LUKE KELLY

BRITISH HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITY IN RUSSIA, 1890–1923

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palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-3-319-65189-7 ISBN 978-3-319-65190-3 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017953009

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	All-British Appeal
AFSC	American Friends' Service Committee
ARA	American Relief Administration
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
CIS	Council for International Service
COS	Charity Organisation Society
FEWVRC or FWVRC	Friends' Emergency and War Victims' Relief Committee
FHL	Friends' House Library (London)
FSU	Friends' Service Union
FWVRC	See FEWVRC
ICRR	International Committee for Russian Relief
IWRF	Imperial War Relief Fund
JDC	(Jewish) Joint Distribution Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RFRF	Russian Famine Relief Fund
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SFRF	Society of Friends of Russian Freedom (or "Friends of Russia")

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> [The famine has the effect of] illustrating in a very striking way the rottenness of the whole system of government… Everywhere extravagance meets the eye, the forests have been cut down wantonly, the rivers are neglected, the climate is ruined, the peasant, who pays on the average taxes to the tune of four pounds per head, is simply regarded as a revenue-producing unit.[1]
>
> *Manchester Guardian* (on the 1891 famine)

> Russian autocracy succeeded to nothing; it had no historical past, and it cannot hope for a historical future… By no industry of investigation, by no fantastic stretch of benevolence, can it be presented as a phase of development through which a Society, a State, must pass on its way to the full consciousness of its destiny.[2]
>
> *Joseph Conrad*

In 1891 news reached Britain that the crops had failed in the Volga region of Russia. Soon after, appeals were printed in British newspapers, avowing that 'every £1 given will probably save a life', and a fund of about £37,262 15s 2d (or £49,640,000 in 2015 money) was sent to

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[1] 'Through Famine-Stricken Russia: A Commissioner's Story How the Famine Came to be Recognised; Sufferings of the Tartar Population General Conclusions,' *Manchester Guardian*, 18 April 1892, p. 8.

[2] Joseph Conrad, 'Autocracy and War [From the Fortnightly Review, 1905]', in *Collected Edition, Notes on Life and Letters* (London: Dent, 1949), p. 97.

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L. Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890–1923*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3_1

the famine region.[3] This relatively familiar (both then and now) occurrence is the starting point of the analysis presented in this book. Familiar because famines in British India at the same time attracted donations equivalent to hundreds of millions of pounds in today's money, and famines elsewhere would continue to attract the interest of British donors throughout the twentieth century. By the 1890s, giving aid for distant strangers had become an established part of British life. Russia, now more visible in the British imagination, became the object of interventions as British churches, journalists and politicians, among others, presented an assortment of humanitarian prescriptions to a country seen to be struggling. The Society of Friends (Quakers) offered famine relief in 1891–1892, 1907 famine and 1921–1923, war relief from 1916, as well as providing support to the persecuted Doukhobor sect after 1897. The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom (SFRF) was a pressure group set up in 1890 by Russian exiles and British liberals specifically to reform Russia's government by generating public outrage through its journal *Free Russia*. Russia's persecution of Jews prompted condemnation throughout the period. Many groups, including the newly formed Save the Children Fund, sent money and workers to help in the 1921–1923 famine as part of an internationalised effort.

In one sense, the interest in Russia clearly echoed earlier and later humanitarian campaigns in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Similar networks of liberals and Christians had been involved in the main humanitarian causes earlier in the century: abolition, aborigines' protection, Jewish relief.[4] Many of the actors supported the institutionalisation of humanitarianism, through their presence at peace conferences, interest in international institutions, and standardisation of relief practices.[5] But apart from these broad tendencies, the aims of these actors varied, as did their methods. Russia was just one country among many, itself manifesting multiple problems, only some of which were addressed: political oppression and censorship, religious oppression, anti-Jewish pogroms and an impoverished peasantry. Quakers offered aid to the Doukhobors (a small Christian sect) but not Jews, for instance. Liberals were divided on whether, and how, to offer help to nihilist exiles in the 1880s and 1890s and later on whether to give famine relief for communist Russia in 1921. Beneath the seeming ubiquity of the humanitarian gesture, then, lay a variety of motives for, and forms of, humanitarian activity. It is the argument of this book that the humanitarian attention given to Russia between about 1890 and 1923 was the result of a specific conjuncture of ideas and actors, rather than the simple application of a humanitarian ideal. The interest shown to Russia, it is argued, was partially distinct from other humanitarian causes before and after, being generated by the interests, perspectives and techniques of the actors concerned as much as by the fact of suffering.

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[3] Calculated as the economic cost of a project. *Measuring Worth* (https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php, accessed 12 August 2016).

[4] Abigail Green, 'The British Empire and the Jews: An Imperialism of Human Rights?', *Past & Present*, 199.1 (2008), pp. 175–205.

[5] Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), p. 2.

Taking this variety of interests as a starting point, this book seeks to explain the humanitarian discourse that grew up around Russia. It is contended that these humanitarian campaigns were not simply testing grounds for existing ideals or practices, but were produced dynamically. They were often products of the very specific transnational connections through which, for example, the Russian peasant commune (*mir)* became a subject of interest in Britain, Russian exiles such as Sergey Stepniak made friends with British liberals and leftists, the novelist and moralist Lev Tolstoy won British disciples, Quakers saw Russian dissenters as an aspect of their religious mission, or pacifists saw famine relief in Russia as ways to enact their ideals. The book looks at the relations between religious and political ideals and various ad hoc campaigns, to ask how new forms of humanitarianism are generated. That is to say, ‘humanitarianism’ should not first and foremost be taken as an abstract ideal that can be applied more or less successfully anywhere. Rather, by looking at specific forms of intervention, arising from social history, news cycles and micro-practices as much as universalist ideals, we can better understand change and continuity in the humanitarian field in general. Instead of tracing the big turning points of ‘humanitarianism’ as a whole—after 1945 or 1990, say—we should look at the convergences and divergences of these various, smaller currents. In this respect, the book follows anthropological work such as Redfield’s, which argues for a ‘move away from treating humanitarianism as an absolute value by approaching it as an array of particular embodied, situated practices emanating from the humanitarian desire to alleviate the suffering of others.'[6] It is a social and cultural, rather than political or intellectual, understanding of the phenomenon, and therefore derives as much from the practices of churches, political parties and the press as from law or ideas.

Historiography

Humanitarianism, broadly understood as ranging from Enlightenment schemes for the improvement of prisons, schools and public health, to warzone interventions by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like *Médecins sans frontières*,[7] has generated a great deal of scholarship in recent years. First, cultural histories of humanitarian sentiments, particularly in the eighteenth century, have formed an important strand of the historiography.[8] This approach has led to a great deal of work on responses to, and representations of, humanitarian suffering.[9] Secondly, humanitarian practices, or practices like medicine that can be turned to humanitarian ends, are also important aspects of humanitarian action. Analysis of missionaries' work to convert, as well as to clothe, educate and heal, non-Christian subjects of European empires, is clearly an important component of humanitarian history, as is later medical work. Historians and anthropologists have shown how paternalism, professional norms, and state and economic power have combined to produce outcomes more ambiguous and varied than simply the relief of suffering.[10] Thirdly, the function of humanitarian campaigns and organisations in society and politics more broadly—whether as a tool of imperialism, class domination, or a genuinely autonomous and disinterested sphere—is also addressed, especially with respect to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century abolition of slavery campaign.[11] Finally, the differing varieties of the humanitarian ideal can be isolated and analysed. Such approaches can analyse the type of problems deemed worthy of response, the nature of the ties said to create a common humanity, whether aid is conceptualised as an entitlement or a gift, solidarity or compassion, and so on. While humanitarian sympathy is sometimes presented as natural and universal, the prescriptions arising from this sympathy vary considerably: from paternalistic charity, emergency aid, development, to rights-based advocacy, and so on.

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[6] Peter Redfield, 'Doctors, Borders and Life in Crisis,' *Cultural Anthropology*, 20:3 (2005), pp. 328–361.

[7] Craig Calhoun, 'The Imperative to Reduce Suffering: Charity, Progress, and Emergencies in the Field of Humanitarian Action', in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, ed. by Thomas G. Weiss and Michael Barnett (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 73–97.

[8] Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 176–204; Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, 1st edn (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007); Karen Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review*, 100.2 (2005), pp. 303–334.

[9] Richard Wilson and Richard D. Brown, *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[10] Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford: Westview, 1992); Rebecca Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

Despite this multiplicity of humanitarian practices, too many analyses see humanitarianism as a relative constant that has been applied to specific situations. Michael Barnett classifies humanitarianism as a 'compassionate sphere' and delineates three 'ages' of humanitarianism.[12] This has the advantage of giving a clear conceptual and temporal structure, but it can obscure the fact that fields like international law, humanitarian techniques and organisations often have separate chronologies. It also, by virtue of its breadth, glosses over some of the local sources of humanitarianism, and assumes that some form of humanitarian response will exist at any one time. It posits conceptual autonomy and clarity, at least at a distance, that would not necessarily be evident to, say, missionaries carrying out humanitarian work at the time. Indeed, as Wilson and Brown assert:

> [h]umanitarianism, as an ethic, cuts across political orientations and can be associated with religious and political projects as diverse as Quaker pacifism, Protestant evangelicalism, Great Power imperialism, Catholic social democracy, and grassroots democratic socialism…from food aid to refugee resettlement from immigration reform laws to full-scale military intervention.[13]

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[11] Thomas L. Haskell, 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1', *American Historical Review*, 90.2 (1985), p. 339; Thomas L. Haskell, 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2', *American Historical Review*, 90.3 (1985), p. 547; Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Antonio Donini, 'The Far Side: The Meta Functions of Humanitarianism in a Globalised World', *Disasters*, 34.S2 (2010), S220–S237.

[12] Barnett, p. 30.

[13] Wilson and Brown, p. 4.

Discerning this ethic is only one part of the equation. By contrast, Didier Fassin's *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present* uses ethnography to produce very precise and nuanced analyses of 'humanitarian reason' in bureaucratic processes, medical work, disaster relief, and other such situations. This has the advantage of greater precision and provides some of the most interesting case studies in the field. Nevertheless, such ethnographies, however illuminating in the present, can seem disconnected from longer timelines and deeper structures of power. Humanitarianism emerges as an extremely malleable, yet pervasive, force.[14] The problem of linking 'humanitarianism' with its diverse manifestations remains. One solution is Laqua's 'metaphor of a "humanitarian cloud". Similar to a cloud, the contours of humanitarianism are often unclear: at times, it is difficult to delineate humanitarian concerns from Christian charity, or from political expressions of solidarity', which can obscure differing motivations and effects. But the cloud also contains 'pooled resources…be they rhetorical tropes, specific types of information or campaigning techniques.'[15] Such a perspective allows us to show the divergences between the actors involved in humanitarian acts but also the common thread of relief or campaigning techniques and at least some underlying ideals.

Perhaps the narrative of the longest duration and greatest analytic coherence is that of humanitarian principles in international relations. This historiography shows to what degree humanitarian norms, broadly understood, have been able to override state sovereignty and national aims.[16] For example, interventions in the Ottoman Empire,

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[14] Didier Fassin and Rachel Gomme, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present Times* (London: University of California Press, 2012), p. 2. Humanitarianism is seen 'as connoting both dimensions encompassed by the definition of humanity: on the one hand the generality of human beings who share a similar condition (mankind), and on the other an affective movement drawing humans towards their fellows (humaneness).'

[15] Daniel Laqua, 'Inside the Humanitarian Cloud: Causes and Motivations to Help Friends and Strangers', *Journal of Modern European History*, 12.2 (2014), pp. 175–185 (p. 184).

[16] Brendan Simms and D.J.B. Trim, 'Humanitarian Intervention: A History' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Alex J. Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality: Mass Atrocities in an Age of Civilian Immunity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Fabian Klose, *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas and Practice from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Romania and other new East European states have been looked at.[17] Humanitarian responses to Russia have received comparatively little attention, mainly because the country, one of the strongest in Europe, was not nearly as susceptible to intervention as its southern neighbours. Indeed, historiography on foreign responses to Russia focus on international relations, from the Great Game to the alliance system leading up to the First World War, and then responses to communism.[18] Various sub-national connections in the fields of labour history, art and culture, scholarship, and so on, have also been considered, but generally within distinct disciplinary boundaries.[19] Humanitarianism was indeed only a minor strand of the Anglo-Russian relationship (although it took on greater prominence during certain flashpoints like the 1921 famine). Keith Neilson's history of the Anglo-Russian relationship under Nicholas II argues that although there were significant efforts to democratise British foreign policy and to colour it with cultural, economic and moral concerns, diplomacy was certainly the most important strand.[20] Michael Hughes puts more emphasis on the competition that diplomats faced in attempting to determine foreign policy, but confirms its limited effect.[21]

But while national policy may have been, as Neilson shows, relatively unmoved by considerations of humanity, these humanitarian views of Russia had the potential, at least, to undermine this primacy. The book does not reject Neilson's view, but rather focuses on an understanding of the humanitarian strands as shaped in relation to historically specific political relations and transnational connections. In this way it does not try to argue that humanitarianism was any more important in this context than it was; rather it seeks to emphasise the important innovations, contradictions and continuities. For instance, we cannot understand foreign responses to Bolshevik Russia without reference to the 'humanitarian' views of the country developed by non-governmental liberal, labour and humanitarian figures before this point (particularly with respect to the peasantry and public health). In 1921, the famine had become a major foreign policy issue, partly because of the development of the League of Nations and traditions of humanitarian intervention in the West, and partly as a result of ideological debates about the Soviet Union.[22]

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[17] Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[18] Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia*, 1st edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[19] Anthony Cross, *'A People Passing Rude': British Responses to Russian Culture* (Open Book Publishers, 2012).

[20] Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894–1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[21] Michael Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution: Britain, Russia, and the Old Diplomacy, 1894–1917* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), Hughes notes criticism of the 'old diplomacy' by liberals and others.

Yet to analyse 'humanitarianism' in itself, as a principle motivating interventions, creates its own pitfalls. Gary Bass is a political scientist whose history perhaps overstates the role of humanitarianism as an ideal, concerned as he is to prove that it goes back further than commonly thought. Whereas he provides thorough analyses of the building of humanitarian campaigns in favour of the Greeks or Armenians, his overall argument nevertheless exhibits a progressive bias. His focus is on demonstrating the capacity of a notion of 'humanity' to mobilise action, and he therefore downplays the ways that this was entwined in other discourses like nationalism, religion or imperialism. For instance, he argues with respect to the interventions on behalf of Christians in Eastern Europe that 'Christianity was certainly part of the story, but not the whole of it. Some of the most important activists hoped to save humanity, not just Christianity', and he points to the humanitarian campaigns operating beyond confessional or national boundaries.[23] Others, not studying humanitarianism for its own sake, but how it was part of other power dynamics, consider Christian, national or ideological interests to be more important. As Abigail Green shows, 'the question of Jewish rights in Muslim lands was a vital test case for British efforts to spread the values of Victorian civilization through an imperialism of human rights.' Humanity was only part of the story, and it is the other parts that explain why, for instance, the support for Jewish rights

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[22] Indeed, several left-wing British and Americans worked with the famine relief teams and used their experiences as the basis for positive books on the Soviet experiment, discussing its healthcare, education and so on. See Chap. 6.

[23] Gary Jonathan Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*, 1st Vintag (New York: Vintage, 2009), pp. 19–24, 6.

'slackened' after the Bulgarian atrocities in 1876.[24] Indeed, as Davide Rodogno argues, humanitarianism was embedded in a discourse of civilisation that drew a sharp distinction between civilised Europeans and less civilised Ottomans. He shows how the right to intervene or possibility of intervention to prevent massacre in the Ottoman Empire was understood by states during the nineteenth century. Calls for intervention were generated by public outrage, legal and political traditions and views of the Ottoman Empire as much as the concerns of humanity or the logics of state.[25] David Foglesong, in tracing American Christians' engagement with Russia, demonstrates the 'overlap between the missionary campaigns, political crusades and economic drives to remake Russia. [Missionaries] believed they were not only spearheading the spiritual enlightenment of Russia but also preparing the way for her economic advance and political transformation.'[26] Humanitarian practices must therefore be understood alongside socio-economic and political programmes.

Work that does not seek to engage directly, or only, with the concept of humanitarianism is therefore among the most useful. The debate on the abolition campaign, centred on the questions of why the abolitionists took up this cause, and whether it served their (capitalist) interests in some way, has analysed distinctions between intent and function, described the types of campaigning undertaken by different professions and beliefs, and gone some way in assessing the autonomy and nature of purely 'humanitarian' factors. Work on missionaries also offers important insights. Catherine Hall's work on Baptist missionaries in Jamaica shows, in large part through biographies, letters and the micro-level implementation of their 'humanitarian' work, how the British Baptist-led campaign for abolition, based on reporting the suffering of slaves, and helping them to live like Christians, was both driven by universalist sentiments, and worked to transmit race and class hierarchies between Britain and Jamaica.[27] This geographical and social specificity is as important as the universalist sentiment that drove the work. Gill's recent work on the vocation of relief work also provides great insights. Focusing on the 'contest over how authentic knowledge of suffering was adduced and compassion best calculated', she shows how forms of professional and voluntary relief developed alongside changing positions on war, among other factors. Humanitarianism is not static in principle or practice.[28] What makes these works valuable is the wide context used, and the interrelation between different aspects, including a focus on micro-level techniques as well as broader discourses of nation, religion, and so on.

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[24] Green, 'The British Empire and the Jews: An Imperialism of Human Rights?'.

[25] Rodogno.

[26] David S. Foglesong, 'Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and tsarist Russia, 1886–1917', *Religion, State and Society*, 25.4 (1997), pp. 353–368 (p. 361).

[27] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

The book therefore fills three gaps in the historiography. First, it studies in depth the genesis of the humanitarian facets of the Anglo-Russian relationship, as developed by non-state actors. These include the debates over exiles' rights and extradition, religious dissent, and famine. While they did little to affect Britain's policy on Russia, they contributed to a more general oppositional stance on foreign policy,[29] and the idea, at least, that humanitarian concerns should trump geopolitical ones. Second, it analyses in greater detail the development of specific humanitarian forms. That is, rather than considering humanitarian ideals in general, it looks at the development of specific humanitarian practices, deriving from public pressure, professional techniques, and political opportunities. The Quakers intervened to help the Russian Doukhobor sect, not because of some general understanding of 'freedom of conscience', but rather because of the interests of Christian groups, the production of news, and, perhaps most importantly, because of their repertoire of expressions of solidarity. By reconstructing the various interventions, the book shows how humanitarian ideals and methods were used in addressing this cluster of problems with what may be termed humanitarian solutions, looking at how and why British liberals, Quakers and others came to want to solve Russia's problems. It asks: what were the processes by which famine, religious dissent or political oppression in Russia were designated as problems, and by which certain solutions were developed? By so doing, it seeks to get a better grasp of the place of humanitarianism in British civil society. Finally, the book seeks to understand better the humanitarian category as contested on multiple levels and in various contexts, partly through these micro-level humanitarian forms. While focus is put on humanitarian forms, they nevertheless can be related to broader humanitarian ideals, in order to show how varieties of humanitarianism are shaped by appropriation and adaptation. In other words, we would do better to consider liberal humanitarianism or Quaker humanitarianism than humanitarianism in general. By understanding these local varieties, and how they were embedded in other ideas and interests, we can better understand why, say, 'rights' were campaigned for at some times and not others or why political groups might talk about suffering rather than justice.

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[28] Gill, p. 7.

[29] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880–1930: Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), Chap. 11; Michael Hughes, *Diplomacy before the Russian Revolution*.

What types of humanitarianism were produced in the Anglo-Russian context, and were they unique to this context, or part of wider patterns? The book traces a productive relationship between Russia—or rather images of the country and its problems—and the 'humanitarianism' of various actors. It considers that the humanitarian interventions in Russia in this period highlight important aspects of humanitarian thinking in this period, particularly the ways humanitarianism was linked to liberal development, religion and to internationalism, as shown up in Russia. Of course, much of this was derived from larger patterns of activity: H.N. Brailsford, a journalist who wrote about Russia and supported reform, did the same for Macedonia;[30] as did Emile Dillon for Armenia.[31] Famine relief invoked 'lessons' from India and Ireland. Similar points can be made about the Western defence of women's rights in India, or Jewish rights in Romania.[32] Those campaigning for religious solidarity talked about seventeenth-century England, while Tolstoyans built colonies in many places. The relief workers in 1921 were part of a Europe-wide effort and wider 'epistemic communities'.[33] Nevertheless, the problem of

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[30] F.M. Leventhal, 'H.N. Brailsford and Russia: The Problem of Objectivity', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 5.2 (1973), pp. 81–96.

[31] Joseph O. Baylen, 'Dillon, Emile Joseph (1854–1933)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32828, accessed 24 June 2013).

[32] Fink.

[33] Paul Weindling, 'Introduction: Constructing International Health Between the Wars', in *International Health Organisations and Movements Between the Wars*, ed. by Paul Weindling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1–16 (p. 4).

Russia was big enough to offer a field for comparison, and in which to show how humanitarianism grew alongside and was shaped by other discourses. Indeed, it may have been seen as part of a general pattern, but in many respects Russia presented an unusual story. Theodor Shanin identifies the 'specific social syndrome of what we call today a "developing society"' and argues that it first materialised in Russia in the late nineteenth century.[34] At the same time, Anglo-Russian humanitarian interactions were more equal than those in the colonies. The strength of the country meant that humanitarian critiques led not so much to Western domination, as that they were channelled into liberal and radical visions of a Russia both different from the tsar's and from the capitalist West.[35] In this context, Russian writers and opposition figures provided the country and its problems with a distinct and articulate voice, to the extent that writers like Tolstoy and terrorists like Stepniak made British converts, and Russia later became the first workers' state. This was not, then, a universal category applied to Russia, rather it was the result of a confluence of ideas and interest, which fed into Russia's unique social structure, with a large, poor peasantry, a small, socially conscious nobility, and autocratic state, and liberal, anarchist and Christian parts of British civil society. It is therefore a transnational and international, rather than comparative, approach, emphasising the synchronous connections between the two countries.

Methods and Concepts

The book locates humanitarian motives and methods in the above-mentioned campaigns. It seeks to understand the role of humanitarianism in each of the aspects where it may be detected: representations of suffering and their promotion of sympathy; humanitarian practices; NGOs and their aims; and broader ideological debates. It uses the overall timeframe and context of the book, and the juxtaposition of several examples, in order to show how these aspects connected and trace the causal relations among them. Campaigns are taken as the central point of analysis, with individuals, NGOs, nations, and so on looked at to the degree that they interacted with the former. In order to answer questions set by the historiography regarding the functioning of humanitarianism, three aspects of humanitarian campaigns will be considered: the narrative strategies they employed; how these connected to existing interests and ideals; and a more internal account of the methods of individual groups and campaigns, emphasising innovation and the relative autonomy of humanitarian practices and ideals from social and political interests.

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[34] Teodor Shanin, *Russia as a 'Developing Society'* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), p. xi; David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (London: Harvard University Press, 2003); or for Western views of Eastern European underdevelopment in general see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[35] Vera Tolz, 'Russia and the West', in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. by William J. Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 197–216; Franco Venturi, Francis Haskell and Isaiah Berlin, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960); Steven G. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Humanitarian Narratives

A number of scholars have sought to explain humanitarian action through analysis of narrative. Thomas Laqueur argued that ‘humanitarian narratives’, first developed in the eighteenth century, play a central role in stimulating humanitarian action by laying out the causality behind an instance of suffering, and showing ameliorative action to be possible and morally imperative.[36] Luc Boltanski analyses the rhetorical forms that humanitarian appeals can take. This approach argues that humanitarianism needs to be narrated, based on what he concludes are dominant modes of political and social thought developed in the eighteenth century. For Boltanski, the main requirement of a humanitarian campaign is that it can convincingly evoke a ‘politics of pity’ using one of the dominant ‘topics’ he identifies, and meeting the dual requirements of creating a specific enough affinity to be affecting, and a universal enough justification to be eligible for intervention. The problem with this is that a purely textual reading of humanitarianism, however attentive to interest, may overlook the dynamics of these interests. It can also tend towards deductive reasoning. The assumption of a humanitarian logic, and the emphasis on rhetoric, mean that humanitarian campaigns or strategies are understood as more or less successful enactments of a category—humanitarianism—which is largely taken as a given. While he emphasises that by rhetoric he means a speech act which actively connects interests, his focus is nevertheless conceptual rather than historical.[37] Laqueur makes clear that humanitarian narratives do not 'exercise power independently of an audience whose responses are determined by material and ideological conditions outside the realm of language' and that a 'a history and sociology of narrative forms' is therefore necessary to determine why certain humanitarian narratives are effective at certain times.[38] This can also include a history and sociology of humanitarian forms.

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[36] Thomas Laqueur.

Despite such qualifications it can be argued that focus on narratives is at times one-dimensional. In a recent article, Green contends that in the historiography on humanitarianism:

> [i]mplicitly, or explicitly, the ability to empathize with distant others emerges in this literature as a feature of the modern condition… There remains a need to reflect more broadly and comparatively on the relative strengths and particular characteristics of different humanitarian traditions as they evolved in different national, religious, and imperial cultures.

She calls for historians to 'engage in more concrete ways with a variety of national contexts, and religious and political traditions.'[39] Thus expanded in order to be seen alongside a broader range of interests and values, humanitarian narratives can be usefully applied to understand selective interventions abroad. In his study of humanitarian relief in the Middle East after the First World War, Watenpaugh addresses the selectivity of humanitarian responses. He argues that the:

> *humanitarian imagination* structured the choices and strategies adopted by ad hoc relief groups and emerging international institutions…about whether or not to help and what form that help would take. Put simply, during the Great War in the Middle East, some humanitarian emergencies prompted a humanitarian response. Some did not.[40]

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[37] Luc Boltanski and Graham Burchell, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 54.

[38] Thomas Laqueur, p. 200.

[39] Abigail Green, 'Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context: Religious, Gendered, National', *Historical Journal*, 57.4 (2014), pp. 1157–1175 (p. 1175).

[40] Watenpaugh.

Watenpaugh's humanitarian imagination is shaped by sympathies with certain groups, the presence of local contacts, and methods of intervention. This book argues that while the humanitarian logic elucidated by Boltanski exists, any given enactment is in fact built on and constrained by local traditions, practice, interests and opportunities.

Networks

For Michael Barnett, one of the central points of humanitarianism is that it 'crosses boundaries' since 'humanitarianism implies going beyond the call of duty.'[41] For others, such as Catherine Hall, humanitarianism may indeed cross boundaries, but in doing so it also 'maps' certain hierarchies.[42] A large historiography on the campaigns to end slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth century asked how far altruistic motives could be separate from material or political interests.[43] Tracing connections between humanitarians, the objects of their aid and their other interests and connections, is therefore very useful in revealing such links. Not only can it reveal unstated interests, but also transferrable skills and ideological aspects that may not be evident in any given humanitarian work. The SFRF, the Doukhobor campaign and the famine relief efforts all comprised individuals from within and across societies. They were supported by different newspapers, political factors and sections of the public. A prosopographical approach is therefore employed in order to highlight links and ascertain their strength. Prosopography 'is the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives.'[44] It can be used in order to explain the genesis and social function of particular committees, for instance. On the one hand, it can highlight common assumptions that may have gone unnoticed, by showing outside intellectual, religious or political affiliations. More significantly it can connect members' work to their other, perhaps deeper, interests in order to show the intentions and assumptions behind their work. Furthermore, the social, professional, religious and political backgrounds of members can point to the levers they could use to influence society more generally. For instance, knowing that a campaign was largely staffed by Liberal Party members can highlight some perhaps unstated assumptions about the extent of critique and the relative roles of state and voluntary activity. It can also suggest the type of social capital that the campaign was able to employ, and its likely leverage in, say, the Foreign Office. As an example, with respect to the campaigns against the Contagious Diseases Act, Judith Walkowitz has produced a table of the various affiliations of the main actors.[45] This demonstrates that the campaign's appeal was clustered with notions of feminism, Nonconformity, and so on, and that the skills used in it were transferable. This approach is limited in the sense that it does not record how active each membership was, nor dissent. For example, Ruth Fry, chair of the FWVRC (Friends' Emergency and War Victims' Relief Committee), was also on the executive committee of the SCF (Save the Children Fund). However, this fact alone does not explain the continued separate existence of the Friends' and SCF, or their divergences. This can only be ascertained reading minutes and letters, inferring from advertisements and schemes, or from histories of the organisations.

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[41] Barnett, p. 19.

[42] Hall.

[43] David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[44] Laurence Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus*, 100.1 (1971), pp. 46–79.

These connections can be emphasised in several ways. The sociologist Nick Crossley writes:

> I suggest that networks form one dimension, albeit perhaps the most important dimension, of a wider, three-dimensional structure within which cultural production should be analysed. The other two dimensions comprise resources, or more specifically the distribution of resources, which generate power in the context of exchange and asymmetrical interdependence; and conventions, a concept which embraces shared techniques, habits and rules/norms.[46]

By networks, he means to emphasise the specific connections between actors, rather than just shared dispositions. The book focuses on the internal cohesion of campaigns, both formally and informally. Historians have looked at the role of Quaker kinship networks, for instance.[47] They show that it was often not so much shared ideas as the availability of motivated volunteers, connected by close religious and family ties, and leverage in lobbying, that led to success. Indeed, as Stone suggests, a 'limitation of the prosopographical school of historians is that its members sometimes unduly neglect the stuff of politics, the institutional framework within which the system functions, and the narrative of how political actors shape public policy.'[48] The book accordingly pays particular attention to the techniques of campaigning, and how these related to previous practices, particularly religious and political ones. Here, careful attention will be paid to the various models of transferring religious ideas to a social context.[49] It builds on various histories which analyse the role of humanitarian workers, journalists or missionaries in one context.[50]

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[45] Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State*, 1st paper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 126–127; Matthew Hilton, *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain: Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 337.

[46] Nick Crossley, 'The Man Whose Web Expanded: Network Dynamics in Manchester's Post/punk Music Scene 1976–1980', *Poetics*, 37 (2009), pp. 24–49 (p. 27).

In particular, the book will draw on two concepts to understand the workings of humanitarian campaigns, or of the organisations undertaking them. First, Charles Tilly's concept of 'repertoire' will be used. In social movement theory, the interests, traditions and opportunities of a group produce a 'repertoire' of tactics that may be used to advance positive aims, beyond the immediate horizons of that group, one of which is humanitarian campaigns.[51] By focusing on humanitarianism practices—or the practices used to carry out humanitarian work—humanitarianism is not seen as an abstract ideal, a sentiment, or a legal principle. Rather it is seen as a strategic tool, at least in part, and as shaped by non-humanitarian contexts. Indeed, for most of the actors under study, humanitarianism was used to meet other goals, meaning that these goals and material conditions ought to be considered as much as purely humanitarian aspects.[52] The question does not then begin from the standpoint of why were, say, Christians and Boers a focus of humanitarian attention more than Jews, or why the Quakers were 'passive' in certain periods. Rather it considers how, Quaker traditions of ministry—one of the sect's most central and distinctive institutions—and lay participation met various contemporary 'problems' set by empire and trade, for example. From this perspective, the potential objects of humanitarian or ministerial concerns (Boers, Jews) are merely opportunities or interests created by news, business and organisational resources and selected from London, Newcastle or Manchester. The resulting humanitarian campaigns are as much about extending these networks or asserting certain worldviews, as about the immediate relief of suffering. Sympathy cannot be separated from the forms of solidarity that it provokes. Regarding contemporary organisations, Brauman writes that 'the tendency of any institution to seek to increase its resources and expand the scope of its activity' can lead to more work than is needed being done.[53] This is not to misconstrue their intentions, but rather to properly understand the positive status of humanitarian activity as opposed to ideals.

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[47] Quakers' 'especially dense networks of kinship and of business and financial obligations arising from such friendships.' Sandra Stanley Holton, *Quaker Women: Emotional Life, Memory and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1800–1920* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 228, 3, Fig. 1.1; Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 190.

[48] Stone, p. 64.

[49] Patrick Collinson, 'Religion, Society, and the Historian', *Journal of Religious History*, 23.2 (1999).

[50] Charlotte Alston, *Russia's Greatest Enemy?: Harold Williams and the Russian Revolutions* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007); Comaroff and Comaroff; Rebecca Larson, *Daughters of Light: Quaker Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700–1775* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Katherine Storr, *Excluded from the Record: Women, Refugees, and* Relief, *1914–1929* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009).

[51] Charles Tilly, 'Social Movements and National Politics', in *Civil Societies and Social Movements: Domestic, Transnational, Global*, ed. by Ronnie D. Lipschutz (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

This is particularly expedient in describing Quaker work, because it allows us to sidestep the sometimes dominant internal perspective. As Elizabeth Isichei notes, Quakerism has a distinctive lexicon and set of practices.[54] Using these terms can lead one to see more coherence in Quakerism than there perhaps is. For instance, the Quaker theologian and historian, Rufus Jones, describes changes in Quaker philanthropy largely as a result of changes in understanding Quakerism (he uses the term ‘ripening’ to describe changes in Quaker stances to social problems[55]). The perspective of social history, by contrast, shows that these changes were driven as much by class structures or other external social and political factors, as Quakerism itself. Specifically, I intend to use the term ‘repertoire’ to offer a more neutral view of Quaker functions. It can also be applied to the SFRF, who saw ‘humanitarian’ work as a tactic to advance ‘political’ ends which they could not pursue from Britain, to SCF, who saw humanitarian work as part of a broader campaign for children’s rights, to the Tolstoyan movement, whose aims were religious, to liberals, who saw such campaigns as part of their stances on foreign policy, free trade and so on, and to others such as journalists, who had professional and financial motivations.

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[52] Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene, *Religious Internationals in the Modern World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[53] Rony Brauman, 'Global Media and the Myths of Humanitarian Relief: The Case of the 2004 Tsunami', in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. by Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 108–117 (p. 115).

[54] Isichei, pp. 60–110.

Relatedly, the book also employs the term ‘humanitarian circuit’. Based on her work in Gaza, the anthropologist Ilana Feldman coined the term to mean ‘relations among donors, relief organizations, and the recipients of aid, through the medium of assistance technologies’ and argues that they ‘not only reflect changing humanitarian goals, they create new demands on such organizations and therefore help shape them.’[56] I use this to highlight the fact that considerable agency in a humanitarian organisation should be attributed to the processes and logistics of distributing aid or intervening in some way. This contrasts with the view that humanitarianism is simply the enactment of an ideal, and is particularly evident in the case of aid to the Russian famine in 1921–1923. Relief organisations had to adopt expertise and norms from outside of Quakerism and meet certain targets. Their ‘humanitarian gesture’ was shaped as much by the ways they worked as by the desire to help. Indeed, humanitarian sympathy was perhaps only one aspect of the relief and is better understood in this context as, for example, a motivation for staff or an advertising strategy than as an ideal that suffused the whole work.

Nevertheless, that these groups, understood through their own organisational or professional principles, were using humanitarian methods, raises the question of how they understood the phenomenon.[57] How far was sympathy, and subjective experience more generally, allowed to set their goals and methods? Many agree that sympathy is itself extremely malleable. Laqueur argues that '"sad and sentimental tales" as a form reached perfection very early in their history' and 'can raise just as readily as lower' threshold of inclusion for humanitarians at any one time.[58] Further, for both religious and secular humanitarians, sympathy was questionable.[59] How it became crystallised in traditions of intervention, norms of acceptable suffering, and laws and structures of justice, is therefore an important contextual question.[60] Analysing humanitarian techniques can be a fruitful way to understand the history of the phenomenon. Both works that look at humanitarianism for its own sake, and those that locate it in other paradigms, offer useful analyses of things such as campaigning, relief practices, personnel profiles, as well as the ideals and conventions for understanding and helping distant strangers. In many ways, these techniques shaped and made possible humanitarian intervention.[61] The multiplicity of these practices was matched by the variety of groups and individuals using them.[62] The book is therefore a history of humanitarian forms rather than ideas, focusing on varieties such as British humanitarianism, liberal humanitarianism or middle-class humanitarianism, more than the ideal type.

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[55] Rufus Matthew Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism, Vol. 1* (London), pp. 314–316.

[56] Ilana Feldman, ‘The Humanitarian Circuit’, in *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism Between Ethics and Politics*, ed. by Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield (Santa Fe: SAR, 2010), pp. 203–226 (p. 204).

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[57] Humanitarian sentiments had long been thought of as natural and distinct, just as specifically humanitarian institutions such as the Red Cross would also develop. Norman S. Fiering, 'Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 37.2 (1976), pp. 195–218 (p. 213).

[58] Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Mourning, Pity, and the Work of Narrative in the Making of "Humanity"', in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. by Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 31–57 (pp. 33–35).

[59] Halttunen.

[60] Marrus uses a distinction between 'knowledge' and 'awareness' with respect to intervention in the Holocaust: Michael R. Marrus, 'International Bystanders to the Holocaust and Humanitarian Intervention', in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. by Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 156–174; On the rediscovery of poverty in the late nineteenth century, Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, 1st edn (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

[61] Thomas Laqueur.

[62] Gill.

Chapters

Chapter 2 sketches the place of Russia in the British imagination, and offers historical background to the debates and forms of humanitarianism. In the late 1880s, contacts between Russian exiles, liberal politicians, radicals and journalists began to form a pressure group for Russian reform. At around the same time, religious groups such as Quakers showed renewed interest in Russian dissenters, while the Russian famine attracted considerable attention from British donors. Disparate and short-lived humanitarian campaigns had emerged in response to the slave trade, Greek nationalism and aboriginal rights since the eighteenth century, but there was no continuous, coherent ‘humanitarian’ movement. This chapter thus looks at the factors that facilitated humanitarian interest in Russia to make broader conclusions about the role of humanitarianism, the connections between local interests and faraway causes, and the longevity of these movements.

This brief introductory chapter looks at the wellsprings of the humanitarian interest for Russia that emerged in this period. It traces the charitable, political and religious landscape of Britain, the prevalent views of Russia’s condition and the role of ‘humanitarian’ claims in international relations and civil society at the time, in order to understand why a humanitarian view of Anglo-Russian relations emerged. It locates humanitarianism in British civil society, and thus contributes to a history of humanitarianism ‘from below’ as opposed to law or theory. It offers analysis of the place of humanitarianism within the Society of Friends, because Quakers were involved in all of the campaigns described and therefore offer an example of how a non-humanitarian group comes to take up humanitarian work and showing how religious beliefs and practices shaped Quaker humanitarianism.

Chapter 3 analyses the British response to the Russian famine of 1891–1892, one of the first foreign and non-colonial famines to attract British attention. The chapter analyses the British relief fund, led by the Society of Friends, in relation to contemporary views of famine, internationalism and the Anglo-Russian relationship. The chapter examines the methods of relief, seeking to show how it was linked to the givers’ social backgrounds and political aims. It also looks to understand how the relief was a response to concerns about Anglo-Russian competition, the faults of tsarism and the growing prominence of humanitarianism. While aid had been given in colonial (Ireland, India) and semi-colonial (China) contexts, this relief offered to one of Britain's rivals was still a relatively novel endeavour. That a humanitarian response was offered was both the result of an increased 'humanitarian' consciousness, and of the strategies of British liberals, keen both to criticise Russian autocracy and what they saw as Britain's militaristic foreign policy. The chapter therefore analyses the British press, the role of Russian exiles and the backgrounds of the relief givers, to situate the relief in the politics of the day.

It uses the archives of the relief committee to show how the relief itself was undertaken on the ground, and represented to donors. Led by Quakers, it was partly derived from the religious and organisational imperatives of that group, while also responding to the broader climate of opinion on Russia. While emphasising its apolitical humanitarian character, the relief also positioned itself in this nexus of social and political values. The chapter contributes to our understandings of the humanitarian framing of natural disasters and economic problems, the effect this has on discourses of development and civilisation, charitable practices, and the way that humanitarianism is positioned as a social and political force.

Chapter 4 looks at interventions on behalf of Russia's Jews and dissenting Christians. Religion featured prominently in analyses of civilisation and social change. British liberals and nonconformists posited a particularly strong link between Protestantism and modernity. This was apparent in diagnoses of Russia's condition, alongside more positive views of the 'Russian soul'. Religion was also the driver of a long-standing form of transnational solidarity, as Protestants and Jews made efforts to defend their co-religionists in foreign lands. How, then, did the humanitarian problematisation of the suffering of Russia's Jews and dissenters emerge in the 1890s from these diverse strands of thought and action?

In 1895, the Doukhobors, a Christian sect in the Caucasus, burned their weapons in protest at conscription and were flogged by the government. An international campaign, led by Lev Tolstoy and his followers and British Quakers, brought their suffering to the attention of the world and raised funds for relocation. Other dissenting sects such as Stundists (Baptists), Mennonites and Molokans attracted the attention and aid of British church groups, the Russian opposition and the press. The suffering of Russian Jews, particularly dramatic events such as the Kishinev pogrom, also won the sympathy of British groups, particularly Jewish ones. The journalist Lucien Wolf published 'Darkest Russia' to publicise these atrocities and they remained a strong argument against tsarism. This religiously framed suffering drove British religious groups to offer solidarity and aid. Moreover, the effect of these problems being publicised contributed to the image of a despotic Russia.

This chapter analyses several attempts to defend religious groups in Russia, against the backdrop of changing discourses of religion and civilisation, in order to shed light on the drivers of humanitarian action. This includes the Doukhobor campaign of 1895–1902 and reporting of Russia's dissenters, alongside efforts to help Russia's oppressed Jewry. It seeks to show why certain groups intervened in these problems, and how solidarity and ideology shaped humanitarianism. More generally it seeks to show the importance of religious genealogies of humanitarianism and human rights. It is argued that religious tolerance and belief was a central way of understanding Russia and its flaws, and that humanitarian work became increasingly important to religious groups in the face of secularisation.

Chapter 5 takes a different angle by looking at the humanitarian interest in Russia's political shortcomings. As shown by the support given to Greek nationalism in the 1820s, Italian nationalism in the 1850s, and subsequent efforts to help Spain and China, the status of foreign 'causes' changed with fashion. In 1890, a pressure group, the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom (SFRF), was formed in order to publicise tsarist atrocities and support the Russian opposition in Britain. The latter consisted of 'nihilists' and 'terrorists' exiled in London, and was supported by a range of liberal and radical opinion. They published a monthly journal, *Free Russia*, arranged protests and lantern shows, and defended exiles in British courts. This chapter analyses the reasons for the framing of this political issue as a humanitarian one, the techniques used to present it as such in the media, and its effect in political culture. It argues that, as with religious humanitarianism, the sympathy shown to Russian political exiles was built on social and historical identification.

It analyses a wide range of portrayals of the leading member, the Russian terrorist Stepniak, and nihilists in general, asking why they came to be supported by British liberals. It argues that this humanitarian support must be understood within traditions of political asylum as well as contemporary liberal politics. Images of repression and suffering were mobilised for this cause, but they were mobilised by those already predisposed to support the Russian exiles for political reasons. The chapter therefore contributes to understandings of humanitarianism in international relations and the status of liberal internationalism in late Victorian Britain. It shows how pressure groups are formed by circumstance, and how they seek to push their agenda in the public sphere by looking at the membership and campaigning methods of the SFRF.

The chapter shows the way that humanitarian techniques were developed both at the micro-level of campaigning material, and at the macro-level by showing how humanitarian work was part of the SFRF's political programme. It looks at the publications and methods of the SFRF, and relates them to the British political landscape, discourses of civilisation, in order to show where 'humanitarian' problems were positioned in the national press. Its material on *Free Russia* contributes to knowledge of humanitarian representations. By locating the stances of the SFRF in British traditions of asylum and campaigning, it contributes to the prehistory of human rights. It is argued that humanitarian concerns had become an important way of making foreign policy claims and that these claims cannot be understood without reference to the political aims and beliefs of their makers.

Finally, Chap. 6 looks at the British response to the 1921–1923 famine in Bolshevik Russia. The famine of 1921–1923 threatened millions of Russians and brought millions of pounds in aid as well as hundreds of relief workers as humanitarianism took centre stage. The First World War and ensuing chaos had done much to provoke a growth and formalisation of humanitarianism, with an increasingly professionalised group of relief workers and a new international legitimacy centred on the League of Nations. At the same time, conservative and nationalist voices in the *Daily Express* and other outlets, anti-Bolsheviks exiles and government figures protested the idea of sending relief to Russia. This chapter provides a social and cultural history of the famine relief within this new international configuration. It looks at how British humanitarians from various political and charitable standpoints sought to help Russia.

Using the records of the FWVRC, the chapter provides a detailed analysis of some of the dilemmas of famine relief, and links them to broader debates about the ideology and organisation of humanitarian relief. Relief workers had considerable scope for decision-making on the ground in this significant international event. The chapter analyses how humanitarian decisions were shaped by fund-raising imperatives, humanitarian practices and ideological debates. The concept of a 'humanitarian circuit' is used to understand the role of humanitarianism on the local, national and international levels. The mechanics of famine relief in Russia and charitable organisation in Britain are linked to broader political, religious and professional debates. It therefore seeks to complicate narratives of professionalisation by showing how religious traditions, politics, and the practical needs of fund-raising and logistics brought about a more complex and contested situation.

Humanitarian Traditions and Russia's Problems

'Thou must go to Russia.' These were the portentous words 'audibly uttered' to Joseph James Neave, a Quaker from Suffolk, in 1890, and later recounted in his published journal. In his telling of the episode, Neave first replied 'I cannot', and 'trembled all over', before being calmed and accepting his call. Although the precise nature of his service was not revealed, Neave discovered later that he was to plead to end the oppression of Russian dissenters (Stundists and Molokans) who had been exiled to the Caucasus.[1] Once another more senior Quaker, John Bellows, had found himself similarly moved, the London Society of Friends agreed to support the trip.[2] The pair travelled to Russia where they visited imprisoned Stundists to comfort and pray with them, in addition to visiting Tolstoy. While Neave expressed hope for true religious and political liberty in Russia, his journey was spiritual, not political, in nature and he restricted a letter to the Tsar to assurances 'that [the Tsar] had not more loyal subjects in his entire Dominion anywhere than these exiled Stundists'.[3] Neave's and Bellow's attempt to help the Stundists was not the most famous or influential example of advocacy from the time, but

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[1] Joseph James Neave and Joseph Joshua Green, *Leaves from the Journal of Joseph James Neave* (London, 1911), p. 105.

[2] On the conventions of ministerial inspiration see Elfrida Vipont Foulds, 'Travel under concern: 300 years of Quaker experience,' *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 50, no. 4 (1964); Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (London, 1921), p. 196.

[3] Neave, *Leaves from the Journal of Joseph James Neave*, pp. 143, 150.

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L. Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890–1923*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3_2

it does demonstrate the diversity and particularity of British engagements with Russia. Neave was acting as part of a longstanding Quaker tradition of travelling ministry, in which such inspirations were common. The subject of his calling, Russian dissenters, brought this tradition into contact with a broader humanitarian discourse on religious liberty in Russia. It is with the meeting between such local traditions and a growing discourse on Russia's problems that this book is concerned.

Russian problems were firmly lodged in the British consciousness by the 1880s, so it is perhaps unsurprising that Neave would be aware of the Stundists' plight. Contacts between Russian exiles, liberal politicians, radicals and journalists led to the formation of a pressure group for Russian reform. At around the same time, religious groups showed renewed interest in Russian dissenters and Jews, while the Russian famine in 1891–1892 saw British donors send thousands of pounds, and the press condemn Russia's malfunctioning agricultural economy. Humanitarian campaigns had emerged in response to the slave trade, Greek nationalism and aboriginal rights since the eighteenth century, but there was no continuous, coherent 'humanitarian' movement. This chapter thus looks at the factors that facilitated humanitarian interest in Russia as a basis for broader conclusions about the role of humanitarianism, the connections between local interests and faraway causes, and the longevity of these movements. Surveying the wellsprings of the humanitarian interest for Russia that emerged in this period, it traces the charitable, political and religious landscape of Britain, the prevalent views of Russia's condition, and the role of 'humanitarian' claims in international relations and civil society at the time in order to understand why a humanitarian view of Anglo-Russian relations emerged. It seeks to help locate humanitarianism in British civil society and political debates, and thus contribute to a history of humanitarianism 'from below'. The chapter first discusses the place of Russia in the British imagination, asking whether this image made Russia the object of intervention for the British. It then moves on to discuss what outline the forms of humanitarianism at the time, and concludes by analysing the role of humanitarianism in the Society of Friends, as a case study of the most prominent group in the book.

RUSSIAN AND INTERVENTION

What made Russia amenable to humanitarian engagement? Scholars have traced the concept of humanitarian intervention in international relations, asking whether atrocities could trigger humanitarian interventions.

Public opinion, as articulated by the news media and pressure groups, did push for various interventions in the nineteenth century and Western European states did include the sufferings of Christian populations, although not Muslim ones, in their calculations regarding the fate of the Ottoman Empire.[4] Given the variety of other interests governing the behaviour of European states, it is perhaps too much to say that humanitarian intervention was a completely independent principle, responding primarily to suffering or the violation of rights.

Interventions which did not breach state sovereignty, such as famine relief or the SFRF's advocacy, took on a greater variety of forms. While voluntary action such as that described in this book perhaps did not have to overcome as high a bar as that which threatened the balance of power, this form of intervention was nevertheless highly selective and sporadic. Barnett classifies the nineteenth century as one of 'imperial humanitarianism', in which humanitarianism was linked to Western civilisation, but beneath this periodisation lie a number of competing humanitarian forms, representing a number of ideologies.[5] For example, the relief efforts under study in this book sought to position themselves in opposition to British foreign policy and values. Another, more technocratic form of humanitarianism, centred on 'diplomatic conferences and international cooperation to combat' transnational crimes, was also developed in the period.[6] Civilisation was a central, if malleable, concept through which the objects of intervention, and the right to intervene, were understood. In international relations the standard of civilisation was fairly fixed, signifying the European nations and North America as well as Japan and the Ottoman Empires in some estimates. In general discourse, its meaning fluctuated somewhat, and included notions of economic development, morality and political capacity. As Engerman shows in his analysis of American modernisers' relationship with Russia and the USSR, as views of Russian character, capability and social structure changed, so did the possibilities of modernisation in Western eyes. A universalist belief that all, including Russians, were capable of modernisation competed with particularist beliefs in the 'Russian character'.[7]

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[4] Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[5] Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[6] Philippa Hetherington, '"The Highest Guardian of the Child": International Criminology and the Russian Fight Against Transnational Obscenity, 1885–1925', *Russian History*, 43.3–43.4 (2016), pp. 275–310 (pp. 277–278).

By the 1890s, two features dominated in analyses of Russia: its backward economy and its repressive institutions.[8] The former was for some a deeper condition that necessitated government repression, or at least prevented too much reform. For others, Russia's poverty was just another symptom of a ruthless autocracy and landowning class, unwilling to overturn the unfavourable conditions of the 1861 emancipation, or to invest in educating the peasantry. Anti-tsarism was propagated vigorously by the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom and its liberal supporters from the 1890s (see Chap. 5). Of course many countries were poor or politically repressive, but the presence of a European, or Europeanised, elite and a Christian peasantry, made Russia a different proposition. As Watenpaugh shows with respect to the Ottoman Empire and its remnants after the First World War, humanitarian interventions often rested on a prior engagement with a part of the population. Protestant missionaries had for many years sought to convert and help the Armenian populations in the Middle East, and these missionaries, along with the American University in Beirut, formed the network on which humanitarian aid was based. While aid flowed freely to Christians connected with the institutions of American modernisation or confessional preference, disasters affecting Muslim populations were met with shrugs and silence. Watenpaugh uses the concept of a 'humanitarian imagination' to describe the interlinking of contacts and ideas that promote humanitarian crises in Western eyes.[9]

Russia too was imagined as a place worthy of help long before any intervention took place. Its place in the British imagination, or at least the liberal imagination, was the fruit of a number of intellectual trends, travel works and scholarly books on the country. In the early nineteenth century, the country was seen to be divided both geographically, as it was a 'European power with an Asiatic territory',[10] and sociologically, as it had a Europeanised noble class and a large, 'backward' peasantry.[11] Later in the century, the characterisation of civilisation overlaying barbarism was flipped as more positive views of Russia were sought in her peasantry and 'ancient' constitutional institutions, the *mir* (village commune) and the *veche* (public assembly) in Novgorod.[12] The influential *Times* journalist and author Donald MacKenzie Wallace asserted that the Russian village communes were 'capital specimens of representative constitutional government of the extreme democratic type'.[13] MacKenzie Wallace's praise of the *mir* was shared by many others, including those who saw it as a potential revolutionary resource.[14] Discussion of the 1861 emancipation of the serfs brought the question of the capability of Russia's peasants to the fore. McKenzie Wallace's 1877 book, while optimistic about the peasants' future, and warning against 'monstrous' depictions of serfdom as might feature in 'sensation novels', still questioned the efficacy of Russia's institutions. The peasants were not poor because of inherent qualities, but because of serfdom, followed by the 'rack rents' in post-emancipation Russia. McKenzie Wallace's book and others like it were important not for advocating any one political position on Russia (he was more conservative than most of the SFRF, for instance), but rather for putting Russian problems into the terms of Western social and political categories. For example, Wallace talked about Russian Christian sects as nonconformists, using terminology from British history, which would be important in leading British Christians to identify with Russian ones. Focus on the deliberative arrangements of the *mir* allowed the peasants to be seen as capable subjects, worthy of help in liberal eyes, and at least partly allayed images of peasant lethargy. This more detailed image of Russia combined with the growth of nationalism in the West to mean that, instead of being merely separate from the Roman–Germanic world, Russia was now a distinct nation like any other, and was to a greater extent seen on its own terms.[15] According to Malia, the reforms of Alexander II meant that Russia was seen in terms of Western political categories, and given a 'political personality'.[16]

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[7] David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (London: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[8] Teodor Shanin, *Russia as a 'Developing Society'* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), p. xi; Engerman; for Western views of Eastern European underdevelopment in general see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[9] Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

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[10] Lyall, *The Character of the Russians: And a Detailed History of Moscow. Illustrated with Numerous Engravings. With a Dissertation on the Russian Language, and an Appendix, Containing Tables, Political, Statistical, and Historical, a Catalogue of Plants Found in and near Moscow; an Essay on the Origin and Progress of Architecture in Russia, &C. &C.* (London: T. Cadell, 1823), p. 10.

