

Vice Beyond the Pale:

Representing 'White Slavery' in Britain c.1880 - 1912

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of PhD

I, Rachael Claire Attwood, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been
indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis will explore the discourses of 'white slavery', as used to represent the traffic in women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation during the first chapter of the history of trafficking in Britain between c.1880 and 1912. It will trace the reconfigurations to these discourses and seek to locate their wider significance(s). How did 'white slavery', as a means of thinking about sexual danger in specific times and places, function and why was it made to function in this way? What does its application tell us about the society in which discourses of 'white slavery' had resonance? What is the significance of sex trafficking in modern Britain?

It will approach this task by analysing, contextualizing and comparing the discourses of 'white slavery' that emerged during each of three distinct moments in the history of trafficking in Britain, namely, the scandal over the exploitation of British girls on the near Continent between 1880 and 1882, the proliferation of an international anti-trafficking movement in an age of mass-migration between 1899 and 1910, and the struggle for a Criminal Law Amendment Act to combat trafficking in 1912. Focus will be on the discourses of the individuals and groups rallying against trafficking but the discourses of those dismissive of the need for action against such exploitation will also be considered for the insight these negative voices provide into perceptions of trafficking.

This process not only promises to improve our understanding of the nature and implications of the phenomenon of trafficking throughout the years under examination. It also promises to improve our understanding of organized responses to systematic sex crimes against women in modern British history and, moreover, our understanding of the nature of hegemony and the loci of power in society during turn-of-the-century Britain.

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Abbreviations

BSP	British Socialist Party
CLA	Criminal Law Amendment
ECPAT UK	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, United Kingdom
EU	European Union
FA	Friends' Association for Abolishing State Regulation of Vice
HL	Hartley Library, University of Southampton
ICA	Jewish Colonization Association
ILP	Independent Labour Party
JAPGW	Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women
JLS	Jewish Ladies' Society for Preventive and Rescue Work
LNA	Ladies' National Association
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
NUWW	National Union of Women Workers
NVA	National Vigilance Association
RCAI	Royal Commission on Alien Immigration
SDF	Social Democratic Federation
TARA	Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, Glasgow
TAS	Travellers' Aid Society
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WL	The Women's Library, London
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union

Introduction

On Saturday 18th May 1912, under heavy clouds and in a chill wind, some 9,000 children drawn from the Boy's Brigade and the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides and the Navy League Girl's Brigade, together with a host of other youth groups, assembled amid thick crowds of onlookers in London's Hyde Park to begin the year's Empire Day celebrations. Just as their peers would do, and had done for some years, throughout Britain's colonies, dominions and dependencies under the auspices of the League of Empire, they gathered to manifest their pride in Britain's imperial status and to demonstrate the 'oneness in diversity of the British brotherhood'.

A vibrant pageant ensued to the sounds of the bands from the Thirteenth Battalion London Regiment and Queen Victoria's Rifles. Presided over by the Lord Mayor of London, the Duchess of Argyll, Lord Meath and a number of other elite members of the League and imperial representatives, a Union Jack was hoisted aloft from a central flagstaff and sixty-five standard-bearers representing each of Britain's imperial territories marched in front of it, lowering their colours in salute to the British flag. Then, to drum rolls from the bands and patriotic cries from the audience, all of the young attendees made a pledge of loyalty to the flag before marching in columns past the central flagstaff. With the fervour of the occasion reaching fever pitch, the grand finale began. The imperial standard bearers marched past the Union Jack once again, this time to the sound of a song that had been reserved for that moment.¹ And so rang out the Georgic air, written by James Thomson and set to music by Thomas Arne in 1740, which had come to represent Britain's alternative national anthem:

When Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main;
This was the charter, the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sang this strain:
'Rule, Britannia!
Britannia, rule the waves:
Britons never shall be slaves'

¹ See: *The Times* (20 May 1912); *The Advertiser, Adelaide, SA* (21 May 1912)

The nations, not so blest as thee,
Must, in their turn, to tyrants fall;
While thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
'Rule, Britannia!...' ²

The following Friday 'Rule, Britannia!' reverberated in many of the 23,000 schools in the United Kingdom and the 38,000 schools in the Dominions - among the eight and a half million young students - that participated in Empire Day. ³

Few of the children singing these words could have guessed that it was citizens like themselves that were being imagined as the latest victims of the anathema of slavery on British soil.

*

Discourses of slavery had long had resonance in ideas of British national identity. Britain, so conventional wisdom ran, represented the world's principal 'anti-slavery nation'. It had endowed its citizens with freedom as a birthright and had afforded the citizens of other countries succour from enslavement, being a most civilized and civilizing liberal power. Discourses of slavery, in turn, had long had played an important role in the rhetorics of the country's extra-parliamentary reform groups as a means of evoking the severity of the particular humanitarian cause they were campaigning against and highlighting the national significance and the patriotic nature of their respective campaigns. Britons, such organizations argued, should perceive any denomination of slavery, anywhere, as an abomination and had a moral obligation to rail against it in the name of the nation. Whether in the original abolitionist discourses of the 1760s to 1830s concerning the injustice of the enslavement of subjects of colour in the British West Indies or the later abolitionist campaigns of the 1830s and 40s decrying the maltreatment of deportees to the penal colonies of Australia. Whether in the protests by the factory reform movement against the exploitation of the country's workers from the 1820s to the 1850s or the outcry over the treatment of indentured Chinese labourers in the mines of British-occupied South Africa between 1880 and 1906, discourses of slavery were mobilized by reform groups to emphasise the distinctly 'un-

²'Rule, Britannia!', in Cummings, WH, *Dr Arne & Rule, Britannia* (London: Novello & Co, 1912), pp.111-36

³ *The Advertiser, Adelaide* (21 May 1912)

English' nature of the abominations they fought against and to highlight the profound national need for redress.⁴

Notions of history played a significant part in anti-slavery rhetoric. Slavery was represented as an injustice that was anomalous to the fabric of national life which had been woven over the centuries given Britain's historical status as *the* country of freedom, as underwritten by its proud naval heritage, and given the historical entitlement of its people to liberty. Perpetuating a tradition in abolitionism of protest through verse, the poet, writer and staunch abolitionist, Hannah More wrote in her 1788 work 'Slavery, A poem':

Shall Britain, where the soul of freedom reigns,
Forge chains for others she herself disdains?
Forbid it, Heaven! O let the nations know
The liberty she loves she will bestow;

Not to herself the glorious gift confin'd,
She spreads the blessing wide as humankind;
And, scorning narrow views of time and place,
Bids all be free in earth's extended space.
What page of human annals can record
A deed so bright as human rights restor'd?
O may that god-like deed, that shining page,
Redeem OUR fame, and consecrate OUR age!⁵

Specific ideas of gender were at the core of these historicized concepts of national identity and played a central role in the discourses of slavery. These ideas cut in two distinct ways. As Keith McClelland suggested in relation to the struggle for workers' rights during the factory reform movement and the 1860s campaign for the extension of the franchise to certain working-class men, slavery had traditionally been represented as a slight on the birthright, not of the British citizen *per se*, but of the British *man*. The

4 Richard Huzzey has demonstrated persuasively the significance(s) of 'anti-slavery' campaigns following the abolitionist movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He argued that rhetorics of 'anti-slavery', rather than dying with the Abolition of Slavery in 1833, continued to have a resonance, being re-commissioned in a diverse array of different reform movements during the nineteenth century, whether focussed on the 'enslavement' of citizens abroad in the name of empire or citizens on home soil in the name of industrial capital and/or the State machine. Further, he acknowledged the enduring significance in national identity of concepts of 'anti-slavery' following legal abolition, putting forward a convincing argument for the fact that Britain was thought of principally as a nation opposed to slavery in priority to an 'Abolitionist' nation *per se*, with active 'anti-slavery' sentiment playing an influential part in what it was to be British. Huzzey, R, *Freedom Burning. Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012)

5 More, H, *Slavery, A Poem* (T. Cadel: London, 1788), p.18

act of enslavement – in terms of its direct imposition upon British citizens - was represented as an affront to the nation’s masculinity, whilst freedom, whether in the form of political emancipation or otherwise, was portrayed as the historical, legal entitlement of the nation’s freeborn men, as decreed by the constitution.⁶ '[T]ell me not of the free labour of a poor famishing artisan, covered in rags and broken in spirit', Richard Oastler, a principal figure in the factory reform movement, declared when rallying his comrades in 1833, '[t]his is the freedom that the unprotected British labourer enjoys in his boasted land of liberty'.⁷

Furthermore, slavery was represented as something which the British man had a moral duty to protect the women and children of his country, and other countries, against given their supposed natural weakness, vulnerability and reliance upon their male protectors. He was also portrayed as duty-bound to protect the country’s colonial subjects en masse given their putatively effeminate or disreputably savage, infantile and dependent nature. That, as we will see, abolitionist organizations chose to condemn the flogging of various groups of enslaved citizens abroad by emphasizing the outrage inherent in the punishment being inflicted on women, attests to this notion of slavery as something that ‘the weaker sex’ should not have to endure whilst there was a nation of civilized and chivalrous men on the world stage.⁸

While containing many similar arguments and motifs, the original abolitionist campaigns and the languages of slavery they deployed ought not to be understood as just another in a long line of abolitionisms and slavery discourses to have had resonance in modern British culture. Rather, they were the first major manifestation of their sort and pioneered the very themes which were thereafter subject to variation upon variation. They, along with the languages used by pro-slavery campaigners, Srividhya Swaminathan has implied, were formative in, and helped to cement, ideas of national identity predicated on Britain’s unparalleled status as an anti-slavery nation.⁹ The rhetorically and symbolically charged discourses of slavery used by abolitionists in the

6 McClelland, K, “Some Thoughts on Masculinity and the ‘Representative Artisan’ in Britain 1850 -1880” *Gender & History*, 1:2 (June 1989), pp.164-77

7 Oastler, R, *Facts and Plain Words on Every-day Subjects...* (Huddersfield: Hernaman and Perring, 1833), p.16

8 Altink, H, “‘An Outrage on all decency’: Abolitionist Reactions to Flogging Jamaican Slave Women 1780-1834” *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, 23:2 (August 2002), pp.107-22

9 Swaminathan, S, *Debating the Slave Trade: Rhetoric of British National Identity, 1759-1815* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), esp. ch. 1. See also: Turley, D, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery, 1780-1860* (London: Routledge, 1991)

late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries delivered for abolitionism not only palpable success by way of the 1807 Slave Trade Act, which abolished the slave trade in the British Empire, and the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act, which abolished slavery itself in parts of the Empire (at least in law), but also an exceptional, recognized moral authority. They, as Derek Peterson put it, successfully 'extended the range of social problems for which British people felt themselves accountable, endowing abolitionism with a profound moral capital that was capable of uniting otherwise disparate interest groups within society in resolve'.¹⁰ The discourses of slavery mobilized by abolitionists, as such, had a significant impact on subsequent extra-parliamentary reform movements.

Reform groups appropriated abolitionism's paradigmatic ideas and images of slavery in their discourses so as to harness the rhetorical successes and moral authority of the earlier campaign, assert the public accountability of the injustice against which they fought and thus bind the population in support of their cause. They did so not only positively, by aligning themselves with the former anti-slavery campaign, but also often negatively, by marginalizing it. The enslavement of black subjects in the British West Indies was invoked to command *or* to eschew the rhetorics of abolitionism and so emphasise the gravity of a given cause and the extent to which it was worthy of public sympathy and government attention. Reform groups, self-consciously and intentionally, walked in the rhetorical footsteps of their elders and often not out of mere convenience but out of genuine conviction of the moral proximity - if not moral superiority - of their cause to that of Abolition. Indeed, as Richard Huzzey argued in his excellent analysis of the anti-slavery campaigns of the Victorian era, following the experience of the abolitionist movement, discourses of slavery became increasingly multivalent in the rhetorics of reform groups and 'anti-slavery' became an increasingly contested category of protest, being made to signify different things at different times. 'Within British society', he averred, 'anti-slavery could be claimed or rejected as a relevant precedent

¹⁰ Peterson, D (ed.), *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Great Britain, Africa and the Atlantic* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), esp. intro.

for particular reform movements, depending on what individual Britons assumed anti-slavery to entail'.¹¹

'White Slavery'

It is with a particular denomination of this multivalent currency that the following thesis is concerned, the discourses of 'white slavery', as used to represent the international traffic in women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

Nowadays, we think of sex trafficking as a very recent problem, related to drugs rackets and organized crime syndicates, modern technologies and globalization. However, the international traffic in women and girls was just as much a phenomenon of turn-of-the-century society as it is now. Indeed, it was a phenomenon in which Britain played a prominent part. As early as the 1860s, reports of British girls being trafficked to the licensed brothels of Belgium and France were being received by the Home Office and a minor traffic of this sort continued alongside a relatively small intra-Continental traffic for the next two decades, entering British popular consciousness in 1880.

By the close of the nineteenth century, prevailing circumstances produced the fuel, the motivation, the technologies and the markets for an international traffic of unprecedented scale in which Britain was a principal hub. In the 1870s, the Great Depression sent shockwaves through many of the world's economies, ushering in a twenty-five year downturn which, to varying degrees, brought reduced industrial growth, falling incomes, failing businesses and mass-unemployment to most European countries.¹² In the 1880s, Tsar Alexander III began sanctioning pogroms on Ashkenazi Jews in the Pale of Settlement and implemented legislation which restricted Jews' economic activity. This set a precedent of persecution in Russia that lasted three

11 See: Huzzey, *Freedom Burning*, p.6; chs. 7 & 8. Indeed, Derek Peterson has also implied this process, referring to groups outside the Abolitionist Movement 'pirating abolitionism into distant seas'. '[A]ntislavery rhetoric and symbolism', he contended in relation to the factory reform movement, 'escaped from the grip of Abolitionists and animated contemporary working-class activism'. Peterson (ed.), *Abolitionism*, pp.15-6

12 There is much debate over the severity of this series of recessions and how the recessions affected different countries. Available statistics can, moreover, be misleading. We know, for example, that Germany's experience of the Depression was, from the mid-1890s, punctuated with soaring industrial output, yet high unemployment was pervasive there throughout this period of 'boom'. For the purposes of this analysis, it suffices to note that a serious downturn of some description affected most European states between c.1873 (the crash of the Vienna stock-market) and 1895. See: Leon, P (ed.), *Histoire économique et sociale du monde, vol. iv, La domination du capitalisme, 1840-1914* (Paris, A Colin: 1978)

decades and occurred alongside increasing anti-Semitic prejudice on the Continent. Thus swathes of European men and women were plunged into poverty and, in the case of East European Jews, were also living in fear of violence. Uprooting to find better prospects, and often taking any opportunity to make money, came to represent dire necessity for increasing numbers in this time of desperation. The proliferation of commercial passenger lines made migration viable and affordable to many. Therefore, from the 1880s, an exodus began from the impoverished parts of Europe.¹³ Many of those fleeing their homes were young men and women, travelling without families and with few friends. It was this endemic poverty and this mass-migration that facilitated the first manifestation of the modern problem of the systematic traffic in women.

Britain was of strategic importance in this growing network because, as well as receiving a considerable flow of immigrants from which traffickers could recruit, it played host to *four* of the world's busiest transmigrant ports. Traffickers and procurers would enter the country with – or with the intention of obtaining – a human cargo of women, usually to travel on to another point of the global trafficking network. From Britain women were sold for rich returns to brothel-keepers in places as remote as Buenos Aires and Johannesburg, Calcutta and Rangoon.¹⁴ Few would return. The enactment of a law restricting immigration from 1905 is likely to have deterred few traffickers from travelling via Britain given the ease with which such legislation could be circumvented and the profitability of the trade.

As the problem of trafficking within and from Britain developed so too did the country's organizational responses to it. From the small, short-lived London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in English Girls, which had grown from the campaign to repeal the state regulation of prostitution and had been founded by a handful of male Quakers in 1880, the country's anti-trafficking movement soon diversified beyond recognition. By the 1890s, two great international taskforces had taken on the fight against trafficking in Britain, the National Vigilance Association (NVA)

¹³ For an analysis of the persecution of East European Jews and Jewish mass-migration see: Johnson, S, *Pogroms, Peasants, Jews: Britain and Eastern Europe's 'Jewish Question', 1867-1925* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), esp. intro, chs.1-2

¹⁴ The breadth of the turn-of-the-century global trafficking network is outlined by Edward Bristow in his study of Jewish responses to trafficking: Bristow, EJ, *Prostitution and Prejudice. The Jewish Fight against White Slavery, 1870-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982)

and the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women (JAPGW), and they, following an International Congress of anti-trafficking groups organized by the NVA in 1899, effectively presided over the newly-formed global mechanism, the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons. Indeed, the two associations, individually and collectively, assumed a dominant presence in the reform movement against trafficking both at home and abroad right up to the outbreak of the First World War.¹⁵ Yet the fight against trafficking was not simply engaged with by the country's anti-trafficking groups. As the new century progressed, the question of sex trafficking was increasingly co-opted by groups comprising external reform movements such as the women's suffrage and the labour movements, which, whether to promote action against it or demote its relevance, evoked the issue of trafficking to further their respective campaigns. Largely thanks to the pressure of such groups, a Criminal Law Amendment Bill, represented by its supporters as a law to combat the traffic in women and girls, was passed in 1912.¹⁶ Although in reality it did little to prevent trafficking, the Bill constituted the first legal recognition of such criminality in Britain.

It was languages of 'white slavery' that were, in various configurations, mobilized by both anti-trafficking and wider reform organizations to represent the systematic sexual traffic in women and girls. This thesis will explore the nature and wider significance of the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized between c.1880, when the initial revelations of trafficking came to light, and c.1912, when the country's first law directed at the problem was passed.

Long before the phenomenon of sex trafficking entered British popular consciousness, discourses of 'white slavery' were being mobilized by reform groups to campaign against the systematic exploitation committed on the bodies of white British citizens, men as well as women. Since the very advent of abolitionism in the late 1800s, discourses of 'white slavery' had been deployed by reformers to evoke the ethos and channel the moral authority of the abolitionists' campaign against black slavery, whilst racially redirecting the focus of the campaign and endowing it with a distinct ethnicity-based hierarchy of oppression. Specifically, the discourses were used originally as a

¹⁵ Ibid, esp. pp.35-9

¹⁶ See: Fletcher, IC, 'Opposition by Journalism? The Socialist and Suffrage Press and the Passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1912' *Parliamentary History*, 25,1 (February 2006), pp. 88-114

means of comparing the injuries being inflicted upon a particular group of white Britons with those that were inflicted upon the enslaved black population and/or another group of 'enslaved' foreigners. Concepts of race and nation were highly influential in the discourses, used interchangeably to connote not a biological difference between 'slaves' per se, but a difference founded in what we today understand as ethnicity in which the notion of civilization was key. Whether in order to establish a parity between the two groups of victims or in order to foreground the white subjects in question, languages of 'white slavery' were mobilized to broaden the sense of anomaly and outrage regarding slavery transmitted in abolitionist discourses, using comparisons founded on ideas and images which, to varying degrees, privileged the experience of the white Briton and emphasized the exceptional atrocity of slavery committed on British shores. In this respect, their political function was highly malleable, being put to use in discourses that complemented the ideologies and claims of abolitionism *and* in counter-discourses which subverted these ideologies and claims. While never enjoying the same resonance as the original campaign for abolition, the languages of 'white slavery' nevertheless increasingly assumed considerable significance as a parallel discourse in modern British anti-slavery campaigning.¹⁷ They, like the preceding discourses of slavery used by abolitionists, were, in their various configurations, heavily gendered.

In response to abolitionism, advocates of slavery in and beyond the West Indies mobilized languages of 'white slavery' to convey the notion that the suffering of the enslaved black population was nothing compared to that which was afflicting the average British working man and thus question the legitimacy and subvert the moral appeals of the abolitionist campaign. In 1792, for example, pro-slavery advocates printed *The True State of the Question*, a pamphlet by 'A Plain Man' and addressed to those Petitioning for Abolition, which argued the dangers of abolition whilst outlining the superior 'slavery' to which the British worker was being subjected on home soil and the detriment brought his wife and children by his subjection. 'White slavery' was constructed as the burden of the ordinary British man and as the tyranny of his masculinity - his wage-earning ability -, at the expense of his dependents. Expressing his

¹⁷ See: Huzzey, *Freedom Burning*, esp. ch.4; Drescher, S, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch.9

regret at signing the Petition for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, having been enlightened as to the error of his ways by a visiting Parson, the 'Plain Man' relayed what the religious man told him:

Were a poor man here to give one such dinner as the Negroes, the savings of his whole life would not suffice; for small indeed will be the savings of a Labourer, who must clothe his wife, clothe his children, nourish his family, pay the doctor when they are sick, pay his rent, and purchase even the tools with which he earns his scanty and precarious subsistence. He is the slave of the most inexorable master – Necessity – and even the Game that ravages the little corn, or small garden, he possibly may have, and which might occasionally procure him a wholesome hearty meals, he does not touch. As the parson properly observed, we should in the first instance restore freedom to, and relieve the wants of our own poor. – Remove the beam from our own eye, before we meddle with the mote in our brother's.¹⁸

It was, however, with the factory reform movement from the 1820s that languages of 'white slavery' first achieved considerable resonance in reformist discourses, pressed into use in a number of different ways and by a number of different reform groups within the movement. Once again, the languages had at their core comparisons between 'the British wage slave' and the black African slaves of the West Indies. Importantly, though, one of their prime focuses was now the inequitable conditions afflicting white British women and children under the country's industrial system. 'White Slavery' had come to signify in many reform groups' discourses the *direct* exploitation of those supposedly weaker, dependent subjects whom it was deemed a man's duty to protect and, as such, a slavery of the utmost cowardliness and atrocity.¹⁹

The organizations comprising the factory reform movement and the organizations comprising the original abolitionist cause - two factions, which were at least for a few years contemporaries in the reform world -, had a fractious relationship. Factory reform groups drew heavily upon abolitionist iconography and rhetoric yet many differentiated their cause as morally superior to that of abolition. They, for the most part, mobilized languages of 'white slavery' for the purpose of privileging their

18 Anon., *The True State of the Question Addressed to the Petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. By a Plain Man who signed the Petition at Derby* (London: J. Bell, 1792), pp.4-5

19 Gray, R, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. pp.29-32, 46-7

cause above that of abolition and appealing to public benevolence that might otherwise be diverted to the anti- (black) slavery cause – a process that the leading abolitionist William Wilberforce described as ‘a proposition so monstrous, that nothing can possibly exhibit in a stronger light the extreme force of the prejudices which much exist in the minds of its assertors’.²⁰ The incorporation into these discourses of the ‘vulnerable, relative others’ that were white English women and children, alongside men, as subjects of the ‘slavery’ of exploitative labour thus functioned as a particularly effective way of demoting the abolitionist cause and tugging on the public’s heartstrings.²¹

The short-time movement, a series of radical groups campaigning for an array of workplace reforms including the limitation of the daily hours of workers, and especially child workers, pulled no punches in this respect. Co-opting the abolitionist tradition of protest verse, Abraham Wildman, a poet and the Secretary for the promotion of the movement, evoked ideas of Britain as an anti-slavery nation in an 1830s piece entitled ‘The Factory Child’s Complaint’:

In a land where freedom smiles,
We are worse than negro slaves;
Envy of surrounding isles,
Rouse thy patriots from their graves.

Nation blessed from above,
Must thy children wear the chain?
Land of Bibles - Christian love,
Justice pleads for us in vain.²²

Similarly, short-time movement luminary, Richard Oastler, broadening his plea from ‘the male labourer’ to child and women workers, mobilized a language of ‘white slavery’ in a letter to the *Leeds Mercury* in 1830 on the abuses rife in Yorkshire’s cloth industry. Stressing the superior entitlement of his subjects and evoking the hypocrisy of the middle-class industrialists running the abolitionist campaign, he declared:

20 Wilberforce, W, *An Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire, in Behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies* (London, J. Hatchard and Son, 1823), p.45

21 For excellent analyses of the factory reform movement and languages of slavery see: Gray, *The Factory Question*, esp. ch.2 & Drescher, S, ‘Cart Whip and Billy Roller: Antislavery and Reform Symbolism in Industrializing Britain’ *Journal of Social History*, 15:1 (Autumn 1981), pp.3-24

22 Cited in: Forshaw, CF (ed.), *The Poets of Keighley, Bingley, Haworth and District, being Biographies and Poems of Various Authors of the Above Neighbourhood* (Bradford: Thornton & Pearson 1891), pp.173-174

Thousands of our fellow creatures are existing in a state of slavery more horrid than are the victims of that hellish system, colonial slavery...The very streets which receive the droppings of the Anti-Slavery Society are every morning wet by the tears of innocent victims at the accursed shrine of avarice, who are compelled, not by the cart whip of the negro slave driver, but by the equally appalling thong or strap of the overlooker, to hasten, half-dressed, but NOT half-fed, to those magazines of British infantile slavery - the worsted mills in the town of Bradford.²³

This focus on women and children in the discourses of slavery was not new. As we have seen, a particular emphasis was put upon the direct subjection of enslaved black women, not least via the punishment of flogging, in the languages of slavery used by the abolitionist movement to articulate the moral repugnance of slavery. Moreover, as Marcus Wood suggested, 'the child' played a central role in the discourses of slavery deployed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with conflation of 'the slave' and 'the child' as well as 'the animal', constituting a leitmotif in both abolitionist and pro-slavery discourses. On one hand, enslaved subjects could be infantilized and/or bestialized by reformers to emphasise their helplessness and dependency, the cruelty of their affliction and the pressing need for them to be freed by their benevolent British fathers and mothers. On the other hand, the lot of the exploited British child worker could, as in Wood's example of the painter and poet William Blake's reaction to a white boy worker in 'Astley's beast menagerie', be likened to that of an animal to highlight the anomaly of his subjection as a British citizen and imply that such treatment was more befitting of 'the bestial black slave' of the West Indies.²⁴ However much they might have attempted to subvert the claims of abolitionism through their rhetoric, the groups mobilizing discourses of 'white slavery' during the factory reform movement should be viewed as having drawn upon the gendered constructions of the abolitionist cause in this respect.

The focus on women and children endured. However, by 1880, the dominant discourses of 'white slavery' had slipped from the hands of those campaigning against the *industrial* exploitation of white British women and children, and into the hands of those campaigning against the *sexual* exploitation of white British women and children

²³ *Leeds Mercury* (16 October 1830)

²⁴ Wood, M, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp.272-4

through trafficking. This transition was neither seamless nor absolute. The former set of discourses endured in some form well past the factory reform movement and into the new century, with 'white slavery' being understood to be a multifaceted referent. In 1853, the author and factory reform advocate, John C. Cobden published a work, complete with corroboratory 'official documents', on the 'white slavery' of the country's children in exploitative labour.²⁵ Some five decades later in 1905, the journalist Robert Harborough Sherard published *The Child Slaves of Britain* on the same subject, based on a revision of his 1895 work, *The White Slaves of England*.²⁶ Before being deployed in connection with trafficking, moreover, languages of 'white slavery' were fleetingly used in the 1870s to refer to another type of sexual exploitation, that afflicting women under the system of state regulated prostitution. Used by the movement in opposition to that system, a movement whose worldwide operations went under the name of the International Abolitionist Federation, the languages endured for a short time in this form. Speaking of tackling regulated prostitution internationally, the leader of the movement, Josephine Butler, wrote to her colleague HJ Wilson in 1875: '[i]ndeed, in defeating White Slavery in England alone, we should be merely lopping off the branch of a poisonous tree'.²⁷

From 1880, though, the re-designation of the discourses of 'white slavery' to the issue of sex trafficking was rapidly accepted and absorbed into both reformist and popular culture. The term 'white slavery' came, over the next thirty-five years, to carry different meanings and focus on different types of female victim from one moment to the next, depending on the nature of the traffic in women and the nature of the politics guiding those representing trafficking at a given time. The discourses of 'white slavery' came not simply to function as a rudimentary means of pitting 'the white English women or girl victimized through trafficking' against 'the former black slave' and/or other 'enslaved' social actors whose plight had currency in the culture of the day. They came to function as a means of describing the suffering of particular groups of trafficked

25 Cobden, JC, *The White Slaves of England: Compiled from Official Documents* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1853);

26 Sherard, RH, *The Child Slaves of Britain* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1905) & *The White Slaves of England* (London: J. Bowden, 1895)

27 The Women's Library (hereafter WL), Josephine Butler Autograph Letter Collection, 3JBL/10/14A, Josephine Butler to HJ Wilson, 8 March 1875

girls by evoking concepts of freedom and slavery that had resonance at specific moments. They were put to work in a variety of ways to conjure up ideas of priority and morality, race and nation, foreignness and threat.

The reconfigured discourses of 'white slavery', their structure, their underlying politics and their implications throughout the period will be focussed upon in this thesis.

Historiography

Compared to other moral and sexual questions, other subjects of extra-parliamentary reform and other social and political issues, sex trafficking in modern Britain is a subject that has typically been kept at arm's length by historians. Scholarly work on the subject is relatively sparse and is mainly concerned with the logistics of the crime and the nature of the response to it by organizations, rather than the way in which it was represented and its wider significance as a social phenomenon. Indeed, in his groundbreaking work *The History of Sexuality*, analysing Victorian ideas regarding sexual morality, prostitution and gender, Michel Foucault omitted reference to the traffic in women altogether, rendering it the 'lost chapter' of his study.²⁸ This omission, as will later be argued, is a particularly significant one because the representation of, and responses to, trafficking in turn-of-the-century Britain challenges Foucault's emphasis on modern sexuality as a system defined by predominantly discursive power arranged through complex webs of knowledge, social mores and practices, as opposed to a system guided by repressive power derived from 'the law' or 'the state'.²⁹

The issue of trafficking in modern Britain has featured most often as an aside within wider histories of prostitution and moral reform, treated as a resurgent, 'flash in the pan' phenomenon or an ephemeral subject of reform which was unable to compel significant government action until 1912. It is not until the conclusion of her 1995 feminist history of sexual and moral politics, *Banishing the Beast*, that Lucy Bland focussed to any great extent on the issue of trafficking, and then it was to examine the

28 See: Foucault, M, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (London: Vintage, 1990)

29 Frank Mort suggested that Foucault's theory of the power dynamics of 'modern sexuality' is flawed given the dominance of juridical processes in defining sexuality. This idea, however, overlooks the external influences that lay behind the key amendments of the law regarding moral and sexual questions, perceiving juridical revisions to be concocted by the State in isolation to discursive forms of power influencing the ideas of sexuality entrenched throughout society. See: Mort, F, 'Purity, Feminism and the State: Sexuality and Moral Politics, 1880-1914' in Langan, M & Schwarz, B (eds.), *Crises in the British State 1880-1930* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), pp.209-223

1912 Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which, in reality, marks the end of the first chapter of the history of trafficking in modern Britain. In an excellent, albeit short, consideration, Bland highlighted the moral panic that was stirred surrounding the traffic in women as the Bill passed through parliament and outlined the campaign by suffragists for the Bill to become law. She emphasized how the 'white slave' question both bound together, and caused schisms within, the suffrage movement, referring to the antipathy of the suffragist Teresa Billington-Greig towards the 'terrible rumours' that were abounding from suffragists about trafficking. Importantly, Bland broke from a dry narrative to theorize about the structure of the moral panic over trafficking, suggesting its gender-specific nature. She attributed women's fear regarding trafficking to 'their fear of male sexuality, presented culturally as rampant and excessive and experienced by many as oppressive'. Meanwhile, she evoked the intersection of ideas of race and attitudes towards trafficking to suggest that male fears over the international crime were related to notions of 'the racial Other' and miscegenation, and were precipitated by the fact that men, in an age of suffrage militancy and increasing working-class female independence, found the idea of women as 'helpless victims in need of male protection' satisfying. Whether such a binary distinction can be made between female and male fears surrounding trafficking is a moot point, but that the moral panic that surfaced in 1912 was heavily gendered and was influenced by the hegemonic norms of class, race and gender of the day, cannot be doubted.³⁰ Paula Bartley, in her more recent history of prostitution in Britain between 1860 and 1914, focussed on a different moment in the early history of trafficking. In between brief accounts of the initial revelations of trafficking in the 1880s and the passage of the 1912 Bill, she presented a relatively detailed narrative on the response by the NVA to trafficking in the early twentieth century, although regrettably did not carry out the same process regarding the JAPGW. She outlined the 'number of strategies to combat international prostitution' deployed by the NVA at home and abroad, and recounted the organization's efforts in bringing about the International Congress and the subsequent international legal infrastructure of the anti-trafficking movement. Significantly, she too

³⁰ Bland, L, *Banishing the Beast, English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-1914* (London: Tauris Parke, 1995), pp.297-302

paid attention to the role played by ideas of race in the panics regarding trafficking, evoking the relationship between the responses to 'international prostitution' within Britain and anxieties held by social purity advocates over 'vicious foreign women'. Indeed, pointing to the link between the 1905 Aliens Act and social purity activism, she situated certain responses to trafficking in the new century in a broader social and political framework.³¹

These valuable considerations aside, each historian nevertheless wrote the history of trafficking in Britain across the period 1880-1912 as one of relative insignificance rather than sustained significance, within a world of apparently more pressing and enduring sexual and moral issues. Paula Bartley, for example, represented the first scandal over trafficking in terms of the complacency it engendered and its failure to affect an amendment of the law. The scandal, she claimed, demonstrated the 'state's reluctance to intervene in the moral lives of citizens' and inspired no more than a 'desultory investigation' by an indifferent Lords Select Committee.³² She, moreover, prefaced her detailed description of the NVA's anti-trafficking operations with the suggestion that the organization itself was originally complacent to trafficking and pursued its campaign for ulterior reasons, thus further demoting the crime in modern British history. "By the early twentieth century, possibly influenced by the lack of success in curbing English prostitution, possibly encouraged by the support of the women's suffrage movement", she contended, "the NVA focussed attention on problems associated with international prostitution called 'white slavery'".³³ Similarly, in his earlier history of British medico-moral panics, *Dangerous Sexualities*, Frank Mort, choosing to focus simply on the two moments in turn-of-the-century society when the issue of trafficking had some bearing on the law, marginalized the historical importance of trafficking. He represented the initial revelations of trafficking as just another, and not the most immediate, cause of the tightening of the law regarding the protection of minors by way of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, and represented the pressure for anti-trafficking legislation in 1912 as the heyday of purity reformers' and suffragists' irrational panic over trafficking, which, resulted in a law that was ineffectual and that

31 Bartley, P, *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.170-3

32 Ibid. pp.85-88

33 Ibid. p.170

'deeply split' the suffrage movement.³⁴ It is telling that each historian paid considerably more attention to the revelations of child prostitution in London published by the journalist WT Stead in his 1885 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' series than the initial revelations of sex trafficking that came to light five years earlier.

