Bolshevizing Britain in the Interwar Imagination

by

Olivier Jacques

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

© 2021

Olivier Jacques

Abstract

Bolshevizing Britain in the Interwar Imagination interprets the emergence of anti-Bolshevik popular fiction (also known as Red fiction) in Britain as manifesting a range of responses to the perceived "lessons" of the Great War. It argues that these responses foreground two opposing interpretations of the Great War in Britain: on the one hand, a militarist interpretation justifying the use of military power to quell labour unrest in Britain after the war; and on the other, an anti-militarist argument advocating for the preservation of peace as the only course of action to ensure Britain's long-term survival. Examining the novels of four British popular fiction writers (H. C. McNeile's *Bull-Dog Drummond* (1920) and *The Black Gang* (1922), Emerson C. Hambrook's *The Red-Tomorrow* (1920), Edward Shanks's *The People of the Ruins* (1920), and J. D. Beresford's *Revolution* (1921)), this dissertation identifies the figure of the ex-serviceman in this body of literature as a focal point for discussions of Bolshevism and revolution. In their depiction of ex-servicemen, these novels adapt conventions of archetypal romantic heroism to suit a period wherein heroes were imagined as returning from rather than leaving for war.

  Bolshevizing Britain moves away from assessments of early interwar British anti-Bolshevik fiction as a static set of conventions, reconsidering this body of work for the wealth of information it offers on conservative responses to labour unrest in interwar Britain. In the years shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), the possibility of an English revolution modelled on the Russian revolutionary context was still plausible. This possibility made one of the central questions of the time in Britain—"How to address labour and political unrest in the United Kingdom?"—inseparable from cultural

debates over the long-term sociopolitical consequences of employing military measures to ensure British hegemony. *Bolshevizing Britain* shows how the anti-Bolshevism of these novels emerges precisely at the point of contact between the authors' portrayals of ex-servicemen as vessels for ideological contributions to these cultural debates over militarism, and the authors' imaginative reinvention of prewar generic conventions to fit the cultural mood of early interwar Britain.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Adam Barrows for welcoming me with such enthusiasm during my visit to Carleton University in November 2015. Our meeting convinced me to enroll in Carleton University's PhD program and I have not regretted this decision. Thank you, Adam, for being such a kind and supportive supervisor these last years. My doctoral project changed directions a few times during those years, but your presence in my corner was instrumental in bringing it to completion.

I also want to thank Dr. Jodie Medd and Dr. Dana Dragunoiu for challenging my ideas, reviewing my chapters, and supporting me throughout this process. Dr. Medd, I am extremely grateful for the time you took to read through my corpus. Your thorough feedback led me to rethink many ideas I took for granted and really contributed to my growth as a scholar. Dr. Dragunoiu, your comments on my dissertation were tremendously helpful in further consolidating my thoughts on popular culture more generally, but also on the place of popular fiction in literary studies. I also remember fondly my experience auditing your class on Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, which introduced me to Russian literature. I want to thank you both for the roles you played in helping me bring this project to term.

I want to extend my gratitude to Dr. Sarah Brouillette and Dr. Brian Greenspan, whose comments and feedback in the early stages of my doctoral studies motivated me to take on this project as my thesis, as well as Dr. Brian Johnson, whose seminar on superhero fiction gave me a strong sense of the value of studying popular fiction within the context of literary studies. I also want to thank Dr. Travis DeCook, Dr. Julie Murray, priya kumar, and Lana Keon for answering all of my silly and serious inquiries over the

years. Your kindness and generosity played a big role in my positive experience studying at Carleton.

As a Canadian studying obscure, first-edition British novels published a hundred years ago, it is difficult to convey just how thankful I am of the help I received from Carleton's library staff. Denize Tan and Patricia Paquette, thank you for the several email exchanges and for going above and beyond the call to help me track down and access rare editions of anti-Bolshevik novels. I could not have completed this project without your support.

I want to thank Dr. Brad Kent, Dr. Jean-Philippe Marcoux, Dr. Elspeth Tulloch, and Dr. Liani Lochner for all they taught me at Université Laval. It is in their classrooms at the Pavillon Charles-De-Koninck in Quebec City that I discovered my passion for literary studies and I would have never even contemplated pursuing graduate studies were it not of their continuous support along the way. I also want to thank the many friends I made along the way in Quebec City and in the National Capital Region, especially Jean-Michaël Dubé-Rousseau, Frédéric Béland, and Jason Liboiron, who helped me keep it together for all this time. My parents and my sister were always generous with their support and love throughout the years, and I thank them for being there for me when I needed them.

Finally, I want to thank the love of my life, my beautiful and brilliant wife Leslie Savath. I may have convinced her to begin the PhD with me, but I would have never finished this degree were it not of the example of superhuman discipline that she displayed daily by my side at the kitchen table or at a coffee shop. Thank you, Leslie, for celebrating even the most minor accomplishments with me and for being there when I

needed you. I am so grateful for all that you did to help me finish this thesis. Finally, this acknowledgement page would not be complete without the mention of Aria, Toccata, and Coda, who warmed up our laps, meowed for attention, and chewed on our school supplies for all these years. Thank you, little kitties, for bringing cuteness and joy wherever you nap and for being the real masters of our household.

Table of Contents

Introduction: British Popular Fiction and Anti-Bolshevism

Military and Anti-Military Myths

This thesis explores the transformative impact of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) on British popular fiction in the years shortly after the event. Analyzing novels by four writers of the period, Herman Cyril McNeile, Emerson C. Hambrook, Edward Shanks, and John Davys Beresford, I argue that the portrayal of Bolshevism as a scapegoat for British domestic problems in the popular fiction of this period reflects a polarity in British self-representation after the conclusion of the Great War, with militarist and anti-militarist perspectives on labour unrest in Britain set in opposition to one another. Written during the Russian Civil War (1918-1921) while the British political landscape was undergoing transformations and while large strikes were taking place all over the United Kingdom, these novels highlight fears and concerns about the possibility of a revolution occurring in Britain.

Unsurprisingly, the fiction examined here was deeply influenced by the Great War and could aptly be described as a subset of war fiction. Reading such novels comparatively foregrounds the clash between the two dominant military myths that came to the forefront of the public sphere during the years immediately following the war: an anti-militarist one that took seriously the mantra of the Great War as "the war to end war" and a militarist one that believed in the mobilization of armed forces as the most appropriate solution to any kind of domestic, imperial, and international problem (J. Lawrence 558). The clash of these two myths continued until 1921 when the militarist spirit was relegated to the margins of political discourse (558), partly because, like in the

case of revolutionaries, the more violent endorsers of this military spirit failed to organize in any meaningful way. This doctoral dissertation presents the connection between these two myths and the emergence of anti-Bolshevism as the defining feature of this first wave of Red fiction in Britain, one that distinguishes it from similar fiction published later in the interwar period and throughout the Cold War.[1]

Christine Grandy's recent work on interwar popular fiction provides crucial foundations for this thesis as she demonstrates just how productive it can be to study British mass fiction as manifestations of contemporary concerns. Her scholarship facilitates my study of anti-Bolshevism in British popular fiction as it offers insightful analyses and observations on the kind of characters that populate interwar popular fiction. Although she does not explore at length the role of Bolshevism and its proponents in such fiction, her reading of anti-Bolshevism in McNeile's Bulldog Drummond series influenced the inclusion of McNeile's work in my project. Throughout this thesis, I build on her exploration of ex-servicemen, profiteers, businessmen, and politicians in interwar British popular fiction to position the figure of the Bolshevik amid these various recurring characters.

The authors under scrutiny in *Bolshevizing Britain in the Interwar Imagination* all portrayed Bolshevism in conjunction with other contemporary concerns, including topical ones such as rehabilitating the ex-serviceman in British society and quelling working-class radicalism, as well as metaphysical ones such as causality, spiritualism, and

---

[1] There were two main Red Scares in Britain during the twentieth century, one in the years following the Great War and a second one during the Cold War. Both Red Scares generated a considerable number of cultural productions dramatizing concerns over Bolshevik/Soviet invasion. These "waves" of Red fiction are usually distinguished using the two world wars as historical delimiters, the first wave spanning the interwar period and the second wave beginning in the aftermath of the Second World War.

mysticism. Even though the fear of a Bolshevik-inspired revolution in England drives the plots of these novels, none of these authors discussed Bolshevism in isolation. I investigate some of the key cultural concerns that these writers address through their respective dramatization of Bolshevism both to clarify the outline of such a malleable figure as that of the Bolshevik in British fiction and to complicate its function in early interwar popular culture.

My work aims to situate the subjects of revolution, Bolshevism, and radicalism amid the various transformations occurring within the British popular fiction published soon after the war. I thus build on William Stowe's claim that popular fiction "serves, consciously or unconsciously, as a forum for the introduction and especially for the naturalization of new ideas" (660), as it draws on works of popular fiction to trace some of the anxieties that led to the naturalization of anti-Bolshevism as a new idea soon after the war in Britain. Although most of these anxieties were distinctly conservative, some writers like Beresford were in fact socialists who disagreed with the Bolsheviks' revolutionary methods more than with the prospect of a revolution in Britain. This thesis thus complements Matthew Taunton's claim that "the Soviet Union had become in this period [the 1920s] 'a kind of fantasy space' where British writers and intellectuals could stage their debates, and onto which they could project their desires" ("Russia and the British Intellectuals" 210); indeed, it covers writers for whom the future of Britain could be reimagined as a fantasy space onto which they could project their fears and transpose the most nightmarish aspects of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Modernist Russomania, Popular Fiction, and Literary Studies

In the extensive and rich scholarship devoted to Anglo-Russian relations during and after

the Great War, considerable attention has been given to the influence of key

individuals—ministers, diplomats, famous émigrés, artists, and others—on the

dissemination of Russian culture in Britain. Over the last decade, several scholars strived

to move away from such a focus on individuals in order to examine the period through

larger institutions such as societies and libraries, objects of study that favour issues of

translation, circulation, and mediation over other issues more specifically related to the

impact of certain individuals (Beasley and Bullock 1). This recent scholarly endeavour,

spearheaded by Rebecca Beasley and Philip Ross Bullock in their edited collection of

essays *Russia in Britain, 1880-1940: From Melodrama to Modernism* (2013), has been

particularly helpful to chart the dissemination of Russian culture in Britain in the early

twentieth century.

The first decades of the twentieth century marked an unprecedented enthusiasm

and appreciation for Russian culture in Britain. It is during this period that Constance

Garnett's English translations of Russian literary masterpieces bridged the linguistic gap

between Russian literature and British readership. The British exposure to writers like

Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Ivan Turgenev, and to Russian artistic

performances such as Igor Stravinsky's music and Sergei Diaghilev's popular Ballets

Russes in the early 1910s, led to "an unprecedented explosion of Russomania among the

British 'intelligentsia'" (Cross, "By Way of Introduction" 31). Current studies continue to

emphasize the enduring influence of Russian arts on Britain's literary production

throughout the 1910s and 1920s, and advance the argument that Russia during this period

acquired a function "analogous to that of a symbolic artistic cachet or cultural capital" in British culture (Wrenn and Soboleva 18). For instance, Caroline Maclean's *The Vogue for Russia: Modernism and the Unseen in Britain 1900-1930* (2015) furthers the claim that the fashion for anything Russian reached its height during the 1910s and 1920s with the rise of British modernism (2). The popularity of Anton Chekhov's drama and short fiction in Britain in the years after the Great War supports this claim to continuity, since there were a number of British critics at the time who interpreted his works as a means of understanding the Bolshevik Revolution (Klimova 221). Moreover, several Russian émigrés such as S. S. Koteliansky and John Cournos (born Ivan Korshun) were given a prominent place among modernist circles during and after the Great War for their knowledge of Russian language and culture, and for their endeavours to translate lesser-known Russian literary works into English. Their translations of Russian literature, adding to those of Constance Garnett and those of Aylmer and Louise Maude, indeed contributed to the continuation of Russophilia within modernist circles in England.

Most British modernists did not write explicitly about the Bolshevik Revolution in their fiction during the first decade following the event. David Ayers suggests two reasons for this silence. He explains that high-modernist writers rarely ventured beyond subtle allusions to the politics of their time, to events like the Bolshevik Revolution but also to public figures like British Prime Minister Lloyd George, Ramsey MacDonald of the Labour Party, and American President Woodrow Wilson. He argues that this choice to stay away from contemporary politics reflects the fact that "many of these writers were opposed to—or at least uninterested in—the rise of socialism or the creation of a new international order," and that "in some cases simple artistic individualism led writers to

conclude that they should avoid the topics which were the commonplace of their time, or at least address such topics only indirectly or obliquely, and as a last resort" (*Modernism* 6). This lack of interest is debatable, since, as Rebecca Beasley indicates, the formation of social clubs like the 1917 Club in response to the February Revolution in Russia, a group that included a fair number of well-known literary figures and socialist intellectuals, shows that there was a certain degree of interest in socialism and social transformations among high-modernist circles in the late 1910s and early 1920s (Beasley 386-87).

The most likely explanation for the modernists' apparent reluctance to engage with the Bolshevik Revolution in their fiction has to do with their intense appreciation for pre-revolutionary Russian arts and culture. Several modernists perceived a rupture between the aesthetic ideals of pre- and post-revolution Russian culture at a time when pre-revolutionary Russian artists like Sergei Diaghilev, Wassily Kandinsky, and Igor Stravinsky were all "more recognizably 'modern' than any of their British equivalents" (Beasley and Bullock 9). British modernists saw great value in the works of these artists as well as in those of nineteenth-century Russian authors like Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy who each wrote about revolutions or revolutionaries at some point in their respective careers. It was thus a major point of contention among British literary elites shortly after the war to figure out whether the Bolshevik Revolution could be understood as a continuation of Russia's history of revolutionary activism or as a break from such a tradition. After all, three generations of British readers had digested Russia's liberal and revolutionary traditions through translated literature, which led many literary journals to "read the revolutions as the fulfillment of arguments made by nineteenth-century

literature" (Beasley 386). The anti-Bolshevik émigrés of the Russian Liberation

Committee[2] conversely strived to counter this popular perception of the Bolshevik

Revolution as merely the latest development in Russia's revolutionary tradition through

propagandist essays and stories such as Isaak Shklovsky's non-fictional *Russia under the*

Bolsheviks (1919) and Cournos's short story *London under the Bolsheviks: A Londoner's*

Dream of Returning from Petrograd (1919).

 Although it is impossible to know for certain the extent of the committee's

influence on British literary circles, it remains true that several modernists dissociated

their interest in Russian culture from contemporary Russia in the years after the

Bolshevik Revolution. Beasley ascribes this break to the Bolsheviks' departure from

values British Russophiles stereotypically attributed to Russia at the time. She explains

that roughly thirty years of propagandist literary criticism curated an image of Russia and

Russian literature as embodying a network of values including "life (as opposed to art,

style or technique), realism (as opposed to formalism), engagement (as opposed to

disinterestedness), nature (as opposed to culture), the rural (as opposed to the urban), the

national (as opposed to the international), spirit (as opposed to materialism or the

machine), and romanticism (as opposed to classicism)" (433). The Bolsheviks endorsed

several values that conflicted with those British Russophiles praised in the cultural

productions of pre-revolutionary Russian artists. For instance, the Bolsheviks' advocacy

of the machine over the spirit, of the urban over the rural, and of internationalism over

---

[2] The Russian Liberation Committee was one of the most prolific anti-Bolshevik organizations in Britain between 1919 and 1924. During the Russian Civil War, it became an important source of news from the fronts of the civil war for the British press. For more information on the Russian Liberation Committee, see Charlotte Alston's "The Work of the Russian Liberation Committee in London, 1919-1924" (2008).

nationalism (433), all represented a break away from earlier traditions. It is thus that pre-revolution Russian literature and arts could continue "perform[ing] a modernising function within the framework of the English artistic canon" (Wrenn and Soboleva 63) during the 1920s as inspiring cultural productions for a group of emerging English writers and artists.

The connection between Russian culture and British modernism has been one of the most thoroughly studied questions by scholars of Anglo-Russian cultural exchanges. As early as the first decades of the twentieth century British authors were discussing the influence of newly translated Russian novels on their fiction (Beasley 5). As Maria Krivosheina indicates, however, this scholarly focus on "elitist literary magazines and intellectual trendsetters associated with the Bloomsbury Group … offer[s] conclusions about a relatively small fraction of readers and journalists" (275-76). She rightly asserts that such studies are "not intended to explore the relationship between Russian literature and the mainstream readership" (276). The focus on modernists and on the modernist reception of Russian literature obscures other ways in which Russia influenced British culture during that same period, namely in mass fiction. The case of anti-Russian works of popular fiction necessitates expanding on Krivosheina's claim since the qualitative assessment of such works is often tinted by the long-standing reluctance to consider popular fiction as worthy of academic literary studies.

What came to be known later as popular fiction first developed in the mid to late nineteenth century as a new market appeared for publishers with the spread of mass literacy across Britain. The market-driven literary industry that emerged in response to this widening reading public brought with it the professionalization of authors and

publishers, the advent of new networks of distribution, as well as new presentation

formats such as the iconic three-decker (Bloom, *Cult Fiction* 49-50). The number of titles

published annually in Britain increased remarkably during this period. The production of

books went from 370 titles in 1800 to nearly 6,000 in 1900 (and over 12,000 by 1914),

and periodicals from 3,200 titles per year in the late nineteenth century to over 10,000 in

1914 (Belk 1). One of the most innovative developments of this literary industry was the

creation of fiction magazines, which allowed authors to publish shorter stories on a

weekly or monthly basis. It is the popularity of these magazines that ushered in the "era

of the short story" (Pringle and Ashley 2), with the serialized publication of Arthur

Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories figuring as one of the first examples of the

typically English "*series short story*—a tight form, usually numbered and run in

consecutive issues" (12, italics in original). The serialization of short fiction changed

storytelling approaches since each story needed to be sufficiently self-contained to

accommodate new readers while at the same time pleasing more devoted readers already

familiar with the characters and settings. Partial narrative climaxes and cliffhangers

became common approaches simultaneously to entertain one-time readers and compel

them to read the next issue to find out what happens next. By the 1920s, the production of

popular fiction was so large that publishers began using genre divisions as a means of

marketing their books and magazines for more specific audiences (Pringle and Ashley

15). These "aesthetic categories" (Bloom, *Bestsellers* 39) targeted specific class,

economic, and political demographics, each of which were themselves strongly divided

along gender lines. From that moment onward, genre became "the primary logic for

popular fiction's means of production, formal and industrial identification and critical evaluation" (Gelder, *Popular Fiction* 40).

An influential strand of modernism constituted itself against this emergent mass culture through what Andreas Huyssen describes as a "conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other" (vii). More importantly for our purposes, however, a large number of literary critics since the Second World War ended up continuing the modernists' "strategy of exclusion" as they glorified and canonized high modernism as "the last bastion of defence against the depredations of the culture industry" (Daly 120). Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno provided in the late 1940s the theoretical foundations for dismissing the culture industry as a culture of "sameness" (94), as escapist not "from bad reality but from the last thought of resisting that reality" (116), and as "the irrefutable prophet of the existing order" (118). They thus redefined an attack commonly directed at mass culture: the dismissal of such fiction as providing an escape from reality and distracting readers from engaging seriously and critically with the world around them. Horkheimer and Adorno reconceptualized the escapism of mass culture as working to preserve tyrannical and totalitarian realities through the double negation that mass culture does not allow escape from a bad reality (which would be positive) but rather allows one to escape from his or her responsibility as a human agent to resist oppressive realities in any possible way. By virtue of its escapism, mass culture appears in their theory as one of the foremost instruments of the status quo, a barrier to social resistance that enforces totalitarianism, tyranny, and authoritarianism.

The canonization of high modernism in the second half of the twentieth century by literary critics therefore further consolidated the long-standing divide between mass

fiction and highbrow literature. Scholars corroborated Horkheimer and Adorno's position by fetishizing style, form, and "difficulty" (Daly 123) as the defining features of good fiction while situating popular fiction as a mass of bad fiction against which one can distinguish proper fiction. Because it privileges plot and characters over style, and because it is accessible and formulaic, popular fiction was deemed unworthy of the attention of serious readers and literary critics. Even though scholars more favourably disposed towards popular fiction have been working on dismantling the ideological barriers between 'high' and 'low' literature since the 1960s (Priestman 1), such assumptions remain culturally pervasive today (Gelder, "The Fields of Popular Fiction" 3). They manifest themselves in the most surprising places, including for instance in Christine Berberich's concluding remarks as the editor of the *Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction* (2015) wherein she describes the history of twentieth-century popular fiction as "imply[ing] the latter approaches to the popular: the abuse of power, the manipulative element of it that seems to condemn its consumers to a streamlined, a trivialized and institutionalized diet of conformist sub-cultural matter" ("Afterword" 315).

Red Fiction Scholarship

Despite the relative absence of references to the Bolshevik Revolution in early 1920s English modernist fiction, widening the bibliographical scope reveals a large number of fictional works published during that period that repudiated and sometimes endorsed the Bolshevik regime. From 1917 to the end of the 1920s, at least 42 novels and a few novellas and short stories concerned with the Bolshevik Revolution were published in

Britain, a large majority of them falling under the umbrella of "popular fiction." Most of

these works are listed in Anthony Cross's *The Russian Theme in English Literature from*

the Sixteenth Century to 1980 (1985) and others can be found in specialized surveys of

Red fiction.[3] Few of these fictional works ever received sustained critical attention, and

surprisingly even fewer in studies concerned with the impact of Russia on British culture.

Perhaps the main reason why scholars interested in Russia's influence on Britain in the

early twentieth century should consider studying Red fiction with the same rigour as they

consider the works of well-known figures like T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, or Bernard

Shaw, would be in order to correct the current tendency to portray the early interwar

period in Britain as predominantly Russophiliac. The enduring tendency to treat

Russophilia as nuanced and Russophobia as simplistic is ideologically infused and

reflects an attempt, conscious or not, to highlight positive cultural influences over

negative ones.

The goal of studying Russophobic works is neither to glorify nor celebrate them,

nor to carve them a place in the British literary canon. Most of these works were deemed

as failures in their own time and over time by reviewers and scholars alike. Yet these

works were published consistently by big and small publishing houses, which shows that

there was a sustained readership for such works in Britain throughout the interwar period

and the Cold War. The nuances of these works are just as important as those of

Russophiliac works to understanding the cultural reception of Russia by Britons

throughout the twentieth century. And, as the following chapters demonstrate, most often

---

[3] For surveys of Red fiction, see Rebecca Beasley's *Russomania: Russian Culture and the Creation of British Modernism* (2020) and Michael Hughes and Harry Wood's "Crimson Nightmares: Tales of Invasion and Fears of Revolution in Early Twentieth-Century Britain" (2014).

the main morals of such works are only partially related to the subject of Bolshevism itself—e.g., in McNeile's *Bull-Dog Drummond* (1920) and *The Black Gang* (1922) wherein repurposing newly demobilized officers appears more important than the revolutionary threats themselves. The goal of studying such works, then, should neither be to dig for flaws nor to find out just how much the writers actually knew about Russia, but rather to investigate how writing about Bolshevism allowed them to grapple with various contemporary concerns through the reconfiguration of established generic conventions.

A few studies deserve mention here for their important influence on my understanding of interwar anti-Bolshevik fiction. One crucial mention here is Rebecca Beasley's recent monograph *Russomania: Russian Culture and the Creation of British Modernism 1881-1922* (2020), whose chapter "Against the Machine" provides one of the most thorough and least antagonistic assessments of this early anti-Bolshevik cultural production in Britain. Other significant but less recent or comprehensive publications include I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1763-3749* (1966), Keith Neilson's "Tsars and Commissars: W. Somerset Maugham, *Ashenden* and Images of Russia in British Adventure Fiction, 1890-1930" (1992), Steve Nicholson's *British Theatre and the Red Peril* (1999), Tony Shaw's "Early Warnings of the Red Peril: A Pre-History of Cold War British Cinema, 1917-1939" (2002), Michael Paris's "Red Menace! Russia and British Juvenile Fiction" (2005), Antony Taylor's "Red Scares and Inter-war London" in *London's Burning* (2012), Michael Hughes and Harry Wood's "Crimson Nightmares: Tales of Invasion and Fears of Revolution in Early Twentieth-Century Britain" (2014), and Gregory Claeys's "Anti-Bolshevism and Anti-Fascism,

1918-1940" in *Dystopia: A Natural History* (2017). These works helped me make sense of the cultural attitudes and anxieties that led to the emergence of Red fiction. They each employ a broad survey approach to identify trends, tropes, and historical allusions in Red fiction. Their findings provide crucial foundations for this thesis, but rarely push beyond one- or two-page analyses of the works under consideration—which indeed makes sense considering the number of works that they attempt to distill for the reader. Although Beasley is correct in her claim that close reading can be a limiting methodology to analyze literary forms and genres (31), the current scholarly assessment of anti-Bolshevik fiction would gain from a closer attention to individual texts in order to avoid reducing a multitude of novels to single themes and several writers to a set of ideas. My own close readings show that anti-Bolshevism can, indeed, be discussed at the level of theme, but that it also manifests itself at the levels of tone, narrative structure, characterization, and pace. The four chapters addressing McNeile, Hambrook, Shanks, and Beresford reveal anti-Bolshevism to be more than a subtext; it is integral to the writers' struggles to adapt Victorian and Edwardian generic conventions to suit the interwar context in Britain.

Another problem with the survey approach pertains to the sheer number of new authors it aims to introduce at once. It can be relatively easy for a reader new to Red fiction to get lost amid so many obscure authors, novels, plays, and novellas. Most novelists and playwrights who wrote fiction about the Bolshevik Revolution in Britain soon after the war did not figure in the British canon and were soon forgotten. Playwrights had little to no chance of being remembered since most plays touching ever so slightly on the subject of Bolshevism or Russia were indiscriminately censored by the Lord Chamberlain's censors. The reasons for such censorship were manifold; they

included a simultaneous attempt to avoid "portraying an incompetent potentate related to the British monarchy" and "to pander to an overthrown regime" (Nicholson 17). Another important reason was that plays discussing Bolshevism ran the risk of offending the Russian émigré community in England by reducing the chaotic situation in Russia to mere entertainment. Furthermore, such plays also jeopardized the possibility of future diplomatic efforts with Bolshevik authorities in Russia, were they to emerge victorious from the Russian Civil War. The power of theatre to influence public opinion was fully recognized by the British State (2), and there was thus no shortage of justifications for the censorship of anti-Bolshevik plays in Britain.

Novelists, on the other hand, had no such barrier in front of them because the censorship of novels in Britain during the interwar period focused less on politics than on obscenity (Sigel 61-83). This meant that, unlike on the stage, novelists could discuss and portray Bolshevik Russia in the most unflattering terms and still have their work disseminated to the public. Studying this wave of fiction requires looking at the lives of these novelists, their politics, and their experiences as writers. It also requires an examination of the generic conventions they deploy in their fiction in order to contextualize the solutions they propose to prevent an English or British revolution. In other words, studying this wave of Red fiction necessitates a shift in focus from the macro to the micro, from listing texts to delving into them, so that scholars can later return to the macro perspective and derive more nuanced conclusions regarding what Wrenn and Soboleva call the "myth" of Russia in 1920s Britain.

Of the several studies of Red fiction listed above, Hughes and Wood's "Crimson Nightmares" is perhaps the one whose findings bear the most on this thesis. Hughes and

Wood claim that anti-Bolshevik cultural productions need to be understood as shaped by

a "nebulous anxiety" (295) about changes occurring in British society after the Great

War, and that focusing exclusively on the propagandist aspect of such works "cannot

capture the rich texture of factors that inevitably shape both their production and

consumption" (295). Perhaps their most important contribution to the study of Red fiction

is that one ought to understand these "tales of the future," a broad generic marker they

borrow from I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War*, as inherently related to prewar

invasion literature written by the likes of William Le Queux, George Henty, and Horace

Newte.

Hughes and Wood's study frames Red fiction as a cultural response to interwar

concerns shaped by prewar generic conventions, a premise that permeates every aspect of

this thesis's approach to the subject. They describe Red fiction as a legatee of Edwardian

invasion literature, wherein "nightmare scenarios were brought about by the triumph of

both internal and external 'others' committed to the overthrow of the social and political

status quo" (298, italics in original). This claim is indeed accurate and relevant, but paints

too linear a trajectory between prewar and postwar British popular fiction. Several other

prewar genres, including the romance, the scientific romance, the adventure novel, and

the spy novel, played a significant role in the formation of Red fiction during the interwar

period, each imbuing the subject of labour unrest with its own particular set of

conventions and concerns. The generic conventions of invasion literature reveal very

little about Edward Shanks's *The People of the Ruins*, for instance, insofar as this novel

engages rather more pointedly with conventions associated with the scientific-romance

tradition such as the discourse of degeneration and the projection of scientific concerns

into the future, among others. Anti-Bolshevik tales of invasion ought to be understood as indeed participating in the reinvigoration of a prewar genre to befit the interests and concerns of interwar Britons, but also as engaging in a conversation with other authors writing on the same subject at the same time, albeit through different narrative devices and towards different ends.

Hughes and Wood claim that "in the 'unstable world' that followed the First World War, … prewar fears of German military ambition were replaced by fears of revolution and national disruption" (297). This transition from the German threat to the Bolshevik threat during the interwar period was in fact far from simple, especially considering that revolutionary Russians never fully replaced German villains in interwar British fiction, or at least only ever did so in a select few novels. In the early aftermath of the Great War, villains were often imagined as a confused hybrid of Germanophobic and Russophobic prejudices, a testament to the enduring influence of prewar and wartime anti-German propaganda and to the possibilities that revolutionary Russian villains offered to maintain interest in invasion literature after the military defeat of Germany. As we will see in Chapters 2 and 3, in works like *Bull-Dog Drummond* and *The Red To-morrow*, Germans and Bolshevik Russians become mutual extensions of the same threat embodied in single characters, respectively the archvillains Carl Peterson and Charles Mostyn. In other works like Beresford's *Revolution*, which is the focus of Chapter 5, neither Germans nor Russians play a role in the story despite the revolutionary context of the narrative. The texts analyzed in this thesis show that, at the very least in the early years of the interwar period, Bolsheviks and domestic revolutionaries appear more as a supplement to the German threat than as a full-fledged replacement. It is thus more

productive to imagine British fears of revolution in interwar fiction as operating alongside and in relation to fears of German revanchism (and later of Nazism), rather than as a simple linear transition from one to the other.

For the wealth of insights that Hughes and Wood offer in their introductory remarks on red-scare anxieties in Britain in the 1920s, as well as on the necessity for scholars to acknowledge the diversity of Red fiction, their article reveals little about how invasion conventions work or are reworked in Red fiction, or about how Red fiction changed or maintained such conventions after the war. Instead, they provide several plot summaries "to show that there was considerable diversity among the various authors who wrote red-scare 'tales of the future' during the 1920s" (309), which they understand as all falling broadly within the umbrella of invasion narratives. Yet, most of their plot summaries do not address the invasion component of the narratives in question, which makes it unclear why one ought to read any or all of these texts as invasion narratives.

One especially surprising item on Hughes and Wood's list is Beresford's *Revolution*, which is distinctly *not* about foreign invasion. Beresford's tale of revolution focuses exclusively on the domestic aspects of labour unrest in Britain and carefully avoids facile attacks on Bolsheviks or Germans. Hughes and Wood's summary of *Revolution* ends with the claim that

> in the American edition of *Revolution*, [Beresford] wrote that his book was
> intended as a warning that changes must take place if Britain was to avoid descent
> into 'hatred, cruelty and bloodshed.' Many other writers of red-scare narratives
> echoed this view, hoping like the authors of prewar invasion literature to draw

readers' attention to the perils faced by a Britain that seemed to be sleep-walking

towards revolution and, by extension, the collapse of civilisation. (303)

This blurb represents the extent of Hughes and Wood's effort to connect the plot of

Revolution to the conventions of invasion literature. But this curated excerpt of

Beresford's foreword to the American edition misrepresents the author's message as

synonymous with the more militarist cautionary tales striving to stir Britons into fighting

the Red threat, tales wherein tropes of sleepwalking often appear. As Chapter 5 will

show, Beresford's novel is distinctly opposed to violence. Towards the end of the novel,

the protagonist Paul Leaming specifically rejects the possibility that invasion lies in the

future of Britain (Beresford 312-13). The type of change that Beresford discusses in the

foreword is a "change of heart, a change of outlook, a new attitude" (*Revolution* VI),

which a close reading of the novel reveals to be a change towards pacifism. It is clear that

a number of the texts Hughes and Wood review are indeed tales of invasion, but their

attempt to subsume the whole of Red fiction under the genre of invasion counteracts their

very argument against reductive readings of such narratives. This thesis can thus be read

as building on Hughes and Wood's project since it addresses early interwar Red fiction as

a gateway for a discussion of British anxieties in the aftermath of the war, and for an

examination of generic transformations and continuities in interwar British mass fiction.

Red Fiction and the Challenges of Political Novels

The works discussed in this thesis all fall within the nebulous genre of the political novel.

This genre is nebulous because it presupposes that there is such a thing as an apolitical

novel. Yet this generic marker remains commonly employed nowadays as an umbrella

term englobing various types of social satires (e.g., utopian/dystopian fiction), fiction of

resistance and emancipation, as well as fiction endorsing or describing a specific political

stance (e.g., libertarian fiction, socialist fiction, conservative fiction). It goes without

saying that novels concerned with revolutionary change fall within the conventions of the

political novel, if only for their incorporation of the subject of revolution as a crucial

element of their respective stories. For Irving Howe, whose *Politics and the Novel* (1957)

provided the theoretical foundations of the political novel, the Russian Revolution was

the dominant theme of twentieth-century political novels: "The contrast between early

political hope and later disillusion becomes the major theme of the twentieth century

political novel: Malraux, Silone, Koestler—all are obsessed by the failure, or betrayal, of

the revolution" (205). Howe loosely defines political novels as novels predominantly

concerned with political ideas or novels using a political milieu as a main setting (17).

For him, the political novel is a "work of internal tensions" (20) between what he sees as

the necessities of the novel (portraying human behaviours and feelings) and an attempt to

incorporate the "pellets of modern ideology" (20) into the story. He claims that the

political novelist "must drive the politics of or behind his [or her] novel into a complex

relation with the kinds of experience that resist reduction to formula" (21-22).

Howe finds a strong supporter in Stuart A. Scheingold, who inadvertently

underscores and reiterates in his book *The Political Novel: Re-Imagining the Twentieth*

Century (2010) the main problems inherent to the political novel as a generic marker.

Scheingold writes, approvingly, that "To be worthy as literature, a political novel must,

according to Howe, negotiate the treacherous passage between the polemical and

personal. If a political novel is to have literary merit and not degenerate into a polemic, it

must be anchored in an authentic portrayal of the lives of its characters" (11). The

problems with this claim are manifold. First, evaluating the authenticity of characters'

lives is a dubious interpretive approach that makes the generic identification of a novel a

result of the interpreter's interests and prejudices rather than any set of features inherent

to the novels. Howe himself acknowledges in an anecdote early in his book that, when

someone pressed him after a lecture to clarify the exclusion of a given novel, "[he] meant

by a political novel any novel [he] wished to treat as if it were a political novel" (Howe

17). This brings us to the second problem, which derives from the first one. How is one to

use such a slippery method of categorization as a means of deciding where any given

political novel falls within the equally murky spectrum of literary merit and polemics?

Marge Piercy reminds us that

> reviewers don't perceive books as having a political dimension when the ideas
>
> expressed in the novels … are congruent with the reviewers' own attitudes or with
>
> those they're used to hearing discussed over supper or at parties. When reviewers
>
> read novels whose attitudes offend them or clash with their own ideas, they
>
> perceive those novels as political and polemical, and they attack them. (109-10)

Piercy's remarks here are fully applicable to anyone who employs Howe's approach to

define a political novel as either worthy or unworthy of literary merit. As mentioned

earlier, the existence of political novels suggests that there are apolitical novels when

really, as Piercy indicates, the politics of so-called apolitical novels are merely invisible

because they are congruent with the interpreter's own politics.

Christopher Harvie provides an alternate definition for the political novel in *The

Centre of Things: Political Fiction in Britain from Disraeli to the Present* (1991), one

equally if not more difficult to employ. He writes, "If the political novel is defined, as G.

M. Young described history, as 'the conversation of people who counted,' then Disraeli

originated the genre and we must start with him" (7-8). From this definition, Harvie then

proceeds to elaborate "a general topography" (3) of approximately 600 titles published in

Britain between the time of Benjamin Disraeli in the 1840s and the late twentieth century.

For Harvie, the political novel is written about or by people involved in party politics,

which makes his topography of the political novel in Britain a general overview of British

political history. As his reviewer James Gindin writes, "Harvie's definition of political

fiction, increasingly, whether as complaint, dissidence, propaganda, analysis, ideology, or

nostalgia, reflects his simplified version of history" (727). It becomes increasingly

evident through these attempts to define political fiction just how difficult it is, even for

scholars honing in on the subject, to reconcile the political and literary aspects of political

fiction. What could seem like an opportunity to investigate how political ideas

materialize in a given novel through a synergy of plot, characterization, setting, and

symbolism, becomes instead a discussion on "people who counted," which, like Howe's

definition, revolves once more on the whim of the interpreter, rather than on any inherent

feature of a novel. The literary analyses included in this dissertation aim to demonstrate

that such a synergy exists in popular anti-Bolshevik novels, just as much as it does in

mid-century canonical fiction reflecting on the legacies of the Russian Revolution.

Anti-Semitism in Red Fiction

Many works of fiction engaging in a critique of revolutions in the early interwar period

also indulged in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. After the Bolshevik Revolution, several

rumours emerged across Europe and in Russia attributing the event to the Jews. The fact

that two crucial figures in the development of European socialism, Karl Marx and

Ferdinand Lassalle, were Jewish and German, contributed to the growing belief among

conservatives that socialism and communism were but Jewish-German attempts at social

corruption.[4] Even though Jews never played a decisive role in the two revolutions that

occurred in Russia in 1917 (Budnitskii 327), the words "Jew" and "communist" quickly

became interchangeable in anti-communist propaganda after the Bolshevik Revolution

(Smith 171). This made it even more difficult for Jewish Russian refugees to seek asylum

in other European countries during the Russian Civil War, since they were often seen as

"unassimilable and infected with a revolutionary virus" (Hanebrink 8).

These anti-Semitic sentiments were substantiated in 1920 when the first English

translations of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* began circulating in Britain and the

United States. The *Protocols* are an anti-Semitic forgery that was first published in 1903

in Russia. It describes an international conspiracy theory affirming that Jewish leaders

around the world were working in secret to take over, and eventually destroy, the world.

Despite attempts in the 1920s to prove that the document was in fact a forgery,[5] the

Protocols remained very popular during that period as a companion piece to

anti-Bolshevik and anti-German propaganda. Indeed, the *Protocols* appeared in Britain

only two years after the publication of John Henry Clarke's *England under the Heel of*

---

[4] See William Brustein's *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust* (2003) for more information on this subject.

[5] See, for instance, Philip Graves's "The Truth about the Protocols: A Literary Forgery," published in the London *Times* in August 1921 (Graves).

the Jew (1918), which consisted largely of translated excerpts written by Werner Sombart and described Jewish, German, and Bolshevik threats as one and the same.[6]

Anti-Semitism was never as widespread in Britain as in other European countries like Germany and Romania (Brustein 337). Nevertheless, by the beginning of the twentieth century anti-Semitism was firmly ingrained in British literature. Iconic Jewish characters like William Shakespeare's Shylock and Charles Dickens's Fagin, among others, had participated in the consolidation of Jewish characters as villains and as convenient scapegoats for social ills. The typical characterization of a Jewish villain in fiction tends to follow one of two main forms, the Jew-villain or the Wandering Jew, both of which can be traced back to the Bible. The Jew-villain, as Edgar Rosenberg explains, emerged in English literature during the Medieval and the Renaissance periods. When Shakespeare wrote the character of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* (1586), most traits of the Jew-villain were already well established (Rosenberg 33). The dramatization of Jewish figures in the roles of traitors, moneylenders, Christ-killers, murderers, mutilators, and poisoners had already been common practice for centuries in English religious drama. From the Renaissance to the twentieth century, Jewish characters maintained their place in the roster of the most recurring villains in English literature but were endowed with new characteristics. It became commonplace to give such villains a daughter "sufficiently good and beautiful to serve as a foil to the wicked father" (34), and in several late-nineteenth-century texts the Jew-villain took the shape of monsters like vampires (Davison 120; Robinson 16).

---

[6] For a more detailed discussion of this Jewish-German-Bolshevik triple threat, see the chapter "The *Protocols* Circle the World" in Norman Cohn's *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the* Protocols of the Elders of Zion (1967).

The other main form of Jewish villains in British fiction is that of the Wandering Jew, which is based on a biblical story of unconfirmed origins wherein a Jewish man insults Jesus during the walk to his crucifixion and is resultingly cursed to wander the world until the Second Coming. The Wandering Jew often appears in European literatures as a means of addressing "the question of the nature and parameters of European national identity, as constituted by various commercial, religious, and social practices and values" (Davison 2). In such stories, the Wandering Jew has served to reinforce Europeans' sense of identity by presenting them with a paradoxical figure that simultaneously represents locality and itinerance, as well as familiarity and exoticism (Cohen 147). The Wandering Jew has the "chameleon-like ability to take on a form that reflects a given age" (Felsenstein 62). The lasting existence of this anti-Semitic stereotypical character, as in the case of the Jew-villain, owes to the adaptability of its common tropes to fit any political and religious context.

In the novels analyzed throughout the following chapters, anti-Semitism transpires in the characterization of several villainous characters. We will see that both the Jew-villain and the Wandering Jew often appear in this fiction as inherently connected to the Bolshevik threat, both tapping into anti-Semitic interpretations of the Bolshevik Revolution and participating in its dissemination to British readers. One objective of this thesis is thus to examine some of the anti-Semitic stereotypes at play in the novels under consideration to show how they function amid anti-Bolshevik tropes, themes, and subtexts.

Corpus Selection and Chapter Division

After compiling to the best of my abilities a comprehensive list of British Red fiction

published during the interwar, I chose to focus on the early years of the period to

determine whether certain trends originated within this fiction while the outcome of the

Bolshevik Revolution was still undetermined. This decision was informed by a sense that

the tendency to analyze interwar Red fiction as one large cultural phenomenon conceals

the complexity of individual works as well as the cultural specificity of distinct moments

within the period. Honing in on works published shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution

thus seemed appropriate for this study since it would allow me to investigate early trends

in British anti-Bolshevik fiction. I then decided to derive conclusions from a small corpus

of primary texts for two main reasons. First, examining fewer texts reduces the number of

necessary plot summaries, which are inevitable in studies of obscure fiction. Second, and

more importantly, analyzing a small number of texts gives me the opportunity to delve

further into these works than any existing scholarship. One weakness of working with a

small corpus pertains to the possibility that my findings are specific to the works chosen

and would not apply to other works of Red fiction published in the early aftermath of the

Bolshevik Revolution. This weakness, in fact, illustrates perfectly why it is necessary to

further investigate this cultural production in the first place; other works would indeed

lead to different findings, which is why this project is concerned less with making general

claims about Red fiction than with figuring out what the selected writers had to say about

revolution and Bolshevism, and how these four writers' novels interact with one another.

The selected works are H. C. McNeile's *Bull-Dog Drummond* (1920) and *The*

Black Gang (1922), Emerson C. Hambrook's *The Red To-morrow* (1920), Edward

Shanks's *The People of the Ruins* (1920), and J. D. Beresford's *Revolution* (1921). Other

works were strongly considered for this corpus, such as Charles Ross's *The Fly-By-*

Nights (1921) and John Bernard's *The New Race of Devils* (1921). Ross's novel opens a

discussion about the role of the United States in the British response to Bolshevism, but

the novel's discussion of Bolshevism and revolution reveals them to play relatively minor

roles among other concerns like prohibition and German revanchism. Conversely,

Bernard's novel would have allowed me to discuss a type of narrative otherwise absent in

my corpus: anti-Bolshevik novels written by British authors but set elsewhere in the

world. While most examples of such novels set the action in Bolshevik Russia, Bernard's

novel unfolds entirely in Germany, which opened several avenues of inquiry regarding

the connection between Germanophobia and Russophobia in early Red fiction.

