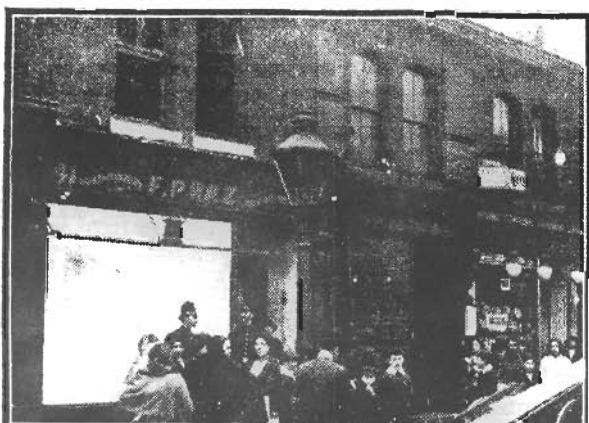
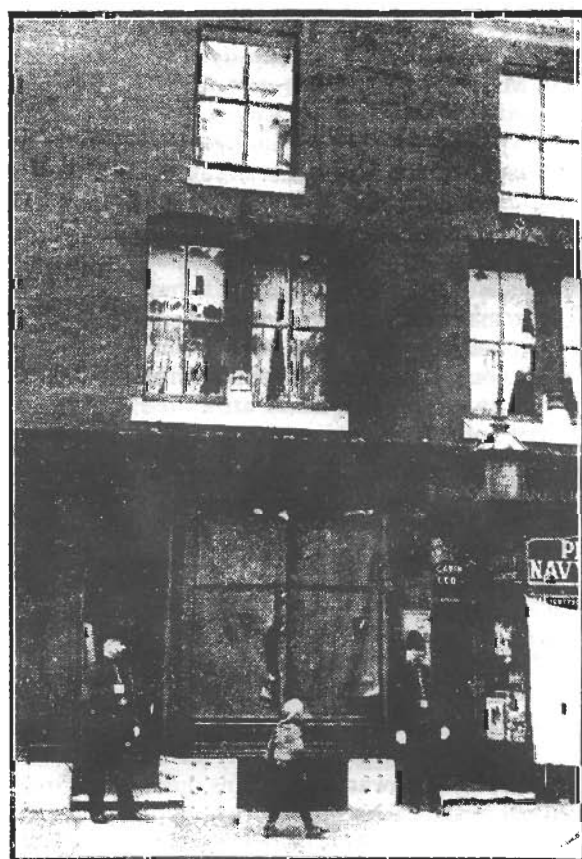


THE MANCHESTER COURIER, WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 1915.

RIOTOUS SCENES IN MANCHESTER AND SALFORD.



Top: A riotous scene in Foles New Road. Bottom: Windows in Rusholme Road broken by an angry sailor.



A shop in Cross Lane, Salford, whose windows were broken on Monday night. "Courier" Photos.

THE LANCASHIRE ANTI-GERMAN RIOTS OF MAY 1915*

Panikos Panayi

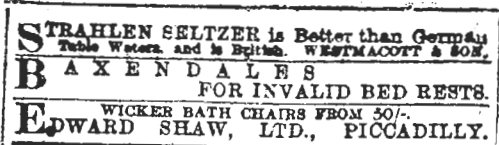
Between 1851 and 1910 over four million people migrated from Germany. Although the vast majority went to America,¹ an important minority made its way to England. For instance, in 1861 the German population of England totalled 28,644 and by 1891, had reached 50,599. It fell back slightly over the next ten years but attained a peak of 53,324 in 1911. It is particularly important to note that until 1891 the Germans constituted the largest single immigrant group in England and after this date came second only to Russian Jews.² Nevertheless, historians have devoted little attention to the German community in England. The recent study by Rosemary Ashton deals with the political refugees in Britain during the Victorian period and ignores the bulk of the German community who had left their homeland for purely economic reasons.³ This article focusses on an episode which seriously affected many of the ordinary immigrants settled in Lancashire, namely, the anti-German disturbances following the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915. The severity of these riots raises important questions about the tolerance of British society towards aliens. To begin with, however, something can be said about the Germans in Manchester and Liverpool before 1914.

Outside London, where about half the German population of England resided, a major area of settlement was Lancashire, particularly Liverpool, Manchester and Salford. In 1911 these cities contained German communities of 1,326, 1,318 and 201 respectively.⁴ In both Liverpool and Manchester German nationals had, from the early nineteenth century, been both visible and prominent. In Liverpool, starting by organising religious meetings in various locations, they had, by 1871, bought Newington Chapel, re-naming it the German Evangelical Church. There was also a *Deutscher Klub* and a *Deutscher Liederkrantz*. Occupations ranged from seamen, to sugar-bakers, pork butchers, up to wealthy merchants. Manchester was similar — there were 153 German firms easily identifiable, by 1870, ranging across banking, textiles and chemicals and many merchants. Names like Rothschild, Ermen and Engels and Mond were well known. Indeed Owens College and the University of Manchester had German Professors of Chemistry, Physics and Pathology. Charles Hallé founded and conducted the Hallé orchestra and was succeeded by another famous German, Hans Richter. As in Liverpool, Germans were well represented in the retail trades, pork

butchers, shoe makers and "skilled workers in the new industries", for example. By 1900, three German places of worship existed in the city. The most famous German institution between 1860 and 1912, when it closed, was the *Schiller Anstalt*. Overall the prominence and contribution of German immigrants was not inconsiderable.⁵

Hostility towards aliens, particularly Jews, began to develop in Manchester from the mid-nineteenth century and increased with the influx of Russian Jews during the 1880s. Local journals such as *Spy* and the *Manchester City News* saw the refugees as a threat because of what they claimed were their "unclean habits", their exploitation of the native population, and their exclusivity. Much of this hostility was anti-semitic.⁶ Specific anti-German sentiment began to develop during the Edwardian period as Anglo-German political and economic rivalry grew. In 1903, for instance, an article in the *Manchester Evening News* pointed out that the number of Germans in the city had declined in recent years and attributed this to the development of anti-German sentiment aroused by German support for the Boers. It also claimed that local employers believed that Germans whom they appointed would observe their business methods and copy them "upon their return to Germany" resulting in increased competition. In 1912, as anxiety over German militarism rose, the German Consul in Manchester, Captain Schlagintweit, felt that he had to calm the fears of the local population about a possible German invasion and the number of Germans in Britain when he spoke to the Ancoats Brotherhood.⁷ Nevertheless, these examples do not fully prepare us for the intensity of suspicion and opposition displayed towards Germans during the Great War, not only in Lancashire but throughout the whole of Britain.