The history of trafficking in Britain has not always been addressed in this manner in works on moral and sexual politics. In his 1977 study, *Vice and Vigilance*, Edward Bristow examined trafficking as an evolving phenomenon and traced the developments in the way it was fought against by extra-parliamentary organizations throughout the turn of the century, paying particular attention to the formation and operations of the International Congress. He, though, offered few clues as to the significance of the history of trafficking in Britain, keeping his narratives descriptive rather than analytical per se. He, moreover, introduced moral judgments into his treatment of trafficking that would make his feminist peers recoil, basing his discussion of the initial revelations of trafficking on the prejudicial assumption that women who had agreed to accompany traffickers abroad, only to be deprived of their liberty, were in some way to blame for their predicament and had not been afflicted by any crime. Referring to 'white slaves' repatriated from Belgium, he stated that 'while a few were innocent victims, most seem to have been professionals who did not know they would be kept in more severe circumstances than prevailed at home', thus trivializing the exploitation to which trafficked women were subjected.³⁵

The traffic in women and girls from Britain and the organizational responses it solicited have been subjected to more in-depth scrutiny in dedicated studies, but these studies have, by and large, focussed simply on the relationship between trafficking and the Jewish community. Following *Vice and Vigilance*, Edward Bristow in 1982 wrote *Prostitution and Prejudice*, an impressively detailed, and as yet unsurpassed, history of the worldwide Jewish response to trafficking.³⁶ In the same year Lloyd Gartner produced an article in a similar vein with a British focus.³⁷ Both historians, Bristow in particular,

34 Mort, F, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Panics in England since 1830* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1987) pp.126-8; 143-5

35 Bristow, EJ, *Vice and Vigilance. Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1977), p.88

36 Bristow, *Prostitution*

37 Gartner, LP, 'Anglo-Jewry and the Jewish International Traffic in Prostitution, 1885-1914' *AJS Review*, 7/8 (1982/1983), pp. 129-78

presented sensitive accounts of the part played by Jewish people in trafficking and of the operations of the JAPGW. In doing so, however, they constructed trafficking and anti-trafficking initiatives as predominantly 'Jewish issues' somehow detached from the national past. While neither historian denied the efforts of the country's non-denominational anti-trafficking organizations, the way that they treated these organizations in their respective studies attests to their consecration of trafficking as a Jewish question. Bristow, for example, in a précis of British responses to trafficking, outlined the early history of the NVA, acknowledged the efforts of the organization's Secretary WA Coote in organizing the 1899 International Congress on trafficking and 'travelling around the world organizing support for a new [anti-trafficking] movement'. He even recognized links between some of the basic sensibilities of the NVA and the JAPGW.³⁸ Nevertheless, he did so not to forge a parallel between the Jewish and non-denominational arms of the country's anti-trafficking movement upon which to base his analysis, but rather to create a springboard from which to talk about the implicitly unique problem of *Jewish* trafficking and the implicitly unique *Jewish* response to it. Lloyd Gartner also outlined the work of the NVA and Coote as a means of contextualizing the *Jewish* focus of his study and emphasizing the superior legacy of the JAPGW in the modern international movement against trafficking. 'WA Coote's international crusade', he argued, 'had his personal religious vision as his inspiration [for the International Congress], but much of the practical guidance came from the JAPGW'.³⁹

This field of study - that is, sex trafficking from Britain as a Jewish question - has broadened little with time. In his thought-provoking 2007 article 'British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire', Paul Knepper wrote a similarly one-sided, commemorative history of the JAPGW. He lauded the association as that which 'became the most visible Jewish anti-crime organization in Great Britain and the model for initiatives in Jewish communities throughout the world' without recognition that it worked in close co-operation with the NVA and, like the other international Jewish

38 Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp.37-9

39 Gartner, 'Anglo-Jewry', pp.166-7

groups, was part of the multi-denominational International Congress.⁴⁰ He, moreover, tended to credit the Jewish Association with the successes of the British anti-trafficking movement as a whole and worked on the false assumption that the association was only interested in helping the Jewish population. The country's first law targeting trafficking in 1912, he concluded, 'illustrates the complexity of the JAPGW's legal campaign to protect Jewish women'.⁴¹ The bearing of trafficking upon the Jewish population and the efforts of the JAPGW to put a stop to such criminality cannot be denied. However, to write the history of sex trafficking in Britain or elsewhere as simply an aspect of Jewish history is to leave a great deal of what is an important story untold.⁴²

This point is endorsed by the excellent studies produced about the traffic in women that took place in other countries. The feminist historian Petra de Vries examined the political significance of the campaign against trafficking in the Netherlands at the turn of the century in an article published in 2008. She suggested that the emergence of the organized response to trafficking brought about important shifts in the ideologies and politics regarding female sexual abuse that had hitherto guided the country's movement against regulated prostitution. She did not, however, develop these ideas in her short consideration of the issue.⁴³ In an impressive history of licensed prostitution in Buenos Aires from the late nineteenth century to the 1950s and 60s, Donna Guy devoted considerable attention to examining the moral panic surrounding the traffic in women to the Argentine capital and the organizational responses to the perceived problem of trafficking within the city that emanated from both in and outside the Jewish community. She explored the influence of ideas of gender in the politics as well as the social and economic aspects of prostitution and, unlike anyone before her, focussed on the relationship between notions of 'the prostitute' or 'the trafficked', family and nation, in Argentine popular and political

40 Knepper, P, 'British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire' *British Journal of Criminology*, 47: 1 (January 2007), p.67

41 Ibid. p.69. See also: Knepper, P " 'Jewish Trafficking' and London Jews in the Age of Migration" *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 6:3 (November 2007), pp.239-256

42 Significantly, there have been no in depth histories of the NVA's anti-trafficking operations from the organization's foundation and throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, outside of Bristow's narratives in *Vice and Vigilance*.

43 de Vries, P, 'Josephine Butler and the Making of Feminism: International Abolitionism in the Netherlands 1870-1914' *Women's History Review*, 17:2 (April 2008), pp. 257-77

culture. Questioning why Buenos Aires became central in the debate over trafficking at the turn of the century when it was by no means the prostitution centre of Latin America, for example, she suggested that the image of the capital as a 'sin city' came to hold 'a particular symbolic content' designed to give 'important messages to Europeans and Latin Americans in modernizing countries'. Buenos Aires, she contended, was made to look undesirable to immigrants: 'Argentina [was] accused of being an accomplice in the loss of family control over innocent foreign women. Once girls slipped away from parental authority, evil men and government took advantage'. It is such work on the wider social, cultural and political significance of the traffic in women and girls that has been missing from histories of trafficking in Britain.⁴⁴

Brian Donovan, in a work dedicated to the 'white slave' question in the United States between 1887 and 1917, also explored the moral panics that took place over the traffic in women and the politics of, and alliances between, the diverse interest groups that engaged with the issue of trafficking. Acknowledging that 'white slavery narratives reflected the social and historical conditions of their production', he set his work apart from other histories of sex trafficking by examining the *discourses* of 'white slavery' used across a variety of cultural forms at different times and places within the United States, analysing the role(s) played by ideas of race and gender therein and suggesting the wider implications of sex trafficking at given moments.⁴⁵ His work made a compelling case for the significance of the languages of 'white slavery' in gaining an understanding of the culture and society from which the languages emanated.

And it would seem that others agree. More recently, there has been a promising new focus in the study of sex trafficking in British history. Jo Doezema, Mary-Ann Irwin and Ian C Fletcher have each examined the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized at specific moments within the first chapter in the history of trafficking in Britain, with a view to piecing together the structure and the wider significances of the representation of the traffic in women. Notably, historians of British anti-slavery reform have not

44 Guy, DJ, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), chs. 1&2

45 Donovan, B, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender & Anti-Vice Activism, 1887-1917* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), esp. intro & ch.1

participated to any great extent in this new historiographical wave.⁴⁶ Jo Doezema explored the construction of trafficking in Britain and the United States, analysing representations of ‘white slavery’ from the past alongside contemporary portrayals of the traffic in women. In attempting to trace the relationship between present ideas of trafficking and the historic constructions of such criminality, she produced an unprecedented study which is illustrative of the worth of her approach in understanding the roots and politics underpinning today’s anti-trafficking movement. Doezema, however, concentrated more on theorizing about certain aspects of past representations of trafficking than analysing the structure of the representations and thus did not fully explore the historical significance of the construction of trafficking and its development throughout time. She, for example, examined “‘white slavery’ as a ‘political myth’” in nineteenth-century British history by way of a partial review of literary and philosophical theory regarding mythologies, focussing only fleetingly on the discourses of ‘white slavery’ themselves and then principally through Stead’s 1885 ‘The Maiden Tribute’ revelations, which, compared to the principal trafficking scandals of the period, featured few references to ‘white slavery’.⁴⁷

Mary-Ann Irwin focussed in greater depth on exploring the leitmotifs used to portray ‘the trafficked woman’ in the late nineteenth century. She analysed the discourses of ‘white slavery’ used by not only those in favour of, but also those ambivalent to, action against trafficking, paying some much-needed attention to the ideas of gender, class and race that informed these convictions. In doing so, she provided a valuable insight into the reciprocity of the rhetoric used by the two camps in their ‘struggle for representation’ and into the specific mesh of discourses from which each camp drew its rhetorical power. Namely, she emphasized the significance of patriotic ideas of race and nation in the construction of ‘the trafficked’ by anti-

46 Richard Huzzey, for example, mentions the application of the term ‘white slavery’ to sex trafficking as an aside in his work on British anti-slavery campaigning, focussing to a far greater extent on ‘white slavery’ as a means of describing industrial exploitation by the factory reform movement. See: Huzzey, *Freedom Burning*, ch.4. Joel Quirk paid more attention to ‘white slavery’ as an anti-slavery campaign. He, however, did not engage significantly with the discourses of ‘white slavery’, instead merely narrating the history of the turn-of-the-century fight against trafficking, in what is a good, wider consideration of movements against slavery in British and American society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Quirk, J, *The Anti-Slavery Project: From the Slave Trade to Human Trafficking* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), ch.8

47Doezema, J, *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters. The Construction of Trafficking* (London & New York, Zed Books, 2010), esp. chs.2&3

trafficking campaigners and their subversion using pejorative ideas of class or gender by the critics of anti-trafficking intervention. Her conclusion that the 'white slavery' metaphor 'served to reform the popular image of the prostitute, enabling the public to see her...as the pitiable victim of malignant external forces', however, is somewhat undermined by the wider semantic parameters she established in her study. She defined 'white slavery' as a signifier of *any* form of organized sexual exploitation and so overlooked the possibility that the representation of the international problem of trafficking and 'the trafficked' might differ from that of domestic prostitution and 'the English prostitute', particularly in terms of ideas of race.⁴⁸ Her analysis nevertheless improves our understanding of the debates that took place over trafficking and encourages us to think about such criminality within a wider cultural and political framework.

And so too does Ian Fletcher's admirably comprehensive, chronological examination of the rhetorics of 'white slavery' mobilized in the debate over the 1912 Criminal Law Amendment Bill by the organizations comprising the suffragist and the socialist movements.⁴⁹ Exploring the ways in which the organizations 'struggled to appropriate the white slavery agitation' for their own ends in their respective journals, Fletcher examined how each group attempted to harness the agitation "to forge a 'chain of equivalence' between the socialist and the suffragist movements, around the key link of the working-class woman subject as white slave, sweated worker, and potential socialist and suffragist citizen" and thereby argue for or against the extension of democracy. He paid some valuable attention to the notions of race deployed in representations of trafficking to contend that '[t]he divide between metropole and colonies, the nation and the world, marked the end [of the democratic 'chains']' constructed by the organizations given the unassailable difference with which foreign victims of exploitation and/or perpetrators of trafficking were associated.⁵⁰ Broadening the parameters of his study further, Fletcher also looked to the wider significance of the languages of 'white slavery' mobilized within the two movements. The radical press, he

48 Irwin, MA, "'White Slavery' as Metaphor. Anatomy of a Moral Panic" *Ex Post Facto, The History Journal*, 5 (1996) <http://www.walnet.org/csis/papers/irwin-wslavery.html>. Accessed 01.01.09

49 Fletcher, 'Opposition by Journalism?', pp. 88-114

50 *Ibid.*, esp. pp.90-1, 113-4

averred, provides a vital insight into not only how the 1912 Bill and the figure of 'the white slave' were represented and the pressures the government faced surrounding the measure but crucially also the damage to what he termed the 'romance of parliament' sustained during the Edwardian era.⁵¹

Fletcher, however, tended to place the controversy over the proposed legislation and trafficking under a bell jar within the Edwardian Crisis and, as a result, limited what we can glean about the 'white slave' question and the political climate in which it was being raised. He treated the rhetorics of 'white slavery' as exceptional rather than intimately linked to, or in unspoken dialogue with, the other rhetorical discourses that informed and fuelled the Edwardian Crisis, failing to consider that 'white slavery' was one of a number of competing 'slaveries' within the Crisis, transmitted via inter-related discourses predicated on a binary distinction between 'the enslaved' and 'the free'. His brief analysis of the use of ideas of race in representations of the Bill suffered as a result. Fletcher's work, like Irwin's, nevertheless established a new and much needed direction for the study of trafficking and, specifically, the discourses of 'white slavery', in modern Britain, providing one of the inspirations for this thesis. Yet there is more work to be done.

Sexual Exploitation & The Crisis of Liberalism

The discourses of 'white slavery' produced during the first chapter of the history of trafficking in Britain between 1880 and 1912 have not yet been analysed in depth. Their reconfigurations have not been traced and their wider significances have not been explored throughout this time when trafficking was a new phenomenon in British popular consciousness and the 'white slavery' appellation, as a referent to trafficking, enjoyed most cultural capital. How did 'white slavery', as a means of thinking about sexual danger at specific times and places, function and why was it made to function in this way? What does its application(s) tell us about the society in which discourses of 'white slavery' had resonance? Indeed, what is the significance of sex trafficking in modern Britain?

51 Ibid., pp.88, 112-3

Finding answers to these questions not only promises to improve our understanding of the nature and implications of the phenomenon of trafficking itself in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century society. It also promises to improve our understanding of organized responses to systematic sex crime against women in modern British history – and by virtue of the country’s prominent role in anti-trafficking initiatives – in modern international history. But more than simply having relevance to women’s history, it promises to improve our understanding of the nature of hegemony and the loci of power in society during turn-of-the-century Britain.

This thesis explores what the discourses of ‘white slavery’, used between c.1880 and 1912, tell us about both the changing nature of representations of female sexual exploitation and the politics that underpinned these representations. It investigates the possibility that, with the advent of public consciousness in Britain of the transnational problem of trafficking, the way in which female sexual exploitation was thought about, represented and responded to, was subject to a series of fundamental reconfigurations, at the heart of which lay particular notions of race and nation. It traces these reconfigurations and the notions of race and nation that underpinned them at particular moments and across the period as a whole, examining their significance. Analysis will proceed on the assumption that representations of female sexual exploitation provide a valuable insight into not simply the nature of sex crimes on women at a given time but also the ideologies and interests of the specific groups representing such crimes and the hegemonic norms of race, gender, and class in the culture in which the groups operated. Indeed, the thesis seeks to answer the question, “what impact did the emergence of the phenomenon of trafficking and the discourses of ‘white slavery’ subsequently developed up until 1912 have on the campaign against female sexual exploitation, and what does this tell us about society during the broader period?”

This thesis also explores what the discourses of ‘white slavery’ reveal about what was a fundamental and permanent transformation in the relationship between state and society that began in c.1880, became acute between 1910 and 1926, and culminated in c.1930.

This period of discontinuity, Stuart Hall and Bill Schwarz theorized in an excellent analysis of state and society between 1880 and 1930, witnessed a number of short-term

crises of the state which were localized within, and engendered by, external reaction to the state's formal apparatuses; that is, its systemic political structures and legislative processes. These crises coalesced over the period to precipitate an even deeper crisis - a seminal moment of destruction as well as reconstruction - that set in 'across the social formation as a whole' and that successfully threatened 'the hegemony of the dominant order'.⁵² This deeper crisis, Hall and Schwarz contended, marked an epochal transition away from the force that had dominated the culture of the preceding decades; liberalism.

But it was not a crisis for simply the Liberal Party per se. Rather it was a crisis of the social and the political, as well as the philosophical and the civic, institutions that formed the pillars of liberal hegemony and that had guided everyday life. Firstly, it brought about the erosion of the 'technical relationship' between state and civil society, defined by liberalism's central principle of individualism, with the emergence of a reconfigured partnership, and a shift in the balance of power, between the two bodies. The notion of the sovereignty of the individual in civil society, 'his' inalienable right to own property and 'his' liberty of action as guaranteed by the free-market and upheld by the law; the notion of the state as the overseer of the market and the legislative guardian of an individual's liberties, that were central to the liberal doctrine, progressively disintegrated. State intervention increased and collectivist political agendas - namely, 'those organized around class or corporate' interests - gained purchase alongside mounting pressure for, and the gradual growth following the 1867 Reform Act, of a mass democratic culture, loosening political affiliations and political party structures. 'Laissez-faire' government increasingly gave way to 'hands-on' government as the state moved towards assuming a fuller and more pro-active role in civil society, investing its power in providing for and policing the social body like never before.⁵³ Secondly, the structural crisis between c.1880 and 1930 also challenged and redefined the 'formal, philosophical elaborations of liberalism, as well as the lived, civic ideologies and practices which drew on liberal philosophy and which, by the 1860s, constituted the common sense of the mid Victorian age'. It wrought crisis throughout

52 Hall, S & Schwarz, B, 'State and society, 1880-1930' in Langan & Schwarz (eds.), *Crises*, pp.8-9

53 Ibid., p.8. See also: Harris, J, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1994), p.116

the entire liberal social system such that the dominant notions of ‘the individual, family, constitution, law and nation – which defined the very core of liberal thought..., the taken-for-granted points of moral reference, the practical ideologies of the leading classes in English society’ were undermined and reconfigured by a new set of ideas and agendas. The crisis of liberalism was, for this reason, also a crisis of ‘the very *ideas* of state and civil society, of public and private’ and this had ‘direct effects on the intellectual and moral leadership of the dominant classes’.⁵⁴

Hall and Schwarz elaborated their ideas by drawing upon Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and, specifically, the leftist thinker’s observation of the dramatic enlargement and growing complexity of state power from the 1870s in the imperial countries of Europe following colonial expansion. They suggested that Gramsci’s argument that, with the enlargement of state power, the growing consciousness among oppositional political forces that the overthrow of the state necessitated “a protracted struggle waged on all fronts, cultural as well as political, economic and military, engaging with the ‘*focos*’ of power distributed through political *and* civil society”, is key to understanding Britain’s transition from liberalism. The argument, they maintained, provides an insight into ‘the reconstitution of the relations between state and civil society, the expansion of the very idea of politics and the incorporation of the masses in the nation states of the late nineteenth century’.⁵⁵

But what sparked these changes? The transition between c.1880 and 1930, according to Hall and Schwarz, was precipitated above all by the structural and political reconfiguration of the capitalist classes. At the heart of the transition lay the ascendancy of monopoly capitalism, the opposition that this form of capitalism posed to the tenets of classic liberalism, the new political pressures its grandees exerted upon the state and, significantly, the alliance of these grandees almost exclusively with the Conservative Party from the 1890s onwards to the detriment of the Liberal Party.⁵⁶ The reconfiguration of the capitalist classes, in turn, prompted the “‘remaking’ of the working classes”, ‘restructuring...the division of labour and...fracturing and disorganizing

54 Hall & Schwarz, ‘State’, pp.10-12

55 Ibid. esp. pp.11-12. See: Gramsci, A, *The Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971) esp. pp.243-5. Hall and Schwarz acknowledge the specificities of Britain among other European imperial powers, when extrapolating Gramsci’s theory.

56 Ibid. p.13

the cultural and political ties which had held skilled labourers to liberalism'. It spurred growing unionization among the workforce and the mobilization of working- and middle-class citizens in extra-parliamentary reform movements, thereby further fuelling the transition.

While fundamental in understanding Hall and Schwarz's theory, the specific economic circumstances posited by the two scholars as underpinning the transition from liberalism are not focussed upon in this thesis. Rather, the reconfigurations in the discourses of 'white slavery' and the politics behind the discourses are explored to establish what they reveal about the dynamics of the transition away from liberalism, in particular regarding the relationship between certain extra-parliamentary groups and the state, and the role played by these groups in precipitating the transition. They are also explored to establish what implications the transition had on organizational responses to moral and sexual questions. In particular, they are examined so as to trace the effect the developing crisis of liberalism had on the structure of the practical, radical or philanthropic responses to such questions and the relationship of such responses to the state, society and, more broadly, liberal hegemony at different points in the transition. This process promises to allow a better understanding of what the incremental shift away from liberalism did to the way that social, sexual and moral danger was represented and addressed outside of parliament, and where power was allowed to reside in organized responses to these 'dangers' at different moments.

Structure

The following dissertation will elaborate upon these themes, carrying out the hitherto neglected task of tracing the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized during the period c.1880-1912 when trafficking first gained currency as a putative form of slavery in Britain. It will explore how the discourses were configured and functioned throughout the period, as well as their wider significance. The particular discourses of 'white slavery' used during each of three seminal moments in the representation of trafficking during the period will form the basis of this process. These sets of discourses will be analysed and contextualized, individually and in unison, to glean, firstly, what they tell us about the changing nature of the portrayal of female sexual exploitation, of the

politics underpinning these portrayals and the implications of the reconfigurations on how such abuse was thought about and policed. Secondly, the process will be undertaken to glean what the three phases reveal about the changing dynamics of power throughout the period, the dominant notions of race and nation, class and gender that had currency, the social actors subsequently empowered or emasculated, and the nature of hegemony. Specifically, attention will be paid to what the moments reveal about the transition away from liberalism as it manifested itself between 1880 and 1912, and the reconfigurations between state and society intrinsic to that transition.

The thesis will be divided into three sections. Each section will examine one of the seminal moments in the mobilization of the discourses of 'white slavery' and the representation of trafficking.

Section One tells the story of the first revelations of trafficking in Britain concerning a few English girls being trafficked to the near continent. It explores the organizational responses that the 'new' problem solicited between 1880 and 1882 by comparing the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized by the International Federation leader, Josephine Butler, with those deployed by the new, male-dominated London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in English (later British) Girls, and particularly by the Committee's Secretary, Alfred Stace Dyer. The section argues that the emergence of trafficking brought about a fundamental reconfiguration in the balance of power in the movement against female sexual exploitation. The feminist, egalitarian and libertarian ethos that had guided the female-dominated movement against state regulated prostitution came increasingly to be supplanted by a statist male-led regime, which abandoned feminism and egalitarianism and espoused a detrimental doctrine of ethnocentricity. Female sexual exploitation was thereby represented as the tyranny of helpless women and girls of the 'superior' English race at the hands of malignant, foreign male oppressors.

The section concludes by considering what the two responses to trafficking tell us about the transition from liberalism. It argues that the reconfiguration of the power-balance in the fight against sexual exploitation sheds light on how extra-parliamentary

organizations dealing with moral and sexual questions facilitated the on-going transition during the years in question via their increasing deference to the state and passive acquiescence to the status quo.

Section Two tells the story of the organizational responses to trafficking in Britain between 1899-1910 when trafficking had become a worldwide phenomenon, involving mainly foreign citizens following mass-immigration from Europe and the Eastern European Jewish Diaspora, and when the anti-trafficking movement had become a coherent international congress. It compares the discourses of 'white slavery' and representations of trafficking mobilized by Britain's principal anti-trafficking taskforces, the NVA and the JAPGW, and compares the politics guiding each group. Sensitive to the pressures felt by the JAPGW because of the growing culture of anti-Semitism in and outside Britain, it argues that the two organizations brought a similar set of middle-class moral standards to their interpretation and management of sex trafficking which led them to misunderstand the underlying causes of the problem and to strive to counter it with a repressive, bourgeois 'parental' model of philanthropy. This model, the section argues, was characterized by two distinct gendered anti-trafficking programmes which each sought to police the 'problematic foreign entities' of society that might succumb to, or instigate, sexual danger by bringing the 'purifying influence' of British middle-class moral values to bear upon them. It led, among other things, to female sexual exploitation being represented as the self-inflicted predicament of a certain type of working-class foreign girl who had come from a bad home and who wanted too much independence.

In conclusion, the section argues that the programme pursued by the NVA and JAGPW attests to how, by the years in question, the reconfiguration of the country's main moral reform groups as 'devotees of the state' was largely complete, and their role in abetting the transition from liberalism was strengthened. By this time, the campaign against trafficking was run by a male-dominated body of activists that not simply sought to ally with the state but who increasingly conducted their philanthropy based on a similar set of interests and values to that which formed the foundation of state power. As such, these activists became agents in the transition. The section, in

turn, suggests that the NVA and JAPGW's programmes also give an insight into the increasing power exercised by the country's main moral reform organizations because of the changing nature of the state and how this power and the social position it delivered to the organizations facilitated the transition from liberalism all the more.

Section Three tells the story of the debate over trafficking that raged as the 1912 Criminal Law Amendment Bill was progressing through parliament during the height of the Edwardian Crisis, as well as the significance that the languages of 'white slavery' came to assume as the monopoly on the issue of trafficking held by the NVA and JAPGW was challenged by a number of extra-parliamentary radical groups. It explores how the question of trafficking was appropriated by each of the principal organizations comprising the country's suffragist and socialist movements, comparing the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized by each group. Moreover, it considers what these discourses tell us about the Edwardian Crisis as a whole.

Firstly, the section argues that, with the question of trafficking being appropriated by radical groupings, representations of female sexual exploitation returned to a variation of the 'English female victimhood vs foreign male perpetration' model propagated by the London Committee but came to feature more prominently the dismissal of the suffering and civilization of a series of 'enslaved racial others' as a means of mustering political attention for the country's trafficked women. Secondly, the section contends that the manner in which the groups comprising the suffragist and the socialist movements, so influential in energizing the Edwardian Crisis, represented and exploited the issue of trafficking in their respective discourses provides a valuable insight into the politics in play during the Crisis. These representations, it argues, provide valuable clues about not only some of the ideologies and strategies of the individual radical groups in question but also the harmonies or conflicts that characterized their relations. They show us how, in these relations, hierarchies of oppressions based on concepts of enslavement were key and how 'white slavery' came to be used as a floating signifier and tendered as a multivalent currency with particular meanings at particular times. More broadly, they show us how certain key social and moral questions came to be wrested from the organizations that had once claimed a

monopoly over them and were mobilized by radical groups with different reform priorities, for the short-term gain that such mobilization might bring to the groups.

Furthermore, on the subject of the transition from liberalism, this section will argue that the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized at this moment suggest that by 1912, the transition had reached an acute phase. The authority which social purity organizations had been allocated in previous years was, along with the state, plunged into crisis, and the role these organizations had played in promoting the transition was momentarily put in the shade, by organized political opposition to state power and, specifically, to the Liberal government by radical groupings.

This thesis concludes with a summary of the two principal arguments regarding representations of sexual exploitation and the transition from liberalism. Further, it examines the responses by extra-parliamentary organizations and by the government towards the problem of sex trafficking in today's society.

Unlike the history of the discourses mobilized in organized responses to a number of sexual and moral causes, the history of the dominant discourses of 'white slavery' in turn-of-the-century Britain is necessarily a history focussed, by and large, on London-based associations and individuals. Alfred Stace Dyer's London Committee quickly appointed itself *the* champion of British women and girls in the fight against trafficking and achieved renown on this basis, being the pioneer of the country's anti-trafficking movement. Indeed, throughout the rest of period, there were no significant groups engaged in the fight against trafficking in Wales, Scotland or Ireland, nor in provincial English cities, outside the local branches and committees established by what became the principal anti-trafficking organizations, the NVA and the JAPGW, whose headquarters were each situated in the capital. The outposts of the two organizations at the country's key port cities concerned with anti-trafficking work, moreover, deferred to their respective London headquarters and typically carried out prescribed vigilance tasks, rather than focussing on policy formation or leading investigations into trafficking.

There simply was not the practical need for anti-trafficking operations in most British towns and cities. The vast majority of local NVA groups that peppered the country were generally concerned with broader moral issues, as opposed to trafficking

per se. The traffic in women was such a 'new' phenomenon in turn-of-the-century society that local purity reformers across the British Isles were largely unaware of the scope of the problem and, given the apparently specialized and centralized nature of the nascent anti-trafficking movement, they were not inclined to take an active stand against 'white slavery'. Such activists were happy to entrust groups like the London Committee, and later the NVA and the JAPGW, with exclusive responsibility for the fight against trafficking and, unlike today's anti-trafficking movement, did not seek to actively co-ally with these bigger organizations to any great extent. Thus, what were London-based groups came, by default, to constitute - and certainly claimed authority as - *British* groups, speaking and acting for Britain as a whole as the sole champions and coordinators of the national anti-trafficking movement. Similarly, however far-reaching their regional networks, the radical organizations outside the anti-trafficking movement that mobilized discourses of 'white slavery' during the Edwardian Crisis did so principally from their London headquarters and often through journals whose editorial teams were located in the capital whilst nevertheless claiming to represent the interests of their members throughout Britain.

Although many of the discourses of 'white slavery' that will be considered in this thesis emanated from London, then, they can justly be considered to comprise British discourses of 'white slavery', in light of the accepted self-representations and closed structures of organizational responses to trafficking. Where available, however, representations of trafficking, together with responses surrounding questions such as immigration, that surfaced at a local level will be considered.