Furthermore, the fact that John Bernard was a pseudonym employed by the Irish writer

Annie O'Meara would have allowed me to explore in greater depth the subjects of

women's perspectives on the Russian Revolution as well as that of Ireland's role in

British fears of revolutions. I ultimately excluded Bernard's novel for the reason that it

would have required adding a large amount of contextual information on Germany's rich

history of labour unrest during that period. Adding this material would have detracted

from the thesis's focus on Britain as the other novels in the corpus are all solidly

anchored in British soil.

The main connection that emerged from the works of McNeile, Hambrook,

Shanks, and Beresford pertained to the writers' efforts to situate the subject of

Bolshevism and labour unrest alongside ex-servicemen whose responses to radicals and

revolutionaries are informed by their war experiences. This connection could not emerge

from a study of modernists who remained infatuated with pre-revolution Russian culture and literature, nor from a study of novelists whose thorough knowledge of Russia and of the events that occurred there in 1917 makes their works more often a commentary on Russia than on Britain. It is also not the kind of connection that would jump to the eye in a large survey of British Red fiction for the reason that ex-servicemen can seem at first sight only obliquely related to the subjects of Bolshevism and revolution. Yet the following chapters show this connection as one of the most crucial aspects of these anti-Bolshevik novels. One of the Great War's most reverberating impacts on British popular fiction is that it shattered several conventions of heroism and villainy that had been reaffirmed in countless works prior to and during the war: after the Great War, the hero was not leaving for but returning from war, and Germans became less exciting villains due to their loss in the war.

Through their veteran protagonists, these four writers elaborate responses to the possibility of a Bolshevik-inspired revolution occurring in Britain. These responses each endorse either a militarist or anti-militarist approach to prevent the destruction of the United Kingdom. I conceptualize McNeile's and Hambrook's novels as representative case studies of militarist fiction, in opposition to Shanks's and Beresford's novels which endorse an anti-militarist response to labour unrest and social transformations. In all four cases, the novels' respective moral visions regarding Bolshevism and revolution are enclosed in the protagonists' ability to learn the "right" lessons from their war experience, lessons that are indissociable from the writers' adherence to a military or an anti-military myth. The thesis is thus organized into four chapters devoted to literary

analyses of the primary texts, preceded by a shorter chapter providing necessary background information for the main chapters.

Chapter 1 offers a brief history of the British reception of the Russian Revolution between 1917 and 1920. I unfold this narrative with a dual emphasis on the distinct characters of the February Revolution and the Bolshevik (or October) Revolution in 1917, and on the impact of the Great War on the British reaction to both of these events. The objective of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the rich socio-historical moment of the early interwar period in Britain while foregrounding the strong connection between the war effort and the emergence of anti-Bolshevism in Britain. The chapter ultimately builds on the historical overview to offer a rationale for understanding the interwar British Red Scare as a developing phenomenon rather than a static set of prejudices and ideologies.

Chapter 2 initiates the literary analyses with the first two instalments of H. C. McNeile's Bulldog Drummond series, *Bull-Dog Drummond* (1920) and *The Black Gang* (1922). In these two novels, McNeile creates a vigilante figure whose experience as a captain in the Great War makes him exceptionally well suited to fend off the revolutionary plans of his cosmopolitan archnemesis Carl Peterson. This chapter accomplishes three main objectives: it opens a discussion of veteran heroism alongside anti-Bolshevik concerns of foreign invasion; it establishes these two novels as an ideal case study to investigate the relationship between Bolshevik and German villains in the aftermath of the war; and it unfolds a reading of the novels as a plea for ex-servicemen to escape the boredom of peace through anti-Bolshevik activity.

In Chapter 3, I turn to Emerson C. Hambrook, another writer endorsing a militarist approach to labour unrest in Britain. His novel *The Red To-morrow* (1920) offers a rare case of a conservative novel following the coming of age of a young Marxist revolutionary. In this novel, the protagonist's gradual conversion to conservatism occurs too slowly, resulting in the destruction of England by ill-intentioned foreigners and anarchists. This chapter reads Hambrook's novel as a plea for the British working class to embrace militarism and conservatism. I analyze Hambrook's novel as emphasizing a sense of powerlessness in the face of a politically divided Britain, which renders the nation unable to make use of its military might efficiently. For Hambrook, militarism is indeed the solution to labour unrest, but it hinges on the existence of a solid conservative leadership that is missing after the Great War in Britain.

Chapter 4 turns to the first anti-militarist writer of the corpus, Edward Shanks, whose novel *The People of the Ruins* (1920) imagines an English Revolution that starts a gradual historical regression towards a neo-medieval period. This chapter reads Shanks's novel as a legatee of H. G. Wells's scientific romances, in which the author deploys a satire of romantic heroism through the genre's characteristic discourse of degeneration. I analyze this satire as targeting principally the glorification of military knowledge, a staple of militarist fiction like the Bulldog Drummond series and *The Red To-morrow*. For Shanks, I argue, the glorification of military knowledge as an indicator of romantic heroism can only lead to England's gradual regression to medieval ways of thinking and living, and eventually to the complete destruction of the nation.

Chapter 5 concludes this thesis with an analysis of J. D. Beresford's *Revolution* (1921) as a response to Shanks's novel. Beresford's novel describes the delayed impact

of a socialist revolution in London on the lives of English citizens living in a small

nearby suburb. The protagonist is a shell-shocked ex-serviceman whose spiritual

connection with the natural world leads him to become the leader of his community after

the revolution, as a mediating figure between the more extremist representatives of the

socialist and conservative factions emerging in the village. This chapter reads the

counter-revolution that unfolds in the later chapters of the novel as an implicit response to

the militarist endorsement of writers like McNeile and Hambrook, and as an explicit

response to Shanks's novel, which Beresford's protagonist cites directly at the end of

Revolution. Beresford's message, I demonstrate, is one of peace and optimism; for him,

McNeile's and Hambrook's militarism can only lead to the destruction of England, but

unlike Shanks, whose novel leaves little room for hope that England can somehow escape

its impending destruction, Beresford's novel offers spiritualism as an answer to the

apocalyptic mood of the postwar moment.

Chapter 1: War Expectations and the Emergence of Anti-Bolshevism

1.1 Celebration and Outrage: The British Response to the Russian Revolution

The transformation of British attitudes towards Russia's revolutionary moment between 1917 and the early 1920s is mainly the result of two factors: first, the distinct characters of the February Revolution and the October Revolution; and second, the difficulty for many officials, intellectuals, and activists in Britain to dissociate British war exigencies from the emancipatory needs of the Russian population. Both the February and October Revolutions took the British by surprise. The abortive Russian Revolution of 1905 and the violent retributions that ensued had somewhat numbed the British to the possibility of a successful revolution in Russia. The news of the February Revolution reached Britain on the morning of 16 March 1917 (NS),[7] after a week without news from Russia and rumours of intense food riots in Petrograd. Due to the rise of communication technology in the decades prior to 1917, news of the revolution was shared around the world at a speed unmatched by any other prior revolution (Arnot 10-11). Britain's immediate response to the news of the February Revolution was one of astonishment and celebration. The Allies' embarrassment of fighting alongside a tyrannical Tsar in the name of democratic freedom was finally over; Russia was free. The celebratory mood was originally shared by people of all political leanings in Britain but became, during the spring and summer of 1917, more directly associated with the activities of the Labour Party, trade unionists, and London's various socialist societies.

---

[7] Dates corresponding to the Gregorian calendar will be referred to as New Style (NS), and those to the Julian calendar as Old Style (OS). Russia officially transitioned from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar after 31 January 1918 (OS) by skipping straight to 14 February (NS) on the next day.

The Britons' enthusiastic response to the February Revolution partly arose from their expectation that the new Russian government would precipitate a transition from autocratic rule to democracy while keeping the Tsar's military commitments to the Allies. The fact that few in Britain understood the contradictory nature of these expectations can be explained as a consequence of insufficient communication between Russian and British officials throughout 1917 and as a manifestation of British officials' thoroughly self-serving outlook on the two revolutions that occurred in Russia in 1917. From the most radical to the most conservative British commentator in 1917, all judged the revolutions in terms of their potential effect on British war interests (Arnot 15; Graubard 22). According to the foreign editor of *The Times*, Harold Williams, "the revolution ought to have removed the final barrier to complete Anglo-Russian co-operation" (Alston, *Russia's Greatest Enemy?* 115), that barrier being the Tsar himself. Williams was wrong, of course, since internal conflicts among Russia's new leaders regarding the meaning of the revolution for the war effort would replace the previous barrier. Several military generals and Duma politicians had supported the February Revolution because they thought democracy would facilitate cooperation with the Allies (Smith 104), whereas lower-class citizens and their political representatives understood "ideas of a constitution, a democratic republic, and … civil and political rights, … as means to achieve peace, solve the economic crisis, and remedy deep social injustice" (104). Williams was not alone in believing that Anglo-Russian cooperation had reached new heights with the February Revolution. When the revolution occurred, many saw the new developments in Russia as a "ray of hope—the promise of an eventual bright dawn" (Bullock 41). It led to the creation of new societies like the 1917 Club founded by

Leonard Woolf and friends, a "socialist forum" (Glendinning 192) with a primarily

political membership which included prominent figures such as Ramsey MacDonald,

Aldous Huxley, H. G. Wells, E. M. Forster, H. N. Brailsford, and Virginia Woolf.

The exhilaration of the British for the February Revolution was the culmination of

almost a decade of intense Russophilia in Britain. At the centre of this craze for all things

Russian were Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, starring Vaslav Nijinsky. Diaghilev's

premiere in London was scheduled during George V's coronation festivities in June 1911

and was widely praised in newspapers and fashionable magazines (Wrenn and Soboleva

43). Closely connected to Diaghilev's popularity was the phenomenon often called the

"Cult of Dostoevsky" (Crowder 18-19). Beginning with Constance Garnett's English

translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* in 1912, the "cult" of Fyodor Dostoevsky marked

the enthusiasm shown by the so-called cultural elites towards the Russian novelist. The

context of the Great War contributed to the immense popularity of *The Brothers*

Karamazov in the 1910s. The novel's glorification of human freedom[8] was particularly in

line with British war propaganda, which often described the First World War as a battle

opposing freedom and tyranny. It is during those years, when Diaghilev and Dostoevsky

(as well as several lesser-known artists) were on everyone's lips in London, that Russia

acquired in Britain a reputation for being culturally refined. This status reinforced official

---

[8] Dostoevsky illustrates through the character of the Grand Inquisitor the notion that "to bring harmony
into the historical process one must *inevitably suppress human freedom*" (Zenkovsky 144, italics in
original). By aligning the Grand Inquisitor's disdain for human freedom with the devil, Dostoevsky's novel
portrays human freedom as both holy and worth defending. The anti-socialist implications of Dostoevsky's
tale of the Grand Inquisitor would resonate even further with conservative British readers after the
Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the advent of the Soviet Union.

propaganda efforts striving to increase popular interest in Russia after the signing of the

Triple Entente in 1907.[9]

The British press had difficulty gaining access to reliable information on political

developments occurring in Russia throughout the summer and early fall of 1917 (Arnot

79). The messages of British correspondents in Petrograd during those months were

"increasingly fragmentary, disjointed and even meaningless" (79), and thus British news

outlets were not in a position to know the extent of the crisis afflicting the Provisional

government. Consequently, when the Bolsheviks seized power from the Provisional

Government later in the fall, the British were once more taken by surprise (Arnot 80;

Graubard 43). The British response to the Bolshevik Revolution was just as intense as

after the February Revolution, but it was fuelled by opposite feelings, namely outrage and

fear. The exhilaration of the British for the advent of a liberal democracy potentially

surpassing their own in Russia had set the stage for bitter disappointment in October

when the Russian Provisional Government lost control of the State to an unknown group

of revolutionaries. British officials and the press knew little about Vladimir Lenin or the

Bolsheviks at the time of the revolution,[10] which therefore made it relatively easy for

journalists and politicians to paint them as anarchist fiends hellbent on destroying

European civilization after the October Revolution. Despite their antagonistic

introduction in the press and despite the general animosity directed at them in Britain, the

Bolsheviks nevertheless grew a British following after the October Revolution, the most

---

[9] The Triple Entente was an alliance between the Russian Empire, the Third French Republic, and the British Empire to counterbalance the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.

[10] For an account of the Bolsheviks' first portrayals in British newspapers, see Ian Bullock's *Romancing the Revolution: The Myth of Soviet Democracy and the British Left* (2011).

prominent group being the British Socialist Party (BSP). Inspired and purportedly

endorsed by Lenin (Bullock 223), the BSP merged with other small socialist parties in

1920 to form the Communist Party of Great Britain (Thorpe, *CPGB and Moscow* 30),

which would stay active until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

1.2 The Prism of War

The radically different natures of the two revolutions were mostly understood through the

lens of war necessities in Britain. Committed to helping Russia's Provisional Government

raise the population's war morale, Britain and France devoted substantial sums in the

spring of 1917 to propaganda efforts in Russia to promote the war, justifying the extra

expenditure as "insignificant if compared with what the Germans are spending here"

(Buchanan qtd. in Alston 116). Even larger amounts were spent in the summer to support

the Provisional Government (Challinor 172) in hope that additional funding would help it

secure its hold on the Russian population and ensure the continuous participation of the

Russian Imperial Army in the war. The Allies knew that Russia was in no condition for

continued participation in the war, Russia having suffered more casualties than any other

Allied country and lacking weapons and ammunitions. However, they wanted more than

anything to keep Germany busy on the Eastern Front (Smith 121) and thus continued

pressuring Russia to uphold its earlier commitments. Their insistence on Russia's return

to the war and the Provisional Government's attempts to reconcile the Allies' demands

with those of the Russian population severely undermined the popularity and credibility

of the Provisional Government in Russia. The ministers' decisions and actions regarding

the economic crisis in the late summer of 1917 were seen as sabotaging the gains of the

February Revolution, and the attempted return to war between 18 June and 6 July 1917

resulted in devastating losses for the Russian Imperial Army and in even further popular

dissatisfaction with the government. By that time, no amount of British funding could

improve the terrible reputation of the Provisional Government; if anything, British

involvement was seen as part of the problem. In a way, the war-centric approach of the

British contributed to the fall of the very government they sought to help by adding to the

already unbearable pressure put on the Russian Provisional Government.

The perceptive Michael "Grisha" Farbman, acting as the Petrograd correspondent

for the *Manchester Guardian*, was one of the first public voices to criticize Britain and

the Allies openly for being so self-absorbed in regard to the February Revolution. In a

lecture titled "The Russian Revolution and the War" delivered on 20 July 1917 for the

National Council for Civil Liberties, Farbman argued that

> it should be clearly understood that the Russian Revolution was not intended
>
> merely as a means for the better prosecution of the war. Nevertheless, it has been
>
> so interpreted by the Western Allies. The first disappointment for New Russia
>
> was to find that the Revolution was regarded in the West from this utilitarian
>
> point of view. … Without intending reproach or blame the Russian people has
>
> again and again appealed to the West to abandon this illusion. It has done so
>
> through its Government, which has sent its successive Notes to the Allies, through
>
> organisations and congresses of the army and the workers and the peasants. In
>
> every possible form of manifestation the Russian democracy has endeavoured to
>
> make clear the real meaning of the Revolution. It has sought to make the West
>
> realise that to Russia the Revolution is not a means to victory, or a means at all,

but the very end in itself, and itself the sole and highest victory that European

democracy has achieved in the war. (14-16)

The February Revolution arose out of economic and political problems emerging, for the

most part, from the Great War. The combined frustrations resulting from rapid inflation,

food shortages, incompetent military leadership, immense war casualties, as well as from

rumours that Grigori Rasputin and Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna were conspiring with

Germany (Smith 90),[11] were some of the most important factors that led to the February

Revolution. At the beginning of the revolutionary year of 1917 the Russian population,

like those of most countries at the time, were tired of the war. Significant war losses had

eroded Tsar Nicholas II's brief span of popularity, and the initial patriotism spurred by

the outbreak of war in 1914 was spent by 1917.

The urgency of the war amplified the geographical, cultural, and political

differences between the two nations at a time when unity was most needed. These

differences played into the Britons' apparent misunderstanding of the Russians'

perception of the war, since British officials could not understand that "for the average

Russian the great battles on the plain of Flanders were as remote as if they were on

another planet" (Ullman 4). Yet, all misunderstanding aside, war was ongoing and

necessitated immediate action from both Russia and Britain. In 1917, Germany would

make great, unimpeded advances into Russian territory and direct serious submarine

attacks on British merchant vessels in order to starve Britain into submission. Britain and

---

[11] The fact that the Tsarina was born in Germany severely damaged the reputation of the Romanov dynasty during the war. Equally damaging was the Empress's close relationship with the Russian mystic and self-proclaimed holy man Rasputin, who was seen as a fraud and charlatan by most of the Russian population. Rasputin was assassinated on 17 December 1916 (OS) by a group of noblemen.

Russia both needed an early end to the war, but had conflicting perspectives on how to

reach such an end. H. N. Brailsford would write soon after the October Revolution that

"At first our Press pretended to see in this demand an amiable but childlike idealism.

Then it fell into the other extreme of attributing it to German bribes. It has never to this

day faced the plain fact that Russia is physically unable to continue the war without self-

destruction" (*The Herald* 17 Nov. 1917 qtd. in Ullman 120). Exceeding any bond

connecting Britain and Russia as allies against the Central Powers, both nations'

respective self-preservation inevitably overrode empathic desires for their ally's well-

being.

1.3   (Mis)Gauging the Power of the Soviet

The existence of a Dual Power in Russia composed of the Provisional Government and

the Soviet was initially quite puzzling in Britain (Cowden 11). In British newspapers, the

February Revolution had been described at first as the temporary replacement of the Tsar

by a European-style parliamentary government with the Tsar's brother, Grand Duke

Michael Alexandrovich, in line as the likely successor to the Russian throne. Amid

discussions of monarchial abdication and the democratization of Russia prevailing in

British news, the re-establishment of the Petrograd Soviet, a vestige of the Revolution of

1905, was seen as subsidiary. The Petrograd Soviet, or Workers' and Soldiers' Council,

was formed again in February to represent the working class and the troops in official

decisions. Most of its representatives in the few months following the February

Revolution were Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), Russian socialist

political parties. Between February and October 1917, prominent Bolsheviks (another

Russian socialist party) would return from exile and gradually become the main voice of the Petrograd Soviet. In Britain, even though the role of the Russian Soviet was duly noted by the left (Bullock 44), the political power of the Petrograd Soviet after the February Revolution took some time to register. Despite the Provisional Government's official status on the international scene, the Petrograd Soviet held more power and authority at home by virtue of its control over the troops, railways, and telegraph service (Fitzpatrick 124). On 1 March (OS), before the Provisional Government was even formed, the Petrograd Soviet issued the notorious Order no. 1. This decree demanded the democratization of the army through the creation of soldier committees and the reduction of officers' disciplinary powers, while also demanding the recognition of the Soviet's authority on anything involving the armed forces (Fitzpatrick 126). Such an assertion of power, barely acknowledged in Britain but taken seriously in Russia, had major repercussions on inter-allied communication and on the Russian Imperial Army as a whole: one of the main ones being that soldiers only recognized the authority of the Soviet while officers only recognized that of the Provisional Government (127). This situation rendered the Provisional Government unable to make any serious military commitment to the Allies and disorganized the Russian Imperial Army since neither the government nor the Soviet had full control over the army, nor did they agree on pressing issues like the war.

Between 3-5 July (OS), an event known as the July Days occurred in Petrograd during which a number of strikes broke out, demanding that all power be given to the Petrograd Soviet. The strikes began in the Vyborg District, Northwest of Petrograd and near the borders of Finland. In late June 1917, the mounting frustrations of Russian

workers and soldiers over governmental and Soviet policies were becoming obvious, and

"convinced many Bolsheviks and Left SRs at the factory and army unit level and in the

district and city organizations that the time was ripe for action, perhaps even a seizure of

power by the Soviet" (Wade 181). On 3 July, "The First Machine Gun Regiment, after a

tumultuous meeting, resolved to stage a demonstration that day with the purpose of

overthrowing the Provisional Government" (181). From the Vyborg District, several

factory workers and the soldiers of the First Machine Gun Regiment made their way to

the Tauride Palace in Petrograd, the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet. This

demonstration was one of the first times that Lenin's slogan "All Power to the Soviets"

was chanted by a crowd. Faced with lack of cooperation from the Soviet executives

(mostly Mensheviks and SRs), the protestors took the SR leader Victor Chernov hostage

and yelled the often-cited line, "Take power, you son of a bitch, when it's given you!"

(Fitzpatrick 130). Lenin was in Finland on 3 July, which left low- and mid-level

Bolshevik leaders in charge of making the decision of supporting the demonstration or

not. Understanding the risk of alienating their own supporters otherwise, the Bolsheviks

"agreed to authorize and lead, in the words of the broadside issued about 4:00 a.m., 'a

peaceful, organized expression of the will of the workers, soldiers and peasants' for

Soviet power" (Wade 182). The Provisional Government succeeded in dispersing the

protests by publishing documents attesting of Bolshevik ties with Germany, supported by

evidence of telegram exchanges and by the fact of Lenin's return to Russia via Germany

in April 1917. These documents severely undermined Bolshevik popularity and forced

Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders to go into hiding to avoid arrest.[12]

Historians disagree on how to interpret the July Days crisis, seeing it as either "a

calculated attempt at insurrection by the Bolshevik party … or a fairly spontaneous

initiative by rank-and-file anarchist and Bolshevik soldiers and workers who presented

party leaders with a semi-insurrectionary fait accompli" (Smith 122-23).[13] This being

said, in Russia and abroad the July Days crisis was for a long time unequivocally

presented as an abortive attempt by the Bolsheviks to claim power for themselves, and in

Britain this event led to one of Lenin's first introductions in British newspapers. The

roles of Left-SRs (who also led the protests alongside Bolsheviks) and of the First

Machine Gun Regiment went unmentioned. Brailsford referred to Lenin and the

Bolsheviks as Maximalist Social-Democrats on 17 July (NS) in *The Herald*. He wrote

that "while the 'Maximalists' had arguments that should be considered, there was no

possible excuse for their recent actions during the July Days, when they had made an

abortive attempt to seize power in the name of the soviets. … 'Their attempted revolution

was happily a fiasco'" (Brailsford qtd. in Bullock 70). The British coverage of the July

Days reduced the crisis to a clash between political parties rather than presenting it as a

popular demonstration of boiling frustrations. In Britain the event was presented as a

"Maximalist" struggle to overturn the Provisional Government in the name of the Soviet

---

[12] For more information on Lenin's alleged ties with Germany, see Semion Lyandres's "The Bolsheviks' 'German Gold' Revisited: An Inquiry into the 1917 Accusations" (1995).

[13] In my account of the event, I favoured more recent assessments of the crisis, which tend to be more lenient towards the Bolsheviks. For a more thorough examination of this event, see Rex A. Wade's *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (3rd ed. 2017); Richard Pipes's *The Russian Revolution* (1990); and Alexandre Rabinowitch's *Prelude to Revolution: The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July 1917 Uprising* (1991).

when in fact it "represented a genuine outburst of popular discontent. This struggle was a demand for a more radical and effective government—an all-socialist government—which would fulfill popular aspirations for peace, economic reform and solutions to the many problems wracking the country" (Wade 184).

1.4   The Bolshevik Revolution and British Reactions

On 24 October 1917 (OS), the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC),[14] the Petrograd Soviet, the Bolsheviks, and the Left-SRs led a well-timed attack on Alexander Kerensky's Provisional Government that culminated in an assault on the Winter Palace in Petrograd. Lenin, who had been hiding in Finland since the July Days, had returned in secret to Petrograd in early October to convince the Soviet's Central Committee of the urgent need to prepare for a revolution, after several attempts to do so from his hideout in Finland had failed. The spark that began the Bolshevik Revolution, however, was not Lenin's plan but "the government's ill-conceived decision to launch a minor punitive action against the Bolsheviks" (Wade 235). On the night of 23 October, Kerensky ordered the closure of a Bolshevik press. The leaders of the MRC, the Petrograd Soviet, and of the Bolshevik and Left-SR parties interpreted the move as a counter-revolutionary attempt to crush the insurrection. The next morning, they ordered Red Guards to take control of several key locations in Petrograd. By the evening of 25 October, the Red Guards had cornered the members of the Provisional Government in the Winter Palace and quickly forced them to capitulate. Few shots were fired throughout the whole

---

[14] The Military Revolutionary Committee was a Bolshevik military force created on 16 October 1917 in preparation for the insurrection.

procedure, mostly because "no one was eager to die for the Provisional Government" (238). Although the event is remembered as the Bolshevik Revolution, the victory was originally achieved in the name of the Petrograd Soviet as a whole.

Minutes after the capitulation at the Winter Palace was held the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. The balance of power within the Petrograd Soviet at that moment opposed a Bolshevik majority (holding "about 300 of the approximately 650-670 seats" (242)) against a minority of moderate Mensheviks and SRs, with Left-SRs and Menshevik-Internationalists spread out in between.[15] The moderate Mensheviks and SRs began the congress with a series of speeches condemning the Bolsheviks' insurrection as making a civil war inevitable and as ruining the gains made in the February Revolution. In protest and purporting to go to the Winter Palace to support the Provisional Government, most moderate Mensheviks and SRs stood up and left the room, leaving the Bolsheviks as the undisputed leaders of the congress of Soviets; the revolution was henceforth officially the Bolsheviks' revolution. The next day, the Bolsheviks were forming their government, the Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars), led by fifteen Bolsheviks. The Sovnarkom was controversial from the start because of its exclusively Bolshevik leadership, which contradicted the democratic foundation of the Soviet. The constitution of the Sovnarkom changed a few times during the following

---

[15] Although each of the main parties constituting the Petrograd Soviet were socialist in ideology, they held conflicting views regarding the best course of action to build a socialist society. The Bolsheviks were the most radical party, believing in an immediate transformation of the State's organization and structure. The moderate Mensheviks and SRs opposed the Bolsheviks on the projected timeframe of the socialist revolution. Whereas Bolsheviks wanted a speedy revolution, the moderate Mensheviks and SRs believed in a slow-paced, incremental transition towards socialism. They were thus often described as conservative-socialists or right-socialists by their Bolshevik counterparts. Menshevik-Internationalists and Left-SRs were spread between the radical and conservative factions of the Petrograd Soviet. Their votes were therefore important to determine whether the Bolsheviks or the moderate Mensheviks and SRs would decide of the Soviet's governing strategy after October 1917.

month until 17 November (OS), when it finally became a coalition government as seven Left-SRs were given a leadership position.

In November 1917 (NS), it took two days for the British press to realize that Russia was once more in the midst of a revolution. Unable to reach Kerensky (who was in hiding and would only re-appear in London later in the summer of 1918), and not privy to official communication between the Sovnarkom and the British Government, the British press resorted to rumours and "phantasmal hopes engendered by the wishful thinking of the troubled and embarrassed phantoms of the self-entitled ministers" (Arnot 93). An outline of the Bolshevik Revolution and its outcomes slowly took shape in the British press as the Sovnarkom began transmitting news to the press via wireless stations. Several newspapers initially described the event as a coup organized by Maximalist revolutionaries, which, as earlier in the summer, was the Britons' name for the Bolsheviks at that point in time. The *Manchester Guardian* was one of the first papers to give a brief overview of the Maximalists' plan as outlined by Lenin: "first, the immediate conclusion of war for which purpose the new Government must propose an armistice to the belligerents; second, to hand over the land to the peasants; third, the settlement of the economic crisis" (9 Nov. 1917 (NS) qtd. in Arnot 95). The first two parts of Lenin's plan were particularly alarming in Britain. A separate peace treaty between Russia and Germany would be interpreted as treason in Britain, and transferring the land to the peasants could inspire British working classes into revolting against their capitalist and aristocratic oppressors. As a result, no word was strong enough to convey the repudiation of the Bolshevik Revolution in the British press.

The press originally dismissed the Bolsheviks as doomed to fail in a matter of days. This belief was largely the product of misplaced hopes in conservative-socialists (moderate Mensheviks and SRs) whose popularity in Russia had consistently diminished since the February Revolution. Britons believed that the Russian peasantry and garrisons across the country would unite to crush the insurrection. They also believed that Kerensky would make a heroic return to Petrograd with an army and take back his country. The British placed immense hopes in his ability to succeed, as well as in the gathering of counter-revolutionary military forces in the South of Russia. Kerensky did, in fact, attempt a counter-revolution in the days following the Bolshevik Revolution, but to no avail. By the end of 1917, the British press's depiction of revolutionary Russia had shifted entirely from unanimous celebration of the February Revolution to vilification of Bolshevik revolutionaries.

Due to the Britons' lack of knowledge regarding Russian politics and history, the Bolsheviks were originally imagined through the only examples known in Britain, as an inconsistent mix between violent terrorists and members of the Tolstoyan movement.[16] The British press cared little for the actual politics of the Bolshevik party except for its stance against the continuation of the war. It was also clear from the outset that the Bolsheviks were not overly concerned with maintaining friendly relationships with the governments of Allied countries. Only moments after the revolution, the Bolshevik

---

[16] From the late 1870s onward, Tolstoy developed a Christian anarchist philosophy "based on the doctrine of non-resistance to evil" that rejected the State and all its related institutions (Alston, "Tolstoyan Movement" 53). This led to the emergence of a Tolstoyan movement in Russia during the 1880s that spread to Britain in the 1890s and 1900s. For a sustained examination of the Tolstoyan movement in Britain, see Charlotte Alston's "Britain and the International Tolstoyan Movement, 1890-1910" in *Russia in Britain, 1880-1940: From Melodrama to Modernism* (2013).

government began reaching out to Germany and the Allies to negotiate terms for an armistice. Britain was the only Allied nation to respond. The British ambassador George Buchanan wrote back to the Bolshevik leaders that Russia had contacted the enemy nineteen hours before the Allies, and that the Allies "had therefore been confronted with an accomplished fact on which they had not been consulted" (Buchanan qtd. in Ullman 25). Moreover, he responded that he could not speak on behalf of the British government regarding immediate negotiations for peace since "it was impossible for the Ambassador to reply to notes addressed to him by a government which his own government had not recognised" (25). Two barriers prevented such official recognition: first, the Russian population as a whole had not accepted the new Bolshevik government; and second, such an important decision required the British government to secure their electorate's approval before making any statement. On the same day that Buchanan sent his response, Allied embassies received a note that informed them that Russia had stopped all military operations on the Eastern Front and would promptly begin peace negotiations with Germany in the following month (25). Although the Bolsheviks denied on several occasions that they were more eager to negotiate with Germany than with the Allies, from the British perspective it certainly looked like Russia was betraying them to sign a separate peace treaty with the Germans.

It also did not help that the Bolsheviks had been busy sending propaganda to British colonies urging them to revolt against their colonial oppressors (Ullman 28-29). The British government had worked since the beginning of 1917 to smother all possible revolutionary movements in Britain, from backing a veterans' association (the Comrades of the Great War) as a measure against the radicalization of other similar organizations

since the February Revolution (Hally 24), to denying passports to the labour delegation

for the Stockholm Conference of socialist parties in August wherein British socialists

could have interacted with socialists from Germany and Russia. There were therefore

many reasons for the British government not to embrace the Bolshevik Revolution to the

same extent as the February Revolution. In addition to the Bolsheviks' anti-war stance,

their open attacks in newspapers on British capitalism and aristocracy, as well as their

attempt to stir proletarian revolutions across the world, made them a new kind of threat to

British national security.

Yet in spite of all these reasons, there remained a few motives for the British

government to make genuine diplomatic efforts with the new Bolshevik leadership.

Indeed, as Ian Bullock rightly indicates, in late 1917 it was "still … possible to justify the

earlier Bolshevik takeover from a conventional democratic point of view by stressing the

representativeness of the soviets compared to the self-appointed elite of the Duma parties,

who had set up the Provisional Government, now overthrown" (76-77). However, this

justification crumbled in January 1918 when the Bolsheviks dissolved the Constituent

Assembly in which they were themselves only a minority (Ullman 68). The Constituent

Assembly had been planned to convene as soon as the Great War ended in order to elect

the future government to lead Russia. The very name of the Provisional Government that

shared political power with the Soviet throughout 1917 referred to the temporary nature

of the government, which was to lead until an official government could be elected by a

Constituent Assembly. The leadership of the Provisional Government changed plans

during the summer of 1917 and initiated the establishment of a Constituent Assembly in

the fall despite the war still raging in Europe. After the Bolshevik Revolution in October

1917, the Bolsheviks allowed election procedures to go ahead, suggesting that they saw

themselves also as a provisional government and that they were willing to submit

themselves to the majority vote of a Constituent Assembly. However, the Bolsheviks

soon realized that they were unlikely to win a majority in the assembly, and thus began

dismissing the value of the Constituent Assembly in public communications. The day

after the Constituent Assembly's first meeting in January 1918, during which the

Bolsheviks were rejected by a large majority of votes as suitable leaders for Russia, the

Bolsheviks locked down the Tauride Palace where the assembly was held and declared

the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. In Britain, this move by the Bolsheviks

turned most would-be uncommitted observers into ardent opponents. The Constituent

Assembly carried the promise of democracy and constitutionalism, and its dissolution

confirmed the Bolsheviks' opposition to these ideals. The dissolution was seen as a

radical break from the democratic foundations of the February Revolution, even more so

than the Bolshevik Revolution itself. At this point, the emergence of British anti-

Bolshevism was almost complete; what was missing was for the British government to

choose a course of action regarding the Soviet regime.

1.5   Early Contacts with the Bolsheviks: Diplomacy and Duplicity

From December 1917 to August 1918, the British government's dealings with Soviet

Russia can be safely described as failures. The British tried for the better part of the year

to secure diplomatic ties with the Bolsheviks. They worked extensively towards securing

a peace treaty with Bolshevik authorities via their new diplomat Bruce Lockhart.

However, at the same time they would finance counter-revolutionary movements in the

South and the Far East of Russia to help overthrow the Bolsheviks. They would also send military forces to the North of Russia in the cities of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk under the pretext of protecting the Russian population from German invasion via Finland, but would instruct them later in the year to consider the Bolsheviks as their enemies alongside German troops. The Bolsheviks would understandably interpret these apparently contradictory measures as demonstrating the Britons' poorly veiled eagerness to betray them, which the Bolsheviks would transform into powerful propaganda for the Red Army in the years that followed. The year of 1918 in Anglo-Soviet relations can be summarized as the Britons' dual failure to build diplomatic bridges with Soviet Russia and to restore the Eastern Front via direct intervention.

The assassination of the abdicated Tsar and his family in the summer of 1918 had surprisingly little effect on British relations with the Bolsheviks at the time. As early as March 1917 British newspapers were discussing the possibility of having the former Tsar and his family reside in England to ensure their safety (McKee 306). While these plans never came to fruition, popular interest in the abdicated Tsar's safety and whereabouts remained strong in Britain. In the early summer of 1918, rumours began to surface in Britain that Nicholas II was in fact dead, killed in an altercation with a soldier on a train (318). These rumours were discredited in July when the Bolshevik authorities confirmed their execution of the Tsar and his family on the night of 16 to 17 July 1918 (318). It is possible that these rumours mitigated the impact of the news in July by making British citizens wary of their veracity. Nevertheless, the British reaction to the death of the Tsar was varied and tended to mix political critique of Tsarist politics with sensational and largely fictional accounts of the Tsarist family's last moments.

A far more significant reason for the deterioration of Anglo-Soviet relations from mid summer 1918 onward was an assassination attempt on Lenin that happened on 30 August, the very same day that the head of the Petrograd Cheka (Secret Police) was shot dead. These two unrelated events began what is sometimes called the Red Terror, during which Red Guards and the Cheka engaged in ruthless retaliation against confirmed and presumed anti-Bolshevik forces. Countless political prisoners would be summarily executed and supporters of counter-revolutionary forces were to be shot on sight. When an angry mob stormed the British embassy, the Naval Attaché Captain Francis Cromie drew his pistol and killed two men before being himself shot down. His death had disastrous repercussions on Anglo-Soviet relations. All Soviet representatives in London were taken hostage, and British officials in Russia such as Lockhart were likewise imprisoned. These officials' return to London in October during an exchange of prisoners brought an end to the diplomatic game Britain had been playing since the Bolshevik Revolution. British opposition to the Soviet regime was henceforth official.

The armistice of 11 November 1918 removed the main justification for Western governments to intervene in the Russian Civil War (Carlton 5).[17] On that famous day, the Bolsheviks mounted a series of attacks against Allied settlements across Russia to deliver the message that with the war being over, the Allies' presence in Russia was no longer welcome. Posted in the North of Russia, the British General Edmund Ironside declared on the next day to a gathering of Russian officers, "The Germans have accepted all

---

[17] The Russian Civil War opposed two main factions: the Reds (Bolsheviks), who were striving to consolidate their hold on Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Whites (a confederation of anti-communist forces including the British), who were trying to foil their plan and reclaim Russia from the Bolsheviks.

conditions. … Now the task of the Allies is to restore order in Russia" (Arkhangelsk newspaper qtd. in Ullman 257). Deprived of the excuse of protecting the Russians against German invasion or even that of helping Russia in hope of precipitating a return of the Russian Imperial Army to the front, and having no intention of leaving Russia, the British intervention leaders had no other option but to claim overtly their intentions to interfere in another nation's internal affairs.

The British involvement in the Russian Civil War was more prominent than that of any other foreign government. Despite that, the direct influence of British military forces on the outcomes of the civil war was limited. The British contribution to the White Armies consisted mainly in providing military equipment and training Russian officers for combat, and sometimes participating directly in operations. The Russian Civil War unfolded on three main fronts: one in the North, another in the South, and a last one in the Far East of Russia. On these three fronts, White armies were clashing with the Red Army, trying to gain control of the centre of the Russian territory which was dominated by the Bolsheviks. All three fronts received help from Britain, albeit in different ratios and with little communication between them. Britain was only directly involved in the military operations occurring in North Russia. Throughout 1919 and 1920, the British government realized it was spending substantial amounts of money to participate in a war that was proving to be not as consequential to the future of the British Empire as they originally feared. Still recovering from the costs of the Great War, Britain was in no position to provide such financial help over an extensive period of time, especially considering how "These funds and supplies … were not decisive in shifting the balance of military advantage towards the anti-Bolshevik cause" (Smith 174). After all, the British

intervention forces were but one faction in a conflict where "Russians fought Russians, Russians fought non-Russians, non-Russians fought non-Russians, republicans fought monarchists, socialists fought socialists, Christians fought Muslims, towns fought the countryside, family fought family, and brother fought brother" (Smele 40). There was only so much the British could do to tip the scale in such a multi-faceted war.

1.6   Foreign Revolutions, Domestic Strikes

The fiction examined in this thesis emerged as a cultural response to the Bolshevik betrayal of the February Revolution's democratic ideals described above, and to the large number of strikes that occurred across the United Kingdom in 1919 and 1920. As in several countries, the British Red Scare reached its peak in the early months of 1919 as soldiers began returning home from the Great War. The British Government's demobilization strategy after the armistice of November 1918 was met with serious discontent among the soldiers, who thought the process too slow, and resulted in numerous strikes amid armed forces in early 1919 (Butler 328). These strikes in the army were happening at the same time as a large strike over working hours was organized in Glasgow in January of the same year. The combination of these two separate nuclei of strike action seriously alarmed British politicians in early 1919 (Wrigley, "The State" 271), for the reason that in Russia it was precisely the alliance of radical industrial workers and mutinous soldiers that had precipitated the fall of the autocracy (Smith 101-2). One of the most important causes of industrial unrest in Britain throughout 1919 were food prices (Wrigley, "Introduction" 8). Industrial workers perceived inflated food prices at a time when food was scarce as evidence of profiteering ("Introduction" 8), which

stood on the evil side of the moral spectrum in Britain during and after the war. If the soldier was the "man of sacrifice" in the moral language of the time, the profiteers were the antithesis of soldiers as such people tried to benefit from the war without risking their own lives (Robert 104). The government responded to this cause of unrest with relatively successful rationing strategies that reduced waiting time in queues and ensured a fair distribution of limited resources (Wrigley, "Introduction" 10). By the end of 1919, the soldiers' discontent had lost some of its momentum as a result of the demobilization process that discharged up to 10,000 men daily between January and October 1919, leaving fewer soldiers to voice their discontent with every passing day, and due to the fact that by the end of the year most remaining soldiers simply wanted to go home (Butler 346).

Fears of revolution in Britain primarily arose from the sheer number of strikes occurring all over the United Kingdom in 1919 and 1920—1,352 strikes in 1919 and 1,607 in 1920 (Wrigley, "The State" 270-71). Throughout the interwar period, these numbers would only be surpassed by the General Strike of 1926 (271), although large strikes continued to occur on a regular basis during the first half of the 1920s. Several British politicians saw this industrial unrest in early 1919, alongside strikes in the army, as evidence of the Bolshevik threat to the nation (Butler 337). The sighting of servicemen at riots during the summer of 1919 in South Wales and Luton subsequently increased the perceived threat posed by the rioters, for this military presence signaled that the ill-disciplined crowds of rioters might be more organized and purposeful than anticipated and, more threatening still, that the forces of public order might be weakening (J. Lawrence 567). In hindsight, it is possible to see that such fears of revolution were

mostly unfounded at that time despite the proliferation of strikes in the United Kingdom. The British left's long-standing and vocal dislike for the armed forces made it unlikely that soldiers would join trade unionists in their demands for better working conditions (Butler 340), a combination of forces that could have drastically increased the possibility of revolution in Britain (Kendall 179).

Additionally, these fears never materialized because no significant political or cultural movement emerged in Britain to legitimize violence and proclaim it as the key to salvation (J. Lawrence 561). The formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in 1920 could have given voice to the more radical strikers, but several forces prevented that from happening. One of the party's first missions was to get involved in the struggle of the working classes and to amass a larger membership (Thorpe, "Membership" 779). After all, the CPGB's original membership of roughly four thousand members paled in comparison to the Labour Party which benefitted, through its affiliations, from the support of over eight million members (Eaden and Renton 8). The high levels of unemployment in Britain in the early 1920s severely undermined the political power of the workers and of the CPGB, since going on strike requires having a job and since one cannot build factory organizations when most workers are walking the streets (12). Despite the fact that one of the first official acts of the newly elected Labour Party in 1924 was to give formal recognition to the Bolshevik regime in Russia, the Labour administration consistently refused the CPGB's attempts to associate with them throughout the 1920s for the reason that they perceived such attempts as threatening the Labour Party's firm grip over the workers' vote (Shepherd and Laybourn 37). Adding to this picture the British communists' inability to distinguish themselves from trade

unionists during the General Strike of 1926, which could have allowed them to give a

revolutionary dimension to the strike (Eaden and Renton 30), the CPGB hit an all-time

low by the end of the 1920s as its 10,730 membership of 1926 was reduced to only 2,724

by 1930 (31).

1.7   Periodizing Interwar Red Fiction

Fiction touching on the Bolshevik Revolution appeared as early as January 1918 with

Bernard Shaw's one-act farcical play *Annajanska: The Grand Duchess* (retitled

Annajanska: The Bolshevik Empress upon publication the next year). However, anti-

Bolshevik novels only began appearing more steadily in 1919 and 1920. The novels

under consideration in this thesis are representative of this early wave of Red fiction in

Britain. I focus on the early aftermath of the war as opposed to the entire 1920s or the

mid century (as Matthew Taunton does in his recent book *Red Britain: The Russian*

Revolution in Mid-Century Culture (2019)) because I see a radical shift between this

body of fiction and the anti-Bolshevik fiction produced later in the decade or even later in

the century. The failure of the 1926 General Strike in Britain was largely interpreted by

British conservatives as the failure of communism to take hold in Britain. This change

significantly altered the nature of anti-Bolshevik fiction produced after the General Strike

since fiction published in the immediate aftermath of the war was animated by a distinct

anxiety about the rising momentum of radical activity in Britain and the possibility that it

would lead to a British revolution modelled on the Bolshevik Revolution. Following the

General Strike and throughout the 1930s, these fears were tempered by another, more

urgent cluster of fears and anxieties centring on the spread of fascism in Europe.