[11] David Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 22.

[12] "ART. III.—1. History of the Russian Empire", *Quarterly Review*, 113: 225 (1863: January), p. 60.

[13] Donald MacKenzie Wallace, "Russia," in Francesca Wilson, *Muscovy Russia Through Foreign Eyes 1553–1900* (London: George Allen & Unwin), p. 276.

[14] Teodor Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and 'the Peripheries of Capitalism'* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

A belief that Russia's energies were fettered by the autocracy was not limited to revolutionaries. Racial or civilisational generalisations—of an 'Asiatic' peasantry, or the torpor induced by the endless steppe—were less common than critiques of institutions. MacKenzie Wallace was broadly conservative in outlook. He did not dispute the common view that the peasants were apathetic and lethargic, but still displayed faith in the emancipation to allow some degree of enlightenment:

> I have endeavoured to represent serfage in its normal, ordinary forms rather than in its occasional monstrous manifestations. Of these latter I have a collection containing ample materials for a whole series of sensation novels, but I refrain from quoting them, because I do not believe that the criminal annals of a country give a fair representation of its real condition. Imagine an author describing family life in England by the chronicles of the Divorce Court! The method would, of course, seem to all men incredibly absurd, and yet it would not be much more unjust than that of an author who should describe serfage in Russia by those cases of reckless oppression and inhuman cruelty which certainly did sometimes occur, but which as certainly were exceptional. Most foreigners are already, I believe, only too disposed to exaggerate the oppression and cruelty to which serfage gave rise, so that in quoting a number of striking examples I should simply be pandering to that taste for the horrible and the sensational which is for the present in need of no stimulus. It must not, however, be supposed that in refraining from all description of those abuses of authority which the proprietors sometimes practiced I am actuated by any desire to whitewash serfage or attenuate its evil consequences. No great body of men could long wield such enormous uncontrolled power without abusing it, and no great body of men could long live under such power without suffering morally and materially from its pernicious influence. And it must

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[15] Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, p. 190.

[16] Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, p. 168.

> be remembered that this pernicious influence affected not only the serfs, but also the proprietors. If serfage did not create that moral apathy and intellectual lethargy which formed, as it were, the atmosphere of Russian provincial life, it did much at least to preserve it. In short, serfage was the chief barrier to all material and moral progress, and it was, therefore, natural that in a time of moral awakening such as that which I have described in the preceding chapter the question of Serf Emancipation at once came to the front.[17]

Just as important as these sociological perspectives was Russian culture. Russian literature began to be translated into English from the 1860s, and went a long way to improving foreign perceptions of the country's level of civilisation.[18] Authors such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky demonstrated the distinctiveness of the 'Russian soul', giving the country a voice of its own and marginalising the views of Western travellers.[19] Growing appreciation of Russian artists and Russian peasants meant that for many the ruthless autocracy and venal bureaucracy came to be seen as fetters on the 'real' Russia rather than the civilised veneer of an 'Asiatic' country. For all the 'Russianness' of the characters in these works, they were nevertheless made subjects possible to empathise with, distinct but not wholly 'other' or uncivilised. The importance of Russian literature in generating support for humanitarian and anti-autocratic measures can be seen in the novels of the Russian terrorist, Stepniak, which sought to make his motivations comprehensible, and admirable, to westerners.

Lev Tolstoy was among the most influential voices denouncing tsarism and extolling the virtues of Russia's peasants. Quotes from the novelist were common in newspaper reports on the 1891 famine as well as the repression of non-Orthodox Christians. His programme of spiritual Christianity and simple living won him disciples across Britain and elsewhere.[20] In this sense, Tolstoy was important not just as a source of news on Russia's problems, but because he put forward a vision of Russian life that British readers could identify with, or even wish to imitate in some aspects. Russian peasants were not just labourers in an economically backward system of agriculture, but evinced virtues and maintained institutions not found in the industrialised West, such as the *mir*. These ideas were not created by Tolstoy, but the role of his and others' writing in the West shows how images of Russia and its problems created the basis for humanitarian intervention. Both the depth of identification with Russian life and the angles with which Britons approached Russian problems owe something to Tolstoy and his contemporaries. Of course, few Westerners went to Russia to implement Tolstoyan humanitarian solutions—although support for the Doukhobor sect drew heavily on such ideas—instead taking their own professional techniques and ideological baggage with them.

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[17] Donald MacKenzie Wallace, *Russia* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1877), pp. 483–484.

[18] Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, p. 194.

[19] Wilson, *Muscovy*, p. 215.

[20] Charlotte Alston, *Tolstoy and His Disciples: The History of a Radical International Movement* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

Varieties of Humanitarianism

In tracing the changing meanings of humanitarianism, Davies shows that 'across the nineteenth century, there was a general shift from moral philanthropy or the "good of humanity" as an abstraction, to an imperative of transformation and social and political change.' If humanitarianism was defined no more precisely than as an 'affection for humanity', a large variety of activities could follow from this feeling.[21] The best way to deploy compassion was a matter for debate and experiment as towards the end of the century, statisticians, philanthropists and reformers interested in what was called 'the social question' sought to refine and reposition compassion in various social and economic frameworks.[22] Gilbert Murray, a classics professor and internationalist, discussed the history of humanitarianism in a letter: 'In cases of very good government, humanitarianism seems to dwindle away or exist invisibly in another form. There is a Burmese civil servant here, high up, who speaks of all subjects in the high official tone, unsympathetic and "illiberal". At a time of high grain prices, he did not collect revenues, but this was a matter of "administration" not

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[21] Katherine Davies, 'Continuity, Change and Contest: Meanings of "Humanitarian" from the "Religion of Humanity" to the Kosovo War', *HPG Working Paper*, 2012, pp. 1–31 (p. 3).

[22] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, 1st edn (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

"humanitarianism."[23] Some, such as the Humanitarian League, sought to promote humanitarian rationales as a guiding principle for many areas of national life and public policy.[24] For most, however, humanitarianism was seen as Murray saw it: a way to ameliorate destruction beyond the reach of normal administration, and as an outgrowth of a more civilised, or more Christian, society, more than a philosophical or social system in itself. It was, therefore, characterised by diversity of practices and political orientations.

In understanding these orientations, a useful point of departure is to note that humanitarianism was, until the twentieth century, an almost wholly voluntary activity. The interests and skills of the volunteers were therefore a key ingredient in the interventions under study. As such, the ideals of humanitarianism intersected with class, gender, ideology and profession, and intervention in Russia should therefore be understood as a product of the personal and professional aspirations of the humanitarians as much as of images of Russia's suffering population. The humanitarians under study came from several overlapping groups. Most could not be described as professional humanitarians. Those seeking to defend Russia's revolutionaries were often journalists, politicians, writers or religiously affiliated. The famine relief commissioners in 1891–1892 worked as merchants, manufacturers and in similar jobs. Jewish and Christian causes tended to be taken up by already existing bodies within these groups. Many of these amateur humanitarians had experience in previous fields or campaigns such as the Franco–Prussian War, even if it had not been their main occupation. By the time of the 1921 famine, however, a number of 'career humanitarians' can be identified.

Although the famine relief and advocacy efforts in Russia clearly differed from domestic charity, they nevertheless echoed some of the latter's motivations, personnel and practices. One important factor was gender. As has been shown by historians, middle- and upper-class women became increasingly engaged in various forms of social service, and particularly 'slumming', in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Charity work offered an outlet for many women denied entry into other fields. Ross argues that 'The various kinds of women's education, charity, and parish work that intensified in the 1860s can all be seen as wedges with which women could pry their way into national life as they moved across the shifting divide between the public and private spheres.'[25] In the last decades of the century schools and universities began to promote social service among female students. Brewis shows how:

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[23] Gilbert Murray, letter to H.N. Brailsford [an SFRF member], 5 September 1905, GB 394/HNB 4, *The Papers of H.N. Brailsford*, LHA.

[24] Dan Weinbren, 'Against All Cruelty: The Humanitarian League, 1891–1919', *History Workshop Journal*, 1994, pp. 86–105.

> Voluntary work at girls' schools was promoted as a means of building character. It was also seen as a way to prepare middle-class girls for work in the world, paid or unpaid. Hence even very small private schools looked for opportunities to promote an ideal of service among pupils. Many such schools aimed primarily to equip their pupils for a life of leisure, but also aimed at making 'useful' women who would live responsible lives and fulfil social duties.[26]

While the ideal of service was echoed in the motivations of volunteers for Russia, more evident, however, was the model of action promoted by such training (and path to professional, or spiritual, fulfilment). Without speculating too much on motives or personal satisfaction, it is clear that much can be illuminated by looking at the skills and habits of humanitarian workers. Gill, for instance, argues that 'institutional prerogatives, occupational protocols and unspoken assumptions are as consequential as acknowledged ideals and ethical resolutions'.[27] The late nineteenth century saw a growing, and sometimes polarised, array of relief organisations, practices and workers. The Charity Organisation Society (COS) was formed in 1869 with the aim of applying scientific principles to charity and trained many social workers and humanitarians in the subsequent decades. The scientific orientation of the COS put it at odds with charities such as Barnardo's, whose 'sensationalist' and sentimental methods the COS sought to discredit.[28] Yet, as Gill argues, traditional notions of

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[25] Ellen Ross, *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 19.

[26] Georgina Brewis, 'From Working Parties to Social Work: Middle-Class Girls' Education and Social Service 1890–1914', *History of Education*, 38.6 (2009), 761–777 (p. 763).

[27] Rebecca Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 210.

[28] Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 88–139.

'heartfelt compassion' co-existed with a new emphasis on standardisation and efficiency.[29] Some charity remained highly gendered and conservative. Kate Marsden's contemporary book, *On Sledge and Horseback to the Outcasts of Siberia* (1892), for instance, documents her trip to help Siberian lepers, which she calls 'essentially women's work', and which carried endorsements from the British and Russian monarchies.[30] Perhaps more typical was the tendency from the late nineteenth century, and particularly after the First World War, for humanitarian organisations to grow internationally and to systematise their practices and principles.[31] The League of Nations and associated technical bodies formalised the transnational co-operation that had been growing for decades.[32]

Humanitarian work was defined as much by the problems it sought to solve as by its methods. As well as domestic charity, war relief came to prominence in the Franco–Prussian War of 1870. Aided by journalism and driven by willing volunteers, the war in Northern France was accompanied a concerted relief effort. Two organisations came to the fore: the British National Aid Society (NSA), later the British Red Cross Society, aiding wounded soldiers, and the Quaker Friends' War Relief Committee, focused on innocent civilians and seeking to advance pacifism and Christianity. The latter objected to what they perceived as the NSA's endorsement of militarism. The FWVRC would persist as a vehicle for Quaker values, particularly pacifism, working in Eastern Europe and the First World War. Humanitarianism here was entwined with the debates on British foreign policy so that undertaking war relief was for the FWVRC to comment on war.[33] In the period under study, relief had strong ties with liberal internationalist political culture.[34] Anti-war sentiment had seen a deputation of Quakers intended to prevent the Crimean War visit Moscow in 1854, and the Quakers would later undertake relief work in the parts of Finland bombarded by the Royal Navy so as to signal their disapproval of British policy.[35] Persistent tension between Britain and Russia in Central Asia and elsewhere meant that pacifists such as the journalist W.T. Stead were particularly enthusiastic about the prospects of the Hague Peace Conference proposed by the Tsar in 1899.[36] There was also considerable support for Russian anti-tsarist movements. Greek liberation in the 1820s, support for Giuseppe Mazzini in the 1850s and other broadly liberal causes had similarly won support in Britain, and many of those supporting the victims of Russian oppression saw themselves as part of a tradition of solidarity. The humanitarianism generated from this tradition was decidedly non-professional and usually took the form of advocacy. As will be shown in Chap. 3, however, this solidarity with liberal and radical movements also helped to buttress relief work in Russia (as well as in the Christian provinces of the Ottoman Empire).

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[29] Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870–1914*, p. 7.

[30] Kate Marsden, *On Sledge and Horseback to the Outcast Siberian Lepers* (London: The Record Press, 1891).

[31] Barnett, p. 83.

[32] Susan Pedersen, 'Back to the League of Nations: Review Essay', *American Historical Review*, 112.4 (2007), pp. 1091–1117; Frank Trentmann, 'After the Nation-State: Citizenship, Empire and Global Coordination in the New Internationalism, 1914–1930', in *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1880–1950*, ed. by Philippa Levine and Frank Trentmann Kevin Grant (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Paul Weindling, *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[33] Rebecca Gill, '"The Rational Administration of Compassion": The Origins of British Relief in War', *Le Mouvement Social*, 227.2 (2009), pp. 9–26.

Quakerism and Humanitarianism

The chapter now turns to focusing on the relationship between the Society of Friends and humanitarianism. Quakers led the British famine relief in 1891–1892, aided the Doukhobors from 1898, raised a small famine fund in 1907, and worked in the Buzuluk famine district from 1921. They therefore provide a thorough example of the process by which humanitarian work is taken up at the micro-level. They had specific procedures for humanitarian or other work, debated such issues at conferences, and produced a large volume of written reports and memoirs. By looking at their organisation and ideals, we can discern how humanitarian campaigns were formed, why they took particular shapes, and how these changed over time. What principles and techniques underlay this engagement with Russian problems, only one of which was religious? The section considers an aspect (humanitarianism) of the worldly role and self-perception of the Quakers, a religious group that evolved from a radical sect in the seventeenth century[37] to respectable middle-class dissenters in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[38] and, in one Quaker's words, 'a spiritually–driven association of activists defined by a strong social commitment and enduring pacifist ethic' in the early twentieth century.[39] These stances towards society reveal broader attitudes to historical phenomena such as individual rights, economic morality and political techniques.[40] As David Feldman argues, a minority's significance—the Quakers were a numerical minority in most humanitarian campaigns and within nonconformist and liberal society more generally—lies in its 'axis of interaction' with the state or dominant groups.[41] Here the Society can show how an insular group saw humanitarianism as a way of expanding its influence, and how the resultant activity mediated the place of humanitarianism in the broader society and polity.

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[34] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880–1930: Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[35] Andrew Newby, '"Rather Peculiar Claims Upon Our Sympathies": Britain and Famine in Finland, 1856–1868,' in M. Corporaal, C. Cusack, L. Janssen, & R. van den Beuken, eds., *Global Legacies of the Great Irish* Famine*: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 61–80; Andrew G. Newby, 'The Society of Friends and Famine Relief in Ireland and Finland, c. 1845–1857,' in Patrick Fitzgerald, Christine Kinealy and Gerard Moran, eds., *Irish Hunger and Migration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization* (Connecticut, 2015), pp. 107–120.

[36] W.T. Stead, "The Great Pacifist: an Autobiographical Character Sketch," *The Review of Reviews for Australasia*, August, 1912, pp. 609–620.

The abolitionist Thomas Clarkson's early nineteenth-century description of Friends as 'more highly professing Christians' is symptomatic of the common elision of Quakerism and charitable behaviour.[42] The book weighed a number of factors including the Quakers' 'principle of vigilance and interference in moral conduct' and traced the diffusion of Quaker principles into society.[43] It narrated how:

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[37] Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1975).

[38] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

[39] Roger C. Wilson, quoted from conversation by Thomas C. Kennedy, *British Quakerism, 1860–1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 6.

[40] As argued in Bernstein, *Cromwell & Communism: Socialism and Democracy in the Great English Revolution*.

[41] Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840–1914*, p. 8.

[42] Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism Volume 3*, p. 263.

[43] Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism Volume 1*, p. 181.

> On their first appearance as a society they suffered as tradesmen, because others, displeased with the peculiarity of their manners, withdrew their custom from their shops. But in a little time the great outcry against them was, that they had for the trade of the country into their hands. This outcry arose in part from a strict execution of all commercial appointments and agreements between them and others, and because they never asked two prices for the commodities which they sold.[44]

Clarkson offered a rational choice model of religion. He stated that if he were asked whether he would like to be a Quaker, he would consider what the advantages of any particular religion are by considering scripture, creed and character.[45] Rather than debating doctrinal truth, his main object was to show the 'various springs, which act upon the moral constitution for the formation of character' in the habits and customs of the Quakers.[46] The religious thinker Rufus Jones, writing around this time, similarly put forward a progressive view, wherein Quaker charity was a natural outcome of its theology. Describing the transition from eighteenth-century Quietism to nineteenth-century social concern, he described how 'a new interest appeared that was destined in the ripening of time to bring the Society once more to an era of real spiritual life and power. This new interest was a rediscovery of the beckoning social tasks of humanity.' These were new 'forms of expression' of a 'social spirit' in the tradition of early Friends such as George Fox or John Woolman. Nevertheless, the Evangelicals who led this first revival did not understand the 'environmental causes' of suffering like Jones's generation because 'it has taken a whole century to ripen and define our problems and present methods of solving them.'[47] Jones' talk of 'ripening' does not explain why certain causes were taken up in certain ways. He does not sufficiently explain the Quakers' involvement in some campaigns and not others, or why they would conceive of politics as out of bounds, but charity as fitting, for example.

In line with the ideas of Jones and Clarkson, several modern historians have identified the Quakers as source of innovations in social and humanitarian thought, or at least the first to put them into action.[48] While this is often exaggerated by historians and others, it is true that the group have been a distinctive and influential group.[49] It is also true that they offer an interesting example of the translation of 'religion' into 'society'.[50] Analysing the role of Quakers in broader historical processes is, however, problematic. The main difficulty is linking the specificity of Quaker doctrine and their small numbers to more widely significant events. Vanessa Morton suggests that relatively few studies 'examine the development of the Society of Friends as a denomination within the political, economic and social context.'[51] Indeed, many internal histories of Quaker humanitarianism have been written, which offer limited consideration of external factors. John Ormerod Greenwood's comprehensive trilogy *Quaker Encounters* is typical of this approach. It covers Quaker relief from war and natural disasters as well as the development of Quaker missionary work in the late nineteenth century but, inevitably given its depth and focus, offers little in the way of social or political context.[52] Where attempts are made to distinguish Quaker positions, they can sometimes involve unjustified interpretive leaps, such as in Helen Hatton's analysis of Quaker famine relief in Ireland, where she describes the Inner Light, perhaps the Quakers' most distinguishing theological belief, as 'a spirit moving without a theoretical superstructure',[53] which enabled the Quakers to reject orthodox economic theory. Equally reductive is Elizabeth Isichei's assertion that 'all the prominent Victorian Quaker philanthropists were evangelicals.'[54] Far more convincing is David Brion Davis' analysis of Quaker motives in the abolition cause, which intertwines the socio-economic positions of Quaker abolitionists, the intellectual climate, Quaker theology, the sectarian and organisational structures of Quakerism, as well as carefully evaluating the significance and timing of Quaker action to determine the Quakers' typicality, effect and significance.[55]

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[44] Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism Volume 3*, p. 226.

[45] Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism Volume 3*, p. 395.

[46] Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism Volume 3*, p. 435.

[47] Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism, Volume 1*, pp. 314–316.

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[48] For example, abolition: David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770–1823* (London: Cornell University Press), pp. 213–254; Helen Hatton, *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland 1654–1921* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press) 1993; Rebecca Gill, '"The Rational Administration of Compassion": The Origins of British Relief in War,' *Le Mouvement Social* (227), pp. 9–26; Eduard Bernstein, *Cromwell & Communism: Socialism and Democracy in the Great English Revolution*, trans. H.J. Stenning (London: Cass, 1966; first published in German in 1895; first English edition 1930), pp. 225–252.

[49] For example, James Walvin, *The Quakers: Money and Morals* (London: John Murray, 1998).

[50] Collinson, 'Religion, Society, and the Historian'.

[51] Vanessa Morton, 'Quaker Politics and Industrial Change c. 1800–1850' (PhD Thesis, the Open University, 1988), p. 8.

[52] John Ormerod Greenwood, *Quaker Encounters: Vol. 1, Friends and Relief* (York: William Sessions Limited, 1975); John Ormerod Greenwood, *Quaker Encounters: Vol. 2, Vines on the Mountain* (York: William Sessions Limited, 1977); John Ormerod Greenwood, *Quaker Encounters: Vol. 3, Whispers of Truth* (York: William Sessions Limited), 1978.

[53] Helen Hatton, *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland 1654–1921* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), p. 27.

Elizabeth Isichei asks, 'when one attempts to analyse the role of "Quakers" in philanthropy or politics, one has to consider whether religious affiliation was indeed the dominant consideration in an individual's life. Can one meaningfully isolate the Quakers from the other supporters of the temperance movement?'[56] Indeed the distinctiveness of Quakerism may be seen as having been constantly under assault from all directions: by similarly enthusiastic and egalitarian Methodists; by similarly serious and efficient Evangelicals; by deists and Unitarians; by liberal humanitarians; by wealth and apathy, and so on. A useful starting point when analysing Quakerism as a social concern is then the institutions and mechanisms of Quakerism: how the Society controlled its members' beliefs and activities, and how collective stances were taken. In this respect, Quakerism may be more rightly seen as a cluster of values and practices, undertaken by its members and institutions, with each value or practice common with other people and churches, leaving the only distinctiveness of Quakerism as their particular aggregation. In this respect, the place of Quakerism in the humanitarian marketplace, through appeals for funds or public debates, can show where and how these traditions were translated into humanitarian notions.

Historians have analysed the methods by which Quakerism delineated itself from the rest of the world. As Isichei shows, Quakerism must be understood through its distinctive church organisation as much as its theology.[57] The Book of Discipline, the sect's rules and dogma, records incremental changes over the years.[58] The way Quakers oriented themselves to the rest of the world should be understood in terms of this history as much as the contemporary religious marketplace. Like all Christians, they were universal in ambition and, over their history, attempted to spread their message to the world at large. This was seldom attempted in practice (although aspirations to this can be seen in particular schemes and writings), with British Quakers in reality being a closely intermarried 'peculiar' people. This 'perfectionism' was the result of the Quakers' rigorous discipline and religious practice and their scepticism of the possibility of spreading true religion in any but a superficial way. This meant that the Quakers saw themselves in certain ways relative to society that cannot be entirely reduced to class, religion and politics, or even Christianity, although their 'peculiarity' often took the form of social exclusivity. They had distinct modes of worship, governance and organisation.[59] In this respect, they may be described in Bourdieu's terms as a separate symbolic economy, with their own language, norms and structures. By the same token, however, it can be said that in religion for religion's sake—a description which fits Quakerism's anti-ritual and anti-theology stance—'it is in one's interest to be disinterested.'[60] The Quaker discipline and meeting was seen as a microcosm of society through which manners and morality were inculcated. Ruth Fry described Quakerism as 'a compact body regulated more severely by their self-imposed rules than by the laws of the country where they live… a sort of microcosm set within the macrocosm of the state.'[61] Quaker specialisation as a spiritual elite saw them dominate many philanthropic campaigns (abolition, anti-Contagious Diseases Act, pacifism) and be exempted from conscription. A historical understanding of Quaker humanitarianism requires one to trace the intersections of autonomous Quaker traditions with outside currents, such as class, humanitarianism and secularisation, with which they interacted.

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[54] Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 214.

[55] David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770–1823* (London: Cornell University Press), pp. 213–254.

[56] Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, xxiii.

[57] On the distinctiveness of Quaker organisation, see Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, pp. 109–110.

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[58] Now called 'Quaker faith and practice'.

[59] Including a unique organisation and distinct vocabulary. Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 110.

[60] Pierre Bourdieu, *Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1996), p. 154.

[61] A. Ruth Fry, *Quaker Ways: An Attempt to Explain Quaker Beliefs and Practices and to Illustrate them by the Lives and Activities of Friends of Former Days* (London: Cassell, 1933), p. 3.

Secularisation, broadly understood, was perhaps the greatest threat to Quakerism.[62] A High Anglican, Thomas Hancock, in his entry to an essay competition on the future of Quakerism, suggested in 1859 that Quakerism could be wound up, having served its purpose of reviving spiritual aspects of Christianity and lost its distinctiveness.[63] The socialist Eduard Bernstein, thinking of the radicalism of the early Friends, asserted that 'Quakerism to-day vegetates simply as a survival from former days.'[64] Yet some Quakers seemed to accept the precariousness of their temporal survival. For Caroline Stephen the organisational structures of the Society of Friends were merely a vehicle for an idea, and had little value in themselves.[65] In part, this acceptance was based on exclusivity. Stephen valued the practices of Quaker worship and behaviour, which she believed needed strong institutions and discipline: 'silence is assuredly an art to be acquired, a discipline to be steadily practised, before it can become the instinctive habit and unfailing resource of the soul.'[66] She argued that Quakerism was the 'purest' form of worship and that as the responsibility for the 'lively and healthy state of each meeting' rested on members, the Society might have needed to 'sacrifice popularity' to maintain the purity of its traditions. This she opposed to the 'aggressive attitude' and 'modern activities' of Home Missions (Evangelical Quaker missions to the English working classes).[67] In line with other writers on Quakerism, she argued that it contained universal truths, and that these could be found in non-Quakers and other religions and modes of living. Quakerism, though, required a demanding form of worship and concentration. This line of thought accepted the social effects of Quakerism noted by others, but also suggested that the specifically religious practice of the sect was a necessary source of these effects.

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[62] Ira Katznelson and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Religion and the Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). http://assets.cambridge.org/97805217/66548/cover/9780521766548.jpg.

[63] Roger C. Wilson, *Manchester, Manchester and Manchester Again: From 'Sound Doctrine' to 'A Free Ministry'*. London: Friends Historical Society, 1990, p. 19. The essay in which this was argued won second prize in a competition on the decline of Quakerism.

[64] Bernstein, *Cromwell & Communism: Socialism and Democracy in the Great English Revolution*: pp. 250, 80.

[65] Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds*.

[66] Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds*: pp. 57.

[67] Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds*: pp. 61, 99–100.

As Quaker debates from the second half of the nineteenth century demonstrate, many were unsure as to the future of the Society. The religion—technically a sect—saw declining membership to the mid-nineteenth century, and a relative decline thereafter. Higher criticism and the decline of Evangelicalism in Britain undermined old religious ideas. New social and political ideals threatened Quakerism's moorings in conservative testimonies and plainness.[68] The nebulousness of the 'inner light' doctrine perhaps led Quakers to have more difficulty than most churches in defining their mission. That key Quaker customs and principles were seen to have worked their way into liberal society threatened to undercut the purpose of Quakerism. Some observers even suggested that Quakerism as 'an idea' was more important than the temporal survival of the Society of Friends.[69] Defending against such 'secularised versions'[70] of the religion was therefore important to Quakerism's survival.

The Manchester Conference (1895) is taken as a turning point in Quaker history as liberal, inner-light-centred Quakerism triumphed over scriptural, Evangelical Quakerism.[71] The new, liberal Quakerism sought to address and co-opt modern ideas, in order to strengthen Quakerism. Lectures included 'The Attitude of the Society of Friends Towards Social Questions' and 'The Attitude of the Society of Friends Towards Modern Thought' and 'Has Quakerism a Message to the World Today?' Quakerism was made to fit with new liberalism, and philanthropic work became more central to the group's message. One speaker, argued for Quakers to move 'towards a brotherhood of man' and another talked of the 'spirit lighted with the love of Christ towards our fellow man' and called George Fox 'the greatest social reformer of his time.'[72] These were general arguments, at the level of principle, and thus only tell us of the highest level orientations of Quakerism. What did the brotherhood of man mean in terms of behaviour, programmes and institutions? Analysis of Quaker humanitarianism should therefore pay attention to the internal dynamics of Quakerism as much as ideas. In analysing the Quakers' engagement with Russian problems, the following chapters therefore consider issues such as how 'humanitarian' problems were reported to a Quaker meeting, what the acceptable response for a Quaker was, and how action that could easily be bracketed as 'humanitarian' was fashioned as to remain Quaker?

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[68] Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ*, p. 60.

[69] For example, John William Graham, 'The Attitude of the Society of Friends Towards Modern Thought, given at the Manchester conference, 1895,' in Thomas D. Hamm, *Quaker Writings: An Anthology, 1650–1920* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), p. 298.

[70] Samuel, 'The discovery of puritanism,' p. 225.

[71] Roger C. Wilson, 'Manchester, Manchester and "Manchester Again: From Sound Doctrine" to "A Free Ministry"' (1990).

[72] Ibid., pp. 32, 147.

One revealing institution is the Quaker 'ministry', as practised by Joseph James Neave, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Quakers did not have paid ministers like other churches, instead believing that it was better to wait on inspiration from the Lord. Those who developed a gift for speaking would be encouraged by other ministers and elders, and would eventually become 'recorded ministers'. If the divine leadings prompted, and the Meeting approved, they could also travel (for which they would have to be issued a certificate). Most of the activity of travelling ministers was pastoral work among the Quaker communities in Britain and America, but some ministers preached, undertook philanthropy and opened up new Quaker connections. Several histories have sensitively addressed this phenomenon, taking seriously the 'divine leadings' of the ministers, at the same time as their function in, say, transmitting sound doctrine or anti-slavery views. Larson, for instance, shows how the ministry had both spiritual and practical purposes at a time when ministers were the main link between Quakers across the Atlantic.[73]

In ministry, the feeling of 'concern' driving the Quaker was as important than the nature of the problem. Ministers' callings all conformed to a similar narrative, helping to shape Quaker work. By this time, given the more scientific and rational culture and their greater integration with mainstream society, they might have found it harder to accept or practise this seemingly odd custom than their more insulated ancestors. As the example of Neave shows, the Quaker ministry was shaped by outside ideas. Neave and Bellows, for instance, were merely two among many 'pilgrims' who visited Tolstoy in the period.[74] Indeed, according to one historian, while the form of the Quaker ministry remained largely the same, its function changed from spiritual self-improvement and the fostering of links between Quakers in the eighteenth century (pilgrimage) to a more expansive mode, including more social work and testimony in the later nineteenth century (discipleship).[75] Fewer and fewer Quakers took up the travelling ministry, and the institution was eventually abandoned in 1924, but we can see echoes of its driving impulses in other Quaker work.[76]

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[73] Larson, *Daughters of Light: Quaker Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700–1775*; Penelope Edmonds, 'Travelling "Under Concern": Quakers James Backhouse and George Washington Walker Tour the Antipodean Colonies, 1832–1841,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 5 (2012).

[74] R.F. Christian, 'The Road to Yasnaya Polyana: Some Pilgrims from Britain and Their Reminiscences', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 66.4 (1988), pp. 526–552.

From the Franco–Prussian War onwards, more and more Quakers took up humanitarian work, meaning Joan Mary Fry is perhaps more typical than Joseph Neave. She championed liberal Quakerism, writing and speaking at conferences, and went on to carry out relief work. Her work may partly be explained by the 'upper class privilege', 'Victorianism' and 'Quaker Puritanism' of her upbringing, according to Oldfield. Humanitarian work for Fry can partly be seen as an 'outlet' that satisfied the dictates of religion and gender. In her writings, humanitarianism was not a detraction from religion, but rather a necessary expression of it. Following the outbreak of the First World War, she wrote: 'We believe there is something Divine in all men, which will respond if we call it out by acting on our belief' before going on to conduct relief work in post-war Germany and later among unemployed miners in Britain.[77] Fry was not the only one to make such a case. A speaker at the Quaker conference of 1920, for instance, argued that 'the giving of a tin of condensed milk may become a sacrament because of the way it is given and received'[78] and similar sentiments can be found elsewhere.

While the appeal of social work and relief was strong, for some, worried about the survival of true Quaker belief and practices, philanthropy was a distraction. The Christian socialist F.D. Maurice, argued that energetic charity efforts were no proof of the vitality of Quakerism. He looked back to the days of George Fox and William Penn, who worked like missionaries to spread the religion far and wide. The goodwill carried by charity work may have originated in Quaker adherence to the right path, but the connection was not secure.[79] An undercurrent of unease with 'worldly' activity, and its threats to displace genuine faith and practice, remained visible in Quaker humanitarian work.

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[75] Johnson, 'From Pilgrimage to Discipleship: Quaker Women's Ministries in Nineteenth-Century England'.

[76] Walker, 'Conception of a ministry in the Quaker Movement and a survey of its development'.

[77] Sybil Oldfield, 'Fry, Joan Mary (1862–1955)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38522, accessed 13 October 2011).

[78] *Conference of All Friends 1920*, p. 173.

The structure of Quaker institutions reflected these views of religion, and particularly the belief that activity should reflect a genuine 'concern', rooted in personal experience of God. Such practices and institutions include unanimous decision-making derived from a 'sense of the meeting' and unplanned ministry led by direct inspiration as in the example of Neave. The most significant effect of all this, was that projects without unanimous approval were not endorsed by the Society. Missionary work was popular with Evangelical Quakers but disliked by conservative and liberal Quakers, and therefore only 'reported to' Meeting.[80] All causes were subject to the same scepticism:

> there is a serious danger inherent in the very nature of collective testimonies, especially those which imply the lifting up of a standard of exceptional severity and purity, lest that which is in some, perhaps even in the majority, sincere and spontaneous should be adopted at second hand, and without personal warrant by others, and should thus become a mere hollow profession.[81]

The lawyer and agnostic James Fitzjames Stephen similarly argued that followers of the 'religion of humanity' would once would have been Puritans but now preached 'a kind of vapid philanthropic sentiment which calls itself undenominational; a need of maudlin benevolence from which all the deeper and sterner elements of religious belief have been carefully purged away.'[82] Indeed, several scholars of twentieth-century philanthropy have confirmed these fears: Stephen Hopgood describing a 'religionless Christianity' in human rights work, and James Kennedy arguing that 'New international organisations like Amnesty International and Greenpeace—Quakers played a chief role in founding both—could fire the moral imagination of active Protestants as much as any church-related body.'[83] Given the reputation of Quakers as active philanthropists, and their relative lack of rituals and sacraments, this problem was particularly worrying.

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[79] Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ is Within You*, p. 55.

[80] They were thus absent from the missionary expansion beginning in 1790. A.N. Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); John Ormerod Greenwood, *Whispers of truth* (York: William Sessions Ltd, 1978); Catherine Phillips, 'Reasons why the people called Quakers cannot unite in Missions,' (1792): This tract was reprinted.

[81] Caroline Emelia Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds*, 3rd ed. (London: E. Hicks, jun., 1891), p. 110.

[82] Quoted in Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, p. 4.

Such concerns were echoed in Quaker organisation, and especially in the way that they approached humanitarian problems. Notably, Quakers avoided 'standing committees', apart from the Meeting for Sufferings, and paid workers, until after the First World War. Some of the key instances of Quaker philanthropy include: the FWVRC's work in the Franco–Prussian War in 1870–1871; the work of Quakers in campaigning against the Contagious Diseases Acts; the Quaker response to the Russian famine of 1891–1892 and the Doukhobor case of 1897–1899; their Macedonian and Armenian relief; their pacifist and relief bodies in the First World War; and the work of the FWVRC and Council for International Service (CIS) after the First World War. All but the last of these were temporary committees, raised to meet specific problems. The FWVRC is an important part of Quaker humanitarianism. It was formed on a temporary basis in 1870 for the Franco–Prussian war, and then revived again for work related to the war between Russia and Bulgaria, and other events. In 1914 it was revived for work in the First World War. Afterwards, new, permanent organisations were formed, including the CIS and the Friends' Service Union (FSU).

Was this expansion an expression of Quakerism? In 1944, John Sessions, working as a relief administrator, wrote *They Chose the Star: Quaker War Relief Work in France 1870–1875*. It was intended both as a history and to help 'those who are concerned with problems of relief in the present world crisis.'[84] Perhaps the main issue that emerges is the relationship between 'concern' and organisation. The author of the introduction notes 'the technique and scope of the work may have differed from time to time, but the same spirit of service and human friendship given quietly, and without parade or self-seeking has been, one hopes, evident in all the work which Quakers have tried to do.'[85] In statements like this, the Quaker ideals of work stemming directly from inspiration are given a central place; debates over whether certain kinds of organisation (hiring workers or advertising) which may have been had at the time, are papered over somewhat. But, as will be shown in the Chap. 4 about the Doukhobors and Chap. 6 about relief in the Russian famine of 1921, these debates actively shaped aspects of the work carried out.

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[83] Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International*, pp. 62–65. See also James C. Kennedy, 'Protestant Ecclesiastical Internationals,' in *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities Since 1750*, ed. Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 306.

[84] Elizabeth Fox Howard, 'Foreword,' in William K. Sessions, *They Chose the Star*, 2nd edn (York: Sessions Book Trust, 1991). xi.

This notion of concern shaped Quaker work insofar as philanthropy was made part of Quakerism because Quakers, using ideas from outside of Quakerism, were willing and (increasingly) trained to undertake it. Nevertheless, the forms of organisation used shaped, and did not just relay, this concern. One historian, in explaining the genesis of the Woodbrooke Study Centre, writes: 'The growth of humanitarian feeling, the movement for the emancipation of women, the interest in peace which promoted the first Hague Conference in 1899—all this was in line with the testimonies to which Friends had long been committed.' Set up in 1903 to revivify Quakerism in a different way to the—for some—'elite' and archaic recorded ministry, the centre offered a diploma in social studies designed by academics and labour leaders, alongside courses in theology.[86] The 'growth of humanitarian feeling' may have been broadly in line with Quakerism, but as this emphasis on training suggests, the driving force was perhaps the desire of individuals to undertake such work, which filtered into specific ways of undertaking such work that were consistent with Quaker practices. This was reinforced by the conscription requirements in the First World War and the resulting need for Quakers to find 'alternative service' (although of course many served in the army or rejected any form of war work and instead were imprisoned).[87]

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[85] Elizabeth Fox Howard, 'Foreword,' in ibid., xii.

[86] Robert Davis, *Woodbrooke, 1903–1953: A Brief History of a Quaker Experiment in Religious Education* (London: Bannisdale Press, 1953), p. 15.

[87] Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914–1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 41–42. About a third of Quakers served in the armed forces; most of the rest accepted some form of alternative service and a relatively small number were imprisoned.

How exactly was relief to serve Quakerism? The All-Friends' Conference of 1920, which set many of the themes for post-war Quakerism, is instructive. The pacifist Joan Mary Fry argued that:[88]

> There are certain laws of the universe upon which we all count and which stand all the tests of experience and of verification. There are also certain moral and spiritual principles which belong to the eternal nature of things and which in the long-run are verified in the experience of the race…[like] heat and electricity… Our mission, as I have said, is to discover these principles and to be the fearless exponents of them.[89]

In the following discussion, Henry Hodgkin, a doctor and missionary in China,[90] argued that winning others over to these principles was a primary goal:

> We ought to remember that large group of people to whom religious language is unfamiliar, who are broadly humanitarian. Towards the frankly materialistic we have to address the arguments of logic, economics, and the unreasonableness of war. Above all, our best arguments should be ourselves; there is no convincement in words.[91]

We can see here many of the issues that would dominate Quaker humanitarian work. While Hodgkin acknowledged the currency humanitarianism had, he was clear that it was not an end in itself, and should not be mistaken for one. There was also the potential for conflict between the argument of 'ourselves'—the logical conclusion of which was Quaker individuals on the ground—and the 'arguments of logic, economics', which, as we shall see, in many cases did not necessarily require staff. Ideas of translating compassion into a social force were shared by the

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[88] Sybil Oldfield, 'Fry, Joan Mary (1862–1955)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38522, accessed 17 January 2013).

[89] Joan Mary Fry, 'Character and the Basis of Testimony,' *All-Friends Conference* (London: Headley, 1920).

[90] 'Henry Theodore Hodgkin', *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity* (http://www.bdcconline.net/en/stories/h/hodgkin-henry-theodore.php, accessed on 31 January 2013).

[91] Conference Friends World, *Conference of all Friends held in London August 12 to 20, 1920: A guide & souvenir* (London: The Friends' Bookshop, 1920), p. 15.

Save the Children Fund (SFC), established in 1919. A history describes Jebb's early life and conscience because 'her experiences were to bear fruit in the great international organisation of the Save the Children Fund.'[92] Jebb asserted that the SCF was not a charity, but rather the 'expression of an international idea.'[93]

Hodgkin maintained that Friends' concern should not be hampered by machinery and asked:

> When it was recently decided in the Meeting for Sufferings to request Friends, where possible, to consult the Council for International Service as well as their own monthly meeting, before taking up service on the Continent, some fears were expressed on this point. Is there any danger of passing the would-be worker through too fine a sieve, and possibly discouraging useful service? If God is clearly leading a person out, why consider questions of suitability, language, possible openings, and so forth, too carefully?[94]

He argued that the 'laws of specialists' should not be 'laid down a priori' and that the Quakers were unique in basing their corporate life on the single principle of the inner light. Edward Grubb agreed in that he believed Quakers had to show the 'moral sources' of work which may be the same as that undertaken by Utilitarians and pantheists.[95] Another speaker stressed the need also for training, particularly in modern social, economic and political history, modern thought, political theory and international organisations.[96] These concerns manifested themselves in an anxiety about the methods of Quaker work, and how it could be displayed in complex, bureaucratic effort like the ones instituted increasingly after the First World War.

Quakers therefore engaged in humanitarian work in a variety of ways. Quaker practices and concepts only partially matched the ends and means of humanitarianism. Their work was often quite distinctive, but it was also shaped by their position in British history and society, particularly their experience of religious toleration and the respectable status of Quakers, in addition to the work of organisation like the Red Cross.[97] Few causes reflected Quakerism in a straightforward way, and even Quaker pacifism, one of their most enduring testimonies, has been characterised by historians as 'feeble' before the First World War.[98] By the end of the First World War, however, Quakerism was strongly identified with relief in the wake of wars and disaster. Ruth Fry's *A Quaker Adventure* (1926), recounting her work in France, Serbia, Russia and elsewhere, shows this well. Tracing the 'motive underlying' Quaker relief work, she highlights the 'philosophy of life responsible for it', namely the 'inner light' and 'duty to fellow men'.[99] She also suggested that the star worn on Quaker relief workers' uniforms was now 'known far and wide in Europe.'[100] In this sense, relief work was now clearly part of the Quaker mission. In Russia, Fry joined other 'career humanitarians' such as Eglantyne Jebb of the SCF.[101]

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[92] Kathleen Freeman, *If Any Man Build: The History of the Save the Children Fund* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p. 14.

[93] Linda Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876–1928* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 185.

[94] Friends World, *Conference of all Friends*, p. 15.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

Humanitarianism the SCF had a number of facets. A desire to alleviate suffering was only one, and blended with professional, social and ideological imperatives. Humanitarianism grew as a vocation, with a greater number of staff and resources devoted to it, and more visibility in public discourse and political life. It was, however, nourished by other fields of activity, such as the liberal internationalist worldview. Quakerism fed many humanitarian campaigns, but Quaker 'humanitarians' remained anxious to project Quaker values. Russia, with its persistent poverty and oppression, as well as many features recognisable and admirable to British audiences, was a fertile field for humanitarian efforts. Such ideological underpinnings were central to charities' legitimacy and appeal, but the field was equally shaped by debates over the most efficient practice (particularly in the case of the COS) or the most spiritually fitting practice (in the case of Quakers and other Christians), as well as the need for individual fulfilment or corporate survival. As will be shown in the following chapters, debates over legitimacy, efficiency and propriety (with respect to the boundaries of charity and politics, and interference in foreign countries) sat alongside narratives of Russian cruelty and suffering in shaping humanitarian activity.

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[97] Best exemplified by David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (New York, Oxford: 1999), pp. 213–254.

[98] Rufus Matthew Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, London, 1970, pp. 164–165; Thomas Kennedy, 'Why Did Friends Resist? The War, the Peace Testimony, and the All-Friends Conference of 1920,' *Peace & Change* 14: 4, 1989; Or not 'consistently vigorous'. Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914*, York, 1990, p. 290.

[99] A Ruth Fry and Robert Gascoyne-Cecil Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, *A Quaker Adventure: The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction* (London: Nisbet, 1926), xvii.

[100] Fry and Cecil of Chelwood, xv.

[101] Linda Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876–1928* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Britain and the Russian Famine, 1891–1892

In the summer of 1891, headlines such as ‘A Terrible Famine Threatened’ and ‘Distress and Brigandage in Russia’ began to appear in the British press.[1] After reading about the suffering, the Society of Friends sent two ‘commissioners’ to investigate the famine conditions. When they returned in early 1892, a subscription list was circulated to Quaker meetings and the press, and money was sent to help the Russian peasants. Rather than simply a response to narratives of suffering, this example of humanitarian sympathy was used to position a broader range of prescriptions for Russia’s problems, and must be seen in the context of liberal politics and anti-tsarism. This chapter analyses how the causes of the famine were presented, and particularly the role of the Russian government, as well as the contribution of the donors and relief workers. Particular attention is paid to the role of different types of journalism—grain reports and more in-depth famine reporting, as well as direct appeals for funds, different types of evidence—in constructing the famine as a humanitarian problem. The backgrounds of the relief-givers are also used to illuminate the interests behind the relief effort.

The first section looks at how the famine was reported in British liberal newspapers, including grain reports in the *Economist*, *Financial Times* and *Manchester Guardian*, the journal of the Russian opposition in Britain *Free Russia*, as well as longer analyses in the periodical press and books

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[1] *Manchester Guardian*, 9 August 1891, p. 5 and *Manchester Guardian*, 17 September 1891, p. 8.

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L. Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890–1923*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3_3

published by the Russian correspondents Emile Dillon and E.A. Brayley Hodgetts.[2] It argues that the reporting of the famine highlighted a causality that made a humanitarian gesture possible and effective. In particular, the British press claimed to be uncovering the famine and speaking for the voiceless peasantry. In this context, the British relief was seen by the relief givers to be a meaningful transnational gesture, as it highlighted the suffering of the peasants and connected the 'better' parts of Britain and Russia. The relief-givers emphasised the value of publicity and sympathy. They also highlighted a dichotomy between the inefficient Russian government, on the one hand, and the hardworking peasantry and 'educated classes' on the other. The chapter then moves on to look at how it related to prevalent views about development and the Russian economy as advanced by British liberal and Russian exiles in particular. It then examines how the humanitarian efforts can be characterised as transnational forces, shaped by the givers' liberal socio-economic thought and charitable repertoires and what this says about the nature of humanitarianism at the time.

News and Humanitarianism

The reporting of the famine by the British liberal press made the famine an object for foreign help.[3] The 'unveiling' of the Russian famine by the free British press contributed to a notion of a superior British civil society that went hand-in-hand with the humanitarian effort.

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[2] On the role of expert knowledge in promoting knowledge of Russian issues in the following decades, see Michael Hughes, 'Bernard Pares, Russian Studies and the Promotion of Anglo-Russian Friendship, 1907–1914,' *Slavonic and East European Review* 78, no. 3 (2000); Michael Palmer, 'The British Nexus and the Russian Liberals 1905–1917,' Aberdeen University PhD thesis, 2002, cited in Alston, *Russia's Greatest Enemy?: Harold Williams and the Russian Revolutions.*

[3] For a summary of the role of expanding news networks in creating solidarity with foreigners, see Gary Jonathan Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*, 1st Vintage books ed. (New York: Vintage, 2009). c. 2. On the efforts of W.T. Stead and 'a network of sympathetic journalists' in mobilising humanitarian sentiment, see Rebecca Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870–1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 76. Looking at the conditions for humanitarianism from the nineteenth century, Rodogno concludes that news media was and is a 'necessary, but not sufficient, condition for intervention to take place.' Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 269. For more general considerations on the potential of moral imagination to bridge distance, see Carlo Ginzburg, 'Killing a Chinese Mandarin: the Moral Implications of Distance,' *New Left Review*, I/208, November–December 1994. Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics*, trans. Graham Burchell (Cambridge: Polity, 1999).

By the 1890s, Russian news was firmly established in Britain. Several newspapers had permanent correspondents in Russia, such as Emile Dillon (pseudonym Lanin), who wrote for the *Telegraph* and the *Fortnightly Review*,[4] and W. Barnes Steveni of the *Daily Chronicle*. Russian émigrés, who had come to England following the failure of the radical *Narodnaya Volya* group in the 1880s, were important sources of information.[5] *Free Russia*, the journal of the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, was a monthly critique of the autocracy, publishing reports from Russia and from exiles. Lev Tolstoy, whose books had become available in the West from about the 1880s,[6] was another important source of information, because of the interest his name generated in England, and because he could escape censorship in Russia. Not all correspondents advocated reform of Russia's government, such as the journalist E.A. Brayley Hodgetts, but the image of Russia's political and economic failings was nonetheless widespread. While the writers of *Free Russia* advocated for Russia reform, even publications that did not contributed to an image of a mismanaged Russia.

How did news of the famine emerge in this context? Grain reports were one of the first sources of information. In the ten months up to October 1891, Russia provided about a fifth of Britain's wheat imports.[7] This had declined by 50% from the previous year. According to most analyses of the famine, Britain did not rely on Russian grain as it could switch to North American or other sources.[8] Indeed, '[t]hroughout the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, wheat from the Americas and India gained an increasing share of the market, crowding out most of the European wheat by the end of the nineteenth century.'[9] The famine did increase British grain prices, but not by much and the famine was ultimately Russia's problem more than Britain's.[10] But while ostensibly neutral with respect to humanitarian issues, grain reports often prompted a wider critique of the Russian government. For example, in July 1891, the *Manchester Guardian* complained:

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[4] Joseph O. Baylen, 'Dillon, Emile Joseph (1854–1933)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); online edn, May 2008 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32828, accessed 10 December 2011).

[5] Narodnaya Volya, the People's Will, was a radical political party which sought to reform Russia after the failure of the 'going to the people' movement by assassinating prominent figures in the autocracy, including Tsar Alexander II.

[6] Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (London: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 194.

[7] 'I. - Imports and Consumption,' *Economist*, Saturday, 14 November 1891, p. 13.

[8] 'Editorial Article 6—No Title,' *Manchester Guardian*, 22 July 1891, p. 5.

> It is exceedingly difficult to ascertain the exact truth as to the yield of the grain crops in Russia. Partly, no doubt, the difficulty arises from the great extent of the country and the want of a properly organised system of collecting information, and partly, it is to be feared, from deliberate attempts of the government to suppress discouraging evidence.[11]

This suspicion regarding Russian statistics on grain, based on the interests and experience of British wheat traders, was not new and easily shaded into a more general critique of the Russian government and its culpability in the famine or even, in one correspondent's view, of the Russian character in general.[12]

The famine led the Russian government to ban exports of grain in summer 1891. On 12 August, this was reported in the *Manchester Guardian* along with plans for aid to the peasants, free transport of grain, and other measures.[13] However, by 25 August the same paper reported that traders were rushing grain out of the country before the ban took effect, making it all but useless.[14] On 22 August 1891, the *Economist* noted that a 'prohibition duty on all cereal exports has been officially contradicted', and consequently excitement on markets had calmed.[15] While it is clear that the news about grain could be about grain and nothing else, there was also considerable cross-fertilisation between stories. Government dishonesty about grain was clearly linked to other matters: the point of lying about grain was to calm markets, but it was also a neglect of Russian citizens because it hampered efforts to help the starving peasants. A country under the rule of law and public opinion would not be able to bend the facts in that way, or to ignore its subjects' needs. When longer essays were written in the periodicals, they could include this information as part of a broader evaluation of Russia. A couple of months later, the *ukase* (decree), a measure publicised as being to alleviate the dearth, had become an example of the government's mendacity or, at best, convoluted and inefficient efforts: '[t]hus the Imperial Government good-naturedly published its intention to prohibit the export of rye after the lapse of a time amply sufficient to allow the great bulk of it to be exported.'[16]

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[9] Mette Ejrnæs, Karl Gunnar Persson, and Søren Rich, 'Feeding the British: Convergence and Market Efficiency in the Nineteenth-Century Grain Trade,' *Economic History Review* 68, no. Supplement 1 (2008), p. 146.

[10] 'The Economist Monthly Trade Supplement,' *Economist*, 8 January 1892, p. 5.

[11] 'Editorial Article 6—No Title,' *Manchester Guardian, 22* July 1891, p. 5.

[12] 'Russia: Serious Frauds in the Wheat Trade,' *Manchester Guardian*, 19 June 1891, 8; E.B. Lanin, 'Russian Characteristics, Part I. Lying,' *Fortnightly Review*, September 1889, pp. 410–432.

[13] 'The Scarcity in Russia: Prohibition of the Export of Grain,' *Manchester Guardian*, 12 August 1891, p. 8.

[14] 'Foreign Telegrams,' *Manchester Guardian*, 25 August 1891, p. 8.

In the famine, as in other things, the Russian press was censored. The liberal press linked this to Russia's military ambitions and prospective alliance with France. In December 1891, the *Manchester Guardian* reported: '[i]n obedience to secret instructions from the Government, the Russian journals have ceased to publish any intelligence regarding the advance of the famine, beyond insignificant details.'[17] There were two broad functions of the British press in these reports. The first was to call the government to account from above. The dominant explanation for the government's 'cover-up' of the famine was that it wanted to protect its reputation in the international money markets on which it relied.[18] Russia had just negotiated a loan from France in return for providing military support (leading to the Franco–Russian entente and alliance), and worrying both the Foreign Office and pacifistic liberals. Indeed, the government's neglect of its peasants was seen in relation to its military ambitions. The *Speaker's* correspondent, for example, reported seeing trains full of soldiers when food was needed.[19] A *Punch* cartoon showed the Tsar creeping away from the famine and towards

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[15] 'The Corn Trade,' *Economist*, 22 August 1891, p. 1092.

[16] E.B. Lanin, 'Famine in Russia,' *Fortnightly Review* 50: 299, November 1891, p. 639.

[17] 'Russian Famine,' *Manchester Guardian*, 15 December 1891, p. 8.

[18] 'The Russian Position,' *Financial Times*, 3 February 1893, p. 2.

[19] Poultney Bigelow, 'Russia, War, and Famine,' *Speaker*, 28 November 1891, p. 640.