Despite anti-German disturbances in London, Keighley, and Crewe during the early months of the War, Liverpool and Manchester did not experience such incidents until 1915. In the meantime, the German communities in both of these cities endured milder forms of persecution, both



Newspaper advertisement, May 1915.

official and unofficial. Liverpool City Council compiled a return of all Germans in its employ although it does not seem to have taken any further action against them.⁸ In Manchester, the *Manchester City News* urged local residents to boycott German restaurants and turn to English establishments. Such developments reflect events at a national level where Parliament and the Press became the major centres of anti-alien agitation. Initially, this had manifested itself as "spy-fever" but, with the rapid advance of German armies through Belgium, became more serious. In October 1914 the *Daily Mail*, which had constantly warned against German military intentions launched a campaign to oust Germans from the hotel and restaurant trade. This campaign, which found support in other newspapers, helped persuade the Government to adopt a policy of internment of male alien enemies in the Autumn of 1914.⁹ After these events, anti-German sentiment became less intense until the following Spring when it re-surfaced with uglier consequences.

Before detailing the course of the disturbances, it is worth pointing out that the anti-German fever of May 1915 also had milder manifestations. For instance, the Manchester



Punch cartoon. Kaiser portrayed as Macbeth witch.

Royal Exchange requested "all members ... of German, Austrian, or Turkish birth, although they may be naturalised British subjects" not to use its premises. In Oldham, about 200 employees at an ironworks went on strike "as a protest against the employment of an alleged alien workman". Similarly, a strong protest by female workers at a cardboard-box manufacturer's in Ancoats meant that, "four Saxon employees were obliged ... to resign their positions". At the same time, the Manchester Limited Restaurant displayed this notice: "No Germans or Austrians, naturalised or otherwise, will be served in this establishment".¹⁰

The initial outbreaks of violence occurred in Liverpool on Saturday 8 May, the day after the sinking. The first affected district of the city was the North End, where a Mr. Fischer's premises in Walton Lane had windows smashed and foodstuffs thrown into the streets. Dimler's in County Road, suffered similarly. The police eventually arrived to clear the crowd away but only managed to force it into Spellow Station where three more shops suffered damage. About sixty police officers now attempted to disperse the rioters but by this time they had doubled in number. They pulled down the shutters of Deeg's shop in Fountains Road, flung them into the street, and destroyed the front of the premises. Meanwhile, 19 were arrested during an attack on a pork butcher's shop in Robson Street. This appears to be the extent of the rioting on Saturday night.¹¹

It increased in intensity on the following day, when Dimler's again came under attack, and spread to other parts of Liverpool with shops attacked in Heyworth Street, Fox Street, Richmond Row, Juvenal Street and Mile End. One of the worst incidents took place in Scotland Road where a pork shop was "entirely looted". During the course of the weekend the police had made about 67 arrests. The bulk of the rioting had taken place in the North End.¹²

The most serious disturbances in Liverpool broke out on Monday when men, women and children wrecked shops throughout the day in many parts of the city. By this time the rioters destroyed the shops of all pork butchers, whether or not they were of German origin, as well as

German shops of every description.¹³ The day's rioting began early in the morning when a crowd of about 2,000 armed with a variety of weapons marched into the Mill Street neighbourhood. Despite the posting of policemen outside shops kept by those believed to have German connections much damage was done. Butchers' shops were wrecked in Mill Street, Warwick Street, Upper Hill Street, Northumberland Street, Windsor Street, North Hill Street, St. James Street, Lodge Lane and Crown Street.¹⁴ Further disturbances broke out in the North End where Deeg's shop lost its remaining windows plus the shop's contents. Rioting also occurred in Paddington while in Great George Street the property of a butcher named Yaag was demolished.¹⁵

During Monday afternoon and evening the rioting spread to Bootle, Birkenhead and Seacombe and became just as serious as earlier events. One of the worst incidents involved an attack on a fountain pen factory in Seacombe which had "been carried on by a supposed German" for the preceding two years. A large force of police and special constables eventually restored order during the evening. In fact, special constables were quite widely used and transported in cars. But during Monday the Chief Constable of Liverpool had contacted the Home Office about the possibility of receiving military aid. The latter agreed but in the end troops made no appearance.¹⁶

Tuesday was marked by less violence, but the rioters who had left few German shops unscathed now attacked German houses. In Wallasey a crowd of 2,000 attempted a march on the suburbs, but were turned back by a police cordon across Wexford Road. It is not clear whether the rioters wanted to attack richer German properties in this area or whether, by this time, they had become intent on looting any houses, irrespective of the nationality of the owner.

One thing does seem certain. By now, also as a result of the destruction of all the German shops, the disturbances had developed into anti-alien, and not simply anti-German, riots. Scandinavians, Italians and Russians all suffered.¹⁷ But most evidence survives about the Chinese who first came under attack on Monday. On Tuesday morning the Chinese legation in London received a letter "from an English friend in Liverpool" which asserted that, "Owing to the sinking of the *Lusitania* by the Germans the crowds of the Liverpool roughs have completely wrecked many Chinese residences in this city". On the following day the legation received a petition with 39 signatures requesting protection from the "British Authorities". The Chinese "Minister" therefore informed the Foreign Office which, in turn, contacted the Home Office. However, nothing happened because the violence had run its course by the 12th.¹⁸

The Times estimated the riot damage at £40,000 and that 200 "establishments" had been "gutted". In fact, the latter figure underestimates the situation because over the following weeks the City Council received 563 claims for compensation. This indicates local violence on a vast scale.¹⁹ Furthermore, by this time a substantial percentage of properties belonging to foreigners had been destroyed. But perhaps the most important was the fact that the Courts had begun to sentence large numbers of rioters.