As Taunton's *Red Britain* demonstrates, some of the most iconic literary representations of the Bolshevik Revolution in Britain were published during the 1930s and 1940s. However, not differentiating the early aftermath of the war from the rest of the interwar period is to overlook the overwhelming influence of Joseph Stalin's policies on the perspective of mid-century British writers regarding the Bolshevik Revolution. Most works published during those decades discuss the Bolshevik Revolution as inevitably leading to Stalinist terror, a conclusion to which earlier writers did not have access. Adding to this the fact that most historical accounts of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Russian Civil War only appeared in England in the late 1920s (Beasley 400), British writers of the early interwar Red Scare largely formed their opinion of Bolshevism based on the press, which was itself much more concerned with the potential repercussions of the revolution for England than anything else. For these reasons, these early novels discussing Bolshevism were significantly less interested in Russia than in Britain. From their fiction, one can assume that these anti-Bolshevik writers generally did not care too much about what was happening in Russia except in terms of how it could affect the fate of their country.

Finally, as my project demonstrates, it is necessary to separate the early Red Scare British fiction from similar fiction published throughout the rest of the interwar period due to the tremendous influence of the Great War on early anti-Bolshevik cultural productions. The figure of the ex-serviceman permeates early anti-Bolshevik novels, as do the tropes of the shell-shocked soldier, as well as the German and the profiteer villains. The following chapters demonstrate a range of ways in which the anti-Bolshevik fiction of this period transformed recognizable tropes of anti-German fiction to fit the

needs of an interwar reality wherein the perceived enemy does not try to invade, but to corrupt Britain into self-destructing. As the Soviet Union claimed its place on the international scene, the conspiracy theories linking its inception to German financiers and revanchists became less and less relevant, except for its popular association with anti-Semitic conspiracies of world domination, which endured for several decades. With the decline of conspiracies describing the Bolshevik Revolution as a German scheme also declined the revolution's connection with the Great War. Once the Russian Civil War ended in 1921, the fears that this civil war in particular would occasion another world war also began to wane from British popular fiction.

Chapter 2: Excitement Essential: Villainy and Bolshevism in H. C. McNeile's *Bull-Dog Drummond* and *The Black Gang*

2.1   *Bull-Dog Drummond*, a Forgotten Bestseller

In his exploration of anti-communism in British juvenile fiction, Michael Paris affirms

that it was unnecessary for popular fiction writers in Britain "to define the Red Menace in

ideological terms, for authors, like 'Sapper,' the creator of the popular Bulldog

Drummond stories, had already established the view that all right-thinking Englishmen

knew instinctively that Bolshevism was wrong" (Paris, "Red Menace!" 122). Herman

Cyril McNeile, writing under the pen name "Sapper,"[18] was one of several popular fiction

writers in the early 1920s who incorporated the subject of Bolshevism into his stories.

Despite the exceptional popularity of his fiction throughout his writing career, however,

McNeile remains largely forgotten today except as an influence on Ian Fleming and

Alfred Hitchcock.[19] His war stories and Bulldog Drummond novels were highly popular

throughout the 1910s and 1920s, with his wartime stories selling 508,200 copies between

1916-26 and the first four of his Drummond novels selling altogether 876,810 copies by

1939 (Meyer 116, 122). McNeile first introduced the character of Bulldog Drummond in

---

[18] A sapper is a military engineer. McNeile's choice of Sapper as a pen name was a reference to the Royal Engineers, his battalion (Jaillant 137). In the United States, his books were published under his real name.

[19] John Pearson writes that it is at school "that Ian Fleming received his introduction to Sapper, the author of the Bulldog Drummond books and the creator of the character whom Fleming often acknowledged as the true spiritual forerunner of James Bond" (10). Ina Rae Hark attributes to Sapper a similar influence on the work of Hitchcock, claiming that "the contrast between amateur and professional had been a key element in the British spy thrillers of the teens and twenties, including those novels by 'Sapper' and John Buchan that inspired Hitchcock's films *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) and *The 39 Steps* (1935)" (Hark 8).

the September 1919 issue of *Hutchinson's Story Magazine* (Pringle and Ashley 30),

roughly one year prior to the character's first appearance in novel form. This novel, *Bull-*

Dog Drummond (1920),[20] went on to sell 396,302 copies during the two decades

following its publication, a sum well exceeding the average sales of middlebrow

bestsellers (Meyer 122). Despite the British censorship of anti-Bolshevik plays, as

discussed in the introduction, the first theatrical adaptation of *Bull-Dog Drummond* was

performed 428 times in England in 1921 and 1922, and was well received in New York

(Treadwell 23). Additionally, twenty-four Bulldog Drummond films were produced

between 1922 and 1969. Hitchcock's first spy film was originally planned to be a

Drummond sequel but became instead *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) due to

copyright issues. When McNeile died in 1937, his close friend Gerard Fairlie took over

his work and added seven novels to the ten McNeile had written. Despite Fairlie's efforts

to keep the Bulldog Drummond series alive, McNeile was quickly forgotten after his

death, with the names 'Sapper' and 'Bulldog Drummond' (when remembered at all) soon

becoming synonymous with British fascism and replaced on the shelves and in movie

theatres by Fleming's iconic Commander James Bond.

The few critics who showed interest in McNeile's fiction after the Second World

War often dismissed the writer and his work as fascist, propagandist, and second-rate

(Jaillant 138), to the point where in the late 1980s it had become cliché to discuss how

Sapper's "'fascist aesthetic' 'heroizes brutality'" (Denning qtd. in Jaillant 138-39).

Indeed, over the years, critics often described McNeile's work as a key example of far-

---

[20] McNeile dropped the hyphen in "Bull-Dog" after the first novel.

right conservatism in interwar British popular fiction and left it at that. It has only been since the 1990s that scholars have begun analyzing McNeile's fiction more closely and (in the last decade) questioning further the reasons of its short-lived popularity after the writer's death. Scholars such as Hans Bertens, Jessica Meyers, and Lise Jaillant have worked to complicate previous assessments of Bulldog Drummond as a caricature of British fascism and situate McNeile's work within the history of the thriller genre and the canon of Great War writings.

This chapter builds on the insight of these scholars' works to explore McNeile's engagement with the subjects of Bolshevism and labour unrest in the first two novels of the Bulldog Drummond series, *Bull-Dog Drummond* (1920) and *The Black Gang* (1922). These two novels oppose Hugh 'Bulldog' Drummond to the archcriminal Carl Peterson, a European mastermind whose objective is to spark a large-scale revolution in Britain for his own financial benefit. Delving into the national allegory embedded in the clash opposing Drummond and Peterson, I interpret the protagonist's quest for excitement as metafictionally reflexive of British popular fiction's need for new exciting villains following the defeat of Germany in the Great War, which led to the appearance of Bolshevik villains in the popular fiction produced in the early 1920s. This chapter argues that Drummond's search for excitement is intimately connected to his ability as a veteran to continue defending his country in the aftermath of the war, and argues further that the interplay between excitement and duty in the two novels aims to soothe two strands of postwar anxieties, a distinctly conservative anxiety regarding the possibility of a revolution in Britain and another pertaining to the existential boredom ex-servicemen felt upon reintegrating into society. I show how Drummond's characterization in *Bull-Dog*

Drummond and *The Black Gang* simultaneously highlighted the necessity for conservatives to work against the spread of Bolshevism in Britain and invited ex-servicemen to escape the sudden boredom of their lives by participating in anti-Bolshevik activity.

2.2   Generic Reconfigurations after the Great War

Bull-Dog Drummond was published in the midst of a postwar transitional period in British popular fiction. The genre most affected by the Great War was that of adventure fiction, which had reached a new height in popularity in the late nineteenth century. While adventure stories are arguably one of the oldest genres of fiction, the rise of mass literacy and the "dramatic expansions and reorganization" of the publishing industries in Great Britain from the 1880s onward (Belk 1) led to an unprecedented peak in the production and consumption of adventure stories. During this period, the adventure novel primarily served to disseminate imperialist propaganda to impressionable young boys. Patrick Dunae writes that "Every Christmas [in the Victorian-Edwardian period,] hundreds of juvenile adventure novels appeared, novels that romanticized and glorified the exploits of British empire builders" (105). These late-nineteenth-century adventure stories were part of the "romance revival" that replaced the domestic realist novel as "the narrative flagship of middle-class Britain" (Daly 4). Adventure fiction remains to this day widely produced and consumed (Zipes 1627-28), but in the wake of the Great War this fiction became a critical target for war memoirists and authors who had become disillusioned with the war. Adventure fiction fell under these memoirists' and authors' denunciation of "the sanitised, romantic, and glamorised images of war[,] … a powerful

and influential aspect of the 'old lie' that sold notions of patriotism, duty, and the nobility

of sacrifice to young men and which had persuaded them that war was romantic and

exciting" (Paris, *Over the Top* xii).[21] Many adventure stories of the interwar period

accounted for this drastic change in public opinion by adapting their heroes, villains, and

quests to befit the context of the period: heroes were not leaving for but returning from

the war; war profiteers, businessmen, and politicians became commonplace villains

(Grandy, "'Avarice'" 669); and imperialist quests across continents were replaced by

quests within the nation to uncover corruption and criminal schemes.

This indictment of the "old lie" also affected the conventions of the emerging

genre of spy fiction. The first wave of British spy fiction written by the likes of William

Le Queux, E. Phillips Oppenheim, and John Buchan loosely began in the late 1890s and

flourished in the Edwardian period. Their novels revealed unease regarding British

national security (Hepburn 11) and fear that the jealousy of other nations threatened the

integrity of the British Empire (Laurie-Fletcher 6). These concerns changed in the

aftermath of the war, mostly because the main threat to British hegemony and most

recurrent villain in these writers' fiction, Germany, had been defeated. The early 1920s

was a transitional period in the history of British spy fiction but is often overlooked in

specialized criticism due to the more easily discernible contrast between pre-1914 tales of

espionage and those of the late 1920s with regard to their portrayals of heroism and

realism (Neilson 476; Seed 122). Another reason for this omission is that several tales

involving spies in the early 1920s were marketed instead as thrillers, a genre whose

---

[21] The "old lie" in this citation refers to Wilfred Owen's war poem "Dulce et Decorum Est" (1920).

conventions overlap with spy narratives and which dominated the market during the interwar period (Bloom, *Bestsellers* 113).

McNeile's Bulldog Drummond series is one such example of a hybrid between invasion, spy, and adventure fiction that was sold in Britain as thrillers. In the United States, *Bull-Dog Drummond* was also marketed as a thriller but with the added subtitle "The Adventures of a Demobilized Officer who Found Peace Dull." This subtitle situated the novel within the tradition of adventure fiction while emphasizing the hero's veteran status as well as the distinctly postwar context in which he operates. The thriller's conventions are broad enough to incorporate the conventions of several other genres, but narrow in their "reliance upon, or subordination to, the single-minded drive to deliver a starkly intense literary effect" (Glover 135). Like other genres such as mystery and suspense novels, the thriller's conventions revolve around creating a mood—in this case, a gripping narrative pace—and eliciting a specific reader response. This aspect of the thriller has given the genre one of the worst reputations among popular fiction genres since its "lack of literary merit has always somehow been inseparable from the compulsiveness with which its narrative pleasures are greedily gobbled up" (135).

Considering this reputation, it is therefore unsurprising that the promotion of the Bulldog Drummond novels as thrillers eventually hurt McNeile's long-term status as a wartime writer. Additionally, the thriller's dependence on continuous social disruption (Meyer 124) led McNeile to set Drummond one novel after the other in a world on the brink of war or collapse, to the point where this world eventually became but an extension of the war (125), a sort of denial that the war ever ended. By the late 1920s, this celebration of war conflicted with the master narrative of the disillusioned soldier

and dissociated McNeile's highly popular war stories even further from the literature of the Great War. When scholars began creating and disseminating the canon of Great War writings (roughly from 1964 onward (Campbell 264)),[22] McNeile's war stories had been overshadowed by the reputation he acquired during the interwar period as a thriller writer with fascist tendencies (Jaillant 138), which led to his exclusion from the canon.[23]

2.3 Bull-Dog Drummond and the Thrill Imperative

McNeile begins his first Bulldog Drummond thriller with a prologue set in December 1918 in which he introduces the mysterious Comte de Guy, who is in fact Carl Peterson, an archcriminal of undisclosed origins posing as a Frenchman. The passage describes Peterson's meeting in Switzerland with two rich German business owners and one American "at the head of the great American cotton trust" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 8) whose funds he requires to finance his revolutionary project in England. In exchange for their contributions, he promises them a "taste of power such as few men have tasted before" (10). The joint forces of Americans and Germans could have surprised British readers so shortly after the Armistice, but Peterson does "not wish to touch on the war—or its result" (9). Rather, for him "it is neither France nor America with whom they [the Germans] desire another round. England is Germany's main enemy; she always has been,

---

[22] James Campbell identifies John H. Johnson's *English Poetry of the First World War* (1964) as "the inaugural text for this first wave" of Great War criticism (Campbell 265).

[23] McNeile began his writing career as a short-story writer during the war. His first stories were all about the war and were published first by the *Daily Mail* and then republished by Hodder & Stoughton as collections titled *Sergeant Michael Cassidy* (1915), *Men, Women and Guns* (1916), *The Lieutenant and Others* (1916), *No Man's Land* (1917), and *The Human Touch* (1918). Each of these collections sold very well during the war and remained in print throughout the interwar period (Meyer 116). These war stories were seen as "authentic" stories about the war due to McNeile's authority as a soldier-writer. See Meyer and Jaillant for more on McNeile's relevance to the canon of Great War writings and the material conditions that led to his exclusion.

she always will be" (10). This comment reaffirms that even after the war Germany

remains England's perennial opponent and feeds into the British fear that Germany was

plotting revenge in response to the harsh conditions of the Versailles Treaty (Paris, *Over*

the Top 152).

The setting of this opening passage juxtaposes an apparently insignificant event—

a meeting of business owners in Switzerland—with demonstrations of British military

supremacy in Germany. The meeting occurs "on the very day that a British Cavalry

Division marched into Cologne, with flags flying and bands playing as the conquerors of

a beaten nation" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 4). Already in this passage McNeile foregrounds a

common villain of early 1920s popular fiction discussed earlier: the evil businessman.

The two German businessmen are coded as evil first via their nationality, which is

revealed using the derogatory "Boche."[24] Their villainy, in turn, extends to the American

businessman who willingly associates with them. As the head of the American cotton

trust, the American businessman is further coded as the evil beneficiary of an economy

originally based in slave labour. More importantly, McNeile reveals these three

businessmen as villains by establishing them as international profiteers. Only a few pages

after McNeile glorifies the British Cavalry marching into Germany, Peterson appeals to

his potential business partners by saying, "the war was waged by idiots … it is time for

clever men to step in … I claim that we four men are sufficiently international to be able

---

[24] According to the OED entry for "Boche," this derogatory term is likely a derivation of the French word "caboche," which is itself a derivation of the English word "cabbage." In the French context, "caboche" is employed to designate the head of someone who is stubborn, ignorant, or unintelligent—i.e., a "cabbage head." During and after the Great War, the term "Boche," as well as its common alternate spellings "Bosch," "Bosche," and "Boshe," were commonly used in Britain and in France as a reference to Germans, especially German soldiers.

to disregard any stupid and petty feelings about this country and that country" (8). In light of the earlier patriotic passage describing the British Cavalry, Peterson's disparaging comments on soldiers and war appear as highly offensive and opposed to British patriotism and militarism. Peterson acknowledges this opposition by distinguishing between, on the one hand, "idiots" who wage war and have petty patriotic feelings about their country, and on the other, cold and calculating international businessmen who see in such conflicts opportunities to expand their personal wealth and power. The latter's opportunistic greed and disregard for nationalism, in addition to their considerable wealth in times of scarcity and food shortages, establish them as profiteers, some of the most predominant villains in 1920s British popular fiction (Grandy, "'Avarice'" 668). However, except for Peterson himself, these profiteers only loom in the background of *Bull-Dog Drummond*. Their need for a fourth financier to destroy Britain frames Drummond's adventure in this opening novel, but the businessmen themselves remain too distant from the main action to contribute to the novel's thrill. As such, McNeile's introduction of revanchist Germans this early in the story can be seen as a nod to the lingering Germanophobia and to the predominance of anti-profiteering sentiments in interwar Britain while keeping the truly thrilling villains for later disclosure in the novel.

Peterson's project represents the main threat to British hegemony in the first two novels. The fact that it is disclosed to the potential financiers merely days after the armistice reveals both an anxiety that Britain might be rejoicing in its victory too soon and a desire for the war to continue; the simultaneity of Peterson's meeting and the British celebrations in Germany suggests that any time spent celebrating the military victory allows Britain's enemies to regroup and prepare their next move against the

British. McNeile, like many other popular fiction writers of the time, used the Bolshevik

Revolution as a sensational backdrop for his hero's adventures. However, when Peterson

introduces his plan of revolution to the three businessmen, he never actually mentions

Russia or the Bolsheviks. These allusions are confirmed later in the novel with the

appearance of a Bolshevik character, although the contemporaneity of the Bolshevik

Revolution and the Russian Civil War at the time of publication would have led most

readers to understand the allusions from the outset. Peterson's scheme relies on

channeling the revolutionary potential of England towards self-destruction. His project

targets

> a force in England which, if it be harnessed and led properly, will result in
>
> millions coming to you [the businessmen] … It is present now in every nation—
>
> fettered, inarticulate, uncoordinated… It is partly the result of the war … Harness
>
> that force, gentlemen, co-ordinate it, and use it for your own ends… That is my
>
> proposal. (10)

Peterson's revolutionary project for England would be of no benefit to the working

class—only to himself and his potential financiers. In this way, the project reflects a

common understanding of political revolutions in interwar popular fiction as criminal

schemes detached from social justice. In such fiction, revolutions work *against* a

population and never *for* them. Here, revolution is presented as a means for international

profiteers to make a profit while getting revenge on Britain for winning the war. Only the

destructive and sensational aspects of the revolution are foregrounded, with no mention

of a post-destruction rebuilding phase. Neither Peterson nor his financiers dwell too long

on what England could become through revolution. All that matters is that the revolution

will simultaneously empower its leaders, dismantle British hegemony, and be lucrative

for a select few people.

For readers at the time, Peterson's project of revolution echoed the commonplace

anxiety that the fragility of the British Empire in the wake of the Great War posed an

opportunity for other nations to infiltrate England and foment social unrest. Examples of

such rhetoric were commonplace among British conspiracy circles. For instance, the

popular British conspiracist Nesta Helen Webster wrote a letter to the editor of the

Washington Post in 1920 arguing that

> the chaos now reigning in Ireland is simply the prelude to the same condition of
>
> affairs in this country. To cause revolution in England is the first and most
>
> essential point in the programme of the International revolutionaries. … England
>
> is the pivot of the world's civilization. If England goes the whole world goes with
>
> her. Marx was right in his surmise; he was right, too, in believing that English
>
> workingmen will never make this revolution. 'Foreigners must make it for them.'
>
> They are making it now. (262-63)

This letter was published as an appendix to *The Cause of World Unrest*, a book-length

commentary on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* edited and introduced by Howell

Arthur Gwynne, the editor of the *Morning Post* in London. Webster's xenophobic and

English exceptionalist message replicates that of numerous newspaper articles, books,

and essays published during those years in Britain. This anxiety was fuelled by the

existence of organizations like the British Socialist Party which, as seen in the previous

chapter, claimed to have Lenin's support and to be the voice of British Bolshevism

(Bullock 223). It was equally fuelled by the growing number of British leftists turning to

communism during those years. McNeile's novel therefore reframes this context as part

of a Machiavellian plan to destroy the nation. It was easier for McNeile, Webster, and

other like-minded endorsers of English exceptionalism to place the blame on immigrants

and non-British people for this apparent transformation of Britain's political landscape

than to confront the reality that large segments of the British population were unhappy

with the status quo as it existed prior to the war. By framing social unrest and

revolutionary projects as foreign invasions, McNeile circumvents any consideration of

the British working-class experience under capitalism. Blaming the Bolsheviks and the

perceived anarchy of their politics, McNeile and many of the writers examined in this

thesis were afraid that revolution would in turn give rise to anarchy and shatter British

laws and customs. As such, these writers saw revolution not so much as a transformation

of Britain but as the end of Britishness. Peterson's blatant transparency regarding the

criminal objectives and the anti-British motivations of his revolutionary project

underscores this xenophobic conservative anxiety.

Like most criminal masterminds in anti-communist popular fiction, Peterson

claims to have "no nationality. Or rather, shall I say, I have every nationality. Completely

cosmopolitan" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 8). Peterson's blurred national identity consolidates

his villainous characterization in opposition to the patriotic and firmly grounded British

characters. In other words, Peterson's cosmopolitanism makes him a representative of

foreigners in general. His undisclosed national allegiances hammer in the belief that a

British revolution could not be for the greater good of British workers and lower classes

for the simple reason that it is not organized by patriotic British citizens. And if it were

organized by British workers, it could only be the result of foreign ideologies corrupting

their minds since no patriotic Briton could possibly want to transform Britain on the

model of another nation. This catch-22, which is firmly anchored in the British popular

discourse of the time, introduces a variation on the common interplay between internal

and external threats in invasion and spy fiction; unlike in the fiction of prewar writers, the

internal threat no longer consists solely of foreign spies hiding in Britain but also of

British agitators embracing foreign ideas. By transforming the internal threat from a

physical one to an ideological one, McNeile's novel reflects a shift in conservatives'

conceptualization of defeat. Up until the end of the war, defeat in invasion fiction usually

occurred when another nation crushed the British army and claimed London as their own.

However, the kind of defeat which McNeile's novel proposes is different since Britons

themselves, misguided as they may be, precipitate the collapse of their own nation by

letting the false promises of foreign agitators get to their heads.

To fight this threat and erase this anxiety, McNeile introduces the freshly

demobilized Captain Hugh Drummond who, a few months after Peterson's meeting with

the businessmen, places an advertisement in the newspapers that sets the tone for the

entire Bulldog Drummond series. The advertisement describes a "Demobilised officer

[who,] … finding peace incredibly tedious, would welcome diversion. Legitimate, if

possible; but crime, if of a comparatively humorous description, no objection. Excitement

essential" (*Bull-Dog* 15). While Bertens is right in his claim that "Nationalistic pride and

paranoia provide the emotional twin structures for all the [Bulldog Drummond] novels"

(55), these two emotions only become specific to McNeile's fiction when understood as

secondary to Drummond's longing for excitement. After the defeat of Germany,

Drummond has become a man without a purpose. Unlike many ex-servicemen who

returned to England unable to work and faced conditions of extreme poverty, Drummond's finances are never in question. He has servants and does not need to work for sustenance—merely for excitement. Jaillant rightly reads Drummond's "thirst for excitement [as] an attempt to reenact the war" (138). For Drummond's life to have a meaning, he needs an enemy against whom to wage war. Drummond necessitates a new enemy for the same reason thrillers of foreign invasion needed one after the defeat of Germany: without an enemy, they are both meaningless—Drummond sits on his couch and the invasion thriller is left with no invader and no thrill.

Drummond's need for self-fulfillment in the wake of the Great War has become intimately connected with his ability to continue protecting Britain. In that context, McNeile frames excitement as a soldier's reward for serving his or her country in times of need. In his fiction, he foregrounds the dangers of war as generating a highly addictive adrenaline rush, one that ex-servicemen long for in the aftermath of the war. Most British soldiers were young men who had barely reached adulthood by the end of the Great War. They were men who had come of age constantly reminded of their own mortality. McNeile's portrayal of interwar Britain wagers that the end of the war deprived these young soldiers of the spark of excitement that gave meaning to their lives. At the outset of *Bull-Dog Drummond*, the eponymous character strives to reverse the causal relationship between national duty and excitement; rather than seek an opportunity to protect his nation and expect excitement as a reward, Drummond goes on a quest for excitement that leads him to protect the nation once more.

Drummond's first adventure pertains to saving the father of his future wife, Phyllis Benton, from Peterson and his henchmen. Drummond and Phyllis's first

encounter is interrupted by Peterson's second-in-command, Henry Lakington, a man whom, according to Phyllis, Drummond will probably need to kill in the near future. When questioned as to why Lakington deserves to die, Phyllis gives two reasons: "'First and foremost the brute wants to marry me,' … 'But it isn't that that matters,' she went on. 'I wouldn't marry him even to save my life.' She looked at Drummond quietly. 'Henry Lakington is the second most dangerous man in England'" (21). From this passage onward, Drummond and Phyllis develop feelings for each other, which further antagonizes Lakington as an Englishman who not only betrays his own nation by working with Peterson but also wants to "steal" Drummond's love interest. Throughout the novel (and every subsequent one), Phyllis's main role is to be kidnapped by villains and saved by Drummond. McNeile himself wrote in 1935 that Phyllis was "the most kidnapped wife in literature" (McNeile et al. 16). This love story between the chivalrous Drummond and his damsel perpetually in need of saving foregrounds Drummond's heroism in romantic terms. Phyllis is a neutral party forced into a conflict in which she wants no part, evoking Britain's wartime propaganda regarding "the rape of Belgium." This British propaganda campaign depicted Belgium as a woman brutalized by Germany and helped clarify to the British public why opposing Germany was necessary; explaining to British citizens that they needed to risk their lives fighting German soldiers because an Austrian Archduke and his wife were murdered was difficult, but justifying the need to go to war to save "poor Belgium" feminized as an innocent woman under threat of sexual violation by German occupation was morally unambiguous and significantly easier. Drummond's relentless desire to save Phyllis from villains fulfills a similar function as this propaganda campaign and serves as a constant reminder of Drummond's heroism.

No matter how violent and brutal Drummond can be, the precarity of Phyllis's situation always justifies the morality of his actions.

As most of his contemporaries, McNeile believed that "Those who still look on war as a romance will be sadly disillusioned when they get out there" (C.N. 65). Yet, McNeile's conception of war as unromantic "does not result in a condemnation of war" (Jaillant 151). "On the contrary," claims Jaillant, for McNeile "combat is seen as the tuition of manhood. Only bravery and sacrifice can bring meaning to life" (151). Unlike Lakington who could not serve in the war due to "a bad heart" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 20), which metaphorically suggests that his heart is vile and corrupt, Drummond has experienced war. He has already demonstrated his bravery and risked his life for his nation; he has paid the tuition of manhood. As such, his veteran status codes his quest for excitement, legal or criminal, as unwaveringly patriotic. Drummond's war experience affirms his commitment to the nation and confirms to the reader that excitement in this context is not evidence of the man's puerile nature but rather of his eagerness to employ the skill set he developed during the war (Grandy, *Heroes and Happy Endings* 90). For McNeile, the skills an ex-serviceman like Drummond obtained by protecting Britain against foreign threats can but lead the protagonist to do what he was trained to do best— protect the nation. British ex-servicemen never received the hero's welcome Prime Minister David Lloyd George had promised them, but in McNeile's fiction they are celebrated as heroes whose skills were still needed to protect Britain. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of Drummond's effort to protect the nation and his romantic quest to save Phyllis transposes the German threat to Belgium during the Great War to the home soil;

Phyllis evokes the "rape of Belgium" but truly represents a feminized Britain who needs to be saved by heroic ex-servicemen like Drummond.

Drummond is a super-vigilante grounded in British conservative values of the early 1920s: he is a sportsman and a gentleman; a chivalrous saviour figure; and a highly distinguished military captain. An accomplished heavyweight boxer and practitioner of ju-jitsu, Drummond is fearless and merciless, and demonstrates a propensity for courageous action bordering on stupidity. He has an eye for detail at times worthy of Sherlock Holmes. He is an undisputed leader and bows only to the King of England. Even his flaws evoke Britishness and can be reclaimed as virtues. Drummond's distinctive "cheerful type of ugliness," which earned him the epithet "Bulldog," "inspires immediate confidence in its owner" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 25). This epithet alludes to John Bull (the national personification of the United Kingdom), and establishes Drummond as the UK's guard dog, or defender. Drummond's blunt and impulsive approach to solving problems opposes the subtle intelligence of his opponents, which is coded as effeminate, effete, hyper-sophisticated, and consequently suspect. In the Bulldog Drummond series, the villains plan everything carefully, only to be defeated by Drummond's "shrewd common sense" (McNeile, *Black Gang* 102). These many elements of Drummond's characterization give an allegorical dimension to his clash with Peterson. Drummond stands as the best Britain has to offer and Peterson, "the most dangerous man in England—the IT of ITS" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 27), stands as the apex of foreign machination and villainy. Both are meant to be seen as supermen but become in the process embodiments of upper-class narcissism and delusions of grandeur. Their coding as hero and villain rests primarily on their respective positioning with regard to British

national security. As an ex-serviceman and the protector of Britain Drummond can only be a hero, while Peterson's challenge to British hegemony makes him unredeemable as a villain.

McNeile's recurrent allusions to boxing, poker, and hunting imagery foreground the playful and masculine aspect of Drummond's dangerous adventures. These allusions "[seek] to make acceptable, even to hold up for admiration, … Drummond's love of killing, his thirst for absolute power" (Bertens 62). The stakes are never too high for McNeile to describe the action as a boxing match, a poker game, or a hunting party (62). The metaphorical description of war as a game or hunt falls within a long-standing English tradition that can be traced all the way back to the reign of Richard I (1189-1199) (Wilkinson 68). The flourishing of sporting daily newspapers in late-nineteenth-century England significantly expanded the range of such metaphors in both directions—war as a game but also games as warfare. The nineteenth-century clash between the British Empire and the Russian Empire was thus nicknamed the "Great Game," and the Boer War was described in several newspapers in terms of duelling and fishing imageries (78). While participation in specific sporting or hunting activities was usually class specific, the popularity of their respective imageries when applied to war spanned across class divisions (76). McNeile's use of these metaphors in his novels therefore contributes to his effort to prolong the war through Drummond's adventures by establishing the clash between Drummond and Peterson as nothing less than a war. At the same time, the metaphors domesticate the rivalry as a simple, playful sporting or hunting event opposing frenemies. By taking these two angles into consideration (Drummond's adventures as war and as play), McNeile's metaphors of war are an attempt to reconfigure depictions of

violence in the novel by celebrating them as instances of thrilling entertainment rather than passages of disturbing sensationalism.

While he stands in many ways as the conservative Briton's ideal of a hero, Drummond's own display of patriotism can be interpreted as rather weak. Jaillant argues that Drummond's patriotism "is a pretense. … He does not present his combat as a way to save England, but as the 'life of sport' he desires. As a conservative upper-class man, he has a natural disgust of Russian revolutionaries … But that does not make him a nationalistic warrior, ready to put his country's interests before his own" (155). Jaillant's observation is pointed but does not account for the effect of Drummond's veteran persona on the coding of his actions. As an exceptional ex-serviceman hardened by his experience of the Great War, Drummond has already proved the extent of his patriotism and of his willingness to sacrifice his well-being for the greater good of Britain. As such, Drummond's service during the war legitimizes all of his actions as ultimately good and commendable, even when they involve the most gratuitous violence or when they seem individualistic.

Even Drummond's vigilantism, which recalls the anarchism of his Bolshevik opponents later in the novel via their shared disregard for the rule of law, is fully redeemed as a part of his military persona. Drummond's experience as a decorated officer in the war gives him the credentials to be trusted with Britain's security even if this means employing anarchist measures to fight anarchists. The case of vigilante ex-servicemen opposing working-class activists was recurrent in interwar Britain. This was due to the fact that a higher proportion of middle-class Britons died during the war than their working-class counterparts; since the working class's labour at home was

usually deemed essential to the war effort, they were less likely to be sent to the front line (McKibbin 36). There were even cases when the government itself "formed militarized strike-breaking organizations" (36) that employed middle-class ex-servicemen to act as vigilantes and break working-class strikes using violence when necessary. As such, Drummond's disgust for Russian revolutionaries is a legacy of his upbringing as a conservative upper-class man, but the novel (and the real-life government-endorsed vigilantism to which it alludes) suggests that it is Drummond's military experience at the front that truly opposes him to radicalized workers.

Furthermore, as in the case of Drummond's successor James Bond, some of the most thrilling aspects of McNeile's character and missions pertain to the fact that he operates at the margins of the law for the good of Britain. While Drummond is not licensed to kill, his extralegal mission has the tacit sponsorship of none other than the Director of Scotland Yard. At the end of *The Black Gang*, the Director of Scotland Yard affirms that "The means they [Drummond and his gang] adopted were undoubtedly illegal—but the results were excellent. Whenever a man appeared preaching Bolshevism, after a few days he simply disappeared. In short, a reign of terror was established amongst the terrorists" (McNeile, *Black Gang* 279). As such, Drummond's ambiguous positioning with regard to the law grants him a higher degree of personal freedom than any other citizen, which he deserves because of his unambiguous morality as Phyllis's chivalrous saviour and of his implicit unwavering patriotism as a decorated ex-serviceman. Drummond's tendency to bypass due process often results in thrilling passages since, in these novels, bringing swift justice to villains increases the pace of the novels themselves.

2.4   Thrilling Anti-Bolshevism

The clash between Drummond and Peterson unfolds over four novels, after which other

villains replace the latter, including Peterson's wife Irma. However, only the first two

novels draw on the subject of Bolshevism. Afterward, McNeile tones down the political

content of his novels and shifts the direction of his stories towards British corruption and

criminality rather than foreign invaders and Bolsheviks. These first two novels are

therefore isolated from the following novels, and their plots unfold in a chiasmic

structure. In *Bull-Dog Drummond*, the story revolves around Peterson and the thrilling

surprise at the end pertains to Drummond's discovery of a plan to Bolshevize England.

The Black Gang unfolds the same plot in the opposite direction: the story revolves around

British communist organizations and the surprise at the end pertains to Drummond's

discovery that Peterson was behind the scenes all along. Similarly, Drummond begins his

quest alone in the first novel and becomes the leader of a gang, whereas in the second

novel he begins as the chief of the "Black Gang" and ends up dismantling the group. This

structural reversal underscores a shift in McNeile's opinion of Bolsheviks and of their

potential as thrilling villains. From the first novel to the second, McNeile's portrayal of

the Bolsheviks transitions from a simple remedy to boredom towards becoming a genuine

threat to capitalism.

    During these two novels, Drummond depends upon an almost unlimited circle of

friends and acquaintances to help him in his adventures. Bertens describes this circle as

an "old-boy network" (60) that hinges on Drummond's military connections. Even after

the war, Drummond can count on the undying loyalty and devotion of every soldier who

once operated under his command (59). Despite the extensive range of this network, one

group of men in particular helps him in almost every one of his adventures and takes the name of the Black Gang in this second novel. The Black Gang is composed exclusively of ex-servicemen who, like Drummond, seek a new purpose for their lives in the aftermath of the war: Algernon Longworth, Peter Darrell, Ted Jerningham, Toby Sinclair, and Jerry Seymour. They find this purpose by serving under Drummond in his adventures. McNeile's recourse to a group of ex-servicemen to fight crime in London is a direct legacy of the romance revival of the 1880s that emerged alongside an "ethos of professionalism and expertise" (Daly 8). Nicholas Daly explains that the character repertoire of the romance reflects this growing interest in the figure of the professional; such fiction "not infrequently pits a team of men with particular skills—sometimes actual professionals—against some outside threat" and thus "embodies the fantasies of this emerging professional group, whose power is based on their access to and control of certain forms of knowledge" (8). After the war, as McNeile's Black Gang illustrates, the soldier unit could constitute one such team of professionals ideally equipped to defend the nation via their experience of warfare and knowledge of military tactics.

In the Bulldog Drummond series, the military hierarchy underlying these soldiers' relationship with their captain is unshakeable. The five ex-servicemen never challenge Drummond's authority and arguably worship him. Their veteran personae, as in the case of Drummond, code them as unwaveringly patriotic and knowledgeable of what is best for the nation. Their presence reaffirms the exceptionality of ex-servicemen in McNeile's Britain. Drummond may be the best man Britain has to offer, but the success of his missions often depends on the help of his gang. This relationship between the leader and his gang shows that underneath Drummond's apparent individualism lies a strong sense

of community. Their shared experience of the war unites them as a tightly knit community of ex-servicemen that undergoes a serious transformation over the course of the two novels from loosely selected acquaintances participating in an exciting mission to a gang of vigilantes whose sole mission is to dismantle the threat of communism in England. McNeile portrays military collectivism as the patriotic counterpart to foreign-inspired collectivisms like Bolshevik communism. For him, the conservative foundations of the military guarantee the protection of the status quo against revolutionary forms of collectivism. Just as Drummond's skills acquired during the war can only be employed for the benefit of his country, the ex-servicemen's collective bond is created through their shared, proven willingness to put their individual lives at risk for the good of their nation. As a result, in McNeile's fiction the organization of ex-servicemen under the leadership of a decorated officer like Drummond can only be for the good of Britain regardless of their methods.

In *Bull-Dog Drummond*, the revolutionary project and the Bolshevik character are merely entertaining substitutes employed to supplement the declining relevance of German villains after the Great War; they are attempts to bring the characteristic thrill of the thriller genre to *Bull-Dog Drummond* while refusing to acknowledge real-life Bolsheviks as a genuine threat to British hegemony. Unlike other common villains like profiteers, businessmen, and politicians, Bolshevik characters in early 1920s British fiction were often portrayed as hotheaded rather than calculating, as fanatics rather than self-serving cowards. This made them well suited for thrillers since their common characterization gave them a sense of unpredictability. In *Bull-Dog Drummond*, only one Russian character, named Ivolsky, makes an appearance. Drummond first meets him after

getting caught by Peterson and Lakington. The "unkempt" man "explode[s] unexpectedly" and says, "I know not what this young man [Drummond] has done: I care less. In Russia such trifles matter not. He has the appearance of a bourgeois, therefore he must die. Did we not kill thousands—aye, tens of thousands of his kidney [sic], before we obtained the great freedom? Are we not going to do the same in this accursed country?" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 98). Drummond immediately identifies the man as "what is vulgarly known as a Bolshevist" (98), to which the man, "turn[ing] his sunken eyes, glowing with the burning fires of fanaticism … on Drummond" (98), responds:

> 'I am one of those who are fighting for the freedom of the world,' … 'for the right
> to live of the proletariat. The workers were the bottom dogs in Russia till they
> killed the rulers. Now—they rule, and the money they earn goes into their own
> pockets, not those of incompetent snobs.' He flung out his arms. He seemed to
> shrivel up suddenly, as if exhausted with the violence of his passion. Only his
> eyes still gleamed with the smouldering madness of his soul. (98)

This first introduction of Bolshevism in the Bulldog Drummond series brings together many of the stereotypes usually found in anti-communist fiction: the Bolshevik is described as mad and unkempt, and an imagery of fire is employed to describe his physical appearance. In such novels, Russian revolutionaries often have a fiery passion or fire in their eyes, and often sport red hair and a red beard. In this case, the Bolshevik character's violent passion is meant to oppose Drummond's calm, playful, and gentlemanly tone, when ironically few men display such cruel and merciless violence as Drummond in the first two novels. When Drummond throws Lakington in a bath of acid at the end of *Bull-Dog Drummond*, or when he orders his gang to flog two Jewish men to

within an inch of their lives at the beginning of *The Black Gang*, Drummond displays a

penchant for violence that also borders on fanaticism. McNeile's description of the

Bolshevik character's violence rather confirms the premise that excesses of violence are

justified when perpetrated by an English ex-serviceman and abhorrent when committed

by a foreigner.

Soon after, the Bolshevik randomly interrupts once more the conversation

between Peterson and Drummond:

> 'Have you ever seen a woman skinned alive?' he [the Bolshevik] howled wildly,
>
> thrusting his face forward at Hugh. 'Have you ever seen men killed with the
>
> knotted rope; burned almost to death and then set free, charred and mutilated
>
> wrecks? But what does it matter provided only freedom comes, as it has in Russia.
>
> To-morrow it will be England: in a week the world… Even if we have to wade
>
> through rivers of blood up to our throats, nevertheless it will come. And in the end
>
> we shall have a new earth.' (99)

Drummond's response to such a sensational picture is to "li[ght] a cigarette and [lean]

back in his chair" (99), and express calmly and humorously that "it seems a most alluring

programme" and that he "shall have much pleasure in recommending [him] as manager

of a babies' crèche" (99). The Bolshevik's insistent attempt to frighten Drummond

initially fails, but certainly paints a gruesome image of Bolshevism to the reader. No

longer simply mad, the Bolshevik is now described as an animal "howl[ing] wildly" who

cares more about violence than about the objectives of Peterson's revolution. Such

descriptions are attempts to heighten the Bolshevik's threatening features to increase the

pace of the thriller.

Drummond's more serious response to the Bolshevik's violent plan for England comes after a few minutes of reflection. No longer amused by Ivolsky's words, he responds:

> 'You fool,' … 'You poor damned boob! You—and your new earth! In Petrograd to-day bread is two pounds four shillings a pound; tea, fifteen pounds a pound. Do you call that freedom? Do you suggest that we should wade to *that*, through rivers of blood?' He gave a contemptuous laugh. 'I don't know which distresses me most, your maggoty brain or your insanitary appearance.' (99, italics in original)

Drummond's palpable agitation in this passage further contributes to the thrill of the novel by showing the limits of what falls within Drummond's conception of an exciting adventure. The thrill of the novel requires Drummond to lose control of the situation momentarily in order to shake the absolute certainty of his eventual success. At that moment in the novel, Drummond reaches a threshold after which he no longer derives pleasure and excitement from his mission. McNeile reveals in this passage the dynamics regulating the interplay between Drummond's quest for excitement and the thriller's need for new villains. The ultimate thrill of the novel requires Drummond to go too far in his search for excitement; the reader's thrill depends on McNeile making the success of Drummond's mission seem uncertain and on Drummond losing control of the situation. In *Bull-Dog Drummond*, the villain who succeeds in shaking Drummond's hardened persona is neither Peterson nor Lakington, nor the three evil businessmen from the prologue; the Bolshevik Ivolsky alone succeeds in piercing Drummond's seemingly impenetrable armour.

Despite Ivolsky's potential as a villain, Drummond kills him soon after in the most unceremonious way—he forces Ivolsky into a mechanical trap designed by Lakington, which breaks his neck. His body is then dissolved in a bath of acid by Lakington himself while Drummond watches from a hiding spot. This turn of events shows that, after his brief but heated conversation with Drummond, Ivolsky has fulfilled his role of raising the stakes of Drummond's clash with Peterson. If Drummond fails, Ivolsky's gruesome portrayal of Bolshevik Russia awaits England in the near future. McNeile capitalizes on Ivolsky's death to showcase Lakington's inventions, the trapped staircase and the acid bath, while simultaneously foreshadowing Lakington's own fate at the end of the novel; in another chiasmic structure, Ivolsky dies instantly in the staircase and is then disposed of in the acid bath, whereas Lakington is forced into the acid bath and then runs to his death in the staircase. The moral of the story is that death awaits foreigners planning to destroy England, but an unimaginably more painful death awaits any English coward who, like Lakington, would dare betray Britain. Rather than Ivolsky's murder or Peterson's capture, Lakington's death is the culminating thrill of *Bull-Dog Drummond*. Ivolsky therefore functions as a second-rate villain whose villainy is as intense as it is brief. In other words, McNeile takes advantage of the untapped potential of Bolsheviks as thrilling villains in this opening novel while subsuming their villainy to that of more recognizable villains embodied in the figures of Peterson, Lakington, and the financiers.

In *The Black Gang*, McNeile shifts this dynamic by introducing two Bolsheviks who, unlike Ivolsky, are more central to the plot. The first one, named Zaboleff, appears in the prologue of the novel as a special guest in a meeting of anarchists occurring in an

old shuttered house near Barking Creek in East London. He is a middleman between an organization of London-based anarchists and the "Chief"—Peterson. His urgent message to the attendees is to inform them that London will no longer be considered safe for their activities due to the disappearance of several members of their community over the preceding weeks. He informs them of the existence of the Black Gang, a "body of men who are not within the law themselves. A body of men who are absolutely unscrupulous and utterly ruthless, a body of men who appear to know our secret plans as well as we do ourselves" (*Black Gang* 15). All that is known about this body of men is that "they are masked in black, and cloaked in long black cloaks … they are all armed" and "the leader of the gang … [is] a man of the most gigantic physical strength; a giant powerful as two ordinary strong men" (16). This is all Zaboleff has time to disclose before the leader of the Black Gang—Drummond—reveals himself from the shadows of the doorway.