Sources

The majority of the discourses of 'white slavery' considered in this thesis are those mobilized by the organizations either actively fighting, or in advocacy of action, against the traffic in women, these groups being the main proponents of the discourses. The papers and publications of such organizations are therefore central in this thesis. The annual reports of the London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in English Girls held at the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library and the archives of the Friends' Association for Abolishing State Regulation of Vice housed at the

Library of the Religious Society of Friends in London form the backbone of the analysis conducted in Section One. Section Two draws heavily upon the archives of the National Vigilance Association and the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons housed at The Women's Library in London, the papers of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women in the Jewish Care archive at the University of Southampton's Hartley Library, and the JAPGW's printed reports in the Montefiore Pamphlet Collection at the London Library. While the JAPGW's papers in the Jewish Care Archive are incomplete, the majority of the organization's annual reports throughout the period in question are available so a representative picture of the group can be put together. The archives and printed propaganda of the country's leading suffrage groups, the NUWSS, the WSPU and the WFL, housed at The Women's Library, together with the papers of the British Socialist Party, the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party at the London School of Economics Library and the Labour History Archives and Study Centre at the John Rylands University Library, Manchester, were of help in the research conducted in Section Three. Where applicable, the archives of the regional branches of these organizations are also considered throughout the thesis. Although fragmented and principally focussed outside the period under examination, the papers of the Liverpool branches of the NVA and the JAPGW held at the city's Record Office, for example, add breadth to the research conducted in Section Two. Similarly, the archives of the groups with which the organizations in question collaborated are analysed, such as those of the somewhat fair-weather friend of the NVA and the JAPGW, the Travellers' Aid Society, held at The Women's Library.

All of these organizations were made up of individuals. The personal papers, memoirs and auto-biographies of the members of the organizations in question are also included in the range of sources considered in the thesis. The letters of Josephine Butler, which have been expertly catalogued by The Women's Library, as well as the International Federation leader's 1896 printed autobiographical work *Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* constitute key sources in Section One. Meanwhile, the papers of suffragist luminaries such as Teresa Billington-Greig - another treasure of The Women's Library - and the works of key figures in the socialist movement like Philip Snowden and Robert Blatchford are used in Section Three.

This thesis, however, is far from just an organizational history of English responses to sex trafficking. The spotlight is also on the discourses of ‘white slavery’ mobilized by those who believed that trafficking was unworthy of concerted action for, inter alia, the insight they give into how the discourses were re-appropriated or subverted to undermine the campaign against trafficking. The various arms of the country’s press constitute a key source in understanding the discourses of ‘white slavery’ mobilized by both those for and those against action against trafficking, and they are used throughout the thesis. The original revelations of sex trafficking coincided with, and took advantage of, the so-called New Journalism – democratic reportage, universal interviews, and exposés. Scandals and debates over the policing of trafficking erupted, and were played out, in the pages of mainstream periodicals throughout the period. As such, national publications from *The Times* to the medical journal *The Lancet* provide key information about the diverse ways in which discourses of ‘white slavery’ were mobilized. Local publications, especially those produced in areas that were in some way touched by the question of trafficking, such as London’s *The Standard* or *The Liverpool Mercury*, are similarly of immense value. The British Library online newspaper collection has been an indispensable source in this respect. The British radical press is also used heavily throughout the thesis. The analysis in Section Three focuses predominantly on the journals of the country’s main suffragist and socialist groups including the NUWSS’s *Common Cause*, the ILP’s *Labour Leader* and the ‘progressive’, independent publication, *The New Age*. The Women’s Library, the Burns Collection at the University of London’s Senate House Library and the British Newspaper Library at Colindale have each been of great use in accessing this source material. The parliamentary debates that took place over the ‘white slave’ question at moments when Bills designed to afford minors greater protection and/or directly combat trafficking are similarly useful in understanding the conflicting discourses of ‘white slavery’ being mobilized throughout the period. So too are the parliamentary papers pertaining to trafficking such as the 1881 ‘Correspondence Respecting Immoral Traffic in English girls in Belgium’ and the reports of the Lords’ Select Committees on the Law Relating to the Protection of Young Girls of 1881 and 1882, considered in Section One.

The discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized by individuals and groups that did not directly participate in the debate over trafficking but who, on account of their political interests, incorporated the issue into their rhetorics are also examined. Section Two, for example, considers the debates transacted in and outside parliament on the question of foreign immigration and immigration restriction contained in sources such as the minutes of evidence of the 1902-3 Royal Commission on Alien Immigration and anti-alienist propaganda by Arnold White.

Finally, the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized in popular culture are considered. Trafficking, as the subject of cultural production, reached its height in the years after 1912. However, the introduction of the 'white slave' question into popular art forms had already begun. While not a central focus of the thesis, the languages of 'white slavery' voiced in popular works such as the 1911 trafficking exposé, *In the Grip of the White Slave Trader*, and in visual art such as the political cartoons printed in the radical press will form part of the analysis.

Methodology

The thesis draws upon a broad array of methods, utilizing the more valuable tools of post-structuralism as well as those of social, political, and local history so as to produce a bespoke methodology that reaps the benefits, and avoids the disadvantages, of any one philosophy of 'how historical research should be done'. It works on the premise that the relationship between discourses of sexuality and power, and the ideas of ethnicity, class and gender that underpin this relationship in specific times and places, are best explored without adherence to one single historical methodology or one particular niche of the historical community.

The principal method deployed throughout the thesis is discourse analysis which, given the focus of this analysis on texts relating to 'marginal' groups of female citizens, has been influenced by post-structuralism's emphasis on decentring the dominant narratives, and looking to expose the alternative histories and minority voices, of the past. Indeed, it is influenced by the way in which historians such as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Anna Clark and Judith Walkowitz have adapted Foucauldian ideas of

Victorian sexual politics to acknowledge 'the material context of discursive struggle [surrounding sexuality] and the specificity of women's experience in these struggles'.⁵⁷

The analysis conducted on the following pages is not, however, shaped by the proclivity of post-structuralist methodology - and too often the proclivity of proponents of feminist or women's history - to transpose onto the past a static and homogeneous cultural relativism in which there is little regard to causality or change throughout time, in which agency is denied by the absence of a unified subject, and in which text and context are one in the same. This thesis is based on the principal that with time, there is change, that no human being is devoid of subjectivity, that everybody has a tale that deserves to be told and that, ultimately, all that stands between history's known and unknown subjects is a story.

⁵⁷ See: Walkowitz, JR, *City of Dreadful Delight. Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (London: Virago Press, 1992), p.9

Section One

Re-scripting Sexual Exploitation: The Belgian Affair & the Birth of Britain's Campaign Against Trafficking, 1880 - 1882

Chapter One

One September evening in 1879 Alfred Stace Dyer, a publisher and Secretary of the Quaker-led Friends' Association for Abolishing State Regulation of Vice, was leaving a Sabbath Service in Clerkenwell when he was approached by a fellow congregation member. Out of the blue, he was told that an acquaintance had discovered that 'a young English girl was confined in a licensed house of prostitution in Brussels and was contemplating suicide as the only means of escape from her awful condition'.⁵⁸ The acquaintance had apparently encountered the nineteen year old girl when visiting a brothel in the Belgian capital and had, despite her 'imploring him with tears to aid her escape', made no attempt to rescue her out of fear for his reputation. Dyer felt compelled to act upon this revelation. He had, he later claimed, long taken a 'deep interest in matters affecting public morality, especially in relation to the condition of women and children'.⁵⁹ He traced the acquaintance and questioned him about what had happened. He was told the story relayed by the girl, Ellen Newland, of the deceit by which she had come to be interned in a foreign brothel. She had been in London in search of employment when she met a 'man of gentlemanly exterior who had promised her marriage if she would accompany him for that purpose to Brussels'.⁶⁰ She had quickly obliged and let him escort her to Calais where she was introduced to one of his friends. Her 'future husband' then announced that he had run out of funds and would have to travel back to England to get more. He obliged her to go with his friend to Brussels where he promised he would join her upon his return. She objected to this but he 'pushed her into the railway carriage' bound for the Belgian capital and left, never to

58 Dyer, AS: *The European Slave Trade in English Girls* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1880), p.6

59 Dyer cited in: 'Memorial to the Foreign Secretary' in Borel, T (Edmondson, J trans.), *The White Slavery of Europe. From the French of Pastor T Borel of Geneva* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1880), p.31

60 'Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Law Relating to the Protection of Young Girls...', *P.P.*, 1881, (448), IX (hereafter *SC81*), p.101

be seen again. Ellen was imprisoned in a brothel directly upon arrival in the Belgian capital and was still languishing there.⁶¹

Dyer had been introduced to what the opponents of regulated prostitution on the Continent were already referring to as the 'white slave traffic'. In the ensuing months, he would stir the first scandal over systematic child sexual exploitation in modern British history and inaugurate the country's first major campaign against such abuse.

This section will examine the significance of the awakening of consciousness regarding sex trafficking on the campaign against female sexual exploitation in Britain through analysis of the discourses of 'white slavery' that emerged in response to revelations of a Continental traffic in English or British girls. It will explore the impact of the country's first dedicated anti-trafficking organization on representations of sexual exploitation and on the politics which underpinned these representations.

The traffic that occurred between Britain and the near Continent was relatively well established by the 1880s. Unlike Belgium and France, where it was illegal to coerce a girl under the age of twenty-one to become a prostitute, the age of consent in Britain was thirteen and, although it was a misdemeanour to abduct a girl under the age of sixteen, those between sixteen and twenty-one without property were afforded no protection. Moreover, under British law it was perfectly legal to induce a girl over the age of thirteen into prostitution in a *foreign country*. Many European countries licensed prostitution, rendering it a recognized and lucrative industry that demanded a guaranteed supply of women. Prostitution was regulated in Britain's seaports and garrison towns under the Contagious Diseases Acts and was by no means less prevalent than abroad. However, such regulation did not institutionalize and commercialize British sex workers in the same way. To traffickers who thrived on supplying the licensed brothels of the Continent, importing girls from Britain was easier than recruiting girls locally and, with false birth certificates readily obtainable, access to underage girls brought little official intervention.

61 London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in English Girls: *Annual Report, 1881* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1881) (hereafter *LC81*, etc), pp.6-7

In his determination to rescue Ellen Newland, Dyer sought the help of Josephine Butler, the leader of the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the national division of the British, General and Continental Federation for the Abolition of Government Regulation of Prostitution (later the International Abolitionist Federation); the international body which she had herself founded in 1875. Butler was known to have had similar cases brought to her attention before, to possess a keen understanding of legislation regarding Continental brothels and to have many Federation colleagues abroad able to help with inquiries into allegations of sexual exploitation.⁶² She was the obvious mentor for Dyer, and she did not disappoint him.

Butler quickly contacted two of her Belgian Federation friends, Pastor Anet and Madame Behrends Wirth, and asked them to look for Ellen Newland. Anet soon managed to find the missing girl in the capital's Saint Pierre hospital being treated for venereal disease and, together with Behrends Wirth, oversaw her rescue. He wrote to Dyer at the Friends' Repeal Association, confirming the details of Ellen's case and petitioning the Association to form a "Society to prevent the 'white slave trade' between England and Belgium". Anet entrusted his detailed report of events to Butler who also received the police report on the incident from Belgian's foremost judicial authority, the Procureur du Roi.⁶³

Compelled by this evidence, Butler then wrote on behalf of the British wing of the Federation to the Friends' Repeal Association, requesting funds to be sent to Anet to repatriate 'Miss Newland' and reiterating the need for there to be 'set on foot without delay a practical agency for the prevention of the traffic in young girls (a veritable slave trade) carried on between England and Belgium'. Recognizing Dyer's experience as a publisher, she added in her letter to the association that '[she] should be glad to hear...what steps [it] advised as to the publication of the [Newland] case'. The Quaker group, doubtlessly influenced by its Secretary and 'in conformity with the wishes of several of its subscribers', 'forwarded to Pastor Anet a cheque for £5 to cover the

62 Dyer Brothers, the company that Dyer co-owned had been publishing Butler's works since the mid 1870s.
63 *The Shield* (19 December 1879), p.183; Library of the Religious Society of Friends (hereafter LF), Records of the Friends' Association for Abolishing State Regulation of Vice (hereafter FA), MS SOCP/M1, Minute Book, 4 December 1879. The 'Procureur du Roi' is the equivalent to the Senior Crown prosecutor in Britain.

expenses of bringing the young women to England' by return of post.⁶⁴ Dyer interviewed Ellen shortly after her return to the country that December and, convinced of her plight, persuaded a group of his City friends to establish a fund for rescuing English girls from Continental brothels.⁶⁵

Dyer then set about making what he had learned public. Writing to the *Daily News* on 2nd January 1880, he called for action against the suffering of the 'victims of this diabolical slave traffic', painstakingly retelling Ellen Newland's story and that of another decoyed English girl who was still languishing in a Belgian brothel. He warned that 'it is impossible to tell how many daughters of respectable parents...are now imprisoned in houses of ill-fame' and appealed for money for the new fund.⁶⁶ This was not the first time that the attention of the press had been drawn to the issue of sex trafficking. Three years earlier, a letter by the then English Chargé d'Affaires in Brussels, H. Barron, on the problem of 'young Englishwomen...allured to Belgium by deceptive representations' had been printed in *The Times* but had failed to excite public interest.⁶⁷ Likewise, the journal of the British wing of Butler's Federation, *The Shield*, had at this early stage featured stories of a 'white slave trade' which had been in operation in Eastern Europe 'for a long series of years' but they had met with similar public indifference.⁶⁸

Dyer's revelations, however, quickly caused a stir. They were reproduced in many regional and national newspapers and even appeared in the *New York Times*.⁶⁹ Over the following weeks, they inspired heated debate on the correspondence pages of the *Daily News* as well as the London newspaper, *The Standard*. As Butler later acknowledged, Dyer's words made a 'deep impression...on our English public'.⁷⁰ Many readers wrote in to these newspapers in praise of Dyer's efforts. A letter in the *Daily News* signed 'W.E.E.' enthused that 'thousands of people will be glad to help Mr Dyer and his friend to rescue English girls' and even suggested that his appeal for funds 'was too modest'. In the same column, the letter of 'an Englishwoman of the higher classes'

64 LF, FA, *Report of the Committee for 1879* (London: FA, 1880), p.2; FA, MS SOCP/ M1, Minute Book, 4 December 1879

65 See: Dyer cited in: *SC81*, p.99

66 *Daily News* (2 January 1880)

67 *The Times* (3 February 1876)

68 See: *The Shield* (3 June 1876), pp.812-3

69 See: *Birmingham Daily Post* (3 January 1880); *Liverpool Mercury* (3 January 1880); *New York Times* (19 January 1880)

70 Butler, JE, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1896), p.358

was featured, declaring it 'the duty of the Government to take steps to prevent such wickedness...'.⁷¹ An equal number of letters, though, refuted Dyer's claims and/or the need for action against trafficking. Thomas R Jeffes, the British Proconsul in Brussels, wrote to *The Standard*, claiming that the facts that Ellen Newland had told him upon interview 'did not, in some important particulars' match Dyer's story and that no additional efforts were required to combat trafficking because the British Charitable Fund in the Belgian capital was 'always ready and anxious to give help where it is needed'.⁷²

The most notable contribution to the furore came in the form of a letter to *The Standard* entitled 'The Alleged Belgian Traffic' by M. Lenaers, the Commissioner to the Chief of the *Police des Moeurs* responsible for the regulation of prostitution in Brussels. Despite the fact that Dyer had made no reference to the Belgian authorities, Lenaers entered into a protracted vindication of the *Police des Moeurs*. Branding Dyer's account 'as erroneous as it can possibly be', he averred that 'no woman can be admitted [into a Brussels brothel] before she has formally declared to the police officer appointed for that purpose that she enters of her own free will, and never in the presence of the keeper of the place the girl asks to be received...[They]can leave whenever they like'. The two English girls whose stories Dyer had told, Lenaers insisted, were not injured parties at all. Both had known what they were doing and one had contravened Belgian law by 'presenting herself under a false name' when registering as a prostitute. Dyer had 'allowed himself to be carried away by a very laudable feeling', but his 'call for money...looks very like a new kind of speculation'.⁷³ Lenaer's 'over-sensitive' protestations were welcomed by Butler and her colleagues. *The Shield* branded the aspersions cast regarding Dyer, 'a suggestion at which we positively rejoice, as it proves how intensely M Lenaers dreads the attention and investigation which he so earnestly and unscrupulously deprecates'.⁷⁴

Prompted by Lenaers' defensiveness and news of further trafficking cases, Dyer and his City friends formed the London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of

71 *Daily News* (3 January 1880), p.6

72 *The Standard* (9 January 1880). See: *Liverpool Mercury* (15 January 1880)

73 *The Standard* (17 January 1880)

74 *The Shield* (6 March 1880), pp.32-4

the Traffic in English (later British) Girls. The committee, of which Benjamin Scott, the Chamberlain of the City of London, was Chairman, Dyer, Secretary, and Butler, an affiliate member, resolved that its first task was to 'investigate on the spot the system of regulated debauchery in Brussels, with a view to rescuing some of the English victims'. It elected Dyer and George Gillett, another Quaker Repeal advocate, for the mission.⁷⁵

The men arrived in Brussels in late February. After conducting extensive enquiries, they discovered that, contrary to Lenaers' protestations, underage girls *were* duped into brothels and *were* detained there under duress without the authorities intervening. In their investigations the men encountered three English women; two of whom, Dyer later recalled, 'apparently much under age' and all 'anxious to leave but intimidated from doing so'.⁷⁶ Dyer pledged to help one of the women, Louisa Bond, escape and applied to the Procureur du Roi to arrange a policeman to supervise her exit. The Procureur, however, declined, reminding him that Louisa had 'a right to leave the house at any moment'.⁷⁷ He referred the Quaker to the local Commissioner of the Police whose Deputy reluctantly agreed to go and interview the girl, only to report that she had denied wanting to escape. With this, Dyer, Gillett and the Belgian Federation delegate Dr Alexis Spingard returned to the brothel but were prevented from seeing the English captive and threatened with violence by the house's bully. Desperate, the men sought the assistance of the British First Minister in Belgium, Sir Saville Lumley. He, however, declined to be interviewed and, through his Secretary, directed Dyer to the Vice Consul. Dyer tracked down this official only to be referred to Proconsul Jeffes who, in turn, claimed to be unable to remove the girl but promised to 'communicate with the proper authorities' about her case.⁷⁸ This merely resulted in a sham investigation by the Belgian authorities, whereby the English girl was asked 'a series of cold official questions, more adapted to lead her to think that they wished to incriminate her rather than release her [and replied] in a way that seemed likely to preserve her from the unknown horrors of another fate'. 'This judicial farce', Dyer observed, 'was afterwards

75 LC81, p.10

76 Cited in: Borel, *The White Slavery*, p.33

77 Dyer, *The European*, pp.12-3

78 See: Dyer cited in: SC81, p.102

quoted by the Procureur du Roi in the *Journal de Bruxelles* as a conclusive refutation of my statement that the young woman was detained in a life of infamy against her will'.⁷⁹

Upon returning home, Dyer wrote to the London press decrying the exploitation he had encountered and the inaction of the Belgian and British authorities. However, with the exception of the minor periodical, the *Christian*, whose editor happened to be a friend of Dyer's, his letter was ignored.⁸⁰ Unperturbed by this setback, the London Committee petitioned Colonel Howard Vincent, the Director of Criminal Investigation of the Metropolitan Police, to look into the instances of trafficking brought to light. Vincent obliged and, having sought the approval of the Secretary of State, sent two of his inspectors, Greenham and von Tornow, to Belgium and Northern France that March to 'inquire with reference to the alleged abduction of English girls for the purposes of prostitution in foreign towns'.⁸¹ Despite this breakthrough, the indifference of the authorities again became apparent. The inspectors carried out only cursory inquiries under the auspices of the Belgian *Police des Moeurs*, investigating the brothels of nearly a dozen Continental cities in a matter of days, and they returned with inconclusive findings.⁸²

At this point, Butler stepped into the breach. Returning from a Federation meeting in Paris to learn of the short shrift the press had given Dyer and the unsatisfactory police investigation, she printed an impassioned letter in the May issue of *The Shield* entitled 'The Modern Slave Trade' in which she lamented the abuse of 'her nation's children' in Continental brothels and chastised the English authorities for allowing their abduction. Importantly, she dared to do what Dyer had only been accused of. She blamed the Belgian authorities for 'knowing and not avenging' this exploitation.⁸³ Although not exciting the British press, Butler's letter would soon prove significant.

That August, the London Committee presented a memorial to the then Foreign Secretary, Earl Granville, urging 'diplomatic and legislative action' against the 'white

⁷⁹ Dyer, *The European*, pp.16-17.

⁸⁰ *The Christian* (11 March 1880). His letter was later reprinted, again thanks to Butler, in *The Shield*. See: *The Shield* (20 March 1880), p.38

⁸¹ See: Marquis of Salisbury to Mr Lumley (31 January 1880) in: 'Correspondence Respecting Immoral Traffic in English girls in Belgium', *P.P.*, 1881, (C. 2910), XCVIII, p.19; Vincent cited in: *SC81*, p.61

⁸² See: Marquis of Salisbury to Mr Lumley (31 January 1880) in: 'Correspondence', p.19

⁸³ Butler: *The Shield* (1 May 1880), p.64

slavery' of English girls. Its appeal, though, like Dyer's petitions in Belgium, was passed between various state officials and ultimately ignored.⁸⁴ The issue of sex trafficking had been raised with the Foreign Office before. As early as 1874, the British representative at Dunkirk had written to Granville reporting the arrest of M. Klyberg, a prolific trafficker, who had operated a 'lucrative trade [in English girls] which he had been carrying on with impunity for many years'.⁸⁵ In 1876, Granville's successor, the Earl of Derby, even announced to First Minister Saville Lumley that the Home Secretary 'will do all in his power, for the purpose of putting an end to the decoying of girls to Belgium'.⁸⁶ Despite such promises, however, the government had failed to act and were not persuaded by the London Committee to review their indifference.

Away from Westminster, the campaign against trafficking was more successful. Whilst waiting to hear from the Foreign Office, the London Committee engaged in rescue and investigative work overseas, started a service of checking the respectability of employers abroad and opened a register of girls 'discovered to be, or recently to have been, in Continental brothels; for the use and information of parents and friends who had lost relatives'.⁸⁷ It also took steps to raise public awareness of trafficking. Overcoming the rebuff from the press, the Committee had an array of pamphlets printed about its rescue missions and the plight of trafficked women and girls.⁸⁸ It also arranged for the *Christian Herald* to publish an appeal to its readers to write to Earl Granville and entreat him to 'use diplomatic pressure upon the Belgian Government to hinder the decoying of English girls to Brussels'.⁸⁹ Several readers obliged and memorials were forwarded by groups including the Uxbridge Quakers, the Battersea Liberal Association, the Free Church Synod of Aberdeen and '200 ladies of Clifton'.⁹⁰ The Friends' Repeal Association, with not inconsiderable help from the London Committee Secretary, also helped rally the nation against trafficking, commissioning a series of unprecedentedly successful publications on the subject. In September, Dyer, at the

84 See: LC81, p.24

85 Consul Wodehouse to Earl Granville (12 January 1874) in: 'Correspondence', p.1

86 Earl of Derby to Mr Lumley (8 December 1876) in: 'Correspondence', p.12

87 LC81, p.26

88 See: Anon, *The Belgian Slave Trade in English Girls. A True Story as Related by a Victim* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1880); Anon, *A White Slave Rescued. An Authentic Narrative* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1885)

89 See: *Christian Herald* (8 September 1880). See: The Rev. T. Taylor to Earl Granville (15 October 1880) in 'Correspondence', p.46

90 See: 'Correspondence', pp.46-7

association's behest, wrote and published the pamphlet *The European Slave Trade in English Girls* about his Belgian mission. Within a year of its release, it sold nearly 5,000 copies and some 8,000 copies were printed for distribution in repeal associations, church groups and political societies throughout the country.⁹¹ This joined the 10, 000 copies of Dyer's shorter tract on the subject *The Belgian Traffic in English Girls*, which had been published the previous month.⁹² Copies of the full pamphlet were distributed by the Friends' Repeal Association to every member of the House of Lords and Commons and to every newspaper editor in the United Kingdom.⁹³ The pamphlet had run into nine editions by 1885. There was also a surge of interest for a revised edition of the 1876 pamphlet *The White Slavery of Europe* by the Swiss anti-vice campaigner Pastor Borel which, again, had been produced at the request of the Quaker Association and published by Dyer in September 1880.⁹⁴ It sold almost as many copies as Dyer's own work, and it too proved extremely popular for years after its initial publication.

Nevertheless, the government remained indifferent. The chance of action against trafficking had nigh-on dissipated when Butler, albeit inadvertently, forced the issue back into Westminster. Butler's *Shield* allegations regarding the collusion of the Belgian *Police des Moeurs* in trafficking had caused waves on the Continent. Just days after their publication, they were featured prominently in two of Belgium's principal newspapers *Le National* and *Journal de Bruxelles* which, having previously printed Dyer's original exposé and denials by the Procureur du Roi, had a captive audience for stories of sexual abuse in the Belgian capital. This enraged the authorities in Brussels and forced them to act to save face. Lenaers and his deputy, Schroeder, contacted the Home Secretary in late October and demanded that Butler be forced to make a deposition on oath before a magistrate or face imprisonment under their country's Extradition Acts, unless she withdrew her allegations.⁹⁵ The British Government complied and summoned her to testify.

91 FA, *Annual Report 1880* (London: FA, 1881) p.2.

92 LF, FA, MS SOCP/ M1, Minute Book, 5 August 1880

93 Ibid. 2 September 1880, p.203. The Friends' Repeal Association used Dyer's pamphlet to recruit members. 500 copies were sent to non-adherents with a circular requesting that readers 'throw in thy sympathy with those who feel it a duty to resist the serious beginnings of this system [of regulation] in our own land'. LF, FA, MS SOCP/ M1, Minute Book, 4 November 1880

94 LF, FA, MS SOCP/ M1, Minute Book, 6 May 1880. Borel, *The White Slavery*

95 Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p.376

Despite being warned against giving evidence by her colleagues given the difficulty in proving her claims, Butler proceeded with a newfound confidence. When recently in France on Federation business, she had been approached by a disillusioned Belgian detective wanting to speak out about the Brussels police because he had grown 'too disgusted with [its] corruption'. He provided her with proof of the sexual exploitation rife in the Belgian capital and how it was being covered up by the authorities.⁹⁶ As Butler averred in her memoirs, '[I] gladly availed myself of the opportunity of making public what I knew and a great deal more'.⁹⁷ Indeed, she was ordered to present a supplementary statement, having offered too much information for one deposition. The detective, meanwhile, turned King's Evidence.⁹⁸ Determined that the anti-trafficking cause should not again be forsaken by the government, Butler also sent a letter to the Home Secretary in which she reiterated the complaints regarding Greenham's investigation and told him of Lenaers' 'collusion with the keepers whom he should have controlled'.⁹⁹ The Home Secretary was compelled to sanction an independent inquiry and appointed the barrister, TW Snagge, to go to Belgium forthwith to conduct it. As Butler later wrote, 'from that time forward no more attempts were made to deny the charges I had made'.¹⁰⁰

The following month witnessed more success for the anti-trafficking cause. The London Committee and Butler's Federation brought about the prosecution and conviction of twelve traffickers, procurers and police officials in Brussels on behalf of the girls they had rescued.¹⁰¹ Coverage of these trials lit up the front pages of the Belgian press and, as the *Courier de Bruxelles* noted, led to 'the conscience of the people being

96 Butler learned that, following the publication of *The Shield* letter, Schroeder had been summoned by the Procureur and asked if the allegations that he allowed young girls into the city's brothels were true. He had assured his superior that they were not, and rushed off to warn Lenaers, before going around the city's brothels to 'carry off the minors who were there' and arrange for them to be sent over the border. He then invited the Procureur to inspect the brothels. Seeing nothing untoward, the Procureur wrote to the Belgian and British Press denying Butler's claims. WL, 3JBL/19/11, Butler to unknown, 3 November 1880

97 Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p.376

98 WL, 3JBL/22/36, Josephine Butler to Mr Johnson, 16 May 1883

99 London Committee, *Six Years' Labour and Sorrow* (London: Dyer Brothers Morgan & Scott, 1885), p.1. Butler managed to find out that the Commissioner's family business flourished by supplying the brothels of the Brussels with wine and effects.

100 Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p.380

101 LC81, p.16. Additional trials were held in the following spring and also ended in the conviction of a series of traffickers and procurers.

aroused as by a thunderbolt'.¹⁰² Butler declared her challenge by the Belgian authorities to be 'one of the causes whereby the floodgates of public indignation have been since opened upon the police and their doings'.¹⁰³ A number of Belgium's foremost functionaries were compelled to resign including the city's Burgomestre and soon, again indirectly thanks to Butler, Lenaers' and Schroeder's positions became untenable. When in the possession of the Belgian authorities, Butler's testimony regarding Lenaers' collusion had been seen by the journalist, M Boland, and he had reproduced it without her knowledge in *Le National*. It caused 60,000 copies of the newspaper to be sold in one day and, as the *Courier de Ghent* reported, 'violently agitated the whole country' and solicited 'unprecedented reproaches ...against the police of the capital' by the foreign press.¹⁰⁴ Given no choice but to clear his name, Lenaers sued Boland for libel and arranged for witnesses to give false evidence in his defence so that his guilt would be concealed. This, however, spectacularly backfired when, in the Court of Appeal, one of his hired witnesses broke down on examination, admitted to perjury and revealed Lenaers' corruption. Despite remarkably winning the trial, the Commissioner and his Deputy were obliged to relinquish their posts.¹⁰⁵ Crucially, the December trials also provided Snagge with sufficient evidence to conclude that 'it [is] a fact established beyond all doubt that for many years a trade...has been carried on, whereby a very large number of English girls, many [underage], have been enlisted [into Continental brothels]' and to advocate immediate amendment of the English law.¹⁰⁶ Butler, meanwhile, reinforced Snagge's conclusion by organizing a memorial to the Home Secretary in May 1881 signed by 'a thousand ladies of high rank', urging for legislation to combat trafficking. She had published the pamphlet *A Letter to the Mothers of*

102 *Courier de Bruxelles* cited in: Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p.389. See Brussels newspapers: *Independance & Echo du Parlement* (13, 14 December 1880).

103 Butler, *A Letter to the Mothers of England* (Liverpool: Josephine Butler, 1881), p.6

104 *Courier de Ghent* (c. January 1881) cited in: *The Shield* (5 February 1881) 197, p.19. The article was in fact written in support of the Belgian capital's police authorities

105 *The Shield* (19 February 1881), p.28;(19 March 1881), p.56; (11 June 1881), p.125; (16 July 1881), p.144; (6 August 1881), p.165. During the December trials, the bench of magistrates in Brussels wrote to the Procureur, urging him that ending the exploitation of minors would render regulation 'inefficacious'. *The Shield* (19 March 1881), pp.53-4

106 WL, Records of the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene, Compulsory Detention / Notification Papers, 3AMS/B/05/21, 'Report of TW Snagge of the Middle Temple, on the Alleged Traffic in English Girls for Immoral Purposes in Foreign Towns, 1881, pp.v, xii. The Belgian Parliament sanctioned a Commission of Enquiry into the *Police des Moeurs* following the resignations but the Commission soon folded out of apparent 'want of evidence'. See: *The Shield* (5 February 1881), pp.19-20; (19 February 1881), p.28.

England, her principal work on trafficking, prior to this petition to mobilize this support.¹⁰⁷

The Government was at last prompted to act and, that June, a Select Committee sat to investigate ‘the law relating to the protection of young girls from artifices inducing them to lead a corrupt life and into means of amending the same’, sparking sustained interest from the press.¹⁰⁸ Snagge was examined at length, and Dyer, Gillett and Benjamin Scott each gave evidence. However, the Lords were far more concerned about the ‘rampant growth’ in juvenile prostitution *within* England and had little time for the members of the London Committee.¹⁰⁹ Not heard until the last meeting, Dyer was deemed to overstate the innocence and entrapment of trafficked girls, and Scott’s evidence was omitted from the Select Committee’s minutes altogether. As Scott later recalled, ‘when I was in the witness’ chair the reporter was ordered to close his book, so that a great deal of what the public ought to have known...has been suppressed to this day’.¹¹⁰ Butler, moreover, was not even called to testify.