The first 67 prisoners, arrested as a result of the weekend disturbances, appeared at the Dale Street Police Court on Monday. Most of those found guilty were remanded for seven days. The Stipendiary declared that although he could understand that the first news of the *Lusitania* affected everybody he rejected it as a justification of the

riots and pledged that future rioters would not be dealt with so leniently.²⁰

On the following day a further 45 people appeared before the Stipendiary. The prisoners included young men of military age and the magistrate suggested that they should "be fighting the Germans at the Front". He carried out his threat of the preceding day by imposing many sentences of 21 or 28 days imprisonment. Various other courts in Liverpool dealt with rioters on this day and in most cases the magistrates remanded prisoners.²¹ Those who had attacked friendly aliens, particularly Russians, were dealt with severely. For instance, one woman was sentenced to 28 days for being drunk and disorderly and 58 days for wilfully breaking two glass windows. On this day the Stipendiary kept to a consistent policy of sending to prison those who had previous convictions and fining those who had not. In fact, magistrates throughout Liverpool adhered to this policy during the trials of other rioters over the next week.²²

MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS, WEDNESDAY.

DISORDER IN MANCHESTER AREA.

RENEWED RIOTING LAST NIGHT.

PREMISES WRECKED, PROPERTY BURNED.

SEVERAL PEOPLE INJURED.

ANTI-GERMAN OUTBREAK.

WHOLESALE ARRESTS.

POLICE COURT PROCEEDINGS.

STIPENDIARY AND THE PROVOCATION.

Riotous Behaviour "Must Not Be Continued."

Rioting directed against shopkeepers and householders supposed to be Germans or of German descent continued in many parts of Manchester and Salford last night. The disturbance was spread over an area even wider than that affected by the afternoon, and at numerous points it was impossible to restore order, although the police had the assistance of almost every available special constable and in some cases of soldiers also. Much damage was done by the smashing of windows and the destruction of property, whilst the fire brigades of the city and the borough were called out several times to suppress fires which had been started by the rioters. Rain, which is often more effective than the police in dispersing a disorderly crowd, fell throughout the evening and the night. It may have tended to reduce the size of the throngs which assembled, but it was not heavy enough to stop the trouble.

INJURED PEOPLE.

Several people were treated at the Salford Royal Hospital for injuries received during the disturbances. A young woman named Elizabeth Tyrrell, of Rydal-street, Salford, was badly cut about the face.

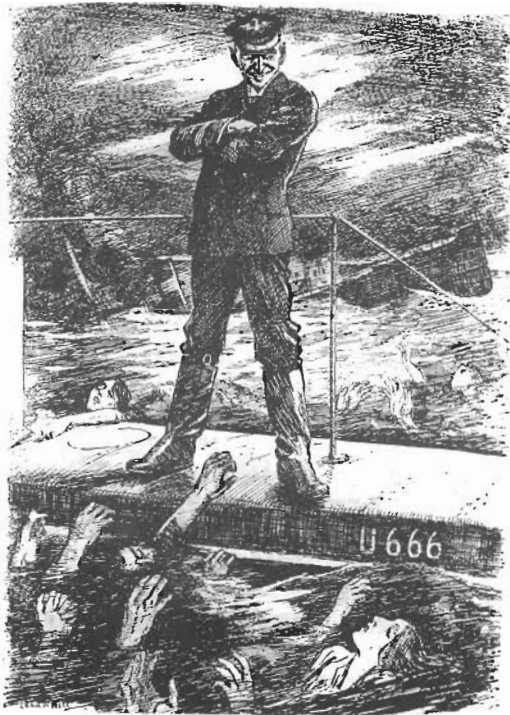
Arising out of last night's riotous scenes in the city no fewer than twenty-one people—thirteen women and eight men—were charged at the Manchester City Police Court, to-day, with various offences. During the hearing of the cases, which came from the whole fire divisions of the city, the Stipendiary (Mr. E. Brierley) remarked: "I can quite realize the provocation people have had in this country, but this sort of conduct does no good, and must not be continued. In the first case Mary Blay, 61, was charged with riotous behaviour."

Manchester Evening News, 12 May 1915.

Although the disturbances in Manchester were less serious than those in Liverpool, they remain the worst anti-alien riots in the city's recent history, casting serious doubt over ideas about Manchester's "tradition of tolerance towards strangers and foreigners consistent with" the city's "great liberal tradition in trade and politics". Although during the weekend a few minor incidents had broken out, the first major outbreak of violence occurred on Monday 10 May. On this day three areas were affected: Gorton, Openshaw and Salford. In the first of these, "trouble began in the morning, when a number of women" visited "the shop of a pork butcher who is said to be a German". The crowd initially jeered the occupants but as it grew "so did the volume of hostility". The police then had some success in dispersing the demonstrators but they reassembled during the dinner hour, and remained most of the afternoon,

although the police presence prevented any serious trouble from developing.²³

Many of those involved in this incident subsequently made up some of the estimated 10,000 crowd which attacked two pork shops belonging to Leonard Lambert in Openshaw. German by birth, Lambert had become naturalised at the age of thirteen, but the rioters ignored this fact. His first shop to come under attack lay in Ashton



The 666 on the submarine referred to the number of the Beast (Revelation).

Old Road. With cries of "Down with the German murderers" and "Down with the murderers of women and children", the crowd proceeded to smash the shop and bedroom windows. A mixture of police, special constables and soldiers eventually brought the situation under control but rioters simply moved to Lambert's second shop in Abbey Hey Lane. The Lambert family were in the living quarters above the shop and took refuge in the bathroom. "Downstairs the crowd had given itself up to a perfect orgy of violence"; windows were shattered, two pigs' carcasses stolen and the cash register destroyed.²⁴

The first signs of a disturbance in Salford came at about seven p.m. when a small crowd threatened the premises of a pork butcher named F. Wagner, in Regent Street. However, no damage resulted. Shortly afterwards, though, a crowd assembled outside a pork shop in Eccles New Road belonging to F. Praz, a naturalised British subject of German origin, which they destroyed and thoroughly looted. Meanwhile, another crowd had gathered outside the shop of a pork butcher named P. Hubb, "a German by extraction, but born in England", in Cross Lane. Shortly after 9 p.m. demonstrators began to throw stones at both Hubb's premises and those of a German fruiterer called Crispin on the opposite side of the road. However, a substantial police presence managed to limit the damage. At about the same time people collected outside a pork butcher's shop in Tatton Street formerly belonging to a German but recently taken over by an Englishman. After the rioters had broken the

windows, a patrol van with a dozen police arrived and moved them on, but only as far as a naturalised German jeweller's shop in Regent Road, but they failed to inflict any great damage there. The crowd then passed into Trafford Road breaking windows at the Trafford Hotel. The police finally restored order at about 2 a.m.²⁵