India with a large sack marked 'Loan 90,000,000,000,000 Francs', and past a peasant holding out his cap and asking, 'Is none of that for ME, "Little Father"?'[20] The famine showed up the hollowness of these grand ambitions for some observers. The *Financial Times* wrote:

> All things considered, the favour bestowed upon Russian finances in general, and particularly upon this over-rated new Loan in this country [from France], is difficult to understand. It is true the French Press is working up public spirit in a political more than in an economic way, yet, to the keen observer, at least, the enthusiastic reports from Cronstadt have already been overweighed by the more serious news about the misery and famine in the interior of that vast empire.[21]

For the liberal press, the loan from France was linked to France's political and military aims and not a sound investment, as shown by the sale of Russian bonds by British and German investors.[22] The famine provided evidence of the Russian economy and state's underlying weakness, which was further highlighted by the government's inept attempts to cover it up. The anti-autocratic *Free Russia* thus argued that the famine showed the 'defectiveness' of the state as it only had 'ukases—a convenient commodity, which is manufactured with no expense.'[23] Still, the liberal *Manchester Guardian* disputed the view that helping Russia in the famine would harm British interests. It would, in fact, do the opposite, as desperation might drive Russia to war.[24]

The second, more obviously humanitarian, function of the press was to provide a voice for the starving peasants.[25] Previous famines in Russia had reached British ears, but none prompted a significant amount of aid. In 1873, on the occasion of a smaller famine, *The Times* had received a letter from a Russian noting that ‘many vexed minds in Russia feel certain that little will be done unless some such organ of public opinion as *The Times* will give expression in tones that cannot be but heard to what is now the stifled cry of a starving province.’[26] Similar notions were widespread in this famine. The peasants were physically isolated by distance and poor communications, and not able to discern or complain of the real causes of the famine. Dillon reported that starving peasants ‘gave up the ghost without the slightest murmur against their little father.’[27] Superstition enforced by the Orthodox Church only exacerbated the problem. A doctor apparently told a British Quaker that a baby had died because its mother would not suckle it and break her fast. The priest would not remove the embargo ‘and the infant was literally starved to death and laid in its little grave as a Divine requirement.’[28] The *Spectator* talked of peasants ‘scattered in isolated villages over areas as big as many Britains, without roads and without arrangements for carrying anything in quantity’ and suggested light railways as a solution.[29] This confirmed the longstanding idea that in Russia the ‘popular voice is like unto that of one crying into the wilderness and the press is all but paralysed.’[30] The Reuters correspondent, E.A. Brayley Hodgetts, reported a Russian lady saying that she welcomed journalists, even those from Russia’s ‘hereditary enemies’, as it was the only way to get publicity.[31] In a later book denouncing the Russian autocracy, Kennard, who worked on behalf of the Quakers, complained that the Russian authorities lied about famines in 1907. They produced:

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[20] 'What will he do with it?', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 10 October 1891, p. 177.

[21] 'The New Russian Loan,' *Financial Times*, 6 October 1891, p. 2.

[22] See for example, 'The Russian Position,' *Financial Times*, 3 February 1893, p. 2, which argued that Russia lied about the famine in order to influence her market position and that English and German investors sensibly sold most of their bonds.

[23] 'The Famine in Russia,' *Free Russia*, September 1891, p. 6.

[24] 'Editorial Article 3—No Title,' *Manchester Guardian*, 26 January 1892, 5. Echoing the liberal, economic pacific-ism of people like John Bright and Richard Cobden.

[25] Vernon asserts that the New Journalism was responsible for making hunger into a humanitarian cause. James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 18–39.

> reports of “local scarcity” (an expression the Bureaucracy is very fond of), but no approach to real famine. I have seen this statement when I myself have but just travelled through that country, and been a pained

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[26] ‘Famine In Northern Russia. Vassily Vassilievitch,’ *The Times*, 14 November 1873, p. 4.

[27] Lanin, E.B., ‘Famine In Russia,’ *Fortnightly Review*, November 1891, p. 637.

[28] Bellows and Bellows, *John Bellows: Letters and Memoir*, p. 112.

[29] ‘The Famine In Russia,’ *Spectator*, 14 November 1891, p. 666.

[30] ‘Russia Under The Tzars,’ *Athenaeum*, 2 May 1885, p. 561.

[31] Edward Arthur Brayley Hodgetts, *In the Track of the Russian Famine: The Personal Narrative of Journey through the Famine Districts of Russia* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1892), p. 185.

> witness of the most terrible suffering that can fall to the lot of man. I have seen reports to the effect that so many thousands of roubles have been expended in a certain district, and so much food. I have travelled there, and discovered that if any food has been distributed, it has been in amounts hardly worth mentioning and of absolutely no avail in the relief of the starving peasantry. As for money—solid money—my experience is, that when one hears of that being distributed, one may set it down at once as a fairy tale.[32]

The British press reports thereby saw themselves as compensating for Russia's lack of openness, and giving voice to the peasants' suffering.

Underdevelopment and Russian Society

The reporting of the famine was set against a widespread belief that Russia was backward and mismanaged. Even before the famine, it was thought by the liberal press that Russia was on the 'verge of change' and needed reform if it was to prevent revolution.[33] Reports on the famine turned to these deeper causes and criticised the Russian government. In many accounts, the famine was used as a metaphor for the general 'exhaustion' of the autocratic, semi-capitalist system, with the ground like a 'squeezed-out lemon.'[34] Russia's problems were endemic, Dillon writing that 'Famine in Russia is periodical like the snows,' but entirely preventable. He wrote of the country's agricultural degradation: '[t]he exhausted soil is scarcely half as fertile as it was, and vast tracts of land are now as bare as an egg.'[35] The *Edinburgh Review* talked of deforestation, rivers drying up and desertification, and the threat to civilisation: 'The unfortunate experiences of Central Asia, which was once a garden of fertility, but is now a desert peopled by nomads only, are repeating themselves.'[36] In Russia there had been debates about the possibility of exhausting the soil on the steppe for several decades by this point.[37] Famine was not thought to be something that happened in advanced countries and reports used the Russian words *golod* and *golodya* (for local and national famines, respectively) to emphasise the persistence and acceptance of famine in Russian culture.

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[32] Howard Percy Kennard, *The Russian Peasant* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1907), p. 227.

[33] 'Art. VII—The Weakness of Russia', *Westminster Review*, July 1885, p. 135. The British consul similarly noted the potentially destabilising effects of Russia's rural poverty. 'Memorandum by Consul-General Mitchell on the Political Aspect of the Economic Condition of Russia [1888],' in D.C.B. Lieven et al., British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983), pp. 232–234.

[34] 'Through Famine-Stricken Russia: "Not a Government but an Asiatic Despotism." Wholesale Terrorism and Spolia-Tion University Intelligence Election Intelligence,' *Manchester Guardian*, 23 March 1892, p. 5.

[35] E.B. Lanin, 'Famine In Russia,' *Fortnightly Review*, November 1891, p. 647.

The famine highlighted the deprived position of the peasantry, who were seen as ignorant and sometimes 'barbarous' as a result of the government's bad policy and indifference.[38] In many accounts, the botched emancipation and a lack of education had left the former serfs at the hands of market forces with which they did not have the resources, institutions or intelligence to deal effectively.[39] Economic historian James Mavor later agreed that the emancipation had been botched, with compensation payments too high and land distribution not corresponding to soil quality, leaving the peasants prey to *kulaks* (rich peasants and money lenders).[40] The routes of the railway system exacerbated this, meaning the southern peasants could not compete with the large cultivators.[41] The *Edinburgh Review* argued that 'serfdom had degraded the rural masses' so that, on emancipation, they lacked initiative or even understanding of the concept of a contract.[42] The anti-tsarist publicist Stepniak was more direct in blaming the government and argued that the Russian famine was due to the over-taxation (45%) of the nominally free peasantry. He contrasted Russia's experience with France's where the harvest had fallen by the same proportion—a third—in 1888, but famine had been avoided.[43] The critique was not of market forces per se but of their partial and mismanaged realisation in the Russian context.

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[36] W. Barnes-Steveni, 'Through Famine-stricken Russia,' *Edinburgh Review*, January 1893, p. 18.

[37] David Moon, 'Agriculture and the Environment on the Steppes in the Nineteenth Century,' in *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby Schrader, and Willard Sunderland (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 91–92.

[38] David Ker, 'Russia's Two Teachers-Famine and War,' *Leisure Hour*, May 1893, p. 492.

[39] 'Why Famine Will Last In Russia,' *Review of Reviews*, August 1892, p. 149.

[40] Mavor, *An Economic History of Russia*, p. 289.

[41] Hodgetts, *In the Track of the Russian Famine*, p. 112.

[42] W. Barnes Steveni, 'Through Famine-stricken Russia,' *Edinburgh Review*, January 1893, p. 5.

The reporting on the famine made a strong division between on the one hand the useful members of civil society, the hard-working or demoralised peasants, and on the other the despotic, inefficient state. Simms suggests that an 'articulate opposition' in Russia was successful in publicising the famine and what they saw as a poor government response, and using it to delegitimise autocracy in general.[44] Similar tendencies can be seen in the British liberal press, which painted a picture of incompetence. Dillon wrote, for example, that 'Russian *tschinovniks* [bureaucrats]…are delighted to shift to the shoulders of Providence or Nature responsibility for the fruits of their own mismanagement.'[45] The government, after ignoring reports and censoring the press, would eventually respond, but too late.[46] Brayley Hodgetts, who collected his reports on the famine into a book, noted an official, the Governor of Kazan, who denied the famine and stage-managed demonstrations of 'plenty' for inspectors. When this was eventually exposed and funds were donated by merchants, the Governor distributed them so inefficiently that merchants refused to give any more.[47] He also reported private feeding kitchens being prohibited in Moscow.[48] Britain's response to famines in India was held up as an example to imitate.[49]

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[43] Sergius Stepniak, *At the Dawn of a New Reign: A Study of Modern Russia* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905), p. 104.

[44] James Y. Simms, *Impact of the Russian Famine: New perspective* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1978). He argues that the opposition overestimated both the economic effect of the famine and the weaknesses of the government response.

[45] E.B. Lanin, 'Famine in Russia,' *Fortnightly Review*, November 1891, p. 636.

[46] M. Dolenga, 'Famine and Bureaucracy in Russia,' *Albemarle*, 5 May 1892, p. 176.

[47] Hodgetts, *In the Track of the Russian Famine*, pp. 224–233.

[48] Hodgetts, *In the Track of the Russian Famine*, p. 92.

[49] 'Editorial Article 6—No Title,' *Manchester Guardian*, 22 July 1891, p. 5. They suggested allowing speculation, supplemented by some direct aid, as was done in India; 'Francis William Fox, letter to Russian Famine Relief Committee,' 12 January 1892, Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, Library of the Society of Friends (LSF), London. While the Indian system was being held by as an example for Russia, famines were also being used by Indian and Irish nationalists to critique British imperial rule. Vernon, *Hunger*, p. 79.

At the same time as highlighting the government's poor response, many reports emphasised the more praiseworthy efforts of Russian peasants and civil society. The anti-tsarist journal *Free Russia* argued that Russia had passed through the famine relatively unscathed because of 'the indomitable energy of the peasants', who wanted to avoid becoming proletarians and 'borrowed money not for food but for seed.' They would, for example, do light harrowing with men rather than horsepower in order to save their remaining cattle and horses (the selling of beasts of burden for food—as an example of peasant desperation—had been a recurrent story in British famine reports): 'Now, we ask, is this not a most emphatic refutation of the charges of improvidence, laziness, and reckless drunkenness, brought against the peasants by the partisans of serfdom?'[50] *Free Russia*'s criticism of the Russian government was deliberately measured, but its coverage of the famine emphasised the positive role of civil society and the peasants. In summarising the famine, they argued that the reports of the Tsarevich's relief committee 'invariably tell the same story: frightful misery until some private individual or society came to the place, wrote to the papers, got subscriptions and helpers, and organised the work of relief upon a sound basis.' This was in contrast to the 'wooden formalism, laziness and indifference' of bureaucrats. They thus argued that 'Educated Russia has proved at this crucial test not only willing but also well-fitted to serve the country honestly, intelligently, and devotedly.'[51] 'Educated Russia'[52] agreed with this assessment, and gained considerable confidence, experience and moral authority from their famine relief work.[53] Others were not as sanguine about the prospects of reform, even if they agreed on Russia's failings:

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[50] S. Stepniak, 'Editorial,' *Free Russia*, July 1892.

[51] S. Stepniak, 'The Lessons of the Calamitous Year,' *Free Russia*, July 1892, p. 4.

[52] 'Educated Russia' (tsenzovoe obshchestvo) was a term used to define the segment of society separate from the peasantry and also the state. For debates about the role of civil society in Russia, see Laura Engelstein, *Slavophile Empire: Imperial Russia's Illiberal Path* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 78–98. Educated Russia may also approximate the Russian definition of the intelligentsia, which was 'understood as applying to that part (the larger one) of the educated class, whose distinguishing characteristic was its aspiration to overcome the stagnation of the existing system of government and secure a change of regime' Boris Elkin, 'The Russian Intelligentsia on the Eve of Revolution,' in *The Russian Intelligentsia*, ed. Richard Pipes (London: Colombia University Press, 1961), 32. That is to say, Stepniak meant to paint a broad picture, including not just radicals.

[53] Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924* (London: Pimlico, 1997), pp. 157–162.

Brayley Hodgetts suggested that Russia was too big to be governed centrally, but that the peasantry were too backward and apathetic for self-government[54] and the opposition were 'faddists'.[55] The *Financial Times* also took a pessimistic line, but agreed that the Russian government had 'failed'. The paper argued that because of the famine the government may collapse, not from 'revolution in the ordinary sense, but to the mere fact that the servants of the Government lost hope, courage and loyalty, and that the Administration stopped working' as most taxes could not be collected anymore.[56] In the British press, then, describing the famine and the famine relief served to highlight a particular view of Russia wherein its government was both incompetent and, because of its autocratic form, actively preventing civil society from helping the victims.

Britain, Russia and Humanitarian Intervention

This section analyses the social and political views that shaped the British relief, given by the Quakers' Russian Famine Committee, in order to discern the nature of this humanitarian gesture. From the beginning, the publicity surrounding the relief contributed to notions of Russian backwardness and gave confidence and ammunition to opponents of the regime. Indeed, the Russian Government feared that a foreign investigation into the famine might cause a scandal like the one following George Kennan's book on the Siberian prison system.[57] When the relief fund attempted to send commissioners, Edmund Wright Brooks and Francis William Fox, the Russian government was reluctant to allow them in. They were also advised not to go by the Foreign Office, as it 'would not be agreeable to the Russian government' but went anyway, emphasising the neutrality of their relief, and that it came from 'private individuals' and not the government.[58] This was both to assuage the fears of the government, and to highlight the efficient nature of the relief to potential donors. Nevertheless, the Committee had contacts in Russia, and communicated with Michael Morrison, the Bible Society agent for South Russia, Sir Robert Morier, the British Ambassador to Russia, Dr. Baedecker, a Russian Evangelical, and Madame Novikova, a Russian aristocrat and pro-tsarist writer in England.

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[54] Hodgetts, *In the Track of the Russian Famine*, p. 21.

[55] *In the Track of the Russian Famine*, pp. 5, 79.

[56] 'Can Russia Pay Her Way?' *Financial Times*, 30 May 1892, p. 1.

[57] Richard G. Robbins, *Famine in Russian, 1891–1892: The Imperial Government Responds to a Crisis* (London: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 99.

[58] Sir Philip Currie, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'Letter to Friends Famine Committee,' 30 November 1891, Miscellaneous letters, Box 323/3, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

Russian fears were justified in the sense that anti-tsarist ideas were woven through the distribution of relief. Criticism was implicit in the fact and nature of the foreign relief, and possibly explicit—although no evidence remains—in the relief workers' own views. Quakers were not principally motivated by anti-tsarism, but rather a liberal internationalist worldview which shared many of the same complaints about backwardness and mismanagement as anti-tsarism, and saw humanitarian aid rather than any political prescriptions as their contribution. *Free Russia*'s recommendation stressed the 'non-party and unsectarian character' of the Quaker relief fund and that it was 'no part of the present duty of the Society of Friends to enter into any criticism of the methods of religious, social and political persecution, which the Russian government sanctions towards the subjects of the Tzar.'[59] Yet in 1907, Quakers also offered aid to relieve victims of a smaller Russian famine, but were much more openly critical. Letters from Kennard, the Quakers' contact in Russia, to the Quakers' Russian Famine Relief Committee reveal a more openly hostile attitude to the Russian state. He claimed that: 'The [Russian] Red Cross is primarily and before everything else red tape and officialism. Their money must first of all circulate through official channels'. He also attempted to expose the government:

> P.S. I trust you will use every means known to mortal man to get my letter exposing the Police published: - I have had countless appeals to expose the system of men of all positions, and am determined to do it. I sent a copy of my letter to you straight to Reuter. Re my incident, the governor apologised most humbly, at the same time it is interesting to note that the local press make no reference to the matter,- they have no doubt been forbidden to. TWO MORE OF OUR BEST LADY WORKERS ARRESTED YESTERDAY.[60]

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[59] 'The Society of Friends and their Famine Fund,' *Free Russia*, May 1892, p. 9.

[60] Dr Kennard, 'letter to EW Brooks,' March 1907, Box 323/4, Folder 10, *Relief of Famine in Russia Committee*, LSF.

Indeed, the pamphlet circulated to the public in 1907 was openly critical of the Russian state:

> Add to this a ruinous and unfair system of taxation, a reckless expenditure of tremendous sums on useless or worse than useless wars, the enormous expense of a strictly centralised administration, and the utter incapacity of the administration to develop the natural resources of the country and you shall probably need no further explanation to understand at least the main causes of the economical crisis in Russia.[61]

It promised that ‘not a penny’ would go through official channels.[62] The change may be the result of greater liberty of the press following the 1905 revolution, and an increased possibility of reform, as well as accentuated anti-autocratic feelings following the Anglo–Russian alliance. These pamphlets reveal the strong undercurrent of anti-tsarist feeling and that relief, while neutral in itself, was carried out by those who saw the tsarist government as a problem.

In 1891–1892, there were no such explicit anti-tsarist statements, but the way the relief was reported in Quaker pamphlets and newspapers served to highlight the backwardness and mismanagement of Russia. The relief was distributed by two ‘commissioners’ sent by the Quakers, but rather than religion this reflected middle-class notions of efficiency, technical expertise most of all. The initial position of the Meeting for Sufferings[63] regarding the famine, on 6 November 1891, talked of the ‘importance of prompt action and also the desirability of distributing food if possible and not merely the sending of money.’[64] This position had changed by the time the Russian Famine Committee was laid down, largely, it seems, on the recommendations of the two Quakers sent out to report on the famine, Edmund Wright Brooks and Francis William Fox, regarding the most efficient techniques. Wright Brooks and Fox argued that more commissioners should not be sent by the Meeting for Sufferings as then they would have to ‘see with [their] own eyes to the distribution of all the food in every soup kitchen, bakery and private house where such distribution was being carried on.' Instead they should use 'private individuals' 'most of whom were already engaged in the great work of practical benevolence which is particularly the topic and work of the present time in Russia in whose hands the funds raised by the Society could be placed with confidence that they would be well, honestly and efficiently administered.'[65] It is true that the relief was non-sectarian in that it did not favour one group of sufferers over another. It is also true that the relief was couched in religious and humanitarian notions and avoided politics. However, the nature of its giving nevertheless played into the debates about Russia's economic backwardness and political repression sketched above.

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[61] “The Impending Famine in European Russia,” Pamphlet, 8 January 1907, Box 323/4/Folder 4, *Relief of Famine in Russia Committee*, LSF.

[62] “The Impending Famine in European Russia,” Pamphlet, 8 January 1907, Box 323/4/Folder 4, *Relief of Famine in Russia Committee*, LSF.

[63] The Quaker body that considered humanitarian issues.

[64] *Meeting for Sufferings*, 6 November 1891.

The commissioners' vacillation over the mode of giving demonstrates both contemporary views of charity, and how various modes of giving could confer legitimacy and status. Personal giving was seen to be important by many, but had to be balanced by more rational discrimination. This is evident in the way that Lev Tolstoy's relief efforts on his estate, widely publicised in the British press, were discussed. In one report, he emphasised Christian love and criticised 'the official', only interested in 'lists and documents' and said that the number of poor was not a valid question, but that the only real question was 'what portion of my powers can I devote to them?'[66] This was another person's view of Tolstoy; in letters to the British press, he did emphasise the need, first of all, to determine how much corn was needed.[67] Nevertheless, the Quakers criticised Tolstoy's methods, with Brooks writing to London that 'evidently no accounts of expenditure were demanded of him by his supporters.'[68] First-hand reports and personal distribution were seen as a necessary aspect of the relief effort but had to be balanced by a wider view. The Quakers' appeals to the public consisted of a brief mission statement followed by several letters from their commissioners and other observers. For example, emotional letters from Owen, a pastor working in Russia, were published in Quaker appeals. In one he wrote 'I can assure you that it is impossible to exaggerate the deplorable and heart-rending state in which the peasants of the Volga district are.'[69] He emphasised his presence in the famine-stricken districts, as well as the emotional effect of seeing the suffering. The necessity of first-hand evidence was here as much to do with authority and witnessing as evoking an emotive response.[70] But crucially it was balanced in Quaker adverts by statistics and guarantees that funds would be efficiently spent.

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[65] Edmund Wright Brooks, 'Letter to I Sharp,' 8/20.3.1892, Box 323/3. Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

[66] J.J. Stadling and W. Reason, *In the Land of Tolstoy: Experiences of Famine and Misrule in Russia* (London: J Clarke, 1897), p. 39.

[67] 'Correspondence,' *Free Russia*, December 1891, p. 12.

[68] Edmund Wright Brooks, 'Letter to Famine Committee,' 8 April–10 April 10, Box 323/3. Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, Correspondence, LSF.

The Quaker appeal, sent to Friends' Meeting Houses, and printed in the *Guardian* and *Free Russia*, amongst other places, repeated the claims that 'every £1 given will probably save a life' and 'the cost of keeping the Russian peasantry alive will probably not exceed 1/2d per head per day.' According to Laqueur, one of the functions of humanitarian narratives is that 'ameliorative action is represented as possible, effective and therefore morally imperative.'[71] In the famine reports, eternal notions of 'starving Russia' were made into a rectifiable problem, at least in the short term. Most commentators noted the long-term weaknesses of Russian agriculture; one correspondent noted that 'The peasant is seldom in what may be called affluent circumstances in the best of years and it is not easy for those who are accustomed to see him year by year nearly on the verge of starvation to say whether he is badly off or not.'[72] The Reuters correspondent suggested that most of European Russia was on 'out-door relief'.[73] In this context, the role of relief was not only to ameliorate the famine in the short term, but also to highlight the structural problems ignored by the Russian government.

Who was distributing the aid and how were related to hierarchies of competence and civilisation. Gilbert Coleridge, writing on behalf of the English Famine Relief Committee, a small fund that amalgamated with the Quaker fund, said that the Quaker commissioners 'will make a second journey to Russia in order to personally distribute whatever money may be collected. A part of the money will be handed to Count Tolstoy for the relief of those districts with which he is in immediate contact. In other districts relief will be administered by the Society of Friends.'[74] The Quakers did indeed personally distribute the money, but not to the peasants, as Coleridge's letter may imply, but to Russian philanthropists who ran soup kitchens and so on for the peasants. However, following Wright Brooks and Fox's position, this notion shifted somewhat. The *Manchester Guardian* offered a more precise description: 'Private and thoroughly trustworthy channels are already open, through which funds may be distributed direct to the starving peasantry, under the personal direction of their Committee, who will again send Commissioners from among their members to act on their behalf.'[75] The ideal of personal relief and the better outcomes it could bring remained, but Wright Brooks and Fox were to help at arm's length, helping from the position of foreign experts. Indeed, their reports on the Russian famine exhibit similarities with the methods of Western capitalists in Russia from the 1880s onwards, as described by John P. McKay, wherein firms and individuals would pursue large profits through the use of advanced Western technology and expertise:

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[69] 'Appeals to Society of Friends and Public: Extracts from Fox and Brooks Letters,' 15 January 1892, Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

[70] 'The rhetoric of feeling and empathy was crucial to [reporters'] claims to knowing.' Vernon, *Hunger*, p. 28.

[71] Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative,' p. 178.

[72] 'Through Famine-Stricken Russia: A Night Drive in the Snow. The Distress and Count Tolstoy's Work,' *Manchester Guardian*, 8 January 1892, p. 8.

[73] Hodgetts, *In the Track of the Russian Famine*, p. 50.

> Engineers with their studies and entrepreneurs in their subsequent decisions apparently assumed that the implementation and management of advanced industrial technology was their essential function, their *raison d'etre*.[76]

Indeed, Wright Brooks and Fox offered technical solutions to the famine. Francis William Fox suggested a system of irrigation works in Russian villages, the cost of which was to be paid for by a cess and irrigation bonds over 25–30 years by each *mir*. He did not say whether the scheme should be compulsory or not.[77] He perhaps overestimated his expertise and the lack of it in Russia: debates over the climatic effects of deforestation and the value of irrigation on steppe agriculture had been going on for years amongst Russian meteorologists and agriculturists, and in 1892 General Annekov did indeed undertake irrigation works in the Don basin and on the Trans-Volga Steppes, but this was probably not in response to Fox. Fox's letter did precede the schemes, but its lack of detail in comparison to the existing debates and scientific institutions in Russia means it is unlikely that it prompted this move, and it certainly provided no detailed expertise.[78]

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[74] 'Letter from Gilbert Coleridge,' *The Times*, 14 January 1892, p. 10.

[75] W. Alexander, 'Through Famine-Stricken Russia: Sufferings of the Peasantry Victims of the Famine the Society of Friends and the Famine,' *Manchester Guardian*, 26 January 1892, p. 8.

[76] John P. McKay, *Pioneers for Profit: Foreign Entrepreneurship and Russian Industrialization, 1885–1913* (Chicago, 1970), p. 110.

[77] Francis William Fox, 'letter to General Annekoff,' 23 December/4 January 1891/1892, Box 323/3. Folder 10, Miscellaneous Letters from *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF; See also Herbert Jones, 'letter to Isaac Sharp,' 31 March/12 April 1892, *Russian Famine*

The business-like tone of the reports of the famine and the solutions they attempted reflected the backgrounds of the Quaker Russian famine committee. It consisted of William Jones, Herbert Jones, Edmund Wright Brooks (cement manufacturer), Joseph Bevan Braithwaite (stockbroker), Francis William Fox (engineer), Henry Tuke Mennel (coke manufacturer and later tea merchant), Edwin Ransom (newspaper proprietor) and Wilson Sturge (corn factor). The committee also provided contacts and resources for the relief. Herbert Jones, Edwin Ransom and Wilson Sturge all knew Russian. Wilson Sturge and Edwin Ransom also lived in Russia, the former as an exporter of hardwoods and minerals and the British Vice-Consul in Poti on the Black Sea. Sturge had also offered relief to Finnish villages affected by the Crimean war and in the Franco–Prussian war, while Bellows, Mennel and William Jones had offered relief in the Franco–Prussian War.[79] None were famine relief experts, but they nevertheless conveyed a seriousness and capability in business matters and endorsement of particular forms of governance. They thus invoked the administration of Indian famines (albeit not in detail),

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Committee, LSF wherein the former thinks that the Committee should spend extra money on something 'of a more permanent character like a school of agriculture'.

[78] David Moon, 'Agriculture and the Environment on the Steppes in the Nineteenth Century,' p. 97.

[79] Edward H. Milligan and Trust Sessions Book, *Biographical Dictionary of British Quakers in Commerce and Industry 1775–1920* (York: Sessions Book Trust, 2007). Quaker Dictionary of Biography, LSF.

rather than seeking to define humanitarian action as a separate sphere.[80] They should, therefore, be distinguished from the more 'professional' humanitarians who, as Gill shows, were becoming a part of the landscape in this period (and particularly after the First World War).[81] The Quakers administering the relief did so in their spare time and sought to position themselves in older traditions of amateur humanitarianism as opposed to the more institutionalised and self-consciously independent forms that developed after the First World War in particular, as well as to emphasise their pacifism.[82] This stance came partly from Quaker scepticism of organised work, and particularly of standing committees which threatened the Quaker tradition of direct inspiration and 'concern' (see Chap. 2).[83]

Nevertheless, as is evident from discussions at the Manchester (1895) and London (1920) Conferences of Quakers, relief was increasingly part of Quaker identity, particularly for younger, more liberal Friends, and in the face of 'militarisation', 'jingoism' and the ever-present threat of declining membership. The Friends' War Victims Relief Committee, first formed in the Franco–Prussian War, exemplifies the Quaker tradition of pacifist relief, and included the wearing of a Quaker badge to identify the relief workers.[84] Relief work demonstrated long-held Quaker values of pacifism and humanitarianism in a form acceptable to both liberal and Evangelical Quakers and became more and more central to Quaker identity.[85]

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[80] On the categorisation of the 'forces of compassion', and its relations to the forces of 'production and destruction', see Barnett's discussion: Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 22–32.

[81] Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870–1914.*

[82] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p. 86. They were not trained in relief work and did not seek to create a permanent organisation.

[83] Despite their active charity work and good reputation in that field, Quakers were sceptical of charity, believing that it had threatened to displace real religion. Consequently, until after the First World War, Quakers always took up humanitarian causes on an ad hoc basis and avoided standing committees, instead responding to the appeals of individual Quakers on particular issues.

[84] William K. Sessions, *They Chose the Star* ([S.l.]: 1944); Rebecca Gill, '"The Rational Administration of Compassion": The Origins of British Relief in War,' *Le Mouvement Social* 227, no. 2 (2009). Quakers distinguished themselves from the Red Cross approach, feeling that it endorsed war.

Why did Quakers offer help in this instance? Unlike, say, American Mennonites, many of whom had migrated from Russia, or millers who traded with Russia, they had no economic or corporate connections with Russia. From the Quaker perspective, one of the most important factors in driving the relief was the position of Russia in debates about peace and militarism. Tolstoy, the religious novelist and pacifist, publicised the famine and had an affinity with Quakers and British pacifists,[86] while more generally Russia, and British relations with the country, were linked to debates about militarism. Russia had been the biggest threat to Britain for decades, and had been the scene of an unsuccessful Quaker 'peace deputation' led by Joseph Sturge on the eve of the Crimean War;[87] it was later the source of the St. Petersburg Declaration on conduct in war.[88] In this context, humanitarian work was a way for the Quakers to assert liberal, Christian values in contrast to 'jingoistic', nationalist ones. The effort has similarities with Quaker relief in the areas of Finland hit by the Royal Navy during the Crimean War in seeking to project a liberal version of British values.[89]

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[85] While Evangelical Quakers favoured missionary work, and liberal Quakers sought to address the 'Social Question' more broadly, humanitarianism, with its links to free trade, internationalism and the promotion of peace, was somewhat amenable to both. Tracts were distributed in the Franco–Prussian War, but this was not a central part of the efforts, and did not feature in the Russian famine efforts of a less Evangelical Society twenty years later. The fact that liberal, Inner Light-centred Quakerism came to dominate after the 1890s combined with Quaker conscientious objectors' relief and medical work in the First World War saw relief move decisively to the fore after 1920.

[86] Richenda C. Scott, *Quakers in Russia* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964); Alston, *Tolstoy and His Disciples: The History of a Radical International Movement*.

[87] Alex Tyrrell, 'Sturge, Joseph (1793–1859)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26746, accessed 16 November 2014).

[88] For the Quakers' hopes of promoting peace through the Tsar see their discussion of the Russian-instigated Hague Peace Conference in 1898, 'Editorial: The Tsar's Peace Manifesto,' *The Friend*, 7 October 1898.

[89] Andrew Newby, '"Rather Peculiar Claims Upon Our Sympathies": Britain and Famine in Finland, 1856–1868,' in M. Corporaal, C. Cusack, L. Janssen, and R. van den Beuken, eds., *Global Legacies of the Great Irish Famine*: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Perspectives (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 61–80; Andrew G. Newby, 'The Society of Friends and Famine Relief in Ireland and Finland, c. 1845–1857,' in Patrick Fitzgerald, Christine Kinealy and Gerard Moran, eds., *Irish Hunger and Migration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization* (Connecticut: Quinnipiac University, 2015), pp. 107–120.

While the trajectory of Quaker humanitarianism was driven by dynamics particular to the sect, it is fair to say that to outsiders the relief manifested liberal, middle-class attitudes as much as anything particularly Quaker. While the motivations were Quaker, the methods were less obviously so.[90] The coincidence between Quakerism and the liberal middle classes was more important than anything in Quaker theology in attracting funds. That the Quakers did work to relieve the famine must then be seen as part of a cluster of values and resources amidst which those Quakers undertaking relief sought to position themselves and their religion. Quakerism could be said to have been part of a 'humanitarian circuit' in which Quakers mobilised certain resources (reputational, organisational) to position themselves as leading relief givers.[91] They initiated a relief fund, but interest in Russia's problems was already prevalent in British society. The Quakers could quickly circulate their appeal for funds to a large number of meetings in England, Ireland and the USA including in New York, Philadelphia, California, as well as holding various public meetings, which included local Anglicans and other prominent non-Quakers.[92] Of course, other churches had bigger congregations with deeper collective pockets so the fact that Quakers would flag a Russian famine as a cause worth attending to, and that others would respond it to, also requires some recourse to values, namely Quaker pacifism, anti-tsarism and liberal internationalism.

The Quaker fund was successful with outsiders partly because the group had a strong tradition of philanthropy, including relief in the

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[90] They perhaps did not reflect Quaker beliefs or practices as directly as Quaker ministry, or the Evangelical conception of missionary work, for example. H.E. Walker, 'Conception of a ministry in the Quaker Movement and a survey of its development' (Unpublished PhD., Edinburgh, 1952). Instead they reflected a broader Quaker mission, most strongly articulated at this time by liberal Quakers. Of course, what the Quaker mission should be was debated, as well as being influenced by outside developments such as the Red Cross.

[91] Ilana Feldman, 'The Humanitarian Circuit,' in *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism Between Ethics and Politics*, Erica Bornstein and Peter Redmond, eds. (Santa Fe, SAR: 2010), pp. 203–226.

[92] Various pamphlets in 'Miscellaneous letters,' Box 232/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF; 'The Famine in Russia: Public Meeting in Manchester,' *Manchester Guardian*, 13 February 1892, p. 9.

Franco–Prussian war, and a good reputation.[93] For example, *Free Russia* supported the Quaker famine relief fund on the grounds that readers could ‘safely rely on [the Quakers’] past history in the cause of humanity in vindication, if any were needed, of its present work among the starving people of Russia.’ The *Manchester Guardian* stated ‘Where such work is to be done nobody could do it better than the Society of Friends’ as it was on good terms with Russian government, had experience of famine from Ireland, and Quakers checked facts and could be trusted to spend money well—in fact, ‘the Society of Friends are willing to guarantee, as no other body can, that each pound shall be put in the right way to reach its peasant and preserve him.’ The Quakers were especially associated with this kind of work as it was ‘the one war that the Quakers fight willingly’.[94]

The way the Quakers sought to characterise their endeavour is clear from an interview given in the Quaker *Friend* magazine. From beginning to end, the tone was business-like: ‘By arrangement with E.W. Brooks, I had an interview with him at his offices, at 74, Great Tower Street, London.’[95] The commissioners’ role was to identify ‘channels’ and ‘trustworthy individuals’ in Russian society, and distribute accordingly, thus effectively endorsing a view of Russian society. They included Tolstoy, other members of the Russian upper classes, and the ‘educated classes’. The Friends Russian Famine Relief Committee requested that those to whom it gave money sent accounts of how it was distributed, which were sent back to the Committee in London.[96] The actual distribution needed those with local knowledge and with the right motives if it was to be successful. State bureaucrats, for example, with their own careerist incentives, could often misuse the money. The *Manchester Guardian* reported:

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[93] Their fund totalled £37,262 15s 2d with contributions from 3800 individuals and groups, including £1000 from the English Famine Relief Committee. Barry Dackombe, ‘The Great Russian Famine of 1891–1892: E.W. Brooks and Friends’ Famine Relief,’ *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* Vol. 58, no. 3 (1999), p. 295. The total raised by another English fund administered by Olga Novikova, a Russian expatriate, was about £1000. Simms, *Impact of the Russian Famine*, p. 58; To put this effort into context, the Russian government spent almost 150 million roubles (approximately 15 million pounds) on food and seed purchases and provided supplemental relief for 11 million people at one point: Robbins, *Famine in Russia*, pp. 168–169.

[94] ‘Editorial Article 3—No Title,’ *Manchester Guardian*, 26 January 1892, p. 5.

[95] ‘Interviews with the Delegates,’ *The Friend*, 22 January 1892, p. 54.

[96] See ‘Miscellaneous Letters,’ Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF for detailed accounts of expenditure, often down to individual horses or consignments of oats.

> It is alleged that in some instances the distribution of relief has not been fairly proceeded with. At Tambov, for instance, the local committee, in agreement with the judicial authorities, have taken things into their own hands in order to prevent misappropriation on the part of the Government officials.[97]

The Quakers argued that working through locals was better than sending for help from England as 'a knowledge of the people, their circumstances and their language are indispensable qualifications, without these no one could succeed.'[98] Similarly, *Free Russia* and others recommended that those wishing to help famine victims should send money to Tolstoy (foreigners were allowed to do this) because he had 'sincere and earnest people' to distribute it, as opposed to government 'bureaucrats'.[99] *Free Russia* described the 'forces of educated Russia busily engaged in villages and towns in trying to relieve the sufferings of the people' after ignoring the 'red-tape formalism and prohibitions' of the government. It described the personal attention needed to measure the peasants' needs—which they often lied about—and distribute accordingly.[100] Images of Tolstoy distributing with kindness and devotion were reported widely.[101]

The relief was not an autonomous, professional effort, as would be seen in 1921–1923. The British relief was given by amateur humanitarians to parts of Russian society deemed trustworthy, and did not, for example, run its own kitchens, medical programmes or carry logos. An image in the Illustrated London News shows relief that is part of the social fabric, with urchins alongside well-dressed charitable ladies and nuns. They were drawn by pencil, somewhat picturesque and not dissimilar to the paper's coverage of British urban poverty.[102] The British reporting on the famine relief reveals certain patterns of distinction, as expertise and sympathy were used to map out hierarchies of competence and benevolence. Technical and emotional evidence were juxtaposed to create relationships—namely, of expert and subject, of 'brotherhood', and of capable and incapable rulers. It was common to see in newspaper reports a particular observer making claims to truth by being more scientific and less emotive. Stepniak, for example, reviewing the Foreign Office's report on the famine in *Free Russia*, stated that the 'description of the character and dimensions of last year's famine is the best we know of. It is entirely devoid of anything sensational. Not a single harrowing description. It is all figures. But figures are sometimes more eloquent than the most graphic illustration, and certainly much more characteristic of the general condition of the country.'[103] An article in the *Lancet*, reprinted in *Free Russia*, argued that 'men of humanitarian science' must aid the famine. They made a chemical analysis of the 'famine bread' (i.e. a substitute made of twigs, bark, dirt and other available items) brought back from Russia—mentioned in most reports of the famine, if not in such scientific terms—and found it to be 40% non-nutritious. Similarly, a representative of American corn merchants went with a donation of corn to Russia and brought back a 'sample' of the famine bread.[104] This scientific exchange implicitly mapped a hierarchy of expertise wherein Western experts diagnosed Russia's ills, paving the way for a benevolent expression of this more advanced civilisation.

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[97] 'The Famine in Russia,' *Manchester Guardian*, 5 September 1891, p. 5.

[98] Edmund Wright Brooks, 'letter to Famine Committee,' 13/1.3.1892, Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

[99] 'Count Tolstoy's Relief Fund,' *Free Russia*, December 1891, p. 7.

[100] 'From the Famine-Stricken Districts,' *Free Russia*, 1 March 1892, pp. 7–8.

[101] For example, 'Through Famine-Stricken Russia: A Night Drive in the Show the Distress and Count Tolstoy's Work,' *Manchester Guardian*, 8 January 1892, p. 8.

Humanitarianism and Civil Society

What conceptions of humanitarianism and internationalism are shown by this relief work? The *Manchester Guardian*, in recommending the Quaker fund, argued its case in terms of a 'wider patriotism'—that is, placing this humanitarian relief within the context of internationalist and pacific theories of politics.[105] Contrary to ideas that helping Russia might contradict British interests, not helping Russia, which was struggling financially, might have driven it to strengthen its military alliance with France—potentially destabilising the whole continent. Further, the Tsar might be driven to war to distract his subjects from internal discontent. Instead the editorial argued for a patriotism that 'looks forward to a system of politics in which the good of no human being will be considered by another to be an affair of secondary importance on the ground that both were not included in the one nation.'[106] By contrast *The Times*, writing with 'not a few delicate questions either actually pending or looming in the future' in mind, argued that: 'the crisis is not one that justifies a national movement here to collect subscriptions in aid of the sufferers, who, it must be remembered, are the subjects of a paternal despotism that undertakes the whole burden of responsibility for those under its rule, and is peculiarly resentful of the interference, however well meant, of other people… The Russian government raises an enormous revenue and borrows largely for military and other purposes. It is unquestionably capable of providing for the elementary wants of a population to whom the elementary rights of citizenship are denied.' Aside from the particular advantages of making Russia fend for itself, the paper advanced the general principle that just as Britain took responsibility for famines in Ireland and India, they should not in Russia as 'it is for the benefit of humanity at large that every Government should be responsible within its own sphere.'[107]

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[102] Christopher Hibbert, *The Illustrated London News' Social History of Victorian Britain* (London: Angus and Robertson, 1975).

[103] Sergius Stepniak, 'Foreign Office Report on Russian Agriculture and the Failure of the Harvest in 1891,' *Free Russia*, 1 November 1892, p. 5.

[104] 'THE FAMINE IN RUSSIA,' *Review of Reviews*, June 1892, p. 577.

Duncan Bell argues that the 'the degree to which [intellectuals'] liberal internationalism permeated British society as a whole is, though, an open question' and cites free trade, the peace movement, and the Mithlodian campaign as evidence for the existence of a popular internationalism.[108] While not explicitly putting forward a political philosophy, it can be argued that the famine relief was part of a liberal internationalist agenda in that it posited moral, anti-militaristic and commercial domestic reforms in Russia as part of a more peaceful international order.[109] The Quakers' relief work, while emphasising a business-like efficiency, was also part of an idealistic Christian and internationalist worldview, with grand religious notions of 'reaping' and 'international brotherhood' analogous to the multiplied profits available to Western capital in poor countries like Russia. It is unlikely that they would have used such broad strokes when discussing poor relief, or the passing of a bill, in Britain.[110] Russia therefore allowed greater scope for action, and multiplied rewards. The Quakers had undertaken relief in the Franco–Prussian War as a way to demonstrate their pacifism, and Quakers would go on to demonstrate against the Boer War.[111] While they felt a special connection to Russia because of previous exchanges and the presence of Tolstoy and sects like the Doukhobors, their interest in this famine can largely be explained by the liberal politics of the Quakers who brought it to attention.[112]

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[105] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[106] 'Editorial Article 3—No Title,' *Manchester Guardian*, 26 January 1892, p. 5.

[107] 'London, Saturday, January 23, 1892.' *The Times*, 23 January 1892, p. 9.

[108] Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 238, fn. 5.

The relief was of course a charitable rather than profit-seeking venture, with money being sought from Britain not Russia: 'If the heart of the great city of London could be moved so as to induce large donations from city bankers and merchants we should then feel liberated to give at once with a freer hand and thousands of lives might be saved which I fear will now be lost.'[113] The reward being reaped was not financial, but rather of 'goodwill' and 'brotherhood', measured in publicity:

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[109] Ibid., Bell, p. 239.

[110] Quakers did have a tendency to talk in moral, rather than political, language and to send 'memorials' to political leaders. However, their work in British campaigns also had to use meetings, petitions, pamphlets, get scientific opinion, influence MPs, sponsor bills and so on. The national (and historical) scope offered by Russia was certainly somewhat different. Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 90–112.

[111] They sought to distance themselves from what they saw as the pro-militaristic Red Cross relief. Gill, '"The Rational Administration of Compassion": The Origins of British Relief in War.'

[112] Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); Thomas C. Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, 1860–1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Brooks unsuccessfully stood as a Liberal for Essex South East, 'The General Election. The Polls—Nominations,' *The Times*, 7 July 1892, p. 6.

[113] Edmund Wright Brooks, 'letter to Committee,' 22/2/1892, Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

> we are more and more confirmed in the opinion that our Society and the British Public have before them a grand opportunity of proving in a practical and effective manner that God hath made of one blood all nations of the earth, + of establishing in the hearts of the Russian nation + even of its government also a feeling of gratitude for sorely needed help + of creating a bond of brotherhood, such as perhaps never existed before. If we are happily successful in the pursuance of that feeling of which our Commission has been the opening chapter, great will be the reward, but if on the other hand you should not succeed great will be the disappointment of the Russian people. You who are at home can have no idea what a sensation our presence in this country has excited. Wherever we go, everyone we meet has heard about us + though here we are 1000 miles or more from the Capital, letters from Petersburgh have preceded [illegible] "society" on the universal "grape vine". Way has been made for us again and again in the most un asked for + effective manner, + we cannot but believe that a way has been providentially prepared beforehand. The policy of our newspaper the Times towards Russia is a most mischievous one; we should at least receive the active co-operation of the Daily News, which though not much read here, would be very influential at home.[114]

Here the commissioners had the opportunity to influence a whole country, and prove a universal principle, in a way that they would probably not have be able to do in Britain. The scale of the country seemed to amplify their effect, partly through divine influence, partly through the extent of the problem, and partly through the social and geographical structure that allowed letters from St. Petersburg to be influential across thousands of miles of land.[115] Brooks noted 'Never was need so great, never was opportunity so grand: my earnest hope is that Friends will embrace it and in so doing do also more to promote Peace and Goodwill between the two great nations than has perhaps ever been possible to be done before.'[116] The language is providential, with frequent religious references, and exemplifies many of the themes and preoccupations of liberal internationalism in its enthusiasm for international co-operation, public opinion, and faith in British liberal capitalism, politics, and humanitarianism to ameliorate Russia's situation and the geopolitical one.[117] These notions were tied to more practical political divisions, such as the support of the liberal *Daily News*. Here again humanitarians relied on the press, not just as an indicator of effects, but as a creator of this 'brotherhood'. Others echoed this view that famine relief made 'international brotherhood' real or 'concrete'. Indeed, Tolstoy said that following the relief effort 'the universal brotherhood of man is no longer an abstract ideal but a concrete fact.' This was echoed by Gilbert Coleridge, of the English Famine Relief Committee, who argued that the Russian peasant would not forget this help from the English. He used the example of an English schoolboy sacrificing all his playtime in order to do a paper round to raise money for famine relief.[118] *Free Russia* showed how sympathy translated into material benefits:

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[114] Edmund Wright Brooks and Francis William Fox, 'letter to Committee,' 23.7.1891, Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

[115] Adverts note that 'there are eighteen to twenty of the govts which are stricken with famine, and that each of them is as large as England.' 'Appeals to Society of Friends and Public—Extracts from Fox and Brooks Letters,' 15 January 1892, Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

[116] Edmund Wright Brooks, 'letter to Committee,' 8.1.1892, Box 323/3, Folder 10, *Russian Famine Committee*, LSF.

> In the most distant countries the sufferings of the Russian people found an echo in men's hearts. From England and America over one million of roubles was received in money and in corn. This means over one hundred thousand lives saved. The American corn, which was of excellent quality, was used chiefly for seed in the famine-stricken provinces of the middle Volga, and has given exceptionally good returns, such as the exhausted and weakened native seed never gives. If, in many districts, the peasant will be able to have a loaf of bread, upon their table for the next year, they will owe it to their American friends.[119]

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[117] Quakers were supportive, and constitutive, of nineteenth-century internationalism, from the Peace Society to John Bright's efforts with Richard Cobden, to later peace conferences. Phillips, 'Friendly Patriotism: British Quakerism and the Imperial Nation, 1890–1910.' While some strands of internationalism and humanitarianism were couched in positivist terms, they nevertheless had significant crossover with religiously framed views, and many of the same goals and assumptions. On the strands of liberal internationalism, see Sylvest, *British liberal internationalism*, 1880–1930, c. 2. Following the First World War, however, the Quakers' pacifism (as opposed to pacificism) led them to an ambivalent relationship with the League of Nations and its basis in collective security, yet remained supportive of the core internationalist beliefs in free co-operation across borders, the rule of law and moral progress. Kennedy, *British Quakerism*; *Conference of All Friends*.

[118] Gilbert Coleridge, 'The Russian Famine Fund,' *Free Russia*, July 1892, p. 8.

[119] Sergey Stepniak, 'The Lessons of the Calamitous Year,' *Free Russia*, July 1892, p. 3.

This highlighting of the gift is a common enough trope in humanitarian writing, but when we consider more specifically not just the universal spreading of ‘brotherhood’, but the more particular relationship created by giving to the Russian middle classes (and thereby highlighting tsarist faults), in the context of British foreign policy, the activity comes to appear more historically remarkable. It was a choice shaped by the social, political and religious landscape of Britain and particularly by the liberal internationalist belief in technical expertise, voluntary action across borders, and the advanced role of Britain in this worldview. Because of this, the relief was linked with an implicit critique of the Russian autocracy, drawing on long-standing political critiques but maintaining philanthropic neutrality.

Conclusion

The famine of 1891–1892, the biggest in a series, was seen by British observers as ‘laying bare’ the problems of Russia. The nature of British reporting of the famine added to this idea of exposure, as reports of the facts of the famine and the carrying out of relief, were seen to be in opposition to government censorship. Reports on grain harvests and prices, letters from Tolstoy and expatriates, and local press reports, contributed to a notion of exposure. Indeed, a good deal of impetus can be said to have come from Russian exiles and particularly the *Free Russia* journal, which presented an influential oppositionist view of Russia in the 1890s, as its editor Stepniak was well-connected in liberal circles. The decision to provide relief therefore cannot be understood separately from the news sources which presented the problem.

The response was shaped by specific ideological concerns and views of Russia. The relief effort showed the desolation of Russia’s agriculture, economy and governance. An implicit contrast was made between, on the one hand, Russia’s isolated villages, inarticulate peasants, lack of railways, and roads that closed during spring and summer and, on the other, the telegraphs that relayed the news to Britain, financial networks that brought money and subscription lists that channelled the sympathy of a more democratic and economically advanced society. The British response was not mediated by any direct economic interest, but by a view shaped by the professions and worldviews of those who undertook it. News of the famine came from business reports, Tolstoy, from British expatriates, and from foreign correspondents such as Emile

Dillon. The Society of Friends had a tradition of relief work and an interest in promoting peace, and many of those on the famine committee had given relief in the Franco–Prussian War, for example.

It was in this context that famine relief was, in part, a way to assert liberal, internationalist values. Famine relief, as opposed to direct political critique, was an acceptable and fulfilling path for Quakers and those who donated; nevertheless, as has been shown, a critique of Russia was present because of the way that relief addressed economic problems long identified by British observers and Russian opposition, and came from those with liberal views, interests and expertise. The British relief went hand-in-hand with a view of Russian deficiencies from the British perspective and an emphasis on the efficiency of the relief (rather than the emotional involvement of the givers). This presentation of expertise in ameliorating the conditions of famine, and diagnosing its underlying causes, allowed the givers to emphasise their own role and the value of the liberal civilisation they championed; in the British context, the demonstration of compassion beyond borders emphasised their liberal credentials as part of an internationalist worldview which sought to spread progress and provide an alternative to confrontational modes of international politics.

The relief was professedly neutral with regards to politics, focusing instead on the efficiency and moral value of its delivery. However, if we step back and consider its colouring as an efficient counterpoint to Russian mismanagement, and its association with a strong Russophilic, anti-tsarist discourse in the British press, then we can better understand its meaning and positioning in the context of the time. By temperament the relief commissioners and the Quakers in general were liberal and therefore pre-disposed to dislike autocracy. They also chose to offer help in a situation that had been highlighted by a significant anti-tsarist discourse in the press, and in oppositions to the prescriptions of conservative foreign policy.

As is evident from the scepticism of the Foreign Office and *The Times*, that foreign relief might upset the Russian government was a possibility. Neither was it accepted by these sources that the famine was the business of the British public. A separate sphere for ‘humanitarianism’ was therefore not fully evident, in theory or in practice. The Quakers and those reporting the relief made this distinction, emphasising the neutrality of the relief, but in reality the borders between humanitarian concern for the suffering and criticism of the tsarist regime were porous, not least because of the strong anti-tsarist discourse in Britain. The episode therefore demonstrates the way that humanitarianism is linked, both in its macro-level presentation and its micro-level implementation, with broader political questions and social assumptions, without denying the force of humanitarian compassion and neutrality in asserting this implicit politics. It has shown that this humanitarian gesture was closely meshed with other values, namely efficiency and liberalism, and should be situated at the confluence of anti-tsarism and Quaker internationalism.

Speaking Up for Religious Freedom in Russia: Jewish and Christian Humanitarianism

For many Britons, Protestantism went hand in hand with progress. Russia was backward in part because its state religion repressed the energies of its people, both within and without the Orthodox communion. When a number of peasant sects were found to be dissenting from the state church, this was taken as a sign of stifled progress. Helping such sects not only advanced religious freedom, a good in itself and a central pillar of nonconformist politics, but would also encourage the modernisation of Russian society. None suffered more than Russia's Jews, and the country's regular pogroms were vividly portrayed and loudly deplored as another charge against the brutal autocracy. By the 1890s, such images of religious repression underpinned an important facet of the humanitarian discourse on Russia, building on longstanding practices of transnational solidarity by Protestants and Jews in addition to state protection of Christians abroad.[1]

In late nineteenth-century Russia the religious appeal of oppressed Christians was augmented by the supposed radical potential of peasant

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[1] Andrew C. Thompson, 'The Protestant Interest and the History of Humanitarian Intervention, c. 1685–c. 1756', in *Humanitarian Intervention: A History*, ed. by D.J.B. Trim and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 67–88; Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 210. Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

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L. Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890–1923*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3_4

communes and sectarians, by Tolstoyan Christianity, and by the critique of Russian autocracy.[2] Russia's non-Orthodox groups won the support of both Russian revolutionaries and foreign observers.[3] One of the most attention-grabbing episodes occurred in 1895 when the Doukhobors, a Christian sect in the Caucasus, burned their weapons in protest at conscription and were flogged by the government. An international campaign, led by Lev Tolstoy and his followers alongside British Quakers, brought their suffering to the attention of the world and raised funds for relocation. Other dissenting sects such as Stundists (Baptists) and Mennonites attracted the attention and aid of British church groups, the Russian opposition and the press. The suffering of Russian Jews, particularly dramatic events such as the Kishinev pogrom, was regularly denounced to British audiences. This religiously framed suffering drove British religious groups to offer solidarity and aid. This interest, and particularly the campaign to defend and relocate the Doukhobors, is indicative of the mixing of religious concerns with humanitarian methods.