Having re-sat in the following Parliament, the Committee issued a report in 1882 which, despite the presiding Lords’ focus, acknowledged the problem of trafficking. Significantly, among various measures designed to afford the country’s minors more protection at home and abroad, the report advocated increasing the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen.¹¹¹ This was somewhat unexpected given that previous attempts to raise the consent threshold had been met with hostility. A Criminal Law Amendment Bill incorporating the Committee’s recommendations was introduced by Lord Rosebery in May 1883. It passed through the House of Lords that year as well as in 1884 and 1885, but each time it was either dropped or talked out in a Commons preoccupied with the Sudan crisis and the issue of parliamentary reform.

Frustrated by the fate of the Bills, Butler together with Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army, among others, took up an earlier offer of publicity by the *Pall Mall*

107 Butler, JE, *A Letter*

108 SC81; *The Shield* (6 August 1881), p. 184; *Daily News* (31 May 1881); *The Times* (31 May 1881); *Liverpool Mercury* (26 August 1881)

109 See: SC81, pp. 62-3, 72

110 WL, Records of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Petitions for Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, 3AMS/B/01/01, Scott, B, *Speech by Chairman Benjamin Scott FRAS, Chairman of the London Committee for Suppressing the Traffic in British Girls* (c.1885)

111 SC81, p.16

Gazette's editor, WT Stead.¹¹² Stead ensured that a 'storm burst upon the public ear' from his newspaper, throwing light on the systematic sexual exploitation of minors in London in his 1885 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' series. It was the widespread cries for reform solicited by these revelations that finally convinced the government to pass the Bill for which Butler and the London Committee had long laboured.

The Affair in History

The light cast by 'The Maiden Tribute' scandal has, in turn, overshadowed what will be referred to as the Belgian Affair in scholarly analyses. Typically, historians have focussed upon the furore surrounding Stead's revelations when examining systematic sexual exploitation in late nineteenth-century Britain, treating it as *the* first major outpouring of reformist zeal about child sex abuse and as a key turning-point in campaigns on moral and sexual issues. There has been some excellent work on the subject. Judith Walkowitz has suggested that the emphasis on 'the innocent child victim' engendered by 'The Maiden Tribute' scandal acted as a catalyst for 'new, more repressive political initiatives over sex' to take root, as championed by the country's nascent social purity movement.¹¹³ More recently, she has explored the genres, old and new, evoked by Stead, situating them in their cultural context to present convincing reasons for 'The Maiden Tribute's' rhetorical power and transformative influence in sexual politics.¹¹⁴ In an earlier re-examination of the scandal, Deborah Gorham considered the implications on moral reform campaign of the new focus on juvenile prostitution among the urban poor prompted by Stead's work, drawing upon the notion of childhood in late Victorian culture to, like Walkowitz, suggest that 'The Maiden Tribute' scandal ushered in a new inappropriate politics of coercion surrounding sexual questions and social purity.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Walkowitz, *City*, p.96

¹¹³ Walkowitz, JR, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.248-50

¹¹⁴ Walkowitz, *City*, Ch.3; See also: Joyce, P, *Democratic Subjects. The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p.181

¹¹⁵ Gorham, D, 'The "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" Re-Examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late Victorian England' *Victorian Studies*, 21:3 (Spring, 1978) pp.353-79

The Belgian Affair has not been ignored altogether. Edward Bristow and the journalist, Ann Stafford, have each written short narratives of this earlier scandal, whilst, in a Belgian work dedicated to scandals over licensed prostitution in Brussels, Christine Machiels has outlined the Affair from the Belgian perspective in impressive detail and Cathy Kohler has traced some aspects of the Affair's reception in England.¹¹⁶ Mary-Ann Irwin has gone beyond basic narration of the Belgian Affair to briefly examine some of the discourses mobilized by the London Committee and the government in her consideration of "'white slavery' as a metaphor".¹¹⁷ However, the Affair has generally been cast as an incidental occurrence in histories of prostitution and of moral reform in Britain and has not been explored in terms of its wider significance.

The fact that the Belgian Affair has neither been analysed through the same lenses nor to the same degree of focus as 'The Maiden Tribute' scandal has obscured chapters of the very history that much of the work on Stead's revelations has sought to explain. It has led to a pivotal episode in the development of the country's social purity movement being marginalized. Moreover, it has led to the opening passage of the British history of trafficking as a phenomenon and 'white slavery' as a discourse pertaining to trafficking being eclipsed, thereby erasing the significance of notions of race and nation in these moments. Although 'The Maiden Tribute' paid some attention to the international traffic in British girls, its principal focus was on domestic juvenile prostitution among female minors. It was, as such, merely peppered by the ideas and images of race and nation that permeated the discourses of the Belgian Affair. Its treatment by historians as a vital first awakening of public indignation over the sexual abuse of minors and young women and as a crucial turning-point in the policing of moral issues has therefore occluded these ideas and images in the earliest representations of, and responses to, such abuse. Crucially, it has masked key clues regarding the profound significance of the Belgian Affair in reconfiguring organized responses to social and moral questions within Britain and, specifically, in reconfiguring the country's campaign against female sexual exploitation.

116 Bristow, *Vice*, pp.86-9; Stafford, A, *The Age of Consent* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), Ch.5 & 6 ; Machiels, C, 'Introduction' & Kohler, C, "Le 'Traffic Belge' vu de l'Angleterre' in Chaumont, J-M, & Machiels, C (eds.), *Du Sordide au Mythe : L'Affaire de la Traite des Blanches. Bruxelles, 1880* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2009)

117 Irwin, "'White Slavery'"

The Belgian Affair marks the beginning of one journey and an important crossroads in another. It brought the issue of trafficking before the British public via a coherent body of discourses and gave life to an organization that would later merge to become one of the pillars of the social purity movement and the principal advocate of the repressive doctrines the movement espoused. Yet, just as importantly, the Affair provided the circumstances for a fundamental reconfiguration of power within the campaign against female sexual exploitation. It precipitated a new balance of forces within the campaign whereby the female-led executive and feminist agenda, which had characterized the campaign since the birth of the movement against state regulation in the 1870s, came to be accompanied, and increasingly supplanted, by new male-dominated leaderships that were guided by a different, more repressive set of principles.

To assume that the Belgian Affair solicited a momentous 'changing of the guard' in the movement against female sexual exploitation during which women were replaced wholesale by men and feminism by 'masculinist' politics is, however, to misunderstand the subtlety of the changes in the power dynamics within the movement brought about by the Affair. Moreover, it is to misunderstand how reconfigurations in these dynamics occurred at all.

The new balance of power was not the product of a dramatic struggle for supremacy between the sexes in the organizational response precipitated by the Belgian Affair. Rather, it was a gradual process whereby the advances of Dyer and his gentleman-led London Committee were facilitated by not only the willing co-operation of Butler's feminist vanguard but also many of its members' increasing adherence to the new political current in their movement following the Affair. As we will see, however, Butler herself remained sceptical towards this current, later aligning herself with the social purity group, the National Vigilance Association in name only. The repeal movement had long relied on its male affiliates and parliamentary friends to achieve its ends, but it had not hitherto let them take the reins or have some of its members follow their lead in the way that it did following the Belgian Affair.¹¹⁸ Indeed, we should not see

118 Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, pp.137-48

Butler's followers as a homogenous or static entity when examining the impact of the Affair. Whilst the Affair was still unfolding, the resounding majority of followers still advocated, or at least did not contradict, the 'traditional' feminist doctrines of the repeal movement. We can safely talk in general terms of the feminist ideologies within the movement against female sexual exploitation. However, the establishment of the 'white slave' question on the political scene following the Affair had a fragmentary effect and, seemingly, a significant number of activists were persuaded by the ethos espoused by Dyer and his Committee. While the Belgian Affair certainly did lead to considerable power being transferred from the old feminist order to the new male-led order in the campaign against sexual exploitation, culminating in a shift in focus ideologically as a consequence, the impetus for the transition was complex. It came from both Dyer's male followers *and* some of Butler's former acolytes who were drawn by the new agenda developing in their movement. Indeed, many of these acolytes would come to assume prominent positions in the key social purity groups that took shape in the years after the Belgian Affair. This needs to be borne in mind when understanding the significance of the Belgian Affair and the important power reconfigurations it facilitated.

Moreover, we should not assume that the new balance of power in the campaign against female sexual exploitation lead to feminist, civil-liberties orientated campaigns being altogether displaced. Following the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1886, Butler's British-based campaign turned its attention to the European countries that were still 'subjected' and, throughout the 1880s and 90s, it fought for the repeal of the regulation of prostitution in India.¹¹⁹ Indeed, Butler continued to inspire feminists across Europe well into the new century, and her international Federation endured in parallel to the development of international male-dominated, social purity-focussed initiatives against trafficking.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the 'white slave' question in Britain and the male-dominated organizational response to it following Dyer's revelations precipitated gradual yet permanent and significant changes to the dynamics of the country's

119 Summers, A, 'Which Women? What Europe? Josephine Butler and the International Abolitionist Federation' *History Workshop Journal* 62 (Autumn 2006), pp.214-31; Levine, P, *Prostitution, Race & Politics, Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003)

movement against female sexual exploitation at large and to the dominant ideologies, representations and agenda, it espoused.

The Discourses of 'White Slavery'

The discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized during the Belgian Affair help tell the story of this reconfiguration. Within them, two distinct discursive syntheses arguing for intervention against sex trafficking can be discerned; that of Butler and that of the male executive of the London Committee, as epitomized by Dyer. These syntheses coexisted without conflict but varied a great deal in structure and in no respect more clearly than in the notions of race and nation each author drew upon to represent the problem of trafficking.

Butler represented the principal spokesperson of the repeal movement on the 'white slave' question during the Belgian Affair and was supported without any meaningful dissent by the followers of her movement in her representation of sex trafficking until the fragmentation that took place within her feminist vanguard in the wake of the Belgian Affair. She made 'white slavery' a significant part of the repeal campaign. While the discourses produced by feminists concerned with sexual exploitation underwent several changes in emphasis between the earliest stages of the repeal campaign and the Belgian Affair, the ethos and values that underpinned them remained largely the same. We can, as such, use Butler's discourses of 'white slavery' during the Affair as a reliable insight into the traditional philosophy of her movement and its devotees. Equally, Dyer's synthesis can be taken as indicative of the ideologies espoused by the London Committee, given the leading and apparently uncontested role the Quaker played in the group and the fact that he authored and/or published the majority of writings approved by the Committee.

The Two Syntheses

Both Butler and Dyer chose to represent the iniquity of sex trafficking and the innocence of those whom it victimized in their discourses of 'white slavery' through the cultural form of melodrama, just as Stead would in his revelations later in the decade. They shunned dry, fact-driven appeals to their readers and opted instead for passionate

lyrical exhortations full of metaphors and superlatives, extremes and opposites. Melodrama had great currency in languages of popular radicalism throughout the period. Through its emphasis on democracy in the policing of moral questions and the apportionment of virtue, it empowered otherwise marginalized citizens to voice their grievances within what Patrick Joyce has termed 'a polarized world of moral absolutes, in which reality was rendered as a Manichean struggle of good and evil'. It had considerable resonance when used to highlight the plight of the working classes and women in general, feeding 'the new and potent appetite for demos' that had been cultivated by the popular press since the 1840s.¹²⁰ The format of the melodrama that Butler and Dyer brought to their respective discourses, however, differed greatly.

Butler combined the divine and the secular in her melodrama, perpetuating a tendency that Anne Summers has observed in the Federation leader's repeal rhetorics throughout the preceding decade. Her discourses were informed by a language of religious fervour, mysticism and prophecy founded in Protestant scripture, as well as a maternalism and feminism rooted in traditional lay ideas of motherhood and in, what Summers has identified as 'an existing medico-liberal framework' regarding physical and sexual abuse. She portrayed trafficking as an unchristian abomination on young girls' bodies and positioned herself as a devout and prescient 'mother of all' impelled by piety and maternal instinct to warn fellow mothers and fathers of the danger that such male-sponsored evil posed their children and to unite with them in vanquishing it.¹²¹ Her melodrama was thus unconventional in perpetuating the constitutional radicalism traditionally espoused by the cultural form whilst providing an alternative to the secularism, paternalistic values and male-biased power hierarchy that traditionally characterized it. A spiritualistic heroine takes up the fight against the forces of darkness and women are empowered along with men to help her save the day. In her memoirs, Butler referred to the 'missionary zeal' and 'individual propagandism' of Dyer and Gillett

¹²⁰ Joyce, *Democratic Subjects*, pp.177,181. See also: Walkowitz, *City*, pp.85-6

¹²¹ Summers, A, 'The Constitution Violated: The Female Body and the Female Subject in the Campaigns of Josephine Butler' *History Workshop Journal* 48 (Autumn 1999), pp.8-9. Judith Walkowitz discerned variations of Butler's self-representation as prophetess and supportive mother in the discourses Butler wrote whilst caring for 'repentant prostitutes' in 1860s Liverpool. However, there is no equivalent to the 'suffering magdalen' with whom Walkowitz suggests Butler aligned herself at this earlier stage, in Butler's 'white slavery' discourses. It is with the *mothers* of the victims of sexual abuse as opposed to the young victims themselves with whom Butler relates during the Belgian Affair. Walkowitz, *City*, pp.89-91.

and lauded their 'difficult and heroic research' in Belgium.¹²² She, however, kept for herself the role of the all-seeing mother of the campaign against trafficking.

Butler was acutely aware of the need to garner as much publicity for the anti-trafficking cause as possible and was quick to recognise the rhetorical potential of the instances of exploitation brought to her attention. Writing to her Federation colleague, Dr Carter about the exceptional plight of the trafficked girl Adeline Tanner, Butler emphasized not only the 'peculiarity' of the case but how it was 'most useful for their cause'.¹²³ She did not, though, resort to deliberately embellishing these 'useful' examples to further her ends in her melodrama. However passionate and emphatic the language she used, she kept her own integrity, and that of her cause, intact.

By contrast, Dyer produced a melodrama that was simultaneously more conventional and less consistent. Whilst retaining the traditional secular and paternalistic schema of the popular cultural form, he added to it a myriad of other genres and political discourses. Central to his confection was a notion of masculine duty and heroism derived from such influences as the medieval chivalric romance, the modern imperial adventure novel and the radical rhetoric of the contemporary movement for franchise reform. Meanwhile, a language of difference ran through his melodrama rooted in traditional ideas of Britain as a morally superior nation, popular caricatures of 'the Continental type' and 'the French', and long-standing, conservative notions of the irredeemable fallenness of 'the prostitute'. In discourses which rarely broke out of the first-person, Dyer positioned himself as *the* patriotic protector of outraged English or British womanhood (both Butler and he used the two nationalities interchangeably and most often opted for the latter), duty bound to risk perils of any proportion to save his countrywomen suffering in the clutches of the men of Belgium and France. He appealed not as a father to his fellow English fathers but as an exemplary English male, a lone hero, who should be emulated by the men and supported by the women of his country. His letters to the press outlined *his* exploratory

122 Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, pp. 395, 359.

123 WL, 3JBL/19/05, Josephine Butler to Dr Carter, 1 April 1880

efforts and *his* achievements in pioneering the country's anti-trafficking movement, citing the 'poor girls... whom I have helped to rescue'.¹²⁴

Dyer, moreover, was a reformer who had no qualms in embellishing or omitting the facts of important cases in his melodrama to win over his audience. At the 1881 Select Committee on the law relating to the protection of young girls, Dyer was forced to admit that the account he had passed off as 'Adeline Tanner's own words' in his Belgium trip narrative had, in fact, been subject to 'verbal alterations from his wife'.¹²⁵ Indeed, Snagge condemned Dyer's insistence in the London Committee's initial memorial to the Foreign Secretary that it was 'almost impossible for friends desiring to assist female British subjects [entrapped in Brussels brothels]...to obtain any help from the English Diplomatic or Consular authorities' as 'an allegation unfounded in fact, and gratuitous as it is groundless' which 'marred' an otherwise commendable petition.¹²⁶

The Two Reformers

Butler and Dyer were at very different points in their lives when they took up the anti-trafficking cause. Butler was fifty-one and already one of the most influential and revered proponents of women's rights of her day when in 1880 she started to rally against the abuses revealed in Belgium. She had been the foremost figure in the British repeal campaign for more than a decade and exercised similar power in the International Federation. However, this prestige came with considerable responsibility and Butler was undergoing an exceptionally challenging phase of her crusade when the Belgian Affair was unfolding. Although growing numbers were joining the fight against state regulation in Britain, the battle to convert public opinion to the repeal cause was not won. A new Select Committee on the Contagious Diseases Acts had been appointed by the government in summer 1880, but it ended up giving short shrift to the evidence of repeal advocates during the three parliamentary sessions in which it sat and reported in favour of the legislation in 1882.¹²⁷ Redoubled efforts were required if the Acts were to be abolished. Despite frequent bouts of mental and physical illness, Butler

124 See: *Christian* (11 March 1880) cited in: *The Shield* (20 March 1880), p.38

125 *SC81*, p.106

126 WL, 3AMS/B/05/21, 'Report of TW Snagge', p.xxxii

127 See: Walkowitz, JR, *Prostitution* pp.151-2

determinedly combined her increased domestic repeal duties with regular trips to the Continent on International Federation business and work in the nascent British campaign against trafficking. Indeed, her memoirs attest to how she was seldom off duty and produced her writing on 'white slavery' whilst juggling an exhaustive array of commitments. One evening prior to giving her deposition at the Belgian authorities' behest and shortly after returning from a Federation meeting in France, Butler was 'not well...and retired to rest early' but 'was not allowed to be quiet very long, for before 5 o'clock in the morning [she was] awakened by a loud knocking at the front door' from a messenger sent by Benjamin Scott bearing a warning against her testifying.¹²⁸

Butler's Belgian Affair synthesis represented somewhat of an adjunct to her repeal discourses. While Butler was the spokesperson on the subject within the feminist vanguard of the repeal movement, she never claimed to be a special authority on trafficking. Her discourses of 'white slavery' did not feature the same formulaic imagery and rhetorical leitmotifs of her repeal writings. Being confronted by the Belgian Affair out of the blue and amid a barrage of repeal commitments, Butler did not have the time to fully embrace the anti-trafficking cause and her ideas on the subject did not have the opportunity to crystallize. This said, the synthesis she produced during the Affair nevertheless conveyed the same basic beliefs regarding the evils of regulated prostitution and the double-standard of sexual morality that dominated the repeal movement and as such can be taken as representative of the traditional feminist-orientated campaign against sexual exploitation.

Powerful, outspoken and respected as a public figure at a time when civil society was deemed a man's domain and the home, a woman's, Butler was far from a typical middle-class woman. She was able to accord herself some leeway in the 'separate sphere' gender prescriptive that characterized bourgeois life and legitimize her place outside the home by representing the active role that she, as a woman, assumed in public life as being divinely-sanctioned. In both her repeal and 'white slavery' discourses, she aligned herself with a distinct Christian feminism which allowed her to ratify her campaign work in the name of morality and religion. As Eileen Yeo observed,

¹²⁸ Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p.377

'in a bourgeois culture which constructed femininity largely on Christian foundations, and prioritized married motherhood as true womanhood, respectable women who wanted to stretch conventional gender models needed also to use Christian materials...'. Butler represented God as having intended for there to be a 'communion of labour' between men and women in both public and private spheres whereby the sexes complemented one another and played roles of equal importance, for the sake of effective social action.¹²⁹ But, as Anne Summers has reminded us in relation to Butler's repeal campaign, she did not represent it as divinely ordained that men and women should be equals in these spheres. Rather, she defined women in relation to their membership of the private sphere and biological identity, just as in the dominant patriarchal culture of her day, to suggest that they had been sanctioned by God to undertake the special role in public life of bringing the unique purifying influence of their morally-superior sphere and sex to bear on society and the body politic.¹³⁰ In her introduction to *Woman's Work and Woman's Culture*, the collection of essays that she edited in 1869, Butler praised the idea of a 'social motherhood', advocating a dissemination of women's 'home influence' throughout public life.¹³¹ Indeed, likening the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to the sacrifice made by the female in her willingness to endure pain or even death in childbirth, Butler, Yeo and Summers have each suggested, presented women as entitled to this special spiritual role in society on account of their very bodies.¹³² 'Christ, and after him all the teachers, poets and thinkers of the world', the International Federation leader explained in her 1884 work *Lady of Shunem*, 'used the travail and joy of motherhood as the typical expression of all that is deepest and most terrible in spiritual anguish and highest and purest in spiritual joy and

129 Yeo, EJ, 'Protestant Feminists and Catholic Saints' in Yeo, EJ, (ed.) *Radical Femininity. Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp.128-131. See also: Yeo, EJ, *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996), pp.127-8 Anne Summers argued that Butler's experience in the early days of her marriage in 1850s Oxford of her 'exclusion from an all-male educational institution' and its 'sophisticated suspension of belief in the truth and value of the Scriptures', owed to her asserting more forcefully 'her own faith in faith' in her rhetorics. Summers, 'The Constitution', pp.9-11
130 Summers, 'The Constitution', pp.7-8

131 Butler, JE (ed.), *Woman's Work & Woman's Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1869) pp.xxvii-iii

132 Yeo, 'Protestant Feminists', p. 138; Summers, 'The Constitution', pp.7-8. See also: Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p.117

fruition'.¹³³ Thus Butler validated her crusades against regulation and against trafficking as her ordained duty in God's name, as a woman and a Christian.

Dyer, on the other hand, was a young man of 30 who had yet to make a name for himself in reformist circles when he wrote his letter to the London press that sparked the Belgian Affair, and when he began constructing his 'white slavery' melodrama. He had been the Secretary of the pacifist group the International Arbitration Society in his early twenties and, since 1877, had been an active member of the Working Men's League of the Repeal Movement. He was the Secretary of the Friends' Repeal Association and had just founded what would be the popular social purity journal *The Sentinel* when his trafficking revelations hit the press. However, he had never spearheaded a campaign in his own right, having always been a faithful follower of other people's crusades.¹³⁴ The fight against the traffic in women revealed in the Belgian Affair was the first cause that Dyer could claim as his own and the first that promised him the chance to build a reputation as a pioneer. Although still active in the Friends' Repeal Association and his publishing firm, it was to the furthering of this cause that he invested the majority of his time, effort and ambition over the next three years.

Dyer's discourses of 'white slavery' also ought to be understood in the context of his profound psychic investment in, and eagerness to publically align himself with, 'manliness', the style of masculinity which had long been venerated by the bourgeois culture of the day.¹³⁵ Dyer was hardly a conventional figure of authority when he embarked upon his campaign against trafficking in 1880. He had the advantage over Butler of being a member of the sex perceived to be naturally entitled to exert influence in civil society. However, he did not possess the full range of ingredients of manliness deemed intrinsic to commanding respect and exercising power and leadership in public life. As John Tosh argued, manliness represented an influential 'guide to life' which stipulated that its disciples had 'attributes which equipped a man to place his physical stamp on the world' such as 'energy, virility and strength' as well as 'moral qualities

133 Butler, JE, *The Lady of Shunem: Papers on Religious Subjects* (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1894), p.5, cited in: Yeo, 'Protestant Feminists', p. 138

134 Dictionary of Quaker Biography; 'AS Dyer Obituary' in: *The Friend* (12 November 1926) p.1026. Dyer would go on to play a key role in many radical movements, including Ellice Hopkins's Social Purity group, the White Cross League, Ellice Hopkins' and the fight against the Asian opium traffic. See: Dyer, AS, *Chinese Christians and the ravages of the Opium Plague...* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1890)

135 Tosh, R, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), p.86

which enabled [him] to attain [his] physical potential' such as 'decisiveness, courage and endurance'. These characteristics, Tosh continued, were associated with 'social responsibility' and had to be earned through hard work, individualism and independence. Although this style of masculinity was in theory attainable regardless of a man's upbringing and education, Dyer was disadvantaged when it came to gaining his stripes.¹³⁶ He was a campaigner of humble origins and limited formal education in a reformist network dominated by educated middle-class citizens. He was, like many members of the London Committee, a Quaker in a society which had long undervalued the social contribution of dissenters and which marginalized the masculinity of the religion's modest men-folk. Perhaps most detrimentally, he was a man who, as his obituary read, 'from his boyhood was of frail physique' in a culture which considered bodily strength to be the fulcrum of respectable masculinity.¹³⁷ Dyer compensated for these 'disabilities' by emphasizing his many moral qualifications as a manly figure of authority in the public sphere. Highlighting his righteousness, his patriotism and, above all, his chivalry, he underlined his legitimacy by styling himself as a decorous protector of women and girls, a white knight amongst men, whose specific vocation it was to spearhead the campaign against the foreign forces that threatened the nation's womanhood and the purity of society. In his best-selling pamphlet on his Belgian mission he described how, when he encountered the English girl interned in a Brussels brothel, 'her whole frame trembled with excitement, and she was overcome with emotion at the prospect of escape'. Similarly, he reproduced Adeline Tanner's letter of thanks to him in which she enthused, 'in words I cannot express the gratification it gives me to think that friends headed by yourself are striving to have this traffic stopped'.¹³⁸ Chivalry, as Marc Girouard has shown, was a code of behaviour deemed integral to manliness among upper- and middle-class men in Victorian Britain and, crucially, one which emphasized the importance of a man's moral fibre in priority to his physique,

136 Ibid pp.86-8; Tosh, *A Man's Place. Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (Newhaven & London: Yale University Press, 1999) pp.116-7. See: Tosh, J, 'What should historians do with masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain' *History Workshop Journal*, 38 (1994), pp.189-90

137 *The Friend* (12 November 1926), p.1026

138 Dyer, *The European*, pp. 17,19

connections and wealth.¹³⁹ Aligning himself with this code and the other moral components of manliness therefore allowed Dyer to validate his authority and so be, as fellow-Quaker Maurice Gregory observed, 'a living human exemplification of power in weakness'.¹⁴⁰

139 See: Girouard, M, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (Newhaven, London: Yale University Press, 1981)

140 *The Friend* (12 November 1926), p.1026

Chapter Two

Ideas of foreignness or race, nation and patriotism pervade the syntheses that Butler and Dyer produced during the Belgian Affair and are intrinsic to the ideological framework that each reformer used to think about and describe the problem of trafficking. Comparison of the key points of departure in the ideas of this sort that Butler and Dyer brought to their respective syntheses sheds light on the reconfiguration of the power-balance in the British campaign against female sexual exploitation that took place during the Belgian Affair. It suggests the key ideological differences between the old feminist order, as it stood in the early 1880s, and the new male-led London Committee that progressively dominated proceedings in the campaign. Moreover, it provides an insight into the affect of the increasing power of the male leadership on the representation of female sexual exploitation and on the treatment of women subjected to sexual abuse. This chapter will carry out such a comparison. It will focus on the syntheses of both Butler and Dyer given the status of these figures as key representatives of the female-led repeal campaign and the male-dominated London Committee, respectively. However, the discourses of the reformers' colleagues will also be considered for the insight they provide into the ideological differences between the two factions.

As has been intimated, Butler and Dyer's individual synthesis were most likely influenced by a specific set of personal priorities and anxieties. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the basic philosophies, agendas and biases that the reformers brought to their writings on sex trafficking were largely those accepted and espoused by the members of their respective campaigns. While the different private circumstances in which Butler and Dyer wrote their syntheses may have impacted on the *style* of their representations of the injustice of trafficking, they did not, it might be suggested, of themselves have a dramatic impact on the ideological *substance* of their representations.

The English Prostitute Abroad:

Before this comparison, however, it is important to understand the negative attitudes towards 'the prostitute' and prostitution that were dominant in the period throughout which the Belgian Affair took place for what they tell us about the notions that the two reformers had to counter in their syntheses. In early 1880s culture, with sex trafficking such a new phenomenon, the identity of 'the white slave' was conflated with that of 'the prostitute'. The evidence heard from those ambivalent to action against trafficking at the 1881 Select Committee prompted by the Affair attests to this and provides a rich source of information about how the putative 'prostitute' that was 'the trafficked girl' was perceived. In and outside the Select Committee, it was widely held that a girl simply could not suddenly find herself in prostitution, whether at home or abroad, by accident. She had to be licentious to even entertain taking the first steps towards pursuing such work. As Proconsul Jeffes told the Committee, 'I think that if a girl is misled in being brought over to a foreign country...when she has to undergo the preliminary examination necessary for a girl to undergo before she can be admitted into [Belgian brothels], she would positively refuse provided she were a virtuous girl'.¹⁴¹ 'The prostitute' was considered to have not simply a proclivity towards vice but an active intention, if not a compulsion, to pursue it. Consul Hotham reported to the presiding Lords that 'there was no idea of injured innocence' regarding one 'hardened-looking, brazen-faced [trafficked] woman' brought to his office in Calais.¹⁴² Indeed, as in Jeffes' insistence that girls habitually 'declare that they are of age when they are not' in order to enter Belgian brothels and 'tell him tales' about being detained in these houses if discovered to be underage, 'the prostitute' was deemed liable to resort to deception to continue plying her trade with impunity and therefore could not be trusted. She was, moreover, seen as irrevocably tainted by this moral corruption. The Proconsul reported how the woman who had taken in the repatriated trafficked girl Lucy Nash 'tried in every way to reclaim her; but within a short time she went upon the streets again, and they have never been able to get her back'. Such vice was considered class-specific, a vocation of girls of the urban poor thought to, as Surrey Police Chairman Hardman

¹⁴¹ SC81, p.34

¹⁴² Ibid. pp.97,45

testified, have 'evil influences...early brought to bear on them' that tainted their moral fibre on account of the overcrowded and squalid environments in which they were raised.¹⁴³ In short, any girl who found herself in prostitution was deemed destined to be there, as corrupt and corrupting as the home from which she came and the system in which she worked.

That the majority of 'white slaves' whose cases were brought to light were very young, in some cases barely teenagers, did not mitigate these adverse representations. As Deborah Gorham suggested, as opposed to today's society in which guidelines regarding the age of consent and of adulthood prescribed by the law are widely considered authoritative, there was confusion over the boundary between childhood and adulthood in Victorian Britain, with no consensus as to what defined the transition. While children held great symbolic importance in depictions of family life and were understood to be dependents deserving of care and affection, 'many Victorians suffered from uncertainty about the nature of childhood and the proper relationship of children to the structure of the family and the wider society'.¹⁴⁴ The age of consent, thirteen, was neither seen as definitive of, nor necessarily related to, childhood. Therefore, a young person performing putatively adult actions such as engaging in sexual relations, whether consensual or otherwise, could too easily mark that person out as an adult and render him or her ineligible for the sympathy and affection extended to children in the eyes of onlookers.

The Belgian Affair also occurred at a time when pseudo-scientific discourses depicting prostitution as one of society's gravest problems and 'the prostitute' as one of society's most flawed and dangerous constituents had considerable resonance and when the debate over how prostitution and 'the prostitute' should be controlled, fanned by the Contagious Diseases Acts, was still raging. 1840s Britain had borne witness to a growing intellectual interest in prostitution with an increasing amount of social research taking place into what became branded 'the Great Social Evil'. Researchers, through the collection and collation of 'moral statistics', investigated the nature, causes and implications of the problem of prostitution and advocated measures

143 Ibid. pp.32,34,40,92

144 Gorham, "The Maiden Tribute", p.356

for its containment, focussing, by and large, on 'the prostitute'. By the following decade, such research, epitomized by the extensive works of William Acton and WR Greg, was, as Walkowitz has argued, 'instrumental in generating an intellectual climate sympathetic to regulation', emphasizing the normalcy of male sexual urges, the necessity of vice and the insuperable danger brought by the irredeemably flawed figure of 'the prostitute' by way of venereal disease.¹⁴⁵ These ideas, which by the 1890s would find expression in influential criminological studies such as Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero's *Criminal Women, the Prostitute, and the Normal Women* that racialized 'the prostitute' as a corrupting, atavistic anomaly within the female sex, cast prostitution as an inevitable evil that should be contained by the law via the police and medical authorities.¹⁴⁶ Laws to protect children from sexual exploitation and to control procurement, as in the Criminal Law Amendment Bills of the 1880s, were, by extension, presented as of ancillary importance in containing the adverse repercussions of organized vice. Cure through regulation was exalted rather than prevention through legal reform.

Continental Vice: The System or the Subjects?