The riots which occurred on Tuesday, were aptly described by the *Manchester Courier* as "without parallel in the history of the city". Scores of shops were damaged and broken into. The occupants in many cases had to be smuggled away secretly by police to prevent personal violence. Disorder affected many areas of Salford and Manchester. In the former, crowds, of mainly women, had gathered outside the shop of a pork butcher named Hoffer in Greengate from 7 a.m. During the course of the afternoon shops and houses came under attack in West Union Street, Oldfield Road, Cromwell Road, and numerous other streets throughout Salford.²⁶

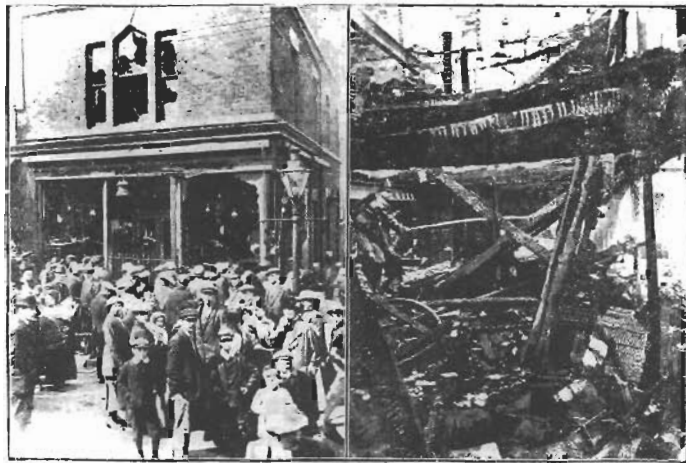
After dark Ellor Street became a "principal storm centre". Here, five shops were wrecked though none belonged to Germans. Subsequently, a crowd estimated at over 1,000 people attacked the Royal Hotel at the corner of Tatton Street and Phoebe Street where the licensee was Mrs. Georgiana Pressler. Rioters smashed windows and threw furniture out of them. Other shops attacked in Salford during the evening included a pork butcher's and an eating house in Regent Road, the Trafford Park Hotel in Trafford Road, and a jeweller's in Chapel Street. Thousands of people also wrecked a series of properties in Lower Broughton Road where the available police, including two on horseback, remained powerless. Salford Hospital treated "several persons" for injuries received during the rioting. At the same time, "about a score of Germans called at the Town Hall and outlying police stations to seek police protection".²⁷

Violence spilled into Eccles and Patricroft. In Eccles crowds smashed the windows of the Albert Inn, Church Street, which had an enemy alien licensee. They demolished a pork butcher's in the same road. Meanwhile, a confectioner's in Church Street came under attack and several shops "were threatened without any actual damage being sustained". At Patricroft a crowd threw stones at a second-hand clothes shop owned by an English woman married to a German.²⁸

Other areas which experienced violence on Tuesday included Ancoats, Bradford and Clayton, Ardwick, Gorton, and Openshaw. In Ancoats during the afternoon a group of two or three hundred mill-girls attacked and looted a pork shop in Oldham Road, owned by a naturalised German named Chris. Several other shops in Oldham Road occupied by Germans were "subjected to hostile demonstrations", while two pork shops in Rochdale Road suffered severe damage. Two pork butchers in New Road, Bradford and Clayton, "were practically besieged for two hours. The windows were smashed, and much more serious damage was threatened but for the intervention of the police".²⁹

In the evening the rioting spread to Ardwick where a crowd, estimated at 5,000, wrecked houses and business premises belonging to Germans. In two cases "the rioters succeeded in ransacking houses and securing furniture, which was set ablaze in the middle of the street". Eventually, mounted police were called to restore order. In Hyde Road, West Gorton, a house belonging to an English widow of a German suffered serious damage, as did that of her daughter, living next door.

Extremely violent scenes occurred in Openshaw where shops came under attack in Chancery Lane and Ashton Old Road. One of the worst incidents took place when



A crowd gathered in front of a shop in Wadsworth.

A portion of a shopkeeper's establishment in a local street, which was destroyed.

rioters returned to the premises of Lambert in Abbey Hey Lane which they had damaged during the previous night. By ten o'clock about two thousand people had gathered around the shop. They removed the broken windows and entered the house. At this point Lambert, together with his mother, wife and a friend, attempted to escape from upstairs. Members of the crowd directed blows at Lambert and his friend and the latter ended in hospital with a head wound. The women found refuge in Mill Street police station. In the meantime, the rioters set fire to the building and cheered as it burned.³⁰

This proved the most serious incident on the worst day of the Manchester disturbances. People took to the streets on Wednesday, but only a few minor incidents were reported.³¹ It is difficult to estimate the exact extent of the damage caused during the three days of rioting. In Salford 30 properties had come under attack and subsequent claims for compensation amounted to over £2,000. Manchester City Council received 107 claims totalling £2,375. Although a large proportion of those whose property suffered damage were naturalised British subjects, the local police still decided to round up unnaturalised male alien enemies for internment. The *Manchester Guardian* held this action partly responsible for the fact that the rioting ceased on this day because it gave "the public a sense that justice had been done".³² This newspaper also mentioned the "sobering effect" of the arrests of the previous day. Twenty-one people appeared in the Manchester City Police Court on 12 May when the magistrate handed out generally lenient sentences. However, he warned that although he could "quite realise the provocation people have had in this country ... this sort of conduct does no good, and must not be continued". Therefore, on the following day, as well as imposing fines, he also jailed three men.³³

After having described the riots, it is necessary to consider possible causes. Contemporaries offered three distinct reasons which basically, though not exclusively, reflected their position on the political spectrum. Firstly, there was newspaper comment, chiefly in the Conservative Press, which classed the riots as a justified response to a horrendous act, the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Secondly, there were those (including C.P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*) who blamed the anti-German articles and editorials which had greeted the sinking as themselves instrumental in generating the public violence. Thirdly, an alternative explanation was proposed by the socialist and feminist, Sylvia Pankhurst, that these disturbances were partly hunger-riots. We can consider each of these in turn.