Zaboleff's conversation with the group of English anarchists shows the growth of radical organizations in England during the year that separates Peterson's defeat at the end of *Bull-Dog Drummond* and the prologue of *The Black Gang*. Zaboleff is the highest-ranked revolutionary to visit London since Peterson. He sets the stage for Peterson's return by introducing a problem beyond the solving skills of homegrown anarchists or even higher-ranked Bolsheviks like himself. The eradication of this Black Gang will necessitate nothing less that the participation of the Chief himself. Unlike Ivolsky whose role in *Bull-Dog Drummond* was to showcase the danger that Peterson and Lakington posed to Britain and Drummond (i.e., Peterson's revolutionary project and Lakington's killing devices), Zaboleff embodies a reversal of the roles wherein he showcases the danger that Drummond poses to anarchists in Britain. In the sequel, genuine

revolutionaries are no longer accessories to a criminal scheme but at the centre of the intrigue.

At the outset of *The Black Gang*, the reader is introduced to a key difference in Drummond's character. Whereas in the first novel the ex-serviceman would let his thirst for adventure and excitement dictate the pace of his involvement in foiling Peterson's plans, in the opening passage of the sequel he appears as a cold and calculating vigilante whose task has taken over the playful nature of his previous iteration in the novel series. His work since Ivolsky's threats has become a serious mission and only a desire to protect Britain via extreme violence remains. Drummond discloses his purpose as the leader of the Black Gang as that of

> a collector of specimens. Some I keep; some I let go … I think we [the Black Gang and the police] are working towards the same end. And do you know what that end is, Zaboleff? … It is the utter, final overthrow of you and all that you stand for. To achieve that object we shall show no mercy … But you still hold the ace, Zaboleff … and when we catch him [the Chief] you will cease to be the cream of my collection … now that you are caught—he will come himself. (*Black Gang* 20-21)

Unlike in the previous novel wherein Drummond's victories were often the result of villains underestimating his capability, at the outset of *The Black Gang* Drummond stands in all his terrifying glory. In *Bull-Dog Drummond*, boredom had led Drummond on a quest for excitement, but in *The Black Gang* Drummond's new duty leaves him no time to be bored. His trials against Peterson have shaped him into a more serious kind of protecting figure for the UK, one whose success in his missions requires him to strike

fear in his enemies and enact his own version of justice. If, in the opening novel, Drummond was trying to re-enact the war, in this sequel he is right in the middle of the battlefield. Peterson's attempt to spark a revolution in Britain gave a new purpose to Drummond's life after the war, one that outlived the initial defeat of the archcriminal. In the sequel, Drummond's life is filled with one purpose: stopping the spread of Bolshevism in Britain. There is no longer a need for him to seek excitement since the danger and violence of his mission offer all the thrill he could possibly desire.

The second Bolshevik introduced in *The Black Gang* is named Yulowski, a direct allusion to Yakov Yurovsky, the Bolshevik who acted as the chief executioner of the Russian Imperial family in 1918. Yulowski first appears in a conversation with a British socialist. The latter informs the "red-headed man" (*Black Gang* 233) that their "Socialist Sunday Schools … were started twenty-five years ago," wherein

> Blasphemy, of course—or rather what the Bourgeois call blasphemy—is instilled at once. … we drive into them each week that the so-called God is merely a weapon of the Capitalist class to keep them quiet … Get at the children has always been my motto—for they are the next generation. They can be moulded like plastic clay … We preach class hatred—and nothing but class hatred. (233-34)

This speech reveals McNeile's suspicion of the educational system as a means of promoting socialism, a common suspicion among conservatives that perdures to this day. Yulowski's response to the methods of British socialists seeks to highlight for the reader the difference between homegrown socialists and Russian Bolsheviks. Yulowski responds:

I admit its value, my friend … and in your country I suppose you must go slowly. I fear my inclinations lead towards something more rapid and—er—drastic. Sooner or later the Bourgeois must be exterminated all the world over. On that we agreed. Why not make it sooner as we did in Russia? The best treatment for any of the Capitalist class is a bayonet in the stomach and a rifle butt on the head. (234)

The Russian's smile then becomes "more pronounced and cruel" and he proceeds to boast of having "battered out the brains of two members of the Arch Tyrant's family" (234-35)—the brains of two daughters of Tsar Nicholas II. Yulowski is a caricature of Bolsheviks closer to Ivolsky than Zaboleff in his conception. Unlike Zaboleff, whose role is to present Drummond as a legitimate threat to anarchism in Britain, Yulowski's role resembles Ivolsky's in that he raises the stakes of a potential defeat for Drummond and substantiates the anti-Bolshevik conservative anxieties that justify Drummond's extralegal mission to prevent revolutionary plans.

This time, however, the Bolshevik character poses a genuine threat to the lives of Drummond and his wife. Both of them are captured by Peterson's men, who then debate with their Chief how to deal with them. Count Zadowa, a hunchback of unconfirmed origins who is the director of anarchy in London, advocates for caution, while Yulowski is in favour of "killing [Drummond] violently, and at once" (253). Peterson reconciles the two arguments by saying that Yulowski is to kill Drummond and his wife by hitting them on the head with the butt of a rifle, after which their bodies are to be placed in a car and dumped in the river as a forensic countermeasure. That way, Yulowski gets to murder them, Zadowa secures the continuation of his activities by making the murder look like

an accident for the police, and Peterson is forever rid of his rival. Even Drummond, who

never appears to fear death in his adventures, seems scared of dying at the Russian's

hands. He "passed his tongue over his lips, and despite himself his voice shook a little.

'Am I to understand,' he said after a moment, 'that you propose to let that man butcher us

here—in this house—with a rifle?'" (259). Drummond has been captured numerous times

throughout the two novels and threatened with all kinds of torture devices. Yet, his voice

never shakes in these situations. He is always confident in his ability to escape and to

make his opponents pay for what they wanted to do to him. However, this time is

different. If the Bolshevik kills them both in this house, Drummond fails as a protector in

every way: he fails to protect his wife *and* his nation.

Of course, McNeile would have never earned his reputation as a "writer of

improbable fiction" (Jaillant 138) if Drummond had actually died in this scenario. After

Peterson formally sentences both Drummond and his wife to death, Drummond tries to

object in vain: "[he] tried to speak and failed. His tongue was clinging to the roof of his

mouth: everything in the room was dancing before his eyes. Dimly he saw the red-headed

brute Yulowski swinging his rifle to test it: dimly he saw Phyllis sitting bolt up-right,

with a calm, scornful expression on her face, while two men held her by the arms so that

she would not move" (McNeile, *Black Gang* 262). It is at the moment when Drummond

is about to faint and has lost all hope that the Black Gang—"Hundreds of them" (263)—

intervene and save the day. Seizing the opportunity, and "with the howl of an enraged

beast, Drummond hurl[s] himself on the Russian—blind mad with fury" (263). Two

seconds later, the Black Gang enter the room and pause "in sheer horror. Pinned to the

wall with his own bayonet which stuck out six inches beyond his back, was a red-headed,

red-bearded man gibbering horribly in a strange language" (263). By acting in this way, Drummond takes on the imagery of the wolf usually ascribed to the Bolsheviks in the novels. His "howl of an enraged beast" recalls Ivolsky's wild howl (*Bull-Dog* 99) and Yulowski's "wolfish grin" (*Black Gang* 262), which shows that the cruelty of his action is on par with those of the two Russians, but that his is justified because its objective is to save the damsel in distress rather than to kill her. By no coincidence, saving the damsel requires the brutal murder of the executioner of the Russian Imperial family, whose very existence symbolizes the Bolshevik threat to royalty all over Europe.

In *The Black Gang*, the threat of Bolshevism has fully replaced that posed by the Germans. There are no more German revanchist profiteers or German henchmen within the ranks of the villains. Even though Peterson remains at the head of the criminal organization, the Bolshevik characters are no longer second-rate villains. With Zaboleff setting up the action and Yulowski acting as the climactic threat to Drummond's and Phyllis's lives, McNeile's second novel portrays Bolsheviks as convincing and thrilling villains for conservative popular fiction. As the most widely read anti-communist novels in those years, *Bull-Dog Drummond* and *The Black Gang* set the tone for nearly seventy years of anti-communism in British popular fiction. Bolshevik characters, later described more generally as soviet characters, eventually outshone all prior iterations of Russian villains in British popular fiction due to their role in the more widely known second wave of Red fiction produced during the Cold War. McNeile therefore lays down in his first two novels the foundations for many popular fiction writers who, like him, thought that Bolshevik villains could be thrilling.

2.5   The Quest for Excitement and the Promise of Anti-Bolshevism

As this chapter demonstrated, Drummond's thirst for excitement and commitment to duty reflect deeply embedded conservative anxieties after the end of the Great War. Excitement was a promise of the war. The propagandist efforts to romanticize military heroism through conservative adventure fiction for younger readers in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century had, by 1914, constructed an image of warfare as an escape from boredom. Paris claims that "In this context, it is something of a cliché to refer to Rupert Brooke and his enthusiasm for an adventure he believed would rescue him from the dullness of everyday life. But the simple truth is that he really did speak for most of his generation" (*Warrior Nation* 111). Decades of popular fiction in Britain promoted war as exciting and heroic for various imperial and military motives. War had become for some people nothing less than an "antidote to the tediousness of daily life" (Kustermans and Ringmar 1777). Even though war rarely fulfilled the romantic expectations of young soldiers, "the anticipation of war [nevertheless] harbour[ed] the dream of the restoration of meaningful agency" (1777). Drummond is an ex-serviceman who not only anticipates but recreates war during a period of peace. His life only has meaning when pitted against an enemy; and he understands that with some effort—and a well-placed newspaper ad—it is always possible to find a new enemy against whom to wage war.

Although disillusionment was widespread among returning soldiers soon after the war, most ex-servicemen in those years were less concerned with criticizing the war than with finding their place in this new reality. In 1918, an entire segment of the population found themselves thrown back in society after four years of warfare. Many of them, like

Drummond, felt deprived of an outlet to escape the dullness of their lives. They had lost their purpose in life at an age barely old enough to be considered adults. In 1929, Charles Edmonds published his account of the postwar years, and claimed that "When it came to be 'after the war' you hardly knew what to make of it. Friends were parted. Life seemed large and empty. You had to earn a living. It was not easy to begin again, to take thought for the morrow when you had not expected to be alive for it. … Disillusion came in with peace, not with war; peace at first was the futile state" (207-8). He affirms that unlike in war wherein soldiers had a clear sense of direction and were forced to live in the moment, "peace seemed to lead nowhere: it was anticlimax" (208). For many returning soldiers, peace was "boredom understood as an existential condition: as a fundamental disengagement of the soul" (Svendsen qtd. in Kustermans and Ringmar 1776).

Those for whom participation in the war was not a burden but a vocation had a particularly difficult time reintegrating into society. For them, the postwar return to normalcy left a gaping hole waiting to be filled. Like Drummond and his social circle in *Bull-Dog Drummond* who "can be seen as outcasts who find it difficult to adjust to postwar society" (Jaillant 153), these ex-servicemen no longer had the opportunity to employ their expert military skills for their nation. In their physical prime and ready for action, they were stuck at home searching for work instead of living their own adventures. Drummond's quest for excitement acknowledges the reality of these ex-servicemen. The fact that Drummond finds excitement in preventing the spread of revolutionary ideas in London reflects two distinct strands of conservative anxiety after the war: the apparent spread of Bolshevism in Britain and the existential boredom caused by ex-servicemen's sudden return to inactivity. McNeile's first two novels can be read as

inviting ex-servicemen seeking to escape the boredom of their lives to pursue the same objective—fight communism at home and abroad. In this way, McNeile's characterization of Drummond "demonstrates ways in which the discontented can find a new place in society, and satisfies the demand for a soldier to remain a hero" (MacCallum-Stewart qtd. in Jaillant 154). Drummond's initial mission in the first two novels therefore presents the spread of Bolshevism in Britain as both a source of and cure for anxiety, provoking fear of revolution yet offering ex-servicemen an escape from the existential boredom of peace.

The transformation of Drummond's quest between *Bull-Dog Drummond* and *The Black Gang* from the pursuit of excitement to organized counter-revolutionary vigilantism suggests an evolution in McNeile's perception of the threat posed by British revolutionaries between 1920 and 1922. Whereas McNeile initially portrays counter-revolutionary activity as casual entertainment, downplaying in the process the reach of revolutionaries' threat to the nation, in *The Black Gang* he portrays anti-revolutionary vigilantism as an imperative. The sudden shift in tone between the two novels denotes an intensification of conservative anxieties regarding the possibility of a Bolshevik-inspired revolution happening in Britain. Drummond's Black Gang thus appears as an example to follow: an unofficial organization of ex-servicemen finding a new meaning for their lives by waging war against foreign revolutionaries. Having the Black Gang save Drummond and his wife at the end of the second novel shows that even a super-soldier like Bulldog Drummond will be powerless to stop the rise of revolutionary activity in Britain without the participation of other like-minded ex-servicemen.

Unsurprisingly, ex-servicemen continue to appear in the works covered in the following chapters. The main characters of Emerson C. Hambrook's, Edward Shanks's, and J. D. Beresford's novels are all ex-servicemen (even if Hambrook's protagonist only becomes one somewhat late in the novel). McNeile's originality lies in identifying these ex-servicemen as a dormant force to counter radical organizations. Peterson's assessment of the working class as "a force … present now in every nation—fettered, inarticulate, uncoordinated … [and] partly the result of the war" (*Bull-Dog* 10) equally applies to ex-servicemen in McNeile's fiction. McNeile's fiction urges the reader to harness this force and protect the nation at all costs, even if it means engaging in extralegal activities. My next chapter attends to Hambrook's *The Red To-morrow*, another work of fiction imbued with conservative anxieties regarding the future of Britain. However, instead of ex-servicemen, Hambrook targets the working class and strives to convert workers to conservative politics.

Chapter 3: The Life and Times of an Infantilized Radical: Emerson C. Hambrook's *The Red To-morrow* and the Bildungsroman of a Revolutionary

3.1 Converting the Working Classes to Conservatism

In the previous chapter, I showed how McNeile responded to the ambient conservative anxiety of a Bolshevik future in Britain by imagining a fictional protector for the United Kingdom. With the end of the Great War, British popular fiction genres like the thriller and tales of invasion were in dire need of a new enemy. Anti-German stories had lost some momentum with the defeat of Germany in 1918, and British writers needed new exciting villains for their fiction. The Bolsheviks would often fulfill that role after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. I interpreted the first two novels of McNeile's Bulldog Drummond series as inviting a parallel reading of the eponymous agent's longing for excitement and British popular fiction's need for new villains after 1918. A detective of immense physical strength and unwavering convictions, Hugh "Bulldog" Drummond thwarts Carl Peterson's revolutionary plans for Britain twice in the first two novels of the series by creating a team of vigilantes consisting of men who served under him during the war. As I argued, Drummond represents the interwar British conservative's version of a super-vigilante, one bestowed with the responsibility of protecting Britain from cosmopolitan villains such as Peterson and his Bolshevik henchmen. Above all, McNeile establishes Drummond as a role model for conservative Britons, as the guiding figure to follow in order to save Britain from foreign revolutionary threats. The overwhelming violence of his actions is a threat to would-be revolutionaries, but more importantly it is a

manifestation of McNeile's fear of what the future has in store for his country if no one is willing to take extreme measures against the spread of revolutionary ideas in Britain.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to an author who employed a very different strategy to portray the necessity of acting against the spread of revolutionary ideologies in Britain. Most conservative writers of the period had little patience for British socialist activists. They understood radicals as naïve and dangerous, as people betraying their own nation by embracing foreign ideologies. In fiction, when described at all, British radicals were depicted as "intimidated rabbit[s]" (McNeile, *Bull-Dog* 95) and corrupted cowards. Emerson C. Hambrook's *The Red To-morrow* is unusual in that it is a conservative novel written from the perspective of a working-class Scot lured into socialist activities. It represents a substantial effort to convince British socialists that Britain's survival depends on their political conversion to conservatism. This chapter delves briefly into the mystery of Hambrook's identity and then explores the characterization of Hambrook's protagonist in regard to his participation in the organization of a revolution across the United Kingdom. The analysis shows that the identity struggle of the protagonist serves as a means of infantilizing radical politics through the promotion of militarism and conservatism, while revealing patriotic Britons' feeling of powerlessness in the face of an impending revolution unless socialists see the error of their ways. I argue that Hambrook's *The Red To-morrow* reclaims this powerlessness as a call for action for the working class to get behind conservatism and for conservatives to secure the future of Britain.

3.2   Hambrook: Undercover Spy?

Based on the information available on Hambrook, there is some evidence that the name

may in fact be a pseudonym. The best clue available as to who might be the real author of

The Red To-morrow is an anonymously penciled note in a first-edition copy of the novel

that could be found in the L. W. Currey Catalogues in 2018, which attributes the

authorship of the novel to "Sir George Mackgill" ("Hambrook, Emerson C. THE RED

TO-MORROW").[25] While there seems to be no record of anyone of that name in Britain

during that period (Hughes 53), there is mention of a man named "Sir George McGill" in

John Baker White's diaries. During White's time as a secret agent in Britain prior to his

political career, he worked under a man named George McGill who died in 1926 and was

at the head of a private investigation organization. Mike Hughes affirms that "It is

possible to say with a considerable confidence that there was no 'Sir George McGill' in

the early 1920s because none of the standard and comprehensive directories list one"

(56).[26] Fortunately, Hughes's research led to the discovery of a man whose description

fits not only the man described by White, but also the probable author of *The Red

To-morrow*. This man was not Sir George "McGill" but "Makgill" of the Makgill clan in

Scotland. Sir George Makgill was born in 1868 and died in October 1926 at the age of

fifty-seven, which corresponds to the information White provides in his diaries on

"McGill" (Hughes 56). Makgill was the eldest son of Sir John Makgill, tenth baronet of

---

[25] Here I must thank John Clute, editor of the *Science Fiction Encyclopedia* website (Clute, "Hambrook, Emerson C."), for pointing me in the direction of the L. W. Currey Catalogues and bringing to my attention the particular spelling of "Mackgill" in the penciled note. The full note reads: "This book was written by Sir George Mackgill." The book can no longer be found in the catalogues and appears to have been sold.

[26] Hughes's claim is confined to British records. There was at least one other George McGill in the 1920s, an American politician who served as Senator for Kansas from 1930 to 1939. The George McGill discussed in White's record died in 1926 and is therefore a different person.

the Makgill clan, and Margaret Isabella Haldane, the half-sister of Lord Haldane (56). As

per his obituary in *The Times*, Sir George Makgill "was educated privately, and became

known as a writer of novels, articles, and stories, chiefly of Colonial life" ("Sir George

Makgill: Obituary"). The obituary also mentions Makgill's involvement in the Anti-

German Union, a xenophobic wartime organization. More importantly, Makgill's

obituary mentions nothing of the last ten years of his life, or of the reason for his

untimely death at the age of fifty-seven.

It is in the scholarship devoted to the British Secret Service that one can trace the

last years of Makgill's life. Gill Bennett offers a short biography of Sir George Makgill

and provides many missing links regarding the man's activities and politics. She claims

that Makgill is a key representative of the imperialist repudiation of the Bolsheviks' rise

to power in late 1917 (71). Makgill was a firm believer in the economic power of a

British Empire removed from international trade (Makgill, "Imperial Reconstruction"

318), and thus the Bolsheviks' attempts to stir social unrest in British India and other

colonies was for him a threat to "the very core of British Imperial capitalism and

imperilled the postwar return to profitability" (Bennett 71). Makgill responded to this

threat by creating a private industrial intelligence organization to spy on people suspected

of encouraging industrial unrest. At the top of his priority list were the activities of

communists, anarchists, and any other organization deemed subversive (71). He

investigated groups as diverse as the British Spiritualist Lyceum Union and the Workers

of Zion, and even public figures such as Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and Aleister

Crowley (72). Since Makgill spent the last ten years of his life undercover, it makes sense

that *The Times* would not have had access to any information on his latest activities. All

that is known about Makgill after the Great War comes from his own publications and the diaries of other prominent spies who worked with or for him, such as John Baker White, Maxwell Knight, and Desmond Morton.

The alternate spellings of his name, Sir George Mackgill and Sir George McGill, both appeared after Makgill began his investigation organization and were written by third parties who may not have known Makgill's real identity. For instance, White (who spelled "McGill") was introduced to "Sir George McGill" by an agent named "H" who served as his contact with the organization (Porter 165). His interview with "McGill" is one of the only times White actually met the man in person (Hughes 53). It is likely that Makgill would not have cared (or risked) to reveal his identity to a new agent. Moreover, in his correspondence with Morton and their shared network of informants, Makgill similarly employed an alias, the name "Fyfe" (Bennett 65). Considering the secrecy around Makgill's identity in the years following the war and until his death, such differences in the spelling of his name could well be due to the writers (White and the author of the anonymous note in a copy of *The Red To-morrow*) having never actually seen the name "Makgill" written down before. Since the name "Makgill" belongs to a single Scottish clan, "McGill" and "Mackgill" could be attempts at spelling an uncommon name.

The likelihood that Emerson C. Hambrook is a pseudonym for Sir George Makgill is considerable, even if impossible to prove within the scope of this thesis. Makgill was an experienced novelist deeply involved in anti-German and anti-Bolshevik organizations. His last confirmed novel, *Felons* (1915), was published at the approximate time when Makgill began his secret activities. According to the date under Hambrook's

short introduction to *The Red To-morrow*, the novel was completed by October 1919,

which would have given him enough time after finishing *Felons* to write a new novel.

Makgill also has a history of using pseudonyms. As listed on WorldCat, Makgill

published *Cross Trails* (1898) under the name of Victor Waite and *Outside and Overseas*

(1903) under Mungo Ballas. Furthermore, the protagonist of *The Red To-morrow*

corresponds almost perfectly to a blend between Makgill's own life and that of Scottish

agitator John Maclean. Like Makgill, the novel's protagonist is a Scottish man of

aristocratic descent who is denied access to the privileges of his social rank.[27] It is

through the bitter resentment arising from this perceived injustice that the protagonist

becomes involved in socialist activities in London. Afterward, the protagonist's life

seems loosely modelled on that of Maclean, who spent a year in prison for spreading anti-

conscription propaganda and had become by the end of 1915 "the idol of the Left Wing

of the BSP [British Socialist Party] and the editor of its monthly periodical, *Vanguard*"

(Cowden 12).

---

[27] The Makgill family is in the Peerage of Scotland. In the seventeenth century, Sir James Makgill became the first Baronet of Makgill, the Lord Makgill of Cousland, and Viscount of Oxfuird, all three titles to be passed down to his "heirs male whatsoever" (a Scottish rule of inheritance that allows the passing of a title to somebody not directly in the line of descent from the first peer) ("Creation and Inheritance of the Peerage"). Due to a mistake that happened regarding the inheritance of these titles in the eighteenth century (officially recognized as such by the Committee for Privileges of the House of Lords in 1977), George Makgill only inherited the title of Baronet (which is not a member of the peerage) despite being the legitimate heir of the Lord of Cousland and Viscount of Oxfuird titles. Like his father James Makgill who died in 1906, George Makgill continued his claim for the Lordship and Viscountcy until his death in 1926. His son Sir John Makgill, twelfth Baronet, finally inherited both titles in 1977, which were since passed down twice.

3.3 *The Red To-morrow*, a Conservative Proletarian Novel

The Red To-morrow was published by the London Proletarian Press, a small-scale press whose only two known publications are A. B. Elsbury's *Proletarian Parodies: Songs of Rebellion to Every-day Tunes for the Works, Streets, and Home* (1910) and Hambrook's *The Red To-morrow* in 1920.[28] *The Red To-morrow* sits oddly with the press's implied specialization in proletarian literature as it satirizes proletarian concerns. Bill V. Mullen claims that "As a genre, proletarian literature was formalized in the wake of the Russian Revolution of 1917 as the cultural arm of the Bolshevik Revolution, amid intense debate about the nature and function of workers' culture under socialism" (Mullen). The fact that the novel was published by a proletarian press, in addition to the word "Red" in the title which by 1920 had become synonymous with Bolshevism, could indicate an anti-capitalist novel concerned with working-class issues. However, even though *The Red To-morrow* can be interpreted as a novel indeed written for working-class readers, its message is clearly written in defence of capitalism and against revolutionary agendas. This novel is thus a good reminder that British conservatism in the interwar period cannot be reduced to a set of politics solely concerned with property owners and with the upper and middle classes (Williamson 3). In the British Conservative Party's political ascension during the interwar period, "about half of the Conservative vote in parliamentary elections came from the labouring population" (4). After the war, British conservatives devoted a considerable amount of energy to educating the working class on matters of politics and ideology (McCrillis 145-46). These efforts were responses to the rise of the

---

[28] Given the uncertainty around the author's true identity, in my subsequent references to the author I will use the pseudonym Hambrook.

Labour Party and to the fear that its socialist propaganda would attract inexperienced voters who were just given the right to vote with the Representation of the Peoples Act in 1918 (147). *The Red To-morrow* therefore provides a case study of how fiction could be deployed to disseminate conservative politics to the British working class during the late-1910s rise in labour militancy and strike action in Britain.

Like McNeile, Hambrook presents anti-capitalism as a destructive ideology corroborated by people who either fail to see the larger picture and the many ways capitalism helps the working class, or by fanatics whose only desires in life are to destroy, kill, and overthrow. The protagonist Alec Wilson's stance on the subject of capitalism wavers during his adventures, but by the end of the novel his disillusionment with radical politics is complete and he stands fully committed to the defence of capitalism. In the last few chapters of the novel, when a revolution unfolds in the United Kingdom, London is destroyed and the protagonist must fight for the status quo he once abhorred. The transformation of London into a full-fledged dystopia provides the cautionary message characteristic of the genre: a revolution inspired and led by foreigners can but unleash hell in England.

The novel's narrative strategy makes for effective propaganda. The story satirizes various socialist and labour organizations and counterbalances them with conservative ideas—the "proper" ideas. The novel follows the preparations for a large-scale revolution and describes in graphic detail how its success leads to bloodshed and horror. *The Red To-morrow* promotes the necessity of re-establishing the status quo—Britain as it was prior to the war—and preventing further destruction of the State by revolutionaries. Hambrook's novel unabashedly copies the outline of Russia's revolutionary year of 1917

with a storyline tracing the build-up towards a relatively peaceful and smooth first

revolution modelled on the February Revolution, soon followed by another that is

explicitly violent and based on the Bolshevik Revolution. The events of the novel are an

exact copy of the world scene in the 1910s but set thirty years in the future. The action

unfolds in the 1940s, at the end of another war opposing Britain and Germany, and

discusses the event of a second Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and Poland, which is

soon followed by a Red Revolution in London. Hambrook stages a coalition of "the

various brigades of the left wing of the revolutionary forces—Socialist, Communist,

Syndicalist, and Anarchist" (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 178)—only to dismiss their

alliance as self-destructive later in the novel. Indeed, England's provisional government

is overthrown in a highly destructive revolution that results from the fundamental

ideological differences opposing the several brigades' definition of a proper political

system.

3.4   Reaching Political Maturity to Save the Nation

The strength of this novel lies in the character development of the protagonist. The novel

is a bildungsroman whose structure evokes those written in the wake of the French

Revolution in the late eighteenth century. In such bildungsromane "the emergence of the

hero's character increasingly mirrored the emergence—socially, economically,

politically, ideationally—of the world around him" (Jeffers 2). The emergence of

Wilson's character is inseparable from the development of the world around him. From

his upbringing as a kid and an adolescent to his involvement in the preparations for a

revolution, Wilson's coming of age follows the gradual deterioration of Britain through

war and revolution. By aligning Wilson's rise to maturity with the deterioration of the British State, Hambrook gives an apocalyptic dimension to the usual trials of childhood. Each time Wilson makes a mistake or fails in his journey towards maturity—i.e., each time he acts in favour of the revolutionary cause—Britain is one step closer to utter destruction. Hambrook establishes Wilson's identity struggle as having a direct impact on the future of Britain, and it is therefore through Wilson's actions and relationships that one can uncover the precise moral of *The Red To-morrow*.

The opening chapters of the novel establish a working-class Scottish setting alluding to "Red Clydeside," a period of revolutionary activism in Glasgow that began in the 1910s and lasted until the 1930s. At the centre of this movement was the Marxist schoolteacher John Maclean, an influential Scottish activist whom Lenin appointed as the Soviet Consul of Scotland in 1918 (Bell 95). Maclean was an ardent supporter of a Bolshevik revolution in Scotland and believed that more intense labour unrest at home would force the British State to focus on domestic issues rather than participate in the Russian Civil War (98-99). In addition to the fact that he is also a Scottish activist, Wilson shares a few biographical elements with Maclean, including participating in anti-war activism and being sent to jail, but also diverges significantly in other ways. One of the main differences between Wilson and Maclean pertains to their respective stances on the necessity of education. Maclean's first vocation was to educate others in the teachings of Marxism, whereas Wilson is profoundly against receiving an education. Hambrook's protagonist also embraces Marxism and works to share its lessons with the world, but he barely understands them. By reframing Maclean's commitment to Marxism through Wilson, Hambrook's novel challenges the credibility of Marxism. Supporters could

elevate Maclean's commitment to Marxism as a demonstration that he knew better than his political opponents, but Hambrook ensures an opposite interpretation by presenting Wilson's commitment to Marxism as a demonstration that he does not know enough. The influence of Maclean's biography on Wilson's characterization thus explicitly foregrounds the didactic objectives of *The Red To-morrow* as an attempt to undermine the appeal of Marxism for working-class readers.

Hambrook's initial portrayal of Wilson satirizes his working-class identity, reveals his propensity to oppose the law, and foregrounds his motivations to overthrow capitalism as a personal grievance over ungranted aristocratic rights. Hambrook introduces Wilson as an adolescent delivering a speech while standing on a crate "at the corner where one of the wynds of the 'Auld Toon' of Edinburgh ran down into the Cowgate … before a low-browed shop that displayed sparse and unclean vegetables" (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 2). Full of conviction, Wilson declaims, "'We hae oor rights!' … brandishing a thin fist while the ragged sleeve flapped its frayed ends about the freckled forearm. 'We a' hae the natural rights of men—so we're aye telled. But whaus are thae rights? Tell me that, my friends" (1). The protagonist appears as a young and energetic speaker devoted to the rights and needs of the working class, despite being "but a boy of thirteen, with a thin freckled face and carrot-red hair that had seen neither brush nor comb" (1). This opening passage presents the reader with a sympathetic but heavily satirized working-class adolescent; young Wilson repeats slogans he barely understands with conviction, portraying the rhetoric of working-class emancipation as infantile and lacking intellectual depth. Hambrook emphasizes the protagonist's charisma through the boy's desire to improve the workers' living conditions, but nevertheless

frames Wilson within a conceptualization of the working class as good-hearted albeit intellectually weak.

Hambrook also presents Wilson as naturally opposed to the law. The opening passage ends with Wilson engaging in an argument with a woman that results in a broken window and a round of questioning with a police officer. While the man whose window was broken makes his charge against Wilson, the woman in question accuses the boy of "using language calculated to provoke a breach of peace" (7). Her issue with Wilson's language is then replicated in the narrator's description of the boy's mother, who "spoke with what the Cowgate called an 'English accent'—a sure sign of 'giving herself airs'" (7). Both the boy's and the mother's uses of language are interpreted as attempts to deceive others, the boy through "calculated" language and the mother through her English accent. Ironically, both Wilson and his mother are victims of deception; it is later revealed that the life conditions afflicting Wilson's mother are consequences of being deceived by a rich man, and the rest of the novel underscores the many times Wilson is deceived by others. Following the incident, the boy is then dragged off by the police officer, "shiver[ing] in his rags as he was marched off, the prisoner of the Law he hated, helpless, but still at heart an unconquered rebel against the powers that be" (8). Young Wilson may be a prisoner of the law and of his social condition, but his rebellious attitude promises the reader that he will overcome his predicament and find freedom through rebellion.

Twelve years later, in the second chapter, Wilson is still fond of sharing his political ideas publicly and has somewhat suppressed his Scottish accent, which only surfaces in stressful moments. More than anything, Hambrook capitalizes on Wilson's

rebellious attitude as a child to introduce his older self as a "young man with curly dark-red hair, and features that somehow suggested a refinement that was belied by the rough northern tongue," a man with "a powerful voice, a rude, natural gift of oratory, and that intangible personal force whereby one man can hold the attention of a thousand almost regardless of the meaning of his words" (9-10). What transpires in this description is a contrast between Wilson's natural predisposition to leadership and his upbringing in a poor, single-parent family. His working-class heritage, characterized in his "rough northern tongue," clashes with the refinement of his physical features and natural gifts.

This second chapter elaborates Wilson's politics as firmly opposed to military conscription. Standing under a red banner with the words "No Conscription!" (10), Wilson gives a speech arguing for working-class solidarity against participation in the war with Germany, which in the novel occurs in the 1940s but is directly transposable to the context of the Great War in Britain. The red colour of this banner, in conjunction with Wilson's own red hair, present "Red" politics—socialism, communism, Bolshevism, etc.—in direct opposition to militarism. Wilson's speech rehearses common socialist-pacifist arguments of the 1910s, as it describes the war against Germany as a capitalist war, criticizes politicians' appeal to patriotism as a manipulative incentive to enlist, and emphasizes class rather than nationalism as the true distinguishing factor between one person and another. Hambrook deploys the militarist message of his novel in the crowd's response to Wilson's arguments. Members of the crowd begin taking apart Wilson's credibility as a speaker by getting him to disclose on stage that he has never been to the battlefield, discrediting his dismissal of war atrocities committed by Germans. The situation escalates until an ex-serviceman jumps on stage and punches Wilson in the face,

after which other ex-servicemen from the crowd surge on the young man, beat him, and tear off his clothes.

Hambrook frames this passage in a way that underscores Wilson's courage in the face of adversity—he never concedes to his opponents and fights back until the police break the crowd—at the same time as he glorifies the ex-servicemen's violent response to Wilson's words. The ex-serviceman who puts Wilson in his place is a "tall, lean, bronzed man, with the badge of the treefern [sic] on his collar … [with] one arm … in a sling" (13).[29] This ex-serviceman aggressively attempts to make Wilson admit his words are lies. When Wilson doubles up on his claims, showing his courage, "A brown fist shot out, landed full in the speaker's mouth, and sent him headlong off the lorry into the seething crowd below" (14). Afterward, "The soldier, one-armed as he was, picked [the chairman] up by the neck[,] flung him squealing into the crowd, and turning, began to address the mob in fiery words" (14). The soldier, in this passage, is given several characteristics seen in McNeile's veteran heroes; he is strong, impulsive, and violent. From a militarist perspective, someone acquiring these qualities via military service is certain to make sound decisions about national security. In this passage, the ex-serviceman punches Wilson in the face after the latter undermined the villainy of the Germans, claimed nationalism does not exist, and suggested British war atrocities were on par with any other participant in the current world war; in a militarist novel like *The Red To-morrow*, the only good response to such a situation is a violent one.

---

[29] The badge of the tree fern was often given to British colonial officers for their service in New Zealand.

Hambrook establishes Wilson's anti-militarist political convictions as a bitter, selfish vendetta against society for his not having had access to the aristocratic privileges to which he is entitled. The narrator informs the reader that

> [Wilson's] father had omitted the marriage ceremony—and his mother had been dismissed from her situation as maid to a lady and had become an outcast. His father had done him, as well as his mother, a grievous wrong. "If I had my rights," she had been wont to say when the whisky bit, "I'd be riding in my carriage, and you, Alec, my laddie, would be heir to broad lands and grand houses. Your father's people are great folk, and your grandfather was a soldier—a well-known general. You'd be a rich man if we had our rights." That was the source of his grievance against the world, and the fount of all his bitterness against the social system under which he was excluded from the position he considered his right of birth. (18)

Being the illegitimate child of a rich aristocrat and a lady's maid, Wilson was born and raised in poverty despite carrying the genes of "great folk" and of a well-known general, from whom one can deduce he obtained his innate ability to draw the attention of crowds with words. His mother's grievance over ungranted rights evokes young Wilson's opening speech on natural rights and liberty while demonstrating how Wilson's passionate contempt for social injustice is a product of his upbringing. In order to ensure the appeal of his radical character for potential conservative readers, Hambrook frames Wilson's motivation for participating in revolutionary activity as a form of chivalric vengeance rather than jealousy and avarice like other radical activists in similar fiction. This narrative frame circumvents the argument of systemic economic disparity by

presenting Wilson's story as a family romance in which Wilson is denied his class inheritance and directs his resentment at society.

The young man's desire to transform Britain stems from a desire to avenge his mother for his biological father's decision to abandon them. The chivalric dimension of this revenge story reframes Wilson's political convictions in terms more relatable for conservatives at the time. While chivalry is most commonly understood as a medieval code of conduct, there were many "chivalric revivals" in British history (Berberich, *English Gentleman* 15) that cemented chivalry as part of a proper British gentleman's conduct. During the Great War, several propaganda campaigns drew on chivalry to convince young men to participate in the war, whether through cartoons of Britannia, the female personification of Britain, asking men to take arms in her defence, or even through posters asking young wives to question the masculinity of their husbands if they were still at home when their nation needed them the most (Frantzen 13-14). By working to avenge his mother, young Wilson proves his masculinity even though his young age and disdain for education confirm to the reader that his approach to vengeance is most likely impulsive and ill-conceived.

As in most bildungsromane, the protagonist's conflicted identity drives the narrative forward. The danger threatening society at large is embedded in the protagonist's efforts to overcome his identity crisis. The two sides of Wilson's self, his belonging to both the lower and upper classes, are emblematic of his wavering between a desire to revolutionize London into a fairer and better place to inhabit, and a deeply embedded fear of the possible harm that a revolution could cause. Hambrook dramatizes this negotiation as an inner struggle fuelled by the protagonist's belonging to two

politically opposed social classes and by the cunning influence of characters speaking in favour of either side. Wilson's confused identity thwarts his desire for a better world because it prevents him from delineating what does and does not belong in his vision of utopia. Wilson's hope of improving society cannot be realized until he reconciles his ancestry with his upbringing, until his identity becomes more stable and easier to align with a single objective. Hambrook presents the stability of Wilson's identity or lack thereof as a gauge of maturity. It is only at the end of the novel when Wilson's identity stabilizes that his journey towards maturity reaches completion.

Hambrook grants Wilson little agency over his own coming of age. Each major change in the protagonist's convictions is the result of external influences. As an adolescent, Wilson trained as a mechanic and would have been happy to continue his life peacefully, "But, in Glasgow, where he was employed for some years, he found himself thrown by his views into a set among his fellow workers who were imbued with revolutionary ideas. He had joined several societies which spread the doctrines of Karl Marx, and was fired with their plans to overthrow the social fabric" (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 16). Wilson's radicalization reaffirms the popular belief that the working class was being internally corrupted by revolutionaries; Wilson would have been happy as a worker had he not fallen in these circles, in the same way the British Secret Service had difficulty acknowledging the possibility that the radicalization of the working class was a result of discontent over living conditions rather than foreign corruption (Porter 121-22). The opening chapters introduce a protagonist whose life is essentially predetermined by forces larger than himself, first by his ancestry, then by his social circles. These forces leave Wilson powerless to control his destiny.

Wilson's political ideas are never really his in *The Red To-morrow*. He is convinced as an adolescent to follow the teachings of Marxism and much later becomes a mouthpiece himself for the propaganda efforts of the League of Revolution. In both cases, Wilson does not fully understand the projects he endorses, which can be seen as a result of his refusal to receive an education as a child. Wilson becomes a strong propagandist because he genuinely believes in what he promotes. Only a few words eloquently phrased are enough to radically alter his politics, from being an anti-war activist to willingly participating in the war, from being in favour of a utopian revolution, to being against it, and finally to being in favour of it once more. No matter where he stands on the political spectrum, Wilson's opinions are never his; he is a pawn in the hands of people more intelligent or cunning than he. His constant wavering between Marxist and conservative politics after one conversation or another shows that he is incapable of deciding whose vision of a better world corresponds to the future he wants for himself and his peers. The entire novel can be read as Wilson's unsuccessful quest to achieve intellectual independence. His multiple encounters with his enemy Charles Mostyn, as well as his conversations with his romantic interest Amber Adam and an old socialist named Richard Thrandsby, precipitate his conversion first from a pacifist to a militarist, and then from a socialist to a conservative.

Charles Mostyn is the root of all that is evil in *The Red To-morrow* and his chief characteristic as a villain lies, like Peterson in the previous chapter, in his ambiguous nationality. He is a foreign spy hiding in plain sight amid London's left-wing societies, as well as the main instigator of the Red revolution in the United Kingdom. The novel's first mention of Mostyn characterizes him as the embodiment of the conspiracy theories

ascribing the Bolshevik Revolution to Jewish financiers. Mostyn is first described as "a short, swarthy man, with strongly-marked Semitic features. He spoke with a faint guttural accent" (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 20). In addition to exhibiting stereotypical Jewish physical traits, Mostyn introduces himself to Wilson as an agent for a Russian fur company who speaks German fluently. Indeed, after raising a glass "to the Red To-morrow" with Wilson and lending him one of his many costumes (23), Mostyn brings Wilson to a restaurant

> where everybody spoke a foreign tongue. Mostyn himself talked fluently to the proprietor and waiters in the same language. When one of them addressed Mostyn as "Herr Mosenstein," Wilson concluded that the place was German and that Mostyn was not his companion's real name. But this did not prejudice Wilson against his new friend. On the contrary, priding himself on his broad international sympathies and pacifist principles, he was delighted to find himself among his country's enemies. (24-25)

Mostyn's ambiguous nationality solidifies the novel's connection between Jews, Russians, and Germans as enemies of Britain. Mostyn is neither Russian nor German, and is both at the same time—and certainly *not* British. As Hambrook writes in his short introduction, "I have aimed at depicting, not individuals, but types" (Hambrook, "Introduction"). Mostyn is, for Hambrook, a Jew-villain grounded in national ambiguity, a figure whose lack of clear national anchors enhances the threat he poses for Britain.

One aspect of Mostyn's national ambiguity pertains to his characterization as a gifted spy whose ability to infiltrate and invade is of hyperbolic proportions while responding to no clear allegiance. Like most spies in fiction, he bridges the personal and

the national in a single character, except that Mostyn employs his superhuman skills of infiltration for no nation's benefit; he represents at once no nation in particular and every nation opposing Britain, and betrays everyone and every nation in his pursuit of Britain's destruction. In this way, Mostyn recalls once more McNeile's Peterson, whose cosmopolitanism and anti-British convictions are at the centre of his villainous characterization. However, Mostyn is not given the same degree of opposition as Peterson. Wilson is neither a super-vigilante nor the UK's defender and as such, Mostyn wins every encounter with him. This distinctive aspect of Hambrook's hero-villain dynamic removes the necessity to glamourize the villain as a charismatic opponent; whereas McNeile needs Peterson to appear worthy of Drummond's unparalleled military skills and shrewd common sense, Hambrook only needs the reader to genuinely hate Mostyn. This being said, Hambrook also gives an allegorical dimension to the clash between his protagonist and antagonist. Mostyn generates the momentum towards the revolution by stepping on Wilson at every turn, which allegorically manifests Hambrook's belief that British revolutionaries like Wilson are misguided souls who are being fooled into sacrificing their best interest to elevate and empower foreigners like Mostyn. Like in McNeile's *Bull-Dog Drummond* with Drummond and Peterson, it is through the polarity of the conflict opposing Wilson and Mostyn that Hambrook traces the gradual increase in tension towards the inevitable revolution, making the two characters' personal relationship inextricable from the national conflict at the heart of the novel.

Mostyn's depiction as a Jew-villain further complements this ambiguity. The descriptions of the Jewish community as a "state-within-a-state" or "nation-within-a-

nation" were common anti-Semitic slogans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries that underscored the dual-national anchors of Jewish people (Levy 680). These

slogans were often paired with the anti-Semitic understanding of Jewish nationalism as

an international force working in solidarity and independently from the nations hosting

them (Green 535). For anti-Semites like Hambrook, then, Jews represented a threat to

national security since they were an inter-European group whose objectives were the

topic of wild conjectures such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *England under*

the Heel of the Jew discussed in the introduction. Hambrook's novel taps into the same

"paranoid imperative" (Landes 25) as the *Protocols* as it shifts the axiom "rule or be

ruled" to "exterminate or be exterminated" (25). Mostyn does not care about ruling; he

only cares about destroying and exterminating the British.

Mostyn's only weaknesses as a spy are bodily identity markers that cannot be fully

erased. Wilson never fails to identify Mostyn through his stereotypical Jewish physical

traits. Allan Hepburn affirms that "According to the laws of spy narratives, the subject

has no control over physical manifestations of identity. The spy's body registers national

identities in physical characteristics, voice, and gestures" (12). While Mostyn can

disguise himself as Karl Mosenstein, Captain Morton, or Joseph Moll, the two features

which never change in his depiction are those manifested through his body (Jewish

features and missing teeth) and his moral corruption. Hambrook's anti-Semitic

characterization of Mostyn culminates with the villain's death at the end of the novel.