This chapter analyses several attempt to defend religious groups in Russia, against the backdrop of prevalent ideas of religion's role in modernity and civilisation, in order to shed light on the drivers of humanitarian action. It is argued that religious tolerance and belief was a key way of understanding Russia and its flaws, and British liberals and religious groups all condemned the persecutions of Jews and non-Orthodox Christians. The help offered to the persecuted varied significantly, however. The second section of the chapter therefore moves on to look at the processes behind one campaign, focusing on the aid given to the Doukhobors from 1895. In showing the decision-making of Quakers behind the British arm of the campaign, it seeks to highlight how solidarity and ideology shaped humanitarianism and how humanitarian work became increasingly important to religious groups in the face of secularisation. Focus is put on the way that religious issues were apprehended in humanitarian terms, and the particular forms religious humanitarianism took. Rather than considering humanitarian ideals, the analysis starts from the point of view of religious groups' interests and traditions. That is to say that Quakers and Jews apprehended the problem of suffering in Russia because it coincided with their religious beliefs and group identity, not primarily because they supported a notion of rights or aimed to alleviate suffering.

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[2] Charlotte Alston, '«A Great Host of Sympathisers»: The Doukhobor Emigration and Its International Supporters, 1895–1905', *Journal of Modern European History*, 12.2 (2014), pp. 200–215.

[3] For an example of American views of Russia and religion see David S. Foglesong, 'Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and tsarist Russia, 1886–1917', *Religion, State and Society*, 25.4 (1997), pp. 353–368.

Christians and Jews

Jews suffered the worst persecution of any group in the Russian Empire, yet there were conspicuous gaps in the foreign support offered to them. As Shaw notes, the main Quaker journal 'was almost entirely silent on the Jewish Question, a silence that was conspicuous in the wake of the 1881–1882 pogroms and those of the early 1890s.'[4] This can perhaps be explained in part by the unwillingness of Quakers to appropriate causes not stimulated by direct inspiration and individual 'concern', although as the famine relief campaign in 1891–1892 shows, Quaker concern could be stirred by issues beyond threats to Christianity. Tolstoy seems to have had similar scruples. According to the *Telegraph*'s Russia correspondent, Emile Dillon, when asked to write a letter denouncing the persecutions of the Jews, '[o]r if he found it inadvisable to write…to sign a collection paper against the persecution of the Jews', the moralist apparently replied that 'he sympathized with anything we might write in favour of the Jews: he thoroughly disapproved of the oppressive measures put in force against them. At the same time he finds it difficult to write on the strength of an impulse given from without, however good.'[5] Again after the Kishinev pogrom in 1903, he said to those who asked him to speak out, 'people are demanding from me the activity of a publicist, when I am a person entirely occupied by one very important question which has nothing in common with contemporary events: namely the problem of religion and its application to life.'[6]

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[4] Caroline Shaw, *Britannia's Embrace: Humanitarianism and the Imperial Origins of Refugee Relief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 221.

[5] 'Entry for February/March 1890.' *Dillon diaries*, Acc.12382/Notebooks and Diaries/ 40–42, National Library of Scotland.

[6] Although his stance may have subsequently softened. Harold K. Schefski, 'Tolstoy and the Jews', *Russian Review*, 41.1 (1982), pp. 1–10 (p. 6).

British Jews had their own deep-rooted mechanisms of communal solidarity.[7] Jewish international interests were initially represented by wealthy and influential individuals such as Sir Moses Montefiore, a Jewish philanthropist and head of the Board of Deputies.[8] In 1840 a Franciscan went missing in Damascus and local Jews were imprisoned and tortured. Montefiore and Adolphe Crémieux, later the head of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, went to speak to the Sultan in person.[9] Montefiore's efforts were usually personal and patriarchal in style, but at the same time a more modern and public form of solidarity was being created, with more interest from ordinary Jews, often at odds with the positions of the traditional Anglo-Jewish leadership. By the mid-nineteenth century, according to Green, Jewish activism came to be characterised by 'voluntarism outside traditional communal spaces'.[10] The press was especially important, and the *Jewish Chronicle* reported widely on persecuted Jews in Russia and the Middle East in what Cesarini terms 'a modern form of ethnic solidarity.'[11] Slightly later, the French-dominated Alliance Israélite Universelle (1860), the Anglo-Jewish Association (1870), the Austrian Isralitische Allianz (1873) and the German

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[7] W.D. Rubinstein says that English Jewry was 'possibly' the first group to help other Jews: W.D. Rubenstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1996), p. 15; In an early instance of international solidarity, British Jews lobbied George II on behalf of Jews in Bohemia, the order for whose expulsion was subsequently revoked: Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983) p. 4; In the eighteenth century, the Sephardi Bevis Marks synagogue in London gave financial assistance to Jews in Venice, the Holy Land, Persia, Jamaica, and to Jewish captives: Albert Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), p. 289; Jewish organisations followed the steps of other denominations and in 1840 the Committee of Diligence was renamed the Jewish Board of Deputies (1840) to echo the Deputies of the Three Denominations representing Protestant dissenters' interests.

[8] Abigail Green, 'Rethinking Sir Moses Montefiore: Religion, Nationhood, and International Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century', *American Historical Review*, 110.3 (2005), pp. 630–658.

[9] David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), p. 338.

[10] Green, 'Old Networks, New Connections: The Emergence of the Jewish International', in Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene, *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities Since 1750* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan: 2014), pp. 53–81.

[11] David Cesarani, *Reporting Anti-Semitism: The Jewish Chronicle 1879–1979* (Southampton: University of Southampton, 1993), p. 31.

Hilfsrerein der Deutschen Juden (1901) would represent international Jewish interests more formally, using modern methods. The American secular Jewish organisation B'nai B'rith also helped Jews abroad, including pressuring the Romanians through the Jewish American consul there and sending disaster aid to Palestine.[12]

Anglo-Jewry was often successful in mobilising Western public opinion against antisemitic persecutions in Eastern Europe, the Catholic countries and the Middle East.[13] Green argues that the success of the Jewish philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore, rested on his ability 'to locate specifically Jewish concerns at the heart of this wider universalist and humanitarian agenda.'[14] Russia's treatment of the Jews was widely publicised and denounced in the British public sphere. The Russia correspondent Emile Dillon (writing under the pseudonym E.B. Lanin) listed the restrictions placed on Jewish life, their persecution by the state, and the indifference of the Russian press and public. In Russia, he argued, everyone treated the Jews badly 'for the Jew is a vessel of dishonour for coarse-minded tschinovniks who void their rheum upon his beard, and foot him as they would spurn a stranger cur over their own or other's thresholds'. Jews' lives were made 'made literally unendurable' by being 'scoffed at, terrorized and robbed by every petty official…insulted, beaten, and kept in constant fear of violence by a vile rabble whom they dare not irritate by even a slight success in business or trade; held up to scorn and indignation of all Russia by the Governmental press as the authors of every calamity avoidable and unavoidable.'[15]

The émigré journal *Free Russia* published regular articles on Jewish persecution. In an 1890 issue, its editor Stepniak argued:

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[12] Leff, p. 2.

[13] C.S. Monaco, *The Rise of Modern Jewish Politics: Extraordinary Movement* (London: Routledge, 2013); Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[14] Green, p. 657. Or see on the Mortara Affair in 1858: Cesarani, p. 40; David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840–1914* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 135.

[15] Emile Joseph Dillon, *Russian Characteristics* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1892), p. 554.

> The presence of such a mass of people, whose rights, as men and citizens, are daily violated, cannot help exercising a most demoralising influence upon the national character of the Russians. It will stir up their lowest instincts, graft upon them a cynical disregard of all moral restraint, accustom them to trample down the weak and sneer at human sufferings…It is for our own sakes, and for the sake of our children, as well as for the sake of general humanity, that we must protest against, and oppose by all the means in our power, this disgraceful policy towards the Jews, and we hail every attempt on the part of foreigners to put a stop to it by outside pressure.[16]

Russian antisemitism was well dissected enough to generate its own terms and imagery. Johnson demonstrates how the 1903 pogrom in Kishinev was 'the first time a pogrom entered the world's consciousness in visual terms' as photographs 'showed the bodies of victims laid out in a makeshift mortuary, the chaos of ransacked buildings and pavements strewn with shattered furniture and glass.'[17] Revulsion was widespread decades before this and 'every British newspaper, metropolitan and provincial, roundly condemned the regime for its deliberate pogrom policy.'[18] It was not until 1903, however, that the paradigm of the pogrom as a 'national institution' with rules and process, and authority support, took form in the British imagination.[19]

Yet for all the recognition of Jewish suffering, 'there were no straightforward political solutions' for the Jewish question in Eastern Europe.[20] The size of Russia's Jewish population made emigration less straightforward as a solution than for the Doukhobors (see below). As Britain become more collectivist and nationalistic, many argued that East European Jews were difficult to integrate into British society, and anti-immigration sentiment grew in the last decades of the nineteenth century.[21] According to Shaw, '[a]s early as the summer of 1882, Jewish

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[16] Sergius Stepniak, 'The Jews in Russia', *Free Russia*, September 1890, pp. 6–9.

[17] Sam Johnson, *Pogroms, Peasants, Jews: Britain and Eastern Europes' Jewish Questions, 1867–1925* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 77.

[18] Johnson, p. 85.

[19] Johnson, pp. 86–88. Johnson identifies a December 1903 article in *The Times* as the source of this view.

[20] Johnson, p. 4.

[21] Shaw, pp. 222–225; Feldman, pp. 263, 381.

philanthropists expressed hope that the acute crisis in Russia was coming to a close and that it would thus be safe to stop refugee flight' and helped return 510 adults and 114 children to the country from which they had fled.[22] The respectable leaders of Anglo-Jewry also sought to distance themselves from more assertive left-wing and Zionist protests from poorer segments of the British Jewish community by offering only limited support for Jewish immigration to Britain.[23]

Indeed, policy towards Russian Jews was seen in both the context of the balance of power in Eastern Europe, and a national politics of immigration and cultural identity. Prominent intellectuals such as the historians E.A. Freeman and James Bryce, as well as Gladstone, questioned Jewish (or Disraeli's) support for the Ottoman Empire, responsible for massacring Bulgarian Christians but generally less hostile to its Jewish populations than Russia was, over Russia.[24] Olga Novikova, a pan-Slavist author based in London, criticised the Jewish case against Russia as sectarian, arguing: 'there is no doubt that the desire of Jewry to injure Russia, whom they regarded as their oppressor, entirely obscured the sympathy which they might otherwise have felt for the massacred Bulgarians.' She suggested that if there were 500,000 Chinese 'monopolising all the best things in Southern England', Britain might carry out a policy similar to Russia's.[25] While Novikova's antisemitism was worse than most, several historians believe that the Bulgarian atrocities campaign in 1877 marked a turning point in the perception of Jewish problems in British 'humanitarian' (particularly Christian) circles, as support for Jewish causes lessened and Jews withdrew support from Gladstone's Liberal Party.[26]

The persecution of Russia's Jews was a significant issue for the British government, as the pogroms swelled the number of immigrants to the country. Between the 1880s and the First World War, from 120,000 to 150,000 East European Jews came to the UK.[27] Given the tensions that caused and the importance of Christianity to British conceptions of humanity, Jewish problems did not fit neatly alongside the other humanitarianism described in this book, although as Shaw shows, Russian persecution of the Jews was regularly and prominently denounced by the British establishment. The pogroms were conceptualised as part of Russia's intolerance and illiberalism.[28] In 1872 a Lord Mayor's meeting against Russian pogroms was held. In 1882 protests at the restrictive May Laws were held protest at Mansion House, and attended by Christians who had campaigned against 'Bulgarian atrocities'. The meetings were 'conceived as British—not Jewish—affairs.' These protests garnered some support from government and in 1891 Gladstone sent an open letter and a deputation of two Englishmen to Russia to raise the issue.[29] After the Mansion House meeting in 1882, the Jewish MP Baron de Worms presented a resolution in the House of Commons, 'aimed to encourage a direct intervention' by the British Government to prevent any recurrence of the pogroms. Parliament published two Command Papers (Blue Books) on the pogroms but did not conclude the regime had deliberately sponsored pogroms, and Worms' proposal was rejected.[30] While such efforts had limited effect, direct help was also given to Jewish refugees, with a joint Mansion House and Jewish fund raising over £100,000 and relieving 2749 refugees in Britain with money or help to emigrate elsewhere.[31]

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[22] Shaw, pp. 229–230.

[23] Johnson, pp. 89–90.

[24] Rebecca Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 88–90.

[25] Olga Alexsieevna Novikova and W.T. Stead, *The M.P. for Russia: Reminiscences & Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1909), p. 280.

[26] Feldman, Chap. 4; Cesarani.

[27] Johnson, p. 2.

If responses to Russia's Jews won only half-hearted support from Britain, Christians potentially had a much wider pool of supporters. Not only did British Nonconformity have considerable organising potential, but Russian 'nonconformists' were seen by many anti-tsarists as the seeds of reform or revolution in Russia. The largest group of Christian sectarians was created when a schism occurred in the Russian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century after a group later labelled Raskolniks or 'Old Believers' rejected changes to the liturgy.[32] Russian Dissent had a number of origins. Charismatic vagrants were among the sources of the Skoptsy, a small group of self-castrating Christians.[33] German Mennonite populations came to Russia as part of Catherine the Great's 'populationist' scheme to strengthen Russia, settling in the Volga region.[34] Other groups sprang up across the Russian Empire. The Soviet historian Klibanov argued that under the 'stimulus of growing market ties' in the seventeenth century some peasants tried to become 'independent producers of goods' at a time when the church had large property holdings and was trying to maintain its privileges. In his account, each sect's beliefs were determined by its economic interests. The appeal of new doctrines waxed and waned according to their fit with certain groups' interests and size and economic conditions. Battles within sects between factions advocating rationalism and mysticism were the result of divergences in wealth between members.[35] For its part, the Russian state wavered between seeking to integrate and punish its dissenters, and a model of tolerance and isolation which allowed these groups to colonise border areas of the Empire.[36]

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[28] Vivian D. Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain Since 1858* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989); Monaco, pp. 146–151.

[29] Shaw, pp. 211–213.

[30] Johnson, pp. 59–60.

[31] Shaw, pp. 211–213.

[32] Engelstein argues that this Schism weakened Orthodox power: 'Once the authority of the church was questioned, however, in the name of true faith, the process of fragmentation was set into motion.' Laura Engelstein, *Castration and the Heavenly Kingdom: A Russian Folktale* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 12.

Both Christian and secular observers saw in Russia's dissenters the signs of repressed social, economic and political progress. Donald MacKenzie Wallace, a journalist for *The Times*, whose popular *Russia* (1877) went through several editions, argued that sectarianism:

> has nevertheless a considerable political significance. It proves satisfactorily that the Russian people is by no means so docile and pliable as is commonly supposed, and that it is capable of showing a stubborn, passive resistance to authority when it believes great interests to be at stake. The dogged energy which it has displayed in asserting for centuries its

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[33] Engelstein, p. 21.

[34] Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia, 1762–1804* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[35] A.I. Klibanov and Stephen P. Dunn, *History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s–1917)* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), p. 42; Sergey I. Zhuk, *Russia's Lost Reformation: Peasants, Millennialism, and Radical Sects in Southern Russia and Ukraine, 1830–1917* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

[36] Nicholas B. Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus* (London: Cornell University Press, 2005); Daniel Beer, 'The Medicalization of Religious Deviance in the Russian Orthodox Church (1880–1905)', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 5.3 (2004), pp. 451–482.

> religious liberty may perhaps some day be employed in the arena of secular politics.[37]

MacKenzie Wallace was no revolutionary, but nonetheless identified religious dissent as a form of resistance to repression. The view was far from unique. Alfred Heard's *The Russian Church and Russian Dissent* (1887), a general synthesis of scholarship on the subject, reasoned that dissenters showed the thwarted 'aspirations of an eager and imaginative race' whose only outlet, due to repression, lack of education and limited horizons, was religion.[38] While he approved of the 'rational' sects (Doukhobors, Stundists and Molokans) and their 'Protestant, reformatory character', the impulse could also go awry, evidenced by the 'ritualistic' Old Believers, and the 'hundreds' of bizarre sects, including 'gapers' who sat for hours with open mouths waiting for the spirit to enter, Dietooubiitsi (Child-killers), Doushilstchiki or Troukastchiki (Stranglers or Fellers), Stranniki (Wanderers), Skakouni (Jumpers), Khlysty and Skoptsy (Flagellators and Castrators), Pliasouni (Dancers), Nyemolyaki (Prayerless), Bezzlovestnil (Dumb), Tchislenniki (Enumerators), Moltchahiki (Taciturn), Vozdoukhatzi (Sighing Ones), and many others. In this view, the religious impulse shown by Russian dissenters, whether mystical or rational, leading to fanaticism, ritualism, orgies or thrift, was an unformed aspect of the more advanced character and civilisation of England or America.[39]

Sporadic expressions of solidarity with the dissenters can be observed throughout the nineteenth century. The first sources were religious. Some of the first British writing about Russian sectarians came from missionaries with the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS). In the early nineteenth century, works by Russian clergy including *Several Characteristics of Doukhobor Society* were translated from Russian by the BFBS's Robert Pinkerton. The data from the survey of Doukhobor beliefs and practices was later used by Pinkerton when he went to see the sect himself.[40] Quakers were also interested in Russia both because of the promise of sects similar to themselves, and through their work with the British and Foreign Bible Society.[41] The Quaker William Allen, travelling with the BFBS wrote: 'that we had heard in England of the persecution they had endured, and also of the humane interposition of the Emperor, on their behalf,—that while we had felt sympathy with them in their sufferings, we wished to know what were their religious principles.'[42] For all their excitement at the prospect of a new form of Protestantism, the Evangelical visitors expressed disappointment at Doukhobors' reluctance to use scripture and focus on oral traditions.[43] Nevertheless, these English Protestants appealed to the Russian authorities on the behalf of persecuted sects on certain occasions and helped their migrations. Jon Paterson of the British and Foreign Bible Society and Richard Phillips, an English Quaker, secretly appealed to end the exile of Doukhobors in Finland and provided funds for this.[44] Later in the century, Quakers Thomas Harvey and Isaac Robson wrote pamphlets and solicited donations on behalf of Mennonites who had emigrated to America and Canada following Russia's insistence on their military service and were struggling because of having to sell their land cheaply and pay highly for passports.[45]

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[37] Donald MacKenzie Wallace, *Russia* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1877), p. 324.

[38] Albert F. Heard, *The Russian Church and Russian Dissent, Comprising Orthodoxy, Dissent, and Erratic Sects* (New York: AMS Press, 1971), pp. 83, 92, 206.

[39] Heard.

[40] Robert Pinkerton, 'A Visit to the Dukhobortsy on the Sea of Azov, 1816', *Doukhobor Geneology Website*, http://www.doukhobor.org/Pinkerton.htm.

Support for non-Orthodox sects was tied up with opposition to tsarism, as liberals and radicals looked for signs of social and economic progression in Russia's heartlands. Aleksandr Etkind contends that 'the issue of popular sectarianism was strategically involved in the debate about the Russian people, which shaped several generations of future Russian revolutionaries.'[46] Indeed, Daniel Beer argues that sectarianism became a 'genuine ideological rival to the Orthodox Church' in the second half of the nineteenth century.[47] Populists, Tolstoyans and Social Democrats were among those to take a political interest in the sects. While a populist revolt centred on the dissenters never materialised, revolutionary scholars such as Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich continued to try to foster revolutionary potential until beyond the Bolshevik revolution.[48]

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[41] John Ormerod Greenwood, *Friends and Relief: A Study of Two Centuries of Quaker Activity in the Relief of Suffering Caused by War or Natural Calamity* (York: William Sessions Ltd, 1975), p. 97.

[42] Allen, William and Grellet, Stephen, 'Quaker Visit to the Dukhobortsy, 1819', *Doukhobor Geneology Website*, http://www.doukhobor.org/Quaker.htm.

[43] Ebenezer Henderson, *Biblical researches and travels in Russia* (London: James Nisbit, 1826), p. 469; Allen, William and Grellet, Stephen, 'Quaker Visit to the Dukhobortsy, 1819', *Doukhobor Geneology Website*, http://www.doukhobor.org/Quaker.htm.

[44] Greenwood, *Friends and Relief*, p. 101.

[45] Greenwood, *Friends and Relief*, p. 103.

[46] Aleksandr Etkind, 'Russian Sects Still Seem Obscure', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 2.1 (2001), pp. 165–181.

By the 1890s, Russian dissenters were a standard topic in analyses of Russia's position. *Free Russia*, the Russian opposition journal in London, emphasised the repression of the sects, and the potential for socio–economic progress they supposedly embodied. For many, the sectarians were noticeably more industrious than Orthodox Russians, with *Free Russia* suggesting that Stundists and other 'rationalistic sects' were 'the most intelligent, industrious and moral part of the Russian people' and had 'raised the material condition of the people.'[49] This idea was often supported by analogy to English dissenters.[50] An article in a Quaker magazine, in calling for help for Russia's 'Baptists, Stundists, Molokins, and Doukhobortsi', argued that a 'type of character', 'greatly serviceable both in civil and religious society', consisting of 'independency of action' and 'kindly sympathy with man under all circumstances' was indebted to English religious liberty:

> The change in public opinion wrought by the patiently endured sufferings of forty years—1649–1689 remains perhaps the most memorable achievement of the Friends. Experience has completely vindicated their contention that the granting of liberty of conscience would advance both the moral and material welfare of the State.[51]

The anti-tsarist writings of the 1890s enumerated the sufferings of Stundists, Doukhobors and alongside those of nihilists, strikers, and other political opponents of autocracy. On these issues the missionary and religious press found common ground with more radical anti-tsarists. Unlike nihilists, there were significant numbers of Russian sectarians and, for example, a Stundist 'movement', encompassing conferences and national and international alliances grew in South Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[52] British liberals and nonconformists looked on their cause with sympathy and approval. Michael Morrison and John Brown's 1893 book, *The Stundists: the story of a great religious revolt*, repeated many common tropes of Protestant industry and virtue, and of autocratic tyranny. After painting the history of Stundist 'awakenings', the book detailed the Stundist meeting houses closed by the state, and sketched some of the Stundist 'martyrs' taken from their villages on 'administrative order' to be sent to faraway parts of the Empire. Their condemnation of the government was as vociferous as that of *Free Russia*'s editorials, as they pointed to 'Petty espionage by miserable policemen in the villages; inquisitorial questionings by the priests; deeds of inconceivable vileness by the village authorities—these are the tactics pursued by the mighty Russian government against a harmless handful of their subjects, whose only request is to worship God in peace and truth.'[53]

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[47] Beer, p. 462.

[48] Aleksandr Etkind, 'Whirling with the Other: Russian Populism and Religious Sects', *The Russian Review*, 62 (2003), p. 566.

[49] 'The Stundists', *Free Russia*, April 1893, p. 59.

[50] Possible Quaker influence on persecuted heretical Russians in eighteenth-century Tomsk was sought by historians: 'The Desecrated Quaker Maidens', *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, Vol. XXVI. No. 3, November 1919, pp. 106–107.

[51] John S. Rowntree, 'Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting of Friends', *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, April 1900, pp. 30–31.

Explaining the government's policy to Stundists, they argued that:

> Hostility to anything and anybody that is enlightened and loves freedom is a settled policy in Russia, and has characterised the government of that country for more than three hundred years… The fabric of Russian power is an autocracy based on ignorance and superstition; and, therefore, it is the interest of self-preservation that has always prompted the Czar's government to crush anything that would bring enlightenment in its train.[54]

Like *Free Russia*, the authors saw publicity as the best way to help the Stundists:

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[52] Heather J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905–1929* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 3.

[53] Michael Andrews Morrison and John Brown, *The Stundists. The Story of a Great Religious Revolt. [By M.A. Morrison.] Introduction by John Brown … With Photographs of Typical Stundists, and a Map of Southern Russia, Showing Distribution of the Body* (London: James Clarke & Co, 1893), p. 37.

[54] Morrison and Brown, p. 25.

> The nations of the West do not seem to be alive to this. They do not seem to realise that they have at their gates a Power more intolerant of religious liberty than was Spain in her worst days… There is no press in Russia worthy the name to report and denounce each case of persecution as it occurs. The trials of heretics are conducted with closed doors… Russians themselves do not know a tenth of what is being done. We say that the victims are voiceless.

Whereas Germany had protected the Lutherans 'and a powerful European press, and the great financial influence of European Jews' worked to defend Jews in Russia, 'when Russia turns to her own people she persecutes humble peasants who are friendless, poverty-stricken, ignorant, who in fear and trembling suffer in silence and with dog-like resignation.' In Brown's view, the despotic government was 'only prevented from going to extremes of personal torture and the public stake by the dread of Western opinion.'[55] He therefore suggested that 'We can all do something to create an enlightened public opinion, and we can all bear these suffering brethren and sisters in our hearts in prayer before God.'[56]

Jackoff Prelooker, an émigré in Britain, attempted to forge a political movement against the autocracy based on religious concerns.[57] While not sharing Prelooker's stance, the more popular *Free Russia* denounced the treatment of the Stundists, perhaps in part to show that their cause was broader than radical terrorists, and had roots in the Russian population. The journal argued that the only reason the state persecuted Stundists was because they threatened its monopoly on power: 'The Russian government is almost certainly right in fearing the Stundists. Aspirations to religious and political freedom of necessity follow one another. It was so in England, and it will be so in the Russia of our time. But is not the fact that such persecutions are logical serve as irrefutable proof that the government is a standing lie.'[58] They published articles on the sufferings of individual Stundists and on 'The atrocious practice of robbing sectarian parents of their children, for the purpose of bringing them up in official orthodoxy.' It included an eye-witness report:

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[55] Morrison and Brown, p. 37.

[56] Morrison and Brown, viii.

[57] Jaakoff Prelooker, *From Holy Orthodox Russia: A Stundist Appeal to Christian Britain* (Edinburgh), 189.

[58] 'The Stundists', *Free Russia*, 1 March 1897.

> the police officer slowly unfolded a paper and began to read in a solemn voice an official circular, ordering that all children from two to eleven years of age should be taken from their parents or relatives belonging to sects of a "particularly noxious character"… The victims forming the centre of the circle looked more dead than alive, their faces betokening unspeakable agony. At this moment the dead silence was broken by heartrending lamentations from the women, who perhaps did not grasp either the contents of the official paper or the harangue of the priest, but to whom their motherly feeling made the threatened danger quite clear. They were joined by the sobbing children. This loud outburst of grief eventually produced in the orthodox crowd a counter feeling of pity and remorse.[59]

The dictates of the autocracy were shown to be cruel, but capable of being resisted if enough publicity could be spread to generate sympathy. It was the government official, not the ordinary Russian, at fault for the persecution. *Free Russia* also reported meetings in support of the sect and funds where readers could donate money.[60] Others shared these views, and the feminist *Woman's Signal* magazine interviewed a Russian woman who had fled to London after state persecution. Although she had a 'liberal' brother in prison in Siberia, the interviewee emphasised that she had taken part in no political agitation, but had only preached. Nevertheless, the apparatus of state repression soon pushed her to flee the country. She ended by pointing out that readers could help by donating to the Evangelical Alliance or the editor of the *Christian* magazine.[61] While the female Stundist distanced herself from political agitation, her story nevertheless served as an example of the oppressive and arbitrary nature of Russia's regime. It is therefore no surprise that religious groups took an interest in Russia's problems. As with the efforts to help Jews, responses varied from clamorous denunciation to attempts to negotiate special privileges to toothless expressions of spiritual solidarity.

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[59] 'Robbing sectarians of their children', *Free Russia*, February 1898, pp. 11–12; 'The History of Elisey Sukach the Stundist', *Free Russia*, April 1893, pp. 76–78, 110–111.

[60] 'The Baptist Union on the Stundists', *Free Russia*, June 1892; 'Help for the Stundists', *Free Russia*, March 1894; 'Nicholas II and the Stundists: He receives a deputation from the "Friends"', *Free Russia*, May 1894.

[61] 'For Conscience Sake: Interview with a Woman-Stundist', *Woman's Signal*, 23 May 1895.

Doukhobors

Many of Russia's dissenters were small sects of no more than a few villages. The Doukhobors were such a group, consisting of largely illiterate peasants who would no doubt have remained little known outside the pages of religious history books had it not been for their ability to attract the support of a range of well-connected Christians, inside and out of Russia. They conformed to the general pattern of Russian dissent as classified by Western observers, being seen as a sign of progress in Russia's spiritual, social and economic development, if somewhat eccentric. However, they were also the subject of a noisy and effective humanitarian campaign, helping to fund their emigration to Canada.

Doukhobors had probably arisen in the eighteenth century, although a lack of written records means that no one is quite sure of their origin. Their doctrine changed over the years, but the fact that they rejected the rites and hierarchy of the Orthodox Church made them subject to periodic repression by the Russian state. Such a rejection made them popular with Protestants, but their emphasis on oral traditions over Scripture dampened the enthusiasm of Evangelicals while elevating them in the eyes of spiritual or rational Christians. Leftists and anarchists were attracted to the Doukhobors' redistributive systems, vegetarianism and communal child rearing. It was pacifism, however, which put the sect under the spotlight, as Doukhobor religious principles were brought into conflict with Russian state authority.

Support for the sect came first of all through Christian traditions. The Quakers and Evangelicals who visited the Doukhobors in the 1810s were far closer to missionaries than humanitarians. Keen to see this exotic sect who were said to resemble the Quakers, they asked questions about the Doukhobors' beliefs and practices, finding themselves somewhat disappointed about their lack of Scriptural knowledge.[62] The Quakers nevertheless offered some financial support to the Doukhobors in the 1820s, as the latter were moved to Finland by the Tsar, as well as later helping Mennonites emigrate to avoid compulsory military service in the 1870s as part of a tradition of support for Quaker-like groups across Europe, particularly those resisting military service.[63]

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[62] Greenwood, *Friends and Relief*, pp. 101–104.

The support offered to the Doukhobors in 1895 was different in its focus on seeking publicity for the sect. In 1895, Tolstoy wrote to alert the British press to the flogging and exile of Doukhobors.[64] The more radical faction of the sect, Peter Verigin's 'Large Party', had publically burned its weapons, used in military service and protection against cross-border raids, as a signal of pacifism and resistance to the state. This brought the cause to wider public attention and made it more like a modern humanitarian campaign, and through Tolstoy, a wide variety of parties would come to the Doukhobors' aid.[65] Tolstoyans were particularly enthusiastic about the Doukhobors, and quoted their 'Ten Commandments', a highly liberal credo, approvingly.[66] Secular as well as religious lessons were now being learned from the peasants. The journalist and humanitarian H.N. Brailsford declared his support for the sect's vegetarianism: '[t]he Doukhobors, after all, have only given an honestly concrete turn to an abstraction which has long been an obsession in modern thought.' Their example would, he hoped, inspire a 'Copernican revolution' in the conception of man's place in the world relative to animals.[67] At Manchester town hall, the Quaker John Ashworth invoked notions echoing the arts and crafts movement as much as shared religious principles in describing his visit to the Doukhobors:

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[63] John Ormerod Greenwood, *Vines on the Mountains* (York: William Sessions Ltd, 1977), pp. 153–202; Greenwood, *Friends and Relief*, pp. 104–106.

[64] Lev Tolstoy, 'The Persecution of Christians in Russia', *The Times*, 23 September 1895; Vladimir Chertkov, letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, 9 September 1895.

[65] Alston, '«A Great Host of Sympathisers»: The Doukhobor Emigration and Its International Supporters, 1895–1905'.

[66] V.G. Chertkov and Leo graf Tolstoy, *Christian Martyrdom in Russia: Persecution of the Doukhobors*, 2nd edn (Malden, Essex: The Free Age Press, 1900). On the appeal of Tolstoyism in fin-di-siècle Britain, see Charlotte Alston, *Tolstoy and His Disciples: The History of a Radical International Movement* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014); Seth Koven, *The Match Girl and the Heiress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 139–145.

[67] H.N. Brailsford, 'An idea in Fleet Street', *The Speaker*, 25 October 1902, in *The Papers H.N. Brailsford (1873–1958)*, Peoples' History Archive, Manchester.

> I shall always remember my first impression of a Doukhobor village on that beautiful, frosty morning. A picturesque group of quaintly built chalet-like houses, made of logs with turf roofs. The sides were coated with clay plaster and presented a uniform appearance. In the centre of the main room was a large oven, 5 feet square, which serve the purpose of heating the hut and cooking the food. Everything showed most careful workmanship.

He extolled the sect's simple lifestyle, quoting Ruskin: 'all true art is sacred, and in all hand-labour there is something of divineness'.[68]

For all the popularity of the Doukhobor cause, the Quaker 'Meeting for Sufferings' was hardly enthusiastic about this lively assertion of pacifist principles, criticising the Doukhobors as much as the Russian government:

> It appears that, amidst much fortitude in the endurance of cruel persecution and suffering for their refusal to bear arms, they have been led in some degree into an unwise rejection of lawfully constituted authority, which we cannot approve or support.

The Meeting called for publicity so that the Russian authorities might 'see the wisdom as well as the expediency of tempering their policy with mercy.'[69] Such a response was no doubt a consequence of political cautiousness, as well as telling us something about the Quakers' traditional repertoire of action.

The campaign for the Doukhobors was driven by 'Tolstoyans'—followers of Lev Tolsoy's moral writings. Tolstoy's most active disciple, Vladimir Chertkov, did a great deal to publicise the Doukhobor cause, and was exiled from Russia in 1897 for doing so. In Britain he was supported by Tolstoyan colonies. By this time, news of the bad health of the Doukhobors in involuntary exile had reached the Quakers, and they formed a Doukhobor Committee. Nine months later, in April 1898, the Tsar, won over by appeals from Tolstoyans to him and his wife, acceded to the request for the Doukhobors to be allowed to leave Russia.[70] Soon after, events began to speed up, and Arthur St. John, an army captain turned Tolstoyan, encouraged 1,100 Doukhobors to head to Cyprus in July 1898, without planning for their settlement. London Quakers contacted the British Colonial Office to help the Doukhobors buy the land, providing financial guarantees and references to the sect's good character. The Doukhobors did not like the climate or conditions in Cyprus, and many fell ill. Sergey Tolstoy (the novelist's son) therefore pushed for the sect to move to Canada, where there was much unfarmed land available. Quakers chartered ships for what would be the largest single migration to Canada at that point. The Canadian authorities were persuaded to offer cheap land to the Doukhobors by the guarantees of the Quakers in London and Philadelphia, as well as the good word of the Scottish-Canadian economist James Mavor. The funds of British Quakers began to dry up in 1899, although two young Quakers, Hannah Bellows and Helen Morland, travelled to Canada to work as teachers amongst the Doukhobors in 1902.

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[68] John Ashworth, 'The Doukhobortsy and religious persecution in Russia: Lecture to Manchester Quaker Meeting, 1900', *MS Box 02/1*, FHL.

[69] Yearly Meeting Proceedings 1/11/1895, Friends' House Library (FHL).

[70] George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 117.

The Doukhobors relief relied on several overlapping networks of support, but it is worth emphasising that much of this support focused on Christian themes. *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, a pamphlet by Vladimir Chertkov, and featuring a foreword by John Kenworthy of the Christian Brotherhood Church in Croydon and an afterword by Tolstoy, exemplifies this well. The pamphlet located the troubles of the Doukhobors in a Christian framework, arguing that the recent pressure from the government started 'immediately on the revival among them of ancient principles and practice.'[71] Tolstoy used the Doukhobors' plight to assert the importance of Christian ethics over international politics or economic questions, suggesting that those who dismissed the sect were as wrong as 'Pilate and Herod…[in not understanding] the importance of that for which the Galilean, who had disturbed their province, was brought before their judgement.'[72] Christian solutions were posited:

> There are only two means to help people persecuted for faith's sake. One consists in the fulfilment of the Christian commandment, to welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and feed the

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[71] Chertkov and Tolstoy, p. 50.

[72] Chertkov and Tolstoy, p. 95.

> hungry…; the other consists in appealing to the persecutors…by laying bare…the sin, the cruelty, and the folly of their acts.[73]

The pamphlet devoted much space to commending the Doukhobors and outlined the ten 'rules of life' of their 'New Testament'.[74] While the pamphlet asked for money, it also emphasised the importance of visiting the Doukhobors *in person* and of denouncing the sin of the persecuting authorities. More than simply a good deed, helping the Doukhobors was to be a labour of the soul and a stimulus to Christian living.[75] Of course, these appeals were similar in form to strands of secular humanitarianism: denouncing the tsar for sin was not that different to denouncing the autocracy for arbitrariness.[76]

The Quaker response was filtered through a different conception of Christianity. While Christian references were common, many of these referred to the Quakers' own experience of persecution in seventeenth-century England. A Quaker pamphlet recounted the Doukhobors' encounter with the Russian judge.[77] The Doukhobors' avowal of their pacifism in the face of an unfriendly state had similarities with the persecution of Quakers in seventeenth-century England, a comparison which Ashworth made explicit and which would have been apparent to any Quaker: 'The history of the Doukhobors brings home to members of the Society of Friends what our forefathers suffered in the days of George Fox, in the time of the Irish rebellion, and during the American War.'[78] The Doukhobors' steadfast refusal to meet the demands of the state seemed to echo Quaker history again when they kept on their hats for the governor's visit, choosing to greet him in their 'own Christian manner' in a way reminiscent of the Quakers' famous refusal of 'hat honour'.[79] Without a positive view of English Dissent, the Doukhobors no longer appeared praiseworthy. *The Times* put it thus:

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[73] Vladimir Cherktov, Pavel Birukov and Ivan Tregubov, *Appeal for Help* (London, 1897).

[74] Chertkov and Tolstoy, pp. 36–37. These rules included 'by the word "God" they understand,—the power of love, the power of life which is the source of all that exists.'

[75] See also the descriptions of Chertkov and other supporters, who had to suffer exile for their stance. John Bellows and Elizabeth Bellows, *John Bellows: Letters and Memoir* (London, 1904), pp. 321–323.

[76] Luc Boltanski and Graham Burchell, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[77] John Ashworth, "The Doukhobortsy and religious persecution in Russia: Lecture to Manchester Quaker Meeting, 1900," *MS Box 02/1*, FHL.

[78] John Ashworth, *Doukhobor Appeal Pamphlet*, Doukhobor Folder, Friends' House Library, p. 206.

> They are doubtless sincere fanatics, and as such must be looked upon with a mixture of pity and respect; but to speak of them, as COUNT TOLSTOY does, as the victims of religious intolerance betrays a complete misapprehension of the rightful limits of religious freedom.[80]

Some Quakers looked at the Doukhobors' actions as an exemplar of courage for their own fight against militarism. With the Boer War and imperial jingoism in mind, Ashworth put the question, 'What should we do under similar circumstances?' at a time when 'militarism is apparently becoming rampant.'[81] Such comparisons were frequent in Quaker thinking. Edmund Wright Brooks made the case for the Doukhobors in terms that would resonate with Quakerism and with Protestant history more widely:

> Probably since the persecution and slaughter of the Huguenots, two centuries ago, there has been no instance of such cruel, such relentless persecution, as that directed against this harmless and industrious community. As France in that day drove out tens of thousands of the best of her sons and daughters, so does the Russian government today cast off and trample under foot thousands of its worthiest peasant subjects; whilst the former were victims of relentless and triumphant priestcraft, the latter are devoured by insatiable militarism.[82]

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[79] Woodcock and Avakumovic, p. 102.

[80] Editorial, *The Times*, 23 October 1895, p. 9.

[81] John Ashworth, 'The Doukhobortsy and religious persecution in Russia: Lecture to Manchester Quaker Meeting, 1900', *MS Box 02/1*, FHL.

[82] 'Correspondence', *The British Friend*, September 1898, p. 245. The Huguenots were widely perceived as 'the ideal refugees': Shaw, p. 222.

Quakers resisting the First World War would indeed draw on examples of early Quakers.[83] The Doukhobors were, then, attractive not just for their suffering for an abstract principle, but because they resonated with particular understandings of religious freedom and political change as understood by British Quakers. Support for the Doukhobors went hand-in-hand with questioning British militarism. It also served to emphasise the power of religious conviction at a time when young Quakers may have been tempted to politics or social work. Quaker motivations were thus similar to those of Tolstoyans in supporting a radical form of Christianity, but derived from a particular nonconformist experience of British history, more than Tolstoy's Christian anarchism.

A 'broad humanitarian appeal' was made by the friends of the Doukhobors.[84] *Free Russia*, focused on the 'blood-curdling' 'atrocities perpetrated on the Doukhobotzi' and likening their troubles to those of arrested strikers and students. In this account, denouncing the authorities for their violation of freedom of conscience was more important than praising the Christian endurance and good nature of the Doukhobors.[85] Can we locate this episode in the history of human rights? It seems reasonable to categorise the Doukhobors' and their supporters' grievances against the Russian government under the heading of 'freedom of conscience'. Most British Quakers would have strongly approved of such freedoms, and some would have campaigned for them in one form or another. However, as Martin Ceadel argues:

> The earliest pacifists talked a language of godliness rather than of rights, and derived their refusal of military service from their distinctive vocations as Quakers, Mennonites or the like, and not from their status as Christians let alone human beings.[86]

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[83] Thomas C. Kennedy, *British Quakerism, 1860–1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 357–358. Later war resisters invoked the true spirit of primitive Christianity. For historical examples of conscientious objection, see also Corder Catchpool, *On Two Fronts: Letters of a Conscientious Objector*, 3rd edn (London, Allen & Unwin: 1940). pp. 131–133. Catchpool used the example of imprisoned Quaker ancestors, p. 146.

[84] Alston, '«A Great Host of Sympathisers»: The Doukhobor Emigration and Its International Supporters, 1895–1905', p. 211.

[85] 'Something Must be Done', *Free Russia*, 1 March 1897, p. 1.

[86] Martin Ceadel, 'The Peace Movement and Human Rights', in Pamela Slotte and Miia Halme-Tuomisaari, eds., *Revisiting the Origins of Human Rights* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 189–205 (p. 198).

Indeed, when the Mennonites in the 1870s and the Doukhobors in the 1890s were granted citizenship in Canada both groups were exempted from any military service other Canadians might have to undertake. This exception was grounded in the religious beliefs of the two groups, as well as their and the Quakers' reputations as hard workers and good citizens, rather than a wider 'right' to refuse to obey the state. Quakers expressed hope in the Christian example of the Doukhobors, but in terms of practical politics they favoured a negotiated and relative settlement, and were therefore more like 'liberties' than rights.[87] The campaign is consistent in many respects with the Quakers' history of campaigning on behalf of other pacifist or persecuted sects, such as the Mennonites or Norwegian Quakers, throughout the century, rather than a rights campaign.[88]

Where the campaign diverged from earlier Quaker efforts was in the way it amplified the pacifist message. Russia, as was shown in the previous chapter, was a site for the demonstration of pacific principles. An 1899 issue of the *Friend* centred on Russia. In contrast to the aggressive stance of *Free Russia*, it offered a more moralistic analysis of the changes in Russia. Notably, it put more faith in the Tsar's positive effect, as opposed to revolutionaries or reformers. The language of the editorial was religious and somewhat passive: 'Faithful sowing beside many waters, looking heavenward for the fructifying showers and the vivifying breezes, brings in its own good time, "in due season," to use the apostolic phrase, the harvesting of truth.' The role of the Emperor, 'the forcible teaching of the modern prophet of Russia, Count Tolstoy', 'the faithful stand of the Spirit-wrestlers', and the calls of pacifists and humanitarians were considered alongside more hard-headed factors such as the expense of armaments for a poor country like Russia. It concluded that churches ought to work by 'showing sympathy with any movement which has for its object the promotion of Peace.'[89]

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[87] Hoffmann suggests that 'rights that were supposed to hold for all humankind were as rare in international law as they were in constitutions of the era', arguing that civil and social, rather than human, rights, along with the term 'liberties', were used more often. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, 'Introduction: Genealogies of Human Rights', in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 1–26 (p. 7).

[88] In the Victorian period, they were somewhat 'aloof' from political Dissent, although Quakers naturally did support religious freedom. Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 197–200. Also, compare this advocacy with Amnesty's policy of balancing their advocacy between the capitalist, communist and third worlds in order to be seen as promoting universal rights rather than sectarian interest. Stephen Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International*, 1. publ. (London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

Both the methods and the ends of the religiously inspired humanitarians differed from secular ideals. The principle of 'humanity' and the amelioration of suffering were secondary to religious goals.[90] Tolstoy provides a clear example of this line of thought. He had been writing letters to the Doukhobors' leader, Peter Verigin, for a couple of years. Discussing the possibility of emigration Verigin asserted that he was '*almost* positively against *emigration*' as spiritual self-perfection, rather than the preservation of a particular community, should be his aim.[91] Tolstoy agreed, but demurred: 'I who live in freedom and under all the best conditions find it awkward to tell people who are suffering: keep on suffering, keep holding on…it is sad that people have not help on to the end and thereby helped other people to know the truth, since nothing testifies to the truth more than the sufferings that one must bear for it.'[92] Suffering was not something simply to be eradicated, as for humanitarians, but rather a step towards Christian truth. The clerk of the Friends' Doukhobor Committee also stressed the importance of disseminating Christian values through the Doukhobors:

> The emigration cannot fail to bring the testimony against war before the world in a new form. Comparatively few even of those who are Christians can really sympathise with it; but all can understand and may be influenced in measure by the object lesson summed up in the words—how these Christians love one another.[93]

The mixing of Christianity with humanitarianism carried dangers, however. As shown in Chap. 2, Christians worried that the organisation and adulation involved in charity work could overwhelm the genuine motivations of those who began the work. John Bellows, who had worked in the Quakers' Franco–Prussian war relief amongst other projects, but sought to maintain the testimonies of conservative Quakerism, worried that:

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[89] 'Editorial: The Tsar's Peace Manifesto', *The Friend*, 7 October 1898.

[90] Dan Weinbren, 'Against All Cruelty: The Humanitarian League, 1891–1919', *History Workshop Journal*, 1994, pp. 86–105.

[91] 'Peter Veregin to Lev Tolstoy 16 August 1898', in Tolstoy, Donskov, and Woodsworth, *Leo Tolstoy and Russian Peasant Sectarian Writers*, p. 214.

[92] 'Lev Tolstoy to Peter Veregin, 1 November 1898', in Ibid.

[93] Bellows and Bellows, p. 232. Incidentally, Bellows was not a pacifist himself in that he supported the British in the Boer War.

> so far indeed is the busy 'philanthropic' working which is now so popular from being a necessary accompaniment of a healthy religious life, either in an individual or a society, that it but too often marks a stage of decline from all that constitutes real life and power, and too often it is secretly, but unmistakably, leaned upon as an easy means of compromising for the neglect of closer and weightier duty.[94]

Indeed, a persistent tension is evident throughout the long passage of Quaker humanitarianism, between practices of direct inspiration and the Quakers' identification as a religious group, on the one hand, and the pull of humanitarian work, on the other.[95]

The Doukhobor campaign may, then, have taken many of the forms of a humanitarian campaign—humanitarian narratives, publicity, fundraising, and so on—but it was driven by religious ideals that these features threatened. The similarities between the campaign and many secular humanitarian and human rights campaigns should not obscure the fact that for many, Quakers and Tolstoyans, it was a very particular affinity with the Russian sect, more than the violation of a universal principle, that drove the campaign. Given this, and the Quakers' need to maintain their religious identity, the group's work on this explicitly Christian cause, alongside Tolstoyans, clearly had several functions. The work came from the longstanding (at least since the formation of the 'Continental Committee' in the 1810s) Quaker practice of defending their co-religionists abroad, but can also be understood as a decision to work on a Christian cause, popularised by the Tolstoyans, at a time when there were an increasing number of potential causes, inside and outside the Society, in which Quakers might take part. The fact that Quakers and Tolstoyans diverged both from each other and secular humanitarianism shows that the campaign did not merely reflect Quaker beliefs, but was produced from a mix of Tolstoyan enthusiasm, humanitarian techniques, and Quaker traditions. It was not, then, knowledge of Doukhobor suffering, as much as its ability to be linked with existing practices and interests, which brought about the campaign.

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[94] Bellows and Bellows, pp. 17–18.

[95] In 1949, Roger C. Wilson wrote: 'the Society is not a relief organization… In the light of its Christian experience, the Society has certain "testimonies" to proclaim about the nature of human relationships under the authority of God' and that 'corporate action in the Society is rooted in Worship and not in debate or philosophical analysis or social synthesis.' Roger Cowan Wilson, *Authority, Leadership, and Concern: A Study in Motive and Administration in Quaker Relief Work* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1949), pp. 12–13.

Conclusion

Like the famine relief in 1891–1892, aid to Russia's Jews and dissenting Christians was tied up with broader anti-tsarist discourses. Underlying both the famine relief and the efforts to help Jews and Doukhobors were liberal notions of modernisation. When British periodicals talked about the suppression of Russia's Stundists or Doukhobors, they often equated this with the suppression of Russia's social, economic and political energies more widely. Many even saw the dissenters as agents of progress whose intelligence, honesty and work ethic would help lift Russia from its lethargy. But if both these humanitarianism problems had shared ideological underpinnings, they diverged in the type of support they could generate. Whereas the liberal press and that of the Russian opposition supported both causes, the centre of gravity in campaigns for Jews, Stundists and Doukhobors was tilted heavily towards religious groups. These groups all advocated freedom of religion, even if their support did tend to focus on their co-religionists. Support for Jews in the Russian Empire was particularly fragile, with immigration was increasingly restricted so that even the traditional leaders of Anglo-Jewry worked to limit the number of Jews entering Britain. The suffering of Russia's non-Orthodox citizens stimulated a lively series of pamphlets, meetings, books, deputations and advocacy, but this humanitarian view only translated into definite support in conjunction with other interests and motivations.

The Doukhobors relied on a number of strands of support, the motivations for which were distinct and particular, and not wholly comprehensible through purely humanitarian categories. Analysing the terms of the Quaker support demonstrates how the humanitarian campaign depended on non-humanitarian interests. The case raised the question of liberty of conscience, for instance, but it was raised in the way it was because of the traditions of Quakers, and the repertoire of Quaker activism—which in Quaker terms would be called 'testimony' or 'concern'—and the church's position in British society. It therefore shows how humanitarian causes are selected based on existing practices and a need to position the humanitarians relative to a broader spectrum of ideology (here religion), rather than purely as a response to an abstract 'sympathy'. The Quakers were not prompted to offer solidarity by a case of human suffering per se. Rather, they were attracted by Christian suffering for principles (testimonies) that they recognised. Furthermore, the Doukhobor case, highlighted by Tolstoyism, but carried out in a Quaker way, highlights the importance of Quaker practices in shaping their activism. The selection of 'causes' by Quakers required either an obvious connection to Quakerism or a fit with the tradition of activism. Partly this was a way to maintain the religion in the face of secularising tendencies in liberal society. If the Quakers tilted their attention too far towards humanitarian work, without any genuine religious connection, then the survival of the Society would be threatened. Seen in this way, the maintenance of specifically religious practices was not a relic, but central to Quakerism, just as much as the more familiar aspects of their humanitarian work. Quaker humanitarianism was, then, a specialisation, shaped by the social and ideological position of the church, not simply an instance of universal ideas applied locally. A tension between existing Quaker corporate practices—whether this meant restraint in criticising foreign governments or reluctance to endorse missionary work, for example—and the wide range of options and interests of individual Quakers, which may well have included un-Quakerly activism, was a potential source of tension. The Society participated in the Doukhobor campaign because it fitted with their interests and customs, but the campaign as a whole used a wider range of techniques, and often employed a more strident tone than the Quakers' traditional discreet petitioning. Such participation therefore had the potential to subtly change the orientation of the Quakers, even if it was based on their own traditional practices. That religious groups sought to intervene in Russia in this way demonstrates not just a response to Russia's illiberalism, but also the growing potency of humanitarian methods in articulating a variety of principles and interests. Such methods were always contested, however: too great a push to alleviate the suffering of Russia's Jews could undermine 'British tolerance', while too much 'worldly' charity work might shake the Quakers' religious foundations.

Humanitarian Sympathy and National Liberation

Two generations of the best and most talented youth of Russia – let the reader ponder what ‘two generations’ mean – have been sacrificed outright. The prosecution of every gifted boy and girl in the school, and it always ended either in imprisonment and exile, or in the life of a ‘spotted suspect.’ How few, and at what sacrifice, have survived the systematic weeding out of the best forces of Russia.[1]

Peter Kropotkin

The children wanted very much to show how kindly they felt to this man who had been sent to prison and to Siberia just for writing a beautiful book about poor people.

E. Nesbit (The Railway Children)

It marked, indeed, a distinct stage in the development of humanitarian and internationalist sentiment in this country… The extraordinary manifestations of respect and sympathy with which the news of the fatal accident to the eminent exile has been received constituted a very unpleasant blow for the Czardom, and we may guess with what gladness the Russian police would have occupied Waterloo station in London on Saturday and laid hold of scores of the troublesome agitators there assembled.[2]

Manchester Guardian (on the London funeral
of Sergey Stepniak, an exile from Russia)

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[1] Peter Kropotkin, “Condition of Russia,” *Nineteenth Century*, September 1895, p. 533.

[2] “Recollections of siepniak [sic], a correspondent,” *Manchester Guardian,* 4 January 1896.