The *Lusitania* was sunk by a German submarine on Friday 7 May and the first act of violence had occurred in Liverpool next day. *The Times* directly connected the two developments because the city "regarded the magnificent ship as its own special possession, one of the glories of its great port". Moreover the captain and most of the crew came from Liverpool. The *Liverpool Courier* described the situation in more emotive language:

*The disaster to the Lusitania, in which helpless non-combatants were foully murdered, has affected Liverpool in particular. By one coward blow hundreds of homes in the city have been bereft. Can there be any wonder that among the less disciplined classes, who have had to freely sacrifice their menfolk on the battlefield, the feeling of bitter enmity against the Germans should be exacerbated beyond restraint? From the streets wherein dwelt the sailors and firemen who were murdered by the Germans who torpedoed the Lusitania have gone crowds of people who, in their passionate resentment against all things Teutonic, have not been able to distinguish between friends and foes.*³⁴

These assertions receive support from Pat O'Mara who participated in the rioting and recalled "the cries of the women whose husbands and sons had gone down in the 'Lusy' " and "the bitter threats made against Germany and everything with a German name".³⁵

Nevertheless, this explanation of the riots seems unconvincing. Firstly, it cannot apply to other parts of the country unconnected with the *Lusitania*. Even in Liverpool, hardly any rioters appearing in Court had relatives on the ship. One man, charged with wilfully damaging a weighing machine stated that "You would do the same if your ship was torpedoed", claiming he had travelled on the *Lusitania* eight months previously. However, this proved untrue. None of the other defendants reported by the Liverpool press claimed personal connections with the ship.³⁶ At the same time, a number of important figures in Lancashire made some highly explosive statements which incited anti-German feeling. Lord Derby, for instance, declared that, "This country calls no longer for men to fight an honourable foe. It calls for men to hunt down and crush once and for all a race of cold-blooded murderers". A Liverpool priest wrote to the *Liverpool Courier* stating that if "popular fury" resulted in the expulsion of Germans from Britain, "it will be a blessing in disguise".³⁷

Is the second interpretation of the riots any more convincing? The *Manchester Guardian* expressed the view, in a leading article of 14 May 1914, that although the "fury of the people is only too intelligible ... it has taken forms which are unworthy of us, and some of the responsibility for the violence of the mob must fall on the men who, without the mob's excuse of ignorance, have written in the press thinly-veiled incitements to violence, and in one case even to murder". Sir John Simon, the Attorney-General, put the case more bluntly in a letter to C.P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, stating that Harmsworth (proprietor of the *Daily Mail*) "and his like" had instigated the rioting. He continued, "It must be a great satisfaction to him to feel that he has sold his country for 1/2d".³⁸

In view of these assertions, we need to take a brief look at press comment from as early as April 1915 because the sinking of the *Lusitania* "came towards the end of the month in which the tide of popular feeling in this country against Germany and German methods of war had been steadily rising to a height never before reached".³⁹ Stories had appeared in England about the treatment of prisoners



of war in Germany and on 10 April the Government published a white paper claiming the Hague Convention had been violated.⁴⁰ The press made the most of this. On 20 April, for instance, the *Daily Mail* claimed that "While the hapless British prisoners in Germany have been savagely misused, half-starved, deprived of medical attention and clothing, and treated with a calculated ferocity, the German prisoners in this country have been 'coddled' to the disgust of all right-thinking women and men". The Navy, the official journal of the right-wing pressure group, the Navy League, condemned Germany's "naval highwaymen" because since February German submarines had attacked all types of vessels found in British waters, armed or not. Between 18 February and 28 May the German navy sank 25 merchant ships. On 3 May alone eight British trawlers were destroyed near North Sea fishing grounds. On the same day the press carried news of the German poisoning of wells in South-West Africa.⁴¹

However, "among all the evidences of calculated cruelty on the part of the Germans probably none roused more widespread horror and indignation, when its nature and consequences were fully realised, than did the use of asphyxiating gas".⁴² The German Army first employed it on 22 April during the second battle of Ypres and attacks were almost daily for the next few weeks on this part of the French and British front. Among national newspapers, the *Daily Express* and *The Times* reacted particularly strongly. The former stated "We must expect the Germans to fight like savages who have acquired a knowledge of chemistry". The latter, meanwhile, wrote of:

*This atrocious method of warfare ... this diabolical contrivance ... The wilful and systematic attempt to choke and poison our soldiers can have but one effect on the British peoples and upon all the non-German peoples of the earth. It will deepen our indignation and our resolution, and it will fill all races with a horror of the German name.*⁴³

It was in this context that national and provincial papers reported the sinking of the *Lusitania*, in powerful language and pictorial images. *The Times* of Saturday 8 May declared: "The whole world is ringing with the story of this crowning crime". On the same day the headline in the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* proclaimed: "Loss of 1,457 Lives in the *Lusitania*. Germans Gloat Over the Murder of Women and Children".

It was on Saturday, that the first disturbances broke out in Liverpool although they did not spread to Manchester until Monday afternoon. Meanwhile inflammatory articles appeared in the weekend and Sunday papers. The *Weekly Dispatch* published one by the patriotic Tory Socialist Robert Blatchford, with the headline, "The Branded Race. Why Are Any Germans Left Outside Gaols In Britain? Lesson Of *Lusitania* Murders". Blatchford claimed that:

The Germans who sank the Lusitania are the same scoundrels as the Germans who poisoned the wells, who shelled Scarborough, who dropped bombs on Paris, who used poison gas at Ypres. They belong to the same people who are frantic with the desire to drop bombs on the crowded area of London: the same people who, women as well as men, would go mad with joy if their uniformed savages could get loose in an orgy of atrocity in some quiet English village ... How many Germans are living in our country — and not in Gaol? What are they doing here? What are we going to do about Germany after the war? Are we going to treat Germans as we treat civilised and moral nations".