Mostyn is the only Jewish character in the novel and his death symbolizes the

extermination of the Jews—a disturbingly prescient image considering the setting of the

novel in the fictional future of the 1940s. It is only after Mostyn's death that British

patriots can regroup and begin planning their future attempt to reclaim England at the end of the novel.

Mostyn's main functions in *The Red To-morrow* are to remind Wilson of the corruption afflicting his own social circles and to undermine British society from within. Wilson's passionate approach to politics and revolutionary ideas are displayed many times in the novel upon his discovery that Mostyn has once again infiltrated London in a new way. Wilson's fiery temper makes him explode on Mostyn every time, publicly accusing him of all the crimes committed up until then in the story. Without fail, Mostyn's well-established position in important circles in London leads the people present to believe in Mostyn's innocence over Wilson's accusations. These passages precipitate Wilson's transformation as a character by forcing him to reassess his ardent faith in revolution in the aftermath of each episode, during which Wilson bitterly reflects on the corruption afflicting his own political circles. This self-questioning, triggered by Mostyn's haunting presence in every significant event of Wilson's life, is at the heart of Wilson's inner struggle opposing his desire for a better world and his fear that corruption may turn utopia into dystopia.

Mostyn undermines British society by acting both as the instigator of a movement to revolutionize London and as the main force behind the second revolution that transforms London into a living hell. The unified front against capitalism in *The Red To-morrow*, uniting socialists, communists, anarchists, and syndicalists, is part of Mostyn's plan to corrupt London into self-destruction. Despite the fact that each faction of this front includes highly intelligent individuals, no one notices that their radical objectives are being manipulated against them, except for Wilson, whom no one believes.

Mostyn leads Britain's pre-existing revolutionary movements to believe that their shared dream of an anti-capitalist revolution makes them allies against the British status quo, to then turn each faction against one another and bring chaos. Mostyn's role in the novel establishes British revolutionaries as people mistaken into following evil rather than as evil beings. Unlike McNeile's M. P. Charles Latter whose involvement with Peterson stems from the fact that he is "unmoral rather than immoral" and a "spiteful coward" (McNeile, *Black Gang* 74), the politicians and famous figures involved with Mostyn are all (with the exception of the anarchists Miriam Paull and Calmasetto) well-intentioned fools blind to the potentially catastrophic repercussions of their utopian dreams. Christine Grandy explains that after the war there was a polarization within Britain opposing those who had fought and the rest, which included the government ("'Avarice'" 682). In the context of this polarization, politicians "began to take on fraudulent and dubious tones within the best sellers of the 1920s" (682). Hambrook's fiction certainly demonstrates the author's military convictions, but these appear as secondary to his concerns over labour unrest. If Drummond's veteran persona frames his involvement in anti-revolutionary activity, Wilson's participation in warfare is but one of many steps in his journey towards an ideal of maturity grounded in conservatism.

Mostyn's ambiguous identity serves as a double to Wilson's own identity struggles. Whereas Mostyn's lack of clear national allegiances allows him to blend in with various crowds throughout the novel, Wilson's belonging to the working class and upper class allows him to take in the insights of upper-class conservatism while identifying as part of the working class. Wilson's class background ironically works against the propagandist message of the novel as a whole. In *The Red To-morrow*,

Hambrook portrays the British working class as capable of both destroying or saving

their nation. Despite his satirical rendition of so many workers and labour activists,

Hambrook does suggest that the working class has the power to save Britain through

Wilson's gradual conversion to conservatism towards the end of the novel. However, by

introducing Wilson's heroism as the result of his upper-class ancestry, Hambrook

undermines his own propaganda by disempowering the working class as incapable of

emancipation; either they follow the guidance of foreigners and destroy their own nation,

or they submit to the enlightened wisdom of their upper-class counterpart and remain

stuck in their subservient position. Either way, the working class remains infantilized and

subjugated.

Mostyn's relationship with Wilson allegorically represents the relationship

between foreign agitators and British workers. Early in the novel, Mostyn invites Wilson

to cheer "To the Red To-morrow" and Wilson replies "And may it be soon!" (Hambrook,

Red To-Morrow 23). In this exchange, they establish a contract between them that

cements their relationship as the driving force behind the realization of the revolution.

Mostyn's proposed cheer and Wilson's reply also foreshadow the nature of their

relationship throughout the novel, one wherein Mostyn acts and Wilson reacts, one

wherein the foreign agitator plans and the British worker inadvertently executes. Mostyn

is always one step ahead of Wilson regardless of the circumstances, and always manages

to trick Wilson into helping him. Their friendship is short-lived and ends at the second

Wilson realizes Mostyn tricked him into participating in a terrorist act against Britain.

Mostyn successfully invades every aspect of Wilson's life over the course of the novel:

he invades Wilson's working space when he hires Wilson as a driver while he commits

an act of terrorism; he infiltrates Wilson's platoon in the army under the fake name of Captain Morton; he intrudes in Wilson's revolutionary circles when he shows up as a high-ranked communist named Joseph Moll; he invades Wilson's private life when he seduces Wilson's girlfriend; and of course, he invades Wilson's nation when he openly reveals his role in the destruction of Britain at the end of the novel. Through these different forms of invasion, Mostyn replaces Wilson's father as the source of everything wrong in the protagonist's life. This shift effectively transposes the blame Wilson originally placed on the aristocracy onto foreigners, and contributes to Wilson's conversion to upper-class conservatism by dissociating these politics from the protagonist's personal grievance over ungranted rights.

Even though Wilson is the protagonist of *The Red To-morrow*, he is not the one to kill Mostyn—Amber Adam, the conservative voice of the novel, kills the foreign spy and deprives Wilson of the opportunity to overcome his opponent. By doing so, Adam prevents Wilson from ever completing the last trial of his coming of age and effectively emasculates him. In a reversal of the traditional damsel-in-distress narrative central to McNeile's portrayal of Drummond and Phyllis's relationship, Hambrook establishes Wilson as a boy in need of saving. Adam saves him from self-destructive ideologies, frees him from prison, and kills Mostyn on his behalf. By murdering Mostyn, Adam forces the abortion of Wilson's emancipation at the last minute. Consequently, his growth as a character culminates in allegiance rather than freedom; he becomes an unwavering supporter of conservative principles rather than of radical politics. The allegorical dimension of Wilson's coming of age presents working-class emancipation as a dead end, while portraying conservatism (and its classist endorsement of a submissive working

class) as the only political ideology capable of saving Britain from destruction. Franco Moretti argues that "youth is subordinated to the idea of 'maturity'" and that as such "it has meaning only *in so far as* it leads to a stable and 'final' identity" (8, italics in original). Adam's impulse to protect Wilson deprives him of agency over the conception of this stable and final identity, and shows that for Hambrook, the proper working-class identity is one that accepts and embraces a subservient social position.

Adam's influence on Wilson's politics is just as significant as that of Mostyn. After being betrayed by Mostyn for the first time of many, Wilson is brought to a gathering of various left-wing intellectuals whom Keith Neilson interprets as "a veiled slap at the Labour Party luminaries" (493). Indeed, Neilson is right in his assessment of the several characters first described in the place called "Puddler's End" or "the Garden City," but misses the larger objective of Wilson's presence there. While it is certain that these characters are indeed "caricatures, representing nearly everything that would have seemed threatening to the existing order after 1918" (493), Puddler's End sets the stage for the introduction of the only conservative character of the novel, the daughter of a prominent revolutionary and "a rebel against rebels," Amber Adam (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 75).

Like in earlier descriptions of Wilson, Hambrook ironically presents the rebellious character of Adam as a flattering feature while satirizing revolutionary movements concerned with rebelling against capitalism. Hambrook's description of Wilson and Adam as rebellious characters belies an attempt to counter the popular perception of conservatism as idle—the perception that a party against radical change is one in favour of changing nothing. When Adam claims to be in favour of "anything with

action in it. Anything that is not merely words and play-acting and pose" (75), she voices

a common conservative disdain for theories and doctrines (Rose xxiii). Such rhetoric

alludes to the tired anti-socialist argument that socialism only works in theory, while

demonstrating an understanding of politics fundamentally anchored in oppositions.

Hambrook describes socialists as rebels against the status quo, but Adam as a rebel

against rebels, a description that not only situates her in opposition to socialists but

portrays her as actively opposing them through rebellion. After the Great War, the

Conservative Party entrenched itself as the voice of anti-socialism in Britain and

redefined itself as the party of the constitution (McKibbin 62). This departure from the

Conservative Party's previous focus on the propertied class reflected the decline of

wealthy landowners in the 1920s (Beers and Thomas 12) and was an attempt to foster

working-class support. The success of the conservatives' campaign promoting anti-

socialism and constitutionalism cemented the idea that socialism is, by definition, anti-

constitutional and thus anti-British. The novel's celebration of Adam as both a woman of

action and a rebel against rebels (i.e., an anti-socialist) therefore aims to promote

opposition to socialism, a party line deeply rooted in the conservative belief in action

over theory that was propelled to the forefront of conservative propaganda in the wake of

the Bolshevik Revolution.

Adam's nickname in Puddler's End is "the Eve of the Garden City" (Hambrook,

Red To-Morrow 73), which, besides the word play with "Adam" evoking Adam and Eve,

can be interpreted as a symbol of her ideological purity (she is a conservative,

uncorrupted by left-wing politics) and a symbol of her rebellious nature (like Eve who

disobeyed her Father and bit into the fruit of knowledge, Adam is in disagreement with

the socialist ideas preached by her father). Additionally, the "Garden City" juxtaposes the idyllic (through the allusion to the Garden of Eden) and the city, evoking the utopian ideas debated in Garden City. Adam therefore stands as a complex Christian allegory, since her last name is Adam, her nickname is Eve, and her function in Garden City aligns with that of the snake. She convinces Wilson not to believe in the utopian ideas argued by her father and his friends, and seduces him with her grasp of conservative politics. When Wilson falls in love with Adam after looking into "those wonderful eyes" (78), he metaphorically falls in love with conservatism, its pragmatic approach to politics, and its appreciation of action over theory. He becomes "pleased to be worsted by her" (80) and slowly becomes an advocate of what she preaches. At the same time, he falls in love with the only character in the novel uninterested in utopian alternatives, the only one who sees the status quo as the social organization closest to utopia. Whereas Wilson's relationship with Mostyn is a national allegory of the British working class and of foreign corruption, Wilson's romantic interest in Adam symbolizes the necessity for the working class to embrace conservatism.

For both Wilson and Adam, action is the defining feature of masculinity, and is set in direct opposition to intellectual labour. Adam says that she "'admire[s] the splendid fellows who are fighting for their country, right or wrong. They are men—real men—not these—' her eyes fell upon her host and she hastily checked herself, 'not Fabians, I mean'" (75). She foreshadows and inspires Wilson's change of mind regarding the war and his decision to go fight for his country. Their love story results from Adam's recognition of Wilson's manliness when "she held out a slender hand … and in his eyes something that, as he took her hand in his hard palm, sent a little thrill of feminine

satisfaction through her. Even the emancipated woman likes to be admired by a man that is a man" (83). The specific type of masculinity at play in this interaction and in Wilson's ensuing decision to enlist falls within the scope of heroic masculinity, which by the late nineteenth century onward "linked together the new imperialist patriotism, the virtues of manhood, and war as its ultimate test and opportunity" (Dawson 1). Adam's influence on Wilson's participation in the war adds a chivalric dimension to his service that differs from that of McNeile's protagonist; Drummond's chivalry is a product of his participation in the war whereas for Wilson it leads to his participation.

Wilson's conversion from pacifism to militarism acts as a prerequisite for his ulterior conversion to conservative ideals. Allen Frantzen explains that, in the context of heroic masculinity, chivalry transforms one's sacrifice into self-sacrifice, which "has an unintended consequence of great importance … since it exculpates the powers responsible for the conflict that led to the heroic male's death. No one compelled it; rather, he embraced death freely and willingly" (20). Wilson does not die in the war but his disposition to risk his life brings him one step closer to manhood by concretizing his willingness to put the good of the nation above his own well-being. The political conflict behind the war is no longer relevant; all that matters is that Wilson freely and willingly embraces the possibility of dying. Wilson's display of heroic masculinity also connects him to the ideological position of the Conservative Party after the war, as his voluntary service proves that he values the British constitution and that he is a man of action. Wilson's gradual transition to conservatism allegorically saves British conservatives from emasculation. By promoting action as a cornerstone of masculinity, Hambrook emasculates the socialists of Puddler's End as men interested in theory rather than action;

furthermore, he also ironically emasculates conservatism since the conservative voice of the novel is indeed a woman, albeit one bearing the name "Adam," a key figure of religious masculinity. Wilson's conversion to Adam's politics works to prevent such an emasculation by asserting the protagonist's own masculinity, but Wilson's dependence on Adam before and after his service indicates that his wavering politics are not a reliable asset in the fight against revolution. Only Wilson's complete conversion to conservative principles could reassert the masculinity of British conservatism and potentially save Britain from Mostyn's national threat.

Two major factors propel Wilson to abandon his ideological opposition to the war, one being his chivalry and the other his conversation with Richard Thrandsby. If Adam prompts a surge of chivalry in Wilson that eventually leads the protagonist to participate in the war, Richard Thrandsby is the decisive influence behind Wilson enlisting. Thrandsby is a socialist who underwent the same kind of coming of age as Wilson but thirty years earlier during the Great War. This socialist ex-serviceman underscores the connection between Wilson's coming of age and the necessity for him to experience the battlefield. Thrandsby says to Wilson, "I believe you're a good man at bottom. But you're young and you're foolish. Why aren't you fighting for your country?" (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 97). When Wilson promptly responds with socialist and pacifist arguments, Thrandsby replies, "I'm a Socialist myself … I was battling for the cause before you were born. But I'm a Briton first" (97). It is then that Wilson recognizes the man as a "great Socialist writer … who had sacrificed his own popularity with labour in order to warn his country of the German menace—warnings which now read like inspired prophecies" (98). Thrandsby says to Wilson, "You'll admit I've done my best

for Socialism in my time … [a]nd I tell you the best work you can do for your country and for the Cause is to help smash Germany" (98). Unlike Mostyn and Adam, Thrandsby only appears once in the novel, but his impact on Wilson's coming of age is significant.

Thrandsby realigns Wilson's understanding of heroism with militarism. After meeting him, Wilson undergoes "weeks of bitter internal struggles. To admit that he was wrong and to admit that, in shirking military service, he had played the part not of a hero but of a cur was too bitter a pill to swallow" (99). Thrandsby thus contributes to Wilson's growth as a hero by adding a militarist dimension to his already existing chivalry. By the time of this conversation with Thrandsby, Wilson's heroism has already undergone a few transformations. His chivalric desire to avenge the injustice of his mother's condition has already transposed to a more romantic chivalry mainly aiming to impress and seduce Adam, and his belief that socialists are the workers' heroes is no longer as firm after meeting Adam in the Garden City. Thrandsby's role in *The Red To-morrow* is thus to direct Wilson towards participating in the war so that Wilson can leave behind his juvenile pacifist ideals.

Thrandsby achieves this feat by appealing to his and Wilson's shared socialist ideals. Hambrook suggests through Thrandsby's character and Wilson's internal struggle that socialism and militarism are not incompatible. However, although Thrandsby relies on his past as a socialist writer to give himself credibility, his examples and arguments ironically lean more to the conservative side of the political spectrum. He asks Wilson, "where would be your Socialist State if England was … under the Prussian heel?" (98), a false equivalence presupposing that opposing the war for socialist reasons equates to endorsing the destruction of one's nation by invading forces. Furthermore, Thrandsby's

main appeal to pathos during his conversation with Wilson occurs when the socialist

ex-serviceman reveals that two of his sons already died in the current war, with a third

one still lying wounded in the hospital. Thrandsby says to Wilson he would have his sons

die on the battlefield "sooner than see them do what you've done—shirk and desert like

dirty cowards—I'd have shot them dead with my own hand" (99). Thrandsby's claim at

once sets the heroism of Thrandsby's sons in opposition to Wilson's cowardice for being

a pacifist at the same time as it evokes Rudyard Kipling's famous poem "My Boy

Jack" (1916). Kipling wrote this poem a year after the death of his son John[30] on the

battlefield, in which he—or at least the poem's speaker—suggests that the main

consolation for losing one's son in the war is that the son "did not shame his kind"

(Kipling 228). This poem, as well as Kipling's own role in getting his son to the

battlefield despite the latter having failed his medical examination, eventually became

recurring examples of the injustice of the Great War in later fiction.[31] However, in *The

Red To-morrow* Hambrook endorses the message of Kipling's poem. The fact that

Thrandsby derives pride from his sons' death on the battlefield and that he would rather

kill them than see them live cowardly becomes the driving force behind Wilson's

ultimate decision to enlist.

     Thrandsby therefore makes Wilson realize the inherent heroism of militarism.

Following this encounter, Wilson learns of the death of a few of his socialist friends in

---

[30] The explicit subject of "My Boy Jack" is in fact Jack Cornwell, also known as Boy Cornwell, a sixteen-year-old casualty of the Great War. However, scholars have read the poem as directly related to Kipling's grieving process over losing his son John (Mallett 164-65; Jones qtd. in Kipling 228).

[31] For more information on the cultural role that "My Boy Jack" played in twentieth-century and twenty-first-century efforts to commemorate the Great War in Britain, see Michael Paris's chapter "The Great War and British Docudrama: *The Somme*, *My Boy Jack* and *Walter's War*" in *The Great War in Post-Memory Literature and Film* (2014), as well as Dorothea Flothow's "If any Question why he Died: John Kipling and the Myths of the Great War" (2008).

the war, and rather than blame the capitalist war for taking their lives, as he would have done earlier in the novel, he remembers Thrandsby's words and says that "They had proved themselves 'Britons first'" (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 101). Upon seeing a battalion leaving for the front, all cheerful and smiling "as though off for a day's sport" (101) with women nearby "calling farewells and laughing through hard held tears" (101), Wilson's "heart leapt and there flashed through his mind his mother's half forgotten [sic] words, 'Your grandfather was a soldier, a great General'" (101). Soon after this remembrance of his great military ancestor, Wilson sees a fellow Scottish socialist now advocating for men to enlist rather than wait for conscription, and ultimately, a woman who asks Wilson whether or not he will go to the battlefield and avenge her two dead sons. The mother's request leads to an impulsive chivalric assent and, just like that, Wilson's politics radically shift towards militarism: "some cord snapped in his brain; and when he became conscious of his own identity Wilson found himself on the lorry beside his old comrade, addressing the crowd in burning words. … He was unaware that he was telling them of his career as a Socialist and as a pacifist and confessing how he had found no peace therein" (103). Wilson soon finds himself proclaiming the heroism of war participation, claiming that "It's the sword we need, the drawn sword if we're to save auld Scotland frae desolation and our women frae shame. The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! Wha'll come with me to France and smite the Amalekites?" (103). Wilson subsequently enlists and does not regret it. Above all, his appreciation for military work afterward stems from the fact that "so long as he carried out orders promptly and efficiently, he had neither trouble nor anxiety. His own responsibility had been lifted from him and taken over by the vast machine of which he was a minute part" (105).

Nevertheless, despite all that, Wilson remains a socialist at heart; when he meets Adam for a last time before leaving for France, he says, "I've changed my dress, but not my principles. I'm a Socialist yet" (107).

It is at that moment, when Wilson has completed his conversion to militarist ideals, that Adam proceeds to dismantle the theoretical foundations of his socialist ideas through conservatism. Once Wilson is out of arguments to challenge Adam, she provides her only argument: "That is where, in my view, the whole revolutionary movement is wrong. You are all talking of abolishing the *bourgeoisie* when the only possible solution is to abolish the proletariat" (111). Adam's argument generates an exuberant reaction in Wilson: he "crie[s] in astonishment" (111); he exclaims, "'Dod! I believe you're right again!' … his face alight with admiration and surprise. 'I never thought upon that, but it is so!'" (111). Wilson's reaction is one of surprise, open-mindedness, and acquiescence. Hambrook's vision of an improved society, as told via his mouthpiece Adam, pertains to abolishing the proletariat by converting workers to capitalism. Assuming that the popularity of left-wing politics among the working class reflects a jealousy of the rich, an assumption that does not apply to Wilson's chivalric vengeance, Adam offers to resolve the workers' problems by explaining how capitalism functions under long-established conservative principles that favour incremental change over revolution. She claims that capitalism actually helps workers obtain the wealth and living conditions they desire—for her, capitalist Britain is already as good and efficient as it can be. Her utopia is the British constitution as it already exists; it needs not to be created but protected from revolution.

The logical argument in favour of preserving the capitalist status quo Adam provides is by the end of the novel further completed with an appeal to pathos, with an

image of London in ruins following a second revolution. The sheer sight of London in such a state of chaos leaves even an ex-serviceman such as Wilson sick to his stomach. This second revolution in the novel, modelled on the British understanding of the Bolshevik Revolution as disseminated in the press, appears as a collage of gruesome examples of depravity wherein rape, murder, and depredation occur everywhere. With Mostyn in hiding and Adam nowhere to be found, Wilson is left alone to experience his new dystopian reality. The narrator describes the city as

> a picture of desolation and of tragedy. But the coping stone was put upon it by one horrible detail. All down Whitehall, from every lamp-post in sight, swung a dark figure, stiff and unnatural as though the clothes were stuffed with straw. Hardly could they be recognized as human, save for the livid faces and wide glassy eyes. (284)

The politicians' hanged corpses are at the heart of Hambrook's cautionary tale. If a large-scale revolution happens in Great Britain, no one wins—a violent death awaits supporters and opponents alike. The very people who devoted years of their lives preparing the revolution die first, betrayed by their own anarchist allies in the coalition and hanged from the light posts near Whitehall. Adam argues that capitalism is the most appropriate peaceful revolution because it is slow and incremental, and the end of the novel supports her assessment. The peaceful May Revolution weakens Britain's political stability and allows a second revolution to turn London into a place where "Everywhere there was an orgy of infamy, gluttony and lust" (287), "and amid all this horror, cruelty and outrage there were scenes of unspeakable obscenity, open and shameless debauchery and vice beyond the compass of words or the bounds of belief. In the lurid glare of the fires it was

like a fore-glimpse of Hell" (289). Tapping into some of the most graphic descriptions of Bolshevik Russia in British newspapers at the time, Hambrook's image of hell ironically subverts the reality imagined by the members of Garden City, demonstrating how a desire to realize a dream of the idyllic may result in a nightmarish reality closer to hell than to the Garden of Eden.

At the very end of the novel, when Wilson reflects on his participation in the destruction of his nation, he turns to Adam and exclaims, "'Look!' … 'To think that I've given the best years of my life to bring this ruin upon my country!' 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do,' she replied softly. 'Surely there was One who made that prayer long ago. Surely, those words are for you too. You did not know'" (322). By quoting Jesus's first saying on the cross, Adam takes on yet another Christian role, that of the Christian Messiah himself. Instead of chastising Wilson, she reminds him that he cannot be held accountable for what he did not know. Unlike Wilson, however, the reader can no longer claim such ignorance having reached the final pages of the novel. Adam's forgiveness is thus an attempt to guilt the reader into adhering to conservative politics.

3.5   Coming of Age and the Tempo of Revolutions

Like the Christian archetypes of the shoulder demon of temptation and the shoulder angel of conscience, Mostyn and Adam complete each other in *The Red To-morrow*: Mostyn forces Wilson to question his politics by corrupting the many movements to which the young Scot subscribes; and Adam orients him towards the reasonable and achievable, which in this novel is to be found in time-tested conservative politics. The polarity of these characters and their respective pull on Wilson's personal politics generate the

momentum towards the two-step revolution in synchronicity with the narrative's gradually increasing tension towards a climax. As the revolution becomes imminent, Mostyn once more traps Wilson, this time framing him for carrying forged documents destined to stir mutiny in the British army, and successfully landing the brave young protagonist in prison. It is during Wilson's time in prison, while he is completely isolated from the rest of society, that Mostyn's preparations come to completion and the Red revolution occurs. The revolutionary "moment," the culmination of this slow-cooked momentum built through Wilson's many encounters with Mostyn and Adam, happens off stage. From a narrative perspective, sending Wilson to prison conveniently sidesteps the difficult task of conveying in words the intensity of the revolution. Instead, Wilson is told all that happened after the fact when he is prematurely freed from prison, after which he is revealed the details of the May Revolution at the same time as the reader.

While Mostyn is responsible for landing Wilson in prison, Adam is the one who frees him, signifying their respective roles in Wilson's life: Mostyn traps and isolates Wilson, whereas Adam liberates Wilson from his cage and reconnects him with the world. Wilson learns from her that the revolution was peaceful and successful, a rather anti-climactic outcome for such a build-up. Hambrook misdirects the reader in a way that would have been predictable for an audience immersed in news of the February Revolution and the ensuing Bolshevik Revolution: he sets up the revolution as a threat, reveals it to be non-violent and casualty-free, and then portrays a second revolution of extreme gore and violence. In the span of one day, less than a month after the first revolution, London turns upside down: British politicians hang from lamp posts, mothers eat their own babies, rape and murder happen everywhere in plain sight; like in many

British descriptions of the state of Russia during the Civil War, post-revolutionary London becomes a grotesque vision of hell.

Hambrook's novel reveals an understanding of revolutions that hinges on two premises: capitalism's dependence on organized chaos—that is, capitalism requires the harmonious organization of impossibly chaotic social rhythms and patterns; and the revolution's dependence on the successful disruption of this rhythmic chaos everywhere at once for a split second. Revolution needs to happen everywhere and be simultaneous. In *The Red To-morrow*, this revolutionary moment, this split-second interruption of society's rhythms, happens when Wilson is in prison, literally between two chapters. One chapter ends with Wilson in prison, receiving echoes of the troubles happening in London and claiming that the end is near, and the following chapter begins with Wilson's surprise liberation from prison, after which Adam tells him how the peaceful revolution happened. Hambrook gradually secludes Wilson from society as the revolution draws nearer and then incorporates the temporality of the revolution in the very pages of the book: in the time it takes to turn a page, the revolution is over. Hambrook captures the all-encompassing and simultaneous nature of the revolution by disrupting the reading experience and narrative for a split second. In other words, the revolution occurs simultaneously in the story and in the pages of the book themselves. By incorporating the revolution to the reading experience in such way, Hambrook hammers in the propagandist anti-revolutionary message of the novel. Indeed, *The Red To-morrow* shows that the revolution threatening Britain will happen so fast that even those working to realize it will be taken by surprise.

As shown in the previous chapter and in this one, the appearance of anti-Bolshevik fiction in interwar Britain revealed deep-seated conservative anxieties about the future. Hambrook's characterization of Wilson as constantly wavering between radicalism and conservatism suggests the author's inherent feeling of powerlessness in the face of a possible revolution. Unlike McNeile who creates an extraordinary vigilante to save Britain from imminent destruction, Hambrook puts powerlessness at the forefront of the novel by having an ambivalent agitator hold the future of Britain in his hands. There is no Bulldog Drummond or Black Gang to save Hambrook's Britain. The burden of protecting the nation from revolutionaries falls on the reader, whether by converting potential revolutionaries to conservatism or, for the more radical reader, to realize the error of one's ways through Wilson's life story. Even though Wilson eventually embraces Adam's convictions and turns against the revolutionaries, both militarism and conservatism fail in the novel. London is destroyed and no one could prevent it. From the moment Wilson and Mostyn cheer to the red tomorrow, the fate of Britain is sealed and Mostyn's victory is assured. Whether as a war hero, super spy, influential politician, or popular fiction writer, there is nothing for the conservative Briton to do against such a threat, *The Red To-morrow* suggests, except promote conservatism and hope for the best.

Hambrook calls for action through the characterization of Wilson as a man whose ancestry and upbringing give him a legitimate claim of belonging to both the working and upper classes. Wilson's strenuous journey from an ardent pacifist-socialist activist to a militarist-conservative sees him set in motion events leading to the destruction of his country from the inside out. Despite the fact that Wilson remains powerless to stop Mostyn before it is too late, the novel ends on a somewhat hopeful note, with both

Wilson and Adam finding temporary refuge in Scotland, before ultimately resolving to work together towards reclaiming their country. Notwithstanding Wilson's initial mistake in trusting Mostyn, Hambrook frames the destruction of Britain as a result of Wilson's and Adam's slow reaction time: Wilson takes too long to fully embrace conservatism; and Adam takes too long to believe and act on Wilson's accusations regarding Mostyn. By doing so, Hambrook reclaims the characters' powerlessness to prevent the transformation of Britain into a dystopia as an immediate call for action. McNeile and Hambrook were both concerned with the possibility of a Bolshevik-inspired revolution in Britain. Even though they approached the issue in opposite ways, McNeile from the perspective of an unwavering conservative hero and Hambrook from the perspective of a young socialist torn between the legacies of his ancestry and upbringing, both authors fundamentally agreed that Britain was indeed at risk and that swift military countermeasures were the best way to quell labour unrest.

Chapter 4: A Glissade into the Abyss: Apocalyptic Militarism in Edward Shanks's *The People of the Ruins*

4.1 *The People of the Ruins*: An Anti-Militarist and Conservative Tale of Revolution

As seen in the previous two chapters, McNeile and Hambrook employ the subject of Bolshevism as a sensational narrative device allowing for thrilling narrative climaxes and exciting villains. Their novels reveal a conservative anxiety that Britain may be sleepwalking towards revolution by postponing or refusing to use military measures to hinder the spread of radicalism among British workers. This chapter shifts the conversation towards writers who, unlike McNeile and Hambrook, believed that military action posed a greater risk to British national security than Bolshevism. It could be easy to assume, as Hambrook suggested through the luminaries of Garden City and the coming of age of Alec Wilson, that the divide between militarism and anti-militarism neatly corresponds to that separating conservative and socialist politics. This chapter complicates such assumptions by examining the novel of an anti-militarist conservative writer for whom the urge to attack one's political opponents using weapons instead of words represents a return to medieval political practices with potentially apocalyptic repercussions.

Edward Shanks's *The People of the Ruins: A Story of the English Revolution and After* (1920) is a scientific romance detailing the long-term significance of a fictional revolutionary civil war opposing the poor and the rich in 1924 England. The protagonist Jeremy Tuft is a middle-class English ex-serviceman who works as a physics lecturer in

London. On the day of the English Revolution, 18 April 1924, Jeremy goes to visit his friend Augustus Trehanoc, an eccentric scientist who claims to have discovered a new ray that could change the world. On his way to his friend's house, Jeremy witnesses the beginning of the English Revolution, but tries not to pay the rioters too much attention. Upon arriving at Trehanoc's house, he meets another visitor named MacIan and discusses politics and science with the two men. Just as their host is about to demonstrate his ray, rioters break into the house and kill both Trehanoc and MacIan. A rioter then throws a bomb into the room just as the ray is accidentally activated and Jeremy ends up being hit by the mysterious light. Through the common time-travelling trope of the sleep-trance, also known as suspended animation, Jeremy falls into a deep sleep and wakes up 150 years in the future to a neo-medieval England. This trope was notably employed in William Morris's utopian tale *News from Nowhere* (1890) wherein the protagonist wakes up almost two centuries later to a socialist pastoral England, as well as in H. G. Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), which recounts the story of a man waking up 203 years in the future to a dystopian London modelled on his own dreams. Shanks's novel toys with the utopian possibilities of a pre-modern England, but soon reveals the human desire for conquest as inevitably leading the nation towards self-destruction.

Unlike McNeile and Hambrook, whose novels introduce the possibility of revolution in Britain as the end of civilization, Shanks presents the English Revolution as a triggering event initiating a long series of wars all over Europe opposing the rich and the poor. These "Troubles" culminate fifty years later in a second world war that lasts another twenty years, severely trimming the world population in the process and propelling most European nations back to pre-modern ways of living. This chapter

examines Shanks' anti-militarist response to revolution in England by interpreting the

novel's discourse of social degeneration (a crucial component of the scientific romance

genre) as a critique of the British tendency to glorify military knowledge after the Great

War, and the protagonist's characterization as a satire of prewar romantic conventions of

heroism. For Shanks, I argue, a swift military response to English radicalism was bound

to accelerate the destruction of England.

Jeremy's historical reconstruction of the events that occurred during his sleep

leads him to understand the 150-year period as broadly consisting of two large historical

moments: a 70-year-long period of conflict symbolizing humanity's gradual regression

towards barbarity and an 80-year-long period of peace characterized as a pre-modern

pastoral. During this pastoral period, the "glissade into the abyss" (Shanks, *People* 79) as

Shanks describes this social degeneration, appears to have stopped (at least in England,

the centre of the civilized world in Shanks's novel). The narrative follows Jeremy as he

unwittingly participates in breaking the relative stability of pastoral England by helping a

political leader build military weapons, precipitating England towards the abyss once

again. Jeremy's presence at two crucial moments of change in English civilization, from

progress to regression in 1924 and from stability to regression in 2074, reveals the

impulse to militarize as the common denominator between the two time periods rather

than Bolshevism or class politics.

4.2   The Scientific Romance and Shanks's Discourse of Degeneration

Shanks's *The People of the Ruins* is a recurrently cited example of early interwar anti-

Bolshevik fiction written in Britain. Brian Stableford more than anyone else worked to

give Shanks recognition for his contribution to the genre of science fiction. He refers to

The People of the Ruins in at least six of his non-fictional works[32] and describes the novel

as the earliest work of science fiction addressing the "bitter legacy of disenchantment left

by the war" (Stableford, "Science Fiction" 27). The prominent twentieth-century science

fiction bibliographer I. F. Clarke also discusses Shanks's novel as a key contribution to

interwar tales of the future.[33] Despite these claims, Stableford and Clarke do not provide

more than a plot summary of the novel in their discussions. More recent publications

continue citing *The People of the Ruins* as an important war-disillusionment novel written

early in the interwar period, often pointing to Clarke's and Stableford's scholarship for

more information.[34]

  The People of the Ruins was Shanks's sole contribution to the genre of science

fiction. He was known for most of his life as a war poet, a literary reviewer, an academic,

and a journalist. His university training in history informs the post-apocalyptic setting of

the novel, since this narrative approach allows the protagonist to discover what happened

between his time period and the future through fragmented historical remains and

distorted oral accounts. In his review of J. D. Beresford's *Revolution*, Shanks argues that

Beresford "made [the revolution] spring too exclusively from one movement and one

personality[.] … I confess, it offends my sense of history" ("Fiction" 442-43). Unlike

Beresford, who will be the focus of the next chapter, Shanks's concern is with large

---

[32] See Stableford's "Science Fiction before the Genre" (2003); *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature* (2004); *The Future between the Wars: The Speculative Fiction of John Gloag*; *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950* (1980); *Algebraic Fantasies and Realistic Romances: More Masters of Science Fiction* (1995); and *Creators of Science Fiction* (2009).

[33] See Clarke's "The Tales of the Last Days, 1805-3794" (2000); "20th Century Future-Think: The Many Shapes of Wars to Come" (1992), and "20th Century Future-Think: Rediscovering Original Sins" (1992).

[34] See Andrews (146); Buran (13); Claeys (306); Hammond (21); Hughes and Wood (308); McLaren (14); Payne (85-88, 100); Rieder (27); Stevenson ("The Clockwork Man" 25); and Yaszek (195).

historical processes rather than specific people, parties, or movements. His novel underscores the English Revolution as one of several steps in the cyclicality of human self-destruction and portrays key individuals such as English Bolsheviks as merely enacting historical forces. By doing so, *The People of the Ruins* simultaneously taps into topical public fears of revolution and elaborates a pessimistic critique of human nature as perpetually seeking self-destruction.

Shanks's novel draws on the conventions of scientific romance to dramatize the long-term consequences of an English Revolution imagined as the logical culmination of the labour unrest which, as discussed in Chapter 1, occurred in the United Kingdom after the Bolshevik Revolution and the end of the Great War. The term scientific romance is most often employed in the specific context of H. G. Wells's fiction. However, for this chapter I turn to a less frequent and more expansive use of the term to describe the Wellsian British tradition of speculative fiction produced between the late nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries, a tradition that still revolves around Wells's fiction but includes other British authors who followed in Wells's footsteps (Stableford, *SR* 4). This body of British fiction was generally subsumed under the label "science fiction" until Stableford reclaimed the term in *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950* (1985) as a means of distinguishing the early British tradition of science fiction from its American counterpart of the same period. Due to the cultural specificity of the British response to the Bolshevik Revolution, it is necessary to emphasize some of the cultural differences between the British and other late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century traditions of speculative fiction before delving into *The People of the Ruins*.

Stableford contextualizes the emergence of the scientific romance as an extension of the British speculative-essay style of the late nineteenth century. Such essays were generally future-oriented in their speculations, striving to dramatize their findings in a way that would interest an audience with limited knowledge of science (*SR* 5). Charles Howard Hinton's *Scientific Romances* (1886), the first official use of the term, was a collection of non-fictional articles and fictional stories that was reprinted several times over the ensuing decades. Hinton's work consolidated a connection between genuine scientific speculation and the imaginative possibilities offered by fiction. One of Wells's earliest publications, "Zoological Retrogression" (1891), echoes Hinton's attempt to blend scientific research and fiction writing. It is a scientific article that deploys the metaphor of a man walking around a city to discuss the non-linearity of evolutionary change. The article ends with Wells claiming that "The Coming Beast must certainly be reckoned in any anticipatory calculations regarding the Coming Man" (253), which suggests both that evolution can return an animal species to an earlier stage and that humans still carry their bestial ancestry within them (McNabb 389). This line captures three crucial aspects of Wells's brand of science-fiction writing in the years that followed: it uses the tools of literature to supplement a scientific argument, it projects a present-day scientific concern into the future, and it prophesizes the pessimistic regression of humankind over time.

Wells's more pessimistic works, those that have "dystopian overtones" (Fitting 145), were tempered by his literary utopias which foregrounded bright alternatives to the status quo. It is telling, however, that Wells's three main utopias—*A Modern Utopia* (1905), *Men Like Gods* (1923), and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933)—can all rather

easily be read through a pessimistic lens. Wells outlines his first two utopias in parallel

universes, suggesting that humanity is too far down the wrong path to achieve utopia in

the real world, and his last utopia requires the world to go through an apocalyptic world

war and a plague before it can build its utopian alternative—a rather common plotline of

1930s British fiction that echoes many plot elements of *The People of the Ruins*. The

scientific romance tradition that Wells inspired in Britain thus contributed to the larger

pan-European and transatlantic discourse of "degeneration" (Sherry 92) at the turn of the

century which centred on an anxiety that "modernity is actually the engine of regression"

(Nordau qtd. in Sherry 92). In this way, as Roger Luckhurst explains, the scientific

romance was one of several fictional "response[s] to the accelerations of technological

modernity experienced in the nineteenth century" (678). It figured alongside adventure

fiction and Gothic romance as a genre inherently connected to the romance revival of the

late nineteenth century, one in which quests and adventures emerged from the large

number of scientific breakthroughs of the 1870s and 1880s (679).

Wells's speculative and pessimistic approach to the subject of evolution in his

early fiction (e.g., *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896))

distinguished his work from his French and American counterparts. In France, Jules

Verne's brand of the *roman scientifique* was known for its heavily didactic discussions of

science and positivist morals (Evans 17). Verne was publishing at a time when the French

artistic elite tended to follow the aesthetic philosophy of "l'art pour l'art" (art for art's

sake). Verne's legacy as a writer consequently suffered due to his penchant for

didacticism, since prominent French authors of the period deplored his

instrumentalization of literature for pseudo-scientific purposes (Saint-Martin 79). When

Wells's translated works began circulating in France, French critics were "virtually unanimous in proclaiming that he had far outstripped the ageing and much revered Jules Verne" for the very reason that "Wells was an artist where Verne was not" (Altairac 5-6). For critics at the time, then, it was Wells's ability to write about science artistically that made his brand of scientific fiction superior to Verne's didactic *roman scientifique*.

Wells had few American rivals in the first decades of the twentieth century, despite the prevalence of American fiction imbued with scientific concerns from the early nineteenth century onward (Franklin vii-xi). It was only in the 1920s and 1930s that American writers truly began consciously and profusely to write works of science fiction, largely as a result of Hugo Gernsback's effort to legitimize the genre and its fans through the magazine *Amazing Stories* (Westfahl 8). The term "scientifiction" emerged in 1926 and was replaced three years later by "science fiction" in America as a better alternative to "scientific romance" since this new label no longer carried the latter's implicit suggestion that the science under discussion was fanciful (8). The "pessimistic fears of degeneration" (Luckhurst 681) transpiring in the scientific romances of Wells and other British writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle (e.g., *The Lost World* (1912)) strongly contrasted the techno-utopianism of American writers. The equation of technological advancement with progress was at the heart of the early American speculative fiction tradition (681) and did not wane after the Great War. America's late entry into the war and its remoteness from the battlefield had little effect on American attitudes towards technological progress (Stableford, "Science Fiction" 28), unlike in Britain where the proximity and duration of the war led to widespread distrust in modernity and technology. Indeed, much of the science fiction published in American pulp magazines

from 1926 onward was "marked by a naive 'gee whiz' attitude toward its gadgets and settings" (Attebery 35).

Conversely, as we saw in Chapter 2, the war's impact on British popular fiction was manifold. Several archetypes had to be revisited to accommodate the needs of a postwar nation and Britain's victory over Germany required imaginative alternatives to the German threat. While the thriller was on the rise throughout the 1920s, the scientific romance was at a low during this period for the reason that publishers regarded such works as outdated and unlikely to be financially successful (Stableford, *SR* 144). This does not mean that authors stopped writing scientific romances but rather that these were less likely to be published and read. Such stories were indeed relatively absent from the cheap hardcover book (144), a medium that was gradually taking over magazines as the main medium of cheap fiction in Britain throughout the 1920s (Pringle and Ashley 15). The reluctance of cheap hardcover book publishers to accept scientific romances for publication inevitably hindered the dissemination of such works to the public.

The People of the Ruins is an exception to this trend in publishing, as it was not only published but also widely read (Stableford, *SR* 239). It first appeared in serial form between 16 October 1919 and 12 February 1920 in the magazine *Land and Water* (Clute, "Shanks, Edward"), a British magazine for men that covered the war between 1914 and 1918 and then endorsed anti-Bolshevik politics until it was absorbed by the magazine *The Field* in 1920. The novel was then published in 1920 as a cheap hardcover book in London by W. Collins Sons and Co. and in New York by F. A. Stokes. From the moment of its publication in book form, the novel was praised as standing out among the several novels concerned with revolutions that hit the British book market in the early 1920s.

Edward Osborn, in a brief review of such novels for the *Illustrated London News* in 1920,

describes Shanks as "one of the most sincere and delicately musical of our younger

poets" and claims that *The People of the Ruins* portrays "the period that lies far beyond

the anticipated Revolution … [as] ingeniously realised" (738). *The Times Literary

Supplement* described Shanks's novel as a "fine, full-blooded story" ("New Novels"

683). In the *New York Times*, the reviewer claimed that "the author's artistry must satisfy

every reader except the one who demands a 'happy ending' at all costs," and that "In

'The People of the Ruins' we have a striking picture of what life might mean when

ordered for us by the shortsighted [sic], suicidal efforts of those untrained to rule"

("Latest Works of Fiction" 12). Even eighteen years after its publication *The People of

the Ruins* continued to receive favourable mentions in literary reviews, as one can see in a

review by "PenDennis" of Shanks's *My England* (1938) for *The Observer* wherein he

describes *The People of the Ruins* as one of "two remarkable achievements" in Shanks's

literary career (13). Although the academic reception of the book in the late twentieth

century emphasized the novel's connection to the Great War as an early example of

soldiers' disillusionment, most of these early book reviews seemed much more interested

in Shanks's imaginative portrayal of a post-revolutionary England than in the novel's

dramatization of postwar disillusionment.