A fundamental goal that Butler and Dyer had to achieve when representing 'the trafficked', then, was to demonstrate that she was someone to whom vice was alien, who had been coerced into prostitution, who was therefore being grossly and unjustly subjected and who deserved to be afforded protection. Both reformers approached this task by mobilizing a juxtaposition of 'the English girl' who had succumbed to trafficking and 'the Continental agent' of her subjection whereby the innocence and suffering of the former was contrasted with the unchecked corruption of the latter. The way in which Butler and Dyer constructed 'the Continental agent' in this juxtaposition exposes an insightful point of difference in their use of ideas of race and nation to represent trafficking.

Given the many differences in their discourses, Butler and Dyer conveyed the idea of the innocence of 'the white slave' in a surprisingly similar manner. Mobilizing the

145 Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, Ch.2

146 Lombroso, C & Ferrero, G, *Criminal Woman, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004)

melodramatic ideal of 'the undeserving victim', they each cast this figure as an unequivocally pure girl from a respectable working-class family who had been inveigled due to the machinations of the forces of evil. They each highlighted her English identity and, where applicable, stressed her rural upbringing thus distancing her from the disreputable element of the urban poor and underscoring her belonging to the nation by evoking the countryside, a space that Robert Young has argued had a special 'imaginative identification' with Englishness.¹⁴⁷ In her letter to *The Shield*, Butler described the trafficked girls 'immured in the infamous houses in Brussels' as 'little children, English girls of twelve to fifteen years of age, lovely creatures...innocent creatures too...got from English country villages by every artifice'.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Dyer emphasized in his best-selling pamphlet that Ellen Newland spoke to him 'with an air that seemed to betoken sincerity' and had parents who were 'country people of much respectability'.¹⁴⁹ He went on to highlight how 'the victims of this infamous traffic are mostly in unsheltered positions, away from home, and oftentimes orphans', invoking a figure that Martha Vicinus and Nina Auerbach have each argued carried a particular symbolic charge in melodrama as the epitome of innocence and vulnerability and thereby highlighting the need for the guardians of minors to be vigilant.¹⁵⁰

The reformers also represented the suffering to which 'the English white slave' had been subjected similarly, likening it, again in melodramatic terms, to a fate worse than death. Having lamented how the children entrapped in Belgian brothels were said to '*never see the sun, and scarcely the daylight*', Butler proclaimed in her most controversial *Shield* contribution and *A Letter to the Mothers of England* that 'quick murder with dagger or revolver would be mercy and gentleness compared with the slow and agonizing dying to which these beings are doomed'.¹⁵¹ Dyer included Adeline Tanner's story of exploitation as one of the centrepieces of his original Belgian Affair pamphlet, concealing its most graphic excerpts with a series of asterisks. In passages reminiscent of repealers' descriptions of the 'instrumental rape' of the medical

147 Young, RJC, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 231-3

148 *The Shield* (1 May 1880), p.64

149 Dyer, *The European*, pp.11-2

150 Dyer, *The European*, pp.30-1; Vicinus, M, 'Helpless and Unfriended: Nineteenth Century Domestic Melodrama' *New Literary History* (Autumn, 1981), p.130; Auerbach, N, 'Incarnations of the Orphan' *ELH*, 42:3 (Fall 1975), pp.395-491

151 *The Shield* (1 May 1880), p.64; Butler, *A Letter*, p.4

examinations licensed by the Contagious Diseases Acts, he allowed Adeline to give such details as how, despite being 'incapable of sexual intercourse', the police authorities 'attempted to examine my person with an instrument which put me in terrible pain, and seemed to chill my blood'.¹⁵² Butler and Dyer differed in their opinions of the effect of this subjection. Butler reported in *The Shield* how her colleagues in a Parisian Refuge 'brought back' former inmates of 'maison tolerées' (licensed brothels) whilst Dyer represented the system of licensed prostitution as 'transforming a virtuous maiden into an animal, who returns like a dog to its vomit'.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, they each portrayed 'the white slave' as a paragon of purity and respectability prior to corruption, one of the nation's children rather than an outcast, whose suffering was acute, involuntary and undeserved.

The two reformers, however, were not in agreement in their representation of 'the Continental agent' upon whom they blamed this suffering and contrasted the innocent subjected 'white slave'. Butler mobilized notions of foreignness, ideas of national difference devoid of racialized content, to represent trafficking as a crime incited first and foremost by the system of state regulation that was prevalent in most European countries. She portrayed the system as an explicitly Continental menace which, in effectively authorizing prostitution, normalized and aroused demand for increasingly perverse forms of vice and so fuelled the traffic in young girls from England where no such regulation was in operation. Writing on the subject of this traffic in *A Letter to the Mothers of England*, she declared:

Wherever the state and public authorities take sexual vice under their protection, as they do in most Continental cities, the most awful forms of vice are stimulated, until such things I am recording become so common as not to excite the deep wrath which ought to be kindled in order to work their destruction...That such contempt for the sacredness of childhood should prevail in countries where vice has long been patented by the government should not surprise us. For the elevating of debauchery into a guaranteed industry, and a recognized institution, does and must, by the strictest logic, lead to results of a character which otherwise we might almost suppose was impossible.¹⁵⁴

152 Dyer, *The European*, p.26. For analysis of ideas of 'instrumental rape' see: Walkowitz, *City*, p.92

153 *The Shield* (1 May 1880), pp.64-5; Dyer, *The European*, p.32

154 Butler, *A Letter*, p.11

Regulation, she went on to explain, made the customers of vice 'cease to be satisfied with the human merchandise prepared and guaranteed for them by the state, and go out of their way to seek excitement and novelty; hence the violence practised on children...'.¹⁵⁵

Butler did acknowledge that the traffic in English girls would not be taking place without the Continental clientele of licensed brothels creating a demand for 'mere children...to please their fancy'.¹⁵⁶ However, she represented the Continental system of regulation as the underlying cause of these 'cowardly and depraved appetites' that stimulated trafficking. As opposed to the 'Old Corruption' style argument mobilized in the domestic repeal campaign which admonished 'the debased aristocrat' for controlling women through the state, Butler portrayed the regulation of prostitution as controlling, or at least as perverting the libido of, the 'wealthy Continental debauché' and making him crave children.¹⁵⁷ As she warned in her *Shield* letter, Englishmen too will descend to the level of being 'so lost, so brutalized, as to be capable of feeding [their] lusts upon a struggling or slaughtered innocent...if they endure the influence on English soil of the laws which regulate vice'.¹⁵⁸ It was this uncurbed and corrupt foreign system that she therefore pitted against the innocent and suffering English victim of trafficking to articulate the injustice and oppression inherent in the 'white slave trade'.

Dyer, on the other hand, used ideas of race, notions of an innate difference between the inhabitants of nations, to cast the trafficking taking place from his country as an abomination perpetrated chiefly by the male residents of the Continent. In a tone similar to that which would be used by Stead in 'The Maiden Tribute' to vilify London's 'vicious upper class rakes' for their sexual exploitation of the children of the urban poor, Dyer deployed these ideas to depict 'wealthy Continental debauchés' as so inherently corrupt that they instinctively craved young girls to satiate their lusts and thus incited the 'immoral traffic' in English girls.¹⁵⁹ He treated this notion of the innate depravity of the 'rich profligates' of Belgium and France as a conventional wisdom throughout his

155 Ibid. p.15

156 Ibid. pp.15-6

157 For an excellent summary of Butler's use of ideas of gender, class and 'the aristocrat', see: Summers, 'The Constitution', pp.4-5

158 *The Shield* (1 May 1880), p.64

159 Dyer, *The European*, p.5

synthesis and did not couch his prejudice in any semblance of racial theory or even an overtly racialized lexicon. He wrote with an ingrained racial prejudice towards the citizens of the Continent which was typical of his time, taking nation and race to be one and the same thing. As Robert Young has suggested, throughout nineteenth-century England 'the differences between [white] European races and their national characteristics were increasingly emphasized in response to growing imperial competitiveness'.¹⁶⁰ Dyer allowed Adeline Tanner to announce in his best-selling pamphlet, 'I was the helpless victim of every outrage and brutality that heartless profligates, in their unrestrained and unnatural lust, chose to inflict upon me [in the Brussels brothel]...one ruffian, who bore a title, treated me so badly, I thought I should have died under it'.¹⁶¹ His Committee's first report also evoked the idea of the traffic in English girls as the product of the inborn perversion of Continental profligates by appropriating italicized French words and terms from the French nomenclature of prostitution when recounting Dyer and Gillett's rescue mission to the Brussels brothel. It, for example, detailed how these two men '[w]ith a view to rescuing some of the English victims...were compelled to enter some of the houses [of prostitution in Brussels]...and assume the *rôle* of the usual *habitués* of such places'.¹⁶² This use of French lexicon to evoke the difference of the debauchés of the Continent was likely to have struck a particular cord with readers given that, as Young has argued, 'cultural factors, above all, the English language' were central to the racialized identity of the English from the 1860s.¹⁶³

Dyer, moreover, brought a certain equality to his hatred. He suggested that it was simply that the aristocratic debauchés of the Continent were able to afford the premium attached to children in brothels that made *them* the propagators of the traffic in English girls in preference to their less affluent male compatriots. The will to exploit these minors was, to him, an innate condition shared by *all* such men, irredeemable and distinct to their ethnicity. In his contribution to the London Committee's Memorial to the Foreign Secretary, he urged that '[n]othing short of a total prohibition of the

160 Young, *The Idea*, pp.13-4

161 Dyer, *The European*, p.26

162 *LC81*, p.14

163 Young, *The Idea*, pp.172-3

introduction of female British subjects to Belgian licensed houses of prostitution will prevent innocent English girls being decoyed to Brussels, and there kept in a condition of slavery to satisfy the brutal lusts of the inhabitants of that city'.¹⁶⁴ Dyer evoked notions of class more determinedly alongside those of race when presenting Continent debauchés' stimulation of trafficking as being facilitated by the traffickers, procurers and bullies who served the maison tolérées they patronized. He portrayed such brothel employees as profiteering 'panderers to the high personages [of Belgium]' who were cashing in on the perversity of such debauchés and getting rich from exploiting innocent English girls.¹⁶⁵ Writing on the subject of the December trafficking trials in *The Christian*, Dyer highlighted how M. Timmermans, the substitute to the Public Prosecutor representing a series of trafficked girls from England,

quoted as an example of the striking contrast between the fate of keepers of licensed dens and the victims, the case of a keeper of such house, who came to Brussels a few years ago as a waiter, who now possessed a country house, was worth £24,000 Sterling, and boasted that in a few years more his trade would make him a millionaire, while, the victims of this man's profession, after the bloom of their youth has been taken from them, were to be found in the hospital or the graveyard.¹⁶⁶

Significantly, only men were cast as the primary villains and villains' accomplices in Dyer's discourses of 'white slavery'. In the 1876 pamphlet *The White Slavery of Europe*, the Swiss Pastor Theodore Borel dedicated most vitriol to emphasizing the culpability of procuresses for the traffic in girls. In his eyes, these women were 'an incarnation of the genius of evil, a monstrous excrescence of society, and the last effort of vice to surpass itself in what is most odious'.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, even Butler acknowledged the guilt of female figures in her synthesis. She described in *A Letter to the Mothers of England* how it was the nurse, Marie Laborde, who had drugged the parents of the French Delemont brother and sister, having been 'persuaded to make [the children] over to [Henriquez, a depraved chemist-cum-procurer] and his patrons'.¹⁶⁸ Such female protagonists, though, featured nowhere in Dyer's discourses.

164 Dyer cited in: 'Memorial to the Foreign Secretary' in Borel, *The White Slavery* p.35-6

165 Dyer, *The European Slave Trade in English Girls. Ninth Edition*. (London: Dyer Bros., 1885), p.40

166 *The Christian* (23 December 1880). See also: Dyer, *The European*, 6th Edition (London: Dyer Brothers, 1882), p.39

167 Dyer, *The European*, p.7

168 Butler, *A Letter*, pp.8-10

Dyer did not ignore the role played by the Continental system of regulation in stimulating trafficking. In fact, he presented this system as absolutely integral to precipitating the abuse of English girls on the Continent, dedicating the first pages of his pamphlet to outlining the evils it provoked.¹⁶⁹ However, he at no point claimed that this system *produced* the 'foreign slave traffic in English girls'. To Dyer, regulation legitimized and exacerbated the *already* perverted lust of 'the Continental debauché' such as to promote and strengthen, give added purpose to and even revitalise - but not actually *cause* - this traffic. The debauché was naturally corrupt and desirous of immoral pleasure to the extent that he would fuel a trade in minors irrespective of any law in place. That regulation pandered to, and intensified, their vice, in Dyer's eyes, only made such a trade in English girls proliferate all the more quickly and determinately. In his most damning indictment of this system in his pamphlet, Dyer described 'the rich profligate of the Continent' as having, 'unrestrained and *now uncontrollable* passions [that] have sunk him to a position in which...he is morally half brute and half devil, [and] will pay an amount equal to a poor man's annual income for the opportunity of violating a betrayed, terrified and helpless virgin'.¹⁷⁰ Dyer thus contrasted the rampant 'Continental debauché', facilitated by the system of regulation, with the innocent and suffering trafficked English girl to convey the iniquity of the 'white slave trade'.

The difference in the protagonist that Butler and Dyer cast as the leading villain to 'the English white slave's' tragic heroine reveals one of the fundamental changes in the representation of female sexual exploitation that started to occur with the increasing male-domination of the movement of which both reformers were part. It exposes how the cause of this exploitation gradually shifted from being represented as one of the wider structure of society to one of individual morality. It demonstrates, specifically, how the cause changed from being portrayed in libertarian and feminist terms as a question of an over-centralized state depreciating the personal rights of citizens to being represented in a more ethnocentric manner as a question of the indecency of a certain type of citizen. Both reformers were critical of the abuse of

¹⁶⁹ Dyer, *The European*, pp.5-6

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p.6. My emphasis.

power by the Belgian and French states and by the authorities which policed regulation within those states. Both acknowledged the role of these parties in the traffic in English girls and condemned them for their part in infringing the liberty of their compatriots. However, in blaming this crime principally on 'the Continental debauché' rather than the state and the laws by which he was governed, Dyer veered from the liberal individualism Butler brought to her representation of 'white slavery', which emphasized the equality of all citizens and the role of the state as the guarantor of their personal rights. He dispensed with egalitarianism in favour of ethnocentricity and adopted an alternative interpretation of agency to represent sexual exploitation as a violation of inherently innocent females caused and ultimately controlled by certain individuals by virtue of their racial inferiority.

Moreover, that Dyer cast the wealthy Continental *man* as the agent of 'the trafficked girl's' plight and denied the possibility that women played any part in her suffering betrays another oppressive and emasculatory reconfiguration within the movement against female sexual exploitation. It reveals how this abuse came to be increasingly represented in paternalistic terms as a distinctly 'male crime' such as to more forcefully portray women as passive victims, devoid of agency in their own destinies. While Butler tended to typecast most female protagonists as victims in her discourses of 'white slavery', she did not portray sexual exploitation as a simple matter of male aggression and female victimhood.¹⁷¹

The Importance of being English

The reasons for Butler and Dyer blaming the Continental system of regulation and the Continental debauché respectively for precipitating a traffic in girls are clear enough. However, what is less clear is why they blamed their villains for stimulating the traffic in English girls in particular, as opposed to girls of any other nationality. As well as the unfairness of the subjection of 'the English white slave' abroad, one of Butler and Dyer's most pressing goals was to emphasise the notion that her free female compatriots were exceptionally vulnerable to sharing in her fate. The two reformers redoubled their efforts to achieve this former goal and broached the latter by

171 Walkowitz, *City*, p.91

emphasizing the relationship in the proliferation of trafficking between the corruptive 'Continental agent' each held responsible for the abuse and 'the innocent English girl'. The different manner in which they constructed this relationship and explained why it was girls of their nationality above all others who were forced into 'white slavery' suggests another step change in the nature of the British campaign against female sexual exploitation with its increasing departure from its traditional female-led executive.

Butler again used ideas of foreignness to portray regulation as a Continental system which, in imposing a strict age-limit and licensing arrangement for prostitution, made virtuous girls from England particularly susceptible to being trafficked on account of the comparatively meagre protection afforded minors by English law. As she bemoaned in *A Letter to the Mothers of England*:

[o]ur laws do less justice to children and young girls than those of almost any country in Europe. It is this fact, so well known to immoral traders, which causes our metropolis to be the most favourable field of action for them and the headquarters of the gang, who thus profit by our defective laws.¹⁷²

To her, this disparity between the system of prostitution regulation practised on the Continent and English legislation did not cause English citizens to be the *sole* targets of this exploitation. Women and girls of any nationality could be spirited away to a Belgian or French brothel but those of England were most likely to succumb to trafficking. In her groundbreaking letter to *The Shield*, she declared,

[T]he official houses of prostitution in Brussels are crowded with English minor girls...there are far more of these than of any other country, and... their case affords a great opportunity for the English to strike a blow at the whole wicked system of regulation...It is true that the keepers of these houses abroad do receive French, German, Swiss and Belgian minors, but they do it at some risk. If an inquiry of search is made from any country, they may incur a heavy penalty. In receiving English minor girls, they offend it is true against the Belgian Penal Code, but they run no risk of having *English Law* brought to bear against them...the traders and their clients take full advantage of [this] fact.¹⁷³

172 Butler, *A Letter*, pp.11-12

173 *The Shield* (1 May 1880), p.64

She punctuated this declaration with the instance that ‘girls of other nationalities are as worthy to be fought for as our English girls, and ought to be and shall be equally cared for by us’.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, in a characteristic language of Protestant zeal and maternalism, Butler beseeched her fellow mothers in her principal anti-trafficking work ‘to be indignant, to nourish a holy wrath, to arise for judgment, and to plead for the little ones, not only for those of our own nation, but for all’. ‘I have no sympathy with those whose just indignation is aroused only for the daughters of England carried off and enslaved in foreign cities, and who would contend with less zeal for the sacred rights of the children of other lands’, she went on to state, ‘[c]hildhood and youth have the same high claims upon us throughout the wide world’.¹⁷⁵

While she did not let racial categories dominate her representation of trafficking, Butler was not averse to bringing a soupçon of ethnocentricity to her discourses of ‘white slavery’. In a letter thought to be to her sister, Harriet Meuricoffre, in the wake of the Belgian Affair, she explained the impact of the revelations of trafficking: ‘I have a great pain in my heart to have written so unkindly to you...I was sore about all those Brussels things...Lots of Naples girls are sent thus to [Cairo?] – but I felt more about English girls’.¹⁷⁶ These ideas, however, did not spill out into Butler’s public discourses during the Belgian Affair and did not impinge upon her perception of trafficking as a crime whose victims became victims because of the corrupt state and law code in their country of origin rather than their nationality.

Dyer, in contrast, mobilized ideas of race once more to represent ‘the Continental profligate’ as rendering English girls exceptionally vulnerable to becoming ‘white slaves’ by virtue of his innate desire to sexually exploit them in preference to girls of any other nationality. To him, such a citizen, in his inborn craving for minors to satiate his lust, instinctively hungered for the girlhood of England because it was, by its very nature, the purest and so the most highly prized in Europe. He averred in his pamphlet that, ‘[w]ealthy Continental debauchés [compel] the keepers of licensed houses of prostitution [to] enter into costly researches for new, and if possible, perfectly innocent

174 *Idem*.

175 Butler, *A Letter*, p.12

176 Northumberland Archives, Papers of Butler Family Members, Correspondence between Josephine Butler and the Meuricoffre Family, Naples, ZBU/E/3/C/3, Josephine Butler to Harriet Meuricoffre ?, n.d., c.1880-90.

victims; and hence also, English-speaking girls, who are perhaps the most valuable because the [sic] most in request by [them]'. 'The [Brussels] public', he went on to claim, 'have known to be informed of the arrival of an English girl [in one of the city's brothels] by an advertisement in a newspaper'.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, he was careful to emphasise the extent to which his female compatriots were coveted, highlighting how on his Belgian trip, 'I was warned that any attempt to aid an English girl to escape from [brothels] in a certain street would endanger my life'.¹⁷⁸ His London Committee, in a similar vein, published an account by a 'gentleman, well known to the public', which disclosed that '[i]n the Boulevard __ [in Paris there is] a Cocoa shop of which the mistress used to advertise for English girls, dress them up, and sell them from behind the counter'.¹⁷⁹

Like Butler, Dyer did not present English girls as exclusively at risk from being brought to Continental brothels under false pretences. Nevertheless, he portrayed them as the only ones in danger of falling victim to a *systematic traffic* to these houses, for it was only they who traffickers found it worthwhile to import en masse. He juxtaposed his descriptions of the isolated instances of the abuse inflicted upon girls of other nationalities with the insistence that, '[i]t is beyond doubt that a large and well organized traffic exists in supplying licensed houses of debauchery on the Continent of Europe with English girls...for these can be sold for the most money'.¹⁸⁰

The different significance that Butler and Dyer each attached to the fact that it was *English* girls who were being trafficked is telling. It demonstrates how, with the ascendancy of the male-dominated London Committee, female sexual exploitation gradually went from being represented as a potentially universal crime against womanhood perpetrated as a consequence of the ineptitude of the state under which a female lived to a targeted racial attack caused not simply by the vice of citizens of a certain type but by their innate enmity (or perverted lust) towards the girls of their 'racial superiors', the English. Moreover, it reveals how the portrayal of sexual

177 Dyer, *The European*, p.6

178 Ibid. p.11

179 LC82-3, p.28

180 Ibid. pp.30-1

exploitation increasingly shifted to incorporate not only a more ethnocentric ideology but, in turn, also a more limited and paternalistic view of the problem in hand which championed the cause of the English girl at the expense of that of her foreign sisters. In presenting the 'white slave traffic' as a racial affront against his countrywomen on account of their innate moral pre-eminence, Dyer cast '*serious* sexual exploitation' as the peculiar burden of the English female. He eschewed the notion that girls of other nationalities could be afflicted by such *extreme* abuse – they were simply not pure enough – and so dismissed their mistreatment in Continental brothels and susceptibility to slavery as inferior to, and less deserving of attention than, that of his compatriots. Thus he introduced an ethnocentric hierarchy of oppression and vulnerability to the representation of sexual exploitation, positioning the daughters of his nation at its pinnacle to demonstrate that 'the English rose' was the only party who warranted special protection against the abuse spurred by 'the fleurs du mal' of Belgium and France.

Two Shades of White

The task of underlining the injustice of 'the trafficked English girls' subjection and the danger posed to her free sisters might have been an imperative for Butler and Dyer to start winning the fight against the 'white slave trade' but its accomplishment was not enough to strike a killer blow. In order to enable their respective syntheses to pack the desired rhetorical punch, the two reformers had to signify the extreme *severity* of the situation. Both strove to do this by applying a distinctive symbolic code to the term 'white slavery' through which to contextualize the abuse that trafficking was inflicting, and could inflict, upon all innocent English girls. The symbolic codes that Butler and Dyer used in their respective syntheses and the ideas of race and nation such codes drew upon provide perhaps the clearest insight into the change in the portrayal of female sexual exploitation with the birth of the 'white slave' question.

As we have seen, both reformers were part of a movement which had long co-opted ideas of slavery and an accompanying set of racial images into its rhetoric and self-identity. Years before the Belgian Affair was on the horizon, the campaign against regulation at home and abroad had conflated sexual exploitation with the slavery to

which black people had been subjected in the Americas, and it had identified its cause with that of the abolitionist movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Butler, the daughter of a staunch advocate of abolition, made such parallels from the earliest years of her crusade. She chose to position her movement against state regulation even closer to what she termed 'the old anti-slavery apostolate' and present it as the natural heir of the public sympathy generated by the original campaign against slavery by naming her worldwide organization the International Abolitionist Federation and publicly branding its disciples the New Abolitionists.¹⁸¹ Indeed, she, as Anne Summers observed, explicitly represented the women subjected under state regulation as latter-day slaves and represented her campaign as being about them rising up and resisting the new form of slavery to which they were subjected. '[T]he slave now speaks', she declared of the New Abolitionist campaign in 1875, '[t]he enslaved women have found a voice in one of themselves'.¹⁸² Both Butler and Dyer perpetuated this conflation of sexual exploitation and slavery together with its inextricable racial connotations in their Belgian Affair discourses. Both used 'white slavery' as a watchword to perform the basic function of tacitly encouraging their readers to think about the suffering of 'the trafficked English girl' in a similar way to that of the formerly enslaved black population and to accord the anti-trafficking cause at least equal sympathy to that which they had given the original abolitionist agenda. The two reformers did not, however, endow the same meaning and symbolism to 'white slavery' in their respective discourses. Indeed, beyond the use of the term as a rudimentary label, Butler and Dyer each had a very different idea of what the 'white' in 'white slavery' signified.

Butler did not typically mobilize ideas of 'race' or nation, let alone 'foreignness', in the symbolic code she attached to the term 'white slavery'. Rather, she co-opted Manichean notions of morality founded on ideas and images of Christianity and did so to emphasise that the abuses being perpetrated on, and the dangers facing, her countrywomen through trafficking were so acute that they constituted as great a crime against humanity as ever there was. To her, the 'white' in 'white slavery' signified a moral condition. It was a purity threatened by the forces of evil, a Godliness impinged

181 See: Butler, *The New Abolitionists* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1876)

182 Summers, 'The Constitution', p.8; Johnson, G & L, *Memoir*, p.113

upon by the Devil, a light subdued by darkness, compared to which all but the greatest sins paled into insignificance. The original abolitionist movement and the Christian ideals that informed it, Anne Summers has argued, are central to understanding the notion of sexual slavery mobilized in the repeal campaign and by British feminist groups from the 1870s. 'Protestant opposition to slavery', she has contended, 'was based on the principle that Christian salvation could only be achieved where the individual soul was free to seek its own reconciliation with God. This was impossible where the body was so restrained that the individual could take no responsibility for her or his actions'. This ideology and the emphasis in abolitionist rhetoric on the sexual exploitation of female slaves, especially in the discourses of female anti-slavery advocates, had considerable influence on subsequent reform campaigns which highlighted the physical and sexual subjection of women and none more so than the repeal cause.¹⁸³

In the melodramatic finale of *A Letter to the Mothers of England*, Butler, in righteous terms as a mystic mother-superior, appealed to her readers regarding the plight of the English 'white slaves' in Continental brothels:

[w]hen I kneel in my chamber, to plead for the deliverance of those little ones for whom Christ died, I seem to see the childish faces gathering in crowds around me. [They] seem to make their ceaseless mute appeal...from out [sic] those dark habitations of cruelty where they are now helplessly imprisoned.¹⁸⁴

Butler also developed the 'white slavery' term in a religious and moralistic manner in her private discourses. Writing to Mrs Lundie, the sister-in-law of Federation colleague HJ Wilson, about her imminent deposition on the abuses rife in Brussels, she averred, "I am asking the prayers of Christian friends that these enquiries may result in throwing some light on these 'hidden things of darkness' that they may be rebuked...Surely Sodom and Gomorrah will rise up in judgement against the Belgian capital".¹⁸⁵ Indeed, this idea of 'white slavery' as a dark and un-Christian deed that required light and Godliness to vanquish, recurred in Butler's discourses. Prior to the finale of her principal work on trafficking, she included a letter that she had written to her sister regarding the

183 Summers, A, 'Hearth and Harem', University of British Columbia Conference Paper, August 2009, pp.3-4 See: Midgley, C, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns 1780-1870* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992)

184 Butler, *A Letter*, pp.19-20

185 WL: 3JBL/19/10, Josephine Butler to Mrs Lundie, 2 November 1880

instances of 'white slavery' that were emerging following Dyer's exposé, in which she proclaimed with excitement how:

[t]he present time resembles an era of incendiarism, in which fires are breaking out with lurid light on all sides... It is well so. For long years past the slaughter of the innocents has been going on... Now we know [it]; and, before God we are responsible for that terrible knowledge [of the] contempt for the sacredness of childhood.¹⁸⁶

Butler's pious exhortations are reminiscent of those used in the re-working of abolitionist rhetoric in the discourses of 'white slavery' which emerged during the factory reform movement, condemning the exploitation of child workers by their avaricious employers. As Robert Gray has observed, in the campaign of the radical short-time movement in support of factory reform, a campaign which, as we have seen, itself borrowed heavily from the language and symbolism of abolitionism, 'women could be rhetorically addressed, as the mothers of innocent children and bearers of domestic virtue'.¹⁸⁷ *The Poor Man's Advocate*, an unstamped newspaper that supported the movement's aims, for example, appealed to 'the mothers of children, we call upon the ladies of England', as well as 'those mothers of the poor children themselves' to rally against the 'proud oppressor' that was the factory owner.¹⁸⁸

Like Butler's discourses, such pleas were often issued by female campaigners to their fellow mothers, 'probably drawing', Gray has posited, 'on the practices of popular Methodism, in which women's voices were audible'. "As virtuous 'English Christian mothers'...women had an important symbolic function in short-time propaganda, as well as, in reality, a crucial organizing role in the mobilization of community sentiment".¹⁸⁹ Indeed, the parallel between the rhetoric used by campaigners to rally against the old exploitation of children through exploitative labour and that used to rally against the new phenomenon of trafficking was played upon in one passionate newspaper article during the Belgian Affair. Following the appointment of the 1881 Select Committee, the *Northern Echo* ran an anonymous article entitled 'The Cry of the Children' which, using an albeit less egalitarian version of the scriptural, maternalistic

186 Butler, *A Letter*, p.15

187 Gray, *The Factory Question*, p.29

188 *Poor Man's Advocate* (17 March 1832) cited in *Ibid.* pp.29-30

189 Gray, *The Factory Question*, pp.29-32

lyricism that characterized many of the original abolitionist rhetorics and most of Butler's letters to the press, announced:

'They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks so sad to see,
For age's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy'

So sang [the poetess] Mrs Browning many years ago, when English children were slaves in our mines and factories. Her burning words stirred the heart of England, and Parliament set the children free. But there is a more diabolical system of slavery in existence at the present moment to which we may fittingly apply her touching language – the slavery of young girls in foreign houses of infamy...These are the young heart-broken slaves 'weeping ere the sorrow comes with years'. Who cry aloud for protection and redress...The cry of outraged children will be heard in the Halls of Eternal Justice'.¹⁹⁰

Butler did not altogether omit images of race from the symbolic code she endowed the 'white slavery' label. However, she evoked such images only on a few isolated occasions and only then in an oblique manner to imply that trafficking was a *modern equivalent* of the slavery of black people in terms of severity. She described in her memoirs how, upon encountering one repatriated English girl, '[she] seemed to stand before a victim of some cruel overseer of slaves in the cotton plantations of one of the Southern states of America in past times'.¹⁹¹ Similarly, writing to her Federation on the progress of the campaign against regulation in Europe, she quoted her Belgian colleague, Emile Humbert's insistence that 'it would be strange, after all, if the abolition of female slavery were to be achieved to the sound of the lute and the guitar, when it was found necessary to create monitors and by the thousands, before the abolition of negro slavery was accomplished'.¹⁹²

Dyer, by contrast, relied exclusively on ideas of race in the symbolic code he brought to the 'white slavery' appellation, extending the basic function of the term to become a full metaphor. He explicitly pitted the plight of white English girls sequestered in Continental brothels against that of the formerly enslaved black population so as to

190 'The Cry of the Children', *Northern Echo* (3 June 1881), p.3

191 Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, pp.385-6

192 WL, 3JBL/59/05 (European Correspondence 1880 – 1886), Circular Letter from Josephine Butler to the members of the Executive Committee of the International Federation, 22 October 1880

cast the exploitation inflicted upon, and threat looming over, his female compatriots because of trafficking as the worst crime against humanity in history. In his eyes, the 'white' in 'white slavery' signified a skin colour and pertained to a race, the English race, against which any infraction of liberty naturally constituted an offence of the utmost severity. In all nine editions of his best-selling pamphlet, Dyer mobilized his characteristic brand of patriarchal chivalry to condemn the slavery of his countrywomen on the Continent as 'infinitely more cruel and revolting than negro servitude, because it is slavery not for labour but for lust; and more cowardly than negro slavery, because it falls on the young and helpless of one sex only'.¹⁹³ English girls were, he went on to emphasise, at threat 'from being decoyed and sold into the cruellest and most indecent...slavery that the world has ever known', before beseeching his readers to, '[l]et the old anti-slavery spirit speak out !'¹⁹⁴

This use of 'white slavery' as a racialized metaphor represented the rhetorical heirloom that Dyer chose to take from the factory reform movement. Unlike Butler's co-option of the maternal fervour used by the short-time movement, he resurrected and revised the ten-hour propagandists' deployment of 'white slavery' as, in Robert Gray's words, a 'phrase...intended to carry a powerful charge of outrage and anomaly' and to privilege the exploitation and deservingness of factory children over that of black slaves.¹⁹⁵ The London Committee tended to disparage the suffering of black slaves far more explicitly than its Secretary. Referring to the plight of 'English white slaves', it proclaimed in its 1881 report, 'the state of these poor creatures...is one of absolutely slavery, compared to which the life of a Virginian slave was one of comparative liberty and enjoyment...But even this fails to give a complete picture of the abominations which have been brought to light'.¹⁹⁶ Another prominent male influence in the Belgium Affair, Alexis Spingard, established a similar parallel in his discourses. In a letter to *Le National*, later reproduced in *The Shield*, he vindicated Dyer's rescue mission to Brussels by insisting that 'amongst the Americans before the abolition of black slavery, the slave

193 Dyer, *The European*, p.6

194 Ibid. pp. 33-4

195 Gray, *The Factory Question*, pp.46-7.

196 *LC81*, p.12

might find a humane master. To-day the white slave finds herself given up to the power of the most ignoble, base, and mean of modern society'.¹⁹⁷

Thus, with the increasing influence of the male-dominated London Committee, the representation of sexual exploitation changed to not simply feature, but be absolutely dependent on, an ethnocentric hierarchy of oppression and vulnerability to ensure its potency. It came to draw its principal rhetorical force from explicitly positioning the plight threatening the girls of England as superior to, and more unjust, than that which had threatened the women *and* men of other races. Specifically, it came to depend on flagging up the atrocities once perpetrated on black people in the Americas, only to mitigate them as a lesser version of those inflicted upon the paragon of unsurpassed innocence that was 'the English rose', that is, when not simply asserting the superiority of the citizens of England for their, and their forefathers', exemplary services to humanity. The portrayal of this abuse was thus reconfigured to co-opt a language of difference as its mother-tongue that not only spoke to the public of the inferiority of the suffering of all other races but, in doing so, took for granted the idea that certain pains and dangers could only be experienced by the English.