Significantly, Blatchford made no distinction between the German army, the German nation, and the German people wherever they may be: Germans in Britain were certainly no exception. Vengeance should affect everything Germanic. A similar lack of distinction appeared in a leading article the following day, 10 May, in the *Manchester Courier* which claimed that "Germany, and that means wherever Germans are, gloats over its ghastly act, while with its usual hypocrisy the Berlin Government seeks to justify it ... All the waters of the Atlantic will fail to wash away the stain of blood from German hands".

Articles such as these might appear to support Liberal claims about responsibility for the riots lying with sections of the Conservative Press. Nevertheless, caution is necessary. In the first place it proves virtually impossible to find a direct link between a newspaper article and the actions of any individual rioter. Moreover, this was a time of escalating costs in the newspaper industry and responses included desperate attempts to increase circulation. In such circumstances it is not surprising that some journalism might seek to appeal to the baser instincts. Of course, such reporting may have given public endorsement to acts of revenge. Such conjecture is impossible to prove for certain. However, it is worth bearing in mind that on two other occasions when anti-German riots broke out in Britain, but not Lancashire, during the Great War, they occurred at times when feeling against Germany again reached a peak of intensity and when the Press again drew clear links between enemy aliens in Britain and their countrymen in Germany.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, we also need to look in detail at the more radical explanation of the riots advanced by Sylvia Pankhurst. Although her comments refer specifically to London, they also deserve attention with regard to events in Lancashire. She wrote that what took place in the East

End "was largely a hunger riot; the women and children who snatched bread and meat from the aliens snatched it not from hatred of Germany, but because they were hungry".⁴⁵ In order to ascertain whether we are dealing with hunger riots we need to ask a series of questions. What evidence survives about living conditions in Britain at this time? What was the social and occupational status and the sex and ages of those appearing in court? Did they live locally? Did rioters confine themselves to German shops, particularly purveyors of food, or did they turn also to German residences and English shops? What charges did those arrested face? Public order or theft? If the latter, what sort of items did they take?

Despite the claims of Sylvia Pankhurst, more recent studies have tended to support the view that the Great War meant an alleviation in the conditions of the "working classes". Arthur Marwick has written, "constant employment, longer hours, and war bonuses meant an upward movement in earnings, clearly noticeable from February and March 1915". In most cases this offset the rise in food prices and the deterioration in housing conditions. A more thoroughly researched study by J.M. Winter has substantiated these views.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, such general assertions do not answer our question and a more detailed look at the participants of the riots is needed. With regard to their social and occupational status, little information survives. Press reports of the court proceedings rarely provide the necessary information. We are told of a fishmonger breaking a window in Corporation Street, Manchester; the wife of a dock labourer smashing a plate glass window in Liverpool; "a young labouring man" engaged in an attack upon a shop in Abbey Hey Lane, Manchester; and a "middle-aged woman of highly respectable appearance" convicted of being in unlawful possession of a sack of potatoes. The most substantial evidence is that which tells us that mill girls played a part in the attacks upon property in Manchester and Salford. From such brittle evidence about occupational background the only safe conclusion we can reach here is that the rioters did not belong uniquely to the working classes or to any stratum within the working classes, such as the unemployed.

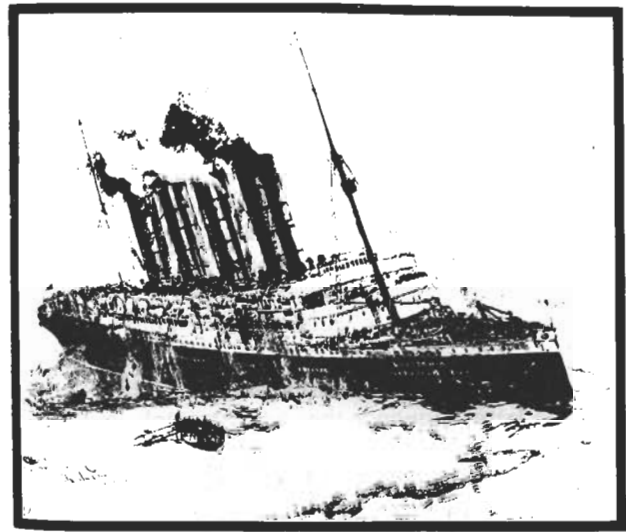
The evidence does suggest that a large proportion of those who took part in the disturbances were women. For instance, of the 65 defendants who appeared at the Salford Police Court on 25 May more than 40 were either women or girls. Similarly, 13 of the 21 people at the Manchester City Police Court on 12 May were women. Nevertheless, this does not allow us to reach any conclusions about the nature of the riots. Neither does a breakdown of the demonstrators' ages. In this case it proves difficult to establish any pattern because children as young as 8 participated as did people over 60. However, of the 65 people who appeared in the Salford Police Court on 25 May, 35 were under 20. But the most obvious point about these 65 people is the fact that they all lived in Salford or its immediate locality. Nevertheless, while this evidence about the rioters may prove useful in itself, it offers little guidance about the nature of the disturbances.⁴⁷

More revealing is an analysis of the type of premises attacked. In Liverpool the initial targets were German shops, particularly pork butchers. However, after the first two days the rioters turned to other targets: furniture dealers, outfitters, jewellers, and even hairdressers. Then, on Tuesday 11 May, after most of the German shops had been destroyed, the attackers moved to

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WEEKS GENUINELY NOW

Illustrated Sunday Herald

"A Cold-Blooded Outrage." NEW YORK CARLES YERGENYAT.