Stableford rightly describes the pessimism at the heart of Shanks's novel as a

legacy of the war ("Science Fiction" 27), but, as the novel's early reviews indicate, one

also needs to account for the novel's elaboration on the impact of the Bolshevik

Revolution and the Russian Civil War on worsening English class relations. One of

Shanks's central premises in *The People of the Ruins* concretizes these early reviewers'

interpretation of the novel as primarily concerned with showing the consequences of a

revolution: that is, the clash between Trehanoc's belief that "there's no limit to what

science can do" (Shanks, *People* 24) and MacIan's claim that the situation in Russia

proves that "civilization ha[s] reached and passed its climax and [is] hurrying into the

abyss" (24). When confronted with Trehanoc's blind belief in human progress through

science and MacIan's pessimistic outlook on the future of humanity, Jeremy responds

that "The present state of our knowledge … doesn't justify prophecies" (25). MacIan's

final reply, that they may not have the knowledge but an intuition that "we've got as far

as we can and everything changes … Change here for the Dark Ages!" (25), serves as the

underlying anti-Bolshevik argument of the novel. It invokes the degeneration discourse of

the fin de siècle and presents the English Revolution as the onset of a decades-long

apocalyptic series of conflicts precipitating humanity's regression to a new Dark Age.

Echoing the exceptionalist message prevailing in most works of Red fiction during that

period, England appears as the last bastion of European civilization. In such a conception

of the world, the Great War and the Bolshevik Revolution (as well as the Irish War of

Independence[35] (1919-1921)) prepared the stage for the destruction of European

hegemony, and a revolution in London would be the tipping point after which all is lost.

---

[35] Although the novel makes no direct allusion to Ireland or the Irish, Shanks's description of the long
series of wars and conflicts across Europe as the "Troubles" alludes to the Irish War of Independence,
which was at times described as such during that period (Hopkinson 14-15). This allusion is not to be
confused with the period known as "The Troubles" that characterizes the violent relationship between
Britain and Northern Ireland in the late twentieth century.

4.3   British Science after the War and the Glorification of Military Knowledge

The People of the Ruins brings together three main clusters of themes: one concerned with the legacies of the Great War on the lives of English citizens; another engaging with Shanks's projected long-term repercussions of a revolution in England; and a third one lamenting the war's irreversible corruption of scientific progressivism (the belief that scientific research is vital to the improvement of the human condition). This idea that the Great War corrupted the ideals of scientific progressivism by requiring the service of scientists on the battlefield and in military laboratories reaffirmed the long-standing idea that scientific research ought to remain isolated from political and cultural concerns. Roger Cooter and Stephen Pumfrey describe the presumption that science is apolitical as part of the "cultural hegemony of science" (239), which for most of the twentieth century was reinforced by science historians whose works "foreclosed any study of the interactions between élite science and popular culture" (240). Within this cultural hegemonic framework, the dissemination of knowledge from the scientist to the layman implies a "'distortion' or an 'adulteration' of the 'pure' and 'pristine' form of knowledge produced by the scientist" (Broks 123). This dominant ideology presents the knowledge production of the scientist as ideologically uncontaminated by political and cultural agendas. While the explosion of scholarship on the cultural history of science that began during the 1980s shows that a closer look at any given period in the history of science

disproves any such separation between science and politics or culture,[36] the myth of the

apolitical scientist working in seclusion still exists today if only as a subject of lament.[37]

Shanks dismisses early in the novel the presumption that science is an apolitical

enterprise somehow insulated from non-scientists and the public. In the central passage of

the novel, when the English Revolution violently begins in the streets of London, the

protagonist is discussing the future of the world with MacIan and Trehanoc while waiting

for the latter to demonstrate his discovery of a new type of ray whose properties remain

unknown. The narrative recurrently interrupts this conversation and the demonstration

itself with noises coming from outside Trehanoc's house. At the very moment MacIan

and Trehanoc finish explaining their respective prophecies on the future of Britain, with

MacIan predicting social degeneration and Trehanoc progress through science, "A dull

explosion filled their ears and shook the windows" (Shanks, *People* 26). Soon after

"came the confused noise of many people running and shouting" interspersed with the

"sound of firing, scattered and spasmodic, punctuated by the dull, vibrating bursts which

Jeremy recognized for bombs" (26). It is as "though suddenly the whole district had been

set in motion" (26). Jeremy and MacIan agree to proceed with the scientific

demonstration despite the violent riots occurring outside, mostly to please Trehanoc.

---

[36] See Sarah Franklin's "Science as Culture, Cultures of Science" (1995); Frank M. Turner's "Public Science in Britain, 1880-1919" (1980); Andrew Hull's "War of Words: The Public Science of the British Scientific Community and the Origins of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1914-16" (1999); Steve Sturdy and Roger Cooter's "Science, Scientific Management, and the Transformation of Medicine in Britain c. 1870-1950" (1998); Christopher Lawrence's "Incommunicable Knowledge: Science, Technology and the Clinical Art in Britain 1850-1914" (1985); and Roger Cooter and Stephen Pumfrey's "Separate Spheres and Public Places: Reflections on the History of Science Polarization and Science in Popular Culture" (1994).

[37] Bruce Charlton's *Not Even Trying: The Corruption of Real Science* (2012) and David Rasnick's "The Tyranny of Dogma" (2015) are two examples of recent laments deploring how the institutionalization and bureaucratization of science destroyed a romanticized understanding of science as an individualist and secluded project.

While all three men are visibly affected by the explosions and gunshots heard outside, only Trehanoc exteriorizes his nervousness as a "disappointment" (27) that Jeremy and MacIan might not want to see his demonstration after all. For Trehanoc, the violence unfolding in his own neighbourhood is of little interest compared to the magnitude of his discovery. In fact, both the riots occurring outside (which Jeremy learns later to have been the beginning of the English Revolution) and Trehanoc's discovery are of considerable magnitude; after all, the revolution alters the entire course of human civilization and the discovery represents science's most astonishing victory over the natural limitations of the human body.

Trehanoc's invention of a new ray—a scientifically revolutionary discovery—creates a direct connection between the political revolution occurring on the scientist's doorsteps and the advancement of science. By having the radicals break into Trehanoc's house and kill him during the demonstration, Shanks bridges the spheres of politics and science in a violent way that foreshadows the gradual destruction of technology and science by radicals during the Troubles. Shanks's novel therefore stages this breach between the political and the scientific as the truly revolutionary moment of the novel, even more so than the beginning of the English Revolution. For Jeremy, the apex of the revolutionary moment occurs in the simultaneous explosion of a bomb and the activation of Trehanoc's ray, which symbolizes a clash between the destructive and productive potentials of modern science.

Shanks's portrayal of the revolution as a breach between these two potentials of science is a response to the application of science for destructive purposes during the Great War. From transportation (planes, submarines, and tanks) to weapons (explosives,

artillery, and gas), the recent advances in science and technology were directly connected to the unprecedented destructiveness of the Great War. The application of science and technology in warfare was indeed established well before the twentieth century, but the Great War was the first major conflict to be understood as a race "to master industrial mass production" (Rasmussen 308). The necessity for more ammunition and explosives necessitated the employment of a large number of civilian scientists and engineers. For many of these scientists, the sense of pride derived from participating in military research and helping their nation win the war came at the price of a considerable sacrifice; their participation required them to "[abandon] their proud tradition of neutrality and freely [offer] their services to the military" (Pattison 521). Some of Britain's most eminent scientists and engineers were employed in the Military Inventions Department of the Ministry of Munitions between 1915 and 1919, wherein they would devote their full attention to evaluating the usefulness and feasibility of inventions designed by civilians and soldiers to improve military weaponry and ammunition (522).

The People of the Ruins is a response both to this large-scale enrollment of scientists to increase the destructive power of military weaponry and to the reality that the extent of military science and technology in the wake of the Great War was enough to threaten the long-term survival of humanity. True to his sense of history, Shanks portrays the main actors of his English Revolution (the British Army and the English Bolsheviks) as relatively inconsequential in comparison to the revolutionary clash of large historical forces such as modern warfare and modern science. This clash in the opening chapters of The People of the Ruins foregrounds Shanks's pessimism with regard to his reader's ability to prevent such an event from happening. As in the case of McNeile and

Hambrook, Shanks's reader can indeed be encouraged to prevent a Bolshevik-inspired revolution in England, especially considering that Shanks sets his revolution in 1924 (four years in the future for his contemporary readership). However, doing so would only delay the inevitable since the two main reasons behind humanity's self-destruction in *The People of the Ruins* are irreversible, one of them being the Bolshevik Revolution, which inspired labour unrest across the world, and the other pertaining to the militarization of science and scientists during the Great War.

The political message of *The People of the Ruins* is therefore multilayered since, as mentioned earlier, the impacts of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Russian Civil War are central to Shanks's premise, but a close reading of the novel reveals English Bolsheviks to be mere actors in a revolution of far more dangerous proportions. The revolution to fear the most is not one that would Bolshevize England; it is one that would irreversibly destroy the distinction between scientific inquiry and military purposes. Whereas reviewers and scholars have identified the novel's disillusionment with the legacies of the war and praised Shanks's description of a post-revolutionary England, no existing assessment of *The People of the Ruins* gives proper recognition to the main connection between these two aspects of the novel, let alone how they relate to the novel's portrayal of science.

Difficult to pin down, this connection pertains to human knowledge and how certain types of knowledge became glorified in the aftermath of the war. In McNeile's Bulldog Drummond series, I showed how military experience and knowledge could be reconfigured as the foundations of heroism after the Great War. The epitome of veteran heroism, Bulldog Drummond always relies on the lessons he learned in the war to figure

out the best course of action in any given situation. Written at the same time as McNeile's *Bull-Dog Drummond*, Shanks deploys a critique of the very foundation that McNeile glorifies. Privileging military knowledge above all, for Shanks, comes at the expense of other forms of knowledge that are crucial for the continued progress of English society. Such military knowledge leads to an increased efficiency at killing human beings, unlike other forms of knowledge such as medical science that aim to improve the human condition.

One of Shanks's anti-militarist morals in the novel is thus that glorifying military knowledge inevitably leads to self-destruction in the long term since the application of this knowledge requires the perpetual continuation of military conflicts. Shanks's skepticism regarding the necessity of military conflict for the continued survival of Britain could have played a role in the longevity of his novel's popularity. Militarist writers like McNeile and Hambrook suggest that refraining from military action would only give the enemy more time to prepare a surprise attack on Britain. This argument had lost its currency by the late 1920s as soldiers' disillusionment became the master narrative of the Great War's legacy in Britain. Shanks's endorsement of an opposite ideological standpoint could thus partly explain why *The People of the Ruins* retained popular appreciation in the decades following its publication whereas Bulldog Drummond's impressive readership waned drastically over the years.

4.4   Scientific Rays and Shanks's Iconography of Light and Darkness

Shanks's novel inscribes itself in a culture of speculation characteristic of the 1920s wherein fiction and non-fiction writers pondered the potential military applications of

science in future wars. After the war, there was a mass influx of newspaper articles, scientific publications, and books speculating on the weapons that would characterize the next international conflict (Fanning 298). Such weapons included poison gas, disease germs, airpower, and indeed the death ray (298). These weapons all made their way into the popular fiction of the period. McNeile's third and fourth novels, *The Third Round* (1924) and *The Final Count* (1926), both focus on innocent scientists whose inventions end up being used for destructive purposes. Hambrook's *The Red To-morrow* introduces the "brass tulip" (*Red To-Morrow* 248), a small tulip-shaped, poisonous implement that the Red Army soldiers put inside their bullets. In *The People of the Ruins*, Trehanoc's ray is never weaponized after his death. It rather serves as a narrative device to connect in the most direct way the English Revolution of 1924 to the Dark Age of 2074.

Trehanoc's ray is part of a larger iconography of light and darkness that unfolds alongside historical regression throughout the novel. The passages describing Jeremy's awakening in the morning of the revolution and his awakening from his 150-year-long trance provide the basic structure of this iconography. On the morning of the revolution, Jeremy gradually wakes up feeling that something is "vaguely unfamiliar" (Shanks, *People* 1). His unease stems from the fact that it is much brighter outside than it should be before 8 a.m., which gradually leads him to realize that he overslept. Shanks describes the awakening as a series of transitions from Jeremy feeling "dull and stupid" to feeling the return of his intelligence as it "flowed back into his empty mind" and finally ends with "energy follow[ing] the returning intelligence" (1). In this opening passage, Jeremy wakes up because it is too bright, a consequence of his maid's absence from his home since she is participating in the general strike across England. In contrast, after Jeremy's

sleep-trance the narrator describes his awakening as a "change from darkness of the mind to darkness of the eyes" (35). Jeremy finds himself "staring into the blackness … assum[ing] for a moment that he was in his own bed and in his own flat" (35). He then has to dig his way out of the collapsed cellar in which he slept for all these years. These two passages of awakening complement each other via the light-darkness binary that operates as an extended metaphor for the regression of civilization in the novel. In the first passage, Jeremy's "returning intelligence" alludes to the progress of science. It evokes the age-old iconography of light as symbolic of human knowledge and the pursuit of truth. The fact that it is too bright outside Jeremy's residence foreshadows MacIan's argument that civilization is past its apex and is bound to return to a dark age, an argument which concretizes *The People of the Ruins* as a literary heir to Wells's scientific romances and their evolutionary pessimism.

Shanks substantiates the light-darkness extended metaphor by bridging the two temporal settings of the novel with Trehanoc's new ray. Wilhelm Röntgen's discovery of X-rays in 1895 and the publication of his findings in English the following year inspired the incorporation of different types of rays in the scientific romances that followed. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898) prominently featured Martian heat rays, which were later reimagined as the iconic death ray by several writers of American science fiction during the interwar period (Fanning 299). Röntgen's discovery gave a new meaning to the perennial symbolic association of light with the pursuit of truth. Perhaps the main reason why light makes such a potent metaphor for knowledge and truth pertains to the dominance of sight among the five basic human senses. To see is to know, in a way, and X-rays allow one to see wavelengths beyond the human eye's natural

limitations. As Richard Gunderman explains, the addition of X-ray vision to the list of

powers wielded by Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster's Superman from the late 1930s onward

would inspire a number of marketing campaigns drawing on the fantasies of young men

to find the strong man within themselves through physical activity or even on erotic

fantasies of portable devices allowing one to see through clothing (1-5). Published almost

twenty years before the first issue of Superman, Shanks's scientific romance draws on the

discovery of X-rays not to express masculine fantasies but to reveal a new ray capable of

illuminating another realm heretofore hidden from the human eye: the future. When

Jeremy is hit by Trehanoc's ray, it is not his bones and internal organs that he gets to see

but rather the distant future of Britain as well as the long-term repercussions of the

revolution underway. In other words, if X-rays reveal what is wrong within one's body,

Trehanoc's ray reveals to the protagonist and to the reader what is wrong with the body

politic.

Shanks alludes both to Wells's heat rays and Röntgen's X-rays in *The People of

the Ruins*. When Trehanoc tells Jeremy that he accidentally hit his hand with the ray,

Jeremy promptly asks him if he received a burn (Shanks, *People* 28). While this question

would be a rather natural one to ask in such a situation, the Wellsian subtext of Shanks's

scientific romance makes this mundane question an allusion to Wells's heat rays. This

intertextual reference becomes clearer with Trehanoc's reply that not only did the ray *not*

burn his hand, it healed an old radium burn and a "festering cut where I jabbed myself

with the tin-opener" (28). Trehanoc's new ray does not burn but heals, which aligns it

less with the iconic death ray of science fiction than with a "life ray," an emblem of a

benevolent scientific progressivism wherein advances in science correlate with the

improvement of medicine and in turn the quality of human life. The discovery of X-rays had spawned an entire new field of medicine (radiology) and Trehanoc's new ray is the logical continuation in the imagination—first a ray to see what is wrong in one's body and then another to heal the body. Shanks's portrayal of a ray that heals and illuminates the future against the backdrop of a violent political revolution suggests this specific moment as the apex of European modernity. Trehanoc's ray echoes the earlier passage of Jeremy's awakening when it is too bright outside. It symbolizes the furthest extent human knowledge will ever reach—literally reaching over a century into the future by maintaining Jeremy alive and healthy through the passage of time.

Röntgen's X-rays then make an appearance in future England as an iconic relic of the past, as proof that European science was once little different from magic. After Jeremy's 150-year trance, one of the first persons he meets is Father Henry Dean, an old self-taught historian. Upon meeting Jeremy, Dean claims that "'so many strange things happened in those days that we have no call to be amazed at you. Why, there used to be a machine in those times that the doctors used to look right through men's bodies.' Jeremy started slightly. 'You mean the Röntgen Rays?' … 'A wonderful light,' said the old man eagerly" (69). For Dean, the previous existence of an X-ray machine is sufficient proof that humanity was at some point capable of preserving a man alive for over a century. Whereas Trehanoc sees his ray as evidence of a great future wherein scientists will have discovered "the origin of matter, and how to transmute the elements … [and] abolish disease" (24), Dean sees the existence of X-rays as evidence of a greater past. No one knows how to make an X-Ray machine in the future, which makes X-Rays themselves representative of a past golden age; for Dean, X-Rays are metonymic of the golden age of

science since they are a light he knows to exist but is never to be seen again by the human eye.

4.5   The Speaker and Jeremy's Military Knowledge

The protagonist wakes up to an England whose inhabitants remember little of the past. The most alienating aspects of this future world for Jeremy are the inhabitants' gullibility and total disinterest in science or any type of evidence-based knowledge (Shanks, *People* 65-66). Jeremy's appraisal of science's new place in the future conflicts so much with the commonly held beliefs of his time that he is forced to acknowledge that he believed in Trehanoc's scientific progressivism more than he cared to admit (65). In this future modelled on MacIan's prophecy of social degeneration, where no one cares for technology let alone science, Jeremy meets two men genuinely interested in both: Father Henry Dean and the Speaker. Whereas Dean sees technology with the same gee-whiz attitude as Trehanoc and many American science-fiction writers of the interwar period, the Speaker manifests an interest in science and technology for the military advantages they could give him over his neighbouring rivals.

As the leader of England in 2074, the Speaker is a direct descendant of the Speaker of the House of Commons in 1924, a Jewish man whose international connections with the Jewish community during the Troubles made him a rallying figure for the rich and the upper class. Shanks portrays the Speaker and his ancestors as opportunist Jews who took advantage of the chaos around the world to claim leadership over England. The Speaker thus embodies an inconsistent hybrid between the Jew-villain and the Wandering Jew discussed in the introduction. He is a Jew-villain by virtue of his

manipulative nature and his greed for power, and his beautiful daughter indeed contrasts

his wickedness. Yet, he embodies none of the other most common characteristics of the

Jew-villain (e.g., he is neither a traitor nor a murderer). Furthermore, his long patriarchal

lineage and his lack of a proper name presents him as one of several reincarnations of the

Speaker of the House of Commons in 1924. Shanks's emphasis on the Speaker's lineage

over his individuality makes him a Wandering Jew figure, an old Jew who returns every

generation until the Second Coming. Even the way the Speaker dresses and looks recalls

the Wandering Jew's physical appearance in anti-Semitic iconography. Some common

features include a long white beard and long hair, which denote old age as well as an

"identifiably Jewish uncleanliness and moral deficiency" (Brichetto 24). Similarly,

Wandering Jew figures often wear clothing meant to indicate Jewishness (27), which

often appears as a biblical robe with a simple belt (27). The Speaker's first introduction in

the novel describes the man as a

> figure [wearing] a dark robe of some thick cloth, which was drawn in loosely by a
>
> cord girdle at the waist and resembled a dressing-gown. His thick, wrinkled neck
>
> rising out of the many-folded collar supported a square, heavy head, which by its
>
> shape proclaimed power, as the face by every line proclaimed both power and
>
> age. The nose was large, hooked and fleshy, the lips thick but firm, the beard long
>
> and white; and under heavy, raised lids the brown eyes were almost youthful, and
>
> shone with a surprising look of energy and domination. (Shanks, *People* 96)

The Speaker's garment and physical appearance correspond closely to typical

representations of the Wandering Jew in fiction and visual arts.[38] The Wandering Jew is

also often associated with ancient knowledge accumulated over the centuries. The

Speaker's keen knowledge of Jeremy's times evokes this trait of the Wandering Jew, and

the fact that he cares exclusively for Jeremy's military knowledge concretizes the danger

of such knowledge for England. After all, the military struggle between revolutionary and

counter-revolutionary forces that began in Jeremy's time allowed a Jew to gain leadership

of England which, as in John Henry Clarke's *England under the Heel of the Jew* (1918)

discussed in the introduction, is implicitly identified by Shanks as a nightmare scenario.

The Speaker finds Jeremy's awakening from a long trance relatively

uninteresting. Rather, it is Jeremy's knowledge of artillery, a vestige of Jeremy's

experience during the Great War, that makes him valuable. In a world wherein the pursuit

of knowledge is an eccentric occupation (as seen in the total lack of interest in Jeremy's

scientific knowledge shown by most characters of future England), the only two

characters interested in the protagonist's knowledge either want Jeremy to confirm their

own skewed sense of history (Father Dean) or employ Jeremy to rebuild BL 60-Pounder

guns, heavy field guns which Jeremy had operated during the war (the Speaker). Neither

Father Dean nor the Speaker actually cares about the type of knowledge that could

improve the human condition. A major casualty of the Troubles, then, is the benevolent

project of science itself. According to Father Dean, the technology of the twenty-first

century pales in comparison to those of the twentieth century, when one could see "trains

---

[38] See Joanna Brichetto's master's thesis *The Wandering Image: Converting the Wandering Jew* (2006) for a thorough investigation of the typical appearance of the Wandering Jew across cultural settings and artistic media.

leaving every town in constant succession, motors on the roads, aeroplanes overhead, steamers on the sea" (Shanks, *People* 74). In 2074,

> the steamship … had practically ceased to exist[;] … A rapidly growing
>
> percentage of accidents … had driven the aeroplane altogether out of use[;] …
>
> There were still a few motors … but these had long been less reliable[;] … As for
>
> trains—there were still trains running to and from London … One went to
>
> Edinburgh every week, and two to Liverpool and Bristol. (74)

The transportation technologies listed above, each emblematic of progress in their own way in the early twentieth century, have declined in the twenty-first century. They become, in this future time period, a symbol of regression that accompanies the general lack of scientific literacy among the English population.

Jeremy ends up forced to participate in the Speaker's ventures, which the old man describes as an absolutely necessary means of preventing humanity's further descent towards the abyss—indeed a cover-up for his struggle to hold power over England at all costs. When Jeremy contemplates the utopian potential of future England compared to his memory of postwar Britain, the Speaker is quick to reaffirm the rhetoric of historical regression. Jeremy says to the Speaker, "You seem to have lost almost all that we had gained … And yet perhaps you have lost much that is better gone. This world seems to me simpler, more peaceful, safer. … We used to feel that we were living on the edge of a precipice—every man by himself, and all men together, lived in anxiety" (102-3). Jeremy implicitly appraises the lack of military values in future England. The simplicity, safety, and peace that Jeremy sees in pastoral England are all indicative of a world wherein military knowledge has become irrelevant. The Speaker wastes no time in correcting him.

He sees this happiness as the "happiness of a race of fools" (103) and responds that "We, too, are living on the edge of a precipice as terrible as any you ever knew. Do you believe that any people can come down one step from the apex and fall no further?" (103). The reader learns from this conversation that the Speaker is in fact a surviving endorser of the kind of militarism that destroyed European civilization in the wake of the Great War. The situational irony of this conversation is twofold. It first emerges from the Speaker's insistence, against Jeremy's and several other characters' advice, that conflicts over taxes and territory with neighbouring communities need to be answered with military might rather than negotiations. It is indeed in his attempt to use the barely functioning BL 60-Pounder guns to prevent his nation from falling further into the abyss that the Speaker precipitates the total destruction of what is left of England in 2074. Another situational irony arises in Jeremy's reluctant but active role in providing the Speaker with the means of enacting his militarist agenda. Without Jeremy to complete the gun production, the Speaker would have never had the misplaced confidence in England's military strength to taunt neighbouring communities into warfare. Jeremy thus becomes a key agent in the destruction of the pastoral England whose peace he praises earlier in the novel.

4.6   Scientific-Veteran Heroism, a Contradiction in Terms

Jeremy's role as the Speaker's right-hand man in future England captures a critique of veteran heroism that Shanks initiates in Jeremy's own time period. Shanks incorporates the conflict between scientific and military knowledge at the heart of Jeremy's characterization as a scientist ex-serviceman. Jeremy's scientific background marks a stark contrast to the protagonists analyzed in the two previous chapters. Both McNeile's

and Hambrook's novels portray and discuss the pursuit of knowledge as a primarily

political endeavour. In the Bulldog Drummond series, McNeile has his public-school

educated protagonist use his common sense to confront highly intelligent villains who

design complicated plans to shatter British hegemony. In *The Red To-Morrow*,

Hambrook clearly distinguishes between incorrect education (socialist teachings) and

proper education (conservative teachings) within his protagonist's coming-of-age story.

For these two novelists, the type of education one receives strongly dictates one's

political leaning and thus needs to be codified along the heroism-villainy spectrum. They

predictably treat any form of education that departs from blindly praising the dominance

of the upper class and the foundations of a capitalist status quo as dangerously flawed and

worth opposing violently.

Possibly as a result of Shanks's own higher education in history, *The People of

the Ruins* deviates from this trend through the introduction of a protagonist who is both a

highly educated scientist and an ex-serviceman. In the opening pages of the novel, the

reader learns that when the Great War began, Jeremy "did not stand upon his scientific

status or attainments; but concluding that the country wanted MEN to set an example, he

hastened to set an example by applying for a commission in the artillery, which, after

some difficulty, he obtained" (Shanks, *People* 8). This passage foregrounds Jeremy's

eagerness to enlist for war duties, as opposed to waiting for the government to force his

hand—or worse, refusing to serve altogether. The conscription of single men aged

between 18 and 40 years old in Britain only began with the passing of the Military

Service Act in January 1916. Prior to that, the decision to enlist remained a personal one,

despite the British government's rigorous propaganda campaign encouraging young men

to volunteer. Jeremy's impulse to enlist reflects that of a large number of scientists in Britain at the beginning of the Great War who likewise believed that direct participation on the battlefield would be more useful to the war effort than scientific research (Pattison 526). During the war, Jeremy rose to the rank of captain. As in the case of McNeile's protagonist, Jeremy's military rank falls in between lieutenant, which "might imply lack of experience or a not more than mediocre war record," and major, which "smacks too firmly of authority" (Bertens 61). While Shanks does not endow Jeremy with the superhuman abilities that McNeile grants his protagonist, the two characters' shared military rank of captain denotes a parallel between their characterization as simultaneously common and remarkable. As captains, these two characters were the highest-ranked officers still participating in field operations. This simultaneously makes them common since they share with soldiers the direct experience of the frontline but distinguishes them as leaders on the battlefield.

Unlike McNeile's and Hambrook's protagonists, Jeremy solves his problems with hypotheses and experiments, and relies on tangible evidence over instinctive knowledge and opinions to derive conclusions. As an example, when Jeremy wakes up in the future and is confronted with a nonsensical situation—emerging from the remnants of Trehanoc's house to discover a London in ruins and covered in grass—his first reflex is "to enquire what hypothesis would be most suitable" (Shanks, *People* 43). For this reason, Jeremy's education leads him to err on the side of caution. Jeremy's caution is most apparent in the passage discussed above wherein MacIan and Trehanoc debate the most likely future of England, on which Jeremy refuses to comment for a lack of substantial evidence pointing one way or another. By approaching complex problems in

this way, Jeremy is less likely to jump to a conclusion that suits him in the way

Drummond does throughout his adventures. Whereas McNeile and Hambrook underscore

the necessity to act swiftly against the spread of Bolshevism in the United Kingdom,

Shanks preaches an opposite course of action. In *The People of the Ruins*, it is the

tendency for people in power to choose quick military action that propels the destruction

of the nation. The main lesson of the Great War, in Shanks's novel, is that warfare needs

to remain a last resort.

Shanks affirms this lesson by demonstrating the failure of militarism twice in the

novel: first, when the British government tries to suppress the English Revolution by

preventively deploying the army in the streets of London, which begins the Troubles; and

second, when the Speaker chooses war over negotiations to resolve political tensions with

neighbouring communities, which leads to the complete destruction of what was left of

England. Shanks stages Jeremy's journey towards Trehanoc's house in the opening

chapters of *The People of the Ruins* as a series of encounters aiming to provide an

overview of the different groups involved in the English Revolution. When Jeremy leaves

his apartment on the morning of the revolution to visit his friend Trehanoc, he notices "a

patrol of troops lying on the grass" (10), which confirms to him that "There *is* going to be

trouble, then" (10, italics in original). A little further down the same street, he sees "A

string of lorries [coming] rapidly down the empty roadway, past him from the West, and

… crowded with troops. Guards, he thought—carrying machine-guns in the first lorry"

(10). Jeremy sees more of these lorries during his journey to Trehanoc's house, including

"A string of five lorries, driven by soldiers, but loaded with something hidden under

tarpaulins instead of troops" (13-14). These elements all represent the kind of military

preparations that McNeile and Hambrook endorse. The British government, in *The People of the Ruins*, employs a military approach to solve the problem of labour unrest and preventively deploys the army to prevent a revolution in London.

Yet, Jeremy hints that such a military response might not be necessary after all. During his walk, he eventually stumbles upon a large crowd appraising an orator standing on a broken chair. Although a threatening sight from afar in the context of a revolutionary struggle, this gathering reveals itself to be little more than a crowd of "honest, blunt, good-natured people" displaying the "seriousness … of men who, having entered into an argument, intend to argue it out. They believed in argument, in the power of reason, and the voting force of majorities" (14). Jeremy promptly realizes that they are nothing like the orator who "lash[es] himself into a fury[,] … working himself into ever wilder and wilder passions" (14). When he meets an old war comrade named Scott sitting in one of the military lorries unable to pass through the crowd, Jeremy says that "There isn't likely to be any revolution hereabouts, unless you make it yourself … it takes more than jabberers like this chap here [the orator] to make a revolution. They want a few damned fools like you to help them" (16-17). Through these passages, Jeremy voices an anti-militarist response to the threat of revolution in England: what England needs is not preventive military action but faith in the loyalty and common sense of its citizens.

Shanks complicates Jeremy's anti-militarist message by having him encounter English Bolsheviks and threatening foreigners during his journey. These encounters disturb Jeremy's conviction that there will not be any trouble after all and leave unclear whether this conviction is not simply reflective of a denialist outlook on the situation. Through these encounters, Shanks initiates a critique of the veteran heroic figure as

displayed prominently in the Bulldog Drummond series. Jeremy's caution often makes him appear indecisive. Since he needs to be in possession of all the facts before committing to a stance on any given subject, Jeremy often seems unsure how to proceed. Despite having demonstrated his ability to lead as a captain during the war, Jeremy nevertheless appears incompetent as a leader for the very reason that he analyzes social issues as one would a scientific problem; by observing more than acting and relying on facts rather than instincts, Jeremy merely reacts to the events around him and demonstrates a passivity that undermines his credibility as a former military captain. We can already see early in the novel how Jeremy's scientist-veteran persona works as a contradiction in terms, since the qualities characteristic of these two personae conflict with one another. As we will see below, Shanks deploys the contradictions inherent to Jeremy's characterization throughout the novel as an anti-militarist critique of romantic heroism; whereas McNeile adapted late-nineteenth-century heroic conventions to create a hero that corresponds to the reality of interwar Britain, Shanks portrays the promotion of veteran heroism as a self-destructive social practice. Both approaches are indissociable from the perceived lessons of the Great War, albeit from opposite perspectives regarding the usefulness of militarism in the aftermath of the war. After all, it is precisely Jeremy's use of his military knowledge and experience that eventually leads to the complete destruction of England in the future.

Jeremy's sole encounter with English Bolsheviks occurs soon after he leaves his apartment and serves as a satirical commentary on the kind of veteran heroism that McNeile glorifies. To understand the satirical aspect of this encounter, it is crucial to consider Jeremy's earlier portrayal as an adventurous figure as well as the urban setting

in which the encounter happens. The narrator informs the reader in the opening pages of the novel that, upon leaving his apartment, Jeremy "felt a faint thrill go through him. This looked like being exciting" (Shanks, *People* 6). His excitement at the idea of roaming the streets in such extraordinary circumstances—which are later revealed as the beginning of the English Revolution—suggests an adventurous personality that recalls Drummond's veteran persona. Hardened by their time in the war, both Jeremy and Drummond demonstrate a taste for adventure predicated on their self-confidence as men who saw the battlefield and risked their lives for their nation. Shanks reaffirms this aspect of Jeremy's personality in a brief conversation that occurs right after the protagonist leaves his apartment. Jeremy meets a frightened constable who, the narrator emphasizes, was "invalided … after three days" during the war (11). Unlike Jeremy, the constable did not experience the battlefield, and thus for him the prospect of revolutionary violence is terrifying. Jeremy asks him, "'And how the devil am I going to get to Whitechapel High Street, I wonder?'… 'To Whitechapel High Street?' the special constable cried. 'Down in the East End? Oh, *don't* go down there! It'll be *frightfully* dangerous there!'" (12, italics in original). Jeremy promptly dismisses the constable's warning and continues his journey to Trehanoc's residence. The constable's opinion of the East End highlights Jeremy's adventurous spirit as he is brave enough to continue his journey despite the warning, while simultaneously emphasizing the sector's particularly bad reputation in England at the time.

In the nineteenth century, the East End was considered both an object of disgust and fascination for anyone living outside its territory (Freeman 51). In 1888, Jack the Ripper killed his victims there and afterward the area became a kind of microcosm for

London's own dark life, as "the streets and houses of that vicinity became identified with the murders themselves, almost to the extent that they seemed to share the guilt" (Ackroyd 412-13). In the early twentieth century, a wave of Jewish immigrants from Germany and Russia settled in the East End (Brodie 188). The generally more radical politics of these immigrants fed into the myth of the East End as the dark life of London by adding another political dimension to the prejudices targeting this urban sector. The constable's emphasis on how "frightful" and "dangerous" it will be for Jeremy to travel through this sector amid riots suggests (and is soon after confirmed) that the East End is at the heart of the revolutionary struggle in England.

This topographic marker in *The People of the Ruins* leaves ambiguous whether the revolutionary movement in England is of domestic or foreign origins. In *The Red To-morrow*, the East End also serves as a locus imbued with the revolutionary ideals of its foreign residents. Hambrook's narrator explains that during the violent revolution at the end of the novel, "The East End had burst in an alien cataract into the West, in a state of murder, rape, and pillage" (287). In this passage, the East End serves as a metaphor for invasion. The metaphor alludes to the undefined borders of the East End sector on the northern and eastern sides, as well as to the popular understanding of this area as primarily populated by foreigners. Through these allusions, Hambrook portrays the East End as a gateway for foreigners into the country that eventually overflows and pours out into the rest of London, allowing these foreigners to perpetrate bloodcurdling violence everywhere in the city. Shanks's portrayal of the East End is more subtle than Hambrook's insofar as it is only later in the novel that the reader is made aware of the historical weight of the revolutionary struggle occurring in the East End early on in *The*

People of the Ruins. Shanks portrays the East End as the setting of a multitude of sensational events including a revolution, murders, bombs, and the activation of a ray of unknown properties. Last but not least, the East End subsequently becomes Jeremy's resting place for his prolonged trance of a century and a half. Shanks's description of the East End is less overtly about invasion than that of Hambrook, but it nevertheless captures the sector's cultural function as an "enigmatic imaginative space" (Newland 17).

Shanks's portrayal of the sector echoes Hambrook's prejudices since Jeremy encounters several radicals in his progress towards Trehanoc's house. It is through these encounters that Jeremy's apparent taste for adventure begins to crumble. Moments before reaching the large crowd listening to a fiery orator, Jeremy sees a car "packed with red-tabbed officers" (Shanks, *People* 12) following an empty lorry. Thinking himself in the company of friendly officers, Jeremy asks one of them for a ride in the lorry. The officer replies with a "flushed and frowning face," "'Oo are you talkin' to?' … 'Oo the 'ell do you think this lorry belongs to, eh? Think it belongs to *you?*' And as Jeremy is too taken aback to answer, he continues: 'This lorry belongs to the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council of Southwark, that's 'oo it belongs to' … 'Dirty boorjwar!'" (13, italics in original). In this passage which reveals the existence of a soviet (Workmen's and Soldiers' Council) in the south of London, Jeremy is so surprised by the officer's aggressive remark that he fails to respond in any way before the car and the lorry are driven away. Shanks's protagonist is shaken by the incident, especially by the "driver's parting shot [which] still rankled in his mind. He felt that it was extremely unjust to accuse him of being a member of the bourgeoisie, and he was quite ready to exchange all his vested interests in anything whatever against a seat in a bus" (13). Jeremy's anxiety

and feeling of injustice after the encounter reflect poorly on his mental fortitude as an ex-serviceman. Jeremy looks quite vulnerable after this encounter. Unlike Bulldog Drummond, Jeremy's experience in the war does not appear to transfer effectively from the battlefield to his postwar reality, since he allows himself to be shaken by an altogether trivial verbal attack; indeed, if Jeremy truly thinks trouble could occur, he should neither feel surprised to encounter angry individuals nor to be treated as an enemy.

Shanks often has passages foreshadow later ones in *The People of the Ruins*. In this case, Jeremy's encounter with the red-tabbed officers mirrors his subsequent encounter with his old war comrade Scott, who mistakes Shanks's protagonist not for a bourgeois but rather a Bolshevik. Scott's job is to bring bombs to the British troops in Liverpool, for which he needs to drive through the large crowd with his lorry. Just as mistaken as the red-tabbed officers, Scott asks Jeremy to do him a favour and use his influence with the English revolutionaries to help him drive through the crowd without attracting too much attention. Seeing Jeremy's bewilderment, Scott says, "Don't be sick with me, old man. … I only thought you used to have some damned queer opinions, you know; used to be a sort of Bolshevist yourself" (16). The narrator promptly adds, "Scott, of course, always *had* thought that any man whose opinions he could not understand was a sort of Bolshevist" (16, italics in original). While Jeremy and the narrator both underscore throughout this conversation just how unreliable Scott is as a soldier, Scott remains the only representative of Britain's counter-revolutionary forces that appears in the novel, which makes his assumption that Jeremy is a Bolshevik symbolic of the chaos to come: in their attempt to quell revolutionary forces, it is likely that the British Army will harm honest British citizens mistaken for Bolsheviks. Jeremy's encounters with the

English Bolsheviks (the red-tabbed officers) and with Scott emphasizes just how little both parties know about each other. Shanks's protagonist finds himself in the middle of a conflict where both parties mistakenly consider him a potential enemy, which suggests that the main problem afflicting England after the Great War is one of miscommunication. Shanks levels his critique against both revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries: against English revolutionaries for following a foreign ideology they evidently do not fully understand; and against counter-revolutionary forces like the British government and the British Army for reductively and conveniently labelling the people they do not understand as "Bolshevists." This miscommunication is a direct consequence of both sides approaching their conflict from a militarist perspective predicated on a conviction that political opponents are enemies to crush rather than people to convince.

Whatever is left of Jeremy's potential as a romantic hero by the end of his journey to Trehanoc's house disintegrates during his encounter with foreign women near his destination. Despite being "not unused to 'trouble' of one sort and another" (7) due to his military experience, Jeremy is made highly uncomfortable by Trehanoc's neighbours. The narrator discloses that "In the side street which led to his destination, there were mostly women—dark, ugly, alien women—sitting on their doorsteps; and he began to feel even more afraid of them than of the men" (20). Jeremy seems horrified that these women "did not lower their voices as he passed, but he could not understand what they were saying" (20). The very presence of these women compromises his masculinity. They berate him as a "Dir-r-rty bourgeois" (20) like the red-tabbed officers and "laugh ominously together" (20), which leaves Jeremy terrified: "The repetition of the phrase in

this new accent startled him and he fretted at the door because Trehanoc did not immediately answer his knock" (20). Jeremy's fear appears largely irrational, even in the xenophobic context that these foreign women make him feel alien within his own country. In this encounter, Jeremy showcases none of the heroic qualities one could have expected from him at the beginning of the novel. His adventurous side is entirely gone by that point in his journey. As an ironic reversal of the typical romantic quest, Jeremy leaves his home as an adventurous heroic figure and reaches his destination a coward quaking in his boots at the mere sight of jeering women.

4.7   Romantic Leadership and the Destruction of England

If miscommunication was the main reason for England's upcoming decline in Jeremy's own time, after his sleep-trance it becomes clear that poor leadership also spoils England's chances of long-term survival. Indeed, in future England, Jeremy is given once more an opportunity to be heroic, this time as one of the Speaker's two main military counsellors. His fellow counsellor, a blood-thirsty Canadian named Thomas Wells, establishes a clear binary wherein Jeremy is meant to be a heroic counterpart to the Canadian. Canada, in Shanks's novel, has surprisingly become a war nation and conquered the United States. Like the shoulder angel of conscience and the shoulder demon of temptation seen in Hambrook's novel, Jeremy and the Canadian offer advice to the Speaker on how to proceed in regard to possible military conflict, with the Speaker rejecting Jeremy's counsel of caution and negotiation every single time. The Speaker's repeated decision to side with the Canadian underscores the villainy of his characterization and his inadequacy as the leader of England, since the Canadian betrays

him towards the end of the novel and sabotages their chances of winning their battle against the Welsh army.

Shanks satirizes the inadequacy of political leaders who base their decisions on romantic ideals. The plot that unfolds in the novel's future England reproduces several elements proper to romances: in a neo-Medieval setting, the Speaker convinces Jeremy to make his guns in exchange for his daughter Lady Eva's hand, alluding to the kings of romance stories promising princesses to valiant knights. Over the course of Jeremy's time working for the Speaker, during which he builds the guns and leads a battalion of gunmen through two battles against political rivals of the Speaker, Jeremy and Lady Eva fall in love. This leads Jeremy, after the crushing defeat of the Speaker's militia in the second battle, to escape with Lady Eva like a chivalrous knight and his princess in order to protect her against barbarous invaders. Jeremy's flicker of romantic heroism dissolves when his damsel in distress commits suicide, implicitly showing that she did not trust Jeremy to succeed in protecting her against the ill-intentioned invaders. Jeremy, at the second he realizes Lady Eva is dead, loses all conviction and promptly commits suicide. Shanks's portrayal of Jeremy's adventure in future England as a parodic romance plays on the novel's overarching theme of social degeneration, as it shows how the glorification of ex-servicemen as romantic heroes akin to the medieval knights of English folklore and literature can only lead England on a regressive path towards medieval ways of living.

As the embodiment of English leadership in future England, both the Speaker and his wife Lady Burney base their actions and decisions on romantic stories. It is through these two characters' attempts to emulate romantic kings and queens that Shanks underscores once more how an inability to communicate effectively is indicative of poor

leadership. Lady Burney, for one, strives to emulate the queens of romantic stories when the English army departs for battle against the Yorkshiremen. The narrator informs the reader that

> The Lady Burney, who had long abandoned the practice of reading, was yet in the habit of hearing long stories and romances from clever persons who got them out of books; and she judged from what she had learnt of wars in the old times that it would be proper to her position to sit in a window and smile graciously on the army as it marched out to battle. (Shanks, *People* 183)

Unfortunately for Lady Burney, "the Speaker, ignorant of her intentions and careless of the ritual of conflict, had appointed various places of assembly for the troops, and had taken no pains to make any part of them march through Whitehall" (183). In an effort to imitate the queens of medieval romance, Lady Burney spends the entire day by the window waiting for an opportunity to flutter her handkerchief in a manner appropriate to her status. The Speaker's ignorance of her intentions underscores once more the motif of miscommunication in the novel, like earlier in the novel between the British Army and the English Bolsheviks, except that this time Shanks elaborates the motif as a farce revealing Lady Burney's misconstrued understanding of how leaders should behave.

Lady Burney envisions her political function as the Speaker's wife as no more than a theatrical performance wherein she plays the part of a queen in a medieval romance. The gravity of war eludes her completely. She remains so until she is killed later in the novel after the Speaker's defeat against the Welsh. Despite being given several occasions to flee and potentially survive when her servants run into her quarters to rummage through some of her treasury before the Welsh invade, she continues giving

orders, insists on saving her jewels, and even slaps one thief on the face. These actions demonstrate her misunderstanding of the situation and result in her getting stabbed with a sword, an ironic twist of fate that sees her killed by the weapon most emblematic of medieval romance stories.