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L. Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890–1923*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3_5

Like those who had helped the Doukhobors and relieved the famine victims, Robert Spence Watson was a practising Quaker. He was also head of the National Liberal Federation and as such was interested in various liberal causes. Emulating his mentor, Joseph Cowen MP, and the example of Giuseppe Mazzini, he believed in helping to liberate the oppressed nations of Europe. It was this that led him to take an interest in the Russian terrorist and exile Sergey Kravchinsky (Stepniak), with whom he formed the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom (SFRF) in 1890.[3] The SFRF acted as a pressure group to denounce the ills of tsarism and buttress the claims of the Russian opposition with news and statistics. Evincing an interesting mix of the humanitarian and the political, the Society saw regime change in Russia as its goal, but focused on portraying the suffering of ordinary Russians and calling for sympathy and moral support from Britain. This chapter uses the SFRF to measure the extent to which humanitarian methods were used to oppose Russian autocracy using British public opinion. While it was not unprecedented for political aims to be supported in at least partially humanitarian terms, as demonstrated by the British reaction to Mazzini, such responses were not automatic.[4] Indeed those in charge of the Friends' famine relief avoided direct criticism of the Russian state despite seeing it as a leading cause of the famine. The Russian exiles involved in the SFRF had also opposed the Russian government with assassinations as part of *Narodnaya Volya* and were therefore outside the normal range of humanitarian sympathy.[5]

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[3] The historian Bernard Pares writes that it 'consisted of very respectable Englishmen, some of them Quakers, and of Russian revolutionaries, sometimes very ferocious.' Bernard Pares, *My Russian Memoirs* (London: Cape, 1931), p. 50.

[4] Eugenio Biagini and C.A. Bayly, *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalization of Democratic Nationalism 1830–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Michael Hughes makes this comparison between Mazzini and Stepniak, and it was made repeatedly by Robert Spence Watson. Michael J. Hughes, 'British Opinion and Russian Terrorism in the 1880s', *European History Quarterly*, 41.2 (2011), pp. 255–277.

[5] The People's Will—considered by some to have invented modern terrorism. Michael Burleigh, *Blood and Rage: A Cultural History of Terrorism* (London: HarperPerennial, 2009); Steven G. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Franco Venturi, Francis Haskell, and Isaiah Berlin, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960).

The SFRF has been widely analysed by a number of scholars. Barry Hollingsworth has shown the alliances on which the SFRF was based.[6] Ron Grant has looked at the organisation from the perspective of labour internationalism.[7] Donald Senese has looked at it from the perspective of Stepniak's career[8]; likewise Frederick Travis with George Kennan.[9] This work covers much of the activity of the Society, the backgrounds of its members, its changing perspectives and fault-lines. The contribution of this chapter is simply to emphasise in more detail the role of a humanitarian understanding of political problems in this context. It considers how this activity was characterised, how it derived from existing traditions, and what contribution it made to humanitarianism more generally. In this respect it rejects the perspective of Grant, and of many Russians of the time, for whom this publicity work was simply a tool to an end (revolution in Russia). While this was true for members, the SFRF's particular work of publicising atrocities, collecting sympathy and pressuring governments can nevertheless be attributed some autonomy, particularly as it fed into a pattern of similar work on foreign revolutions and civil rights. This appeal may not have been successful earlier in time, and it was more persuasive to some observers than others, making it a distinct, but not unprecedented, way of engaging with foreign countries' problems.

The enterprise raises questions about the role of humanitarianism relative to other spheres of activity. The primary goal of those involved was political (reform of the Russian state along liberal lines). That humanitarian methods were used says something about the currency of humanitarianism, both in general understandings of the world—the roles of suffering, sympathy and public opinion in defining nation-states and historical progress[10]—and as a tactic for those advocating reform or revolution in Russia. While Russian autocracy could be denounced purely in terms of justice and legitimacy, that critics increasing invoked the suffering it inflicted on ordinary Russians shows us how humanitarianism increasingly permeated liberal discourse. For many nihilists humanitarian responses were more often than not seen tactically, as secondary to a 'real struggle'. From the perspective of the English actors, this political engagement was also problematic as the Russian opposition they were helping openly advocated violent methods against the Tsar. Humanitarianism is therefore seen here as a compromise between direct intervention as practised by the Russian opposition and indifference to the cause of Russian reform.

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[6] Barry Hollingsworth, 'The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom: English Liberals and Russian Socialists, 1890–1917,' *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 3 (1970).

[7] Ron Grant, 'The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom (1890–1917), A Case Study in Internationalism,' *Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society* 3 (1970): pp. 3–24.

[8] Donald J. Senese, *S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, the London Years* (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1987).

[9] Frederick F. Travis, *George Kennan and the American-Russian Relationship, 1865–1924* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990).

Seen by another logic, however, it was part of a coherent worldview of democratic change, enacted through incipient international organisations, civil rights' protection and activist networks.[11] This liberal internationalist worldview transferred relatively easily to Russia, where an archaic state was believed to be crippling a potentially free people. Many of the Russian exiles in London would complain that their crimes consisted of acts that would have been legal elsewhere, such as distributing pamphlets. The denunciation of Russian autocracy mobilised humanitarian tropes as much as political ones.

Denouncing Autocracy

The SFRF tapped into an existing store of liberal, anti-autocratic sentiment. The warm reception of exiles relied equally on the exiles' own appeal and on liberals' dislike of Russian autocracy, fostered by journalism. The American George Kennan, who first went to Russia as an engineer, published articles on Siberian prisons, then a book, before lecturing widely on the subject.[12] His work on the Siberian exile system was perhaps the most famous criticism of Russian institutions at the time. It opened out onto a more general criticism of autocracy's bureaucratic processes. Following Kennan's work, a small lexicon including 'autocracy', 'chinovnik', 'ispravnik', and 'administrative exile' proliferated in reports about the Russian state.[13] The repressive apparatus of autocracy was not an organic expression of Russian wishes and Kennan noted, for example, that 'Russian officials and political exiles are often secretly in sympathy' (they were often related).[14] Characterisations of Russia as a police state were quite common. Kennard, the doctor who delivered famine relief in 1907, stated that Russia's young were 'being fed on nothing but police laws…schools have been closed, teachers imprisoned.'[15] Writing in the *Fortnightly Review* after Russia's 1905 revolution, Joseph Conrad, no friend of the terrorists, was particularly scathing about the 'curse' or 'phantom' of autocracy, claiming that it was like neither an Eastern despotism nor a Western nation and had no connection to the customs or traditions of its people:

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[10] Didier Fassin and Rachel Gomme, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present Times* (London: University of California Press, 2012), p. 248.

[11] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880–1930: Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[12] Travis, *George Kennan and the American-Russian Relationship, 1865–1924.*

> Russian autocracy succeeded to nothing; it had no historical past, and it cannot hope for a historical future… By no industry of investigation, by no fantastic stretch of benevolence, can it be presented as a phase of development through which a Society, a State, must pass on its way to the full consciousness of its destiny.[16]

But while the picture of Russian failings was widespread, such images did not guarantee support for the deposition of the autocracy or the views of the Russian opposition.

The suffering of the Russian people was not a 'humanitarian narrative' in the same way autopsies and parliamentary enquiries were, as it was not obviously rectifiable by campaigns and charity.[17] The co-ordinates of Russia's despotism had to be adjusted to separate oppressed from oppressor and to shift the problem from one of long-term backwardness to short-term political failings.[18] Detailed institutional critiques of prisons and government policy showed how structural flaws affected individuals and went some way to translating historical understandings of despotism into rectifiable humanitarian problems. To pity a whole people was harder as the causes of oppression were multiple, especially since Russians were seen to be less civilised and, aside from their Christianity, to have less in common with Western Europeans. The internationalist Gilbert Murray, in a letter to an SFRF member, argued that 'pity varies not directly with the amount of oppression, but with the proportion between the actual oppression known and people's expectations of oppression.'[19] This view, if taken further, could see Russia's problems ignored as the natural consequence of a backwards country. A clear link between suffering, its cause, and the potential to ameliorate it, was therefore required. Imprisoned nihilists relied upon the idea that their ends were reasonable enough to justify their means. If they were seen as fanatics, then the idea that some form of civil right was being violated would have less weight.

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[13] 'Chinovnik' and 'ispravnik' are terms for Russian officials, and administrative exile was the process of sending political prisoners to Siberia.

[14] George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System* (London, 1891), pp. 25–26, 39; See also 'A Woman Stundist,' *Woman's Signal*, 23 May 1895.

[15] Howard Percy Kennard, *The Russian Peasant* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1907), p. 245.

[16] Joseph Conrad, 'Autocracy and War [From the Fortnightly Review, 1905],' in *Collected Edition, Notes on Life And Letters* (London: Dent, 1949), p. 97.

[17] Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative,' in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 176–204.

The SFRF sought to portray the cause of Russian freedom on a human scale. An article on the Yakutsk atrocity in the first issue of *Free Russia* finished by quoting the letters of the executed prisoners:

> [they] died as it is given to die only to men whose souls were filled with one great love, which purified them from all selfish and petty thoughts and proved "stronger than death and the fear of death"…it shows what moral strength is hidden in the heart of young Russia and at what price the present bureaucratic despotism is maintained.[20]

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[18] Martin Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 26. In the eighteenth century, Russia had been considered civilised by the West because civilisation was understood as the manners of the elite, while the peasants were thought to be in a similar condition everywhere.

[19] Gilbert Murray, 'letter to H.N. Brailsford [an SFRF member],' 5 September 1905, GB 394/HNB 4, *The Papers of H.N. Brailsford*, LHA.

[20] 'Siberian Atrocities: The Yakutsk Massacre: Refutation in the Foreign Press,' *Free Russia*, June 1890, p. 2.

The journal thereby tried to leverage this specific case into a more general critique of the autocracy. The émigré Felix Volkhovsky, whose escape from a Russian prison was aided by Kennan, argued, with respect to his own imprisonment, that 'the Russian police changed, by unjust punishments, a youth with ordinary Liberal sympathies into a secret conspirator and revolutionary.'[21] Few doubted the veracity of these eyewitness accounts, rather debates centred on the size and representativeness of these 'oppressed' classes. For Kropotkin, writing after the famine, it was a 'class of reformers', who were 'not socialists' and 'certainly not revolutionists', being repressed.[22] The government's use of extra-legal methods meant that

> Two generations of the best and most talented youth of Russia – let the reader ponder what 'two generations' mean – have been sacrificed outright. The prosecution of every gifted boy and girl in the school, and it always ended either in imprisonment and exile, or in the life of a 'spotted suspect.' How few, and at what sacrifice, have survived the systematic weeding out of the best forces of Russia.[23]

James Simpson, a professor of natural science writing for the conservative *Blackwood's Magazine*, gave a more mixed account of the situation. He argued that the condition of political prisoners or life in Siberia was not as bad as people like Kennan said and that terrorists mostly regretted what they had done. While agreeing that Russia had problems, including an arbitrary legal system, he asked of the nihilists: 'But how they could ever have imagined that they were the men to set Russia right passes one's comprehension.' He said that the SFRF 'can only rightly rouse the same feeling—it need not be described—in Russia as the existence in that country of a Society of Friends of Irish Freedom would in ours.' The main problem was the backwardness of Russian society.[24] Rather than seeing the opposition as the coming 'class', Simpson used Turgenev's more personal *Fathers and Sons* metaphor, wherein the nihilists were merely enthusiastic but immature 'sons'.

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[21] Felix Volkhovsky, 'My Life in Russian Prisons,' *Fortnightly Review*, November 1890, p. 784.

[22] Peter Kropotkin, 'the Present Condition of Russia,' *Nineteenth Century*, September 1895, p. 525.

[23] Kropotkin, 'Condition of Russia,' p. 533.

[24] James Simpson, 'The Political Prison in Siberia,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, September 1897, pp. 343–344. Liberals generally did not compare the Russian opposition to Irish nationalists, but often argued that illiberal measures from government bred secret and violent societies. H.H. Asquith, for example, in arguing against a more

While most commentators roughly agreed that Russia was backward or despotic, the cause of this backwardness remained debatable. Emile Dillon worked as a journalist at the liberal *Odessky Vestnik*, the *Daily Telegraph, Fortnightly Review* and other periodicals.[25] He argued that autocracy's 'demoralizing' effects ran much deeper into the consciousness of the nation than other writers, emphasising the autonomy and wholesomeness of the *mir* and peasant traditions, suggested. No political, cultural or social institution had significant roots in Russia, meaning that the removal of the government would not necessarily improve the country:

> It needs but a word from his Majesty and tom-morrow [sic] eighty millions of his subjects would unhesitatingly renounce Orthodoxy for shamanism, autocracy for republicanism, and trial by judges for ordeals and the judgement of God.[26]

Conrad, writing after the 1905 revolution, agreed with Dillon on the limited scope for progress, arguing that Western thought became a 'noxious parody of herself' in Russia's 'atmosphere of despotism'.

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stringent Criminal Law in Ireland, put it that 'There had been in Ireland and elsewhere secret societies such as the Fenian Brotherhood, the Carbonari in Italy, the Ku-Klux-Klan in the Southern States of America, and the Nihilists in Russia; but these secret societies …had drawn the vitality which enabled them to tyrranize over and terrorize the people by such a policy as the Government were now asking the House to adopt… Once suspend [sic] the guarantees of the Constitution, and take away from the people the privilege of free criticism and of legitimate political agitation, and the consequence was to drive them to those sinister and subterranean methods, which wore destructive of peace and prosperity in every country in which they should exist.' H.C. December 24 March 1887, Vol. 312, cols 1396. Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System,* pp. 25–26, 39; See also 'A Woman Stundist,' Woman's Signal, 23 May 1895.

[25] Joseph O. Baylen, 'Dillon, Emile Joseph (1854–1933)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32828, accessed 4 September 2012).

[26] Emile Joseph Dillon, *Russian Characteristics* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ld., 1892), p. 42.

Presumably this included his view of the Russian nihilists as well as the liberal measures of the government. The consequence was that any revolution could only be ‘a rising of slaves’.[27]

It was a more optimistic version of this line of thought that led the journalist W.T. Stead, otherwise a liberal, to support the Tsar. He argued that because of Russia’s demography and particular institutions, it needed ‘government of the flock.’[28] His *Truth about Russia* (1888) and articles in the *Review of Reviews* were perhaps the most prominent ‘pro-tsarist’ viewpoint at the time. This was partly because Stead got the first interview with the Tsar through Olga Novikova, who propagandised for the Pan-Slavist cause in Britain. However, it is noteworthy that Novikova appealed to humanitarian justifications as much as opponents of the Tsar, by encouraging the famine relief efforts in 1891–1892 (and setting up her own fund) and the Hague Peace Congress in 1898, and emphasising that this philanthropy had no ulterior motives.[29] Her main argument was cultural: ‘let us faithfully cling to Russian particularities—“oddities” if you like—and only develop reforms, the germ of which lies in our history, our traditions, and our character.’[30] She was supported by James Froude and Thomas Carlyle in her views about Russia.[31] Still, Novikova was perhaps most effective not for her ideas on Russia in themselves (there were few British supporters of autocracy for its own sake), but rather when her ideas could be used in conjunction with Gladstone’s support of Russia in the debate surrounding the Bulgarian massacres.[32]

Stead secured the first personal interview with the Tsar with the aim of seeing ‘at first hand what manner of man he was and what was the policy he intended to pursue.’[33] Perhaps because of the personal focus of this type of reporting, with which he had become very popular,

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[27] Conrad, ‘Autocracy and War’.

[28] W.T. Stead, *Truth About Russia* (London: Cassell, 1888), p. 175.

[29] Olga Alexsieevna Novikova and W.T. Stead, *The M.P. for Russia: Reminiscences & Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1909), pp. 291, 396.

[30] Ibid., 320.

[31] Ibid., 294.

[32] Ibid., 56. Although there was a small current of English slavophilism: Michael Hughes, ‘The English Slavophile: W.J. Birkbeck and Russia’, *Slavonic & East European Review*, 82.3 (2004), pp. 680–706.

[33] Novikova and Stead, *The M.P. for Russia*, p. 236.

Stead looked favourably on the Tsar.[34] He was competing with people like Dillon (with whom he disputed the copyright to Tolstoy's work, for example) to provide a plausible account of Russia. In his eyes the threat to Russia was the 'encroachment of the bureaucratic machine', which he saw as being separate from the good-hearted Tsar. He disagreed with *Free Russia* on the capabilities and relative importance of the peasantry and the liberal elements in the country, arguing that educated 'public opinion' was no real force in Russia, and that while liberals were insignificant, slavophiles were in harmony with the country's development.[35] Nevertheless, he argued for freedom of the press, association, religion and habeas corpus,[36] and by 1905 at least was somewhat wary of personal rule, saying to the Tsar, 'And if you did lose your temper, half a million men would find a bloody grave before you regained it.'[37] Indeed, few saw the Tsar as a despot. Alongside the monarchist sentiment directed at the Tsar as a relative of the British royals,[38] most saw bureaucracy (corruption, inefficiency) as more of a problem than personal despotism.

The more radical *Free Russia* used the expensive coronation of Tsar Nicholas II as an occasion to refute the view that Russia's backwardness necessitated paternalistic policies:

> Everybody understands that this is one of those unique opportunities for reciprocal confidence and good feeling between the monarch and the nation, and every Russian Tzar professes to understand the reciprocity by proclaiming a manifesto, in which he is expected to understand the beating of the popular heart, and to meet the most ardent wishes of the country whether plainly outspoken or only hinted.

Instead, 'having to choose between the people and the bureaucracy, he has again chosen bureaucracy.'[39] The journal was already contrasting the extravagance of the ceremony with the poverty of the peasants who paid for it, before thousands were crushed at an alms-giving on Khodynka field in celebration of the coronation. According to its own summary of the British press coverage of the coronation, this was a fairly typical view.[40] Aylmer Maude, a translator of Lev Tolstoy writing for the Tolstoyan Christian Brotherhood press, cited John Stuart Mill and a number of Christians to contrast the expense of the ceremony with the poverty of the people following what he called the 'Khodinka massacre'.[41] *Free Russia* argued that if the foreign press had not been invited, it might not be known about and called it 'a holocaust which was to cover them with disgrace and black out all their splendid pageantry.'[42] However, later analysis argues that 'Rumours and popular sayings circulated throughout Russia attesting the weakness and selfish disdain of the tsar, the incompetence of the autocratic regime and the horror of the crush.'[43] Nicholas was criticised for going to a ball that night.[44] The SFRF also sought to make visits of the Tsar abroad the subject of protests, including one to Caxton Hall on 28 July 1909, where a 'resolution of protest was adopted unanimously'.[45]

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[34] Stead, *Truth About Russia*, p. 121.

[35] Ibid., p. 97.

[36] Joseph O. Baylen, *The Tsar's 'Lecturer-General': W.T. Stead and the Russian Revolution of 1905* (Atlanta: [School of Arts and Sciences, Georgia State College], 1969).

[37] Novikova and Stead, *The M.P. for Russia*, 247.

[38] Hughes, 'British Opinion and Russian Terrorism in the 1880s.'

[39] Felix Volkhovsky, 'The Skeleton of Autocracy: The coronation manifesto,' *Free Russia*, June 1896, pp. 47–48.

Nihilism and the Other Russia

While Stead's view of the peasantry's conservatism and backwardness was not uncommon, many saw more positive signs in Russian people and institutions. Scholarship of the time drew strong parallels between Russian peasant organisations and medieval English villages.[46] The pages of the opposition paper *Free Russia* (1890–1915) were filled with stories, reports and statistics demonstrating the good sense and morality of the 'other Russia': its peasants, educated classes and everyone not part of the bureaucracy or the government. The popularity of Russian literature, which began to be translated into English in the period, also served to make Russians intelligible to Westerners.[47] Indeed, as Carol Peaker shows, both *Free Russia* and the *Anglo-Russian* (a more religiously-based and less successful Russian opposition paper), focused on Russian literature and peasant culture.[48] That Russian authors were seen in the same terms as English authors and without condescension, allowed identification with the social and political conditions of Russia.[49] Literature and scholarship thereby facilitated a number of affinities, real and imagined, between the two countries.

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[40] 'Meantime, the pessimists are counting the millions which the Russian peasant has to provide for the occassion.' *Free Russia*, May 1896, p. 42; Helen Baker, 'Monarchy Discredited? Reactions to the Khodynka Coronation Catastrophe of 1896,' *Revolutionary Russia* 16, no. 1 (2003): p. 4.

[41] Alymer Maude, *The Tsar's Coronation as seen by 'De Monte Alto' Resident in Moscow* (London: Brotherhood Publishing Company, 1896).

[42] 'At Moscow: The English Press on the Coronation and the Disaster,' *Free Russia*, July 1896, p. 60.

[43] Baker, 'Monarchy Discredited? Reactions to the Khodynka Coronation Catastrophe of 1896.'

[44] Ibid., pp. 16–22.

[45] 'The Tzar's Visit to England,' *Free Russia*, September 1909, p. 12.

[46] Peter Gatrell, 'Historians and Peasants: Studies of Medieval English Society in a Russian Context,' *Past and Present* 96, no. 1 (1982): pp. 22–50.

'Nihilist' exiles in London were the most vivid and tangible example of this other Russia, and its sufferings, in British debates. The debate over autocracy was not therefore purely academic, but one that revolved, in part, around friendships and government policy towards free speech. Support began at the negative level of tolerating the exiles' presence and not extraditing, ranging through funds and logistical support for escape and return, to critiques of the oppression that necessitated their exile, and finally coming in the form of propagation of the exiles' views.[50] In the main, support from the British state and public opinion settled on the lowest common denominator of supporting their civil and political rights. Although refusing to pay for weapons for nihilists,[51] Spence Watson nevertheless supported them at several removes: through public sympathy and more concretely as political exiles. To the extent that the SFRF focused on the suppression of their capabilities and aspirations, they were a humanitarian problem, although this cannot be separated from the political dimensions.

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[47] Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, p. 194. Turgenev was translated in the 1850s, and Lev Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky in the 1880s.

[48] Carol Peaker, 'We Are Not Barbarians: Literature and the Russian Emigre Press in England, 1890–1905,' *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 3 (2006).

[49] Matthew Arnold, 'Count Leo Tolstoy,' *Fortnightly Review*, December 1887, p. 783: 'The Russian novel now has the vogue, and deserves to have it.'

[50] The idea of an SFRF was initially developed with Annie Besant and George Bernard Shaw. Susan Hinely, 'Charlotte Wilson, the "Woman Question," and the Meanings of Anarchist Socialism in Late Victorian Radicalism,' *International Journal of Social History* 57, no. 1 (2012): pp. 3–36.

[51] Pares, *My Russian Memoirs*, p. 51.

Stepniak was, at the time, the most prominent Russian exile. He arrived in Britain in 1884 following an extradition agreement between Switzerland and Russia. Up to his death in 1895 he wrote articles in publications including '*The Times*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Daily News*, the *Fortnightly Review*, the *Contemporary Review*, *Time* and *Subjects of the Day*', and the following books in English: *Underground Russia* (1883), *The Russian Peasantry, Their Agrarian Condition, Social Life and Religion* (1888), *The Russian Stormcloud or, Russia in Her Relations to Neighbouring Countries* (1886), *The Career of a Nihilist* (1889), *King Stork and King Log: A Study of Modern Russia* (1895) and *Nihilism As It Is* (1894).[52] Perhaps his most concentrated effort in Britain for Russian reform was the SFRF and its monthly journal *Free Russia*, which he edited, and the Free Russian Press Fund.

Stepniak and Russian revolutionaries in general were identified as 'nihilists', but prior to the question of whether nihilists were a good thing or not, they were allowed into Britain by virtue of its liberal immigration policy. These exiles found roles as publishers of books, sources of news stories and facts, and participants in British politics. Much of this was not obviously political: for example, Stepniak was published in *Chums*, a children's magazine, on the subject of 'the games Russian boys play'.[53] In an article in *Free Russia*, a New England abolitionist Lillie B. Chace Wyman describes meeting Stepniak. She encountered the *mir* during 'studies into the history and methods of land tenure in different periods and countries', which led her first to Stepniak's work, then to a lecture of his in Boston. She wrote:

> Stepniak's character was based on a fundamental belief in ethics. He may have made mistakes, he may have done things which may finally be judged to be wrong during a life which was so strangely ordered and thwarted by forces that Western Europeans and Americans can hardly comprehend,

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[52] Senese, *S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky*, p. 122. He can thus be seen as an example of 'exile as a profession'. Heléna Tóth, *An Exiled Generation. German and Hungarian Refugees of Revolution, 1848–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[53] 'The Games Russian Boys Play,' *Sarah J. Young* (http://sarahjyoung.com/site/2011/10/16/the-games-russian-boys-play, accessed 16 October 2011).

> but whatever he did or thought, he did or thought under an authoritative sense of duty. He believed in the *right*.[54]

That is to say that Stepniak entered into and derived support from the milieu of middle-class philanthropy and seemingly despite his more radical beliefs. Nevertheless, Wyman seemed to be aware of Stepniak's violent deeds as she excused his violence by separating its 'ethical' source from its physical consequences.

However, when the question of violence was raised directly, it was not always considered acceptable. Olive Garnett, a minor literary figure, is indicative of the middle-class acceptance of nihilism, and its limits.[55] Her brother edited Russian novels and her sister-in-law, Constance, was one of the first translators of Turgenev and Tolstoy. Olive's diary entry for 29 December 1893 considered accusations that Stepniak had killed (see below). Believing that Stepniak had been moderated by England, but still uncomfortable with thinking about the assassination he committed, she:

> recognised the danger that lay in this attack in that it might close up or narrow the gradually opening & broadening minds of the Russians, under English influence, a result which always follows so closely upon the heels of persecution.
>
> Selfishly, I feared that I might lose "my Stepniak" – the artist-in the Stepniak I do not know, the nihilist, terrorist and —.' [ed. the word she flinched from writing was assassin or murderer][56]

A role in the literary marketplace was not the same as political respectability. Heinemann the publisher said he would prefer Henry James to Stepniak in writing the preface for a translation of Turgenev, because of the controversy surrounding the exile,[57] while the editor of the moderate-liberal *Fortnightly Review* was sacked in 1894 for printing an article by an anarchist.[58] That is, Stepniak more often than not derived his acceptability from his association with liberal images, and largely in spite of his more specific beliefs—although the line between the two was blurred. It is also worth noting that translation was still relatively expensive (or profitable). Constance Garnett, for instance, made about £350 in one good year (1895) from translations of Turgenev (9 shillings per 1000 words with a 10% royalty on sales over 2000 and six volumes published in one year, with 1/5 given to Stepniak for help with the Russian).[59] She tried to translate Chekhov's writings on the Sakhalin penal colony, but could not find a buyer.[60] There were, of course, divisions of labour and Hinely notes how the émigrés often relied on the labour of female translators.[61] Publishing therefore generated its own dynamics, to which political acceptability was only tangentially related.

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[54] Lillie B. Chace Wyman, 'A Grand Figure: Reminiscences of Stepniak,' *Free Russia*, August-October 1899, p. 67.

[55] Anat Vernitski, 'Russian Revolutionaries and English Sympathizers in 1890s London: The Case of Olive Garnett and Sergey Stepniak,' *Journal of European Studies* 35 (2005): pp. 271–282.

[56] 'Letter of december 29 1893' in Olive Garnett and Barry Cornish Johnson, *Olive & Stepniak: The Bloomsbury Diary of Olive Garnett 1893–1895* (Birmingham: Bartletts, 1993), p. 240.

While Stepniak did not have to win permission to enter the country, and there were no calls for his extradition, the broader categories of political asylum and immigration were debated at this time, culminating in the Aliens' Act of 1905. The success or failure of Stepniak's attempts to win popular support could be said to have hinged on the oscillation between his image as a liberal revolutionary, like Mazzini, and that of a terrorist. Often these lines ran parallel to each other: supporting Stepniak and his cause in the press in most cases entailed no conflict or contact with British immigration law, just as supporting the existing liberal asylum law entailed no specific support of those revolutionaries who availed themselves of it. In a small number of cases the two overlapped. This was partly because of Russian police pressure on the British government over Russian exiles in London (the Russian exile Vladimir Burtsev and the liberal journalist H.N. Brailsford were both tried under British law for offences related to their agitation on internal Russian issues). Within the SFRF, debates on arming the Russian opposition and funding exiles also touched on legal questions. More widely, the anarchist threat of the 1890s led to the Rome International Anti-Anarchist Conference on anarchism in 1898 and the St Petersburg accord of 1904. The moral status of nihilism was not directly connected to the legal status of its proponents.

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[57] Ibid., p. 236.

[58] John Mason, 'Monthly and Quarterly Reviews, 1865–1914,' in *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, eds. David George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), p. 285.

[59] Richard Garnett, *Constance Garnett: A Heroic Life* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991).

[60] Ibid.

[61] Hinely, 'Charlotte Wilson, the 'Woman Question,' and the Meanings of Anarchist Socialism in Late Victorian Radicalism.'

Stepniak's time in Britain was largely untroubled by the authorities (except being followed by Russian agents), but his status was nevertheless debated. More often than not Stepniak was known as a Russian 'nihilist', a common but slippery term. A considerable number of novels and newspaper articles focused on the figure of the nihilist (often conflated with anarchists or socialists) at this time. The central question, according to Melchiori, was 'What kind of man was he?' She argues that the nihilist novel was sympathetic to its subject (unlike the attitude to Fenian terrorists) and that this was not from any sympathy with their ideas, 'but deriving rather from the fact that Russian interests in Afghanistan conflicted with British interests in the area… The Nihilists were welcome in so far as they were making life difficult for the Czar, a potential enemy for England and a threat to British India.'[62] This analysis is unconvincing in that it does not properly connect the interests of the readers and writers of these novels with British interests at the level of intention, and so does not show that these portrayals were anything other than entertainment. That is, although aimed at the inner man, these portrayals were nevertheless not necessarily political in intention (either for or against the nihilist). Further, by reducing all interest in the nihilists to a conception of British national interest, it neglects the particular intellectual and political affinities that allowed nihilists to be supported by those in the SFRF, for example.

That 'nihilism' was accepted by English supporters of Stepniak or the press did not mean that Stepniak's or even the SFRF's specific goals would be supported, since the nihilism accepted by the press was often 'liberalism', and Stepniak's politics remained to the left of this view and relatively few Britons were interested in Russian reform. Nihilism was a broad term. Not only could it apply to Tolstoy's realism (as was argued by some critics), but to terrorists or anarchists, whose freethinking led them away from tradition and authority of some sort. Nihilism in this sense was a product of rationalisation. The leading French literary critic E.M. de Vogüé's quotation from Tolstoy shows this view: 'I have lived in this world fifty-five years; with the exception of the fourteen or fifteen years of childhood, I have lived thirty-five years a Nihilist in the true sense of the word,—not a socialist or revolutionist according to the perverted sense acquired by usage.'[63] When combined with anti-autocratic sentiment, this could be blamed on Russian conditions. When transplanted into a different social or political context, such as lower-class London, it became a different type of force altogether. It is the changeable nature of nihilism, that allowed it to fit with liberal rationalism or nonconformist sacrifice, on which support for Stepniak was based.

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[62] Barbara Arnett Melchiori, *Terrorism in the Late Victorian Novel* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 187.

Stepniak sought to define himself in *Underground Russia*, the first book he published in English. In both popular understandings and Stepniak's own words, nihilism was situated between terrorism and liberalism. At first, Stepniak aimed to show how terrorism was in Russia the necessary extension of liberal 'nihilist' ideals, and a good in itself. Later, he emphasised that nihilists (implicitly thought of as terrorists) were really liberals, without denying or mentioning connections with terrorism. In *Underground Russia* (1883), he defined nihilism relative to Western frames of reference as 'a struggle for the emancipation of intelligence from every kind of dependence, [that] advanced side by side with that for the emancipation of the labouring classes from serfdom', based on 'pacific struggle' and ideas.[64] He began by mentioning Turgenev's definition of nihilist from *Fathers and Sons*.[65] He argued that 'the terrorism' was a response to the thwarting of these Western ideals of freedom, by describing the terrorist as an improved version of the earlier, unsuccessful nihilist. In *Underground Russia* he was clear on the value of 'the terrorism' in itself and claimed that foreigners did not support his cause despite the terrorist figure, but because of it (and Russian literature). The Russian revolutionary movement

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[63] Eugène-Melchior Vicomte de Vogüé, *The Russian Novelists* (1974, first published 1886), p. 211.

[64] Sergius Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Underground Russia* (London, 1883), p. 3.

[65] 'A man who doesn't acknowledge any authorities, who doesn't accept a single principle on faith, no matter how much that principle may be surrounded by respect.' Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. Richard Freeborn (Oxford: 1991). pp. 22–23. Turgenev coined the term nihilist, but also, in Malia's words: 'Both as an international intellectual figure and as an artist, Turgenev came to symbolize Russia's participation in a single tradition of European humanism.' Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, p. 194.

> showed the Russians in a new light; it attracted attention by the energy and dramatic force of the unequal conflict; it conquered hearts by the irresistible force of sacrifice. The Russian movement, though not understood, has become a living epos of our time, winning over to its side public opinion, and awakening alike amazement and sympathy.[66]

He continued to try to generate this positive support for nihilists to build on the negative views of Russian autocracy. His novel, *The Career of a Nihilist* (1889), aimed to portray the 'inner man, his feelings, inspirations, which show the general reader more truth than the composition of facts viewed from outside.'[67] The 'inner man' that Stepniak promoted was not consistent with contemporary notions of psychological realism. Rather, he or she was a type, albeit a new type.[68] And while Stepniak's proposal that audiences should look to the 'inner man' suggested greater truth and precision, in fact in the case of terrorism, it did just the opposite as the physical deed was abstracted to some political meaning. Stepniak's assassination of General Mesentsev, the head of the Third Section, was, in Venturi's words, 'the most perfect act of terrorism of the time.'[69] He 'chose old-fashioned technologies (horse, dagger) in order to situate his act in a Romantic legal-moral tradition of tyrannicide.'[70] In *Underground Russia* he described the killing of Mesentsev (without saying that he had done it): 'The Terrorism, by putting to death General Mesentzeff, the head of the police and of the entire *camarilla*, boldly threw down its glove in the face of autocracy.'[71]

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[66] Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Underground Russia*.

[67] Sergey Stepniak, 'letter to Robert Spence Watson,' 14 April 1890, SW 1/17/91, *Spence Watson Collection*, Newcastle University Robinson Library, on the value of his novel, S. Stepniak, *The Career of a Nihilist* (London, 1889).

[68] Richard Freeborn, *The Russian Revolutionary Novel: Turgenev to Pasternak* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 4–38.

[69] Venturi, Haskell, and Berlin, *Roots of Revolution*, p. 610.

[70] Lynn Ellen Patyk, 'Remembering "The Terrorism": Sergey Stepniak-Kravchinsky's "Underground Russia," *Slavic Review* 68, no. 4 (2009): pp. 758–781.

[71] Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Underground Russia*, p. 39.

In some quarters, the sacrifice of the nihilist won admiration just as Stepniak suggested. Writing in 1912, the Marxist Henry Hyndman wrote that the Russian opposition were uniquely dedicated to their cause:

> scenes in the work which impressed themselves very strongly on my mind, notably that of the anonymous printer in the secret underground press who went on working, working, working, regardless of health, danger or enjoyment, quite satisfied that he, the unknown toiler, was helping to spread the light in the world above.[72]

A woman wrote to the editor of *Free Russia*: 'I have been deeply touched by Stepniak's accounts of the heroism of your patriots. I don't think that human nature has ever risen to sublime heights than those some of your countrymen have reached.'[73] Another correspondent wrote that he would 'do anything [he could] to help.' He had heard Stepniak speak while he was an undergraduate at Oxford, and 'from that time [he] was deeply interested in the cause of Russian freedom.' His sister, a member of the Humanitarian League, obtained an interview with Stepniak, and the letter-writer subsequently wrote to his local press on behalf of the revolutionary cause on Russian issues.[74] Charlotte Wilson, an anarchist, wrote to Karl Pearson, eugenicist and Fabian, about the new possibilities embodied by the terrorists. She noted: 'Personally I only know three people with whom it is possible with a free spirit to practice real communism and of these Tchaikovsky [an exile] is the most thoroughgoing' and that 'communism is in daily practice at the Russian universities.'[75] For her, Stepniak was the 'personification of the ideal patriot.'[76] These letters are obviously a limited sample, but they demonstrate that Stepniak's portrayal was not totally ignored on its own terms. They also demonstrate the importance of the personification of abstract ideals.

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[72] H.M. Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life* (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 87.

[73] Gertrude Toynbee, 'letter to David Soskice,' 12 April 1908, STH/DS/1/TO.1–4, *Stow Hill Papers*, Parliamentary Archives, London.

[74] H. Martin, 'letter to David Soskice,' 28 July 1905, STH/DS/1/MART.1, *Stow Hill Papers*, Parliamentary Archives, London.

[75] Charlotte Wilson, 'letter to Karl Pearson,' 7 February 1886, GB 0103 PEARSON/11/2/19, *Pearson Papers*, UCL library.

[76] Charlotte Wilson, 'letter to Karl Pearson,' 24 January 1886, GB 0103 PEARSON/11/2/19, *Pearson Papers*, UCL library.

Stepniak was challenged directly only once. In 1894, an article in the *New Review* strongly hinted that the nihilist, who had lived in London literary circles for ten years, had assassinated General Mesentsev. Written by Olga Novikova (anonymously), it stated that one of the Russians in London, sheltered by the respectability of the SFRF's liberals, had previously 'murdered' Mesentsev with a 'kitchen knife',[77] a more sordid and everyday image than Stepniak's dagger in *Underground Russia*. In response, Stepniak published *Nihilism as it is*, with a foreword by Robert Spence Watson. Stepniak's changing public image can therefore be shown by comparing *Underground Russia* (1883) with *Nihilism as it is* (1894). *Nihilism as it is* skirted the question of whether Novikova's accusation was true or not, and emphasised the same themes of liberal revolution and tsarist repression as had been prevalent for years. The book included the letter sent by *Narodaya Volya's* Revolutionary Executive Committee to Alexander III at his accession to the throne, but not, for instance, the same Executive Committee's 'sentence of execution' to Alexander II, and the liberal programme of the *Zemstvos* (local government), but not Nechaev's *Catechism of a Revolutionary*.[78] This evasiveness was picked up on by the *Spectator*.[79] The *Saturday Review* was also sceptical of the 'well-meant services of Dr. Spence Watson', stating '[h]ow universal suffrage is to be carried out in Russia in the present condition of her lower classes exceeds our comprehension.'[80] Only the *Academy* accepted Stepniak's assertions that political change was viable in Russia, because since the famine the peasantry no longer trusted the

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[77] Z, 'Anarchists: Their Methods and Organisation,' *New Review*, January 1894, pp. 5–16.

[78] Sergey Stepniak and E.L Voynich, *Nihilism as It Is: Being Stepniak's Pamphlets Translated by E.L. Voynich, and Felix Volkhovsky's Claims of the Russian Liberals with an Introduction by Dr. R. Spence Watson* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1894).

[79] 'Nihilism as It Is. With Introduction by Dr. R. Spence Watson (Book Review),' *Spectator*, 4 May 1895, p. 621.

[80] '"Nihilism as it is": Being Stepniak's pamphlets, translated by E.L. Voynich, and Felix Volkhovsky's "Claims of the Russian Liberals",' *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 9 February 1895, p. 193.

Tsar. It also accepted Stepniak's self-professed moderation.[81] A biography of Spence Watson, written long after it was known that Stepniak had killed, was even more circumspect, claiming that Stepniak's 'avowed sympathy with the liberation movement made him so much a marked man that he went to reside in Geneva.'[82] Stepniak's position in liberal literary and journalistic circles, where he found sympathy with his cause, was, then, sufficient to deflect most direct accusations.

Despite Stepniak's assertions, 'nihilist' still had negative currency by the time of his death. According to a story in the liberal *Daily News*, the London Reform Union suggested a memorial to Stepniak on his death: 'Many persons thought of him only as a nihilist; but all his efforts were praiseworthy and constitutional. Among the distinguished refugees to whom this country, to its own honour, had given asylum, none took a higher place than Stepniak… Praising Stepniak as a writer and a humanitarian, the chairman said that his habit of neither thinking nor caring for himself was probably the reason that he came to an untimely end. (Hear, hear).'[83] That 'nihilist' had to be replaced with 'humanitarian' suggests that it was not automatically equated with liberalism. Significantly, many people were willing to make the equation. Although Stepniak specifically distinguished his terrorist martyrs from Christian martyrs to assert his atheism, later mentions of nihilists, by supporters and nihilists themselves, used the term 'martyr' and equated them with people like George Fox using nonconformist notions of conscience:[84]

> To talk earnestly of teaching such people compliance with the laws of the country by means of so many months of labour would be as childlike an endeavour as to profess that had Milton got "eighteen months' hard" he would have become much wiser and never have voted for Charles I's execution, or that a George Fox or a Bradlaugh could be intimidated into a very different course of action than that which made their names historical. These Britons certainly were – nay, any Briton is – as much bound to

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[81] 'Stepniak's "Nihilism as it is" (Book Review),' *Academy*, 12 January 1895, p. 32.

[82] Percy Corder, *The Life of Robert Spence Watson* (London: 1914), p. 193.

[83] 'Proposed Memorial to Stepniak,' *Daily News*, 21 January 1896.

[84] Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Underground Russia*, pp. 40–41.

> observe the laws of this country as any foreigner is; yet what did they do when their moral feeling clashed with the law in force?[85]

The affinity between English liberals and Russian terrorists was enabled by historicist views on the role of violence.[86] Karl Pearson wrote to Spence Watson following Stepniak's death:

> what I would like to see would be a moderate sized boulder brought from Cumberland or Dartmoor, and a bronze plate on it with some simple inscription in Russian and English, "To Sergius Stepniak, the Friend of Russian freedom"… Some day the Russian people would take it back to Russia, till then the County Council would allow it to be placed in one of their gardens or parks…[87]

The use of geological imagery implies a more gradualist history than Stepniak's revolutionary programme might suggest. The 'deeply historicist' Pearson saw, like others, parallels with 'historical' (i.e. Russian) violence, and modern-day civil politics.[88] In a review of Stepniak, he suggested that 'the Englishman…forgets to-day the violence of the revolt that laid the foundation of his own political liberty…his forefathers were guilty of tyrannicide.'[89] The reverse was that Stepniak's deed, while valid on the blank canvas of Russia, was not in Britain, where a civilising process had habituated the people into more civil customs. This enabled terrorism to be equated with more prosaic present day acts—voting, erecting statues, hanging plaques and commercial activity.[90] This is supported by the many comparisons of present-day Russia to seventeenth-century Britain. Indeed, the need for violence in order to advance Russia's condition was constantly contrasted with the legal, rational and commercial means available in Britain. Stepniak therefore argued that dynamite would 'not be naturalised in [Western] Europe as a political agent.'[91]

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[85] Felix Volkhovsky, 'A Russian's View of the Bourtzev Case,' *Free Russia*, March 1898, pp. 20–23.

[86] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 22–23.

[87] Karl Pearson, 'letter to Robert Spence Watson,' 3 January 1896, RSW 1/15/6, *Spence Watson Collection*, Newcastle University Library.

[88] Theodore M. Porter, *Karl Pearson: The Scientific Life in a Statistical Age* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 91–97. Pearson was influenced by German cultural historians like Jakob Burkhardt.

[89] Karl Pearson, 'Review of the Russian Storm-Cloud,' *The Cambridge Review*, 23 June 1886, pp. 106–107.

[90] And is echoed by Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (1911).

When seen in the context of the Russian prison system, the most thoroughly documented aspect of Russian despotism, a violent response was justifiable. For many, Russian terrorists were understood as liberals in exceptional circumstances. Following an analysis of newspaper opinion, Michael Hughes shows that 'most commentators believed that the use of violence to bring about change in an autocratic political system was qualitatively different from resorting to terror in a constitutional system where other avenues for non-violent change were available.'[92] In this view, nihilists were clearly part of an 'other Russia', capable of leading a constitutional nation. That they could be so clearly separated from the autocracy was no doubt made easier by the Russian penal code's deliberate creation of a parallel exile society, carrying on their jobs as usual, in Siberia.[93] The American George Kennan, whose *Siberia and the Exile System*, associated articles in *Century Magazine* and lectures from 1888 onwards, were extremely popular, distinguished Russian nihilists from 'wrong-headed fanatics of the anarchistic type with which we in the United States had become so familiar.'[94] Rather they were 'erect and well-proportioned…men and women who, under other circumstances, might render valuable services to their country.'[95] Although he made a further distinction between 'nihilists' like Kropotkin's brother who were exiled but not imprisoned, and actual terrorists who were imprisoned deeper in Siberia, the fact that 'nihilism' was understood by many to encompass both, meant that the difference was lost. Kennan further blurred the distinction between thought and action by excusing terrorism when he emphasised that administrative exile and the system of autocracy ‘makes terrorists’ and wondered that Russia was not a nation of terrorists.[96]

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[91] S. Stepniak, *The Russian Storm-Cloud, Or, Russia in Her Relations to Neighbouring Countries* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1886), p. 203.

[92] Hughes, 'British Opinion and Russian Terrorism in the 1880s.'

[93] Abby M. Schrader, *Languages of the Lash: Corporal Punishment and Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), p. 83.

[94] Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, p. 2.

[95] Ibid., pp. 40–42.

British Liberties and Russian Terrorism

As these debates over nihilism show, ‘pro-’ and ‘anti-Russian’ had very little real currency outside of specific debates over, say, the Bulgarian question. As Malia argues, the liberalising reforms of Alexander II and the development of a vocal opposition gave Russia a ‘political personality’.[97] Supporters or opponents sided with aspects of Russian politics or society congruent with their own views. Still, an awareness of the different stages of historical development of the two countries was ever-present and allowed liberals to support terrorists; similarly, an awareness of the links between supporting sections of the opposition and the likely effect of this on the situation as a whole was also present. The construction of humanitarian campaigns relied on these links and on specific events or causes, such as royal visits or the imprisonment of political opponents, which could both compress the issue of despotism into a cause, and try to expand its appeal above politics into a moral, British cause.

Despite its humanitarian framing, the nature and success of this work was shaped by the pre-existing political views of its members and supporters. The main impetus for the Society came from Russian exiles, notably Stepniak. Many of the British members were Liberal MPs, journalists or had liberal internationalist sympathies. Grant suggests that the membership as a whole comprised ‘disaffected nonconformist radicals’ attracted by the ‘mirror-image’ of illiberalism offered by Russia.[98] Russian liberation was compared to the English Revolution or to Italian nationalism, both popular causes in the liberal imagination. Joseph Cowen MP, for whom Spence Watson acted as an election agent, had met and supported Alexander Herzen, Giuseppe Mazzini and other European radicals.[99] It was as part of the European liberal revolutionary tradition that Spence Watson saw Stepniak, Kropotkin and Herzen, and in defending Stepniak against accusations that he had used violent means, Spence Watson argued that the current Russian émigrés were 'members of that little band of Russian exiles who have nobly handed down the noble traditions of those great reformers who found refuge on our shores in bygone days.'[100] This implicitly equated Stepniak with liberal revolutionaries like Mazzini, and with Russians 'of the 40 s' like Herzen, and ignored the novel use of terrorism by *Narodnaya Volya* (the People's Will).

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[96] Ibid., pp. 66–72.

[97] Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, p. 168.

[98] Grant, ‘Society of Friends of Russian Freedom,’ p. 11.

[99] Monica Partridge, ‘Alexander Herzen and the English Press,’ *The Slavonic and East European Review* 36, no. 87 (1958): pp. 453–470.

The SFRF's main English support came from backbench Liberal MPs (cabinet members were not allowed to join as it was thought to be a conflict of interest[101]) and journalists. Its initial organising committee of 28 included nine MPs, three clergymen, T. Fisher Unwin the publisher,[102] the academic L.T. Hobhouse,[103] Percy William Bunting, editor of the *Contemporary Review*,[104] the children's writer and Evangelical social reformer Hesba Stretton,[105] Edward R. Pease of the Fabian Society,[106] and the socialist-feminist Isabella O. Ford.[107] Efforts were made to enlist Conservative members but only one—Henry C. Stephens—could be persuaded to join.[108] Later the labour movement would make more of an impact when J.F. Green of the Social Democratic Federation joined as Honorary Secretary, and after the St. Petersburg strikes of 1897.[109] It is more difficult to get data on members not on the executive committee, but given that it was not a mass-membership organisation, the SFRF's descriptions of its audience are just as useful. It organised several public meetings with the labour movement and after 1899 began to emphasise peasant arts and crafts and Russian literature more heavily. In 1905, for instance, the Society, along with the Social Democratic Federation, organised a protest against the perpetrators of Bloody Sunday, with the support of the London Trades' Council, the New Reform Club, the Fabian Society, the Humanitarian League and the Independent Labour Party.[110] Its famous members are easiest to track. H.N. Brailsford cannot primarily be described as a humanitarian in that his main goals and methods were political. He was critical of imperialism, joined the Philhellenic League against the Ottoman Empire and was interested in Balkan issues, particularly Macedonia. His connection with the SFRF was shaped by liberal, socialist and anti-imperialist beliefs, as well as what his biographer calls a 'nonconformist' sense of duty.[111]

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[100] Stepniak and Voynich, *Nihilism as It Is.*

[101] Senese, *S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky*, pp. 64.

[102] Julie F. Codell, 'Unwin, Thomas Fisher (1848–1935)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47454, accessed 8 August 2012).

[103] Michael Freeden, 'Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawny (1864–1929)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33906, accessed 1 August 2012).

[104] J.E.G. de Montmorency, 'Bunting, Sir Percy William (1836–1911)', rev. Tim Macquiban, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32171, accessed 28 May 2013).

[105] Patricia Demers, 'Smith, Sarah (1832–1911)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, October 2008 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36158, accessed 21 August 2012).

[106] Mark Bevir, 'Pease, Edward Reynolds (1857–1955)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2007 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35445, accessed 21 August 2012).

[107] 'Committee,' *Free Russia*, June 1890, p. 2.

'Political' and 'humanitarian' concerns intertwined in the case of exiles. Half a century earlier, disaffected Chartists and radicals had channelled their energies into supporting revolutionaries from 1848.[112] Religion was often as important as nationalism or radical politics, as shown by the Unitarian support and weapon-buying for Mazzini.[113] Support for Mazzini took the form of a humanitarian campaign (a parliamentary debate and celebrity support) in the sense that a problem of the denial of rights was created by the Home Office's unauthorised reading of Mazzini's letters on behalf of Metternich.[114]

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[108] The Executive Committee in 1890 comprised: Arthur H. Dyke Acland, MP (York, Liberal); Thomas Burt; J.E. Ellis, MP (Rushcliffe, Liberal); J.G. Shaw LeFevre, MP (Bradford, Liberal); Joshua Rowntree, MP (Scarborough, Liberal); Henry C. Stephens, London; Prof James Stuart, mathematician and Liberal MP for Hackney and later Sunderland; Alfred Webb, MP (Waterford, Irish Parliamentary Party); Henry T. Wilson, MP (Sheffield, Liberal); James Beal LLC; Rev Charles Berry Wolverhampton; Rev Stopford A. Brooke, London; Percy W. Bunting, W.P. Byles (Bradford, Liberal); W. Moore Ede, Rector of Gateshead; Isabella O. Ford; L.T. Hobhouse, Merton Oxford; John McDonald, Charles Mallet, J. Fletcher Moulton QC (mathematician); Rev Donald Morrison, Chaplain, Wandsworth Gaol; Edward R. Pease; William Saunders LLC; Adolphe Smith, socialist journalist; Hesba Stretton; T. Fisher Unwin; Robert and Elizabeth Spence Watson.

[109] Grant, 'Society of Friends of Russian Freedom.'

[110] 'Great Meeting of Protest at Queen's Hall,' *Free Russia*, March 1905, p. 32.

[111] F.M. Leventhal, 'Brailsford, Henry Noel (1873–1958)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, January 2011 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32033, accessed 23 July 2012).

[112] Sabine Freitag, *Exiles from European Revolutions: Refugees in Mid-Victorian England* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003).

To generate support, such ideals about political liberty had to be mapped to the sympathies and activities of individuals. The figure of Robert Spence Watson is particularly instructive. As a Quaker, and president of the Peace Society, Spence Watson would have been expected to be against violence. However he was also attracted by the cause of political liberty and apparently considered joining Garibaldi when younger.[115] He made a number of equivalences between his Quakerism, which he saw as a form of independent mindedness and public duty, and radical causes. In the pamphlet, *The Proper Limits to Obedience to the Law*, Spence Watson used social and historical distance to make equivalences between the 'passive resistance' of Quakers, and the National League for the liberation of Ireland.[116] We can thus see the joins between a general humanitarian sensibility and specific forms of action or policy following from it. Laqueur emphasises the 'many ways' to 'translate moral into political imperative.'[117] The stances taken by Spence Watson were structured both by his own sense of his and others' agency, partly derived from Quakerism, and by the opportunities and templates for action available to him in liberal, activist and humanitarian traditions (Fig. 1).