German houses as well as to the shops of other aliens, especially Chinese but also Scandinavians, Italians, and Russians. But this was the last day of the disturbances. In Manchester, the attacks were concentrated upon families who were either Germans, or former Germans who had become naturalised. As with Liverpool, pork butchers suffered particularly but purveyors of other goods as well as German residences were also terrorized. Of thirty premises attacked in Salford, five were pork butchers, five clothes shops, four public houses or hotels, three private houses, while the rest sold various other goods. The *Reporter* asserted that these thirty properties belonged "principally" to people of "British or Russian nationality". This is misleading, however, because the crowds apparently attacked anyone who had even the slightest connection with Germany. Those listed as technically British were in many cases not regarded as such by the crowds because they, their parents or their husbands had been born in Germany. The rioters made no distinctions. The evidence is incomplete but it seems probable that the rioters concentrated upon those perceived as German and any desire for booty remained principally a desire for that belonging to "Germans".⁴⁸

An examination of the nature of the charges faced by those who appeared in court reveals no clear pattern with regard to the incidence of theft and looting compared with public order offences. For the first 67 people who appeared at the Dale Street Police Court in Liverpool the offences included stealing, looting, doing wilful damage to property, and assaulting policemen. On the following day, 11 May, a further 45 prisoners faced a similar variety of charges. However, the majority of the 300 people appearing at the same court on Monday 17 May were charged with looting or receiving stolen goods. Similarly, the 21 prisoners in the Birkenhead Police Court on 15 May were all accused of stealing. In Manchester nearly all of the 33 defendants who appeared at the City Police Court on 12 and 13 May faced charges of disorderly conduct. Nevertheless in Salford, two young men and two girls were charged with riotous and disorderly conduct on

12 May while 89 people appeared in the Police Court on 25 May for either stealing or receiving stolen goods. Once again, the evidence does not provide us with any pattern from which to reach secure conclusions about the possible causes of the disturbances.⁴⁹

We can suggest, however, that, with regard to Liverpool and Manchester, the idea that the riots were induced by hunger can be dismissed because, although many people did take food from butchers and bakers, most of those who appeared in court on charges of theft had looted, not edible products but, clothing, furniture, paintings, carpets, crockery, jewellery and, in one case, even a crucifix.⁵⁰ The safest conclusion we can reach about the causes and nature of the riots is that, though they were sparked-off by the sinking of the *Lusitania* and fuelled by anti-German sentiments in sections of the Press, the general result was large-scale looting of a wide variety of goods. Their chief character was anti-German, although they also displayed a more general xenophobia.

These disturbances fit not into the category of food riots but into that of twentieth-century "racial" disturbances. Within the latter sequence they are extremely important. On a national scale they became more widespread than any anti-immigrant violence during this century. The disturbances began in Lancashire then spread to virtually every other region of the country: Scotland, the North East, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, East Anglia, South Wales, Southern England and, particularly, London. They became more serious than any of the anti-immigrant riots of the Edwardian years (against Jews and Chinese in South Wales in 1911) and the post Second World War period (when Blacks came under attack in 1948, 1949 and 1958, for instance). The only other "racial" violence which compares is that which affected the coloured populations of Cardiff, Liverpool, London, Barry, Newport, South Shields and Glasgow in 1919, and the Jews in the East End during the 1930s. All of these events, taken together, clearly support the assessment of Colin Holmes that "most ethnic and racial minorities in Britain at different times in a variety of places have found themselves targets of physical attack".⁵¹ The disturbances in Manchester were particularly striking because they severely question the myth of its apparently unique spirit of racial tolerance.

But the May 1915 riots also need to be placed in the context of the anti-alienism and general intolerance which gripped Britain during the First World War. The issue of enemy aliens became a major one at various times between 1914 and 1918. It attracted a vast amount of attention in both the Press and Parliament. Institutions of all descriptions from trading bodies to restaurants, expelled their German members or employees. In Manchester, for instance, the Chamber of Commerce excluded all persons of enemy birth from the end of 1916, following the earlier decision of the Manchester Royal Exchange to do likewise. Liverpool City Council refused compensation to enemy aliens whose property had suffered damage in May 1915. The city's Cotton Association promised a ten-year boycott of Britain's enemies and its M.P.s wanted to remove aliens from British companies, either as directors or shareholders.⁵² In addition, anti-German and anti-alien movements formed themselves throughout the country. These included the National Party, the British Empire Union, the League of Londoners, the Vigilantes and, in Manchester, the Britain for the British Movement. Each of these had similar aims. The last came into existence in June 1918 with Frederick Brocklehurst as its leader. It



JUSTICE.

The Passing Show, 22 May 1915.

primarily wanted to see "the internment of all enemy aliens, and the denaturalisation and consequent disenfranchisement of all Germans in this country". After the armistice it demanded the deportation of Germans, which became one of the major issues of the "Coupon" election.⁵³ The anti-alienism of the war continued into 1919 when the Aliens Act of 1914, initially introduced as a temporary wartime measure, became permanent.

Official and unofficial anti-immigrant and anti-German sentiment resulted in the disappearance of the German communities which had existed in many parts of Britain during the Victorian and Edwardian years. The *Lusitania* riots contributed to this. They put pressure on the Government to renew its efforts to inter male enemy aliens, a policy which had been eased but which now remained in operation until 1919. The Government also repatriated large numbers of Germans both during and after the hostilities so that the German population of Britain declined from 57,500 (37,500 males and 20,000 females) in 1914, to 22,254 (8,476 males and 13,778 females) in 1919.⁵⁴ In addition, the Government had also passed a wide range of measures during the War to restrict German businesses in Britain.