Unlike his wife, the Speaker's adherence to ideals borrowed from the medieval romance tradition reflects more a desire to manipulate than to play the part of a feudal king. After the English victory against the Yorkshire army, the Speaker insists on presenting Jeremy as a war hero to validate future militarist endeavours. The most striking aspect of the Speaker's celebration after defeating the Yorkshire army pertains to the disconnect between his and Jeremy's interpretations of the event. The Speaker tells Jeremy, "This has been your battle … you shall be toasted at our banquet. Ah, this is a great day, a wonderful day! England is restored. Happiness and greatness lie before us" (214). The Speaker experiences his first military conflict through a fantasy, a "rapturous dream" (214) wherein he is a king of old and Jeremy is his heroic knight capable of turning the tide of a battle in an instant. Jeremy, on the other hand, is sick to his stomach and feels thoroughly like an imposter. He "reasoned earnestly with the old man [the Speaker]. He pointed out to him what a piece of luck it had been that the Yorkshiremen were fools enough to leave their transport exposed. He insisted that it was a mere chance that the destruction of their ammunition had thrown them into so disastrous a panic" (214). Jeremy grounds his observations in facts, and the facts are that his participation in the conflict was less than heroic. His voice trembled throughout the battle, he hesitated, and only survived because of luck: towards the end of the battle, "He reached for it [his gun] and began to fumble with the straps; but while he fumbled a desperate

Yorkshireman, turning like a rat, pushed a rifle into his face and pulled the trigger. It was not loaded" (210). Jeremy demonstrates a self-awareness that conflicts with the Speaker's eagerness to make him a hero. The Speaker's desire to celebrate Jeremy as a hero has little to do with Jeremy as a man or with Jeremy's actual achievements in the battle against the Yorkshiremen. Rather, the Speaker's ulterior motive is to make Jeremy into a symbol of military victory that justifies declaring war against other political opponents.

Through the Speaker and his wife, Shanks critiques the way English leaders employed the language of heroism during the Great War as a means of motivating civilians to sacrifice their lives in an unnecessary conflict. Shanks is particularly critical of the social construction of war heroes as real-life counterparts to the valiant knights of romantic stories. He unfolds this parody alongside unheroic but realistic descriptions of Jeremy's feelings and impressions during the battle. Shanks frames this battle so that the reader not only agrees with Jeremy that luck played a critical role in the English militia's victory, but also that the construction and celebration of war heroes is detrimental to the survival of England. It is indeed after presenting Jeremy as an infallible war hero that the Speaker justifies going into battle a second time in which luck fails him. The glorification of war heroism, whether in the form of romantic delusions of military invincibility or in the form of celebratory attitudes towards the military knowledge of veteran heroic figures, is for Shanks symptomatic of impending social degeneration. Shanks's novel therefore provides a scathing critique of early interwar militarist narratives advocating for militarization as a response to labour unrest at the same time as it warns against celebrating the destructive potential of science at the detriment of other scientific pursuits more likely to improve the human condition.

As a scientific romance, *The People of the Ruins* thus reinvigorates the narrative of degeneration that transpires in many of Wells's early novels and reworks the evolutionary subtext of prewar scientific romances as a commentary on modern tendencies to glorify military knowledge and promote veteran heroism. Shanks's novel works as a complex critique of early interwar social practices in Britain framed in a story demonstrating the eventual decline of scientific progressivism. *The People of the Ruins* thereby adapts Wells's response to late-nineteenth-century evolutionary theories to demonstrate the necessity to embrace an anti-militarist perspective on the problem of labour unrest in Britain. Wells was critical of his contemporaries' comforting assumption that "in the past the great scroll of nature ha[d] been steadily unfolding to reveal a constantly richer harmony of forms and successively higher grades of being, and … that this 'evolution' will continue with increasing velocity under the supervision of its extreme expression—man" (Wells 246). Shanks's novel likewise underscores the necessity to remain critical of decisions made in the present, for long-term human progress is not a guarantee. Like many of his contemporaries, Shanks saw in the class conflicts occurring all over the world an omen of an upcoming sequel to the Great War. *The People of the Ruins* thus presents an anti-militarist satire prophesizing the various possible consequences of the early interwar glorification of war heroism and war knowledge.

In the aftermath of the Great War, anti-Bolshevism provided conservative fiction writers like McNeile, Hambrook, and Shanks with a vehicle to discuss domestic transformations. In many ways, their novels reveal a sense of insecurity regarding Britain's ability to maintain hegemonic power. This insecurity predates the Bolshevik

Revolution by several decades, but in the wake of this event the example of Bolshevik

Russia substantiated fears that the emancipatory objectives of the working class could

lead to civil war and the destruction of Britain. The divide between militarism and anti-

militarism demonstrates the complexity of formulating a response against labour unrest

for those who believed British society should strive to re-establish its prewar status quo.

In fact, the example of revolutionary Russia leant itself both to militarist and anti-

militarist interpretations of how *not* to deal with domestic revolutionaries. A militarist

interpretation of the Bolshevik Revolution would frame it as evidence that the Provisional

Government should have been more proactive in trying to supplant Lenin and his

supporters by any means possible. Conversely, and perhaps more accurately, an anti-

militarist account of the February and Bolshevik Revolutions would present the former as

largely resulting from the Tsar's established willingness to order his troops to open fire

on Russian citizens, and the latter from the Provisional Government's misjudged attempts

to uphold the Tsar's military commitments without considering the Russian population's

demands between February and October 1917 (OS).

     Anti-Bolshevik fiction thus shows how militarist and anti-militarist interpretations

of Russia's revolutionary year of 1917 could colour fictional accounts of the

revolutionary threat in Britain. For popular fiction writers with a mind to write about

Bolshevism after the war, Russia provided more than a roster of caricatural villains. It

offered an example of a hegemonic power falling apart in a matter of months because of

actions perpetrated by a group of unknown radicals. The transposition of the Russian

revolutionary context into fiction of British revolutions demonstrates the power of

foreign events to influence the production of culture in Britain. These British writers

reimagined the events of the Bolshevik Revolution to formulate a critique of the British response to domestic labour unrest. For this reason, anti-Bolshevik fiction should be read and analyzed primarily as a set of responses to British domestic transformations rather than as a commentary on Russian culture for a British audience; such fiction aimed to make sense of British social transformations, not of events occurring in Russia.

Chapter 5: The Emergence of Red Fiction as a Genre: Spiritual Hope in J. D. Beresford's *Revolution*

5.1   Speculative Politics in *Revolution*

This final chapter interprets J. D. Beresford's *Revolution* (1921) as presenting an optimistic and spiritualist response to Shanks's pessimism displayed in *The People of the Ruins*. The analysis first introduces *Revolution* through a critical assessment of the novel's reception at the time of publication and in contemporary scholarship. This assessment demonstrates how difficult it is for reviewers and scholars alike to reconcile the political and literary components of speculative novels explicitly dealing with polarizing political subjects such as revolution. Then, it unfolds a reading of the counter-revolution that occurs alongside a moment of spiritual epiphany for the protagonist in the final chapters of *Revolution*, which I interpret as making a case for spiritualism and mysticism as answers to the political turmoil raging in Britain. Finally, the chapter offers preliminary observations on Red fiction as an emerging genre rather than a series of isolated works of fiction. It analyzes Beresford's citation of Shanks's novel in the last pages of *Revolution* as revealing the development of a discursive space for Red fiction in Britain as a type of political fiction with a language of its own.

The reception of Beresford's *Revolution* at the time of publication and in recent scholarship is a prime example of the difficulty for reviewers and scholars alike to treat the portrayal of politics in a speculative novel as part of a whole rather than as a distraction from the fiction or, conversely, as the only relevant feature of the novel. In the American edition of *Revolution*, Beresford included a brief foreword in which he

addresses the antagonistic response to his novel in England. Beresford's English audience

accused him of "having attempted a definite precast of social troubles over here in the

near future," which "stimulated a violent antagonism in many of [his] reviewers"

(Beresford, *Revolution* V). Beresford claims that this antagonism has led most of his

reviewers to focus on counterarguing the specifics of his precast rather than "[deal] with

the book as a whole" (V). This foreword to the American edition therefore represents an

attempt to redirect the attention of new readers towards the wider vision of his work

while warning them not to get too caught up in the material details and political

skirmishes that appear in the story. Beresford's response to his English reviewers is that

he does "not anticipate a bloody revolution in England either on the lines indicated or on

any other," but that he "hold[s] [himself] definitely committed to a prophecy" (V). His

prophecy is grounded in a belief that "European civilisation has passed its highest point

of development and will gradually decline" (V), a pessimistic belief that echoes Shanks's

The People of the Ruins. Beresford prophesizes that the conflict between capitalism and

labour in England will be resolved in more or less peaceful terms, but will strip England

of its influence on the international scene, after which the English "must look to the

United States of America for the development of a new world-order" (VI).

Already in this short foreword, Beresford drastically distinguishes his novel from

most of his contemporaries' attempts to grapple with England's revolutionary potential in

fiction. Beresford believes that the upcoming decline of English society will result from

the impossibility to reconcile the aims of typical English individuals, which are based on

violent prejudices regardless of these individuals' social class and experience. For

Beresford, the moral of his novel is "not that we must prepare for the upcoming conflict,

but that what we need in Great Britain is a change of heart, a change of outlook, a new attitude" (VI). In light of the analyses deployed in the previous chapters, the most striking aspect of Beresford's prophecy pertains to an apparent absence of xenophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism. In *Revolution*, radicalism emerges from within England, and the Bolsheviks, Jews, and Germans—anyone deemed *not* British—are no more to blame for it than the French or the Americans. This preface already situates Beresford's novel alongside Shanks's *The People of the Ruins* as an anti-militarist narrative, even before the reader begins reading the novel. What Great Britain needs, according to Beresford, is peace rather than war.

Despite Beresford's claim that his English reviewers failed to grasp the philosophical argument of his novel, two of them made particularly insightful observations on the emerging genre of Red fiction: Virginia Woolf and Edward Shanks himself. In her review of *Revolution*, Woolf foregrounds one of the central difficulties of writing speculative novels about future revolutions: is it even possible for a writer to create nuanced and convincing characters while elaborating all the factual information pertaining to the novel's revolutionary setting? Woolf argues that revolutions can make reasonable settings for novels, provided that they have occurred sufficiently long ago to have entered the realm of general knowledge. The difficulty with inventing one's own revolution, then, lies in the fact that there exists no history book that can serve as a companion piece to the novel; the novelist needs to include in the novel all the information necessary to understand the political backdrop of the story. This necessity, for Woolf, makes it particularly difficult for a writer to give proper attention to the characters' inner lives and emotions. She sees worldbuilding, a crucial aspect of

speculative fiction, as ultimately making the reader long for more factual information regarding the imaginary political setting, rather than longing for more fiction.

Woolf's belief that imaginary societies, fictional projections into the future, and alternate realities stand in the way of proper characterization is an embryo of her often-cited critique of Wells's fiction, "There are no Mrs. Browns in Utopia" ("Mr. Bennett" 327)—Mrs. Browns representing the "protean personification of character" (McNeillie xiv). For Woolf, one ought to "feel … a little defrauded when a writer like Mr. Beresford, who can make you interested in his characters, chooses instead to make you interested in the failure of the Communal milk-cart to arrive at Winston at half-past nine" (Woolf, "'Revolution'" 279). Woolf sees the time and energy spent polishing the details of a fictional revolution as a waste of the writer's creative energy and a distraction for the reader.

She singles out the concluding passage of *Revolution* as illustrating how the speculative political setting of the novel creeps into passages that are ostensibly about a character's inner life. In this passage, Lady Angela, the daughter of an influential aristocrat, plays Chopin on the piano by the light of a candle. After her performance, Lady Angela remains entranced for a few seconds, "trembling with a thrill of resignation" (Beresford, *Revolution* 356).[39] These concluding pages focus exclusively on Lady Angela's thoughts and emotions until she gradually returns to her senses, aware that "civilisation was dying full of sin and splendour, of fierce incompleted desires and glorious accomplishments" (357). It is thus that she brings the story to an end, while the

---

[39] All excerpts of Beresford's *Revolution* were taken from the American edition published in 1921 by G. P. Putnam's Sons in New York due to this edition's ease of access for me compared to the English one.

narrator discloses that "it seemed to her that all human life was but a little candle burning in the great dark house of the world, a trembling light of aspiration and endeavour that would presently be quenched by the coming of the dawn" (357). Woolf comments on this passage that

> we should be convinced that it is Lady Angela who matters, and not the cooperative movement. If our attention wanders it annoys us, because we feel that human beings are too important to be disregarded, and yet, as Lady Angela plays, we cannot help thinking about a possible policy for the left wing of the Labour Party. We want Mr. Beresford to turn his mind to that problem, directly the Chopin is over. In short, we want him to give us facts, not fiction. (Woolf, "'Revolution'" 281)

Lady Angela may be a superficially drawn character by Woolf's standards, but she is certainly the sole focus of that last passage. Woolf generalizes her distaste for worldbuilding when she suggests that "we," as readers, cannot help thinking about policies during this passage. It is perfectly possible, despite Woolf's assertion, for a reader to hold both character and worldbuilding details in his or her mind simultaneously, and there is nothing in the passage that explicitly shifts the focus towards "policies."

This closing passage could better be read as an echo of an earlier passage in the novel that similarly evokes a musical fade out as Lady Angela finishes playing a piano piece by a hearth fire that "had died down to a red glow" (Beresford, *Revolution* 357) in a "room … almost in darkness" (357). Lady Angela plays the piano twice in the novel, once on the last night before her father willingly relinquishes their class privilege to rebels to avoid violence, and the other by the light of a candle at the end of the novel. In

the former passage, the protagonist reflects on Lady Angela's musical choice and says that "The exquisite resignation of that posthumous study conveyed to him a sense of human achievement triumphant in the face of death" (194-95). In this first musical performance, Beresford addresses directly the kind of political distraction in which Woolf is interested. Lady Angela proposes playing "something appropriate" to "have a few minutes' peace from politics" (194). Rather than worldbuilding details distracting the reader from Lady Angela, Lady Angela herself suggests that her playing is meant as a distraction from politics.

This distraction works better on some characters than others. Unlike the protagonist Paul Leaming and Lady Angela's family who are deeply moved by the music, Mr. Leaming (Paul's father, a middle-class conservative) cannot possibly care less about Chopin at that moment. When Lady Angela is about to begin playing, he "look[s] at his host as if pleading that the music should be postponed until his very important opinion had been given" (194). As soon as she is done, while the entire audience but him is in tears, Mr. Leaming "look[s] up hopefully, as if he had spent the interval in an impatient desire to get back to the business of life" (196)—this business pertaining to deciding whether or not to fight back against the reorganization of the village on communist lines. Woolf's observation would, in fact, be better suited to this first piano passage, with the addendum that the politics creeping into Lady Angela's artistic moment fully contribute to the symbolism of the passage rather than distract from it. Mr. Leaming's disregard for the majestic beauty of Lady Angela's playing reflects her selection of Chopin's posthumous study in A flat, which she describes as an "anticipation—of passing" (194). Paul concretizes her metaphor when he observes that in this musical selection "he saw

not the consumptive Chopin proudly and delicately awaiting his fall into the darkness, but the passing of the aristocratic spirit" (194-95). Mr. Leaming's palpable desire to return to the subject of politics at the second Lady Angela is done playing reminds the reader that the aristocratic spirit that infuses her performance is indeed at a dead end and is bound to disappear; as a successful businessman, Mr. Leaming cannot care for music when he thinks his world is coming to an end. His desire to fight for his private property and privileges differs from the aristocratic family's passive resignation in that he would rather die (and he is indeed killed) than give away the fruit of his hard work. The final piano scene builds on this first passage and suggests that civilization, rather than aristocracy, is dying. By refusing to relinquish their privileges and organizing a counter-revolution later in the novel, the aristocrats shift their fate onto civilization itself. This closing passage therefore encloses a pacifist warning against violent retribution at the same time as it engages in a nostalgic portrayal of the aristocratic spirit as a stand in for civilization.

Shanks's engagement with Beresford's novel in his review for the *London Mercury* does not warrant as lengthy a commentary as Woolf's review. A significant portion of the review summarizes the plot of *Revolution* with little interpretive effort. Shanks praises the ingenuity of Beresford's dramatization of shell shock as a substitute for the kind of sleep-trance that Jeremy Tuft experiences in *The People of the Ruins*; Beresford employs his protagonist's mental breakdown as a means of alienating him from the politics of his time in a way that resembles Jeremy's alienation in future England. Nevertheless, the insight of Shanks's review lies less in his reading of *Revolution* than in his assessment of Beresford's sympathies as an author. Shanks writes,

>One should be careful (as I have good reason to know) in imputing particular sympathies to the author of such a book as this. Nevertheless it appears that Mr. Beresford's feelings are with the aspirations of labour, but that he sees no hope in violent action: he recommends instead (a counsel of perfection? or of despair?) the disinterestedness, the selflessness of Paul Leaming. It is a positive, if a visionary suggestion; and where a politician might refrain from making any suggestion, when such a qualification must be added, the novelist need not refrain, indeed should not. (Shanks, "Fiction" 442)

Shanks's assessment of Beresford's "suggestion" speaks to his own understanding of fiction as liberating the writer from the kinds of external pressure that would affect the discourse of a politician. Whereas politicians might need to censor their thoughts to protect their reputation or minimize negative political repercussions, novelists have almost absolute freedom to explore even the most fanciful politics, as Beresford does in this novel by drawing heavily on mysticism as a political solution to England's problems. As we will see below, belief in the occult and in mysticism was widespread in early-twentieth-century England, but politicians could hardly draw on such belief systems to devise courses of action or propaganda. For Shanks, Beresford's novel is a prime example of the power of fiction to discuss difficult political topics. As such, Shanks's review, while only superficially engaging with Beresford's novel, nevertheless provides crucial insight on how to approach reading political fiction. In line with his use of scientific romance conventions in *The People of the Ruins* as a liberating way of projecting current-day scientific concerns into the future, Shanks endorses a conceptualization of speculative political novels as equally liberating for the author.

In contemporary scholarship, Beresford's *Revolution* is among the most often-cited novels in surveys of interwar Red Scares in British literature. Yet, few scholars discuss the novel as anything more than its political message, the nature of which remains elusive. Antony Taylor describes Beresford as "a rare example of a non-aligned author" (86), a claim that rings truer of the protagonist than of the author himself. Taylor conflates the impartiality of Beresford's protagonist with that of Beresford himself, omitting to consider how the novel as a whole acts as a commentary on the Bolshevik Revolution and on the rise of radicalism in England. Rebecca Beasley addresses this aspect of the novel directly and reads the novel as "represent[ing] the October Revolution negatively to make the case for socialist gradualism" (400). Beasley situates *Revolution* alongside H. G. Wells's *Men Like Gods* (1923) and J. C. Welsh's *The Morlocks* (1924), other works that were supportive of revolutionary activity but opposed to violent revolutions (400). In this way, Beasley contradicts Taylor's understanding of Beresford as "non-aligned" and establishes the author as representative of a strand of socialism in Britain (most prominently Fabian socialism) that endorsed a gradual transformation of the State towards socialism over violent revolutions.

Although Beasley describes Beresford's novel as representative of a specific category of works engaging with socialism while deploring the Bolshevik Revolution, other scholars such as Michael Hughes, Harry Wood, and Gregory Claeys read the novel as echoing a larger portion of Britain's counter-revolutionary cultural production. Hughes and Wood foreground the novel's treatment of revolution as synonymous with the collapse of civilization (303), which they see as similar to the works of several other Red Scare novelists and prewar writers of invasion fiction. Claeys's reading of *Revolution*

aligns with that of Hughes and Wood since he portrays the novel as a dystopia imbued with stereotypical counter-revolutionary arguments such as those claiming that communism empowers the cruel and ignorant and that, in communism, the poor inevitably plunder the rich (Claeys 305-6). One problem with each of these scholars' assessments of the novel lies in their necessarily limited attention to the novel's nuances. Taylor, Beasley, Hughes and Wood, and Claeys each devote one page at most to Beresford's novel. This is largely an inevitable consequence of the impressive number of fictional works each of them brings together. Their survey approach helps identify key strands of cultural production during the period, but at the same time it severely reduces the complexity of some of the works under scrutiny. This is especially true of Beresford's *Revolution* whose richness defies one- or two-paragraph analyses. Unlike McNeile and Hambrook who assume from the outset that an English revolution would empower the cruel and see the rich plundered by the poor, Beresford walks his reader through the psychological processes informing each character's corroboration of these Red Scare stereotypes and prejudices. In this way, Beresford's approach can be seen as the opposite of Shanks's; despite the fact that the two authors share a disdain for violence and militarism in the aftermath of the war, Beresford's interest is in the life of typical individuals rather than in large historical forces as we saw in Shanks's fiction. Beresford portrays both revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries as shaped by their upbringing, personal interests, wealth, and convictions. Instead of imposing a value judgement on his characters, Beresford delves into their psychology to portray each of their actions, intelligent and reckless ones alike, as most logical and sensible from the characters' viewpoints.

Beresford was one of a very few English novelists operating within London's more prestigious literary circles who wrote fiction that explored the prospect of an English revolution. Among his close friends figured some of England's most famous authors of the period such as D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Hugh Walpole, H. G. Wells, Walter de la Mare, and Dorothy Richardson. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Beresford was known as a "solid realistic novelist" (Johnson, "J. D. Beresford" 19) whose work showed a strong grasp of human psychology. One critic in 1924 placed Beresford above Lawrence, Walpole, and Frank Swinnerton as "the one most equally endowed with that *intelligence* and that *imagination* of life which make good writers of fiction" (Chevalley qtd. in Johnson, "J. D. Beresford" 19, italics in original). Written at the peak of Beresford's prolific literary career (forty-nine novels and five collections of short stories, essays, and reviews), *Revolution* was not Beresford's most acclaimed work but still reflected the skills of an accomplished novelist.

Beresford had already published eleven novels before writing *Revolution* and was well attuned to the mechanics of the novel as a literary form. This experience reflects in Beresford's attention to detail in the characters' psychology, a hallmark of his writing style. Like Hambrook in his preface, Beresford claims to be portraying types of people rather than alluding to living persons (*Revolution* VI). However, his grasp of human psychology results in characters that seem more human than allegorical even though most of these characters are representative of a specific social class and its perspective on revolutions. In *Revolution*, no character stands as an allegorical representation of the ideal Englishman or Briton, nor are the characters organized on a spectrum of heroism and villainy. George Johnson claims that *Revolution* "offers an especially dramatic expression

of the need for self-renunciation and to work for the common good" (*J. D. Beresford* 144). It is precisely because none of the characters are villains like Peterson, Mostyn, or the Speaker that such an expression is credible in *Revolution*.

The treatment of Beresford's novel in academic studies reflects an understanding of political novels falling in the broad category of popular fiction that is unworthy of literary criticism. These books are most often distilled to their political argument (which is generally based on simplistic readings of their plots and characters) and then employed as data for historical overviews. This treatment speaks to the marginalized status of popular fiction in studies of Anglo-Russian exchanges, where works like *Revolution*, *The People of the Ruins*, *The Red To-Morrow*, *Bull-Dog Drummond*, and the *Black Gang* are treated as works that one needs only to acknowledge briefly before getting to the more interesting and comfortable subject matter of canonical authors, or as an afterthought after lengthy discussions on said authors. Nevertheless, there remains a lot to be said about this cultural production, which despite all its flaws (these rarely go unnoticed in the scholarship), tried to make sense, in its own terms and in its own language, of a politically shifting landscape in Britain.

5.2   Counter-Revolution and Spiritual Revelation

The action in *Revolution* is set in the fictional village of Fynemore, a suburb of London, and shows the delayed impact of a revolution in London as its repercussions progressively make their way into the relatively isolated village. The protagonist Paul Leaming, a shell-shocked ex-serviceman gradually returning to his senses after four years of seclusion from public activity, spends the early chapters of the novel trying to make up

his mind on the political climate of England. Like Hambrook's protagonist Alec Wilson,

Paul wavers between conservative politics (prominently endorsed by his father) and

socialist politics (represented through the charismatic orator Isaac Perry). Shortly before

the beginning of the story, Perry revealed himself as the leader of a large amalgamation

of trade unions in England and issued an ultimatum to the government demanding a

number of significant social reforms such as the gradual nationalization of the land,

abolition of inheritance, and uniform educational system. After Paul returns to his senses

at the very start of the novel, Perry sets in motion a general strike until the government

eventually yields to his terms and abdicates. During that transitional phase, Perry is

accidentally killed by a stray shot during a public appearance, which throws most of his

supporters on a quest for revenge against his political opponents. As the news of Perry's

death reaches the small village of Fynemore, Paul steps up as a mediator between

revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries to help carry out the peaceful transition

towards a socialist organization of the village's land, businesses, and institutions. Unlike

Wilson, Paul transcends the polarity of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary politics

by preaching what Taylor describes as "a doctrine of religious humanism" (Taylor 86), a

quasi-mystical doctrine focused above all on peace and compromise. Paul is an

unwavering pacifist whose sole objective in life after the war, at the expense of his own

safety and reputation, is to prevent fighting in his village and minimize loss of life. In this

endeavour, he undergoes a spiritual transformation that leaves him momentarily in charge

of managing his fellow villagers amid tense conflicts.

In *Revolution*, Beresford demonstrates an awareness of other works of fiction

dealing with the Bolshevik Revolution. The character of Lord Winston, the brother of

Lady Angela and a militarist counter-revolutionary, appears as a nod to McNeile's gang

of ex-servicemen. When Paul first discusses his "great faith in a new power that is

coming—coming from the outside" (Beresford, *Revolution* 312) with Lord Winston, the

latter misunderstands Paul: "'Do you mean a foreign invasion?' He asked, not without a

touch of anxiety" (312). Paul's immediate answer, "No, certainly not that" (313),

dismisses the political message of so many other novels discussing the revolution. The

new power that Paul awaits anxiously is distinctly *not* an invasion from abroad, but rather

a message from a religious, otherworldly entity. Lord Winston's apparent fear of

invasion, his public-school upbringing, and his belief in the necessity of violence to

ensure the re-establishment of the old institutions reminds one of McNeile's

ex-servicemen, minus the glorification. In Paul's view, Lord Winston is a man who

believes that the counter-revolution "[is] to be a time for pouncing and shooting, for

enforcing peace at the muzzle of a gun in order to re-establish the old oligarchy" (318).

The fact that Lord Winston dies promptly afterward during an altercation with the

revolutionary faction of Fynemore, shows that for Beresford, McNeile's brand of

militarist heroism is not to be praised. Lord Winston's death is neither mourned nor

celebrated, even though the counter-revolutionary insurrection succeeds at that moment.

Just like Hambrook, Beresford secludes his protagonist as a revolutionary

moment looms in the near future. However, while Hambrook's protagonist sits in a

prison cell when the peaceful revolution occurs and lives through the violent revolution

that follows, Paul experiences fully the peaceful revolution but is forcefully secluded

during the violent counter-revolution. This reversal foregrounds the distinct propagandist

purposes of the two authors' works at the same time as it consolidates a generic

convention possibly specific to Red fiction. That the revolutions come in pairs—a peaceful one followed by a violent one—in the two novels is hardly surprising, considering the succession of revolutions that occurred in Russia in 1917. However, the novelists' decision not to have their protagonists personally experience both revolutions is an argument in and of itself on the subjects of revolution and violence. Hambrook sensationalizes the violent revolution as a cautionary tale for Britain, unlike Beresford who is not entirely opposed to revolutions. From *Revolution*, one can infer that Beresford's point of contention with the Bolshevik Revolution was its violence, as signaled by Paul's pacifism. Beresford's decision to highlight the peaceful revolution over the violent one supports this inference, since by doing so he portrays the counter-revolutionary violence endorsed by the likes of McNeile and Hambrook as truly horrific. In *Revolution*, even more than the impulsive radical Jem Oliver who kills two characters, it is Lord Winston that one should fear and despise since his vision of peace hinges on forcefully re-establishing the institutions that privilege him and his family above anyone else.

As shown in Chapter 3, Hambrook's portrayal of the peaceful revolution as occurring between two chapters suggests that the temporality of revolutions is of such speed that it can surprise even those working to occasion them. However, read alongside Beresford's *Revolution*, Hambrook's absent revolution acquires a new meaning which, although drastically different from the reading proposed in Chapter 3, still functions as anti-Bolshevik propaganda. A joint reading of Hambrook's and Beresford's novels underscores the fact that Hambrook confines the peaceful revolution to the space between two pages whereas Beresford confines the counter-revolutionary revolution to two

paragraphs: these are indeed the revolutions they want their readers to disregard. The fictionalization of a peaceful revolution followed by a violent one is an allusion to be expected in works inspired by the sequencing of the February Revolution followed by the Bolshevik Revolution. However, to avoid burdening their novels with too heavy a focus on factual information, both writers choose to have their protagonist experience only one of the two revolutions. This decision is inherently political and a crucial feature of these two fictional transpositions of the Russian revolutionary events into a British context.

Beresford stages Lord Winston's counter-revolution as a prelude to Paul's climactic vision at the end of the novel, which promptly reminds the reader that it is Paul who matters rather than the violence, at the same time as it lays down the foundations for Beresford's response to Shanks's novel. The counter-revolutionary violence stirs Paul's perception of time and leads him to experience a spiritual journey through hell and back. When it becomes clear for Lord Winston and his father that Paul cannot be trusted with keeping the counter-revolutionary plans to himself, they promptly confine Paul to a kitchen with two guards. Alone in the kitchen, Paul slowly becomes hypnotized by the sound of a grandfather clock whose chiming seems never to end. For Paul, "The clock might have struck twenty or a thousand for all that [he] could reckon of its long agony" (Beresford, *Revolution* 326). He soon loses track of time after hearing the thud of the clock. An hour and a half go by without him noticing, and he awakes from his torpor only when Winston returns to the kitchen to take the men guarding Paul with him. In complete silence except for the "long, deliberate tick-tack of the old clock" (328), Paul concentrates to hear as far away as he can, so that he can know whether or not violence is

to occur.[40] In all his concentration, the clock remains a "complacent" background noise which eventually merges with a sound of "tink! tink! tink!": the "thin and delicate lees of the music made by a blacksmith's hammer and anvil" (329). Eventually, the "musical tink-tink" ceases and is followed by a revolver shot. Violence and chaos ensue. Rifle shots can be heard, "two, close together—then perhaps half a dozen almost simultaneously, until they merged, as it seemed to Paul, into a continuous, irregular volley … into the crash of bursting shells … into the terrible unceasing tumult of hell … dominated strangely and horribly by the rising, threatening note of whirring, clicking clock about to strike" (330-31).

Paul's aversion to violence and conflict is transposed onto the clock in this passage. Randall Stevenson explains that the Great War gave a new dimension to the oppressive nature of the clock. From the industrial revolution onward, the clock had regulated and synchronized industrial work and workers in oppressive ways. As industrial capitalists improved their methods, time measurement became increasingly common as a means of exploiting workers (Thompson 80). The legislative establishment of Greenwich Mean Time as a global timekeeping standard in 1884 further concretized the authoritarian nature of the clock as it gave a cosmopolitan dimension to the timepiece's control over human activity (Barrows 52). By the outbreak of the war, the clock had already become a recurrent metaphor to critique the dehumanizing aspect of industrial work. The war, however, necessitated an even stricter control over time (Stevenson, "'Wheels within Wheels'" 66). The success of military strategies and the survival of troops often

---

[40] In this novel, Beresford employs the onomatopoeic "tick-tack" rather than the more common "tick-tock" to describe the ticking of the clock.

depended on the soldiers' perfect synchronicity in executing their tasks. Soldiers were given wristwatches which proved very useful despite being hitherto considered effeminate (67). In Stevenson's words, "By 1916, death—like life and work generally—was ever more firmly in the hands of the clock" (67). Beresford's critique of mechanical time therefore occurs on two different levels. Paul's conflation of counter-revolutionary violence with the ticking of the clock serves as a critique of modernity. Beresford portrays the clock and counter-revolutionaries as disrupting the peace of Nature and that of the village, which appear both as barriers to the modern project: Nature as a force to conquer and the village as backward and averse to change, the antithesis of the modern city. Furthermore, considering the village's complete isolation from the rest of England during the revolution and the relative peace that arises from this self-governance, the background sound of the clock ticking during the counter-revolution serves as a reminder that the arbitrary decision of homogenizing and synchronizing small communities according to the reality of large urban centres like London is inherently violent; whether it be through insidious reforms like the establishment of standard time or more overtly violent reforms like revolutions and counter-revolutions, small communities have little say over changes occurring in their own nation.

Beresford's narrator describes the clock simultaneously as an object of disruption and as an object of comfort. The clock's loud chime disrupts the peace of Nature in a "tremendous ebullition" (Beresford, *Revolution* 328), but at the same time it serves as an anchor for Paul when confronted with traumatic war memories. When Paul tries to concentrate too hard on distant sounds to hear if he can apprehend the violence about to occur in the village, he remembers the terror he felt during the war when he was assigned

to a listening post to "detect the furtive movements of men in the trenches and the hushed instructions of a low German voice" (328). In this moment, Paul dispels "that illusion by a deliberate attention to the complacent tick-tack of the satisfied clock in the room behind him" (328-29). The clock provides Paul the deceptive comfort of regularity and order at the same time as it violently disrupts the peaceful silence of Nature and demonstrates the extent of its invasiveness—in the midst of his most traumatic memories and in perceptual isolation, Paul still hears the ticking of the clock.

Amid this silence interspersed with the ticking of the clock, Paul can hear the intermittent hammering of a blacksmith from far away. The narrator describes the blacksmith's cadence as musical (329, 330). Unlike the clock, the blacksmith's ticking is distinctly human and thus imperfect. It is "occasional" (329) and "delicate" (329) as opposed to the clock's "deliberate" (328), "complacent" (329), and "threatening" (331) ticking. Through these adjectives, the narrator gives more decisive agency to the clock than the blacksmith, since the descriptions of their respective ticking present the clock as intentionally disrupting the peace of Nature whereas the blacksmith's hammering appears as a musical complement to that same peace. For the clock, the ticking is an end in itself whereas for the blacksmith it is a consequence of his work for the community. After three months living in isolation from the rest of England under a relatively successful attempt at communist governance, the blacksmith's work is no longer attached to the violence of capitalist competition or to the arbitrariness of social classes and economic inequality. Furthermore, his work is for the good of the community and is thus harmonious with the peace of Nature—it is part of the natural order. When the hammering ceases in the far distance, Paul rationalizes that "it did not follow that the worker, whoever he was, had

been forcibly interrupted; he might have finished his job, or be taking a rest" (330). The blacksmith's work does not acknowledge the authority of the clock. He works and rests according to his needs rather than to those of a mechanical device.

However, in this case the blacksmith was indeed forcefully interrupted. Five minutes before 5 p.m., when the "clock in the kitchen had just 'given warning'" (330), the "intense peace of the golden afternoon [is] suddenly violated by the sound of a single shot" (330) that is quickly followed by several others. The narrator connects the explicit violence of the gunshot to the violence of the clock. It is not the death of Lord Winston that makes the gunshot violent (for he is on the receiving end of this first shot), but the fact that it interrupts the magnified and oxymoronic "intense peace" of a paradisiac afternoon. Like the clock's "warning," this gunshot announces many more to come, and even as the chaotic gun fight resounds as "the terrible unceasing tumult of hell" (330), it is not the counter-revolution that the narrator brings to the reader's attention but the fact that this hellish tumult is "dominated … by the rising, threatening … clock about to strike…" (331). The narrator subsumes the counter-revolutionary violence to the clock itself, which suggests that the clock is to be understood as an emblem of the old institutions and their impending return to power. The ellipsis at the end of the excerpt further announces more violence to come. The violent gun fight is over but the clock still threatens to strike, a threat of future violence that will rhythmically and perpetually repeat itself unless the clock and what it stands for are forcibly interrupted.

Paul never hears the strike of 5 p.m. because it is at this precise moment that his mind disconnects from reality and he experiences his life-changing vision. At that moment, he "[felt] himself falling. All sound had ceased, and he was sinking slowly and

interminably into a darkness that continually increased and thickened until it was as if he sank into a fog of motionless black smoke" (331). Paul often describes the place his mind goes to in times of stress as his "retreat," a place that time and social concerns cannot reach. We learn at the outset of the novel that he stayed in that retreat for a few years after the Great War, and that it is the violence of war that induced this "mental sickness" (60). In *Revolution*, we are therefore presented with an attempt to reclaim post-traumatic stress disorder in positive terms. For Johnson, this is the novel's main innovation, one that makes *Revolution* possibly "the first English novel to suggest that a shell-shocked victim has emerged from the trauma of war saner and with greater insight than those around him, who remain mired in rigid tradition and habit-bound ways of thinking" (*J. D. Beresford* 144). In the novels previously considered, shell shock appears as a numbing condition indicative of weakness more than anything else. For instance, in *The Red To-morrow* Wilson is misdiagnosed as "probably suffering from 'shell-shock'" after making unfounded accusations about Mostyn (Hambrook, *Red To-Morrow* 132). In *Bull-Dog Drummond*, only the villain Lakington appears to suffer from shell shock. In both cases, the diagnosis has a negative connotation as an explanation for apparent incoherence or villainy.

Shell shock (renamed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in 1980) is one of the most enduring legacies of the Great War. Despite being a condition whose symptoms did not originate (as it was once believed) from the Great War itself (Jones and Wessely 1-17; Reid 15-16), it is with this war that shell shock is most often associated. Following the war, shell-shocked ex-servicemen and the psychiatrists who worked with them dismantled Victorian misconceptions about mental illness and trauma (Reid 10). During

the war, shell shock was most often understood as a sign of weakness, as it appears in the novels of McNeile and Hambrook. But by the late 1920s, shell-shocked ex-servicemen had acquired a new status in the public commemoration of the war: no longer accused of cowardice, these men who still suffered from their service in the war were defended by those taking care of them as "ha[ving] an exceptional claim on the nation … not just because of their painful neuroses, but because shell-shocked men were uniquely unable to forget the war and all its traumas" (28). Considering the central place of the war and the "urge to remember" during interwar Britain, which according to Paul Fussell still had lingering effects on Britons' daily lives even at the end of the twentieth century (781), shell-shocked ex-servicemen's inability to forget the war cemented their place in the popular imagination of the war up to this day. In the English-speaking world, shell shock has become a metaphor for industrial warfare and the Great War specifically (Winter 8). This explains why the term shell shock evokes the Great War even for people with limited knowledge of this conflict.

Beresford's portrayal of shell shock as providing a spiritual connection with the metaphysical world thus represents an early attempt to reclaim the image of the broken ex-serviceman in positive terms. Paul's service in the war leaves him traumatized and "queer" (Beresford 5), but his trauma gives him an enhanced appreciation for peace. Beresford did not serve in the war because he contracted poliomyelitis at age three and limped his entire life. In the 1930s, he reflected, "I remember very clearly that in the years immediately following the War I often felt that for such non-combatants as myself there was little left to write about" (Beresford qtd. in Johnson, *J. D. Beresford* 73). Paul's portrayal as a shell-shocked ex-serviceman therefore allowed Beresford to incorporate the

subject of the war into the story of a character who, like many of Beresford's protagonists, learns to find his place in society while knowing that he is different from the norm. Beresford began writing at a young age as an escape from the bullying of his schoolmates and the embarrassment of his parents (*J. D. Beresford* 4, 6-7). Johnson postulates that Beresford's early writing while still at school was "perhaps … a way of creating a world in which he was not 'defective'" ("J. D. Beresford" 20). The theme of "abnormal" young men recurs in a few of Beresford's early novels, such as in Beresford's most enduring novel, *The Hampdenshire Wonder* (1911), which follows the short life of a physically deformed child of superhuman intellectual capacities. In *Revolution*, Paul is no child genius but his introduction at the beginning of the novel as a shell-shocked ex-serviceman still frames him as a son in need of parental attention whose persona revolves around his sense of exclusion from the rest of society. It is his difference that defines him throughout much of the novel.

Beresford approaches the subject of shell shock as a form of mystical connection with the spiritual realm, as a means of escaping the horrors of the modern world. Paul describes his "mystical" (Beresford, *Revolution* 84) withdrawals from reality as an "old half-hypnotic condition in which he had been able, as it seemed, to enter into the spirit of matter" (60). Paul goes to his mental retreats several times over the course of the novel, but that specific instance after the counter-revolution is the only time that Paul is confronted with images of darkness and hell. His usual retreats involve communing with Nature at a spiritual level, whether that be with the "Spirit of the Roses" (131) or simply with "the lush vegetation about him" (163). This spiritualism is a running theme in Beresford's later fiction published from 1925 onward (Johnson, "J. D. Beresford" 26) and

became, in his 1930s novels, increasingly present alongside another related preoccupation: mysticism. In *Revolution* we can see these interests working their way into Beresford's fiction earlier in his career.

Beresford's preoccupation with mysticism reflects a general popular interest in the paranormal and the occult in Britain in the early twentieth century. Arthur Conan Doyle and W. B. Yeats were two of many prominent figures commonly associated with this trend for whom mysticism, spiritualism, and the occult became integral to their early-twentieth-century literary production (Brantlinger 249-50). They were both members of the Society for Psychical Research, which also counted Beresford among its members and was a leading force behind the popular interest for the paranormal from the turn of the century onward. The society was originally created with the intent of investigating scientifically the claims and practices of "spiritualism," the belief that the human spirit outlives the human body and can thus be contacted after death (Keeley 767). In response to the immense number of casualties left by the Great War and the Spanish Influenza pandemic, the occult became a therapeutic means of coping with the trauma of loss (Johnson, *Mourning and Mysticism* 3), an alternative to religion and modern medicine.

In *Revolution*, mysticism and spiritualism permeate Paul's experience of the world and allow him to forget momentarily his psychological scars earned during the war. A few years before shell-shocked ex-servicemen were to be reclaimed as iconic of the Great War for their unique inability to forget the war, Beresford presents Paul as uniquely *able* to dismiss his memories of the war. Paul's retreats into the spiritual realm, which for his family are indissociable from his "queer" behaviour since returning from the war, are fully separate from his experience of the war. Paul consistently describes his

moments of retreat in positive terms. In the opening pages of the novel, Paul is afraid that

his father and sister will "destroy his vision by some horror of profane language"

(Beresford, *Revolution* 5). For him, a beautiful sunset cannot be described with empty

words such as "lovely" or "perfect" (5), nor as indicative of good weather in the way his

family would describe it. The sunset is for Paul "a thing mystically revealed to him; a

sublime, if as yet enigmatical message of promise" (5). The sunset, like all aspects of the

natural world that appear to Paul during his visions, are "not the mere presentation of

physical effects, but wonderful symbols of mysterious and exquisite portent" (5). The

mysterious and mystical are at the heart of Paul's visions. It is precisely because they

cannot be explained through scientific, religious, or even poetic language that they appeal

to Paul. His spiritual connection with Nature transcends human comprehension and for

him peace is to be found by reconnecting with Nature as a spiritual force beyond

humanity's power to understand or dominate.

Paul experiences only once a vision concerned with darkness, and it is during the

violent counter-revolution, when the clock strikes 5 p.m. Paul's dark vision has him see

the dead faces of Lord Winston and Oliver who, unbeknownst to Paul at that moment,

died in the conflict. Paul is confronted with several other dead faces as he continues to

fall deeper into the darkness. In each of them, he "recognise[s] some aspect of himself,

and yearn[s] to deliver them from the horrors and tortures of this enshrouding, terrifying

darkness" (331-32). When Paul reaches the bottom of the dark abyss, he finds himself

amid the "movement of hurried, engrossed figures, intent and furtive, with white faces

and evil, deliberate eyes—figures that slipped past him in a swift, preoccupied procession

… They were absorbed by the interest of their own affairs, fulfilling their destiny, and

indifferent to any interference" (332). What Paul sees in his vision of hell are the demons

of modern society and capitalism. He sees dead people with evil and deliberate eyes—an

adjective that recalls the "deliberate" (326) ticking of the grandfather clock. Even in

death, these casualties of capitalism continue strolling around aimlessly, too absorbed by

their business to even realize that they are dead. They are indeed "indifferent to any

interference," even death itself. From this vision, Paul is transported to another spiritual

place occupied not by unapproachable people but by "men and women who, instead of

being hurried and intent, [regard] each other and their surroundings with a half-critical

complacence" (332). These people are not in darkness but in dimmed light, and once

more described with a term previously ascribed to the clock—complacence. These people

are in a twilight zone because they are not fully subsumed by the rhythms of modernity.