Dyer completely overlooked the fact that amongst these black slaves there were women who might also have been, as many were, subjected to similar abuse and routinely through the use of force and violence. He altogether flouted the supposedly unsexualized affliction of the black male. Indeed, he eschewed the subjectivities within, and rejected the humanity of, the formerly enslaved black population wholesale. In his eyes, only his female compatriots were desirable enough to be afflicted by '*serious* sexual exploitation' and only they were pure and civilized enough to be truly damaged when subjected to any such abuse. To him, the physical and moral violation of a minority of the white women of the English race outstripped the lifetime of slavery and maltreatment experienced by those of 'lesser races', namely black people. Dyer in this way represented sexual exploitation as a superior offence perpetrated only against his own superior race and made the representation of this abuse a declaration of racial

¹⁹⁷ *Le National* (3 April 1880)

prejudice and English supremacy, and only after these two things, a protest against the mistreatment of women.

The different symbolic codes that Butler and Dyer each appended to the 'white slavery' appellation also demonstrate how the representation of sexual exploitation developed to not merely be coloured by, but predicate its rhetoric upon, a doctrine of paternalism which typecast women as victims, denied their agency and defined their destiny as pre-determined by their 'biological difference'. In casting 'white slavery' as an unrivalled crime expressly because it targeted only England's 'fairer sex' and was motivated by desire, Dyer based his main argument against sexual exploitation on the notion that the women of his allegedly superior race were 'delicate others' and 'sitting ducks' by virtue of their very bodies. He elevated his female compatriots onto the loftiest of pedestals as creatures whose sex and race endowed them with a purity that rendered them simultaneously those least deserving of, and those most vulnerable to, physical violation. He positioned their 'irredeemable condition' as the counterweight to the putatively male attributes of worldliness and agency, and portrayed their destiny as being in the hands of men, whether as their valiant protectors or loathsome defilers. Dyer turned his back on the promotion of women's rights that had been foremost on the agenda of Butler's feminist vanguard.

An English problem or a problem of the English?

To ensure that trafficking was successfully prevented, the reformers also needed to inform the public of exactly what action it should pressure its representatives to take. Therefore, both Butler and Dyer focussed in their discourses of 'white slavery' on outlining and ranking the measures that needed to be brought before and acted upon by the government to put pay to such foreign criminality. However, they varied in the measures they presented as the most demanding of government attention as well as in the way that they constructed the relationship between 'the British public' that should lobby for these measures and 'the British state' that should enforce them. This variation throws more light on the reconfigurations to the movement against female sexual exploitation solicited by the Belgian Affair.

Once again favouring ideas of foreignness and nation, Butler mobilized a language of patriotism to urge the public that the foremost demand it should make of the government was the amendment of domestic law regarding the protection of minors and that only this would mitigate the slavery of the nation's children encouraged by the Continental system of regulation. The Federation leader of course saw the abolition of this 'fetid foreign system' itself as the measure that would decisively check, or as she put it, 'avenge', such abuse. Indeed, she, in her earlier repeal work, *The Constitution Violated*, Anne Summers has noted, advocated 'the fundamental reform of the British State' to empower women and stop the abuses perpetrated on their bodies.¹⁹⁸ However, Butler represented the abolition of regulation as the far-off holy grail, rather than the most pressing goal, in her crusade. In her eyes, the most immediate means of safeguarding the country's young against trafficking was for 'English fathers and mothers' to ensure that the law was changed to prevent their 'children' from being spirited away by 'the traders in human flesh' who supplied the licensed brothels of the Continent.¹⁹⁹ She defined these 'parents' of English society as the embodiment of England and empowered them as the moral guardians of the body politic, portraying the pressure they could put on government to enforce such legislation as imperative to *their* nation's future and thus a patriotic duty of the utmost importance. Evoking Christian eschatology, the 'mother-prophetess' Butler proclaimed to her fellow parents in *The Shield* on the subject of the 'white slavery' exposed in Belgian and France:

[a] malediction will rest on us English, if we – knowing these things do not avenge our own flesh and blood...the men who carry on this wholesale destruction and organized murder... are in our midst...but our law does not enable us to touch them. This whole subject must be brought before the new Parliament...²⁰⁰

Being rhetorically gifted, Butler was liable to configure the specific nation that she empowered as the instigator of such desperate legal reform according to the audience she was addressing. In *A Letter to the Mothers of England* she appealed

198 Summers, 'The Constitution', pp.5-6

199 *The Shield* (1 May 1880), p.64

200 *Idem*.

specifically to women as the maternal and moral sex to 'help in informing and convincing the men who legislate for us...[to] remedy the injustices and inequalities in our laws' which allowed 'white slavery'.²⁰¹ In her address to both sexes in *The Shield*, she assuaged both male egos and feminist acolytes' concerns by proclaiming that '[G]od grant that [traffickers] may...ere long, feel the strength of English justice and English manhood in this matter, not on behalf of English minors only, but of all women and of all womanhood!'.²⁰² To her, pressure on the state for legislation to hamper the exploits of these immoral traders by as many members of her nation as possible was what was most needed to save England's future, its children.

Dyer, on the other hand, deployed a language of patriotism coloured by his characteristic views of race and nation to implore the public to insist that its government compelled the authorities of the Continent to amend *their* laws in order to prevent *their* perverted citizens enslaving English girls. To him, the most pressing, and the only effective, solution to trafficking was for his compatriots to coerce their representatives into ordering that a special provision be made in Belgian and French legislation to forbid any English female entering a maison tolérée and so spurn the perverted lust of the Continental debauché. He, as opposed to Butler, defined the state as an extension of society, representing the embodiment of England and the true guardian of national interests, and cast the pressure that it could exert for this legal antidote as a performance of its patriotic duty:

What I call upon my countrymen and countrywomen to demand and secure through the action of *our* government is not any additional precaution or facility, but prohibition. Nothing short of a total prohibition of the introduction of female subjects in the licensed houses of debauchery in Belgium and elsewhere, will prevent innocent British girls from being decoyed and sold into the....most revolting slavery that the world has ever known.

Evoking the idea of the English race as that least deserving of enslavement, he proceeded in his pamphlet to declare, '[w]e cannot prevent other so-called civilized Governments from establishing...regulations which hold their own subjects in bondage, but foreign States can justly be asked to exclude British girls from such execrable

201 Butler, *A Letter*, pp.12, 18-9

202 *The Shield* (1 May 1880), p.64

servitude'.²⁰³ The closing passage of his first letter to *The Christian* contained a similar, albeit terser, patriotic appeal:

Let the British public be assured that the *only way* to put a stop to this traffic is for the Belgian Government to *prohibit altogether* the introduction of English girls to their licensed houses of ill-fame...I call upon my countrymen to demand through their own Government that if the Belgian authorities wish to retain our goodwill this prohibition shall be at once enforced.²⁰⁴

Dyer, like Butler, recognized that the English law regarding the protection of children facilitated the traffic in his female compatriots. Only after the prolonged plea to his fellow countrymen and women to pressure for changes to the law on the Continent, however, did he concede dispassionately in his pamphlet that, '[i]n some countries the letter of the law imposes a severe penalty on anyone, who...shall connive at the prostitution of a girl under the age of 21 years. The enactment of a law of this kind in Great Britain would equally make it possible to reach the agents in this infamous traffic'.²⁰⁵ Curiously, Dyer nowhere directly urged his readers of the need for the abolition of regulation when appealing for their assistance in preventing 'white slavery'.

This difference in the reformers' syntheses reveals how, just like the portrayal of the problem of sexual exploitation, the representation of its possible solution came to be increasingly influenced by ethnocentric ideas of English pre-eminence and forsook the 'abolitionist' agenda which had traditionally characterized Butler's female-dominated movement. In defining 'white slavery' as the victimization of his female compatriots by depraved Continental types and in presenting the only true remedy to this affliction as the public coercing its government to force the authorities of Belgium and France to prohibit English girls from licensed brothels, Dyer cast 'serious sexual exploitation' as a crime which his country, as the sole injured party, should not suffer the heaviest burden of putting right. Moreover, he cast it as one which his country, as the injured party *and* a premier nation, could reasonably expect foreign states to redress by changing *their* laws to recognise the special status and entitlement of English

203 Dyer, *The European*, pp.32-3

204 *The Christian* (11 March 1880)

205 Dyer, *The European*, pp.31-2

citizens: Why should it be up to England to dramatically change its law to prevent 'grave sexual exploitation' when such abuse was caused by the debased residents of *other* countries and afflicted *English* girls? Surely the representatives of the nations guilty of precipitating 'white slavery' should act to accord this innately superior girlhood the special protection it deserved to put a stop to its affliction?

This point of departure in the two syntheses also suggests how the solution to sexual exploitation increasingly shifted from being represented as a question of honing the efficiency of the power exercised by the state through the amendment of existing laws to a question of extending the power of the state to assume a more interventionist presence through enacting additional legislation. It suggests how the solution changed from being represented as a matter of how best to protect the vulnerable in society from sexual danger at the least possible cost to their personal liberty to being portrayed as a matter of suppressing the sexual danger that might face them in the future at whatever cost it demanded to their personal liberty within reason. It thus provides another example of the swing in Butler and Dyer's crusade away from its feminist and libertarian philosophy and radical critique of state control towards, in this instance, a more statist, paternalistic and repressive ethos. Indeed, it reveals the first signs of what Petra de Vries has observed in the sister-movement in the Netherlands with the advent of the 'white slavery' question as 'a shift from a wider social movement in which women's rights were articulated to a campaign for more limited legal goals' and, in turn, the strengthening of social purity as 'an ally of repressive state powers'.²⁰⁶

Conclusion:

As well as putting the phenomenon of sex trafficking under the spotlight for the first time, the Belgian Affair prompted a new protagonist to take centre stage in the portrayal of sexual exploitation. It put an innocent young girl from a respectable home, often with a loving family and friends, ambition and integrity, before the public eye where the faceless figure of 'the prostitute' had hitherto stood and so transformed 'the sexually exploited female' into a character no longer bereft of identity and subjectivity, no longer denied humanity and value. *She* became a member of society, one of the

206 de Vries, 'Josephine Butler', pp. 270-3

nation's daughters, with whom Englishmen and women could more readily sympathize and for whom they were compelled to make a stand because she was now somehow their own flesh and blood. Yet at what cost?

The male-led organization that was allowed to claim control behind the scenes as this new protagonist took to the stage abandoned many of the core principles that had guided the work of its female-dominated predecessor and undid many of the inroads that it had laboured for years to make. It unleashed upon the public a melodrama in which the promotion of women's rights and a single moral standard between the sexes, the condemnation of the regulation of prostitution and of the power exercised by the state, were secondary, if, indeed, they featured at all. It increasingly made the portrayal of sexual exploitation a paradoxical performance of national supremacy, male dominance and selective charity in which an individual's ethnicity was a key determinant of their moral fibre and value, and a female's sex was the evidence of her inability to play any other role than victim-in-waiting. It privileged the suffering and rights of 'the English girl' over her Continental counterparts and the formerly enslaved black population yet it typecast her as an exceptionally vulnerable, passive other. It denigrated the men of Belgium and France as perverse predators of this 'delicate creature' yet ignored the role played by Madames in oppressing and offering up their prey. It did so at the expense of the women *and* men of other ethnicities. It did so at the expense of feminism.

Although, as will be seen in the following sections, there would be alterations to its plot and cast, new scenes added and backdrops reconfigured, this new production of sexual exploitation would endure well into the new century, and with the support of some members of Butler's old vanguard. Campaigns on moral issues that were feminist and anti-statist in nature, focussing on civil-liberties and the abolition of a double-standard of sexual morality, would run parallel to the new repressive anti-trafficking movement for three decades after the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. However, it was the male-led initiative against trafficking that increasingly came to have the louder voice in the fight against female sexual exploitation and that would, in the following years, form part of a worldwide movement whose underlying principals were at odds with the internationalism that Butler had built.

The Belgian Affair also provides a wealth of clues about the dynamics of the early stage of what Hall and Schwarz have identified as the transition from liberalism that was in train between c.1880 and 1930. The Affair and the new power-balance it solicited in the campaign against female sexual exploitation point to how, between 1880 and 1882, some of the country's key extra-parliamentary organizations dealing with moral and sexual questions increasingly came to facilitate the transition through their operations. It suggests that such organizations, by increasingly abandoning the anti-statist, radical ethos of the repeal movement and instead viewing the state as the source of the solution to sexual danger, effectively endorsed and in some way underwrote the power of the state and, by extension, the forces propelling the transition. They, the representatives of social purity, accepted and clung to state power on its transitional path and thus demoted the radical groups mounting opposition to the state and its ongoing reconfiguration. In turn, the Belgian Affair suggests that the transition was more of a complex and subtle 'conflict on all fronts' than Hall and Schwarz have suggested, brought into being by rapprochements as well as active struggles by extra-parliamentary organizations with the state, accords as well as rivalries, passive acquiescence as well as conscious rebellion.

Section Two

Unwelcome Departures? The British Anti-Trafficking Movement in an Age of Mass-Migration, 1899-1910

Chapter Three

During autumn 1902, Mary Jick, a 24 year old factory worker in the Polish City of Lodz, started to receive letters from an acquaintance in England by the name of Dora Piernik. The letters urged her to travel to London where, they promised, she would be able to find a better job. Mary could not speak English. She knew no one in the capital. Yet she lost little time in setting sail for England. She was met on arrival by Dora and Mendel Piernik, a man claiming to be Dora's husband, and was escorted to their house. The Pierniks set about persuading Mary, a fellow Jew, to take Dora's lead and become a prostitute. The Polish factory girl obliged and began her new job. She walked the streets with Dora who would collect what she earned and give it to her 'husband'. Until the day Mary refused to continue soliciting and was brutally beaten by Mendel.²⁰⁷



Early in 1907 Jane Goldbloom and Sarah Levine, two young Jews of Russian descent living in London's East End, were befriended by co-religionists Louis Gold, a carpenter from Minsk, and Harry Cohen, a tailor from Warsaw. The girls were persuaded by their new 'friends' to leave home and were taken to Liverpool where they were escorted onto a liner bound for Argentina. They were to be sold into prostitution in Buenos Aires. Gold and Cohen had long been engaged in this trade.²⁰⁸



Two well-off Orthodox Christian girls from the Odessa in Russia, their names never disclosed, left for England in the company of a poor Polish Jew and his wife in October 1901. They had been assured by the couple that if they sailed with them to London they could find themselves lucrative jobs. The girls were each handed 25 Roubles by the Polish woman prior to disembarkation and instructed that if they were questioned at

²⁰⁷ *Traite des Blanches* (April 1903), pp.7-8

²⁰⁸ *Old Bailey Proceedings*, April 1907, trial of Louis Gold & Harry Cohen; *The Times* (27 April 1907)

the Docks, they were to show them the money. Having landed, the Polish woman took the money back and advised the girls to change their names. She told them she could not find situations for them in London after all, but would be able to in South Africa. She promised that she would see them to the new destination and pay their fares. The girls accepted. The Polish man then obliged each to sign two pieces of paper, the first saying 'I owe you 200 Roubles' and the second, 'I owe you 400 Roubles' and insisted that they would quickly make that much in their new jobs. The couple took them to Waterloo Station to board the boat train to Southampton. They had bought steamship tickets for South America not South Africa. They were taking the girls to Buenos Aires to 'repay their debt'.²⁰⁹

These girls were prevented from undergoing further exploitation. Hundreds were not.



This section will explore the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized between 1899 and 1910, when trafficking had proliferated into a global phenomenon and the fight against trafficking was becoming international in scope. It will focus on the two new organizations at the forefront of Britain's anti-trafficking movement, comparing their respective representations of trafficking and examining the wider significance of the representations.

By the 1890s, Britain had become a principal hub in a sex trafficking network that spanned the world. Traffickers and procurers would travel through the country when transporting their human cargo to the thriving markets of organized prostitution in such centres of commerce and/or immigration as Alexandria and Johannesburg, Calcutta and Rangoon, Rio de Janeiro and, notoriously, Buenos Aires.

The Great Depression and Tsarist persecution had left scores of European citizens living in poverty and, in the case of East European Jews, living in fear of violence. Thousands of men were made redundant or had devastating wage cuts. Thousands of women were left without the financial support of male relatives and were denied work.

²⁰⁹ WL, Records of the NVA, 4NVA/1/1/03, Third Minute Book of the Executive Committee, 28 October 1901

For increasing numbers, leaving for places which promised better financial prospects and often taking any opportunity to make money came to represent not simply common sense but *dire necessity*, even if it meant severing social and/or religious bonds. These were desperate times. From the 1880s, an exodus began from Europe, facilitated by the proliferation of commercial passenger lines. Many who joined the throng were young men and women, travelling without families and with few friends. A considerable number were Jews from the Pale of Settlement. Whether in the midst of deprivation or en route to new beginnings, scores of girls became prone to transnational sexual exploitation. Scores of men and women became willing to exploit. A traffic in women of unprecedented scale began.

Britain, home to four of the world's busiest transmigrant ports, became a natural conduit for traffickers and procurers. Transmigrants would arrive at Hull, Grimsby, West Hartlepool, Leith, Newcastle, Harwich or London on Britain's east coast, continuing their voyage from the ports of Glasgow, Southampton, London, or Liverpool. Britain was also a place where human merchandise would be picked up for transportation. The country was not another Pale of Settlement. However, its ports and railway stations were reportedly prowled by traffickers. As FS Bullock, the head of the Metropolitan Police's trafficking taskforce, commented in a 1913 retrospective memorandum: '[alien immigrants] are induced to pass from England to America in the hope of finding work and employment, and in this struggle for life they pass through a dangerous phase which frequently leads to their ruin and degradation'.²¹⁰ Over the years under consideration, over nine thousand unaccompanied female travellers landed in Britain, many without fixed addresses.²¹¹ Indeed, 'the unaccompanied female traveller' became a figure of anxiety upon which anti-trafficking groups dedicated most of their practical preventive efforts.²¹² Jewish procurers would, moreover, recruit in the country's growing Jewish immigrant communities. Their shared language and culture helped to earn their co-religionists' trust. Britain, in turn, became a trafficking market.

210 WL, Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Traffic in Women Publications, 3AMS/B/11/12, Bullock, FS, 'White-Slave Traffic', 12th June 1913, p.7

211 Compiled using: JAPGW, Annual Reports 1899-year ending 1911 (London: JAPGW, 1899-1911)

212 The 'dangerous phase' for immigrants at London's Docks was observed by Beatrice Webb (then Potter) in her report of the city's Jewish community for Charles Booth's 1902 social investigation, *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Potter, B: 'The Jewish Community (East London)' in Booth, C (ed.) *Life and Labour of the People of London*, vol. 3 (London: Macmillan, 1902), pp.166-192

Although trifling compared to Buenos Aires, Johannesburg or Alexandria, it received a significant flow of girls trafficked from Continental Europe. In 1889, one anti-trafficking group was perturbed to discover that several immigrant girls were residing at 'the many houses of ill fame, kept by Jews in Ethel Street' in South-East London and speculated that the City's East India Dock Road bore witness to similar 'gross immoralities of the Jewish population'.²¹³ Indeed, together with the focal point of immigration that was London's East End, British cities that hosted a significant immigrant population such as Liverpool and Manchester experienced this. In 1910, Mrs Louis Cohen, the leader of the Liverpudlian Jewish anti-trafficking initiative declared:

Without exaggeration I can positively assent that [the traffic] is extensive. The number of young Jewish girls who parade our public streets is increasing daily...Besides these girls there are probably more than a corresponding number of men (not Liverpool residents I am happy to say) who live in part of the earnings of the girls and part by robbery.²¹⁴

The 1905 Aliens Act, designed to deny entry into the country to immigrants who were impoverished, who had attained serious criminal convictions or were in ill-health, would have deterred some traffickers from travelling to Britain. However, many others would simply have circumvented the Act's criteria. The trade was a profitable one.

The few statistics available present a tenuous picture of the traffic. We know from the incomplete data collected by contemporary anti-trafficking initiatives that between 1904 and 1910 an average of 10 girls per year were either *suspected* of, or *prevented* from, being trafficked in Britain and that in 1909 these cases reached an apparent peak of 18. (*Fig.1*) Equally, we know from Home Office records that under the Aliens Act, 300 immigrants were expelled from the country for 'crimes relating to trafficking' between 1906 and 1913.²¹⁵ For the years prior to 1905, we have evidence from court and police records of only a few such trafficking-related offences committed under what was a lenient criminal law. Otherwise there are sets of statistics pertaining to the number of European women registered as prostitutes at key trafficking destinations but we cannot tell the route that these women were taken. (*Fig.2*)

213Hartley Library, University of Southampton (hereafter HL), Jewish Care Archive, Papers of the JAPGW, MS 173, 2/1/1, First Minute Book of the General Committee, 20 & 10 January 1888

214 Liverpool Record Office, Papers of the Ladies' Committee of the Liverpool JAPGW, 296 PGW/ 8, Report Book, 11 August 1910

215 *Jewish Chronicle* (4 July 1913)

Speaking of the statistics compiled by his anti-trafficking group, Arthur Moro, Vice President of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, conceded in 1910, '[t]he full significance of these figures is only clear, when it is remembered that we have to deal with such cases as we can discover, and that we have to cope with a most cunning and secret trade, of which it is more than probable that we merely touched the fringe'.²¹⁶ As will be explored in Section Three, trafficking was also increasingly the subject of moral panic, with stories abounding of exploitation in reform circles, parliament and the press that apparently had little evidential basis. We will never know Britain's empirical stake in trafficking.

Many trafficked women during the period were most likely aware they were entering into prostitution and elected to do so out of poverty. A significant number of those exploited via trafficking were, though, probably duped into vice, sometimes with the cooperation of friends and relatives. Traffickers used romantic proposals, offers of highly paid work and unconditional assistance to unaccompanied travellers to ensnare their prey. Not all women and girls fell for them. Yet many, with limited prospects and desperate for a better life, would have *wanted* to believe and invest in such 'golden opportunities'. One of the more cynical and effective means of entrapment was through clandestine marriages. Used particularly by Jewish traffickers in the exploitation of their female co-religionists and known as *stille huppah*, this method not only gave the relationship between 'the exploiter' and 'the exploited' a certain legitimacy that was capable of appeasing concerned customs officials and policemen. It also effectively bound both parties together, leaving exploited women legally in a position of great weakness. This was compounded by the fact that Orthodox Judaism often prohibited the dissolution of such marriages by women and effectively endorsed the ostracism of wives who were estranged from their husbands, unions of this sort being seen as legitimate by some rabbis and those who participated in them despite the fact that they

216 JAPGW, *Jewish International Conference on the Suppression of the Traffic in Girls and Women, 1910* (London: JAPGW, 1910), p.31

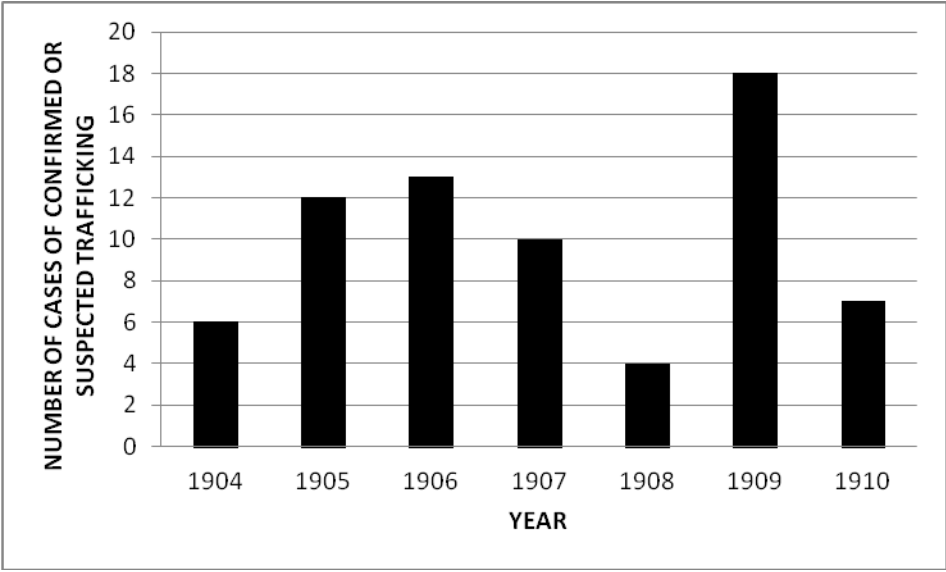


Fig.1 – Graph showing suspected and prevented cases of trafficking recorded by the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, 1904-1910
Compiled using JAPGW Annual reports 1904-10

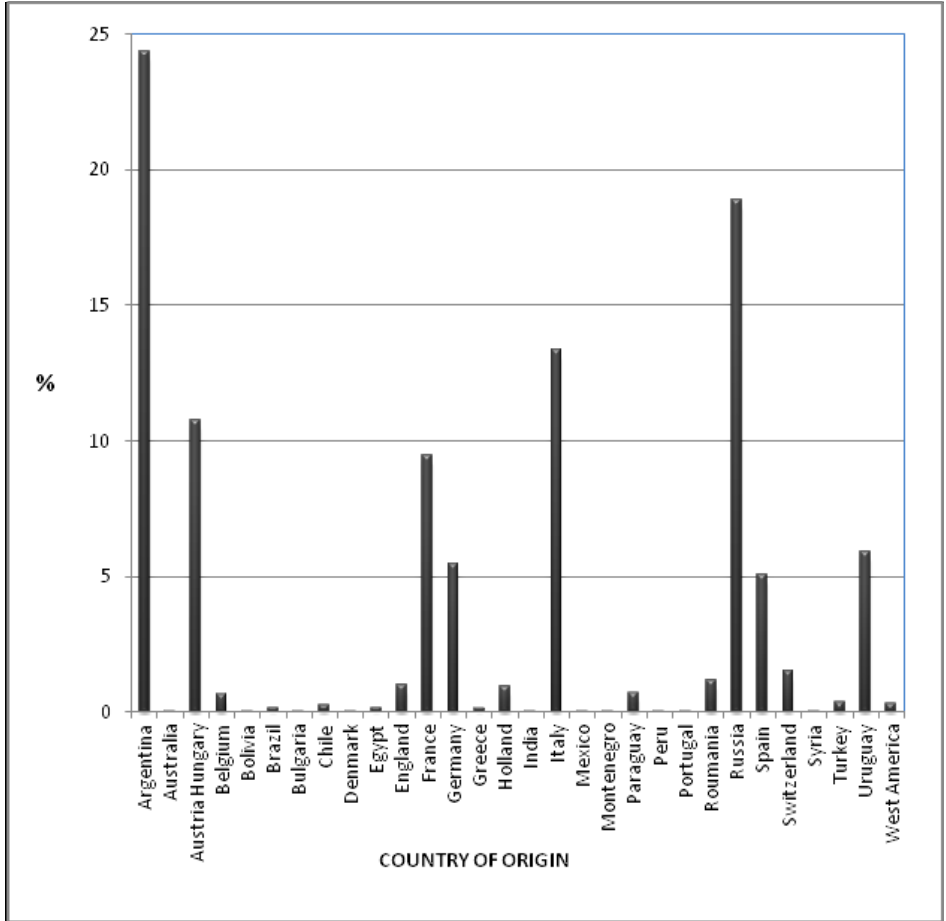


Fig.2 – Graph showing percentage breakdown of countries of origin of the women inscribed as prostitutes on the Register of Health in Buenos Aires, 1889-1901
Compiled using statistics from: The Women's Library, Records of the International Bureau, Argentine National Committee, 4IBS/6/003

were conducted away from officialdom.²¹⁷

Indeed, Jews played a conspicuous part in trafficking in and outside Britain, both as ‘the trafficker’ and ‘the trafficked’. However, trafficking was by no means a Jewish phenomenon. There is no evidence to suggest that Jews assumed the largest presence in the new global trafficking networks. Trafficking was no ethno-religious peculiarity, although, as will be suggested, the structure of orthodox religion played a significant role in exacerbating the suffering it produced. It was a problem of poverty and social dislocation in an age of mass-migration.

The New Response:

In 1885, Dyer’s London Committee disbanded. The British fight against trafficking was taken up by the forces of social purity, as represented by the National Vigilance Association (NVA) and what became known as the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women (JAPGW). These bodies played a fundamental role in uniting the anti-trafficking initiatives of the world into a cohesive movement which sought the solution to trafficking in diplomacy and multi-lateral accord, co-operation with the state-machine and repressive legislation. They put Britain at the vanguard of what had become the international fight against trafficking.

The National Vigilance Association:

The NVA came to prominence in August 1885 amid the public indignation stirred by WT Stead’s ‘The Maiden Tribute’ revelations. It had been conceived and initially funded by Stead with the goal of securing the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill that had been repeatedly introduced without success since the Belgian Affair. Yet its agenda was wider. The NVA, its principal publications declared, was ‘an association of men and women to enforce and improve the laws for the repression of criminal vice and public immorality, to check the causes of vice, and to protect minors’.²¹⁸ Focussing on the preventive as opposed to the rescue side of social purity, particularly among the urban poor, it aimed to ‘raise the standard of moral conduct, by legal proceedings, by

217 Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp.103-6. For an insight into the practice of stille huppah among East European Jewish immigrants in Britain see: Englander, D, ‘Stille Huppah (Quiet Marriage) among Immigrant Jews in Britain’ *The Journal of Jewish Sociology*, 34 (1992), pp.85-109

218 Coote, WE, *A Vision and its Fulfilment* (London: NVA, 1910), p.4

the strengthening of public opinion, and by the awakening of voluntary effort'. Along with anti-trafficking work, it undertook such tasks as investigating employment agencies advertising jobs for young women, overseeing children employed in theatrical performances, publishing pamphlets and holding meetings promoting social purity, instigating convictions for 'immoral conduct' and brothel-keeping, serving 'affiliation orders' to absent fathers and, notoriously, prosecuting vendors of 'questionable books and photographs', owners of theatres staging 'improper productions' and exhibitors of 'immodest works of art' for their 'assault on public decency'.²¹⁹ The association's projects were divided between a number of separate sub-committees overseen by an executive committee.