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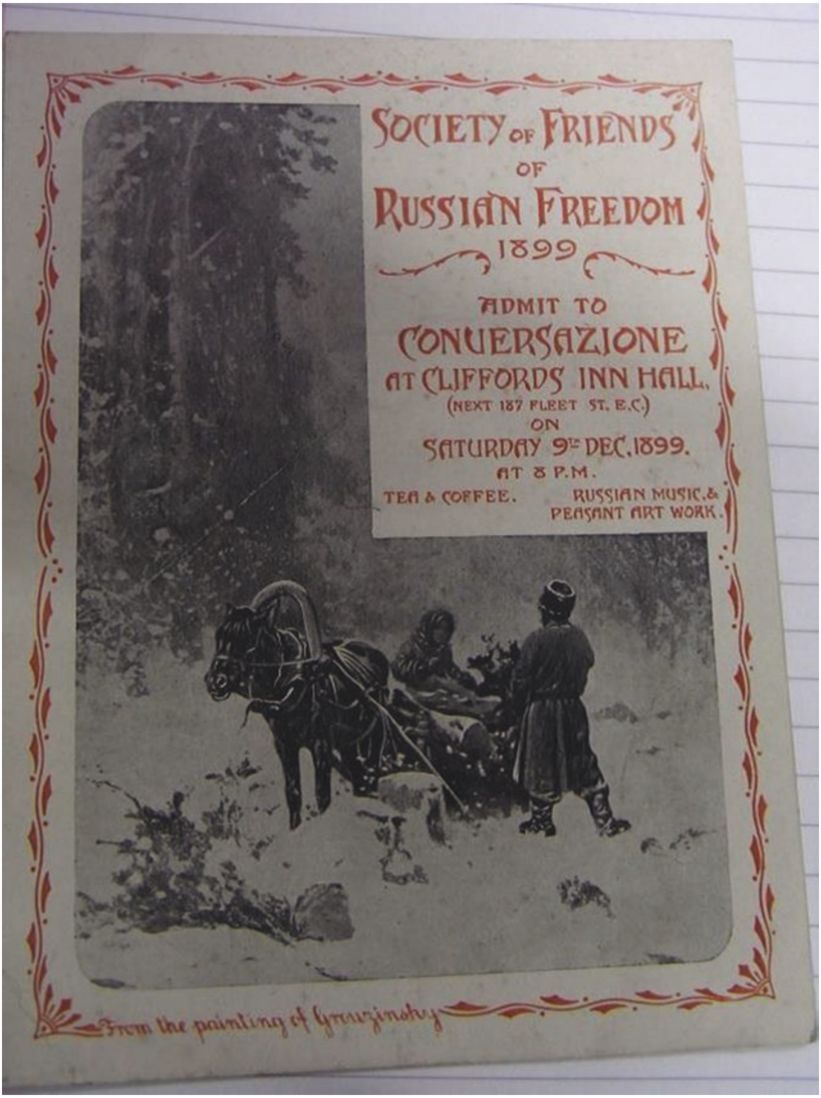
[113] Eugenio F. Biagini, 'Mazzini and Anticlericalism: The English Exile,' in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism 1830–1920*, ed. Eugenio F. Biagini and C.A. Bayly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 145–166.

[114] Christopher Duggan, 'Giuseppe Mazzini in Britain and Italy: Divergent Legacies, 1837–1915,' in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism, 1830–1920*, ed. C.A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 187–207.

[115] Pares, *My Russian Memoirs*, p. 51.

[116] Robert Spence Watson, *The Proper Limits of Obedience to the Law* (Gateshead-on-Tyne, 1887).

[117] Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Mourning, Pity, and the Work of Narrative in the Making of "Humanity,"' in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 36.

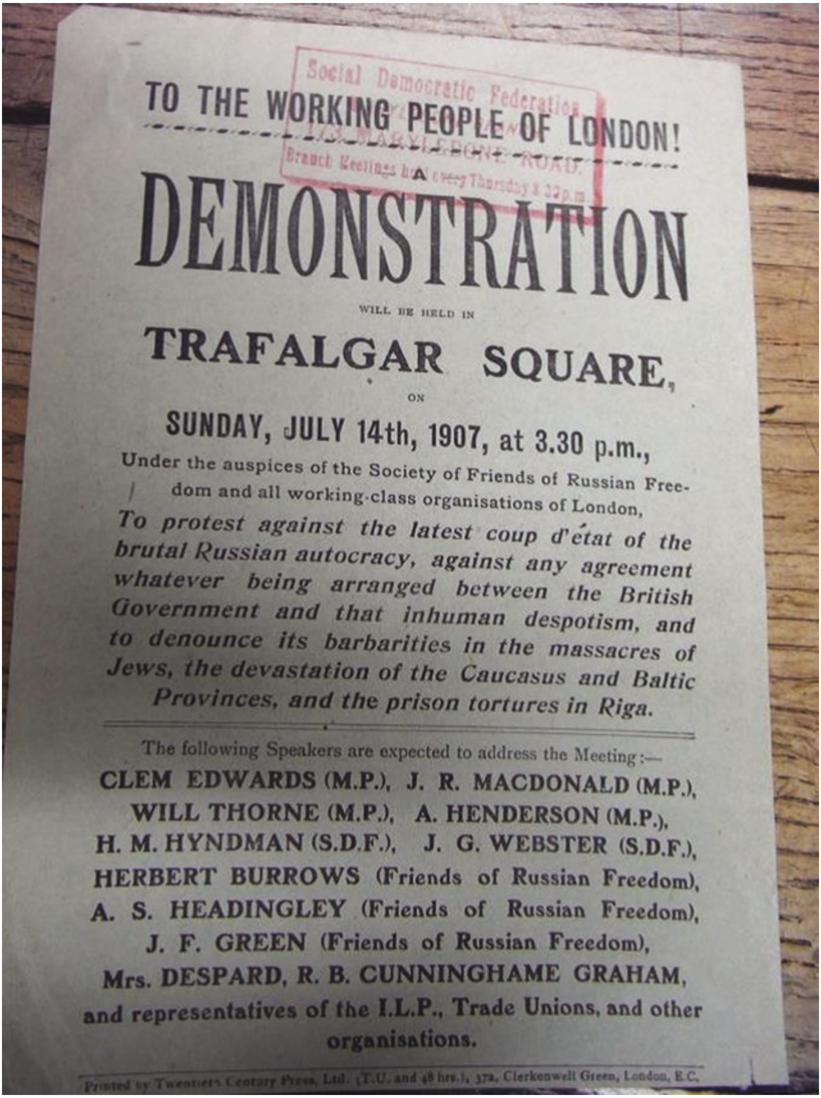


SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
OF
RUSSIAN FREEDOM
1899

ADMIT TO
CONVERSAZIONE
AT CLIFFORDS INN HALL.
(NEXT 187 FLEET ST. E.C.)
ON
SATURDAY 9th DEC. 1899.
AT 8 P.M.
TEA & COFFEE.
RUSSIAN MUSIC. & PEASANT ART WORK.

From the painting of Gruzinsky

Fig. 1 Posters for Russian events from the Unwin Archive, Bristol University library. Pamphlets, DM 851, *Cobden-Unwin file*, Bristol University Library the SFRF tried to mobilise broad support by displaying Russian arts and also sought support from labour movements



Social Democratic Federation
173, MARYLEBONE ROAD.
Branch Meetings held every Thursday 8.30p.m.

TO THE WORKING PEOPLE OF LONDON!

A

DEMONSTRATION

WILL BE HELD IN

TRAFALGAR SQUARE,

ON

SUNDAY, JULY 14th, 1907, at 3.30 p.m.,

Under the auspices of the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom and all working-class organisations of London,

To protest against the latest coup d'état of the brutal Russian autocracy, against any agreement whatever being arranged between the British Government and that inhuman despotism, and to denounce its barbarities in the massacres of Jews, the devastation of the Caucasus and Baltic Provinces, and the prison tortures in Riga.

The following Speakers are expected to address the Meeting:—

CLEM EDWARDS (M.P.), J. R. MACDONALD (M.P.),
WILL THORNE (M.P.), A. HENDERSON (M.P.),
H. M. HYNDMAN (S.D.F.), J. G. WEBSTER (S.D.F.),
HERBERT BURROWS (Friends of Russian Freedom),
A. S. HEADINGLEY (Friends of Russian Freedom),
J. F. GREEN (Friends of Russian Freedom),
Mrs. DESPARD, R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM,
and representatives of the I.L.P., Trade Unions, and other organisations.

Printed by Twentieth Century Press, Ltd. (T.U. and 48 hrs.), 37a, Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.

Fig. 1 (continued)

More direct and concrete support was offered to Russian exiles when threatened by the state. Political liberty for the individual, separate from state citizenship, was not a strong or stable category. In analysing British responses to political exiles over the nineteenth century, Shaw argues that '[r]efugee narratives…made individual stories representative of a wider problem of persecution, a symptom of a larger social ill.'[118] She suggests that 'we need to undertake a comparative analysis of the changing criteria for refuge embedded within the stories told by refugees and the stories told on the refugees' behalf. By understanding this process we can begin to understand why the British constructed—and maintained—a category for refugees distinct from the broader category of foreign migrants.'[119] As well as narratives, resources extant in British political culture, such as legal traditions and campaigning techniques, were vital to ensuring Stepniak's support.

While I do not argue that support for Stepniak was an example of human rights campaigning, the transportation and juxtaposition of debates over liberties tells us about how far and in what ways sympathy was extended across borders, as well as how moral categories related to legal ones. The issue centred on location: that they were British liberties was uncontroversial; for Italians or Russians to have the same liberties, somewhat more so; for British subjects to agitate for these liberties in Italy or Russia or for Italians and Russians to do so from Britain was a grey area.[120] This was mirrored roughly in the division of work between the Russian Free Press Fund and the SFRF, and the latter's insistence on offering only 'moral' support from Britain. The SFRF may not have been arguing for human rights for these exiles in the true sense of the term, but by sympathising with these somewhat distant causes in terms of universal liberty, and brokering support through the patchwork of available institutions, they echoed, or prefigured, such notions.

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[118] Caroline Emily Shaw, 'The British, Persecuted Foreigners and the Emergence of the Refugee Category in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 30.2–30.3 (2012), pp. 239–262 (p. 249).

[119] Ibid., p. 258.

[120] Stepniak's situation had similarities with Mazzini's, and Spence Watson sought to make the comparison.

The careers of Stepniak and others were dependent on legal as much as moral support. In Britain, nihilists were accepted negatively (i.e. not challenged) as political exiles. The category was separate from 'criminal' until the late nineteenth century, when international conferences at Rome in 1898 and St. Petersburg in 1904, led by Russia, sought to define 'anarchism' and terrorism as crimes. Britain was seemingly uninterested in such co-operation and heavy-handed methods, but Jensen argues that, contrary to popular opinion, the country's diplomats did attend and implement some recommendations from these conferences, even if it was lukewarm towards these ideas:

> England [sic] was the last of the great powers to respond favourably to the Italian invitation. Its hesitancy was hardly surprising, however, considering that in 1881 and 1893 it had helped defeat diplomatic initiatives calling for international conferences and joint actions against nihilists and anarchists. What was surprising was that England [sic] decided to send delegates to Rome at all – an action which several historians have denied England [sic] even took.

Mass Jewish immigration, a Tory government and Queen Victoria's concern about her relatives being assassinated made the country more willing to implement stronger measures.[121] Even before then, while there was de facto tolerance of political refugees, the concept of political refugee was 'notoriously difficult to define'. Farhmeir describes political refugees as those committing acts that were legal by the standards of their host country but not their home country.[122]

As has been shown, in popular understandings this was a flexible measure which took into account the harsher circumstances of Russia. The trials of Burtsev and Brailsford offer the most useful evidence of the status of Russian exiles and their cause after Stepniak's death. The SFRF was perhaps most effective in defending émigrés whom Russia sought to extradite—that is, working specifically within British legal norms and traditions of political liberty. Regarding the arrest of Nikolai Tchaikovsky in Russia, Peter Kropotkin wrote to Spence Watson, 'something must be done, and in a case like this, the very fact that *interest is shown to Tchaykovsky here* will have weight with the Russian authorities.'[123] *Free Russia* indeed defended Tchaikovsky against suggestions in the *Daily Telegraph* that he had been justly imprisoned.[124]

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[121] Richard Bach Jensen, 'The International Campaign against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880–1930s,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 1 (2009): p. 326.

[122] Andreas Farhmeir, 'British Exceptionalism in Perspective: Political Asylum in Continental Europe,' in *Exiles from European Revolutions: Refugees in Mid-Victorian England*, ed. Sabine Freitag (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), p. 33.

Vladimir Burtsev was prosecuted in a British court in 1898 for publishing calls for the death of the Tsar in a Russian-language paper. The Burtsev defence was paid for by the SFRF and supported by articles in *Free Russia*.[125] The SFRF argued that it was a political prosecution: 'If we are not always careful…English money might be spent in aiding other, and even autocratic, powers to govern in their own way, which may be, in the opinion of Englishmen, cruel and despotic.'[126] They cited similar calls in the press for the death of the Turkish Sultan in the English press or of the Russian Tsar by Algernon Swinburne, which had gone unprosecuted.[127] Some of those who donated to the defence fund explained that they did not want to see England descend to tyranny.[128] The main strength of their argument was its appeals to English legal traditions.

The British journalist H.N. Brailsford was tried in 1907 for giving a false passport to a Russian who was subsequently involved in a bomb attack in Russia. He argued that it was a 'technical irregularity' that the Russian needed a passport and, echoing Razumov's story in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*, that 'if an Englishman' met an exile in trouble, he would give him a room for the night. More generally, he equated 'pity for individual'—exiled by Russia's illiberal laws—with the 'plight of the people', saying that, like in Italy, supporting the Russian opposition would lead to 'peace in the long-run.'[129] Similarly, in E. Nesbit's *Railway Children*, the taking in of a Russian exile is explained thus: '[t]he children wanted very much to show how kindly they felt to this man who had been sent to prison and to Siberia just for writing a beautiful book about poor people.'[130] Both used standard British liberties to make a statement about Russian conditions, and about how natural and universal those rights should be.

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[123] Peter Kropotkin, 'letter to Robert Spence Watson,' 14 December 1907, RSW 1/10/22, *Spence Watson Papers 1832–1939*, Newcastle University Robinson Library.

[124] 'The Case of N. Tchaikovsky,' *Free Russia*, 1908, p. 7.

[125] Alan Kimball, 'The Harassment of Russian Revolutionaries Abroad: The London Trial of Vladimir Burtsev in 1898,' *Oxford Slavonic Papers,* 6 (1973): pp. 48–65. 'The Queen vs. Boutzev: An appeal for help,' *Free Russia*, January 1898, p. 1.

[126] 'Dr. R. Spence Watson on Bourtzev's Case,' *Free Russia*, February 1898, p. 1.

[127] Felix Volkhovsky, 'A Russian's View of the Bourtzev Case,' *Free Russia*, March 1898, pp. 21–22; Robert Spence Watson 'The State Trial,' *Free Russia*, March 1898, pp. 1–2; also articles by J.F. Green, Felix Volkhovsky.

[128] 'Why Some Englishmen Contributed to the Defence Fund,' *Free Russia*, March 1898, p. 24.

Public Opinion and the National Interest

To the British foreign policy establishment, humanitarian concerns such as those brought forward by the SFRF were minor but not invisible. A British consul wrote in 1888:

> The magnitude of the task before the Russian Government – that of improving the economic condition of an agricultural population of 80,000,000, and of keeping at the same time in check the underground agitation which placed Alexander III prematurely on the throne – ought certainly to be sufficient, in common political sense, to deter the Emperor from following the example of his father in an attempt to allay internal political unrest by a popular crusade.[131]

Considerations of the inadequacies of autocracy are evident throughout, but are clearly subordinate to geopolitical concerns. As Simms and Trim argue, the pervasive notion of Westphalian sovereignty being directly opposed to humanitarian concerns, and thus intervention, is misleading. Interventions, through 'hard' and 'soft' power, have been made for the sake of religious minorities, political stability and notions of humanity since at least the seventeenth century.[132] The two considerations were interlinked rather than opposed. H.N. Brailsford, while appalled at Russia's despotism, also considered the overall balance of power in his calculations. According to Levensthal:

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[129] 'Undelivered Speech for Trial,' GB 394 HNB, *Brailsford Papers*, Labour History Archive (LHA), Manchester.

[130] E. Nesbit, *The Railway Children*, first published 1905, Chap. 5, Project Gutenberg (http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1874/1874-h/1874-h.htm, accessed 28 May 2013).

[131] 'Document 69: Memorandum by Consul-General Michell on the Political Aspect of the Economic Condition of Russia,' in Dominic Lieven, *From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the First World War: Russia 1881–1905*, ed. Kenneth Bourne and Donald Cameron Watt, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office*, Vol. 1 (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983), p. 233.

> for Brailsford, whose primary concern was the furtherance of the Macedonian struggle against the Turks, an agreement with Russia opened the possibility of concerted pressure on the Sultan to appease dissident Balkan Christians. However repugnant the tsarist regime, it seemed neither as corrupt, nor as oppressive as the Ottoman Empire. Despotic though it was, it managed to avoid inciting insurrections within its borders, which was more than could be said for the Porte.[133]

Similarly, the British consul's view of the morality of the situation was inseparable from his view of the likely results of attacking the autocracy or aiding the opposition.

Pressure groups, such as the SFRF or Jewish interests, protested against foreign policy in a way that suggested a direct opposition between the diplomatic view and the 'moral' view. In 1907, a poster was published:

> To the Working People of London! A Demonstration will be held in Trafalgar Square, under the auspices of the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom and all working class organisations of London, to protest against the latest coup d'état of the brutal Russian autocracy, against any agreement whatever being arranged between the British Government and that inhuman despotism, and to denounce its barbarities in the massacres of Jews, the devastation of the Caucasus and Baltic provinces, and the prison tortures in Riga. 14 July, 1907.[134]

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[132] Brendan Simms and D.J.B. Trim, 'Humanitarian Intervention: A History' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Michael R. Marrus, 'International Bystanders to the Holocaust and Humanitarian Intervention', in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. by Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 156–174.

[133] F.M. Leventhal, 'H.N. Brailsford and Russia: The Problem of Objectivity,' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 5, no. 2 (1973): p. 83.

[134] 'To the Working People of London!' Pamphlet, DM 851, *Cobden-Unwin File*, Bristol University library.

However, as letters between Ramsay McDonald of the Labour Party and the government show, this protest made little headway and the government refused to take their concerns into consideration.[135] J.F. Green and Ramsay MacDonald subsequently arranged a demonstration in Trafalgar Square against the agreement, arguing that it would 'raise Russian credit and thus enable the autocracy to borrow money more easily wherewith still further to oppress the Russian people, and interfere with their struggle for constitutional liberty and freedom.'[136] The fact that diplomacy was carried out by a narrow elite, apparently without reference to public opinion, served to increase the perception of a separation between moral and diplomatic ends.[137] Michael Hughes shows that the Foreign Office paid little attention to public opinion at this time and that criticism of the 'old diplomacy' for secrecy, elitism and amateurism was widespread if vague.[138] Appeals to public opinion were in part, then, claims of different classes or political groups to be able to direct policy. In this sense, public opinion was 'one power among other powers…a mere limit on power.'[139]

The SFRF's appeals rested on the conception of the audience appealed to and the nature of the expertise presented. The SFRF and others based their claims to be able to moralise or undercut foreign policy on notions of liberal internationalism similar to those invoked by John Bright and Richard Cobden before the Crimean War as well as contemporary criticisms of irrational, tabloid-led jingoism in the Boer War and the accompanying militarism in schools.[140] Liberals and humanitarians tried to connect humanitarian notions with Anglo-Russian relations. In the first place they argued for a link between autocracy and militarism and looked to the long-term balance of power. If the autocracy did not need to boost its popularity, it would be involved in fewer wars. If it did not need to borrow money from France, it would not have to support France militarily against Germany. Finally, if the government spent less on armaments, it could develop its economy better, which would eventually lead to a freer and more democratic country. Secondly, they sought to create expertise on Russian society, and links between Russian and Britain, to influence national policy. The School of Slavonic Studies at Liverpool University was set up by Bernard Pares with such aims.[141]

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[135] Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'letter to Ramsay MacDonald,' 5 June 1907, LA/PA/07/1/ 383, *J.F. Green Papers*, LHA. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied to Ramsay MacDonald's letter protesting the treaty for the sake of organised labour and liberal opinions saying he 'cannot admit that internal affairs in Russia are relevant to any discussion of matters affecting the respective frontiers of the two countries, with the object of preventing difficulties which might otherwise arise between them.'

[136] J. Frederick Green, 'letter to Ramsay MacDonald,' 25 June 1907, *JF Green Papers*, LA/PA/07/1/385, LHA.

[137] Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894–1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 1.

[138] Michael Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution: Britain, Russia, and the Old Diplomacy, 1894–1917* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

[139] Jurgen Habermas, Thomas Burger, and Larry Kert, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989), pp. 135–136.

How did the SFRF utilise public opinion? Echoing commonplaces about globalisation, Stepniak argued that because of telegraph wires 'all the world suffers with the griefs and misfortunes of every separate people.'[142] Taken by itself, this statement could have been said by any liberal philanthropist. However, the SFRF was meant to stimulate not 'sentimental outpourings, but a real work for Russian enfranchisement'.[143] Here public opinion was oriented directly towards political problems. Nevertheless, Stepniak was initially sceptical of the power of public opinion, and saw it as secondary to the 'real struggle'—in Russia. In letters to Robert Spence Watson he was clear that 'freedom would be won by fighting and not otherwise' and lamented that the Friends of Russia was not started five years earlier to coincide with the most intense period of the struggle in Russia.[144] To effect change in Russia itself, foreigners could help 'by strengthening the fighting body… as far as it is morally possible to do for foreigners.'[145] Charlotte Wilson noted that Stepniak initially looked 'somewhat coldly' on the idea of a 'Society to push the Russian propaganda… He sees "no harm" in a literary sort of society meanwhile, but, evidently, also not much good.'[146] Public campaigning was for Stepniak a compromise necessitated by the weakness of the Russian opposition.

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[140] George Macaulay Trevelyan, *The Life of John Bright* (London: Constable and Co., 1913), pp. 215–253. Trevelyan was critical of British foreign policy and Russian despotism, and chaired the Russian exiles' relief fund.

[141] Michael Hughes, 'Bernard Pares, Russian Studies and the Promotion of Anglo-Russian Friendship, 1907–1914,' *Slavonic and East European Review* 78, no. 3 (2000).

[142] Stepniak and Voynich; Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann, *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics From the 1840s to the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 3; Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 25–29.

[143] Sergius Stepniak-Kravchinsky, '*How Can We Best Help Russia?*', *Review of Reviews*, December 1891, p. 596.

[144] Sergius Stepniak, 'letter to Robert Spence Watson,' 22 November 1888, SW 1/17/82, *Spence Watson Papers*, Newcastle University Robinson Library.

The use of 'humanitarianism' was partly a way for the SFRF to emphasise its non-partisan nature. When reporting the first issue of *La Tribune Russe*, set up by the Russian Social Revolutionary party, David Soskice[147] contrasted *Free Russia* with the French paper, stating that *Free Russia* was 'the organ of an international humanitarian organisation, standing outside all parties, and uniting humane and freedom-loving people of otherwise very different views in a common belief that the Russian people, like any other, ought to have a fair hearing and fair play.'[148] The actual status of public opinion in this context was complicated by several realities and such an uncontroversial stance was impossible. Although the 'fourth estate myth' saw the newspapers as impartial sources of information mediating between the governing classes and the people, in reality the newspaper and periodical press were, in various ways, seen to be connected to political interests and points of view.[149] Furthermore, coverage of Russian affairs was limited by the expense of telegraphed news, the sporadic interest of the British audience and the limitations on getting truthful information from Russia.[150] Finally, public opinion had no definite form outside of elections, meetings and petitions, and thus was subject to a certain amount of bluffing. While it was taken into consideration by policy-makers, it was not really a force in itself, but rather an influence on policy at best.

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[145] Sergius Stepniak, 'letter to Elizabeth Spence Watson,' not dated, SW 1/17/93, *Spence Watson Papers,* Newcastle University Robinson Library.

[146] Charlotte Wilson, 'letter to Karl Pearson,' 24 January 1886, GB 0103 PEARSON/11/2/19, *Pearson Papers*, UCL library.

[147] Editor of *Free Russia* from 1904.

[148] Felix Volkhovsky/David Soskice, *Free Russia*, February 1904, p. 16.

[149] William Elliot, 'The Myth of the Fourth Estate,' in David George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate, *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London: 1978).

[150] Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 210.

At the most general level, the Society believed, or at least said, that the sympathy shown by the Society in England would have a 'cheering effect on the down-trodden' in Russia.[151] The *Manchester Guardian* saw the support at Stepniak's funeral as both evidence of the general role of sentiment in national and international relations, and as having the potential to specifically hinder the institutions of autocracy:

> It marked, indeed, a distinct stage in the development of humanitarian and internationalist sentiment in this country… The extraordinary manifestations of respect and sympathy with which the news of the fatal accident to the eminent exile has been received constituted a very unpleasant blow for the Czardom, and we may guess with what gladness the Russian police would have occupied Waterloo station in London on Saturday and laid hold of scores of the troublesome agitators there assembled.[152]

Stepniak had sought to translate this sympathy directly into political capital in a more direct way.

> The Russian autocracy cannot exist without the support of Western Europe; it is in constant need of money to fill up the holes in its budget; it needs alliances or friendly neutrality in order that its showy external politics may distract attention from the festering sores of its internal politics. In Europe public opinion rules everything, from the Exchange to Parliaments and Cabinets; and the press rules public opinion.[153]

However, this disinterested 'general public' also supported other causes and issues. Spence Watson's aim to make the 'Russian cause a national cause backed by a powerful stream of public opinion'[154] suggests an awareness of the partial nature of the cause within Britain.

In seeking to win public opinion, *Free Russia* first of all emphasised the gathering and dissemination of facts. According to Barry Hollingsworth, 'Articles appearing in *Free Russia* were frequently copied in the English and continental press, and the paper rapidly became known as the best source for authentic information on Russian internal affairs.'[155] This overstates the case (and is seemingly unsupported) since most newspapers already had Russian correspondents with considerable expertise in Russian affairs. Dillon for the top-selling *Daily Telegraph,* had previously edited a liberal newspaper in Odessa and would later befriend the reformist minister Sergey Witte, while MacKenzie Wallace for *The Times* had written a well-received book on Russia in 1877, which was updated in 1905. W.T. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and popular *Review of Reviews* was also a noteworthy voice because of his interviews with, and defence of, the Tsar. These last three, however, were positioned considerably to the right of Stepniak (MacKenzie Wallace supported the Tsar against the Duma after 1905[156]). There were also limitations on news from Russia, and first-hand testimony from Russians and nihilists remained valuable. Indeed, Stepniak had been led to form the SFRF following Kennan's success and the SFRF continued to disseminate Kennan's work and sponsor his lectures.[157]

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[151] Peter Kropotkin, 'letter to Robert Spence Watson,' 15 February 1890, SW 1/10/19, *Spence Watson Papers*, Newcastle University Robinson Library.

[152] A Correspondent, 'recollections of siepniak [sic],' *Manchester Guardian*, 4 January 1896, p. 4.

[153] Stepniak and Voynich, *Nihilism as It Is.*

[154] Sergius Stepniak, 'letter to Robert Spence Watson,' 19 December 1889, SW 1/17/86, *Spence Watson Papers*, Newcastle University Robinson Library.

Crucially, the general analysis of the autocracy offered by *Free Russia* and the SFRF, if not the prescription that followed, was accepted. Stepniak's analysis of Russia was trusted by people who rejected nihilism, socialism and atheism. The *Edinburgh Review* argued that despite the Russian's 'repulsive creed', 'he depicts the misdeeds of the governing classes, no doubt with exaggeration, but with an impress of truth that sometimes makes us go far towards forgetting the crimes into which their victims had been led.'[158]. Robert Spence Watson asked George Kennan whether Stepniak was trustworthy, and was told that he was, despite his extremism.[159] A few individuals vocally supported the autocracy over the opposition, notably Stead and Novikova, but Stepniak was largely correct when he wrote that:

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[155] Barry Hollingworth, 'The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom: English Liberals and Russian Socialists, 1890–1917', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 1970, p. 51; Senese, *S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky*, p. 52.

[156] Charlotte Alston, *Russia's Greatest Enemy?: Harold Williams and the Russian Revolutions* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), p. 78.

[157] For example, in 1894, the Society put on 'A Lecture on Political Exiles at Siberian Convict Mines' with George Kennan, at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly.

[158] 'Underground Russia; Russia under the Tzars; The Russian Peasantry; The Russian Storm Cloud. By Stepniak,' Edinburgh Review, October 1889, p. 519.

> The point is to be fought out in this country as in Russia, though on different ground and with different weapons. The struggle is comparatively easy in this country, for no vested interests are involved on either side for the general public, who have to decide. It is merely a question of knowing the actuality of Russian life, or of weighing the testimony of the contending factions.[160]

It is harder to agree with Stepniak's notion that concrete support would follow from this, however.

Indeed, an important part of the SFRF's work was simply the dissemination of accurate information. Corn traders, journalists and diplomats distrusted Russian news and professed honesty in general. Telegraphs and foreign correspondents were expensive and the British press believed that foreign monarchies did not give reliable information to correspondents.[161] It was not therefore unreasonable for the SFRF to see news-gathering as one of its roles. Especially after the success of graphic Crimean and Franco–Prussian war reports, it was believed that description of 'situations' was needed to supplement facts.[162] This, and the concentration of Reuters and *The Times*, the two most substantial foreign news outlets, on business and diplomatic news respectively, perhaps partly accounts for the number of first-hand articles on Russian prisons written by escapees such as Kropotkin or Volkhovsky.

A report on Siberian atrocities in its first issue started by correcting the coverage of the Western newspapers. Rather than focusing on the 'story of blood and horrors', the article weighed up the various statements printed in papers like *The Times*, the *New York Tribune* and the *Daily News* against prisoners' and officials' testimony and Russian legal codes. Its real object was not to provoke sympathy, but to affirm sympathy's role in political culture: to defend the 'tempest of indignation' triggered by Yakutsk, which had been big enough 'that even the Russian government was compelled to step forward and make some attempt at a defence.'[163] This implied a perceived need to correct bias or misinformation in the Western press (originating with Russian officials). It also implied a belief in the efficacy of public opinion in modern society. Similarly its *Russian Chronicles* column continued to print Russian newspapers' reports with a sceptical eye.

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[159] George Kennan, 'letter to Robert Spence Watson,' (1890?) SW 1/17/92, *Spence Watson Papers,* Newcastle University Robinson Library.

[160] Stepniak and Voynich, *Nihilism as It Is.*

[161] Michael Palmer, 'the British press and international news,' in Boyce, Curran, and Wingate, *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*: p. 210; Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, pp. 214, 230.

[162] Palmer in Boyce, Curran, and Wingate, *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*: pp. 211–212.

By 1908 the SFRF felt that news on Russia was common enough, and the Russian press free enough, for it to be able to 'suspend the regular publication' of the journal.[164] Indeed, the pages of *Free Russia* in 1905 contain a number of appeals on behalf of Russian political prisoners by other organisations,[165] while Kropotkin's 1909 booklet, *The Terror in Russia: An Appeal to the British Nation*, written for the Parliamentary Russian Committee, set up against the background of the Anglo–Russian Entente, is as detailed and damning as any article in *Free Russia*. He limits his evidence to that either corroborated by prison sentences, subject to interpellation in the Duma and not contradicted by the ministry, or printed in the moderate press with names and dates and not contradicted by the information bureau or the official press.[166] The pamphlet is full of details and statistics, including, for instance, a table of the name and method of every suicide by a prisoner in 1908.[167] The development of Russian area studies at Liverpool University, and associated cultural diplomacy, demonstrate the loss of *Free Russia*'s monopoly but the strengthening of its goals.[168] By this time, it was possible to identify a

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[163] 'Siberian Atrocities: The Yakutsk Massacre: Refutation in the Foreign Press,' *Free Russia*, June 1890, p. 2.

[164] J.F. Green, 'Our Activity,' *Free Russia*, 1908, p. 5.

[165] *Free Russia*, throughout 1905.

[166] Petr Kropotkin, *The Terror in Russia: An Appeal to the British Nation*, 6th edn (London: Methuen & co., 1909), p. 2.

[167] Ibid., p. 30.

[168] Hughes, 'Bernard Pares, Russian Studies and the Promotion of Anglo-Russian Friendship, 1907–1914.'

'British nexus' of liberal Russia experts in this period, including Bernard Pares and Maurice Baring.[169]

Stepniak, the driving force of the society, had died in 1895, while a new political context brought about by the Anglo–Russian Entente of 1907 and the First World War made the SFRF's position more difficult and some members deserted or lost interest.[170] Despite continued liberal interest in Russian reform, the Entente with Russia meant that the government emphasised friendship with the country.[171] After the 1905 revolution, the SFRF, reiterating its mission, stated that it worked by publishing facts and collecting money for the escape of exiles.[172] However, the field had diversified and exile funds were set up outside the SFRF, such as the Russian Political Exiles' Relief Fund set up in 1906 on the initiative of Nicholai Tchaikovsky, with Arthur Sidgwick, a classicist, and then G.M. Trevelyan, historian, as treasurer. Between 1906 and 1908 it received £2400.[173] *Free Russia* also noted Vera Figner's Committee for Helping Russian Political Prisoners, formed in Paris, which raised £4512 in the first four months of 1910.[174] The Committee for the Relief of Russian Exiles in Northern Russia and Siberia is another example.[175]

When in July 1917, the *Manchester Guardian* celebrated the February revolution, and the part played by the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, the need for the SFRF had diminished:

> To this victory English sympathy could, of course, give but little help, and that only indirectly. Yet it was in England that men like STEPNIAK, VOLKHOVSKY, and KROPOTKIN found their home, and from England, aided and strengthened by men to whom freedom was the soul

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[169] Cited in Alston, *Russia's Greatest Enemy?: Harold Williams and the Russian Revolutions*, p. 78.

[170] Grant, 'Society of Friends of Russian Freedom.'

[171] Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894–1917*, pp. 12–14.

[172] The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom,' *Free Russia*, February 1905, p. 14.

[173] 'Russian Political Exiles Relief Fund,' *Free Russia*, 1908, pp. 6–7.

[174] 'Committee for Helping Russian Political Prisoners,' *Free Russia*, July 1910, p. 4.

[175] 'Revised appeal for the Committee for the Relief of Russian Exiles in Northern Russia and Siberia, October 1908,' GB 3 DM 851, *Cobden-Unwin file*, Bristol University Library.

> of England, that they maintained that unceasing work of propaganda among soldiers, peasants, and artisans which has at last borne fruit.[176]

The Society wound-down formally in 1917, after *Free Russia* had stopped printing in 1915. Others, particularly in the labour movement continued to do similar work, while after 1917 White émigrés settled in London and publicised the new, Bolshevik terror.[177]

Conclusion

While most of its members saw 'politics' rather than 'humanitarianism' as their vocation, the SFRF nevertheless foregrounded humanitarian methods. Its main work was the journal *Free Russia*, alongside lecture tours and demonstrations. These focused on the suffering of prisoners, religious minorities, peasants and others in Russia, and exposing the cruelty and ineptitude inherent in Russian autocracy. The intention was to generate sympathy in Britain for the Russian people, as well as distaste for tsarism, and thereby promote the cause of reform (broadly conceived). The most direct work done by the SFRF was its defence of political exiles like Burtsev and, indirectly (since they broke no law and were not tried), Stepniak, in the court of public opinion. Burtsev's trial was criticised by *Free Russia*, while Stepniak was supported in a number of ways, ranging from friendship to admiration to financial support. Supporters backed Stepniak's right to agitate peacefully for the Russian cause in Britain and, implicitly, to agitate more violently in Russia.

The sympathy shown to Russians was built on social and historical identification. SFRF members focused on the positive effects and the justness of their support by comparing the Russian objects of their sympathy with landmarks in the progress of English liberty. The spread of sympathy was not here a consequence of humanitarian narratives of suffering; rather it was the result of emulation (Spence Watson of John Bright and Garibaldi, etc.) and lobbying. For liberals and nonconformists, equivalence was made between Russian nihilists and terrorists, and British historical figures like Cromwell, and between violence in Russia and civil protest in Britain. In this sense, sympathy took a rather more egalitarian and active form than is usual in philanthropy, with a strong equivalence between sympathy and action. On the one hand, the Russian opposition were seen as carrying out the same work as earlier English revolutionaries; on the other, the sympathetic journalism and campaigning of British observers was seen as a force just like, or complementary to, terrorism or civil disobedience in Russia. Because of this, support for Russians was an assertion of certain principles, common to radical liberals and internationalists. Russian liberalisation was part of a nexus of causes, and views of the operation of power, held by SFRF members and some others. Support for Russian reform went hand-in-hand with support for a more democratic foreign policy, less militarism, and anti-imperialism.

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[176] 'Free Russia,' *Manchester Guardian*, 7 July 1917, p. 25.

[177] Charlotte Alston, 'The Work of the Russian Liberation Committee in London 1919–1924,' *Slavonica* 14, no. 1 (2008): pp. 6–17.

This was partly a consequence of the exiles' ability to locate their ideas, and the notion of political exile, within a romantic tradition that was in living memory for many contemporaries.[178] It was helped immensely by Western journalists, Russian novelists and others, without which *Free Russia* would have had much less impact. It was also fostered by the presence of the exiles in the social and professional circles of British liberals, socialists and publishers, where they debated the same issues in the same terms. The distance between Russia and Britain and the controversial nature of the nihilist cause, meant that humanitarian methods were especially useful in gathering 'moral support' from British audiences. The portrayal of suffering allowed Russia liberation to be personalised and well as being freed somewhat from political controversy. The focus on real individuals, some being tried in Britain, or with the marks of a prison camp, enabled the disparate denunciation of autocracy and support for reformers and revolutionaries to be squared.[179]

That Stepniak made a reasonably successful cause was as much a consequence of the legal traditions of asylum, Britain's liberal forces and romantic traditions of nationalism, as the narration of suffering in Russia. The SFRF leveraged these resources in the British polity, and the networks supporting them, for the benefit of the Russian cause. The Russian question raised by the SFRF was not then an abstract question of political theory or historical bearing, but rather part of on-going debates. In that respect, the cause contributed as much to liberal and philanthropic self-consciousness as liberal philanthropists contributed to the cause. Most of all, this demonstrates that humanitarianism is strategic and historically specific. In this instance, it was built on the traditions of British liberalism, and the associated views of Britain, Russia and historical change. Indeed, while humanitarian techniques may have been employed, its efficacy was ensured by the ideological affinities between the Russian cause and its British supporters.

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[178] George Macaulay Trevelyan and Sir John Francis Rotton, *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy* (London: Longmans, Green, 1911).

[179] Both George Kennan and Felix Volkhovsky, a former prisoner, wore chains when giving lectures. Donald Senese, 'Felix Volkhovsky in London,' in *From the Other Shore: Russian Political Emigrants in Britain, 1880–1917*, ed. John Slatter (London: Frank Cass, 1984), p. 73; Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative.'

Britain and the Russian Famine, 1921–1923

> We were a strange jumble of people. It was probably difficult to find workers at the time – certainly several had no obvious qualifications for the job. There were some vague Tolstoyans of the garden-city type – Russia had naturally attracted them, and if they were honest with themselves they were certainly disappointed. Here and there, there was an energetic dynamic personality whom the wild and lonely life well suited.[1]
>
> *Francesca Wilson* (relief worker in Russia)

> One could not explain to that heartbroken man (heartbroken is the right word here) that his life and his family's depended on the charity of comfortable folk in England, men and women of the same Christian religion as himself, but whose faith and charity were subject to continual attacks by the mean-spirited everywhere. He could not be expected to understand that maybe a letter to the papers by some outraged peer, or a sermon by an indignant country parson, had condemned to death himself and all his family. We understood it, though, and it did not make life any easier for us to have this picture of our own countrymen always before us when listening to their desperate entreaties, watching their tears, tears of blood if that phrase has any meaning.[2]
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> *Ralph Fox* (relief worker in Russia)

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[1] Francesca M. Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos* (London: J. Murray, 1944), p. 157.

[2] Ralph Fox, *People of the Steppes* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd, 1925), p. 181.

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L. Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890–1923*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3_6

In 1921 the West was alerted to the burgeoning famine in one of the most fertile regions of communist Russia. Seven years of war, bad harvests and communist grain requisition had brought tens of millions of Russians to the point of starvation. Unable to deal with this overwhelming crisis, the Bolshevik government swallowed its pride and asked the West for help. The novelist Maxim Gorky and Patriarch Tikhon were persuaded to write to the famous humanitarian and polar explorer Fridjof Nansen and the archbishops of Canterbury and New York, in the hope that aid from the capitalist powers would follow. Nansen agreed that the famine was 'a calamity almost without parallel'.[3] The Prime Minister Lloyd George called it 'the most terrible affliction that has visited Europe or the world for centuries'.[4] Millions of dollars of aid was soon forthcoming from Europe and the USA, despite misgivings about helping the communist state. In Nansen's words, 'one after another, a certain number of Governments and the majority of national Red Cross Societies and European philanthropic organisations entered the humanitarian crusade'. [5]

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[3] 'A Call to the British People by Dr. Nansen,' Press Matter—For Publication, FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity Appeals*, LSF.

[4] 'The Agony of Russia: Is it Nothing to You?' FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity Appeals*, LSF.

[5] Nations, *Report on Economic Conditions in Russia*, p. 103. Nansen led the European relief organisations under the International Russian Relief Committee (IRRC) after signing an agreement with the Soviet government in August 1921. Herbert Hoover, a mining magnate and strong anti-communist who had run successful relief operations in Belgium in the First World War, signed a separate agreement with the Soviets around the same time to allow his American Relief Administration (ARA) to administer large-scale relief in the famine. From Britain, the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee (FWVRC), the Save the Children Fund (SCF) and the Imperial War Relief Fund (IWRF) all offered relief, as did several American faith-based charities such as the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and others such as the Swedish Red Cross. The ARA's colossal operations have been analysed in terms of their contribution to the famine relief and the relations between the USA and the Soviet Union. SCF's advertising strategies and ideological positioning have been analysed. The American Friends' Service Committee's (AFSC) presentation of Quakerism has been considered, as has the work of the MCC and the JDC. Harold Henry Fisher, *The Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919–1923. The Operations of the American Relief Administration*. [With a Map.] (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927); Bertrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy034/2002005860.html; Rodney Breen, 'Saving Enemy Children: Save the Children's Russian Relief Operation, 1921–1923,' *Disasters* 18, no. 3 (1994): pp. 221–237; Emily Baughan, '"Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!" Empire, Internationalism and the Save the

Humanitarians expanded their horizons and sharpened their tools to meet the challenge presented by the famine, but historians dispute the nature and consequences of their work.[6] Relief workers were driven to travel to the famine region by idealism, but making their work reflect these ideals was difficult. Francesca Wilson wanted a more professional, less 'Victorian,' relief effort.[7] Ralph Fox, along with many pacifists, leftists, Quakers, and others, hoped for a broader political shift in British society.[8] Herbert Hoover's relief aimed to show the superiority of American capitalism. Such desires were inseparable from the more tangible aim of feeding starving Russians. Millions were fed by the relief agencies, but the moral and political significance of this gesture, and the best methods, were strongly contested. Both the spectre of communism and more prosaic debates about the delivery of aid would shape the way

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Children Fund in Inter-War Britain,' *Historical Research* 86, no. 231 (2013): pp. 116–137; David McFadden and Claire Gorfinkel, *Constructive Spirit: Quakers in Revolutionary Russia* (Pasadena: Intentional Productions, 2004); James C. Juhnke, 'Mennonite Benevolence and Revitalization in the Wake of World War I,' *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 60 (1986): pp. 15–30; Calvin Wall Redekop, 'The 'MCC Ethos' and the Organizational Revolution,' *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 70 (1996): pp. 107–132; Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Joint Distribution Committee*, 1929–*1939* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974).

[6] According to Cabanes, the famine was part of a post-war period in which a new form of 'transnational rights' for victims of humanitarian crises came into being. He highlights the new networks of idealistic experts and activists working across Europe to this end: Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). The aid-giving also strengthened states, with Sasson arguing that 'through humanitarian aid, Britain assumed a new role on a global stage.' She shows the continuity of methods and workers between the British Empire and the new humanitarianism of the period 'the Russian famine gave rise to the first generation of experts who gained their knowledge in the empire and then moved to advise international agencies like the League of Nations, the World Health Organization, and the Food and Agriculture Organization. It became the testing ground for many international aid organizations in the twentieth century.' Tehila Sasson, 'From Empire to Humanity: The Russian Famine and the Imperial Origins of International Humanitarianism,' *Journal of British Studies* 55, no. 3 (2016): p. 522.

[7] Ellen Ross, 'Thinking about Francesca Wilson and the Victorian Imaginary that Surrounded her Philanthropic Work,' *Journal of Victorian Culture Online*, 2 June 2014, http://blogs.tandf.co.uk/jvc/2014/06/02/thinking-about-francesca-wilson-and-the-victorian-imaginery-that-surronded-her, accessed on 4 August 2014.

[8] Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924.*

these ideals actually translated into practice. By focusing mainly on the FWVRC, we can see how decisions about relief, such as where to operate, how to distribute, who to feed, and how to co-ordinate with the Soviet state, were made. It has been an argument of this book that the humanitarian attention given to Russia was the result of a number of distinct traditions, practices and contextually specific interests. This chapter shows the tensions between the aims of one organisation and the increasingly professionalised and standardised humanitarian sphere. It contextualises the evolving relief practices in the ideological aims of the relief agencies, the politics of helping communist Russia, and all within the dynamics of a complex system of humanitarian relief.

Ideology and Relief

The Friends' Emergency and War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC) came into the famine with a distinct set of motivations, many of which were rooted as much in debates about the nature of Quakerism as in questions over humanitarianism, communism and capitalism. Following the Manchester Conference in 1895, British Quakerism took a 'liberal turn'. The Doukhobor campaign would not be typical of future Quaker work; rather, war and famine relief would come to be the most prominent aspect of Quakerism, although concern for sects, Quakerism and personal religion more generally would echo through their work. Neither would missionary work, led by Evangelical Friends, be central to British Quakerism.[9] Instead the growing militarism of Britain, shown first by the Boer War and then more decisively by the First World War, came to be the most pressing issue in Quaker eyes. This would move Quakerism away from its relatively easy identification with British liberalism, as in the 1891–1892 famine work or the career of Robert Spence Watson.[10] The First World War was not just an external problem that Quaker conscience extended to address; the conscription requirement raised personal and corporate dilemmas throughout the society. For some, the 'alternative service' of medical work permitted by the conscription tribunals was a betrayal. In large part, though, Quakerism became increasingly identified with relief work.

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[9] The Friends Foreign Mission Association was formed in 1868 and only become an official committee of Yearly Meeting in 1918, before being incorporated into the Friends Service Council in 1927.

[10] After the First World War, Quakers made a 'somewhat uneasy' alliance with the Labour Party based on pacifism. Thomas C. Kennedy, *British Quakerism, 1860–1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 426.

Relief was meant to be an expression of Quakerism. Given the sect's qualms about organisation, this was not straightforward, in theory or practice. The efforts in Soviet Russia came at a time when Quaker humanitarian work was both being expanded and put onto a more permanent basis. The problem was that genuine concern would no longer necessarily be aligned with action. Quakers were wary of 'standing committees' and permanent staff—excepting the general Meeting for Sufferings—and tended to look at problems on a case-by-case basis.[11] Quaker relief in Russia was undertaken by the FWVRC, revived to offer relief in the First World War.[12] The continent-wide war put the FWVRC on a new footing. Quaker work was supposed to derive from individual 'concern', yet the FWVRC worked in Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Poland, France and Germany. This raised the question of whether funds should be pooled and allocated to the most needy areas, or funds should be allocated based on the donors' wishes.

Seen from the perspective of the FWVRC as a whole, the 'Russian field' was not distinct and was shaped by resources as much as 'concern', or even need. It was argued, for example, that the FWVRC should expand its operations in Russia in line with decline in France.[13] The work of the FWVRC was therefore addressed as much to a general problem (the war) as to individuals' concern about manifestations of that problem (e.g. the Russian famine). Although the general and the specific largely coincided, the new permanent organisation was a significant break from Quaker traditions (Fig. 1).

The first Quakers to enter Russia, following an appeal from the Russian Foreign Minister, listed a desire for 'personal service' as one feature of their proposed relief. They said that help with medicine and organisation was needed in the provinces and put an advertisement in

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[11] Scott, *Quakers in Russia*, p. 129.

[12] It had been formed to help in the Franco-Prussian war, then set down, then revived in 1878 and 1912, each time on a temporary basis. The Council for International Service and the Friends Service Union were standing bodies which had some continuity of intent and personnel with the FWVRC.

[13] Minute, 18 March 1919, *Russian and Polish Subcommittee*, FWEVRC, LSF.

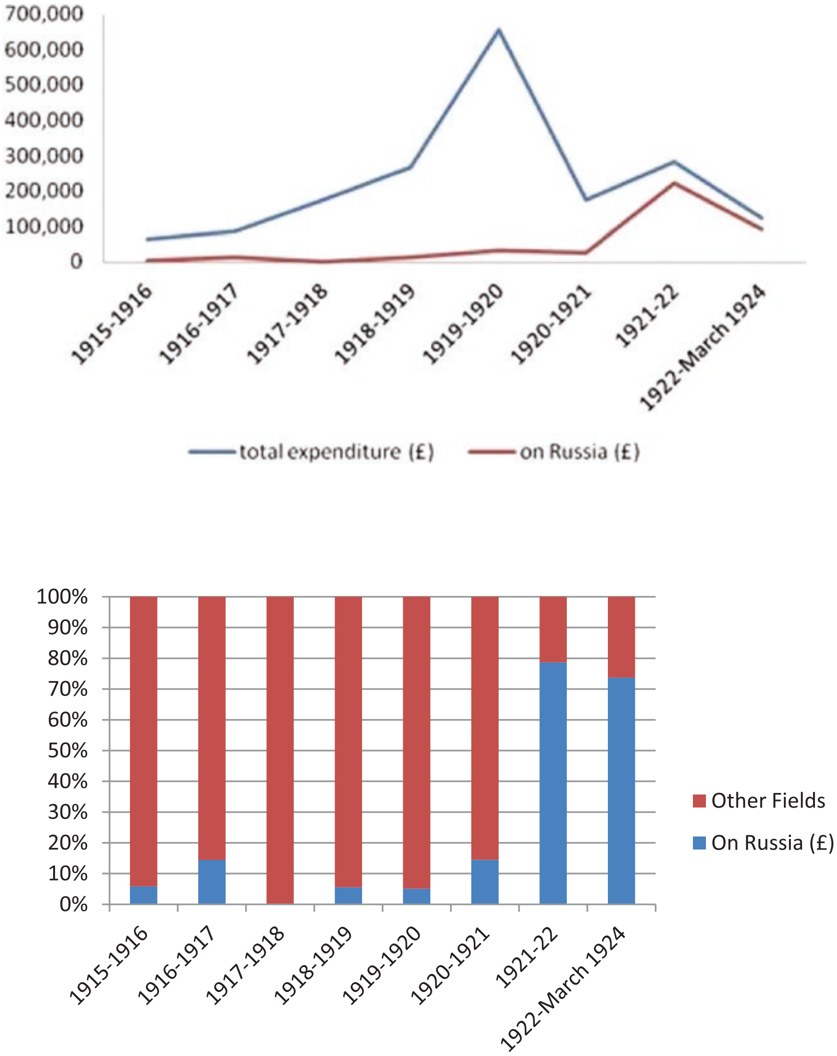

Fig. 1 FWVRC expenditure, overall and on Russian field, 1915–1924 (£). The spike in 1919–1920 is a result of contributions from the SCF fund and the British treasury (£160,366 and £163,432, respectively) for post-war relief

the *Friend* for trained medical staff.[14] The phrase 'personal service' hints at Quaker ideals of directly given aid, while the hiring of experts was a relatively new departure. 'Personal service' still remained prominent as an ideal, but it became part of the management of a large organisation. Individual motivation would now be one aspect of staffing decisions, weighed equally with qualifications, availability and so on. This can be seen most prominently in Asquith's pamphlet on Quaker relief, written in 1943 as a way of learning lessons from the 1921 famine for workers about to undertake relief in the Second World War. 'Concern', the Quaker term for the religious motivation to help, is absent. Instead, workers' 'discipline' and skills are cited as factors that can be transferred to future relief projects. Discipline was needed, for instance, to eat well while others were starving, and most importantly to stick to the feeding lists and avoid 'the worst kind of false kindness to feed people when there is no prospect of maintaining the supply.'[15]

The FWVRC aimed to define a Quaker presence separate from the more business-like American Relief Administration (ARA). Aspirations to 'Quaker embassies' and other internationalist schemes remained common in Quaker publications like the *Friend* and more specific relief publications like *Reconstruction* and *International Service*.[16] Early on, however, because of the scale of the problems in Russia—millions starving, displaced or diseased—and the difficulties of even getting into the country, relief took precedence. At a conference at Reval (modern-day Tallinn), one FWVRC worker, Gregory Welch, argued that 'international ideals' and embassies should be promoted when the 'time is ripe' following relief. The views of the leader of the FWVRC in Russia, Arthur Watts, were more cautious. Regarding embassies, he noted several points: (1) that the FWVRC were Christians sufficiently loving to give 'disinterested physical relief'; (2) that relief should not be used as a way to get permission to spread views, but should itself be the 'simple expression' of Christianity; and (3) that embassies would be refused by the government right now, but there was nothing to stop individual FWVRC workers meeting Tolstoyans or having conversations with Russians.[17]

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[14] Minutes 8 and 10, *Friends' Relief Committee, General and Executive Committee*, 2/6/1916, FEWVRC/M4, Friends' Emergency and War Victims Relief Committee (FEWVRC), LSF.

[15] Asquith, *Famine*, p. 25.

[16] The concept of Quaker embassies came from Carl Heath and bore some fruit in the post-war years. Carl Heath, 'Quaker Embassies' (Pelican Press, 1917).

There were significant differences in the mode of giving between the FWVRC and Hoover's ARA. When, in August 1921, the ARA and IRRC made separate agreements with the Russian government, British Quakers decided to work under the IRRC and to administer their own area, while the American Friends' Service Committee (AFSC) worked under Herbert Hoover's ARA. The ARA emphasised scale and efficiency above more sentimental philanthropic traditions and was at times in disagreement with the Quakers on this issue. Summarising these differences after several years of relief, Ruth Fry, Honorary Secretary of the FWVRC, wrote:

> we in England feel strongly the great desire of having what seems to America a very large personnel, because we believe in personal intercourse and that the essence of our message can only be given individually. The Americans on the other hand, hold equally strongly the belief that sporadic effort is simply wasted and what is wanted is well-organized work on a sufficient scale to make a real contribution of the well-being of a country so that it may be clearly recognized.[18]

Similarly, Hoover wrote to the American Quaker Anna Haines:

> If I were to make a summary as to my judgement of your state of mind, I should say it is due to a visualization of relief problems in the terms of individual givers and individual sufferers instead of in terms of our political institutions, our public sentiment, and the needs and means of saving the lives of millions.[19]

In this way, the long-standing dilemma about giving form to Quaker spirituality was mixed with more practical issues about its jurisdiction relative to other relief and governments. Essentially, the need to make a statement that could match the 'social evils' of war, inequality and so on in scale, necessitated standing committees and bureaucracies, and thus changing the nature of the intervention. The insertion of Quaker ideals and motivations was, in practice, an afterthought. However, the need to display their motives remained in the minds of Quaker relief workers as an ideal, and perhaps goes some way to explaining divergences from the ARA or SCF.