Paul only sees them for a moment and is then propelled into the light, where he is

surrounded "with kind, earnest faces that exchanged glances of recognition with him"

(333). In this paradisiac light, Paul finally meets his equals, angel-like beings who

understand the necessity of peace. Upon arriving there, Paul believes he has reached "the

place of his own people. Those with whom he had common interest. Who would be

willing to plunge back with him into the darkness and rescue the half-blind and the blind

who groped among the hidden desires and purposes of misunderstanding, seeking an

impossible happiness within the confines of their own small, uneasy world" (333).

     In this third part of Paul's vision, the narrator reveals the gradient from dark to

light in the vision to denote various degrees of blindness. We realize then that the white

faces are not dead in the physical, biological sense, but dead spiritually. Their blind

allegiance to the rhythms of modernity, previously introduced through the grandfather

clock, has killed their spiritual connection with the natural world. Paul's vision

culminates in "an instant flash of consciousness" during which he becomes "aware of the

final brightness, and of the terrible ecstacy [sic] of his witness," after which "he [falls]

back with awful speed into darkness and deeper darkness … carr[ying] with him a

flaming message of hope" (333). This message is that "help [is] coming; a new promise

of strength and salvation to the failing humanity of earth" (334). Paul is to become a new

messiah for humanity. He is to replace the old spirit which, "for two thousand years …

had laboured in distress, and not altogether without avail. But its endeavour was drooping

and outworn, settling into a decline of energy, sinking into despair" (334). Through Paul,

"a new charge [is] to be given to men, a new dispensation, coming miraculously at the

hour of failure. The message ha[s] been given to him in his instant knowledge of the

outer brightness, and even as he [falls] into the ultimate blackness, his heart beat[s] high

with love and thanksgiving" (334). His vision ends with "the tall kitchen clock

ground[ing] out the last stroke of five and settl[ing] down again to the contented rhythm

of its long, deliberate satisfaction with the passage of mortal time" (334). In the time it

takes for the clock to strike five times, Paul experiences a spiritual revelation that mirrors

the counter-revolution and establishes him as the hope of humanity.

Paul's vision resembles Yeats's famous poem "The Second Coming," which was

printed for the first time in November 1920—two months after Beresford finished writing

his manuscript and two months before it was published in England and the United

States.[41] Like Beresford's and Shanks's novels, Yeats's poem "express[es] fears about a

---

[41] According to a footnote at the end of the novel (Beresford, *Revolution* 357), Beresford wrote
Revolution between March and September 1920.

world apparently descending into chaos" (Howes 12) and "the turn of history toward violence" (Vendler 79). But whereas Yeats's poem prophesizes the second coming of a "rough beast … slouch[ing] towards Bethlehem to be born" (Yeats 337), Beresford's protagonist announces the second coming of a new, benevolent spirit. This hope at the heart of Beresford's novel, even as it describes the failure of a peaceful revolution in England, drastically contrasts Yeats's apocalyptic vision. This being said, by couching the novel's hopeful message in mysticism, Beresford suggests that Britons do not have what it takes on their own to save themselves from self-destruction.

McNeile and Hambrook both portray Britons as capable of turning the tide of radicalism through violence and patriotism. Beresford does not believe in violence, nor does he believe that radicalism is to blame for Britain's problems. For Beresford, the threat facing Britain after the war is metaphysical and thus beyond the reach of British exceptionalists like McNeile, Hambrook, and Shanks. Each of the authors covered in the previous chapters portray Britain or England in terms of exceptionalism: in McNeile's fiction, every nation conspires against Britain because it is just too powerful a nation to overcome via traditional military tactics; in Hambrook's, it is Britain's excessively permissive laws, a testament of its unique liberalism, that allows ill-intentioned foreigners to infiltrate and destroy the nation; and in Shanks's, the dissolution of the British Empire and the United Kingdom equates to the eradication of civilization in their former constituents, with Canadians becoming blood-thirsty mercenaries and the Welsh becoming barbarians. Conversely, Beresford explains in his foreword that he sees the United States of America as likely representing the future of the twentieth century rather than Britain, which shows that he did not adhere to a British exceptionalist mindset or

that if he did, he kept it separate from his fiction. Like Shanks, Beresford saw the

polarization of radicals and conservatives as symptomatic of significant problems in

British nationalist militarism, which he saw as announcing an inevitable doomsday

unless—and here his viewpoint diverges from that of Shanks—it is prevented by some

sort of divine spiritual intervention. His novel depicts a Britain in dire need of saving—

the antithesis of British exceptionalists' belief in autonomy and self-reliance—and offers

a glimmer of hope through Paul's message from the spiritual realm.

5.3 *Revolution* and the Discursive Space of Red Fiction

Soon after the success of the counter-revolution, Paul confirms the novel's connection

with Shanks's *The People of the Ruins.* Paul's vision of going back and forth between the

abyss and some sort of paradise reads as a subversion of Shanks's explicit elaboration of

an iconography of light and darkness in his novel. Whereas Shanks portrays this gradual

descent as inevitable, Beresford draws on mysticism to suggest that this descent can and

will be stopped by the influence of pacifists, characterized in Paul's vision as enlightened

angels preparing for their arrival on earth. Concretizing the connection between

Revolution and Shanks's novel, Beresford's protagonist has read *The People of the Ruins*.

Paul mentions that "In 1920, Edward Shanks had published a novel entitled *The People

of the Ruins*, in which he had prophesied a gradual decline, within a century and a half, to

the conditions of the Middle Ages. And there were blank and terrible moments in Paul's

life about this time, when he believed that that prophecy might prove a true one" (339-

40).

Paraphrasing Jonathan Culler's definition of intertextuality, Beresford's metafictional citation confirms his participation in the same discursive space as Shanks, as well as their shared use and formalization of codes specific to that space (Culler 1382). For Culler, intertextuality "leads one to think of a text as a dialogue with other texts, an act of absorption, parody, and criticism" (1383). In this case, Paul's reference to *The People of the Ruins* alerts the reader to a dialogue unfolding between these two novels, which upon scrutiny reveals *Revolution* to be a riposte to *The People of the Ruins*. This intertextual reference occurs in the midst of a revelatory moment for Paul, one wherein he realizes that, as in Shanks's novel, modern society is inherently unstable and could indeed begin a never-ending process of segregation leading to a vision of Britain in which "each parish framed its own set of laws and rules of conduct" (342).

Paul's use of *The People of the Ruins* as a means of explaining his own sense of where Britain is headed in *Revolution* fragments and displaces Shanks's precast. Through this quotation, Beresford "distorts and redefines the 'primary' utterance [of Shanks's narrative arc] by relocating it within another linguistic and cultural context … [which] generates a tension between belief both in original and originating integrity and in the possibility of (re)integration and an awareness of infinite deferral and dissemination of meaning" (Still and Worton 11). This tension occurs between the belief in the integrity of Shanks's novel as the original source of this argument and the awareness that the social-degeneration discourse of Shanks's novel is itself a product of the scientific romance tradition that could be traced further back to anterior traditions for as far as the researcher cares to dig. Beresford's citation therefore fragments Shanks's narrative by distilling its political argument from the story (Paul never mentions Jeremy nor any specifics of the

story) and integrating it into *Revolution* as an argument to refute. While Paul never discusses the fictional aspect of Shanks's political novel, Beresford's incorporation of spiritualism as a pacific answer to militarism, his subversion of Shanks's iconography of light and darkness, and his seclusion of Paul through a trance to alienate him (like the reader) from the politics of the near future, each demonstrate a thorough engagement with the literary aspects of *The People of the Ruins*. The connection between these two novels goes well beyond the direct citation at the end of *Revolution*. Beresford's novel responds both to the political and literary elements of Shanks's novel in a way that cannot be unpacked in the context of a broad survey of interwar anti-Bolshevik fiction.

The intertextual citation of Shanks's novel speaks to the early formation of Red fiction as a genre, one that emerged out of a topical fear of revolution in Britain and evolved over time alongside Anglo-Soviet relations. The proximity of the publication dates of *The People of the Ruins* and *Revolution* (less than a year between them), and the fact that the intertextual reference only occurs in the last pages of Beresford's novel suggests that Beresford was likely reading Shanks's work as he was writing his own novel. It also suggests that Beresford was keen to claim a connection between his novel and that of Shanks which, beyond its effect on the philosophical argument of the novel, also functions as a marketing strategy since it attempts to attract Shanks's readership to his novel. Furthermore, Beresford's reference to Shanks's work allows one to infer a perhaps more direct connection between Lord Winston and McNeile's fictional ex-servicemen, considering that the character only appears in the last fifty pages of the novel and the fact that McNeile's *Bull-Dog Drummond* was highly popular from the moment of its publication. Beresford's inclusion of these references foregrounds him as a

reader of such fiction, and makes his novel an attempt to engage with a small body of work responding to the same event. The title, *Revolution*, functions as a generic marker similar to the use of "red" in *The Red To-morrow*, but that is absent in *Bull-Dog Drummond*, *The Black Gang*, and *The People of the Ruins*. The neutrality of Beresford's protagonist transfers onto the title and subtitle of the novel ("A Story of the Near Future in England") as they indicate the subject matter of the book without emphasizing the Bolsheviks' role in the novel's forecasts—unlike *The Red To-morrow* whose title directly evokes a Bolshevik near future.

Richard Bauman defines a genre as an "order of speech style, a constellation of systematically related, co-occurrent formal features and structures that serves as a conventionalized orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse" (3). *Revolution* may be the first novel that demonstrates a thorough awareness of the rhetoric employed by pro- and anti-Bolsheviks in England, exemplified in the conflict opposing the stubborn conservative Mr. Leaming and the arrogant radical Oliver whose politics are embodied in starkly allegorical characters in the novels of McNeile, Hambrook, and Shanks. Beresford moves away from the specificity of McNeile's and Hambrook's fiction in their respective pleas for ex-servicemen and workers to unite against Bolshevism. He also refutes the pessimism of Shanks's novel by presenting his protagonist as a beacon of hope for the future of England. In *Revolution*, Bauman's constellation of formal features and structures begins to appear, through the clash between English conservatives and radicals modelled on the rhetoric of contemporary newspapers, through the formalization of the balance between the two revolutions as an argument, through the characterization of a veteran hero uniquely able to save his nation, and through its simultaneous

commentary on the Russian context and forecast of its possible impact on the United

Kingdom.

Conclusion

The fiction examined in this thesis demonstrates a strong connection between the emergence of British anti-Bolshevism and conflicting responses to the "lessons" of the Great War. McNeile's, Hambrook's, Shanks's, and Beresford's works reveal the polarity between a militarist and an anti-militarist interpretation of these lessons as a central dilemma of their cultural moment, a polarity that did not persist throughout the interwar period. The Great War did not disappear from anti-Bolshevik novels after the General Strike of 1926, but it became less often a dominant aspect of the protagonists' heroism or lack thereof. Involvement with the British Secret Service rather than one's knowledge and experience as an ex-serviceman generally became a more accurate gauge of a character's potential for heroic actions in this later fiction.

This thesis attends to the unexpected, even counterintuitive complexity inherent to anti-Bolshevik popular fiction, particularly the authors' striking, if short-lived, strategies to reinvent prewar generic conventions for the immediate postwar moment. Such strategies included reimagining the heroic figure as returning from rather than leaving for war, focusing on heroic adventures within the nation rather than across continents, and adapting villainous figures to suit the perceived real-life villains of the period— profiteers, politicians, businessmen, and so on. These novels' emphasis on the war and the veteran personae of their protagonists presents their stories as sequels to novels never written, as stories beginning after the hero's trials have been completed. It is thus imperative to read these early works of anti-Bolshevik fiction alongside the prewar novels and genres to which they respond, since their complexity and richness are indissociable from their application and transformation of prewar generic conventions.

Bolshevism, in these early interwar British novels, was a scapegoat for domestic problems. It did not matter much to the writers explored in this thesis whether their depiction of Bolshevism corresponded to its historical counterpart. The appeal of Bolshevism for these writers had everything to do with the aura of mystery surrounding its proponents, which allowed them to portray Russian Bolsheviks as wolfish fiends capable of preaching noble ideals of equality and freedom while butchering innocent people. Studying Bolshevism and Bolshevik characters in British popular fiction requires widening the analytical scope to identify the interacting interwar anxieties that inform the novelist's portrayal of these foreign elements—which may include, but are not limited to, fears of invasion.

For McNeile, the fear of Bolshevik invasion provides at once a source of and a cure for cultural anxieties, as it gives veteran heroes an outlet to exercise their expert military skills for the benefit of their nation. In Hambrook's novel, invasion is a deep-seated source of anxiety, but it remains subsumed under the novel's attempt to convert working-class readers to conservative principles. Moving away from fears of invasion, Shanks's novel draws on British fears of revolution to discuss another anxiety that glorifying military knowledge and experience is bound to propel the nation towards self-destruction. In Beresford's novel we see an entirely different type of anxiety, one grounded in a perception of the violent clash between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries as symptomatic of humanity's disconnection from the spiritual world.

Insofar as my thesis steadily glances backward at the conventions informing these novels, these same titles also often anticipated genres that were to emerge later in the century. Hugh "Bulldog" Drummond and his Black Gang resemble in many ways the

super-vigilante figures that DC Comics introduced later in the century, wherein physically gifted individuals adopt a moniker and put on a mask or costume to fight crime during the night in large urban centres. Shanks's novel, on the other hand, employs several tropes that later became key features of post-apocalyptic fiction after the Second World War, from the protagonist's survivor guilt to the novel's concerns over memory and history, or even through the novel's suggestion that humanity now possesses the means of setting in motion its own destruction. These novels also anticipate the boom in anti-communist fiction produced later in the century during the Cold War, whether in terms of their political anxieties of communist invasions, their use of tropes later understood as dystopian, or their conception of a Bolshevik communist political system as synonymous with the end of the world.

If there is one conclusion to make about the anti-Bolshevik popular novels published in Britain during the interwar, it is that they have more to offer to scholars interested in the impact of Russia on British culture than one might glean from their current status in scholarly research. These novels weave anti-communist politics into stories that reveal themselves to be more complex upon every rereading. They are novels whose exclusion from literary history is more complicated than simply a reflection of their quality as fiction. More importantly, they are novels that can complicate and enrich existing assessments of British anti-Bolshevism in the wake of the Great War.

Bibliography

Ackroyd, Peter. *London: The Biography*. First Anchor Books, 2000.

Alston, Charlotte. "Britain and the International Tolstoyan Movement, 1890-1910."

> *Russia in Britain, 1880-1940: Melodrama to Modernism*, edited by Rebecca Beasley
>
> and Philip Ross Bullock, Oxford UP, 2013, pp. 53-70.

---. *Russia's Greatest Enemy?: Harold Williams and the Russian Revolutions*. IB Tauris,

> 2007.

---. "The Work of the Russian Liberation Committee in London, 1919-1924." *Slavonica*,

> vol. 14, no. 1, 2008, pp. 6-17.

Altairac, Joseph. "H. G. Wells's Critical Reception in France." *The Reception of H. G.*

> *Wells in Europe*, translated by Barbara Ghiringhelli and edited by Patrick Parrinder
>
> and John S. Partington, Thoemmes Continuum, 2005, pp. 14-27.

Andrews, Chad. "Technomilitary Fantasy in the 1980s: Military SF, David Drake, and

> the Discourse of Instrumentality." *Extrapolation*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2015, pp. 139-68.

Arnot, R. Page. *The Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain*. Lawrence and Wishart,

> 1967.

Attebery, Brian. "The Magazine Era: 1926-1960." *The Cambridge Companion to Science*

> *Fiction*, edited by Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp.
>
> 32-47.

Ayers, David. *Modernism, Internationalism, and the Russian Revolution*. Edinburgh UP,

> 2018.

Barrows, Adam. *The Cosmic Time of Empire: Modern Britain and World Literature*.

> California UP, 2011.

Bauman, Richard. *A World of Others' Words: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality*. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Beasley, Rebecca. *Russomania: Russian Culture and the Creation of British Modernism, 1881-1922*. Oxford UP, 2020.

Beasley, Rebecca, and Philip Ross Bullock, editors. *Russia in Britain, 1880-1940: From Melodrama to Modernism*. Oxford UP, 2013.

Beers, Laura, and Geraint Thomas, editors. *Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars*. Institute of Historical Research, 2011.

Belk, Patrick Scott. *Empires of Print: Adventure Fiction in the Magazines, 1899-1919*. Routledge, 2017.

Bell, Henry. *John Maclean: Hero of Red Clydeside*. Pluto P, 2018.

Bennett, Gill. *Churchill's Man of Mystery*. Routledge, 2006.

Berberich, Christine. "Afterword: The Future of the Popular." *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction*, edited by Christine Berberich, Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 309-16.

---, editor. *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction*. Bloomsbury, 2015.

---. *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia*. Ashgate, 2007.

Beresford, John Davys. *Revolution*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921.

---. *Revolution*. W. Collins Sons and Co., 1921.

---. *The Hampdenshire Wonder*. Sidwick and Jackson, 1911.

Bernard, John. *The New Race of Devils*. Anglo-Eastern Pub., 1921.

Bertens, Hans. "A Society of Murderers Run on Sound Conservative Lines: The Life and

Times of Sapper's Bulldog Drummond." *Twentieth-Century Suspense: The Thriller Comes of Age*, edited by Clive Bloom, 1990, pp. 51-68.

Bloom, Clive. *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction since 1900*. 2nd ed., Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

---. *Cult Fiction: Popular Reading and Pulp Theory*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1996.

Brantlinger, Patrick. "Imperial Gothic: Atavism and the Occult in the British Adventure Novel, 1880-1914." *English Literature in Translation, 1880-1920*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1985, pp. 243-52.

Brichetto, Joanna L. *The Wandering Image: Converting the Wandering Jew*. 2006. Vanderbilt University, MA Dissertation.

Brodie, Marc. *The Politics of the Poor: The East End of London 1885-1914*. Oxford UP, 2004.

Broks, Peter. "Science, Media and Culture: British Magazines, 1890-1914." *Public Understanding of Science*, vol. 2, 1993, pp. 123-39.

Brustein, William. *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust*. Cambridge UP, 2003.

Budnitskii, Oleg. "The Jews and Revolution: Russian Perspectives, 1881-1918." *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2008, pp. 321-34.

Bullock, Ian. *Romancing the Revolution: The Myth of Soviet Democracy and the British Left*. AU P, 2011.

Buran, Sümeyra. *Technofeminist Science Fiction: Justina Robson's* Natural History *and Sue Thomas's* Correspondence. 2014. Atatürk University, PhD Dissertation.

Butler, William. "'The British Soldier Is No Bolshevik': The British Army, Discipline,

and the Demobilization Strikes of 1919." *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2019, pp. 321-46.

Campbell, James. "Interpreting the War." *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, edited by Vincent Sherry, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp. 261-79.

Carlton, David. *Churchill and the Soviet Union*. Manchester UP, 2000.

Challinor, Raymond. *The Origins of British Bolshevism*. Croom Helm, 1977.

Charlton, Bruce. *Not Even Trying: The Corruption of Real Science*. Legend P, 2012.

Claeys, Gregory. "Anti-Bolshevism and Anti-Fascism, 1918-1940." *Dystopia: A Natural History*, Oxford UP, 2017, pp. 337-354.

Clarke, I. F. "20th Century Future-Think: Rediscovering Original Sins." *Futures*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1992, pp. 388-96.

---. "20th Century Future-Think: The Many Shapes of Wars to Come." *Futures*, vol. 24, no. 5, 1992, pp. 483-92.

---. "The Tales of the Last Days, 1805-3794." *Imagining Apocalypse: Studies in Cultural Crisis*, edited by David Seed, Macmillan, 2000, pp. 15-26.

---. *Voices Prophecying War: Future Wars, 1763-3749*. Oxford UP, 1966.

Clarke, John Henry. *England under the Heel of the Jew: A Tale of Two Books*. C. F. Roworth, 1918.

Clute, John. "Hambrook, Emerson C." *SFE: The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, 2017.

---. "Shanks, Edward." *SFE: The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, 2021.

C. N. *The Making of an Officer*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.

Cohen, Richard I. "The 'Wandering Jew' from Medieval Legend to Modern Metaphor." *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, edited by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

and Jonathan Karp, Pennsylvania UP, 2007, pp. 147-75.

Cohn, Norman. *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, 1967.

Cooter, Roger, and Stephen Pumfrey. "Separate Spheres and Public Places: Reflections on the History of Science Popularization and Science in Popular Culture." *History of Science*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1994, pp. 237-67.

Cournos, John. *London under the Bolsheviks: A Londoner's Dream of Returning from Petrograd*. Avenue P, 1919.

Cowden, Morton H. *Russian Bolshevism and British Labour*. Columbia UP, 1984.

"Creation and Inheritance of the Peerage." *Debrett's*, www.debretts.com/expertise/essential-guide-to-the-peerage/creation-and-inheritance-of-the-peerage. Accessed 23 July 2018.

Cross, Anthony. "By Way of Introduction: British Reception, Perception and Recognition of Russian Culture." *A People Passing Rude: British Responses to Russian Culture*, edited by Anthony Cross, OpenBook Publishers, 2012, pp. 1-36.

---. *The Russian Theme in English Literature from the Sixteenth Century to 1980: An Introductory Survey and a Bibliography*. W. A. Meeuws, 1985.

Crowder, Colin. "The Appropriation of Dostoevsky in the Early Twentieth Century: Cult, Counter-Cult and Incarnation." *European Literature and Theology in the Twentieth Century*, edited by David Jasper and Colin Crowder, Macmillan, 1990, pp. 15-33.

Culler, Jonathan. "Presupposition and Intertextuality." *MLN*, vol. 91, no. 6, 1976, pp. 1380-96.

Daly, Nicholas. *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British*

Culture. Cambridge UP, 2000.

Davison, Carol Margaret. *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature*. Palgrave

Macmillan, 2004.

Dawson, Graham. *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of*

Masculitnities. Routledge, 1994.

Denning, Michael. *Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller*.

Routledge, 1987.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Lost World*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1912.

Dunae, Patrick A. "Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914." *Victorian*

Studies, vol. 24, no. 1, 1980, pp. 105-21.

Eaden, James, and David Renton. *The Communist Party of Great Britain since 1920*.

Palgrave, 2002.

Edmonds, Charles. *A Subaltern's War*. P. Davies, 1929.

Elsbury, A. B. *Proletarian Parodies: Songs of Rebellion to Every-Day Tunes for the*

Works, Streets, and Home. Proletarian P, 1910.

Evans, Arthur B. "Nineteenth-Century SF." *The Routledge Companion to Science*

Fiction, edited by Mark Bould et al., Routledge, 2009, pp. 13-22.

Fanning, William J. Jr. "The Historical Death Ray and Science Fiction in the 1920s and

1930s." *Vintage Visions: Essays on Early Science Fiction*, edited by Arthur B.

Evans, Wesleyan UP, 2014, pp. 298-324.

Farbman, Michael. *The Russian Revolution and the War*. Headley Bros, 1917.

Felsenstein, Frank. *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English*

Popular Culture, 1660-1830. Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.

Fitting, Peter. "Utopia, Dystopia, and Science Fiction." *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, edited by Gregory Claeys, Cambridge UP, 2010, pp. 135-53.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution*. 3rd ed., Oxford UP, 2008.

Flothow, Dorothea. "If Any Question Why He Died: John Kipling and the Myths of the Great War." *The Kipling Journal*, vol. 82, no. 326, 2008, pp. 62-68.

Franklin, H. Bruce. *Future Perfect: American Science Fiction of the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford UP, 1978.

Franklin, Sarah. "Science as Culture, Cultures of Science." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1995, pp. 163-84.

Frantzen, Allen J. *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War*. Chicago UP, 2004.

Freeman, Nicholas. *Conceiving the City: London, Literature, and Art 1870-1914*. Oxford UP, 2007.

Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. 3rd ed., Oxford UP, 2013.

Gelder, Ken. *Popular Fiction: The Logics and Practices of a Literary Field*. Routledge, 2004.

---. "The Fields of Popular Fiction." *New Directions in Popular Fiction: Genre, Distribution, Reproduction*, edited by Ken Gelder, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 1-20.

Gindin, James. "Reviewed Work(s): The Centre of Things: Political Fiction in Britain from Disraeli to the Present by Christopher Harvie." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1993, pp. 727-28.

Glenndinning, Victoria. *Leonard Woolf: A Biography*. Free P, 2006.

Glover, David. "The Thriller." *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, edited by

 Martin Priestman, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp. 135-54.

Grandy, Christine. "'Avarice' and 'Evil Doers': Profiteers, Politicians, and Popular

 Fiction in the 1920s." *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2011, pp. 667-89.

---. *Heroes and Happy Endings: Class, Gender, and Nation in Popular Film and Fiction*

 in Interwar Britain. Manchester UP, 2016.

Graubard, Stephen Richard. *British Labour and the Russian Revolution 1917-1924*.

 Oxford UP, 1956.

Graves, Philip. "The Truth about the Protocols: A Literary Forgery." *The Times*, 16-18

 Aug. 1921.

Green, Abigail. "Nationalism and the 'Jewish International': Religious Internationalism

 in Europe and the Middle East c.1840-c.1880." *Comparative Studies in Society and*

 History, vol. 50, no. 2, 2008, pp. 535-58.

Gunderman, Richard B. *X-Ray Vision: The Evolution of Medical Imaging and Its Human*

 Significance. Oxford UP, 2012.

Hally, Mike. "The Deep Roots of the British Legion: The Emergence of First World War

 British Veterans' Organisations." *Veterans of the First World War: Ex-Servicemen*

 and Ex-Servicewomen in Post-War Britain and Ireland, edited by David Swift and

 Oliver Wilkinson, Routledge, 2019, pp. 17-33.

"Hambrook, Emerson C. THE RED TO-MORROW." *L. W. Currey, Inc.*

Hambrook, Emerson C. "Introduction." *The Red To-Morrow*, Proletarian P, 1920.

---. *The Red To-Morrow*. Proletarian P, 1920.

Hammond, Andrew. *Cold War Stories: British Dystopian Fiction, 1945-1990*. Palgrave

Macmillan, 2017.

Hanebrink, Paul. *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*. Harvard UP, 2018.

Hark, Ina Rae. "Keeping Your Amateur Standing: Audience Participation and Good Citizenship in Hitchcock's Political Films." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1990, pp. 8-22.

Harvie, Christopher. *The Centre of Things: Political Fiction from Disraeli to the Present*. Unwin Hyman, 1991.

Hepburn, Allan. *Intrigue: Espionage and Culture*. Yale UP, 2005.

Hinton, Charles Howard. *Scientific Romances*. Swan Sonnenschein, 1886.

Hitchcock, Alfred. *The 39 Steps*. Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, 1935.

---. *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, 1934.

Hopkinson, Michael. *The Irish War of Independence*. Gill & Macmillan, 2002.

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Adorno. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, translated by Edmund Jephcott and edited by Schmid Noerr Gunzelin, Stanford UP, 2002, pp. 94-136.

Howe, Irving. *Politics and the Novel*. Horizon P, 1957.

Howes, Marjorie. "Introduction." *The Cambridge Companion to W. B. Yeats*, edited by Marjorie Howes and John Kelly, Cambridge UP, 2006, pp. 1-18.

Hughes, Michael, and Harry Wood. "Crimson Nightmares: Tales of Invasion and Fears of Revolution in Early Twentieth-Century Britain." *Contemporary British History*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2014, pp. 294-317.

Hughes, Mike. *Spies at Work*. 1995.

Hull, Andrew. "War of Words: The Public Science of the British Scientific Community
and the Origins of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1914-16."
The British Journal of the History of Science, vol. 32, no. 4, 1999, pp. 461-81.

Huyssen, Andreas. *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*.
Indiana UP, 1986.

Jaillant, Lise. "Sapper, Hodder & Stoughton, and the Popular Literature of the Great
War." *Book History*, vol. 14, 2011, pp. 137-66.

Jeffers, Thomas L. *Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana*.
Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Johnson, George M. "J. D. Beresford (7 March 1873–2 February 1947)." *Late-Victorian
and Edwardian British Novelists: Second Series*, Gale, 1999, pp. 15-29.

---. *J. D. Beresford*. NY Twayne, 1998.

---. *Mourning and Mysticism in First World War Literature and Beyond: Grappling with
Ghosts*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Johnston, John H. *English Poetry of the First World War: A Study in the Evolution of
Lyric and Narrative Form*. Princeton UP, 1964.

Jones, Edgar, and Simon Wessely. *Shell Shock to PTSD: Military Psychiatry from 1900
to the Gulf War*. Psychology P, 2005.

Keeley, James P. "Subliminal Promptings: Psychoanalytic Theory and the Society for
Psychical Research." *American Imago*, vol. 58, no. 4, 2001, pp. 767-91.

Kendall, Walter. *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-1921: The Origins of
British Communism*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969.

Kipling, Rudyard. "'My Boy Jack.'" *The Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling*, edited by

    R. T. Jones, Wordsworth Poetry Library, 1994, p. 228.

Klimova, Svetlana. "'A Gaul Who Had Chosen Impeccable Russian as His Medium':

    Ivan Bunin and the British Myth of Russia in the Early 20th Century." *A People*

    Passing Rude: British Responses to Russian Culture, edited by Anthony Cross,

    OpenBook Publishers, 2012, pp. 215-30.

Krivosheina, Maria. "Of Blizzards, Pistol Shots, and Fair Smugglers: Russian Fiction and

    Middlebrow Strategies in the *Strand*." *Victorian Periodical Review*, vol. 52, no. 2,

    2019, pp. 275-93.

Kustermans, Jorg, and Erik Ringmar. "Modernity, Boredom, and War: A Suggestive

    Essay." *Review of International Studies*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2011, pp. 1775-92.

Landes, Richard. "The Melian Dialogue, the *Protocols*, and the Paranoid Imperative."

    The Paranoid Apocalypse: A Hundred-Year Retrospective on the Protocols of the

    Elders of Zion, edited by Richard Landes and Steven T. Katz, New York UP, 2012,

    pp. 23-33.

"Latest Works of Fiction." *New York Times*, 24 Oct. 1920, p. 12.

Laurie-Fletcher, Danny. *On Their Majesties' Secret Service: An Historical Perspective of*

    British Invasion/Spy Literature, 1871-1918. 2014. Flinder University, PhD

    Dissertation.

Lawrence, Christopher. "Incommunicable Knowledge: Science, Technology and the

    Clinical Art in Britain 1850-1914." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 20, no. 4,

    1985, pp. 503-20.

Lawrence, Jon. "Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization

in Post-First World War Britain." *The Journal of British History*, vol. 75, no. 3, 2003, pp. 557-89.

Levy, Richard S., editor. *Antisemitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution* Vol. 1. Abc-Clio, 2005.

Luckhurst, Roger. "Scientific Romance, Fantasy and the Supernatural." *Fin-de-Siècle World*, edited by Michael Saler, Routledge, 2015, pp. 677-90.

Lyandres, Semion. "The Bolsheviks' 'German Gold' Revisited: An Inquiry into the 1917 Accusations." *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, 1995.

Maclean, Caroline. *The Vogue for Russia: Modernism and the Unseen in Britain, 1900-1930*. Edinburgh UP, 2015.

Makgill, Sir George. *Cross Trails*. British Library, 1898.

---. *Felons*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1915.

---. "Imperial Reconstruction." *The English Reviews*, 1917, pp. 317-21.

---. *Outside and Overseas: Being the History of Captain Mungo Ballas, Styled of Ballasburn, in the Shire of Fife; with Some Account of His Voyages, Adventures, and Attempts to Found a Kingdom in the South Seas as Told by His Nephew and Namesake, Mungo Ballas*. Methuen, 1903.

Mallett, Phillip. *Rudyard Kipling: A Literary Life*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

McCrillis, Neil R. *The British Conservative Party in the Age of Universal Suffrage: Popular Conservatism 1918-1928*. Ohio State UP, 1998.

McKee, Claire Theresa. *British Perceptions of Tsar Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra Fedorovna 1894-1918*. UCL, 2014.

McKibbin, Ross. *Parties and People: England 1914-1951*. Oxford UP, 2010.

McLaren, Angus. "'The Standardized World We Are Facing and Fearing': Sex and

    Futurist Fictions." *Reproduction by Design*, Chicago UP, 2012, pp. 9-36.

McNabb, John. "The Beast Within: H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, and

    Human Evolution in the Mid-1890s." *Geological Journal*, vol. 50, 2015, pp. 383-97.

McNeile, Herman Cyril. *Bull-Dog Drummond*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1920.

---. *Meet the Detectives: Bulldog Drummond, Hanaud, Dr. Fu Manchu (And Others)*. The

    Telegraph P, 1935.

---. *Men, Women, and Guns*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.

---. *No Man's Land*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1917.

---. *Sergeant Michael Cassidy*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1915.

---. *The Black Gang*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1922.

---. *The Final Count*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1926.

---. *The Human Touch*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1918.

---. *The Lieutenant and Others*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.

---. *The Third Round*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1924.

McNeillie, Andrew. "Introduction." *The Essays of Virginia Woolf: Volume III, 1919-*

    1924, The Hogarth P, 1988, pp. xi-xxii.

Meyer, Jessica. "The Tuition of Manhood: 'Sapper's' War Stories and the Literature of

    the War." *Publishing in the First World War*, edited by Mary Hammond and

    Shafquat Towheed, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 113-29.

Moretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. Verso,

    1987.

Morris, William. *News from Nowhere: Or, an Epoch of Rest: Being Some Chapters from*

a Utopian Romance. Nelson and Sons, 1890.

Mullen, Bill V. "Proletarian Literature Reconsidered." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, Oxford UP, 2017.

Neilson, Keith. "Tsars and Commissars: W. Somerset Maugham, *Ashenden* and Images of Russia in British Adventure Fiction, 1890-1930." *Canadian Journal of History*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1992, pp. 475-500.

"New Novels." *The Times Literary Supplement*, 21 Oct. 1920, p. 683.

Newland, Paul. *The Cultural Construction of London's East End: Urban Iconography, Modernity and the Spacialization of Englishness*. Rodopi, 2008.

Nicholson, Steve. *British Theatre and the Red Peril: The Portrayal of Communism 1917-1945*. UEP, 1999.

Osborn, Edward. "Books of the Day." *The Illustrated London News*, 6 Nov. 1920, p. 738.

Owen, Wilfred. "Dulce et Decorum Est." *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, edited by Douglas Kerr, Wordsworth Poetry Library, 1994, p. 60.

Paris, Michael. *Over the Top: The Great War and Juvenile Literature in Britain*. Praeger, 2004.

---. "Red Menace! Russia and British Juvenile Fiction." *Contemporary British History*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2005, pp. 117-32.

---. "The Great War and British Docudrama: *The Somme*, *My Boy Jack* and *Walter's War*." *The Great War in Post-Memory Literature and Film*, edited by Martin Löschnigg and Sokołowska-Paryż, De Gruyter, 2014, pp. 135-52.

---. *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000*. Reaktion Books, 2000.

Pattison, Michael. "Scientists, Inventors and the Military in Britain, 1915-19: The

  Munitions Inventions Department." *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1983,

  pp. 521-68.

Payne, Mark. *Flowers of Time: On Postapocalyptic Fiction*. Princeton UP, 2020.

Pearson, John. *The Life of Ian Flemming*. Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1966.

PenDennis. "London Week by Week." *The Observer*, 27 Mar. 1938, p. 13.

Piercy, Marge. "Active in Time and History." *Paths of Resistance: The Art and Craft of

  the Political Novel*, edited by William Zinsser, Houghton Mifflin, 1989, pp. 89-124.

Pipes, Richard. *The Russian Revolution*. Vintage Books, 1990.

Priestman, Martin. "Introduction: Crime Fiction and Detective Fiction." *The Cambridge

  Companion to Crime Fiction*, edited by Martin Priestman, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp.

  1-6.

Pringle, David, and Mike Ashley. "Introduction: The Age of the Storytellers." *The Age of

  the Storytellers: British Popular Fiction Magazines 1880-1950*, edited by Mike

  Ashley, The British Library and Oak Knoll P, 2006, pp. 1-16.

Rabinowitch, Alexander. *Prelude to Revolution: The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July

  1917 Uprising*. Indiana UP, 1991.

Rasmussen, Anne. "Science and Technology." *A Companion to World War I*, edited by

  John Horne, Blackwell Publishing, 2010, pp. 307-22.

Rasnick, David. "The Tyranny of Dogma." *Journal of Information Ethics*, vol. 24, no. 2,

  2015, pp. 76-95.

Reid, Fiona. *Broken Men: Shell Shock, Treatment and Recovery in Britain 1914-30*.

  Bloomsbury, 2010.

Rieder, John. "Fiction, 1895-1926." *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by Mark Bould et al., Routledge, 2009, pp. 23-31.

Robert, Jean-Louis. "The Image of the Profiteer." *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* Vol.1, edited by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, Cambridge UP, 1997, pp. 104-32.

Robinson, Sara Libby. "Blood Will Tell: Anti-Semitism and Vampires in British Popular Culture, 1875-1914." *GOLEM: Journal of Religion and Monsters*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2009, pp. 16-27.

Rose, Inbal A. *Conservatism and Foreign Policy During the Lloyd George Coalition, 1918-1922*. Routledge, 1999.

Rosenberg, Edgar. *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction*. Stanford UP, 1960.

Ross, Charles. *The Fly-By-Nights*. John Murray, 1921.

Saint-Martin, Arnaud. "Le Roman Scientifique: Un Genre Paralittéraire." *L'Harmattan*, vol. 6, 2005, pp. 69-99.

Scheingold, Stuart A. *The Political Novel: Re-Imagining the 20th Century*. Continuum, 2010.

Seed, David. "Spy Fiction." *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, edited by Martin Priestman, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp. 115-34.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Penguin Classics, 2015.

Shanks, Edward. "Fiction." *The London Mercury: Volume III, 1920 November to April 1921*, edited by J. C. Squire, The London Mercury ltd., pp. 442-44.

---. *My England*. Jarrolds, 1938.

---. *The People of the Ruins*. Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1920.

Shaw, Tony. "Early Warnings of the Red Peril: A Pre-History of Cold War British Cinema, 1917-1939." *Film History*, vol. 14, no. 3/4, 2002, pp. 354-68.

Shepherd, John, and Keith Laybourn. *Britain's First Labour Government*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Sherry, Vincent. "The Long Turn of the Century." *The Cambridge History of Modernism*, edited by Vincent Sherry, Cambridge UP, 2017, pp. 83-100.

Shklovsky, Isaak. *Russia under the Bolsheviks*. Wilkinson Bros, 1919.

Sigel, Lisa Z. "Censorship in Inter-War Britain: Obscenity, Spectacle, and the Workings of the Liberal State." *Journal of Social History*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2011, pp. 61-83.

"Sir George Makgill: Obituary." *The Times*, 20 Oct. 1926.

Smele, Jonathan D. *The "Russian" Civil Wars, 1916-1926: Ten Years That Shook the World*. Oxford UP, 2015.

Smith, Stephen A. *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890 to 1928*. Oxford UP, 2017.

Stableford, Brian. *Algaebric Fantasies and Realistic Romances: More Masters of Science Fiction*. Borgo P, 1995.

---. *Creators of Science Fiction*. Wildside P, 2009.

---. *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature*. Scarecrow P, 2004.

---. "Science Fiction before the Genre." *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp. 15-31.

---. *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950*. Fourth Estate, 1985.

---. "The Future between the Wars: The Speculative Fiction of John Gloag." *Foundation*,

vol. 47, 1980.

Stevenson, Randall. "The Clockwork Man: Reification, Relativity, and Redemption in

   1920s Fiction." *Journal of Literature and Science*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2020, pp. 18-30.

---. "'Wheels within Wheels': D. H. Lawrence, Industrial Time and War Time." *Reading

   the Times: Temporality and History in Twentieth-Century Fiction*, Edinburgh UP,

   2017.

Still, Judith, and Michael Worton, editors. *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*.

   Manchester UP, 1990.

Stowe, William W. "Popular Fiction as Liberal Art." *College English*, vol. 48, no. 7,

   1986, pp. 646-63.

Sturdy, Steve, and Roger Cooter. "Science, Scientific Management, and the

   Transformation of Medicine in Britain c.1870-1950." *History of Science*, vol. 36, no.

   4, 1998, pp. 421-66.

Taunton, Matthew. *Red Britain: Writing the Russian Revolution in Mid-Century Culture*.

   Oxford UP, 2019.

---. "Russia and the British Intellectuals: The Significance of *The Stalin-Wells Talk*."

   Russia in Britain, 1880-1940: Melodrama to Modernism, Oxford UP, 2013, pp.

   209-24.

Taylor, Antony. "Red Scares and Inter-War London." *London's Burning: Pulp Fiction,

   the Politics of Terrorism and the Destruction of the Capital in British Popular

   Culture, 1840-2005*, Bloomsbury, 2012, pp. 76-104.

Thompson, E. P. "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism." *Past and Present*,

   vol. 38, no. 1, 1967, pp. 56-97.

Thorpe, Andrew. *The British Communist Party and Moscow, 1920-43*. Manchester UP,

2000.

---. "The Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920-1945." *The*

Historical Journal, vol. 43, no. 3, 2000, pp. 777-800.

Treadwell, Lawrence. *Bulldog Drummond Encyclopedia*. McFarland and Co., 2001.

Turner, Frank M. "Public Science in Britain, 1880-1919." *Isis*, vol. 71, no. 4, 1980, pp.

589-608.

Ullman, Richard H. *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921* Vol. 1. Princeton UP, 1961.

Vendler, Helen. "The Later Poetry." *The Cambridge Companion to W. B. Yeats*, edited

by Marjorie Howes and John Kelly, Cambridge UP, 2006, pp. 77-100.

Wade, Rex A. *The Russian Revolution, 1917*. 3rd ed., Cambridge UP, 2017.

Webster, Nesta. *The Cause of World Unrest*. G. P. Putnam, 1920.

Wells, H. G. *A Modern Utopia*. Chapman and Hall, 1905.

---. *Men like Gods*. Cassell, 1923.

---. *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Heinemann, 1896.

---. *The Shape of Things to Come*. Hutchinson, 1933.

---. *The Time Machine*. William Heinemann, 1895.

---. *The War of the Worlds*. William Heinemann, 1898.

---. *When the Sleeper Wakes*. Harper and Bros., 1899.

---. "Zoological Retrogression." *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1891, pp. 246-53.

Welsh, J. C. *The Morlocks*. H. Jenkins, 1924.

Westfahl, Gary. "'The Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and Edgar Allan Poe Type of Stories':

Hugo Gernsback's History of Science Fiction." *Vintage Visions: Essays on Early*

Science Fiction, edited by Arthur B. Evans, Wesleyan UP, 2014, pp. 278-97.

Wilkinson, Glenn. "'The Great Game of War': The Image of War as Sport and Hunting."

   Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914, Palgrave

   Macmillan, 2003, pp. 68-89.

Williamson, Philip. "The Conservative Party, 1900–1939: From Crisis to Ascendency." *A*

   Companion to Early Twentieth-Century Britain, edited by Chris Wrigley, Blackwell,

   2003, pp. 3-22.

Winter, Jay. "Shell-Shock and the Cultural History of the Great War." *Journal of*

   Contemporary History, vol. 35, no. 1, 2000, pp. 7-11.

Woolf, Virginia. "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." *Collected Essays, Volume I*, edited by

   Leonard Woolf, The Hogarth P, 1966, pp. 319-37.

---. "'Revolution.'" *The Essays of Virginia Woolf: Volume III, 1919-1924*, edited by

   Andrew McNeillie, The Hogarth P, 1988, pp. 279-81.

Wrenn, Angus, and Olga Soboleva. *From Orientalism to Cultural Capital: The Myth of*

   Russia in British Literature of the 1920s. Peter Lang, 2017.

Wrigley, Chris. "Introduction." *Challenges of Labour: Central and Western Europe*

   1917-1920, edited by Chris Wrigley, Routledge, 1993, pp. 1-23.

---. "The State and the Challenge of Labour in Britain 1917-20." *Challenges of Labour:*

   Central and Western Europe 1917-1920, edited by Chris Wrigley, Routledge, 1993,

   pp. 262-88.

Yaszek, Lisa. "Cultural History." *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by

   Mark Bould et al., Routledge, 2009, pp. 194-203.

Yeats, W. B. *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, edited by Richard J. Finneran, Simon

and Schuster, 1989.

Zenkovsky, V. V. "Dostoevsky's Religious and Philosophical Views." *Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by René Wellek, Prentice-Hall, 1962, pp. 130-45.

Zipes, Jack. "Adventure Stories: Introduction." *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature*, edited by Jack Zipes et al., W. W. Norton, 2005, pp. 1623-32.