The NVA strengthened its power-base by encouraging the formation of vigilance committees nationwide and by convincing kindred groups to merge with it, such as the Minors' Protection Society, and later, the Central Vigilance Society.²²⁰ Five regional branches of the association were formed: Manchester and Northern Counties, Sunderland and North Eastern, South Wales and Monmouthshire, Bristol and South Western Counties and Birmingham and Midland Counties. Although some branches later opted for autonomy, others were formed in Scotland and the key port cities of Southampton, Hull and Liverpool. The work of the London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in British Girls was immediately subsumed into the NVA. With the exception of Dyer who had gone to Bombay to pursue his fight against regulation, the members of the original group took active roles on the association's Foreign Traffic Committee.²²¹ Josephine Butler was elected onto the Executive Committee, although she, unlike many of her repeal colleagues, chose to play little part in the NVA, shunning what she deemed a repressive and anti-feminist organization. As she later confided to a friend:

there is a constant tendency towards *external* pressure [in the NVA], and inside that a tendency to let the pressure fall almost exclusively on women because it is more difficult, they say, to get at men. It is dangerous work, in

219 NVA, *Annual Report, 1891* (London: NVA, 1891), pp.5 & 15 (hereafter, *NVA1891*, etc); *NVA1894*, pp.1-2; *NVA1898*, p.18. In 1890, the NVA founded a short-lived Medical Home for 'unfortunate girls' and later took over a 'Preventive Home'.

220 NVA, *Transactions of the International Congress on the White Slave Trade, 1899* (London: NVA, 1899), p.2

221 Dyer did join the NVA upon its inauguration in 1885 but chose not to play an active role in it.

reference to personal liberty, but few people care for liberty or personal rights now.²²²

Many within Britain's middle-class reformist, and often also nonconformist, circles did, however, 'heartily sympathise' with the NVA and took places in its upper-echelons. Notable members include Percy Bunting, editor of the *Contemporary Review* and one of the country's pre-eminent Methodists, and Millicent ('Mrs Henry') Fawcett, a champion of women's rights and author who had been one of the first trustees of the National Union of Women Workers in 1895 and would become the leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. Then there was Bunting's sister-in-law Elizabeth Sedman Lidgett, a suffragist, Poor Law Guardian and devotee of the Charity Organization Society, and Laura Ormiston Chant, founder-member of the National Society for the Promotion of Women's Suffrage and a Women's Liberal Federation devotee. Indeed, not simply united by their membership to the organization, the NVA luminaries comprised a close-knit reform community and participated in a distinct reformist culture which pre-dated the NVA, each championing a similar cluster of causes, if not also serving on the same committees. Social purity was often combined with such commitments as membership of repeal, women's rights and/or suffrage groups, Poor Law Guardianship, promotion of the National or Women's Liberal Federation and allegiance to pacifist societies. The members of the NVA were also, by and large, the sons and daughters of non-conformist ministers or well-healed bourgeois industrialists and were, if the offspring of the former often the grandchildren, nieces or nephews of the latter. Theirs was an organization with a relatively narrow demographic, whose members' family interests were intimately tied up with industrial capital.

Other social purity organizations, including the JAPGW, were represented on the association's committees together with the rescue missions whose resources the NVA co-opted. Leading authorities within the country's principal religious congregations from the Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark to Chief Rabbi Dr Hermann Adler also actively participated in the NVA along with their local colleagues. Indeed, although defining itself as a non-denominational group, the NVA relied on Christian institutions at local level and represented its work as being undertaken in the name of the Christianity. As one of

222 WL, 3JBL/33/45, Josephine Butler to Miss Priestman, 5 November 1894

its representatives explained to an audience gathered at Stafford in 1907: 'The great feature of the work [of the NVA] was its unsectarian character, men and women of all nations, creeds, and political opinions working side by side with a singleness of purpose which was practical evidence of Christianity'.²²³

The middle-class reformers and religious figures that comprised the NVA were, however, led by a man from a different background and with a different type of credential; one William Alexander Coote. Coote, like Dyer, was a working-class man whose interests had led him into radical politics and who had achieved prominence in reform circles by chance, and, like Butler, he was a reformer who claimed to have received a calling from on high. We learn this from an 'autobiographical sketch' in Coote's 1916 history of the association, *A Romance of Philanthropy*, included to 'inspire others as heavily handicapped as [he] was'. Coote, according to his narrative, had been born into an Irish family on the affluent side of London's Strand but, as a boy of three, lost his father and was obliged to move to the neighbourhood of 'a very mixed character' that lay opposite where he 'soon adopted the ways and some of the habits of his peers'. Having left school at twelve to become a compositor at a printing firm, he came to be 'looked up to as [a] leader' by his friends and was exposed to the 'sink of iniquity' that was Central London.²²⁴ All changed when, at sixteen, Coote was accosted one night 'by three young men who offered [him] a religious tract', and he underwent a religious experience during which 'the Holy Spirit [took] of the things of Jesus Christ and revealed them to [his] benighted mind'. He parted company with his friends and 'steadfastly set to work...to overcome the weaknesses that had accrued through [his] many neglected educational opportunities'.²²⁵

It was as a leader of working men that Coote started to make his mark. In 1870 he spearheaded the printing trades' campaign for shorter hours and, by 1880, was elected to represent the London Society of Compositors at the Trade Union Congress (TUC), before serving on the Camberwell Vestry and Borough Council and participating in further union activity. He also brushed with national politics, attempting in 1883 to

223 *Staffordshire Advertiser* (27 June 1907)

224 Coote, WA, *A Romance of Philanthropy* (London: NVA, 1916), pp.20-4

225 *Ibid*, pp.22-3

become the Liberal candidate for North Camberwell.²²⁶ Coote, however, had little experience in moral reform circles prior to 1885. He, a man Butler described as ‘most unsound’ and ‘a lover of coercion’, was appointed Secretary of the NVA simply because he had, by chance, been chosen to be the chief marshal at the Hyde Park social purity rally held following ‘The Maiden Tribute’ revelations, and had caught Stead’s eye as a man adept in organizing his peers.²²⁷

Organizing the fight against trafficking was a special area of interest for Coote and his association. From its earliest years, the NVA distributed ‘Friendly Warning’ pamphlets on cross-channel steamships, urging ‘[y]oung Ladies leaving England to take situations on the Continent...to satisfy themselves that *the situations promised them really exist*...[or else] run a great risk of being *deceived and disappointed*’ and listing emergency contacts at European and British ports.²²⁸ It issued similar appeals in various languages to girls leaving the Continent and had its safety message reproduced in the British and the European Press and in its journal *The Vigilance Record*. It organized local committees in the country’s port towns and liaised with the owners of the principal steamship companies to encourage vigilance. By 1887, Coote was visiting Rotterdam ‘to investigate allegations of trafficking [and gather] suggestions of local officials as to how to stop traffic [sic]’ and his Foreign Traffic Sub-Committee was busy petitioning the government to strengthen the law regarding the employment of foreign girls in ‘places of entertainment’.²²⁹ Indeed, although its lobbying was generally fruitless, the NVA played a decisive role in effecting an amendment to the Vagrancy Act in 1898 which made it an offence to live on the earnings of a prostitute. However, all of this was small beer compared to the association’s involvement in anti-trafficking operations from the start of the period under examination.

1899 represents a watershed not just in terms of the history of the NVA and the *British* response to trafficking, but in terms of the worldwide offensive against such criminality. Why it should be this year is the responsibility of Coote and another religious experience. ‘[I]n September, 1898, while I was revising the warning to young

226 ‘WA Coote Obituary’ *The Times* (28 October 1919)

227 WL, 3JBL/30, Josephine Butler to Miss Priestman, 9 September 1891; Bristow, *Vice*, p.112

228 NVA, *To Young Ladies Going Abroad, A Friendly Warning* (London: NVA, n.d. c.1890), p.3

229 WL, 4NVA/1/1/01, First Minute Book of the Executive Committee, 19 July 1887; 26 July 1887

women travelling abroad', Coote recounts in his 1910 history of his organization's international work, *A Vision and its Fulfilment*,

the utter hopelessness of all our methods came over me with a kind of physical oppressiveness...and I cried out in despair, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' Falling, rather than leaning, back in my chair I fell into a kind of reverie. Whether it was a Divine Vision, or a day-dream inspired from on High, I know not. Of its intensity and reality I had not, and never had, the slightest doubt. After a while I awoke...The Vision was solemnly and vividly impressed upon my mind.²³⁰

Coote had, he claimed, been shown how to co-ordinate an international trafficking taskforce. Having purportedly received the £200 he had prayed for to start his crusade from an unexpected donor, Coote toured the majority of Europe's capitals in January 1899, canvassing local reformers and government officials. He returned to England with the support he required to convene the first International Congress on trafficking.

Held in London that June under the auspices of the NVA and with ample JAPGW representation, the Congress witnessed the convergence of delegates from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and Britain to discuss how best to fight trafficking internationally. It was resolved unanimously 'that the Congress approves the principle of forming a permanent international organization for perfecting and bringing into effect the work of the Congress' and the objectives and constitution of this new body, which would meet every three to four years, were settled.²³¹

The new response to trafficking was to be predicated on the distinctly pragmatic political agenda of obtaining multilateral governmental co-operation and suppressive international legislation. While committed to agitating for these things within the body politic and being highly critical of any administration that failed to capitulate to its demands, the new response was to be statist in character, seeking to solve trafficking via the state-machine. It was agreed that as a matter of priority an international agreement should be secured among the governments of the member-states to facilitate the fight against trafficking, legally and organizationally. Moreover, the new

230 Coote, *A Vision*, pp.21-2

231 See: 'International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. Signed at Paris, May 18, 1904', *P.P.*, 1905, (Cd. 2689), CXXXVII

fight was to be separate from that against the state regulation of prostitution to prevent the new movement being inhibited. '[I]t occurred to Mr Coote', Percy Bunting later observed, 'that there were immense numbers of private individuals and societies and governments who could not be induced to Mrs Butler's primary condition'.²³² There was to be a quasi-autonomous national committee in each member-country. Two representatives from each national committee were to comprise the International Committee of the Congress and the Congress' affairs were to be co-ordinated by a single body. This body was to be the nexus of the new taskforce through which all information pertaining to trafficking was to be passed, all contact between the individual national committees mediated and to which all of these committees were to be accountable.²³³

And so the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons was formed. However, a hub where all member-nations enjoyed equal representation it was not. Coote made sure that his efforts to instigate the Congress came with a rich prize for his association and his country. The International Bureau, as Bristow put it, 'was the NVA Executive in another guise, with delegates co-opted from the national committees'.²³⁴ It was made up of five of the most influential men from the Executive who also acted as the English National Committee. It was led by Coote and had as its President, the Lord Bishop of Rochester and subsequently the Earl of Aberdeen; both members of the five. It was housed in the NVA's offices from which its periodical *La Traite des Blanches* was translated into French for circulation around the national committees. Despite the incorporation of a host of states such as Egypt, South Africa, and Argentina, when the Bureau later expanded, it recruited representatives from other *British* social purity and religious groups, including the JAPGW, and in 1907 conscripted forty such groups into what had become the British National Committee. As the Lord Bishop of Rochester declared regarding the British National Committee in December 1904:

the word British is somewhat misleading. We do not want to belittle by one degree the work done by the National Committees, but it is, as it were, the

²³² *Vigilance Record* (July 1910), p.51.

²³³ NVA, *Transactions* pp.14-6

²³⁴ Bristow, *Vice*, p.177

original, or the mother Committee, and has somewhat more taxation of general organization than would fall to the other Committees.²³⁵

This dominance, however, was not universally accepted by other Congress members. The honeymoon of the Congress ended abruptly when controversy raged over the then English National Committee's apparent inability to organise the movement's next official conference. '[A] letter was received from Pastor Burckhardt, Secretary of the German National Committee', the Bureau's minutes from its second meeting recalled, 'enclosing...[a] copy of a circular sent on by the German Committee to the other National Committees, complaining that the English National Committee were [sic] not getting on with the work as fast as the German Committee thought they ought'. France soon echoed this complaint. Coote was compelled to visit each of these committees to justify 'why apparently nothing definite has been accomplished'.²³⁶ Indeed, despite its self-accorded dominance, the British National Committee was one of the Congress' weakest links. Unlike the Russian and German Committees, it could rarely secure government co-operation. At the International Bureau's inaugural meeting, Coote's request to Prime Minister Lord Salisbury to 'favourably entertain the idea of calling an official Conference [of the Congress nations]' was flatly refused.²³⁷ Relations between the British National Committee and Westminster would improve over time but the initial lack of co-operation by the government impeded the work of the International Bureau such to cause lasting antipathy towards Britain's role in the Congress. That said, Coote himself was held in high regard within the Congress and by many of the governments of member-states. By 1910, he had been presented with a diamond monogram pin from the German Emperor, made a chevalier of the legion d'honneur by the French President, and given a similar accolade from King Alfonso of Spain, for his dedicated anti-trafficking work.

At the much-anticipated debut conference of the Congress in Paris in 1902, the first International Agreement on trafficking was drafted, making history when finally ratified in 1904. The new law committed the governments of member-states to an array of initiatives designed to expose and prevent trafficking and help restore the women it

²³⁵ *Vigilance Record* (December 1904), p.5

²³⁶ WL, Records of the International Bureau (hereafter IB), 4IBS/1/1, First Minute Book, 25 July 1900

²³⁷ WL, IB, First Minute Book, 22-24 June 1899; 30 June 1900

affected, focussing above all on the victims of such criminality.²³⁸ Its first three articles were most influential in reconfiguring Britain's, and, particularly the NVA's, response to trafficking.

The first decreed that each of the contracting governments appoint a Central Authority to be 'charged with the co-ordination of all information relative to the procuring of women or girls for immoral purposes abroad', the communication of this information and the implementation of preventive programmes.²³⁹ The British government appointed Frederick S Bullock, a Crime Scene Examiner and later the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. Bullock played an active role within the British National Committee and maintained a rapport with the Committee that transcended their official relationship. His efforts were frequently lauded by Coote and his colleagues. When Bullock got promoted to Assistant Commissioner, the International Bureau 'carried unanimously that a letter of congratulation and good wishes should be sent to [him]...with an expression of hope that he would continue his work...'.²⁴⁰ While critical of the government's inertia regarding trafficking, the NVA and the Bureau retained their faith in the state and were on friendly terms with the state-official appointed to their cause.

The International Agreement's second article stipulated that each government 'undertakes to have a watch kept, especially in railway stations, ports of embarkation, and *en route*, for persons in charge of women and girls destined for an immoral life' and to report all relevant information. The English National Committee took a Deputation to the Home Office immediately after the Agreement was signed, 'suggesting that [this article] could be better worked by ladies than by police constables', and successfully organized a six-month trial for an all-female group to carry out the article on the government's behalf.²⁴¹ The International Guild of Service for Women was inaugurated in April 1903 and soon became a permanent charitable taskforce, supported by the Home Office, although not directly by the government as Coote desired. Functioning as a branch of the NVA and a sister-organization to the International Bureau, the Guild

238 'International Agreement', pp.7-8

239 Ibid. p.7

240 WL, IB, First Minute Book, 3 December 1909

241 'International Agreement', p.7

quickly gained the co-operation of many of the country's railway and steamship firms. Guild workers were recruited to not merely watch for and warn the lone female traveller but also practically coerce and spy on her, especially if she happened to be foreign. In his report to the Home Office following the six-month trial, Coote declared the need in anti-trafficking work for a 'properly qualified...staff of women speaking the necessary languages...ostensibly for the purpose of rendering first-aid to the foreign women as they arrive, but really judiciously to ascertain for what purpose they [have] come and where they intend staying...'.²⁴² The Guild undertook its work in co-operation with kindred groups on the Continent such as Les Amies de la Jeune Fille and with the cross-denominational Travellers' Aid Society (TAS) and the JAPGW at home. Towards the end of the period, these groups, again under the International Bureau, started to discuss plans for the establishment of a European clearing-house for station work.

Finally, Article Three of the Agreement was concerned with what the NVA termed 'the repatriation of undesirable foreign women'. As well as organizing the safe repatriation of women upon request and organizing the care of those who were impoverished prior to repatriation, this clause obliged the signatories to interrogate foreign prostitutes and communicate their details to their country's authorities 'with a view to their eventual repatriation'. In 1905 much of the humanity was stripped from these measures when the Aliens Act gave magistrates unrestricted power to force the immediate repatriation of foreign prostitutes. Purging countries of 'vicious alien women' became one of the prime solutions to trafficking. It is perhaps no coincidence that Coote branded the International Agreement the 'Woman's Moral Charter'.²⁴³ Although the repatriation schemes under international and domestic law were then government-managed, the NVA took an active role in ensuring their implementation. International Guild members approached lone foreign girls specifically to identify prostitutes and coerce them to take government assistance to return home. Moreover, with the implementation of what they referred to as the 'Undesirable Aliens Act', they actively reported such 'foreign criminals' to the authorities.²⁴⁴ Indeed, NVA members

242 Coote, WA, *Paper read...at the International Conference on Railway Station at Berne, June 1910* (London: NVA, 1910), pp.3-6; *Vigilance Record* (February 1904), p.6

243 Coote, *A Romance*, p.198

244 *NVA1907*, p.6

had long called for the repatriation of foreigners leading 'immoral lives'. In 1897, they prepared a special Bill with provisions for 'alien bullies' and drafted most of the section concerning 'Criminal Aliens' in the 1905 Act.²⁴⁵

The 1902 International Agreement did not, however, give the NVA cause to stop its crusade for suppressive domestic legislation. Prostitution and, indeed, trafficking itself were still rife. The 1905 Aliens Act provided for the expulsion of any immigrant convicted of a prostitution-related offence not punishable by fine alone. Nevertheless, it could do little more than make a dent in the traffic transacted on British soil because the prostitution-related offences to which it referred were those defined in the ineffective 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act and 1898 Vagrancy Act. Not until the end of the period did the NVA step up its efforts to push for the revision of these laws. In 1909, as part of a Conjoint Committee with the JAPGW, Jewish Board of Deputies and the London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality, it gained Home Office support for a moderate set of measures to strengthen the law against procurers, brothel-keepers and pimps. Yet it would take three years of campaigning by those in and outside these organizations before this support would translate to a change in the law.

Throughout this section, the discourses of the British National Committee and the International Guild will be considered alongside those of the NVA, for, together, they represent the discourses of the organization as a whole.

The Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women

The other group at the forefront of Britain's anti-trafficking movement was also complex and broad-based. Founded by Lady Constance Battersea, the daughter of Sir Anthony de Rothschild, a banker and landowner at the apogee of the Anglo-Jewish elite, the JAPGW started life as the Jewish Ladies' Society for Preventive and Rescue Work (JLS) in 1885, before changing its name in 1897. It came into being when Battersea, then merely an occasional charitable benefactress and temperance advocate, had her eyes opened and conscience jolted regarding the condition of her less-fortunate co-religionists. One spring evening, she had an unexpected visit from her charity-worker friend, Mrs Blanche Pigott. Pigott relayed how two Jewish prostitutes had come to the

²⁴⁵ *NVA1899*, p.23; *NVA1897*, p.6; *Vigilance Record* (December 1903), p.91

mission where she worked and complained that 'even if they wished to abandon their present way of living, it would be impossible', for the Jewish Community turned its back on 'the unclean' and they, not wanting to enter a Christian Home, had nowhere to go. Battersea was awestruck. 'The subject was one I had always avoided', she recalled, 'and I had never heard, nor, indeed, did I believe, that any so-called rescue work had been needed amongst the Jewish Community'.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, she took action. Battersea was a follower of Reform Judaism, a new progressive variation of Judaism which emphasized women's role in religious life and the ability of 'transgressors' of the hallowed Jewish standards of moral purity to be redeemed. She enlisted her cousin, the influential philanthropist and religious scholar, Claude Montefiore and the like-minded theologian and leader of the New West End Synagogue, Rev. Simeon Singer to go to the mission where the girls were set to return. The men waited in vain for the Jewish girls. Eager to rectify their community's alleged inaction regarding vulnerable girls and women, however, they went back to Lady Battersea to discuss what could be done. The three decided to ask mission worker Mrs Herbert to relay the girls' story to 'a few influential ladies of the Jewish faith'. At this gathering, 'warm proffers of personal help' were given and the JLS was inaugurated.²⁴⁷

Battersea took the role of Honorary Secretary in the new society and her cousin, Lady Emma de Rothschild, that of President. Indeed, the group soon counted in its number some of the most prominent women of the 'cousinhood' of affluent, philanthropic Anglo-Jewish families, including Mrs DQ Henriques, Mrs EM Micholls, and Battersea's sister, the Hon. Mrs Eliot Yorke. Although they had only fleetingly engaged in charity work before, the ladies were zealous about their common cause, which was 'to protect Jewish girls and women from evil influences, from lives of suffering, slavery and degradation' via a charitable programme with 'a two-fold purpose – prevention, and as far as possible, redemption'.²⁴⁸ The JLS established a series of institutions, each specializing in a different field of work and each managed by a separate committee accountable to what, from 1901, was known as the General Council. The first was

246 Battersea, Lady C, *Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1922), pp.418-9

247 Ibid. pp.420-1

248 JAPGW, *Annual Report, 1899* (London: JAPGW, 1899), p.8 (hereafter *JAPGW1899*, etc); JAPGW, *Report of the Year Ending 1908* (London: JAPGW, 1908), p.14 (hereafter *JAPGW-1908*, etc)

Charcroft House. Starting out as a lodging house for newly-arrived 'foreign Jewish girls', this fledgling initiative later became a redemptive hostel or 'Rescue and Training Home' for unmarried mothers. Then there was Rosaline (later Sara Pyke) House, which in 1888 replaced Charcroft as a home for female immigrants waiting to travel on to 'respectable addresses', before becoming a permanent residence and having its former role transferred to a new Intermediate Home.²⁴⁹ They were joined by Highbury House, a domestic training home for 'friendless children' and Montefiore House, an 'industrial school'/reformatory for girls from disreputable backgrounds.²⁵⁰ A fee was charged for all these services, even at the Intermediate Home for vulnerable immigrants, payable by the female tenant or a sponsor.

The JLS's principal preventive initiative, however, was not housed inside an institution and was not undertaken by women. Its fight against trafficking was conducted across many battlefields from port to parliament. The group's anti-trafficking programme was, albeit to a lesser extent than the NVA's, statist in outlook and advocated state-intervention. It was, at least on the front line, a strictly male affair. At its first meeting in April 1885, the JLS 'resolved that some preventive work, should be undertaken in regard to the foreign [Jewish] girls, landing at the [London] Docks'. Before the year was out, it had employed a male inspector, a Mr Reichmann, 'to board incoming steamers at the City's landing-stairs and await trains from the port of Harwich, seek-out any young, unaccompanied female immigrants and facilitate their transit to safe addresses'.²⁵¹ Little would its members have known that in a matter of years the number of their co-religionists fleeing Russia and Eastern Europe would increase dramatically, along with the number of these unaccompanied female immigrants and the people out to exploit them. In 1889, most likely prompted by the increasing migration of East European Jews, the JLS founded a Gentlemen's Sub-Committee to supervise this aspect of its operations under which the entire anti-trafficking initiative of the organization soon started to gain purchase.²⁵²

249 HL, JAPGW, First Minute Book, innermost page; 2 April 1885; 2/1/3, Third Minute Book of the General Committee, 19 November 1896

250 Battersea, *Reminiscences*, p.422

251 HL, JAPGW, First Minute Book, 17 & 24 April; 6 & 20 November 1885

252 HL, JAPGW, MS 173, 2/1/2, Second Minute Book of the General Committee, 15 October 1899

Whereas the NVA encouraged its female followers to play an active public role in its anti-trafficking programme via the International Guild, the Jewish Association upheld a rigid sexual division of labour in its operations predicated on a separate spheres dichotomy, expecting its members to oversee others' work rather than dirtying their own hands. Its men were to co-ordinate dock work and any other operations relating to active anti-trafficking strategy. Its women were to supervise the care of female migrants brought to them by the dock agent at the organization's Intermediate Home. Class and ethno-religious tradition underscored this difference between the associations. The bourgeois, non-conformist members of the NVA - the pious industrialists and their kin - by and large came from a milieu in which the advocacy of radical causes and hands-on philanthropic work, whether by women or men, was respected and considered befitting. To many, these activities constituted a second 'family business', with, as we have seen, members participating often alongside siblings or spouses in a close reformist community. The Anglo-Jewish cousinhood comprising Battersea's organization, by contrast, were the sons and daughters of wealthy entrepreneurs and financiers and comprised an elite network in which such liberty of action, political activism and sustained contact with 'social inferiors' was deemed improper, particularly in the case of women. Living in an environment in which reputation was of the utmost importance, the members of the Jewish association walked with the honour of their families on their shoulders, obliged to live by the mores of the upper-class circles they inhabited and, despite some of its members' advocacy of Reform Judaism, often also the precepts of Orthodoxy, prescribing staunch adherence to a traditional, bifurcated gender paradigm. They were, in a very different sense to NVA members, both philanthropists and share-holders in a 'family business'.

The Gentlemen's Sub-Committee originally comprised just four members: the Rev S Singer, Mr Landon, Mr Schloss and Mr Lucas. Before long, though, it had doubled in size, was renamed the Gentleman's Committee and began to assume a coherent structure, with Singer acting as President and Claude Montefiore, Chairman and later Vice President.²⁵³ Indeed, the familial ties, shared interests and common culture of the

253 HL, JAPGW, Second Minute Book, 25 June 1888; *JAPGW-1906*, p.33

Jewish Association's members made theirs a more cohesive organization than the NVA, with no evidence of significant internal divisions. The Gentlemen's Committee was led from its early days by Arthur Reginald Moro, an eminent London lawyer whose legal expertise would underpin much of the organization's fight against trafficking. Taking the role of Honorary Secretary followed by Vice President, Moro, the great nephew of the famous banker and philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore, was later supported in the Committee by Secretary, Samuel Cohen. Unlike Coote, Moro did not indulge in writing a sentimental autobiography. His obituary tells us that he was a long-term patron and manager of the Hayes School for Jewish Boys, an institution catering for promising students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and was an avid member of the Royal Geographical Society.²⁵⁴ But from his pen, we are left few clues as to what drove his decades of service. The JLS and later the JAPGW undertook what Lady Battersea termed 'a quiet, unostentatious work'.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the esteem in which Moro was held is displayed in the votes of 'unfeigned gratitude' to him that accompany the association's reports and Gentlemen's Committee records.²⁵⁶ Indeed, upon his 70th birthday, his colleagues presented him with an illuminated manuscript, avowing, '[s]horn of your help and sympathy, we can hardly imagine how our Association would have fared, or how it would have achieved the beneficial results it has accomplished'.²⁵⁷

By 1899, the Gentlemen's Committee had two agents working at the City's docks and, by 1910, three, each fluent in Yiddish. The work of the agents was far from plain-sailing at first. As Moro later observed regarding Jacob Sternheim, the first long-serving dock agent: '[w]hen he first began to work at the Docks every obstacle had to be faced unaided by dock, ship, railway officials, or even by the police. All [of whom] regarded with doubt and suspicion the intervention of an inspector of an independent charity'.²⁵⁸ Soon, however, all of the major steamship companies operating from the Port of London granted the Committee's officers often exclusive permission to patrol their section of the dock and inspect their passenger vessels, and supplied regular intelligence. The principal railway companies were similarly obliging, albeit without the

254 'AR Moro Obituary' *The Times* (29 April 1939)

255 JAPGW, *Jewish International Conference*, p.127

256 HL, JAPGW, Minutes with Case Committee Reports, 18 February 1900

257 HL, JAPGW, MS 173, 2/9/1, Address to Moro on the occasion of his 70th birthday by the JAPGW, n.d 1920s

258 Ibid. 2/3/1, Minutes of Council, 12 March 1901

exclusivity, as were state functionaries, with the Medical Officers inspecting in-coming passenger boats at Greenwich and Tilbury reporting any 'unprotected girls' they encountered.²⁵⁹ This gave the organization the unrivalled ability to monitor most parties of immigrants travelling through London, allowing it to offer shelter to scores of girls and women arriving in England in 'default of destinations', with 'undecipherable addresses [sic]' or en route to another country.²⁶⁰ Indeed, the work it conducted was of such breadth that it was relied upon by the TAS. Since its earliest years, the JLS had an arrangement with the TAS whereby its dock agents would take any unprotected Christian girls to the ladies at its Intermediate Home in exchange for a fee and the TAS's reciprocal assistance with Jewish girls at the few railway stations that were not patrolled by its agents. In 1890 'Travellers' Aid Society' was embroidered alongside 'JLS' on the lapel of the dock agent's coat.²⁶¹ The JLS also forged a successful understanding with the Jews' Temporary Shelter. Significantly, the organization invited the NVA to buy a stake in the services of its dock agent but was turned down and, when the International Guild was inaugurated, the NVA co-operated but made no attempt to formally ally with the Jewish group.²⁶²

Before long, the Gentlemen's Committee had officers supported by small sub-committees at the country's principal ports to keep a watch on all immigrants and transmigrants. Indeed, the JAPGW would later claim that, '[a]ny Jewish girl who enters England at the East Coast ports on her way to the United States, Canada or South America is met upon arrival'.²⁶³ Co-operating with local Jewish communities, synagogues and branches of the charitable organization, the Jewish Board of Deputies, Moro and company established subsidiaries in Manchester and Leeds and upgraded their sub-committees in Liverpool, Grimsby and Southampton. These branches joined the port sub-committees in a telegraphic network around which alerts regarding suspicious persons and details of 'unprotected girls' flowed via a Central Office in London, forging a nationwide intelligence community relating to Jewish trafficking.

259 Ibid. 2/2/4, Gentlemen's Committee: Report of the Honorary Secretary of Work Done at the Port of London, 1893–18 March 1894

260 See: *JAPGW1898*, pp.8-9

261 HL, JAPGW, Second Minute Book, 31 January 1890

262 WL, Records of the NVA, 4NVA/1/1/01, First Minute Book of the Executive Committee, 19 July 1887; 26 July 1887; HL, JAPGW, First Minute Book, 4 January 1889 & 1 March 1889

263 *JAPGW-1912*, p.24

The Jewish Association's nerve-centre did not, however, simply re-direct the facts and figures sent to it by its local outposts. It recorded, tabulated and analysed them, treating every scrap of information as a potentially vital weapon in the fight against trafficking. Each of its annual reports featured a lengthy table of statistics, arranged around a series of categories and sub-categories which documented the number of ships and passengers surveyed by the Gentlemen Committee's dock agents that year, the number of 'unprotected girls' assisted, the age, faith and marital status of these girls, and the locations to which they were conducted. Later, the confirmed and suspected incidents of trafficking uncovered were recorded but, as we have seen, the results were somewhat tenuous and incomplete, with data pertaining to unaccompanied female immigrants dominating the organization's statistical profiles. Often the figures collected from a series of years were compared so that readers could have hard evidence that, whether or not making empirical progress, the Jewish Association had the problem of trafficking among their co-religionists under control. However, this was no phenomenon of Jewish philanthropy.²⁶⁴ Each of the country's travellers' aid groups tabulated figures regarding the girls they helped, many with a specific ethno-religious or ethnic focus. The JLS' and later the JAPGW's emphasis on collecting and presenting figures was symptomatic of a tendency amongst philanthropists and social reformers to deploy the new science of sociology and valorize the statistic as a means of diagnosing, understanding and controlling the problems they sought to solve; of ameliorating society by numbers.²⁶⁵

The association's focus on surveillance in its anti-trafficking programme was, however, far from typical. The Jewish group dedicated much of its front line anti-trafficking work to secret investigation and perpetuated a culture of distrust which extended to its internal and external affairs. Even the dock officers it recruited to covertly scrutinize every group of immigrants passing through the nation's ports and railway stations were themselves subject to surveillance and rigorous secret

264 Paul Knepper has suggested that the JAPGW's concern with statistics is indicative of a *Jewish* brand of sociology being practised on the Continent to mitigate anti-Semitism, overlooking that the JAPGW was doing the same as its anti-trafficking peers. Knepper, 'British Jews' pp. 74-5

265 Charles Booth's, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, represents a prominent example of this tendency, featuring meticulous statistical data.

investigation. 'In consequence of some information sent to Mrs Cohen [of the Ladies' Committee] by Mrs Toms', it was reported at a meeting of the organization in 1889,

Mrs Cohen has taken measures to discern whether Reichmann has been doing his duty at the Docks. He was not seen there on Wednesday Feb. 23 when he not only assured [fellow JLS member] Mrs Singer that he had been there, but gave her a written affirmation to that effect. He is to be carefully watched by a detective...²⁶⁶

However, the Jewish Association pursued a broader travellers' aid programme than the NVA so had greater cause to resort to surveillance. It also had more reason to suspect those it was contemplating letting into its inner-circle. As will be considered shortly, anti-Semitism was reaching alarming heights across Continental Europe and, at home, anti-alien resentment was proliferating. It would not have taken much imagination by Battersea, Moro and their colleagues to believe that people with malicious intentions towards the Jewish community might try to infiltrate and sabotage the organization.