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[17] Frederic J. Libby and William Albright, 'Report on Reval Conference,' 22 December 1920, FEWVRC/Box 7/ Parcel 4/Folder 5, *Reval*, LSF.

[18] Ruth Fry, 'letter to?,' 30 April 1923, FEWVRC 7/4/7, *Visits to Russia*, LSF.

[19] To Anna Haines, quoted in Patenaude, Big Show in Bololand: Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*, p. 604.

Quaker dilemmas did not exist in a vacuum; the church was seeking to make a statement in relation to the world in general. As scholarship on the 1891–1892 famine has shown, publicity and politics were important factors in portraying the causes and severity of the famine, and shaping the response. The attention to Russia was not a direct result of the amount of suffering, but was significantly refracted through politics, media and institutions. Writing twenty years later, Asquith, one of the more dispassionate observers, put it that the famine was the 'worst…in Europe in modern times.'[20] The significance of the famine is confirmed by modern comparative analysis,[21] but the separation of 1921 from the preceding seven years of suffering caused by war is a more artificial distinction. The response to the Russian famine as a humanitarian problem, then, must be seen as part of negotiations between the Soviet government and Western relief agencies and governments, over the specifics of relief and broader questions of economics, politics and internationalism. Western recognition of the Soviet Union, Soviet recognition of Western debt and the opening up of trade were all under debate.[22] Claims about the famine were part of these negotiations.

The Soviet state mobilised its cultural resources to attract aid and deflect accusations that communist policies had caused the famine. Prominent Russian liberals and artists like the writer Maxim Gorky or ballerina Lydia Lopokova publicised the famine, while Western visitors were allowed into Russia as part of an 'unprecedented system for receiving foreign visitors and influencing the image of the Soviet Union abroad.'[23] The Russian Trade Delegation in London also worked to this end, with its magazine, the *Russian Information Review*, publishing reports on the famine from October 1921 to September 1922. That both supporters and opponents of the Bolsheviks were aware that Russia's economy was struggling from seven years of war perhaps made them less reluctant to blame the Soviets entirely for the famine. Hoover's ARA had already attempted to work in the country and the Quaker FWVRC had had several workers in Buzuluk (in Samara province) since 1916. Russia also attracted attention from the West, which feared cholera and typhus outbreaks moving from there.[24] Indeed, the FWVRC made similarly bleak descriptions of Russia's condition in 1918: 'The Bitter Cry of Russia' claimed that 'Twelve million refugees from a devastated area as large as the whole of France and Belgium are scattered for thousands of miles over European Russia and in Turkestan and Siberia.'[25] The figures cited for the famine were around twenty million starving (they varied between estimates), so this was seen to be a problem of a similar scale. However, it was only after the international attention following Gorky's appeals and the agreements made with Russia by the and ARA that the international response began to match the problem.

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[20] Asquith, *Famine*, p. 14.

[21] An estimated 9 million dead with a mortality rate of 6%, which makes it comparable on both measures to the 1932–1933 Soviet famine, the 1927 Chinese famine, the 1942–1944 Bengal famine and the 1876–1879 Indian famine: Cormac Ó Gráda, *Famine*: A Short History (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 23.

[22] Andrew Williams, 'The Genoa Conference of 1922: Lloyd George and the Politics of Recognition,' in *Genoa, Rapallo, and European Reconstruction in 1922*, ed. Alex Frohn, Carole Fink and Jurgen Heideking (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 29–48.

Two frameworks made the 1921–1923 famine relief a distinctive field. The first was the political debate over the origins of the famine and character of the Bolshevik regime. Hundreds of thousands of White refugees received aid from national Red Cross organisations and other charities in Europe, Asia and America. Britain only hosted 8000–10,000 White exiles as of 1 January 1922, so perhaps did not witness as strong an anti-Bolshevik critique as other countries.[26] The Russian Liberation Committee, a group set up in London by liberal and conservative exiles,[27] published a pamphlet claiming that 'the famine is caused by the entire economic system of the Soviet'.[28] Most observers and aid organisations attributed some blame to the Bolsheviks, although the Quakers and SCF were less willing to state this publicly.[29] These voices did not stifle the relief efforts; other Russian liberals worked in the Soviet relief committee and sought to attract Western aid and attention.[30]

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[23] Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Union, 1921–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 30.

[24] M.A. Balinska, 'Assistance Not Mere Relief: The Epidemic Commission of the League of Nations 1920–1933,' in *International Health Organizations and Movements, 1918–1939*, ed. Paul Weindling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 96–99.

[25] McFadden and Gorfinkel, *Constructive Spirit*, p. 28; From the AFSC's Bulletin No. 16, 1918.

[26] Marc Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 27–31, 202.

Many emphasised that Bolshevik policies were not the only, or not the main, cause of the famine. The Russian Trade Delegation stressed the effects of war, blockade and the Western countries' refusal to agree co-operation measures at the Brussels, Genoa or Hague conferences.[31] In addition, social and economic arrangements particular to Russia and not necessarily beginning with the Bolsheviks were invoked.[32] Barnes-Steveni, a journalist who had reported on the 1891–1892 famine, emphasised the role of the allied blockade, the war, the climate and the long-term nature of Russia's underdevelopment and argued that communist policies has only 'intensified' the famine at most. Indeed, most of his pamphlet in support of the famine charities was filled with reports from 1891–1892.[33] This line of thought encouraged donations, the use of reconstructive methods and even allowed co-operation with Bolsheviks.

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[27] Charlotte Alston, 'The Work of the Russian Liberation Committee in London 1919–1924,' *Slavonica* 14, no. 1 (2008): pp. 6–17.

[28] Russian Liberation Committee, 'The Famine,' *Bulletin of the Russian Liberation Committee*, June 25, 1922; P.N. Miliuikov, *Russia to-Day and to-Morrow* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 237.

[29] Linda Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876–1928* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 180–181.

[30] 'The appeals from Russia are echoed by the Council of the Exiles in Paris, which represents the groups most resolutely opposed to the Communists,' *The Prime Minister on the Russian Famine*, Imperial War Relief Fund, August 1921; 'The Russian Famine,' *Spectator*, 12 August 1921, p. 15.

[31] *Russian Information and Review*, *passim.*

[32] M. Philips Price, *My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1921). Philips-Price was a correspondent for the Manchester Guardian and later a Labour MP. His book emphasises the failures of the 1861 emancipation; Similarly, Leonid Krassin, speaking in London, emphasised that famines 'recur periodically' in Russia. 'Krassin on the Famine,' *Russian Information and Review*, Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 1921, p. 52.

[33] W. Barnes Steveni, *Through Famine-Stricken Russia* (London: Sampson Low, 1892), p. 6.

By far the most important angle on the famine was Hoover's belief that efficient relief, if properly delineated, could serve as anti-Bolshevik propaganda much better than ignoring the famine.[34]

The British charities sought to delineate their relief from political questions, and to some extent the professionalisation of relief workers did shift humanitarianism into a separate sphere. The relief effort was 'one of the first instances of modern disaster relief with efforts to co-ordinate the work of relief teams.'[35] The Russian field was the first time the SCF used its own workers rather than distributing to local funds, for instance.[36] The ARA's methods can be traced through to CARE in the 1940s, and other organisations also gained significant experience in this field.[37] The famine helped to define these organisations, certain patterns of organisation and of relief practice. Staff and ideas transferred between fields of relief. Michael Asquith's pamphlet was written in 1943 with post-war relief in mind and describes itself as a good book for administrators of relief.[38] It drew lessons from this Russian work in addition to Indian famines of the late nineteenth century, in terms of the economics of famine in general and the practicalities of relief. It also had a foreword by Melville Mackenzie, who worked for the Quaker relief in Buzuluk and later worked for the League of Nations Health Committee.[39] The importance of what historians of science call 'epistemic communities' is therefore evident.[40] Asquith outlined some of the 'key administrative personnel' needed for relief organisations in future that should be selected in advance, including 'shadow units' to assess the area and administer larger staff later. He listed typists, nurses, dieticians, linguists, mechanics and others.[41] For Asquith, the lack of specialised staff and planning for likely requirements was a weakness of the Friends' effort.

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[34] Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*, p. 33.

[35] Paul Weindling, 'Introduction: Constructing International Health Between the Wars,' in *International Health Organisations and Movements Between the Wars*, ed. Paul Weindling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 4.

[36] Kathleen Freeman, *If Any Man Build: The History of the Save the Children Fund* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965); Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action*, p. 180.

[37] CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe) was founded by a member of the ARA and shows a similarity of methods.

[38] Asquith, *Famine*, p. 6.

[39] M.D. Dubin, 'The League of Nations Organisation,' in *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918–1939*, ed. Paul Weindling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 70; Sasson and Vernon, 'Practising the British Way of Famine: Technologies of Relief, 1770–1985,' p. 6.

[40] Weindling, 'Introduction: Constructing International Health Between the Wars,' p. 4.

Given the importance of personnel in determining the efficacy and ethos of relief organisations, the FWVRC vacillated on how to choose its staff. The FWVRC did not develop a systematic staffing policy, a quota for Quaker membership (as in some other Quaker humanitarian organisations) or an index of staff backgrounds.[42] The records of committees and the memoirs of relief workers reveal the debates on this question, however.[43] The FWVRC Finances and General Purposes Committee, in a special meeting on 5 April 1921, stated that there was a 'conspicuous need' among workers for a religious touch since 'in some cases there was hardly a speaking relationship with the Society of Friends'. It also pointed to a need for more organisation and economic expertise, suggesting that 'the bogey of capitalism can be over-estimated' [by more radical British friends] and that perhaps the USA could supply these. The statement that 'Professional mission workers and radical extremists were not required…experienced workers [are] required – not merely people who were at a "loose end"' is also very suggestive. Already in 1920, FWVRC commissioners had recommended 'older and more experienced Friends of business ability in the field.'[44] Workers themselves manifested an anxiety about the 'spiritual significance' of the work, something often discussed at relief workers' conferences (which began, in Quaker fashion, with a few minutes' silence). It was also an issue further up the hierarchy. At one point, the Russia and Poland Sub-committee suggested considering the relation of famine work to the Quakers' more broadly orientated

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[41] Asquith, *Famine*, p. 39.

[42] Storr suggests that informal networks were important for recruitment, particularly among non-Friends. Also that there was a 'selection process'—although there are no records—and informal criteria including pacifism and certain skills like shorthand: Storr, *Excluded from the Record*, pp. 39, 157–158.

[43] There was an interviewing process: for example, Francesca Wilson remembers being asked by Ruth Fry whether her desire to serve abroad was 'a genuine concern for Friends' work and the relief of the unfortunate, or only love of excitement?' and rejected. She did end up working for the Friends through family connections, however: Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos*, p. 3.

[44] Minute 390, 29 June 1920, *Finance and General Purposes Committee*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

Council for International Service and that they should collect information from returning workers by making a questionnaire so that the question of 'higher purpose' could be 'held constantly in mind.'[45]

To a large extent, the FWVRC and SCF were driven by the availability of staff, who were often pacifists or internationalists of some sort, but also manifested professional motivations.[46] The ARA, in contrast, was largely staffed by US ex-servicemen ('doughboys'), some of whom would go on to found CARE.[47] The FWVRC's *International Service* magazine in June 1922 included a 'Situations Wanted' column:

> Those past workers of the Relief Missions who are seeking employment and wish to make their requirements known, should send a brief statement of their qualifications and experience (addressed to the Publicity Department…) and room will be found if possible in the immediately succeeding issue. Readers of International Service who can offer employment are urged to get in touch with late workers who need it.
>
> C. O. (Absolutist) wants work, outdoors if possible, as Traveller or Agent. Fifteen years as insurance agent; two years as assistant tax collector; three years with Friends' Relief Committee (Luggage, Personnel and Passport-Departments). G.T. Montgomery, 18B Peckham Road, London, S.E.5.[48]

The nurse Muriel Payne was similarly careerist. Having been rejected by the SCF who refused to send women to the famine area, she was given a job with the FWVRC after having 'enumerated [her] qualifications'.[49] In her memoir she described her time in Russia more from the perspective of the work done, the methods used and how busy she was than in terms of the suffering of the children or the feelings of kindness or gratitude that may have been present. For instance, she recounted being 'thrilled at the thought' of taking over a district with 67,000 to feed.[50] Gertrude Powick was a university-educated daughter of a Congregationalist minister. As well as working as a teacher she engaged in women's suffrage activism. When the war began, she approached various aid organisations and sought to prepare herself by taking courses in first aid, driving, French and Pelmanism, as well as helping Belgian refugees. The FWVRC were impressed with her range of skills and accepted her application to work in relief on the continent.[51] Although she was not a Quaker, and had two brothers in the armed forces, she nevertheless saw a role for herself with the pacifist-inspired organisation. The FWVRC valued her skills, and did not seem to mind that she was not a practising Quaker. For Powicke and others like her, the work of the FWVRC only had a loose fit with Quakerism, more to do with the values of charity, service and Christianity in general than Quakerism, or even pacifism in this case.

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[45] Minute, 18 February 1919, *Russian and Polish Subcommittee*, FEWVRC, LSF. There is no evidence of such a questionnaire.

[46] Storr focuses on this aspect of volunteering for relief or refugee work: Storr, *Excluded from the Record*.

[47] Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*, pp. 7–9.

[48] *International Service*, June 1922, p. 10. This column does not seem to have been continued in later editions.

[49] Payne, *Plague, Pestilence and Famine*, p. 20.

Professional motives were enmeshed in ideological ones, sometimes more or sometimes less closely fitted to Quakerism. The Quaker relief in Russia was led by Anna Haines (an American nurse) and the British Friend Arthur Watts. Watts had been educated at Quaker schools, worked for his father's joinery business, was involved in adult schools and the labour movement, imprisoned for conscientious objection and ultimately stayed in Soviet Russia after the Quakers left.[52] Haines had been to Quaker schools, worked at hospitals, the Pennsylvania School for Social and Health Work, public schools, the children's bureau, had done settlement work in Philadelphia, been a housing inspector, as well as working for the American Friends' Service Committee (AFSC) and Red Cross in Russia. Similar biographies (involved in social work, pacifism and a reaction against the perceived causes of the war) are shared by other workers.

Francesca Wilson is a good example of a career relief worker from a Quaker background. She also worked in Austria, Serbia, Russia and other places before continuing as a relief worker for Quaker organisations. Her pamphlet, *Advice to Relief Workers Based on Personal Experiences in the Field* (1945), may therefore be taken as representing an important strand of relief practice. She suggested the importance of knowing basic survey methods, of language skills, flexibility, women relief workers and the use of new nutritional technologies. She noted that UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), the Red Cross (both 1 week), the British Council (6 months) and the Friends' Relief Service (3 months) all ran courses for relief workers, covering administration, nursing and so on.[53] The humanitarian work in the famine did not always reach Wilson's ideal of professionalism. She described her time in the Russian famine:

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[50] Ibid., p. 57.

[51] Susan Pares, *Displaced by War: Gertrude Powicke and Quaker Relief in France and Poland 1915–1919* (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2015), pp. 35–39.

[52] 'Arthur Watts,' *Dictionary of Quaker Biography*, LSF.

> We were a strange jumble of people. It was probably difficult to find workers at the time – certainly several had no obvious qualifications for the job. There were some vague Tolstoyans of the garden-city type – Russia had naturally attracted them, and if they were honest with themselves they were certainly disappointed. Here and there, there was an energetic dynamic personality whom the wild and lonely life well suited.[54]

She also suggested that 'most relief is for the helpless and is more a woman's job than a man's.'[55] The figureheads Eglantyne Jebb (SCF) and Fry (FWVRC) were both rich women who had previous experience in philanthropy. For both, humanitarian work was one of the relatively few activities that could be undertaken and, given their ideals and contemporary thinking on charity and peace, was an attractive route. This was not a unique trajectory.[56]

The flow of staff between different relief organisations, universities and other fields of expertise, shows how the relief field was increasingly shaped by expertise as much as ideals. Herta Kraus, who worked for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in the famine and later for the Quakers after World War Two, and as a university lecturer in the USA, is a good example of this. Originally a Jew before converting to Quakerism, she had a doctorate in childcare statistics.[57] Outsiders were thereby attracted to Quakerism through relief rather than religion. Kennedy notes that Walter Ayles MP was 'representative of an emerging breed of British Friend, unconnected with the society by birth and without much sense of interest in historic Quakerism, but socially active and staunchly pacifist.'[58] The famine work also attracted those with left-wing sympathies. Ralph Fox, who worked for the FWVRC, was a founding member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.[59] Three FWVRC workers used their time in Russia to produce studies for the Vanguard Studies of Soviet Russia series.[60] These were: *Woman in Soviet Russia* by Jessica Smith, *Village Life Under the Soviets* by Karl Borders and *Health Work in Soviet Russia* by Anna J. Haines. Anna Louise Strong was a left-wing journalist who wrote for the Quakers. Her book on the new Russia is full of praise and she would later write about Maoist China. John Rickman wrote articles for the *Atlantic*, the *Nation* and later the *Lancet* but these were academic in character and not interested in promoting the FWVRC per se.[61] Interest in Russia (not just communism) was also important, as in the case of Francesca Wilson who adopted refugee children for shorter or longer periods of time, but had a particular affinity for Russian children because of her cultural interests.[62] The desires and capabilities of staff drove the effort as much as they fulfilled roles set by London.

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[53] Francesca M. Wilson, *Advice to Relief Workers Based on Personal Experience in the Field* (London: John Murray and Friends Relief Service, 1945).

[54] Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos*, p. 157.

[55] Wilson, *Advice to Relief Workers*, p. 9.

[56] Sybil Oldfield, 'England's Cassandras in World War One,' in *This Working Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain 1914–1945*, ed. Sybil Oldfield (London: Taylor and Francis, 1994), pp. 89–100; Susan Pedersen, 'Eleanor Rathbone (1872–1946): The Victorian Family Under the Daughter's Eye,' in *After the Victorians: Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain: Essays in Memory of John Clive*, ed. Susan Pedersen and Peter Mandler (London: Routledge, 1994); Georgina Brewis, 'From Working Parties to Social Work: Middle-Class Girls' Education and Social Service 1890–1914,' *History of Education* 38, no. 6 (2009): pp. 761–777.

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[57] Kraus, *International Relief in Action: 1914–1943.*

[58] Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, p. 417; See also examples in: Sybil Oldfield, *Women Humanitarians: Doers of the Word, a Biographical Dictionary of British Women Active between 1900–1950* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

[59] Fox, *People of the Steppes.*

[60] Edited by Jerome Davis, a labour organiser from Yale University, and published by the Vanguard Press owned by the left-wing Garland Fund. The other titles were: How the Soviets Work, by H.N. Brailsford; The Economic Organization of the Soviet Union, by Scott Nearing and Jack Hardy; The New Schools of Russia, by Lucy L.W. Wilson; Religion Under the Soviets, by Julius F; Civil Liberties in Russia, by Roger Baldwin; The Jews and National Minorities in Russia, by Avrahm Yarmolinksy; Soviet Russia and Her Neighbors, by R. Page Arnot; Art and Culture in Soviet Russia, by Joseph Freeman, Ernestine Evans, Louis Lozowick, Babette Deutsch and Lee Simonson.

[61] Re-published in Geoffrey Gorer and John Rickman, *The People of Great Russia: A Psychological Study* (London: Cresset Press, 1949).

As is shown by the motivations of these staff, while not usually (except in a few cases) conceived as a way of helping communist Russia, supporting relief work was only political in the sense that it was conceived as form of a more enlightened, internationalist citizenship. The fund for the 1891–2 famine had emphasised its cost-efficiency ('that the cost of keeping the Russian peasantry alive will probably not exceed 1/2d per head per day'). The Friends' 1921 appeal shifted the weight of this idea by appealing for a greater equivalence between donor and recipient. Considerable material and moral sacrifice was now called for. Whereas the 1891–2 famine was implicitly a demonstration of the efficiency of British intervention in backward Russia, here the famine acted as a moral test for the British people. In 1891–2, that half a penny—or whatever small amount—would save a life for a certain period of time suggested that relatively small donations from Britain could solve the problem without inconveniencing the givers. It was, of course, a much smaller famine. Nevertheless, the 1921 famine appeal was marked by a constant desire for expansion, and thus greater demands on the British people.

The Friends' campaign was perhaps more aggressive than those of the SCF or IWRF in this respect. One column asked readers to 'Sell all thou hast'—including furniture.[63] On a more pacifist note, the story of a donation deriving from a navy prize and the income from a war loan that the donor no longer believed to be ethical was noted.[64] The *International Service* magazine reported that in Holland, a lantern operator who found 'two large parcels of sandwiches thrown away after a picnic party just after our first lecture at Bilthoven, conceived the idea of placing the contents of both parcels on a dish, photographing them, making the photographs into a slide, (all within 24 hours), and showing it at our next meeting at Utrecht the following night.'[65] Along these lines a 'bread and butter week' where every family was encouraged to save the price of one loaf and 1lb butter for Russians was developed. This was also instituted in Sweden.[66] This was not an innovation of the Society of Friends as it had similarities with Hoover's 'wheatless Wednesdays and flourless "victory meals."'[67] Nevertheless, it demonstrates that the Quakers believed that humanitarianism now had a more fundamental role in British life, and that British civil society should take this foreign problem as seriously as it had the war effort.

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[62] Sian Lliwen Roberts, 'Place, life histories and the politics of relief: Episodes in the life of Francesca Wilson, humanitarian educator activist' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010), pp. 135–136.

[63] *International Service*, February 1922, no. 17, p. 4; Matthew 19:21.

[64] *International Service*, December 1922, p. 7.

[65] 'Holland and the Russian Famine,' *International Service*, May 1922, p. 8.

One reason was the changed ideas about British and international society. In 1891–2, it was implied that British society and institutions could have a civilising effect on the rest of the world. Links with members of Russian civil society meant that this was not entirely one-sided, but these latter groups were only seen as worthy to the extent that they were outposts of Western, liberal or Christian values in a backward country. In 1921 pacifists and some liberals had a much greater sense of the Russian cause reflecting back on Britain and seeking to reinvigorate the country's moral state following a destructive war. This was, of course, most true for those who went to Russia and acted as relief workers or journalists. Phillip Gibbs' state-of-Europe novel, *The Middle of the Road* (1922), for example, describes a visit to the famine area as 'a great adventure of the soul' and a chance to put things in perspective.[68] Some, like Ralph Fox, saw the relief as a way to advance communism.

The moral and political claims made about relief and British civil society were unstable and contested. Although British relief was—unlike the ARA's state-funded effort—mostly voluntary, it was still criticised by the *Daily Express* on the grounds that it was representing the nation—by using government and church figureheads, for example: 'We believe that the policy of sending large sums drawn from private benevolence out of the country, while so many of our own people in Cornwall and elsewhere are in tragic distress, is wrong and foolish.'[69] Indeed, while the roots of the SCF and FWVRC were largely pacifist and feminist, they often made their appeals to the whole nation.[70] A Friends' appeal thus stressed that the Russian Famine Relief Fund 'is signed by leading men and women of every creed, religious and political, including the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Bourne, the Lord Chancellor and Mr. H. H. Asquith. IT IS THE BRITISH NATIONAL APPEAL FOR RUSSIA.' The FWVRC argued that helping Russia would help British industry, noting that the 'Unemployed Support Relief of Russia' since credits for Russia would create demand for English industries[71] and quoted Keynes in support of this view.[72] Not all British citizens agreed with the charities' characterisation of British civil society as giving willingly to Russia. Following a call from Eleanor Rathbone and others not to spend at Christmas, the *Daily Express* argued 'This is a reply to those who urge that money should not be spent this Christmas. Such a course could only result in wrecking trade and increasing unemployment.'[73] They also noted a Seaman's Union protest at a Quaker famine appeal where the protesters were ex-servicemen and the speakers Quakers.[74]

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[66] *International Service*, March 1922, p. 8.

[67] Nick Cullather, 'The Foreign Policy of the Calorie,' *American Historical Review* 112, no. 2 (2007): p. 348.

[68] Philip Gibbs, *The Middle of the Road: A Novel* (New York: Doran, 1923), p. 318. Reginald Pound, 'Gibbs, Sir Philip Armand Hamilton (1877–1962)', rev. A.J.A. Morris, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33387, accessed 1 May 2013.

[69] *Daily Express*, 25th November 1921.

The SFC seems to have taken its assumed role as representatives of the British interest seriously. Lord Weardale wrote to the *Daily Express* emphasising British traditions of charity and the national interest in Russia, going as far as to argue that if assurances 'that the government denies the need for relief and in any event thinks that at the present time relief should not be given and that it is undesirable to send out anything from the country for assistance outside Great Britain we will without hesitation although with great grief have to consider the propriety of entirely closing down our work.'[75] And, while the government's opinion may have been in favour of helping Russian recovery, political considerations weighed heavily enough for Lloyd George to refuse to grant a credit to Russia. He wrote to the All-British Appeal (ABA) on 9 March 1922 that the government was in 'full possession of all the facts' and that it could send relief 'in the shape of stores' but not money, since there was already 'heavy taxation' and unemployment was high.[76]

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[70] Baughan, 'Save the Children!'.

[71] *International Service*, February 1922, p. 9.

[72] 'The Russian Famine and British Trade may 1922,' The Russian Field, FEWVRC/8/3/3, *Friends' Relief Committee*, LSF; Keynes also made similar points, although not with the famine in mind, in his *Reconstruction* column in the *Manchester Guardian*. See also Fridtjof Nansen, *Russia and Peace* (London: 1923). See also the publications of the Fight the Famine council.

[73] 'False Appeal to Women,' *Daily Express*, 3 December 1921, p. 1.

[74] 'Protest at a Russian Fund Meeting,' *Daily Express*, 15 December 1921.

[75] 'Lord Weardale to editor of the Daily Express,' 21 November 1921, Clively et al., *Western Aid and the Global Economy [Microform]*. Reel 30, EJ 197.

As Trentmann argues, the First World War 'produced a shift in the political imagination that developed new ideas of international coordination…driven by a symbiotic concern for revitalising democracy in local and transnational arenas.'[77] The relief effort, with its town hall lectures, school donations alongside international conferences in Geneva, can be said to be part of this reconfigured transnational perspective, especially when set against (as it often was) a national perspective. The claims of charities to be connecting British consciences with Russian suffering were contested on the grounds of justice and efficiency by those with different moral and political frameworks, particularly those sceptical of internationalism and communism. For the FWVRC and others, the famine offered a valuable if testing opportunity to enact their ideals. The next section seeks to unpack the ways in which the FWVRC's ideals were shaped by the act of humanitarian giving.

Humanitarian Circuit

The sociologist Luc Boltanski argues that the success of humanitarianism depends 'on its ability to clarify and make explicit [the] connection, which is often realised in practice by its members, between distant causes and the traditions, sensibilities and even interests of those who organise support.'[78] In the famine relief, imperatives of humanitarianism, the Quaker mission, anti-communism, and others, all competed and intertwined. To such ideological debates the anthropologist Ilana Feldman suggests also adding the effect of donors, technologies of assistance ('conduits for relations among' donors, recipients and aid organisations), and mechanisms of assistance (how aid is given) on the dynamic of aid. Her concept of a 'humanitarian circuit—relations among donors, relief organisations, and recipients of aid, through the medium of assistance technologies'[79] is useful in showing how the humanitarian gesture is in fact shaped by such relations and technical demands. In this view, the need to create a cause that donors could identify with was simply one part of a broad, multi-stranded process. The methods of giving relief—particularly the measurement of need, and the ways of giving—shaped the cause. Hoover's ARA set up feeding kitchens to ensure that aid was not interfered with by the Bolsheviks, presenting their aid as politically pure to donors. The Quakers similarly found themselves having to balance dilemmas over who to feed first with the views of donors and the logistics of supply.

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[76] F.L. Stevenson [Downing Street], 'Letter to Miss Fry,' 9 March 1922, FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity*, LSF.

[77] Frank Trentmann, 'After the Nation-State: Citizenship, Empire and Global Coordination in the New Internationalism, 1914–1930,' in *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, C. 1880–1950*, ed. Philippa Levine, Frank Trentmann and Kevin Grant (Basingstoke: 2007), p. 49.

[78] Luc Boltanski and Graham Burchell, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xiv.

From the beginning, giving was 'politicised'. In a country ravaged by war and poorly connected anyway, facts were as scarce as food. The first survey of Buzuluk was undertaken with the Soviet authorities in August 1921.[80] The FWVRC no doubt lacked the capacity to do this themselves and apparently saw no reason to question the Soviet figures. The International Commission set up by the allies took a different view and suggested sending its own experts, while the USSR supplied a detailed booklet of economic data to the 1921 Brussels conference on the famine, with particular attention given to the work done by the government to alleviate the famine, in an effort to deflect blame from the communists and encourage Western aid.[81] Surveying was a question of authority as much as facts and the famine was therefore seen through a political lens from the very beginning. All agreed that there was a famine, even if the degree of Soviet culpability remained a live question.

Perhaps the only independent variable in the famine was the needs of the starving, but hierarchies of need were shaped by the techniques of relief and ideological priorities. One of the most important rules for most relief teams was to provide food only to people if it was reasonably certain that they could continue to be fed. Sir Benjamin Robertson, a British civil servant hired as a figurehead for the British charities, said in his report: ‘I cannot emphasise too strongly the futility of attempting relief on a larger scale than there is a reasonable prospect of carrying on till the end of the famine.’[82] While the ARA, which was funded mainly by the US government and the Soviet government, had a relatively predictable source of funding,[83] British and American Quakers were mainly funded by private charity, and so could not guarantee their future income. The AFSC, however, co-operated with the ARA and Hoover encouraged it to commit to feeding a certain number of Russians from early on.[84] The FWVRC’s London office sent figures to the fields for likely income on which to base their purchasing decisions and feeding lists.[85] It was important to get supplies in before the spring thaw, for instance, since transport was poor and fragmented.[86] Humanitarian work had to negotiate these logistical parameters.

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[79] Ilana Feldman, 'The Humanitarian Circuit,' in *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism Between Ethics and Politics*, ed. Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield (Santa Fe: SAR, 2010), p. 204.

[80] *International Service*, October 1921, p. 5.

[81] Lloyd-Graeme, 'Report on International Commission on the Russian Famine,' 3 September 1921, Memorandum CP 3283, *Records of the Cabinet Office CAB 24/127/86*, National Archives: Kew. p. 479.

When the FWVRC first started working, the 1921 crops had already been harvested, and the next one would not be until the following August. This meant rations would be required for almost a year at least, for which funding was not certain. Poor transport and limited statistics meant it was difficult to estimate agricultural output in Russia[87] and the FWVRC had to reverse its optimistic estimates of the 1922 harvest midway through the summer.[88] It had, though, to come to decisions about its feeding programmes. At times it seems that workers went ahead, or expressed willingness to go ahead, with limited information. One worker, writing from Buzuluk, noted that there was not currently enough to feed people and that the FWVRC must withdraw 'if they cannot go forward', but withdrawal 'would be equal to the disciples declining to go on distributing the bread to the 5000 because, after giving to the first rows, they did not see where the rest was to come from. Of course there must be proper organisation and forethought', but it was better to distribute and hope.[89] A few months later, another worker suggested that if Nansen gave them rye before their staff was in place, they would favour 'trusting the local people and rushing supplies out without waiting for our English personnel.'[90] Generally, however, the FWVRC's moves were more planned. If they fell short at one time, they could also get loans from the US unit or from the other relief agencies in Russia.

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[82] Sir Benjamin Robertson, *The Russian Famine Sir Benjamin Robertson’s Report,* February 1922, p. 9.

[83] About 55% of the ARA’s income came from the American and Soviet governments, including $20,000,000 from Congress in December 1921. Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*, 140; Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*.

[84] McFadden and Gorfinkel, *Constructive Spirit*, p. 73.

[85] Minute 203, 2 November 1921, FEWVRC/SW/ML/3, *Supply and Warehouse Committee*, LSF.

[86] ‘Memo. on the requirements for and poss. of extending famine relief in the Buzuluk Ooyezd: 5. Date when supplies will be required,’ January/February 1922, FEWVRC/8/2/2, *Programmes and Projects*, LSF. Indeed, in his later report Asquith noted that the average time it took for supplies to be transported from a Baltic port to the relief area was 50 days, ranging from three weeks to three months. Asquith, *Famine*.

[87] Nations, *Report on Economic Conditions in Russia*, vi.

[88] Ruth Fry, ‘News,’ *International Service*, August 1922, p. 6.

While maintaining a course of aid as Robertson suggested had an appealing clarity, given the scale of the famine, there was always a temptation to feed more. The FWVRC worked in Buzuluk, a district (*uezd*) in Samara province (*guberniia*). Buzuluk was chosen as the Friends' field of action simply because some Quakers had already been doing medical and refugee work there before this famine and because at the time of the government survey in August 1921, accompanied by the AFSC's Anna Haines, it was identified as the worst district. The FWVRC annual report from 1915–1916 describes Buzuluk being 'as destitute of help and as crowded with refugees as any'.[91] It was, though, only one starving region among many and the FWVRC considered various alternative schemes and expansion plans, inside and outside of Russia. They refused an invitation for relief from the anti-Bolshevik Russian Relief and Reconstruction Fund in South Russia, saying 'we feel our responsibilities lie elsewhere.'[92] The *Daily Express* campaigned against charity abroad in general and especially in Bolshevik Russia, instead collecting money for unemployed Cornish miners. As funds declined in 1922, the ABA shifted its attention to the Near East, namely refugees in Smyrna and Asia Minor. Indeed, throughout the famine, the FWVRC was offered expansion into neighbouring provinces by the Soviet government but FWVRC preferred to meet its commitments in Buzuluk before moving onto other provinces. It did eventually extend to two nearby districts: Kustanay, part of the Kyrgyz Republic (now largely coinciding with Kostanay in Kazakhstan) in June 1922, and Pugachev in February 1923. A letter from Edward Balls, FWVRC worker in Buzuluk, regarding the planned extension to Pugachev in February 1923, sets out the reasoning:

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[89] Tom Cotterel, 'letter to Ruth Fry,' 26 October 1921, FEWVRC/8/2/1, *Government/Foreign Relief*, LSF.

[90] Tom Copeman, 'letter to Arthur Watts,' 8 December 1921, FEWVRC/8/2/1, *Government/Foreign Relief*, LSF.

[91] *FEWVRC annual report 1915–16*, FEWVRC/Appx, LSF.

[92] Minute, 23 December 1919, *Russian and Polish Subcommittee*, FEWVRC, LSF.

> [the Soviet official's] attitude with regard to the Pugachev feeding was that we were already feeding in Buzuluk ooyezd [sic], and it was not fair to meet entirely the needs of one district whilst another was left out, and he actually stated that he would rather we left a proportion of the people in Buzuluk ooyezd [sic] to starve and feed some in the Pugachev ooyezd [sic]. This of course appeals to me as a political move, and from that point of view is no doubt quite a wise position to take up…[but we said] that we had undertaken certain work in Buzuluk and we felt our responsibility to that ooyezd [sic] must be completely met before we were at liberty to work elsewhere.[93]

The desires of donors helped decide where aid was given. Sometimes it was seen to be useful to appeal to a particular constituency, but this raised other difficulties. Given continued need and a lack of funds from the ABA, an FWVRC worker in Kustanai, Ruth Pennington, argued that feeding the Kirghiz 'constitutes an urgent appeal which we ought, if possible, to meet. [It is r]ecommended that, so as not to prejudice our present commitments, London be asked to consider the raising of special funds (estimated at £8000) it being considered desirable to make an appeal for this money to the followers of Mohamed.' The FWVRC could not use its own funds because of its commitment to first feed Buzuluk.[94] While Pennington's response is seemingly pragmatic, the earmarking of donations for a particular cause did not always lead to the fairest distribution of aid when measured by need, leading to potential conflicts between the desires of donors and the needs of recipients.

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[93] Ed Balls, 'letter to William Albright,' 9 February 1923, FEWVRC 7/3/6, *Letters from Buzuluk*, LSF.

[94] 'Ruth Pennington's Appeal for Khirgese Rations,' 11 October 1922, FEWVRC/7/3/1, *Admin*, LSF.

By 1921, the FWVRC was delivering aid in a number of 'fields' over Europe, including Russia, Serbia and Austria. Fundraisers debated the ethical merits of allowing donations to be 'earmarked' for particular causes (Fig. 1). An FWVRC worker protested against a regulation that collections at meetings should not be earmarked, arguing that the address given was often on the subject of one field of operations, meaning that any subsequent donation was 'clearly' intended for that field. The FWVRC Finance and General Purposes Committee decided that it was 'necessary to encourage a personal and individual interest in the Fields.' They also noted that the FWVRC work had an 'international character' so all fields and the general fund should be mentioned.[95] They saw, 'personal and individual interest' as key to getting donations but a strain on efficient allocation; they also felt that 'personal and individual interest' would be better stimulated by a particular country, 'field' or village than by 'internationalism'. They believed that it was important that funds donated should be given to the places that stimulated the donor's interest. Because of this, a few months later, the committee decided that from then on, all earmarked funds would automatically go to specific fields, while unearmarked funds were to be divided equally between the four fields at the time.[96] It was also stated that in future, appeals were to make clear whether the funds advertised were for one field in particular or general funds.[97] Balancing the aims of the FWVRC and of donors, with the complex logistics of relief, was a persistent difficulty for the FWVRC, and made the expression of their intended ideals much more difficult than it had been in 1892. The FWVRC's expression of compassion—whether to Buzuluk, Pugachev or Kostanay—was, then, contingent on a number of factors other than need.

One of the most important parts of the FWVRC's 'humanitarian circuit' was the supply chain between donors and recipients (or in Feldman's words, technologies of assistance). The supply chain was shaped by practical and political imperatives (how far it included Soviet co-operation, whether workers or money were being sent). In turn, the representation of this supply chain was an important part of the charities' appeal and self-definition as relatively 'apolitical' and effective humanitarian organisations. The authenticity and legitimacy of the aid were shaped by whether money or workers, government aid or voluntary donations were being sent. The FWVRC sought to emphasise that their money was effectively and honestly used, and that donations would not be misspent or appropriated by the communists. The *Daily Express* and others scrutinised the charities' efficiency and motives, and queried the justness of giving to Russia instead of other possible causes. While there do not seem to have been any accusations against British charities' honesty, fears about inefficiency and Russian dishonesty or instability threatened to diminish the flow of donations. The FWVRC therefore produced pamphlets such as 'Facts for enquirers', which answered questions including: 'Have reports of the famine been exaggerated? Do the goods reach the famine victims? Should we help Russia while there is so much distress at home? What is the real cause of the Famine? Why do they not help themselves?'[98] It also printed material to be sent to newspapers, telling them they could apply free for the pamphlet 'How the Goods Reach the Famine Area'.[99] They emphasised measures taken to check the amounts of goods at every stage of the journey (usually from London to Riga or Reval [now Tallin], then to Moscow, then to the famine area), and the low rates of theft or leakage.[100] The *Record of the Save the Children Fund* stated in October 1921 that:

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[95] Minute 601, 4 January 1921, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

[96] Minute 673, 16 March 1921, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

[97] Minute 678, 16 March 1921, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

> It cannot be too widely known that the control of the food belonging to us is absolutely in our hands from the time it is brought until the minute the child for whom it is intended has his meal…The policy of the Save the Children Fund, now as always is to abstain most carefully from all political questions.[101]

The ARA had negotiated an agreement with the Soviet authorities that gave them free transport and absolute control over their supplies and distribution. This insistence and their use of foreign experts also reflected a desire to limit co-operation with the Soviets.

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[98] 'Facts for Enquirers,' pamphlet, FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity*, LSF.

[99] 'How the Goods Reach the Famine Area,' FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity*, LSF.

[100] As did Robertson, *The Russian Famine*, p. 7.

[101] 'Politics and Charity,' *The Record of the Save the Children Fund*, 1 October 1921, pp. 19–21.

A significant amount of aid was sent from the governments and citizens of the West, but views differed over the right way to help the Russians. In August 1921, the IRRC stated the need for a co-ordinated international effort.[102] The FWVRC planned for a loan to the Soviet government into 1922 because the 'ordinary system of subscriptions' was deemed unlikely to raise money quickly enough and a loan would be a 'self-respecting basis' for help. Through this, Friends could introduce better farming techniques in conjunction with collective farms in the province. £1m was suggested for January–August 1922.[103] Among Western governments, however, there was the 'strongest possible opposition in all quarters to Dr. Nansen's proposals for credits.'[104] They wanted Russia to make assurances that it would pay back loans taken out by the tsarist government, in order to maintain investors' confidence. By contrast, the British Joint Labour Aid Committee, as part of the Workers' International Russian Famine Relief Committee, did provide a loan, which it characterised as focused on reconstruction of industry and agriculture in contrast to the 'charitable' famine committees.[105] The British government, though, refused to send money and limited its donations to gifts in kind. Sasson argues that this was nevertheless a turning point as it 'established that the British government would provide aid to foreign nationals.'[106]

As the refusal to send money suggests, the nature of the goods sent were similarly linked to political and moral ideas. A certain proportion of aid came in the form of gifts from individuals, companies or producers' associations. The SCF bought 62% of its food, while the remaining 48% was donated (25.8% from Canada, 10.4% from Britain and 1.4% from Australia).[107] Between March 1921 and November 1923 (when relief ended) 43% of the FWVRC's supplies to Russia (measured in cash value) were gifts in kind (see Figs. 2 and 3).[108] While there is no indication of an FWVRC policy on gifts in kind, it was encouraged or at least expected from early in the relief effort. An October 1921 pamphlet, for instance, as well as stating where donations should be sent, provided a warehouse address for parcels of clothes.'[109] Later, efforts were made to encourage sewing meetings, where donors would sew wool provided by the FWVRC (along with lists of preferred items) into Russian patterns. There were 300 such meetings in 1921 and 108 in 1922 (up to November).[110] The relief worker Francesca Wilson emphasised the importance of clothes in national patterns for peasants in Russia and Serbia, and was also, like other relief workers, particularly enthusiastic about work schemes for those receiving aid.[111]

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[102] 'THAT the task of feeding millions of starving people is of such magnitude as to be beyond the capacity of voluntary organisations alone and necessitates the cooperation of all governments.'—Resolution 2 passed at Conference of Russian Relief held in Geneva 15–16 August 1921.

[103] 'Plans for Quaker loan to Buzuluk,' FEWVRC/8/2/2, *Programmes and Projects*, LSF.

[104] P. Lloyd-Graeme, 'Report on International Commission on the Russian Famine,' 3 September 1921, Memorandum CP 3283, Records of the Cabinet Office CAB 24/127/86, National Archives, Kew, p. 475.

[105] Workers' International Relief. British Joint Labour Aid Committee, *Facts About the First International Workers' Loan of the W.I.R.R. And Economic Help Campaign for Soviet Russia* (London: 1922).

[106] Sasson, 'From Empire to Humanity: The Russian Famine and the Imperial Origins of International Humanitarianism,' p. 535.

It is clear that humanitarian giving was and is coloured by widely held concerns not necessarily related to the incident at hand. As Cullather argues, a number of ideas about food relief gained currency in the early twentieth century, including 'that wheat was uniquely important as an international conveyor of bulk food value.'[112] That is to say, the famine relief was not merely a technical question of giving the most needed things in the most efficient way; rather, what was given, by whom and how, were seen to matter. For example, Lloyd George was willing to give supplies but not credits, to avoid being seen as ignoring British poverty. Gorfinkel notes how Americans were interested in donating their

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[107] 'Totals of Supplies Administered by the Save the Children Fund in Russia: Proportion of purchased and donated supplies,' E.T. Clively et al., *Western Aid and the Global Economy [Microform]* (Woodbridge, CT: 2004). EJ201.

[108] From the FWVRC yearly accounts. The Nansen and Hoover agreements with the Soviet government were not signed until August 1921, so these figures include some Friends' work pre-dating the ARA, IRRC and ABA, although the amounts donated to Russia in this period were lower.

[109] Anna Haines, *The Russian Famine*, 21 October 1921 (London: Friends' Relief Committee), p. 15.

[110] Minute 337, 10 November 1922, FEWVRC/SW/ML/5, *Supply and Warehouse Committee*, LSF.

[111] Wilson, *Advice to Relief Workers*, pp. 14–15.

[112] Cullather, 'The Foreign Policy of the Calorie,' p. 342.

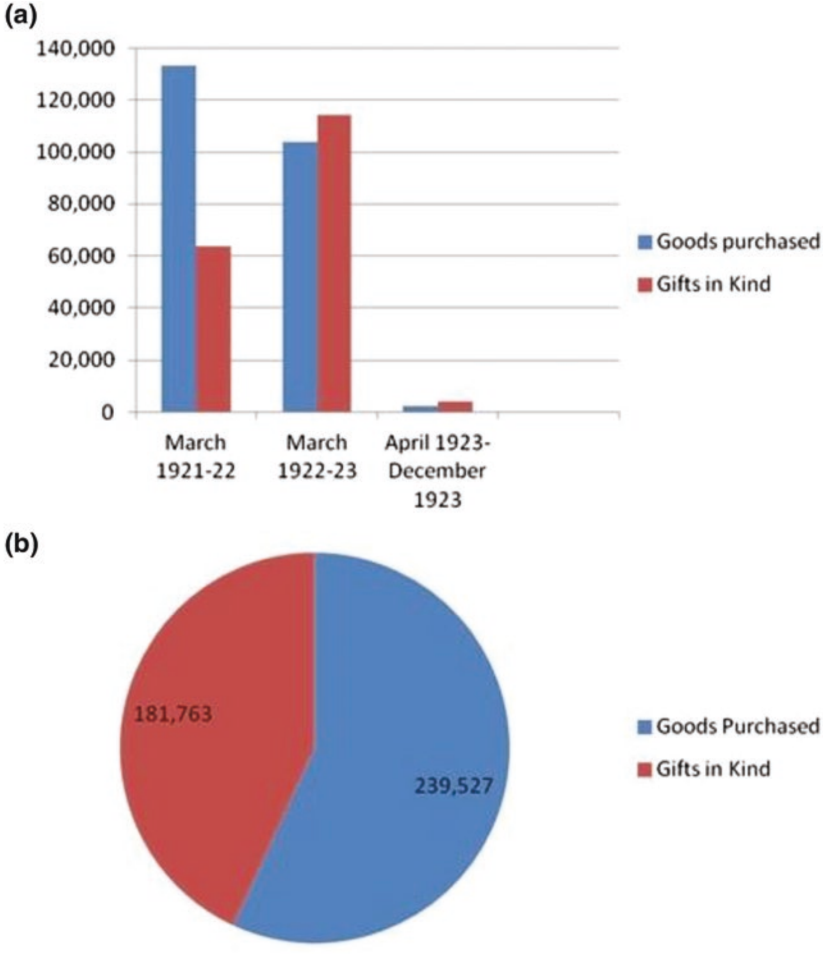

Fig. 2 (a) FWVRC: Goods sent to Russia, 1 April 1921–30 November 1923 (£), by year and provenance. (b) FWVRC: Goods sent to Russia, 1 April 1921–30 November 1923 (£)

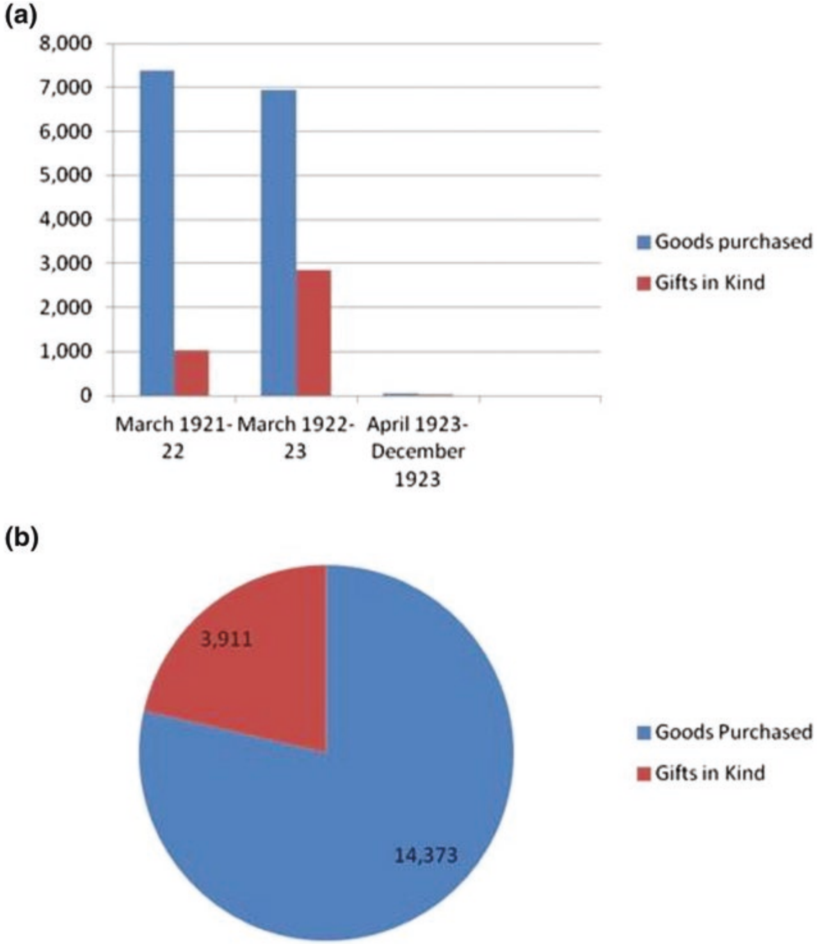

Fig. 3 (a) FWVRC: Goods sent to Russia, 1 April 1921–30 November 1923 (tons), by year and provenance. (b) FWVRC: Goods sent to Russia, 1 April 1921–30 November 1923 (tons)

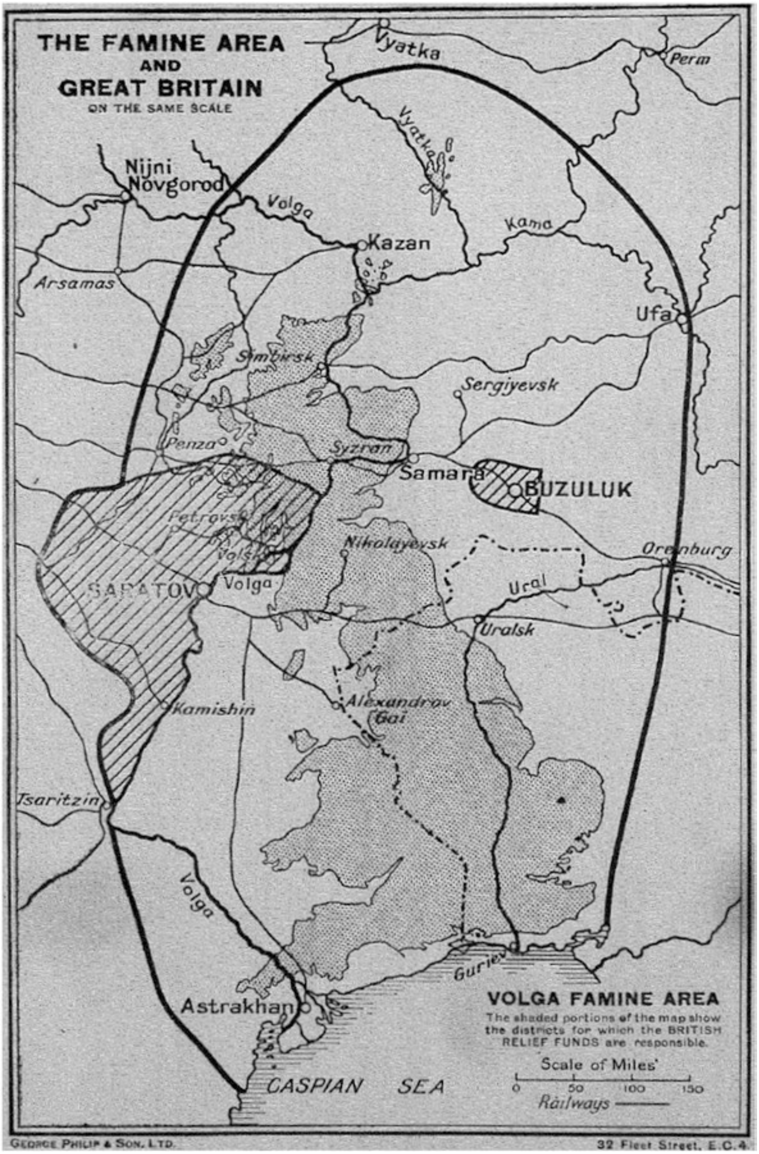
THE FAMINE AREA AND GREAT BRITAIN
ON THE SAME SCALE
Vyatka
Perm
Vyatka
Nijni Novgorod
Volga
Kama
Kazan
Arsamas
Ufa
Simbirsk
Sergiyevsk
Penza
Syzran
Samara
BUZULUK
Petrovsk
Volsk
Nikolayevsk
Orenburg
SARATOV
Volga
Ural
Uralsk
Alexandrov Gai
Kamishin
Tsaritzin
Volga
Guriev
Astrakhan
CASPIAN SEA
VOLGA FAMINE AREA
The shaded portions of the map show the districts for which the BRITISH RELIEF FUNDS are responsible.
Scale of Miles
0
50
100
150
Railways
George Philip & Son, Ltd.
32 Fleet Street, E.C.4

Fig. 4

◀ **Fig. 4** The Famine Area and Great Britain on the same scale (The Russian Famine: Sir Benjamin Robertson's Report, 1922). This map, printed on the back of Robertson's report, also shows how attempts were made to link the famine directly with British donors. Maps were increasingly used in the newspaper press after 1900 to educate readers about war news or other issues (Michael Heffernan, "The Cartography of the Fourth Estate: Mapping the New Imperialism in British and French Newspapers, 1875–1925," in The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire, ed. James R. Akerman (London: 2009)). Here Britain is detached from its empire, sea lanes and allies, and is instead is in the middle of the inland Volga region, with only the Caspian coastline likely to be recognisable to readers. It is clear that the famine area is larger than Britain, and that this problem should be addressed directly by private citizens, regardless of national politics, since London, St Petersburg or other signs of the geopolitical situation are not portrayed

country's corn and horses, although logistics prevented the latter.[113] CARE packages also demonstrate the importance of the gift.[114] Visual representation made the link as explicit as possible, showing the loading and unloading of crates of goods, often with signs 'to Russia' or 'from British workers' (see Fig. 4).[115]

The FWVRC worker Ralph Fox wrote, following a refusal to give food to a poor man:

> One could not explain to that heartbroken man (heartbroken is the right word here) that his life and his family's depended on the charity of comfortable folk in England, men and women of the same Christian religion as himself, but whose faith and charity were subject to continual attacks by the mean-spirited everywhere. He could not be expected to understand that maybe a letter to the papers by some outraged peer, or a sermon by an indignant country parson, had condemned to death himself and all his family. We understood it, though, and it did not make life any easier for us to have this picture of our own countrymen always before us when listening to their desperate entreaties, watching their tears, tears of blood if that phrase has any meaning.[116]

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[113] McFadden and Gorfinkel, *Constructive Spirit*, pp. 51, 94.