NOTES

- * I would like to thank Colin Holmes, John Stevenson, and Bill Williams who provided valuable advice and guidance.
1. C. Trebilcock, *The Industrialization of the Continental Powers 1780-1914* (1981), pp.310-11. Gustav Stolper, *German Economy 1870-1940* (1940), p.39, provides slightly different figures.
 2. The figures are taken from the following sources: *Census for the Year 1861*, Vol.2; *Royal Commission on Alien Immigration*, Vol.III, Appendix, p.63 (P.P. 1903, IX); *Census Statistics for 1911* (P.P. 1913, LXXVIII).
 3. Nevertheless, R. Ashton, *Little Germany: Exile and Asylum in Victorian England* (Oxford, 1986) remains an important study.
 4. *Census Statistics for 1911* (P.P. 1913, LXXVIII).
 5. H. Peet, *The German Church in Renshaw Street, Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1935), pp.65-6; Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry* (Manchester, 1985), pp.168-9; N.J. Frangopulo, 'Foreign Communities in Victorian Manchester' *Manchester Review*, 10, 1965, pp.191, 192-3, 199-201; Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, Curt Friese, 'Some Thoughts on the History of the Germans and their Church Communities in Manchester', pp.3, 6-7, 15-33; Manchester Reference Library Archives, William Thorp, 'Poor Foreigners', M38/4/2/17; Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, R57 (Neu) 1064.
 6. B. Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance: Middle-Class Manchester and the Jews 1870-1900' in A.J. Kidd and K.W. Roberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture: Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985) pp.78-9, 83-4.
 7. *Manchester Evening News*, 30 January 1903; *Manchester City News*, 10 February 1912.
 8. City of Liverpool, *Proceedings of the Council 1914-15*, Vol.II, (Liverpool, 1915), p.447.
 9. *Manchester City News*, 12 September 1914; *Daily Mail*, 14, 17, 19 October 1914; P.R.O. H.O. 45 10944/257142/21.
 10. *Manchester Evening News*, 11, 12 May 1915; *Evening Chronicle*, 11 May 1915.
 11. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 10 May 1915.
 12. *Ibid.*; *Liverpool Weekly Post*, 15 May 1915.
 13. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11 May 1915.
 14. *Ibid.*
 15. *Ibid.* The attack on Yaag's shop is colourfully described by P. O'Mara. *The Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy* (1934), pp.226-7.
 16. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11 May 1915; P.R.O. H.O. 4510944/257142/36.
 17. *Liverpool Courier*, 12 May 1915. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 12, 13 May, 1915.
 18. P.R.O. H.O. 45 10944/257142/82; *Liverpool Courier*, 12 May 1915.
 19. *The Times*, 13 May 1915; Liverpool Record Office, Orders of the Watch Committee to the Head Constable, May 1914-June 1915, 352 POL 1/37.
 20. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11 May 1915.
 21. *Ibid.*, 12 May 1915; *Liverpool Courier*, 12 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 12 May 1915.
 22. *Manchester Guardian*, 13 May 1915; *Liverpool Daily Post*, 13, 14, 17, 18 May 1915.
 23. *Evening Chronicle*, 10 May 1915; *Manchester Courier*, 11 May 1915. The quotes about Manchester's tradition of tolerance towards immigrants come from W.M. Crawford, 'A Cosmopolitan City' in N.J. Frangopulo, *Rich Inheritance: A Guide to the History of Manchester* (Wakefield, 1969), p.110.
 24. *Manchester Courier*, 11 May 1915.
 25. *Manchester Guardian*, 11 May 1915; *Reporter*, 5 June 1915.
 26. *Manchester Courier*, 12 May 1915; *Reporter*, 15 May, 5 June 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 12 May 1915.
 27. *Reporter for the County Borough of Salford*, (hereafter *Reporter*), 15 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 12 May 1915.
 28. *Eccles and Patricroft Journal*, 14 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 12 May 1915.
 29. *Evening Chronicle*, 11 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 12 May 1915.
 30. *Manchester Courier*, 12 May 1915.
 31. *Reporter*, 5 June 1915; *Eccles and Patricroft Journal*, 14 May 1915; *Manchester Courier*, 13 May 1915.
 32. Manchester Reference Library Archives, Manchester Watch Committee Minutes, Vol.47: *Reporter*, 15 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 13 May, 8 June 1915.
 33. *Manchester Evening News*, 12 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 13, 14 May 1915; *Evening Chronicle*, 13 May 1915.
 34. *The Times*, 8, 10 May 1915; *Liverpool Courier*, 11 May 1915.
 35. O'Mara, *Autobiography*, pp.224-5.
 36. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18 May 1915; *Liverpool Courier*, 12 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 12, 13 May 1915.
 37. *The Times*, 10 May 1915; *Liverpool Courier*, 12 May 1915.
 38. Quoted by Stephen Koss, *Lord Haldane: Scapegoat for Liberalism* (Columbia University Press, 1969), p.155. For Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe) and his connections with Manchester see C. Buckley 'The Search for a Really Smart Sheet', *Manchester Region History Review*, 1 (1987), pp.21-8.
 39. *Manchester Guardian History of the War*, Vol.II: 1914-15 (1915), p.353.
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. *Ibid.*, pp.355-7; *The Navy*, May 1915, p.138; Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning* (1977), pp.98-100.
 42. *Manchester Guardian History of the War*, II, p.357.
 43. Both of these quotations, *Daily Express*, 27 April 1915. *The Times*, 29 April 1915, are taken from Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-Time* (1928), p.146.
 44. i.e. October 1914, when the German armies quickly advanced through Belgium, and June 1916, following the death of Kitchener.
 45. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Home Front*, (1932), p.171.
 46. Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (1965), pp.124-8; J.M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (1986), pp.213-215.
 47. *Manchester Guardian*, 13 May 1915; *Liverpool Daily Post*, 13, 18 May 1915; *Manchester Courier*, 13 May 1915; *Eccles and Patricroft Journal*, 14 May 1915; *Reporter*, 29 May, 5 June 1915. As mentioned above, a systematic analysis of the rioters proves extremely difficult because the reports in all of these newspapers, with the exception of the last, provide few details. Even the *Reporter* gives us little information about occupations.
 48. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11, 17, 18 May 1915; *Reporter*, 15 May 1915.
 49. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 11 May 1915; *Liverpool Courier*, 12 May 1915; *Manchester Guardian*, 13, 14 May 1915; *Reporter*, 29 May 1915.
 50. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 18 May 1915; *Reporter*, 29 May 1915.
 51. Colin Holmes, 'The Tredegar Riots of 1911: Anti-Jewish Disturbances in South Wales', *Welsh History Review*, Vol.II, No. 2, December 1982, p.225.
 52. *Manchester City News*, 18 November, 9 December 1916; P.J. Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939* (Liverpool, 1981), p.272.
 53. *Manchester Guardian*, 14 June, 5 December 1918.
 54. These figures are approximate and have been taken from the following sources: the 1914 total comes from a Home Office letter to MI5 of 3 March 1917 in P.R.O. H.O. 45 11522/287235/81; 1917 is from figures in P.R.O. H.O. 45 11522/287235/88. The 1918 total is based on a Home Office memorandum in P.R.O. H.O. 45 11522/287235/148. However, the total males is the figure given here added to that for those interned in *Report of Committee Appointed to Consider Applications from Compulsory Repatriation Submitted by Interned Enemy Aliens* (P.P. 1919, X).