[114] Feldman, 'The Humanitarian Circuit.'

[115] Breen, 'Saving Enemy Children,' p. 229.

[116] Fox, *People of the Steppes*, p. 181.

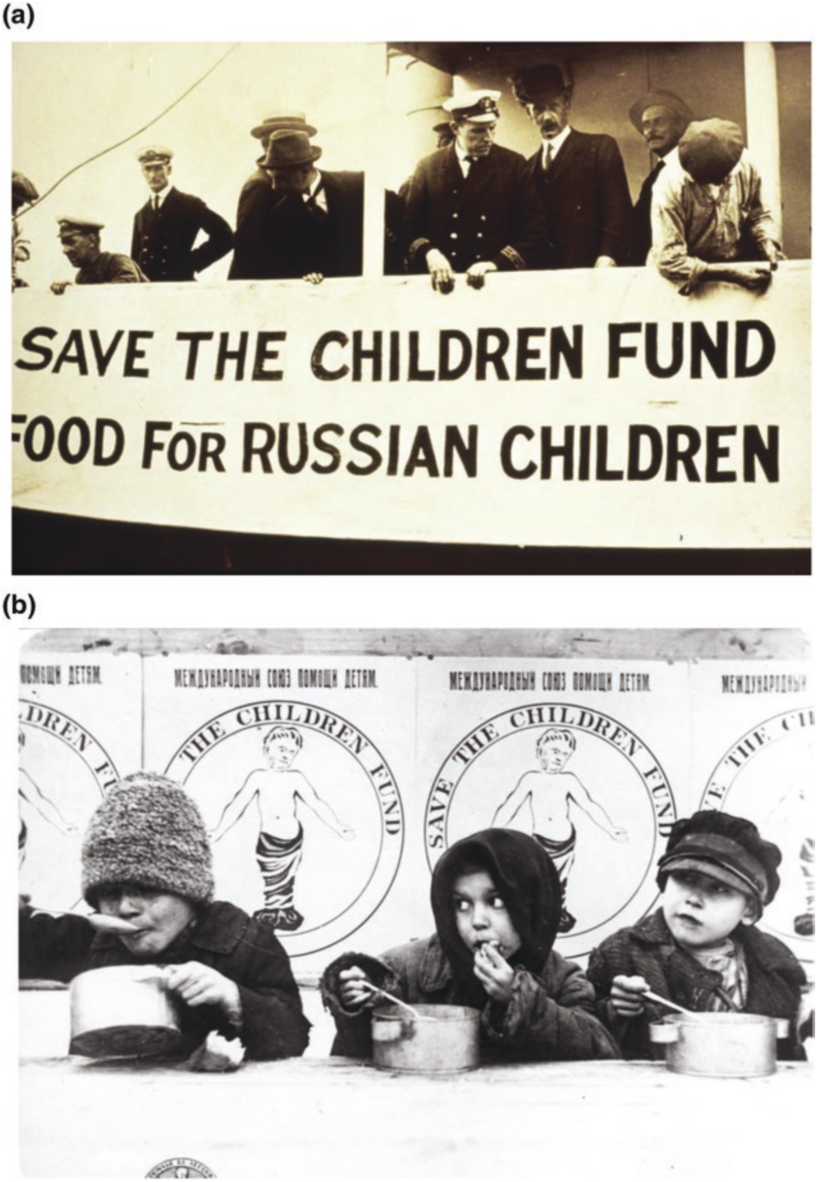
(a)
SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND
OOD FOR RUSSIAN CHILDREN
(b)
ПОМОЩИ ДЕТЯМ
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОЮЗ ПОМОЩИ ДЕТЯМ
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОЮЗ ПОМОЩИ ДЕТЯМ
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ
SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND
SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND

Fig. 5 (a) and (b) Food for Russian Children (Save the Children, 1921) ('1921: The Russian Famine,' blog, *Save the Children website*, http://blogs.savethechildren.org.uk/2012/08/goldmoment-raceagainsthunger4/, accessed 19 July 2013). Connections were made with donors, schools and voluntary groups

For Fox, this inability to supply enough food was a comment on Britain as much as Russia (see also Fig. 5). Conversely, he noticed some old cocoa boxes: 'We could still see in places the legends in English of the firms who supplied the goods originally, a pleasant meeting in this village seventy miles away from the railway, in the heart of the steppe.'[117] Representations of this supply chain were based on, and fed back into, ideals of internationalism, of humanitarianism, and of the possibility of giving separately from, or in opposition to, national and 'political' structures. However, each part of this supply chain was contested and had its own dynamics.

The persistent scarcity of funds in relation to the need for supplies, even just in the Quakers' area of Buzuluk, meant that extra pressure was put onto donors, through advertisements, newspaper articles, collections and performances. Publicity became a key part of the relief efforts—perhaps as much as the relief itself—and considerable attention was thus given to the 'work' of lecturing, collecting and disseminating information on the famine in the relief agencies' magazines. Stories, reports and artefacts from the field were encouraged to be brought back and used to generate more donations. It was suggested that workers in the field 'should also be told of steps we are taking to raise money',[118] presumably to raise their morale. The 'Publicity Doings' column in *International Service,* a magazine for Quaker relief workers, listed the number and location of lectures given by FWVRC workers that month, the money brought in by appeals, pamphlets published, and ideas for new forms of publicity like films and shops.[119] As an example it was noted that 85 meetings had been arranged in February 1923 compared to 90 in February 1922 (when the appeal was at its height), giving a sense of the scale of the public speaking effort.[120] The SCF also printed pictures of and letters from its donors in each issue of its magazine, including accounts of fundraising activities at schools. In this quite literal sense, the famine can be said to have been part of the growth of these organisations. Indeed, the level of expenses, and particularly for advertising, was one of the *Daily Express*'s main criticisms. Underlying this was a concern that benevolence triggered by adverts was not truly spontaneous or voluntary, and was somehow a scam. The charities would say that they were educating or leading public opinion, while the *Daily Express* argued (perhaps not convincingly) that they were cheating them.

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[117] Ibid., p. 198.

[118] Memo, 6 October 1920, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC)*, FEWVRC/FGCP/M1, LSF.

[119] 'Publicity Doings,' *International Service*, *passim*.

[120] 'Publicity,' *International Service*, March 1923, p. 9.

In reality, the relationship between 'advertising' and 'income' had different dynamics than the idealised one between 'donor' and 'recipient'. While the records show that the FWVRC lumped publicity expenses in with stationery and offices expenses, making it hard to determine expenditure, a close correlation can be seen between the SCF's income and expenditure on publicity.[121] The FWVRC did, though, employ publicity staff (their head was paid £350 a year) and they did believe that advertising increased contributions: *International Service* noted that in a four-week period, the FWVRC had spent £256 on adverts, which brought in £2265.[122] Advertising was needed to convert the facts on the ground into donations, amidst the competing claims on people's attention. In May 1922, *International Service* noted a fall in donations, and blamed slackening of financial support on the Easter break, warmer weather and 'uncertainty caused by the Genoa conference'. The last point was identified by FWVRC speakers, who argued that some members of the public did not grasp the horror of the famine and 'are therefore almost wholly concerning themselves with the political side of it, which so engrosses them, that they are blinded to the terrible sufferings of the starving people.'[123] The point of advertising and speaking tours was to focus the minds of the public on the starkest facts, often hidden behind statistical complexities or political uncertainties, and to give a sense that donating could be a direct good in itself. Individual examples of suffering were important, but had to be channelled and supported by a sense of continued overall need. They had to arouse sympathy, but also rational concern as something that absolutely needed help from abroad, so that charity would not be seen as playing into the Bolsheviks' hands. Pamphlets therefore balanced the general and the particular. Anna Haines' report in October 1921 summarised the relief plans from 1 October 1921 to 14 January 1922, showing rations per 100 persons, and providing the overall cost of feeding 25,000 people (their target) each month. 'In addition to this, it should be remembered that over the whole of the famine area, some 20,000,000 people are directly affected. It will be realised, therefore, how urgent is the need for support in order that the work of relief may be extended to the utmost limit' (Fig. 6).[124]

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[121] Breen, 'Saving Enemy Children,' p. 226.

[122] 'Publicity,' *International Service*, February 1922, p. 4. Although they do not indicate how they came to this figure, or have overall statistics for advertising expenditure.

[123] *International Service*, May 1922, p. 7.

Consequently, advertisements were premeditated and shaped as much by market forces as by 'compassion' or even ideology. One of the main planks of Quaker publicity was reports from the famine area. They encouraged relief workers to write reports and then attempted to get them printed in the *Lancet*, the Labour press or to get publicity with the League of Nations Union, the Independent Labour Party, adult schools, the Women's Co-operative Guild, and in religious and progressive weeklies, which gives a flavour of the types of audience being appealed to.[125] They also sought to interest famous individuals like Lord Robert Cecil, H.G. Wells, or to commission writers.[126] Tom Copeman, an FWVRC worker, wrote a series of articles in the *Eastern Daily Press*, on which he was a sub-editor and later editor.[127] Copeman wrote to London that a certain Mackenzie, a journalist sent by the critical *Daily Express*, had accompanied Nansen on a visit, and noted approvingly that 'although they missed the dead body in the street, they saw the cemetery scene.'[128] Such pictures were useful for fundraising in a context where other papers showed 'happy scenes' in Moscow to demonstrate Bolshevik indifference.[129] Yet this coverage could be somewhat stage-managed. For example the *Darlington Northern Echo*—a Quaker-owned paper—said that it would arrange a fund 'provided [the FWVRC] could obtain a certain amount of support to guarantee the success of the scheme in the early days.' The committee decided after consideration to visit wealthy ship owners to this end and the appeal went ahead.[130]

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[124] Haines, *The Russian Famine*, p. 15.

[125] 'Memorandum of Joint Meeting of FGPC and Publicity Subcommittee,' 6 October 1920, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

[126] Minute 430, 12 January 1921, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

[127] 'Nineteen Years' Editor of the 'E.D.P.', *Eastern Daily Press*, 4 April 1956.

[128] Tom Copeman, letter to Arthur Watts, 8 December 1921, FEWVRC/8/2/1, *Government/Foreign Relief*, FEWVRC, LSF.

[129] 'Racing While Russia Starves: A Bolshevist "Derby" at Moscow,' *Illustrated London News*, 1 October 1921, p. 434; 'Russia of To-day in Russian Photographs: Well-Dressed Moscow,' *Illustrated London News*, 30 July 1921, p. 163.

[130] Minute 620, 15 December 1920, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGCP)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

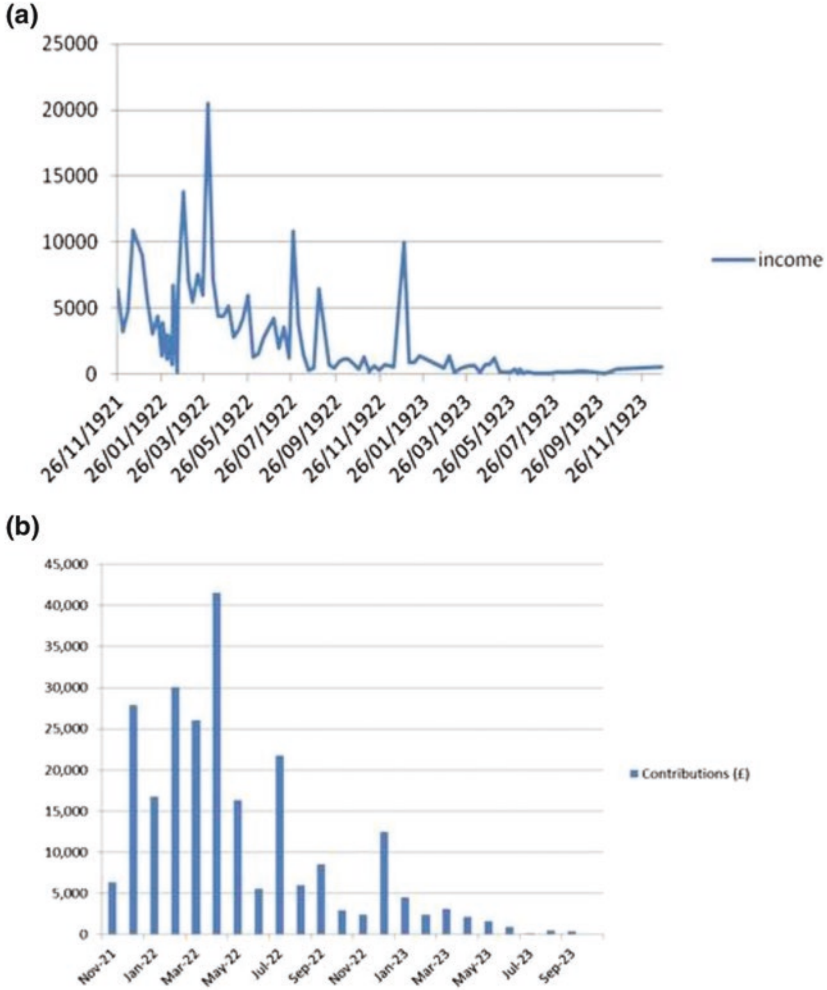
(a)
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
income
26/11/1921
26/01/1922
26/03/1922
26/05/1922
26/07/1922
26/09/1922
26/11/1922
26/01/1923
26/03/1923
26/05/1923
26/07/1923
26/09/1923
26/11/1923
(b)
45,000
40,000
35,000
30,000
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0
Contributions (£)
Nov-21
Jan-22
Mar-22
May-22
Jul-22
Sep-22
Nov-22
Jan-23
Mar-23
May-23
Jul-23
Sep-23

Fig. 6

◀ **Fig. 6** (a) Contributions for the Russian field, excluding gifts in kind, by week, 26 November 1921–6 October 1923 (£). (b) Income for the Russian field, excluding gifts in kind, by month, 26 November 1921–6 October 1923 (£).

Income peaked in April 1922 (Given that the FWVRC's accounts do not always distinguish between different geographical fields or between money and gifts, income for Russia is best approximated by looking at the Friends' Relief Committee's weekly bulletin, "The Russian Field", running from November 1921 to October 1923. This states the weekly contributions for Russia (occasionally fortnightly figures are cited, in which case they are averaged over two weeks). Rough correlations with goods sent shows that this almost certainly does not include gifts in kind so total goods sent are also shown to give a better idea of overall FWVRC contributions to the Russian famine). As the SCF archive shows, there was a correlation between money spent on advertising and income. Although this data is unavailable for the FWVRC, their income follows the spikes in interest in, and severity of, the famine. Smaller peaks and troughs are no doubt explained by weather, holidays, etc.

The FWVRC believed that public opinion had to be stimulated and managed. They assumed that Friends and liberals would be reasonably receptive to appeals. The general public, on the other hand, required education and stimulation. When writing to Lloyd George to request government credits in 1921, the relief committee promised that they would back him with a 'systematic national campaign of education in support of your action.'[131] *International Service*'s 'publicity' column lamented that 'some sections of the press [are] impervious.'[132] Early on, it was noted that Nansen's scheme was not being 'warmly upheld and governments are unwilling to give any real assistance…the Russian Famine Committee are still trying to find a British Commissioner whose name shall carry real weight, but so far they have not been successful in finding anyone free. They are, however, convinced that it is no use waiting longer for public opinion, but that an attempt must be made to lead it rather than to follow it, and I very much hope for a more progressive policy.'[133]

Accounts, too, were put in such a way as present the efforts of each charity in the strongest possible light. The charities, however, made efforts to prevent overlapping or direct competition. In December 1921, the FWVRC's Finances and General Purposes Committee noted that the Russian Famine Relief Fund (RFRF) wanted to pass money from the Quaker appeal in the *Eastern Daily Press* through their books to enlarge figures. The FWVRC refused, but said that the RFRF could use the figures in their adverts.[134] Because of such issues, it was decided in March 1922 that each of the funds was to take certain papers for adverts and put no adverts in without informing the other two as part of a policy of 'co-ordination' rather than 'amalgamation' (Figs. 7 and 8).[135]

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[131] FWVRC, IWRF and SCF, 'letter to Lloyd George,' 19 December 1921, FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity*, LSF.

[132] *International Service*, March 1922, p. 3.

[133] Gen Sec (unsigned), 'letter to William. Allbright,' 13 October 1921, FEWVRC/7/4/6, *William Allbright's Visit to Russia*, LSF.

As shown in previous chapters, Quakers have traditionally placed a lot of emphasis on ensuring the sincerity of 'concern'. The linguist Bauman has shown how 'speaking in the service of the spirit had to derive in a special way from a proper spiritual source, and "carnal talk", talk that did not stem from that spiritual source, was inadequate to comprehend spiritual truth.'[136] This was obviously more relevant with respect to specifically religious work (ministry) than humanitarian work, but echoes are present in the use of standing committees, rather than permanent staff, until after the First World War.[137] Even after the Second World War, Quakers continued to believe that spiritual power cannot be stockpiled because 'it is the product of a particular time, place, purpose and set of relationships.'[138] Therefore it is significant that the FWVRC's publicity department, run by paid staff, pre-wrote appeals, designed to be as effective as possible, and circulated them to Meetings to sign. When campaigning for a government credit to Russia, the publicity department sent out 'suggested memoranda to be sent by preparative meetings to the Prime Minister, local MPs and the press. It is hoped that verbal alterations will be made so that any appearance of a stereotyped draft will be avoided.'[139] They also produced a pamphlet called 'Hints to Organisers of Meetings'.[140] This

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[134] Minute 891, 13 December 1921, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGCP)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M1, LSF.

[135] Minute 964, 14 March 1922, *Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGCP)*, FEWVRC/FGPC/M2, FGPC, LSF. This policy had already been suggested by H.N. Brailsford of the IWRF in November 1921. 'Inter-agency meeting,' 27 November 1921, FWVRC/7/5/3, *Relations with ABA*, LSF.

[136] Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 21.

[137] Scott, *Quakers in Russia*, p. 127.

[138] Robert O. Byrd, *Quaker Ways in Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 81.

[139] 'Suggested Memoranda,' 11 October 1921, FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity Appeals*, LSF.

[140] 'Pamphlets Published,' *International Service*, May 1922, p. 4.

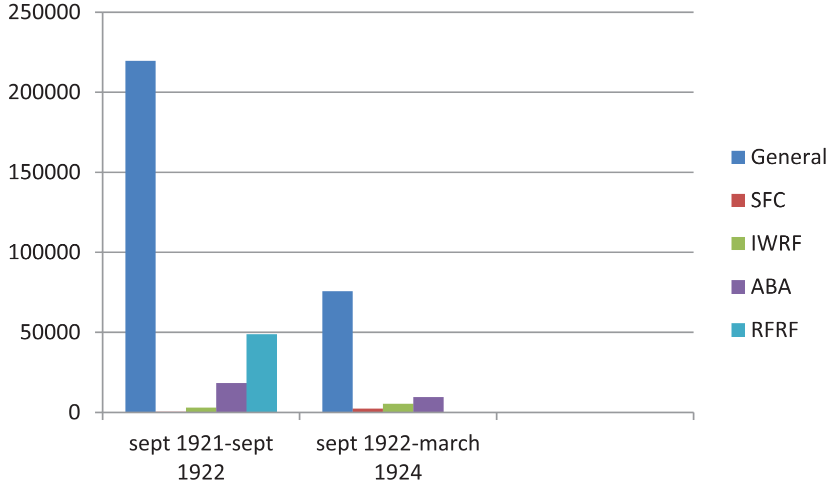

Fig. 7 FWVRC: Contributions by source, September 1921–March 1924 (£)

advised, among other things, to 'wherever possible, persuade the editor to make an announcement of the meeting in the editorial columns, supplying him with a few facts: most local papers are quite glad to get ready-made copy' (p. 3); that it 'is a good plan to appeal to individuals for gifts before the meeting, which can be announced from the platform' (p. 3); and provided suggested resolutions from the meetings, that 'could be changed to suit local circumstances' (pp. 3–4); advice on which locals to approach, the best places to distribute leaflets, and so on.[141] If this plan was followed, then the resulting benevolence would hardly be spontaneous. This was not unique to the FWVRC. As Grant argues, the war spurred innovation in charity work, here including flag days, famine weeks, collection boxes and films and the adoption of children.[142] Amidst this newly professionalised advertising, attempts to connect with different donors were intensified and diversified. Pre-written letters were addressed to donors whose subscriptions were about to expire. SCF sought to connect donors to individual children and feeding kitchens through 'adoption' schemes.[143] The greater need for donations stimulated more direct

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[141] 'Hints to Organisers of Meetings,' FEWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity*, LSF.

[142] Peter Grant, 'Voluntarism and the Impact of the First World War,' in Matthew Hilton and James McKay, eds., *The Ages of Voluntarism* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 27–46. The latter originated with the SCF in Autumn 1920. Storr, *Excluded from the Record*, p. 154.

[143] 'Adoption Scheme,' Clively et al., *Western Aid and the Global Economy [Microform]*. EJ 200.

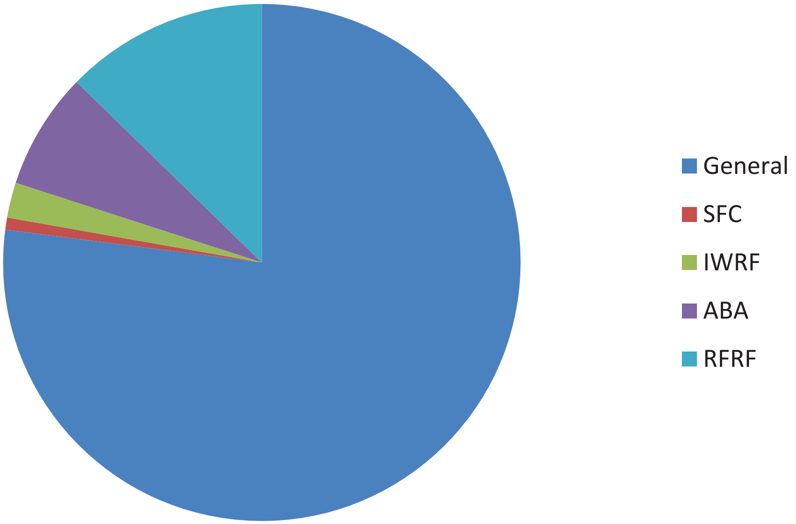

Fig. 8 FWVRC: Contributions by source, September 1921–March 1924. SCF = Save the Children Fund; IWRF = Imperial War Relief Fund; ABA = All-British Appeal; RFRF = Russian Famine Relief Fund. Around three quarters of the FWVRC's income for the Russian work in this period came from general contributions, that is, contributions specifically for the FWVRC rather than funnelled through the ABA (They spent £421,290, including gifts in kind, from March 1922 to December 1924, the nearest appropriate timeframe, while general income from September 1921–March 1924 was £295,294, and income from other agencies in the same period was £88,069)

methods of advertising, calling into question the reasons for donation and stimulating new forms of donation. The more complex humanitarian circuit meant that the dynamics of giving were very different to those of 1891–2, when the Quakers saw relatively little gap between the means and ends of giving.

Dilemmas of Relief

The FWVRC faced a number of difficulties when distributing relief in the famine. Their answers to these questions are revealing of the way humanitarian responses, and the meaning of humanitarian work, are shaped by moral and technical questions. The question of who would be fed first was perhaps the most testing one for the relief workers to answer. Once in Buzuluk, the Quakers, ‘in consultation with’ the Soviet authorities, decided to prioritise children. This was part of a widespread tendency in humanitarianism: Natale argues that in this period, partly because of the SCF, ‘Les secours a l'enfance prennent rapidement une place prépondérante dans l'action humanitaire.’[144] SCF would enshrine the principle of giving priority to infant feeding in their 1925 Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The idea was partly a function of the need to win donors and contrasted with the classic relief principle of feeding the able-bodied first: Sir Benjamin Robertson argued instead in his 1922 report on the famine, that he ‘would give adult feeding priority’ from that point on.[145] This was confirmed in Asquith's 1943 pamphlet, referring to the Indian Famine Codes,[146] which argued that child feeding would create orphans with no one to support them and suggested an alternative hierarchy: (1) workers, (2) schoolchildren, (3) infants, (4) 40–50 year olds, (5) then over-fifties.[147]

Even though distribution was determined ‘from above’, using increasingly scientific norms,[148] the practices and sometimes ad hoc decisions of relief workers were a key part of the system. Statistics were provided by the Soviets, but checks of individual villages were part of the relief workers' routine and, when published in pamphlets, served to demonstrate the efficiency of the relief. Robertson visited richer and poorer houses to ‘verify stocks’ as reported by the local officials.[149] Such visits were deemed important to the public perception of the relief and were included in Robertson's report and other pamphlets. Ruth Fry's *My Visit to Russia* in February 1922 describes the situation of starvation and feeding with the occasional anecdote or description and ends with a survey of one village including numbers of people, deaths, livestock, land sown, and a description of the personal circumstances of one house. Presumably this was to show both that general figures were being verified and relief workers and recipients were being held accountable by the hierarchy, and to put the statistics on a human scale. Fry wrote:

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[144] Enrico Natale, ‘Quand L'humanitaire Commençait À Faire Son Cinéma: Les Films Du CICR Des Années 20,’ *Affaires Courantes et Commentaires* 86, no. June (2004): p. 423.

[145] Sir Benjamin Robertson, *The Russian Famine*, p. 9; Katherine Storr, *Excluded from the Record: Women, Refugees, and Relief*, 1914–*1929* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 139–140.

[146] Tehila Sasson and James Vernon, ‘Practising the British Way of Famine: Technologies of Relief, 1770–1985,’ *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D'histoire*, no. July (2015): pp. 1–13.

[147] Asquith also described the methods used by the Swedish Red Cross elsewhere in Samara, whereby villages were surveyed and their food supplies compared to 1914 levels, from which their allocation was derived. i.e., a village with 75% of the food of 1914 levels would get enough food for 25% of its inhabitants. Michael Henry Asquith, *Famine—Quaker Work in Russia, 1921–1923*, Etc. *[With a Map.]* (London, 1943), p. 28.

[148] Sasson, ‘From Empire to Humanity: The Russian Famine and the Imperial Origins of International Humanitarianism.’

[149] Nations, *Report on Economic Conditions in Russia*, 35.

> In one house visited there were eight inmates, including an ex-soldier: 3 were children being fed at the kitchen. All the adults were prostrate with weakness, and none of them seemed to have any chance of recovery. The only food in the house was a horse's hoof, which was being broiled in a pot on the fire. In the house of the biggest cultivator of the village, who held 50 desyatins of land, the only food was a little food made of pounded grass. His horses were reduced from 15 to 1, and his cows from 5 to 1.[150]

While she does not invoke life stories, names or physical or psychological characteristics, instead choosing to label by age or wealth, the small numbers involved imply individuals (8 inmates can easily be imagined), and allow the picture to act as a bridge between the overall statistics and a more readily imaginable and human tragedy. More generally in famine reports, personal stories served to 'establish the moral [or causal] innocence of the hungry as victims of forces beyond their control.'[151]

In the main, distribution was centralised in order to make sure that proper procedures were being implemented. A central warehouse in each *volost* town, run by a manager, distributed food and recipes to villages, got receipts, and sent them to the FWVRC. There were three or four kitchens per village, one manager for several kitchens and in each kitchen a child was elected to see supplies given out.[152] In a few cases, children of refugees could get rations, when the refugees had 'responsible committees' and could show that they were 'definitely leaving', but generally rations were reserved for residents listed by the village committees.[153]

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[150] A. Ruth Fry, *My Visit to Russia*, February 1922, pp. 11–12.

[151] James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 18.

[152] *The Russian Field*, no. 6, 7 January 1922, FEWVRC/8/3/3, *Friends' Relief Committee*, LSF.

[153] *The Russian Field*, no. 6, 7 January 1922, FEWVRC/8/3/3, *Friends' Relief Committee*, LSF.

The FWVRC's detailed accounting was partly to allay criticisms in the press but mostly was standard accounting practice, as emphasised by the War Charities' Act of 1916, which required a 'responsible committee, keeping minutes and account books; a separate account had to be kept in a bank and all books and accounts had to be open for inspection.'[154] It did not differ significantly from charitable distribution norms and good practice since the nineteenth century.[155]

The FWVRC was to distribute through local committees, with 2–4 English supervisors per district.[156] These local committees selected who was to be fed in each village. Village committees were selected by, or sometimes composed of, the local Soviet. Asquith noted potential problems, such as personal grudges, with this arrangement but was generally positive.[157] There is evidence in reports and letters home from workers of petty theft and unfair distribution by these committees, but it was evidently not considered to be compromising the distribution, and it was seen as something that could be simply redressed by FWVRC workers with 'a lot of patience and a certain amount of variation in one's questioning'.[158] Much petty fraud seems to have been excused by prevailing views of peasant childlikeness and the severity of the situation (there was no question of deserving or undeserving poor, for instance[159]), and most of it is reported to be easy to detect by relief workers. Ruth Pennington described this process in a typed report to the FWVRC, possibly intended for publication:

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[154] Geoffrey B.A.M. Finlayson, *Citizen, State, and Social Welfare in Britain 1830–1990* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 265.

[155] Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange, and Bertrand Taithe, 'The Charity-Mongers of Modern Babylon: Bureaucracy, Scandal, and the Transformation of the Philanthropic Marketplace, c. 1870–1912,' *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 1 (January 16, 2015): pp. 118–137.

[156] *The Russian Field*, no. 4, 17 December 1921, FEWVRC/8/3/3, *Friends' Relief Committee*, LSF.

[157] Asquith, *Famine*, p. 50.

[158] Ruth Pennington, 'A Food Distribution in a Distant Village,' 2 October 1923, FEWVRC 8/2/6, *Feeding and Distribution*, p. 2.

[159] Kraus, working with the Mennonite relief, describes how priority was given to those with no food or supplies, which left those having, say, a cow, with the dilemma of whether to slaughter a potential lifeline for the future in order to get food in the present. The workers admitted this was arbitrary, but could only reply 'choose for yourself' to peasants with this livestock dilemma. Herta Kraus, *International Relief in Action: 1914–1943* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: The Herald Press, 1944), p. 20.

> Once in a way in the course of one's work over a large area it is possible to arrange to personally superintend a distribution. Of course one does not choose to arrive at a place where the committee is known to do good work, so the following experiences must not be accounted as typical of Russian Committee Work; no it is only to show how necessary control is, and how the peasants themselves appreciate the presence of someone from the "foreign boundary".[160]

FWVRC worker Ralph Fox was also fairly relaxed about theft, noting his role was to 'preserve some rough justice' and that 'when need was so great few were strong enough to resist temptation.'[161] Ultimately, relief workers had to enforce the feeding lists. Francesca Wilson concluded that: 'Relief workers have to have hard hearts. If I made one exception, the whole courtyard was full of similar exceptions the next day.'[162] Muriel Payne recounted having found some starving children in the street and then taken them to the famine committee where she found that the children's family were actually on rations. The committee then took the children into a home and withdrew their mother's rations: she had 'been told she can die.' Payne said that this was a drastic sentence but that 'one can see the point.'[163] While these memoirs suggest that the relief workers did follow the ration guidelines, there was clearly scope for other relief workers to make more sentimental choices.

Workers' judgement sometimes overrode medical opinion from head office. In February 1922, Anna Haines noted that the government wanted the unit to half the adult ration to feed more, but 'all local medical opinion and our own judgement' was that this would make it 'worse than useless'.[164] The IRRC's staff in Moscow included doctors who could assess ration levels and nutrition.[165] The relief workers in Buzuluk wrote to London in October 1922 that food value should be considered more important than quality when choosing what to buy and that the London committee should ask experts about the FWVRC's ration scales.[166] To this end Robert Robison of the Lister Institute for Preventative Medicine was asked his opinion on the ration scales in September 1922—a full year after relief work had started in Russia.[167] Indeed, Cabanes argues that in 1921 discoveries about malnutrition 'were still too recent to be effectively applied to humanitarian aid'… 'Only slowly did the SCF and the ARA apply a more scientific approach to food aid.'[168]

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[160] Pennington, 'A Food Distribution in a Distant Village,' p. 2.

[161] Fox, *People of the Steppes*, p. 182.

[162] Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos*, p. 150.

[163] Muriel Amy Payne, *Plague, Pestilence and Famine* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1923), p. 71.

[164] The Russian Field, no. 9, 4 February 1922, FEWVRC/8/3/3, *Friends' Relief Committee*, LSF.

[165] Robertson, *The Russian Famine*, p. 11.

Moreover, on the ground, the ration level seems often to have been determined by the availability of food and the logistics of distribution. Initially supplicants were meant to eat rations in the kitchens so that it was certain the right people were eating the right rations. Relief workers found that it was not always practical for peasants to eat the meals in the kitchens: first, because of the difficulty of travelling to the kitchens for those weakened by hunger; and second because it was seen to be difficult to stop peasants sharing their rations.[169] As early as January 1922, a relief worker reported that eating in kitchens was 'impossible to enforce'.[170] In August 1922, a general conference of the relief workers in Buzuluk noted that 'since starting our policy has been to feed all, rather than a proportion, as however much you give it will be split.'[171]

As well as who was to be fed, the FWVRC also had to balance feeding with other economic concerns: the need to provide enough per person to avoid starvation and the need to balance feeding with medicine, clothing and particularly with the re-establishment of agriculture for next year. This necessitated enough seeds that they would not be eaten before they could be sown, sometimes equipment, and the labourers to be nourished enough to work the fields. Fear of Bolshevism meant that there was considerable debate about how far and in what ways Western charities and governments should help in the famine. For those who believed that the Bolsheviks were to some degree responsible for the famine, outside charity facilitated the government's shirking of its duty, and could even help to strengthen the Soviet state. In this context, charities were careful to delineate their exact sphere of responsibility.[172] However, given the contrasting opinions on the causes of the famine and the prospects for Russian agriculture, it was not always easy to delineate a purely philanthropic and non-political sphere.

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[166] Minute 33, Executive Meeting at Buzuluk, 27 October 1922, FEWVRC/7/3/1, *Admin,* LSF.

[167] Robert Robison, letter to FEWVRC, undated, Box 8/ Parcel 2/Folder 9, *Children's Homes*, LSF.

[168] Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924*, pp. 225–226.

[169] Annual Report, 1 April 1922–1 March 1923, *FEWVRC/APPX*, LSF.

[170] 'Report from L.D. White,' 4 January 1922, FEWVRC 8/2/2, *Programmes and Projects*, LSF.

[171] The Russian Field, no. 32 w/e 5 August 1922, FEWVRC/8/3/3, *Friends' Relief Committee*, LSF.

Despite these dilemmas, the relief agencies all projected a far more professional and apolitical image, and humanitarianism came to be seen as a distinct sphere of activity. In 1891–1892 the relief effort had been conceptualised within Russia's economy, with an emphasis on distributing through Russia's civil society. Here, given the huge size of the famine, the greater scale of relief, and disorganisation in Russia, there was a greater sense that relief practices, ideals and institutions were autonomous. In contrast to the *Illustrated London News*' pictures in 1891, the Quaker film about the 1921–1923 famine featured piles of unburied, emaciated corpses, showing how the famine had gone beyond the reach of the social fabric, and perhaps hinting at comparisons with the industrial-scale killing of the First World War.[173] Photographs had been used in journalism since the turn of the century, and the Indian famine of 1896–1898 saw the first use of skeletal famine victims and emaciated children, while the SCF employed the first photographic image of a starving child in advertising in 1919.[174] The imagery used in the Quaker film was therefore relatively novel, and may have been somewhat shocking.[175] It also (and mostly) showed a distinct relief effort (rather than locals doling out relief), with uniformed relief workers giving out food, clothes and medicine, suggesting that the famine had overrun the boundaries of 'normal' poverty and Russian charity systems, and the presence of a more professionalised humanitarian organisation.[176] As well as Russia, the film shows Quaker work in post-war France, Austria, Germany and elsewhere. In the main, the sequences serve to emphasise the FWVRC's effectiveness in dealing with problems rather than images of suffering.[177] The SCF magazine was linked to the health industry and included advertisements for new infant nutrition, with a before-and-after picture of a starving baby.[178] As Fehrenbach writes, these advertisements combining 'shocking images with expert reports', as well as showing the commercial angle in humanitarian work, also serve to present the suffering as a 'shared human problem' with a scientific cure.[179]

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[172] Unlike elsewhere in Europe, the ARA disengaged without a 'reconstruction' phase. Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*, p. 173.

[173] *New Worlds for Old: Quaker Relief in Stricken Europe*, dir. by George Hubert Wilkins (Society of Friends, 1923), 37'.

[174] Vernon, *Hunger*, pp. 34–39; Christina Twomey, 'Framing Atrocity: Photography and Humanitarianism,' *History of Photography* 36, no. 3 (2012): pp. 255–264; Mark Phillips, 'Towards a History of Fundraising in the UK,' [paper presented at the *Voluntary Action History Society Conference*, Huddersfield, 10 July 2013].

[175] In a recent book, it is argued that photographs of extreme suffering still had to be authenticated and to negotiate political and ethical concerns in order to convince audiences: Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, 'Introduction The Morality of Sight: Humanitarian Photography in History,' in *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, 2015, p. 6.

However scientifically it was presented, relief could never entirely escape broader social, political and economic contexts. On one level, it was a practical necessity to attend to the region's socio-economic structures: the sowing of fields and re-building of infrastructure was needed to prevent more starvation the next year. On another, it was ideological: the corn, machinery and institutions used showed the donors' beliefs. The ARA insisted on importing only American corn and administering the relief separately from Soviet local government.[180] The FWVRC said its policy was to get the cheapest supplies and to work in conjunction with locals. The thin line between famine relief and reconstruction was, then, first of all threatened by the desire to improve agriculture enough to prevent another famine. It was also related to deeper differences of opinion. Lord Curzon argued, in response to criticism of

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[176] Relief Scene from *New Worlds for Old*, 46'.

[177] Silvia Salvatici, 'Sights of Benevolence: UNRRA's Recipients Portrayed,' in *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 200–222.

[178] Sir Michael Sadler, 'The World's Children,' *The Record of the Save the Children Fund*, April 1923, p. 112.

[179] Heide Fehrenbach, 'Children and Other Civilians: Photography and the Politics of Humanitarian Image-Making,' in *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 165–199, 179–182.

[180] See the agreement between the ARA and the USSR: Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*, pp. 180, 746. However, the ARA did shift to supplying and inspecting Soviet institutions.

Nansen's agreement with the Soviets, that the latter's relief was different from Hoover's in that 'Hoover will confine himself to the invaluable though limited task of providing meals for children in certain centres' but that Nansen's task was 'to deal with the famine conditions as a whole' by planting seeds and securing credits.[181] And while Sir Benjamin Robertson insisted that the Soviets should handle the famine themselves once the 'back had been broken', in order not to contribute to 'pauperisation', the and JDC always aimed to help with long-term economic reconstruction.[182]

Criticism was aimed at collaboration with the Bolsheviks. The *Daily Express* complained of the import of tractors by the JDC and Nansen mission: 'Money originally intended for the purchase of food for starving children is now used to import American tractors and organise peasant farmers into co-operative producing concerns.' The paper claimed that the famine was over and 1,500,000 tons of grain had been exported in 1922.[183] Sir Frederick Maurice, a military correspondent, complained to Ruth Fry of this Soviet export of grain: 'Before converting this grain into money for any purpose the Russian government should, in my opinion, have approached the Relief Committees or the League of Nations, or both, and offered the delivery of a portion of that supply…I have an uneasy feeling that Russia is trying to get as much help as possible from Europe and doing as little as possible in return.'[184] The relief workers' justification for this was that grain needed to be exported to create a 'balance between the prices of bread and of manufactured articles, and thus to create sufficient purchasing power among the peasants so that they can buy the necessary machinery at its actual price, rather than resorting to such costly methods by the central government.'[185]

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[181] 'Lord Curzon's Appeal,' 3 September 1921, FWVRC/8/3/2, *Publicity*, LSF.

[182] Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Joint Distribution Committee, 1929–1939*, pp. 59–60; Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*, p. 301.

[183] C.J. Ketchum, 'Save the Tractors: Unexpected Use for "Russian Famine" Funds. Bulging Corn Bins. Enough Food to Send Abroad,' *Daily Express*, 26 April 1923, p. 7.

[184] Sir Frederick Maurice, 'letter to Anna Ruth Fry,' 21 December 1922, FEWVRC/8/2/4, *Supplies*, LSF.

[185] 'Report by Jessica Smith,' 9 July 1923, FEWVRC/8/2/13, *Agriculture*, LSF. ARA workers were also sympathetic to these arguments. Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*: pp. 186–189.

This debate was about ideology as much as organisation. The Russian Relief and Reconstruction Fund, an anti-Bolshevik organisation, said it had 'always laid stress on the vital importance of combining reconstructive effort with relief work.' They put the issue starkly: 'Civilisation is threatened by an appalling menace in the results of Bolshevism, namely, mental decay and moral debacle. Nothing is so insidiously evil, and numbers of the Russian people have succumbed to this poison. If it is important to erect barriers to prevent the spread of physical plagues, surely it is even more important to erect bulwarks against the spread of moral disease.' The fund therefore aimed to 'rescue refugee children of the best type' and to use schools for the 'work of rehumanising, of educating and training, and of the development of character'.[186] It should also be stated that the British government, at least, was happy to 'reconstruct' along capitalist lines. Indeed, its initial attention to the famine problem was linked with the problem of economic recovery in Europe and the need to find new markets for British firms. The Scarab Oil Burning Company wrote to Lieutenant-Colonel Mance of the Board of Trade asking him to look at oil-burning locomotives and 'how best [it] might tackle the systems of getting our system taken up in Russia.'[187] Similarly, the Department of Overseas Trade's Board of Disposal sent lists of surplus material which they were 'anxious to market at reasonable prices'.[188]

Many were suspicious of the Soviet government's famine relief. A committee of liberals and churchmen had been allowed by the government as part of efforts to attract money from the West. However, the British Cabinet had such concerns in 1921, suggesting that 'the non-Bolshevic [sic] members of the All-Russian Committee had been arrested.'[189] Their distrust is corroborated by Alexandra Tolstaia's memoir, written after having left Soviet Russia.[190] Similarly, Fisher of the ARA made a more general point that the classes competent to direct relief had been forced out of Russia by the revolution.[191] These echoed the anti-government views expressed in the 1891–1892 famine. That the FWVRC was more positive about this situation was no doubt a result of its members' liberal views on public health, and their inclination at this time to look for a new system run on new principles. Writing in 1926, Ruth Fry said that she disapproved of the principles of communism but that it was a 'great experiment'.[192] Similarly Ralph Fox, a member of the Communist Party, stated that 'Western democracy is neither desired by nor natural to the Russian people, and they are slowly forming their own new system of government, adjusting it to the growing needs of the country and people.' The system of local soviets made the peasant 'feel he is important as a human being.'[193] In this view, the Soviet system was not incompatible with the voluntarism usually emphasised by the Quakers, because the latter, in the context of Russian peasants, was structured by modern paternalistic methods. Reconstruction efforts were as much about Friends' ambitions and working methods as about their attitude to the new Russia. These views were the reason why the ARA insisted on undertaking every aspect of the relief, whereas the FWVRC worked through the Soviet authorities.

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[186] Russian Relief and Reconstruction Fund, *Report 1920–1921*, pp. 1–2.

[187] E.O. Swinton, memo to Lt Col Mance, 23 August 1921, 'Disposal of Surplus Government Property: Records of the Disposal Board: Disposal of surplus wheat in Malta to Russian Famine Relief Fund,' MUN 4/6183, *Records of the Ministry of Munitions*, National Archives, Kew.

[188] Howard Frank, 'memo/letter to Phillip Lloyd-Graeme,' 21 August 1921, MUN 6/40, *Records of the Ministry of Munitions*, National Archives, Kew.

[189] Lloyd-Graeme, 'Cabinet Report on International Commission on the Russian Famine,' p. 475.

Both the FWVRC's spiritual aims, and the professional backgrounds of some of their workers, inclined them to co-operation with the Soviets. It was noted at the All-Friends Conference of 1920 that Russians were mystical and that the 'hearts of men stirred with a new social gospel… [which] makes them receptive seekers after the truth', especially the case with Tolstoyans, Molokans and Doukhobors, and student cities.[194] Even during the relief, plans for longer-term reconstruction were made, centred on improving Russian agriculture, medicine and training. Some Quakers aimed for a lasting religious presence through a medical centre and ‘embassies’. They were initially willing to co-operate with the new government in reconstructive and public health endeavours. Detailed plans for training colleges (agriculture and nursing, and linked to *Yasnaya Polyana*) and a medical centre were drawn up in 1923–1924 but eventually discarded after neither the Soviet government nor the Quakers would put up the money.[195] The nurse Muriel Payne wrote about how much she liked the Soviet children’s homes, which led her to think that there was ‘something very real in the Communist ideal.’[196] Few of these plans were realised, both because of a lack of funds and because communist Russia closed itself off to humanitarians after 1924. However, the desire to implement such schemes links the work with the development-oriented projects that would become more common in later decades. Their failure in this instance shows how humanitarian projects are shaped by multiple imperatives—those making decisions had to face not only political and ethical questions but also had to balance competing interests and balance logistical restraints.

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[190] Alexandra Tolstaia and Roberta Yerkes, *I Worked for the Soviet* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935), p. 170.

[191] Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*, p. 92.

[192] A Ruth Fry and Robert Gascoyne-Cecil Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, *A Quaker Adventure: The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction* (London: Nisbet, 1926), p. 160.

[193] Fox, *People of the Steppes*, pp. 122, 194.

[194] *Conference of All Friends Held in London August 12 to 20, 1920: A Guide & Souvenir* (London: The Friends' Bookshop, 1920), pp. 42–44.

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[195] Richenda C. Scott, *Quakers in Russia* (London: M. Joseph, 1964), pp. 256–271.

[196] Payne, *Plague, Pestilence and Famine*, p. 102.

Conclusion

The FWVRC's ambitious plans for training colleges and medical centres came to little, and the USSR was closed off to foreign humanitarians by Stalin in 1924. Victims of the 1932 famine in Ukraine would not receive British aid, and it was perhaps not until the 1970s, and the politicisation of Soviet human rights failings, that the country was significantly troubled by Western NGOs (non-governmental organisations).[1] The Soviet regime offered few footholds for outside humanitarians, but after the fall of the Berlin Wall a 'humanitarian ideology' would again be a key meeting point for West and East, as NGOs sought to introduce 'civil society' and free markets to the former USSR.[2] On one level, therefore, this is a story about Russia's changing institutions.

Even when Russia was relatively open to outsiders, however, the limits of humanitarian compassion were shifting and contested. The partiality of some of the humanitarian campaigns is best demonstrated by the help offered to Russia's Jews. While vocal support was offered by the British establishment in the face of Russian pogroms, there were definite limits to this support as British immigration law tightened. Whereas offering famine relief was a project with a definite end—relief workers

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[1] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rightsin History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), Chap. 4.

[2] Laëtitia Atlani-Duault, *Humanitarian Aid in Post-Soviet Countries: An Anthropological Perspective* (London: 2007), p. 14.

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L. Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890–1923*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65190-3

sought to feed the starving and only to highlight the deeper causes—the most obvious solution to the problems of Russia's Jews was emigration, something which many in Britain wanted to limit. Russian nihilists trod a fine line in making themselves acceptable to the British. The pages of *Free Russia*, filled with massacres, atrocities and peasants struggling under the yoke of autocracy, helped to spread a wider critique of tsarist government, but solidarity the exiles garnered did not go much beyond the fringes of the Liberal Party. As demonstrated by the 1921 famine, foregrounding compassion had the power to transcend political suspicions: millions were sent to feed Soviet children, even as communism was being denounced and only a few years after British troops had departed. However, charities placed clear limits on what and how they would spend money to avoid being seen to help the Bolsheviks. Indeed, while sympathy for Russians was spread widely, support was predicated on much narrower affinities.

Russian particularity played a large role. Images such as Kennan's Siberian prisons and charismatic individuals like the terrorist Stepniak and the scholarly anarchist Kropotkin formed the kernel of many campaigns. Indeed, this book has also argued that distinctly Russian ideas, or Russian variants, were central to shaping interventions. That is to say that these interventions were not just a question of applying universal norms in proportion to Russia's needs. Instead, the book sees the origins of Russia's status as an object worthy of help in the British imagination in part because of the articulateness of Russia's writers and exiles. It is true that, on some level, Russia's peasantry was seen as repeating more general patterns of economic development. However, the *mir* as imagined by Slavophile and liberal landowners, transmitted through popular Russian novelists like Turgenev and Tolstoy, scholars like Haxthausen, and utopians like Kropotkin, prompted imitation and idealisation. Would the Doukhobors have been moved to Canada had they not exhibited religious doctrines close to Quakerism, or the principles of agrarian communism dear to British readers of Ruskin and Tolstoy?

While Russian ideas prompted, and shaped, British engagement, we must look to British traditions for the wellsprings of this action. Humanitarian activity often tells us more about the humanitarians than the problems they sought to fix. Michal Givoni, an anthropologist of late twentieth-century humanitarianism, characterises the activity as a form of 'ethical self-cultivation' and focuses on 'the moral habitus that translates the humanitarian imperative into practice, and the modes of being that invigorate what otherwise could remain an idle prescription.'[3] Much can be learned by studying not only the humanitarian principles announced in calls for donations, but also the debates over religious doctrine among Quakers, the commercial imperatives of journalists, and the precise modes of relief and advocacy practised. In the broadest sense, the activity charted in this book was an outgrowth of British liberalism. Feeding on reports of Russian tyranny in the tsarist period, and spurred by pacifist and internationalist sentiments in the 1920s, humanitarian relief and advocacy offered a tangible expression of liberal politics and Christian morality. This was most obviously the case with the SFRF. The group's promotion and defence of exiles came from a British liberal tradition and a historicist, nonconformist reading of Britain and Russia's history. Notions of English fairness and comparisons with seventeenth-century martyrs were invoked, making the defence of these exiles a robust enactment of liberal principles. Quakers working on the famine, by contrast, saw the work as a new way to enact old principles.

One of the most enduring critiques of humanitarianism centres on its erasure of politics in the quest for neutrality and donations. According to some scholars, the period since the 1990s has been marked by a new moral economy centred not on justice, but rather on suffering and emotional responses. Humanitarian imaginaries include a greater number of people, but 'humanitarian reason' can be reductive and depoliticising.[4] It has been shown how refugees can be turned into 'speechless emissaries' with no history or political agency by humanitarians from the West.[5] Similar points can be made about strands of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century abolitionism, and it is sometimes assumed that humanitarianism depoliticises complex problems. It is certainly true that guarantees of impartiality, and often sentimental language, infused the campaigns covered in this book. However, the humanitarian critiques of Russia neither reduced recipients to complete passivity nor shied away from analysing the causes of the suffering in most cases. Humanitarianism was an active and vital strand of liberal, nonconformist politics. It no doubt obscured many issues, and its efficacy can certainly be questioned, but questions of history, politics and the agency of recipients were never far from the surface, and were often actively considered by the humanitarians.

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[3] M. Givoni, 'Humanitarian Governance and Ethical Cultivation: Medecins sans Frontieres and the Advent of the Expert-Witness', *Millennium—Journal of International Studies*, 40.1 (2011), pp. 43–63 (p. 45).

[4] Luc Boltanski and Graham Burchell, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Didier Fassin and Rachel Gomme, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present Times* (London: University of California Press, 2012).

[5] Lisa Malkki, 'Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization', *Cultural Anthropology*, 11.3 (1996), pp. 377–404.

Nicolas Guilhot argues that we should move beyond simplistic models of humanitarianism and politics, and suggests that 'the sociology of religions and the comparative study of different traditions of charity and aid may be more effective ways to move beyond the framework of political theology'.[6] Indeed, the actors aiding Russia related to humanitarian and political questions in a number of ways, which this book has traced back to Quaker belief and practice, liberal politics, and international civil society. Quaker work in two famines and the defence of persecuted Christians responded to real and grave suffering in Russia, as well as being the product of the evolution of the Quaker mission as the sect moved towards a more liberal belief system and a more pacifist practice. The work of the humanitarians and others indeed tell us a great deal about the role of humanitarianism in civil society, but this should not necessarily lead us to characterise humanitarianism as a sphere, or function, in society. Ultimately, humanitarianism must be understood as one strand among several in the Anglo–Russian relationship. It may have developed continuity as a distinct way of thinking about problems and an increasingly professionalised set of practices, but it was always linked with political, practical and circumstantial contexts, making it imperative to understand the varieties of humanitarianism and their role in political contexts. The attention shown to Russia over this period demonstrates how humanitarian activity was not simply the application of 'humanitarianism' to various problems, but instead developed in distinct ways from specific transnational connections and local traditions. The evolution of humanitarianism in this context shows that British, Quaker, liberal, anti-tsarist, and professional humanitarianism need to be understood on their own terms.

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[6] Nicolas Guilhot, 'The Anthropologist as Witness: Humanitarianism between Ethnography and Critique', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 2012, pp. 81–101; Abigail Green, 'Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context: Religious, Gendered, National', *Historical Journal*, 57.4 (2014), pp. 1157–1175.

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