The structure of the Jewish Association and circumstances of its anti-trafficking work help explain the suspicion with which certain new-recruits were confronted. Being a close-knit clique of upper-class Jews who merely *oversaw* philanthropic projects, the association had to look beyond its immediate circle for staff. Insistent upon hiring Jews and prizing a knowledge of Yiddish, it was often forced to recruit from within the community of its less-affluent co-religionists that had recently settled in the East End. This brought an insecurity to the group. Not only did it have to place its trust in strangers but it had to place its trust in strange foreigners. From the vantage point of the assimilated Anglo-Jewish elite which had abandoned many of the ostensible markers of Orthodox Judaism, the new, impoverished immigrant population, in dress, in language, in habits and in moral code, seemed foreign. The newcomers were rumoured to be involved in all shades of criminality and political insurrection and, moreover, were apparently the very group from which the majority of traffickers came. That the East End where most settled was increasingly represented as a corruptive and lawless abyss, compounded these misapprehensions. Thus, whilst dependent on their labour, the association considered it imprudent to invest its faith in their East European 'cousins'

²⁶⁶ HL, JAPGW, First Minute Book, 1 March 1889

without having their foreignness interpreted as safe by an able detective. Its fears were not entirely unfounded. In 1889 one of the Gentlemen Committee's own dock agents, Mr Finsong, was discovered to be actively embroiled in trafficking, announced by Rev Singer and colleague Mr Lauder to the Ladies' Committee as having been, "in spite of repeated warnings...in constant & friendly communication with one of the most notorious of the receivers [of prostitutes], 'Leiberitz' by name, in whose house he had been a frequent visitor, and where he had more than once directed helpless & unsuspecting foreigners".²⁶⁷ Indeed, the Jewish Association's operations were, in many ways, a form of Jewish 'community control', started in response to unregulated immigration and continued in parallel to state-run immigration restriction, in the interests of Anglo-Jewry, to limit the damage that might be caused by the newcomers.

The association's crusade was also a worldwide one. Before playing an active role in the International Bureau, the association made a significant contribution towards ensuring the fulfilment of Coote's vision, convincing the Rothschild family to provide much of the funding for the 1899 Congress and facilitating the NVA leader's first trips abroad.²⁶⁸ More than this, it oversaw the proliferation of an international Jewish anti-trafficking network, organizing the creation of, and liaising with existing, anti-trafficking associations across the world. By 1912, it announced that it was 'entirely due to [its] incentive [that there were] Jewish Protective Societies across the country and Continent'.²⁶⁹ The watershed for this aspect of its operations came in 1897 when the organization secured a grant from the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) for its 'foreign traffic work'.²⁷⁰ Founded amid the persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe, the ICA sought to facilitate the mass-resettlement of Jews through the formation of a series of agricultural or commercial colonies across the world.²⁷¹ Claude Montefiore encouraged the ICA of the need for action against Jewish trafficking and of the danger of the prevalence of such exploitation in Argentina, the site of many ICA colonies. The Gentlemen's Committee was granted a generous annual subvention of £1,200, which

267 HL, JAPGW, Second Minute Book, 15 October 1889

268 HL, JAPGW, Minutes with Case Committee Reports, 17 December 1900

269 JAPGW-1912 ,p.9

270 HL, JAPGW, Third Minute Book, 7 May 1893

271 Norman, T, *An Outstretched Arm. A History of the Jewish Colonization Association* (London: Routledge, 1985)

lasted decades and was quickly increased.²⁷² Indeed, it is no coincidence that in 1897 the JLS decided to rename itself the JAPGW in recognition of the growing importance of the Gentlemen's Committee.

Embarking upon its international agenda with immediate effect, the JAPGW set about initiating new anti-trafficking groups in trafficking trouble-spots within the British Empire and areas of imperial interest. As it later informed its subscribers:

[o]ur aim is to create local societies, sectarian and non-sectarian. We draw the attention of men of influence to the extent of the evil and try to rouse public opinion...When local societies are formed, and when we see that really earnest efforts are being made to form working Committees, we give every assistance in our power.²⁷³

In 1899 its own efforts started to come to fruition. That year the organization began petitioning the leaders of Jewish communities across South Africa and successfully prompted the inauguration of Jewish anti-trafficking committees in the country's principal cities, which, especially in Johannesburg, were all very productive before waning towards 1910.²⁷⁴ In 1900 the JAPGW inaugurated its first overseas branch in Buenos Aires with the help of local dignitary and another of Battersea's cousins, Dr Frederick Perugia. The new branch thrived, enjoying a 'decided promise of assistance from the Head of the [Argentine] Police as well as from the Austrian Consulate' and, later, from Her Majesty's Minister in Buenos Aires, Mr Barrington and the Argentine National Committee.²⁷⁵ Four years later, the JAPGW looked to Egypt. Having been unsuccessful in Cairo, it, thanks to Claude Montefiore, formed a 'small society' in Alexandria but the society proved not to be 'powerful enough' and became multi-denominational.²⁷⁶ Although some of its efforts proved fruitless, the JAPGW was both financially and organizationally the dominant force in Jewish anti-trafficking circles and was, in terms of the worldwide movement against this exploitation, second only to the non-sectarian International Congress in which it played a major role. By 1910, the

272 The JAPGW was supported considerably by Germany's kindred Jewish movement spearheaded by the fraternal organization, the B'nai Brith and Bertha Pappenheim's feminist society, the Jüdische Frauenbund.

273 *JAPGW-1904*, p.22

274 See: *JAPGW1899*, pp.23-4

275 HL, JAPGW, Third Minute Book, 19 November 1896 & Minutes with Case Committee Reports, 6th May 1900; 10th October 1900; *JAPGW-1904*, p.25-6; *JAPGW-1905*, p.30

276 *JAPGW-1905*, pp.10, 23-4. A similar thing happened in India. *JAPGW-1908*, pp.25-7

JAPGW's London Office was doubling as a Jewish International Bureau of sorts and that year the association rallied delegates from ten other countries under its auspices to attend the first Jewish international Conference on the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Girls.

The JAPGW was also a leading light in the fight for domestic legislation against trafficking. As well as striving to bring proceedings against individual traffickers and procurers, it fought to secure an amendment to the criminal law. The work of the organization was, as Battersea declared in 1910, redemptive, preventive *and* 'punitive'.²⁷⁷ Yet, despite lauding 'Clause B regarding immoral and criminal aliens', the JAPGW, unlike the NVA, did not endorse the 1905 Aliens Bill, deeming it capable of doing 'much harm' through the restrictions it sanctioned and the circumventions it allowed.²⁷⁸ In a similar spirit to the Aliens Act, the JAPGW did oversee the repatriation of some of the impoverished girls brought to them by the dock agents but did so unofficially and with the girls' consent. From 1908, it did, however, actively co-operate with the state regarding British Jewish girls who had been repatriated from abroad, caring for them on behalf of the Home Office.²⁷⁹ Indeed, despite its concern to regulate the country's new Jewish community in moral matters so as, not least, to lessen the burden on the state exerted by the immigrant population, the JAPGW placed increasing importance on working with state officials in its anti-trafficking work. It endorsed the efforts of the International Bureau and the International Guild and acted as the state's first source of help regarding Jewish women and girls. Moreover, the JAPGW agreed with Coote's association about the need for the revision of the Vagrancy and CLA Acts. The Bills that were presented to the Home Secretary in 1909, together with the Conjoint Committee presenting them, were put together under the aegis of the JAPGW which had started its campaign for legal reform in 1905.²⁸⁰

The organization's sub-departments will be referred to as the JAPGW unless differentiation is necessary.

277 Battersea cited in: *JAPGW, Jewish International Conference*, p.127

278 See: Moro cited in: *Vigilance Record* (February 1904), pp.10-1

279 *JAPGW-1908*, p.28

280 WL, Records of the NVA, 4NVA/1/1/04, Fourth Minute Book of the Executive Committee, 30 June 1908

Inter-organizational Relations

The relationship between the NVA and the JAPGW was largely cordial and productive at local and national level. Each group celebrated the efficacy of their understanding and neither was backward in recognizing the efforts and achievements of the other. At the opening ceremony of the 1899 International Congress, Coote announced:

My Committee wish it to be understood that there are Associations conducted by Jewish brethren, working continuously to put down this white slave traffic. We have worked in most friendly co-operation for years with Mr Moro and the Chief Rabbi. Much of this present success has been the outcome of our mutual conference as to the best action to be taken.²⁸¹

Quick to reciprocate, the Jewish Association commended the Congress as a 'most comprehensive and brilliant gathering...initiated and most admirably organized by the NVA' in its 1899 Report and would regularly articulate its 'sincere gratitude' for the assistance of its fellow social purity group in its annual publications.²⁸²

The relationship between the NVA and JAPGW was also underpinned by a deep sympathy and sensitivity on the part of Coote towards his Jewish colleagues. The NVA Secretary went out of his way to include the JAPGW in the Bureau's operations and actively promoted the participation of similar Jewish organizations in the Congress. After declaring the benefit of the NVA's 'mutual conference' with the JAPGW, Coote explained to the 1899 Congress in a piece proudly quoted in the JAPGW's annual report:

I mention this so that in the future formation of the National Committees in their respective countries [sic] you may welcome the co-operation of our Jewish Brethren. No stronger demonstration of their interest and earnestness...can be shown than the fact that they voluntarily voted £200 towards the expenses of this Congress.²⁸³

Indeed, Coote was particularly sensitive towards the concept of 'the Jew' as an inferior other that was enjoying increasing currency across Continental Europe, and he was concerned to ensure that such prejudice did not blight the Congress, for the sake of his Jewish allies as well as his own movement. At a special meeting held by the JAPGW to

281 *NVA1891*, p.27; *JAPGW1899*, pp.10-11

282 *JAPGW1899*, p.10

283 *Ibid.* p.11

hear his report of the Congress' international work in November 1900, it was reported that Coote 'had noticed in various quarters on the continent a strong feeling against the Jews, as being traffickers. He suggested that a manifesto should be issued by the English Jews [redacted: as a protest against this false opinion] to show their detestation of the traffic'.²⁸⁴ It is, in turn, clear that the JAPGW felt thoroughly included in the Congress, observing that their members 'are always heartily welcomed, and...their words carry great weight'.²⁸⁵

The organizations' relationship was not, however, without strain, and Coote's sympathy with 'the Jew' was not limitless. The fact that each organization predicated its identity on its status as the foremost in its field gave rise to tension, particularly in the NVA. The JAPGW's increasing influence appears to have caused Coote a certain anxiety that would, albeit infrequently, spill out into his public discourses in backhanded compliments. As well as often being at the heart of his praise for them, money defined the thinly-veiled antagonism Coote expressed towards his Jewish colleagues. The JAPGW's superior wealth afforded Coote the use of a valuable truth that appeared not to breach his brotherhood with the association, for it was fact, but that *could* also evoke the age-old anti-Semitic calumny of money worship and allow him to define his organization as possessing skill above money, and assert its moral and organizational pre-eminence. In *A Vision and its Fulfilment* he included in his lamentation of the inadequate laws and anti-trafficking initiatives in place before the days of the Congress: 'The Jewish Society had spent thousands of pounds in their efforts [sic] to suppress the traffic but the results were painfully small compared with the time and money involved'.²⁸⁶ Unlike the ongoing contempt that the TAS and its leader, Lady Frances Balfour, harboured for the NVA and particularly Coote, grievances were always resolved between the organizations, making for a coherent, united anti-trafficking offensive.²⁸⁷

284 HL, JAPGW, Minutes with Case Committee Reports, 15 November 1900

285 JAPGW-1906, p.9

286 Coote, *A Vision*, p.20

287 For an example of the TAS' contempt towards the NVA see Lady Frances Balfour's speech in *Speeches...at the 'Coming of Age' Celebration of the Travellers' Aid Society* (London: TAS, 1906)

The Discourses of 'White Slavery'

The reconfigured nature of both trafficking and the anti-trafficking movement led to reconfigurations being wrought to the discourses of 'white slavery'. Self-conscious romances of heroic rescues and lyrical exhortations regarding 'the white slave's' plight lost favour to sober, statesman-esque prose as government-sanctioned multilateral accord became the weapon of choice against trafficking and terse, moralistic narratives filled the vacuum left by melodramatic production. The concept of trafficked women as 'white slaves' whose suffering eclipsed that of the formerly enslaved black population became taken for granted, and 'white slavery' became a predicament that no longer needed qualification: Trafficking *was* happening. The question was, 'how could it be stopped?'

The most significant changes in the discourses of 'white slavery' were in structure rather than tone. The London Committee had won-over swathes of Britons with narratives in which 'the English girl' was cast as the tragic heroine and 'the Continental profligate', her oppressor. However, this ethnocentric script had become outdated. To articulate the severity of trafficking, appeal for their respective audiences' sympathy with honesty and retain credibility as leaders in the international anti-trafficking movement, the NVA and JAPGW had to reconfigure the discourses of 'white slavery' to represent the new faces and places of this exploitation. Both organizations had to confront the reality that the tormented 'English rose', that paragon of wronged working-class respectability who had won the sympathy of the public, had been grossly outnumbered as 'the traffickers'' victim by foreign girls and often *impoverished* foreign girls with seemingly foreign moral fibre, migrating from Continental Europe. Many of whom were foreign co-religionists in the case of JAPGW. The role of 'leading villain' also had to be reconfigured by the organizations. The increasing breadth of trafficking networks meant that the identity of 'the consumer of the trafficked' was obfuscated. That Britain acted as a principal hub in the networks, however, meant that the figure of 'the trafficker' came out of obscurity, distinguished most often as a foreign man originating from much the same places as his human merchandise. Again, in the JAPGW's case, he was often a foreign co-religionist.

Further, the NVA and JAPGW had to incorporate a new geographical framework into the discourses of 'white slavery'. The backdrop of the near Continent as the sole consummation point of trafficking was no longer fitting yet the new 'white slave markets' were too remote to be cognizable and could not feature as once they did. The growing awareness that many traffickers and trafficked came from Continental Europe, and particularly Russia and its neighbouring-states, led to a new type of foreign location being co-opted into the discourses of 'white slavery'. Meanwhile, the fact that it was now both a preying-ground for procurers and the prime nexus in the worldwide trafficking network brought Britain into the spotlight.

The NVA and JAPGW were faced with the challenge of telling the new truths of trafficking without losing the support that Butler and Dyer had summoned for the anti-trafficking cause. The way each reconfigured the former discourses of 'white slavery' to achieve this balance between past success and contemporary circumstance will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

There has not to date been a comparative study of the NVA and the JAPGW.²⁸⁸ Seemingly, the fact that the JAPGW was a Jewish group has been taken as evidence that its sensibilities and priorities could not and should not be compared to those of the non-denominational NVA, not least for fear of defaming the Jewish past. However, the two organizations did share a great deal of common ground in their conceptualization and representation of trafficking, and this warrants exploration. We can best understand the structure and implications of Britain's response to trafficking between 1899 and 1910 by thinking about the similarities, rather than the differences, between the NVA and JAPGW, in terms of the way they portrayed such exploitation in their respective discourses of 'white slavery'. A comparison along these lines, providing it is also mindful of the points of departure between the two groups, particularly on socio-religious grounds, promises to throw much needed light on the evolution of the country's anti-trafficking movement as a whole and its wider significance.

To a great extent, the NVA and JAPGW shared both strengths and weaknesses as organizations. Each brought an arrogant set of bourgeois moral standards to their interpretation and management of sexual danger. This led them to misunderstand the underlying causes of trafficking and so strive to counter the problem through what amounted to a repressive and inappropriate, 'parental' model of philanthropy. Based on a diagnosis of trafficking as a foreign plague inflicted upon the under-mothered daughters of the poor by a male class-apart, the model was characterized by two gendered anti-trafficking programmes. Each programme, pursued according to the organizations' respective class and gender prescriptives, sought to police the problematic entities of society that might succumb to, or instigate, sexual danger by bringing the 'purifying influence' of bourgeois moral values to bear upon them.

The organizations' anti-trafficking programmes were marked, on one hand, by a 'motherly' initiative to control the behaviour and regulate the sexuality of the deserving working-class 'daughters' with whom they concerned themselves. This negated the

²⁸⁸ As already mentioned, there has been a tendency among historians examining the JAPGW to write 'commemorative histories' of the organization, and view its significance in isolation, as part of 'the Jewish past'. See: Bristow, *Prostitution*; Gartner, 'Anglo-Jewry'; Knepper, 'British Jews'.

culture and abrogated the independence of the girls who received their help and encouraged the alienation of the impoverished female immigrant as an undesirable citizen, unworthy of philanthropic investment. On the other hand, the organizations' anti-trafficking programmes were marked by a 'fatherly' venture to punish and suppress through the state those predatory scoundrels who seemed willing to wrong these lowly 'surrogates'. This abetted the criminalization of the male immigrant, further promoted immigration restriction and entrenched the identity of the woman as passive victim. 'Motherly' and 'fatherly' initiatives converged to cast 'the sex crime' as a problem of female weakness and culpability, of male perpetration and ingenuity, of working-class ill-breeding and, ultimately, of inferior foreign citizens.

The 'motherly' division in this system of philanthropy is evident in the NVA's International Guild whose lady attendants were to ensure at all costs the welfare of respectable, foreign female travellers, and in the JAPGW's female-run Sara Pyke House and Intermediate Home which sought to protect and nurture those vulnerable, friendless female migrants who were deemed deserving of, and who could afford, the institutions' services. Its 'fatherly' complement can be seen in the lobbying engaged in by the organizations' male luminaries for tighter legislation surrounding domestic and international prostitution, in their quest to prosecute those implicated in trafficking at home, in their advocacy of the repatriation of foreign prostitutes and criminals, and in their front line international diplomatic and organizational initiatives to suppress trafficking. This divide was acknowledged by Rev Canon Ebsworth at a meeting of the NVA in his parish of East Retford in 1906:

There were positions of [anti-trafficking] work that it was better ladies should undertake by themselves, and there were others that gentlemen could attend to better. No one could read the papers issued by the Society without realizing that that marvellous man, Mr Coote, had undertaken work that no lady could undertake so well. But...unless they did work together to stop this traffic and to help...poor deluded girls such work could not go forward.²⁸⁹

Similarly the JAPGW's 1905 Annual Report described how the work of the association was 'of a preventive as well as of a reclaiming character, international as well as

289 Cited in: *Retford Herald & Leader* (6 November 1906)

national, responding to many crying needs, teaching those who are strong to care for those who are weak and appealing to every generous feeling that is in our beings, manly or womanly'.²⁹⁰

The 'parental' programme pursued by each organization conferred some notable advantages to the women and children it was designed to help and laid many of the legal and organizational foundations of today's anti-trafficking movement. However, as this chapter will argue, it did so at a price.

Both groups were in some ways typical of the bourgeois or elite philanthropic organizations of their time. Class interest in priority to religious interest and community fidelity played the most significant part in determining their outlook and agenda. Like the major social welfare provider, the Christian-dominated Charity Organization Society, like its smaller-scale equivalent, the Jewish Board of Guardians, like scores of multi-denominational Houses of Help, reformatories and refuges, the NVA and JAPGW's philanthropic projects were conditioned by distinctions between deserving and undeserving subjects for their patronage, and concern with avoiding the evils of pauperism and dependency by restricting their charity on the basis of hegemonic ideas of race, class and gender.²⁹¹ However, the organizations cannot be typecast as proponents of pure laissez-faire individualism like many of these other groups. The politics of their grass-roots philanthropy was contrasted by the interventionist emphasis of their practical, diplomatic and legal anti-trafficking programmes. Class interest also determined the philanthropic traditions the NVA, and particularly the JAPGW, adopted. Mordechai Rozin and Eugene Black have sought to dispel the 'idealized cliché of Jewish solidarity' in their insightful works on Anglo-Jewish philanthropy and social policy in nineteenth-century Britain. As the former scholar contended in what is a refreshing recognition of the fact that Jewish philanthropy and English, Christian-leaning philanthropy often 'functioned in tandem': "Both [philanthropies] were largely unanimous in their characterization of the 'lower social orders' and in aiming to replace the values of those strata with English bourgeois values, rather than with a specifically Jewish system of traditional values". Yet, Rozin went on to remind us, 'while the Jewish

²⁹⁰ JAPGW-1905, p.8

²⁹¹ See: Lewis, J, *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain* (Brookfield: Edward Elgar, 1995), pp.1-12

elite identified itself with the general principles of English philanthropy, the selection of these principles for actual implementation was based on class interests as they appeared to the elite in the historical circumstances that prevailed'.²⁹² Specific modes of philanthropy aside, the NVA and the JAPGW chose to listen to, speak and teach the languages of the middle-class, white and English – or, specifically, the middle-class, white, Englishman - and did so assured that their actions could only have the most positive effect, for they were in the name of social purity.

We can achieve a clearer understanding of the way in which the discourses of 'white slavery' were reconfigured to reflect the changed face of trafficking and, in turn, achieve a clearer understanding of the implications of the new 'parental' response to this exploitation by analysing the ideas of gender, class and, above all, race mobilized by the NVA and JAPGW in their private and public anti-trafficking discourses. This chapter will tackle the task. It will compare and contextualise the NVA and JAPGW's representations of trafficking, the protagonists involved in such crime and the solutions to such crime. It will explore what these representations tell us about how the two organizations interpreted trafficking and will consider the wider significance of these interpretations on Britain's anti-trafficking movement, on the portrayal of female sexual exploitation, as well as on how groups such as women, the working classes and Jewish immigrants were constructed in the culture of the day. It will conclude by considering what the NVA and JAPGW's responses to trafficking tell us about both the transition from liberalism and the power exerted by philanthropic responses to moral and sexual questions between 1899 and 1910.

Motivation

Before examining the similarities uniting the NVA and JAPGW in their representations of trafficking, a fundamental point of departure between the organizations ought to be considered: their representations of the *motivation* behind their anti-trafficking programmes. Analysis of this difference provides many clues about

292 Rozin, M, *The Rich and the Poor: Jewish Philanthropic and Social Control in Nineteenth-Century London* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999) pp14-19,45-6; Black, EC, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) pp.157-8

the dynamics of, and anxieties affecting, each organization and its portrayal of trafficking.

Although, broadly speaking, both organizations vied to suppress trafficking out of a universalistic desire to eradicate the blight upon humanity by female sexual exploitation, the JAPGW was principally motivated to conduct anti-trafficking work for a reason specific to its ethno-religious identity.²⁹³ The self-proclaimed *raison d'être* of its expanded anti-trafficking work was to repair and protect the historic reputation of Jewish people for absolute purity from taint, or *chillul hashem*,²⁹⁴ that might be caused by the involvement of Jews in trafficking. The JAPGW, moreover, suggested, and often with scriptural solemnity, that it was motivated to take a *leading* role in the international side of this work for, as a group of *British* or *English* Jews, it was uniquely placed to coordinate its co-religionists across the world in cleansing the 'stain upon our Jewish honour'.²⁹⁵ In its 1907 report it declared:

we are ever watchful to safeguard the interests of Jewish girls, not only in London, but all over the country and in many parts of the world. We look upon it as a sacred duty to endeavour to restore the name of the Jewish Community the reputation it long enjoyed for chastity and moral purity, and that the world may know that Jewish teaching and Jewish faith lead to-day, as heretofore, to such results.²⁹⁶

Indeed, the JAPGW emphasized the 'alien' nature of Jews involved in trafficking and the moral superiority of English Jews. Claude Montefiore would later claim, 'no English Jew had so far forgotten his duty to England as to be engaged in this traffic'.²⁹⁷

Significantly, the JAPGW often highlighted the unimpeachable moral fibre of the Jewish majority and differentiated it from the supposedly 'unclean minority' using a language of race. Moro, focussing like many of his associates on the shame brought by the victimization of female Jews in trafficking, averred at the 1910 Jewish International Conference: '[w]e feel that the pride and honour...of our race are at stake, that we cannot allow our maidens to be debased and bought and sold as merchandise. We

293 See: Coote, *Vision*, pp.18-9; *JAPGW-1908*, p.16

294 Literally 'profanation of the name', referring to behaviour that brings shame to the belief in God or to the Jewish community.

295 *JAPGW-1911*, p.36

296 *JAPGW-1908*, p.29

297 Montefiore cited in: *The Suffragette* (11 July 1913), p.660

cannot and *will* not let them go down to ruin, misery, degradation and suffering, without a determined effort to prevent it'.²⁹⁸

Organization members also represented themselves as impelled to fight against trafficking by virtue of their very creed. According to their definition, anti-trafficking was *itself* partly a manifestation of true Judaism and, as such, inaction on the issue constituted sacrilege. 'Wisdom and humanity, common honesty and religious conviction, alike', the JAPGW insisted in its 1910 report, 'demand that Jews should nowhere pursue a policy of abstraction and denial [towards their co-religionists' involvement in trafficking]'.²⁹⁹ In turn, the organization represented its drive to lead Jews across the world in the fight against trafficking as residing in its sense of religious duty to deploy the superior leadership skills it possessed by virtue of its Britishness, in the name of the Jewish race. 'We are not here to play, to dream, to drift', Lady Battersea broke into verse to urge on behalf of her organization at the 1910 Jewish International Conference, '[w]e have hard work to do and loads to lift / Shun not the struggle, face it – 'tis God's gift / Be strong!'³⁰⁰

Thus trafficking was, to the JAPGW, not just a hideous blot upon civilization, but as member, H. Landau, branded it, a 'hideous blot on *our* civilization' that needed to be cleansed with the help of all 'good Jews', and especially *British* Jews, forthwith.³⁰¹

The organization's motivation is perhaps surprising from a group of well-connected, assimilated Jews with varying degrees of sympathy for Orthodoxy. Why would the JAPGW publicly admit to and confront their co-religionists' involvement in trafficking, let alone lead the offensive against it in the interests of Judaism, if it represented such a dangerous black spot on the reputation of the Jewish people? In Glasgow, Jewish congregation leaders refused to acknowledge the involvement of some of their co-religionists in prostitution within the confines of their synagogues for the shame and disrepute these 'transgressors' brought the Jewish faith.³⁰² Why did the JAPGW not follow the same policy? Moreover, why, specifically, would the JAPGW use ideas of the historical purity of the Jews as a race to explain its motivation behind

298 Moro cited in: *Jewish international Conference*, p.25

299 JAPGW-1911, p.36

300 Battersea cited in: *Jewish international Conference*, p.127

301 Landau, H cited in: *Ibid.* p.107

302 Braber, B, *Jews in Glasgow, 1879-1939* (London: Vallentine-Mitchell, 2007) pp.277-9

fighting trafficking and emphasize the exceptionality of the minority of Jews involved in such criminality? To answer these questions, we must look to the conditions in Britain and Continental Europe at the turn of the century that might have made such self-conscious, public vindications of Jewry seem like both a necessity and a 'sacred duty'.

The increasing number of East European Jews settling in the country from the late 1880s engendered mounting localized hostility about the immigrants' affect on their new neighbourhoods and their apparently inassimilable difference to their British neighbours. The cities outside London which played host to growing immigrant communities such as Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool each witnessed tensions of this sort at some level.³⁰³ Although an exceptionally extreme and isolated incident, a small group of Jewish immigrants employed at the ironworks in the South Wales town of Dowlais was subjected to violent assaults in September 1903, after rioting erupted led by Irish-immigrant workers and local labourers aggrieved at the economic hardship supposedly engendered by the 'aliens'.³⁰⁴ Nowhere was resentment more entrenched and politically explosive, however, than in London's East End. For decades before the influx of Jewish immigrants, the East End had been one of the most densely-populated, poverty-stricken districts of the capital. The influx exacerbated this and ignited considerable resentment.

Together with their supposedly 'disgraceful and disgusting', 'foreign' domestic habits, the impact of the burgeoning immigrant population on the local housing market represented a major grievance for local residents.³⁰⁵ The sheer number of East European Jews flocking to the area and the newcomers' willingness to live in extremely overcrowded conditions was deemed to cause increasing rent prices such to force locals from the part of London where they belonged. James William Johnson, an East End labourer, complained in 1902: 'This great influx is fast driving out the natives from

303 See: Endelman, TM, *The Jews of Britain: 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp.162-3; Lee, A, 'Aspects of the Working Class Response to the Jew in Britain 1880-1914' in Lunn, K (ed.), *Host, Immigrants and Minorities. Historical Responses to Newcomers in British Society 1870-1914* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1980), pp.107-27; Collins, KE, *Second City Jewry: The Jews of Glasgow in the Age of Expansion, 1790-1919* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives, 1990); Liedtke, R, *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester, c. 1850-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. ch.8; Buckman, J, *Immigrants and the Class Struggle. The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), ch.1; Gainer, B, *The Alien Invasion. The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p.42

304 Lee, 'Aspects', p.120

305 'Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix', P.P., 1903, Vol.2 Evidence (Cd.1742), IX (hereafter RCAI, Cd.1742) min.8967

hearth and home...Some of us have been born here...; some of us have old associations here of such a nature that we feel it a hardship to be compelled to part from [sic]'.³⁰⁶ The figure of 'the alien' as landlord was also the subject of considerable antipathy, decried for charging exorbitant rents and cramming tenants into properties - a process known as rack-renting - and ruthlessly displacing native residents in the name of profit.³⁰⁷

The principal bone of contention of East End residents towards the Jewish immigrants, however, surrounded the newcomers' activities in the local labour market and was focussed on the *male* immigrant, his perceived inferior work ethic, moral calibre, aptitude and strength. As employees, 'the pauper alien's' willingness to accept extremely low remuneration was construed as driving down the price of labour throughout the East End, pushing native workers out of their jobs or forcing them to live on below-subsistence wages and work all-hours. A Liberal Party leaflet entitled *Broken Pledges* circulated around the East End in 1896, branded the immigrant workforce, 'foreign burglars...stealing the bread and butter out of the mouths of the Englishman'.³⁰⁸ As employers, the newcomers were perceived to operate a system of sweated labour, exploiting workers and damaging local industry by shunning quality workmanship and deploying malicious and deceitful tactics. Charles Freak, leader of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, condemned the merchandise produced by 'Jew foreigner'-run workshops as 'a lot of cheap, nasty stuff that destroys the market and injures us'.³⁰⁹ The controversial doctrine of Tariff Reform, the levying of duties on overseas imports, was increasingly linked with immigration restriction, with both measures being seen by some as common sense precautions against harmful foreign forces. As Keith McClelland has argued, a man's ability to engage in skilled wage-labour such to support his dependents and have his wife keep a 'dignified home' was held among working-class men as intrinsic to his respectability.³¹⁰ That the Jewish immigrant population supposedly did neither of these things marked both the male and, by extension, the female immigrant, as disreputable. Moreover, the fact that the newcomers obstructed

306 RCAI, Cd. 1742, Min.8558

307 Sherard, *The Child Slaves*, p.xix

308 Liberal Publication Department, *Broken Pledges*, Leaflet 1713 (London: Liberal Publication Department,1896)

309 Freak, C, cited in: Wilkins, WH, *The Alien Invasion* (London: Methuen, 1892) pp.72-3

310 McClelland, K, 'Some Thoughts' pp.164-77

their *male British neighbours* from earning enough to keep a dignified home and compelled local women to negate their domestic duties to help scrape together a family-wage, signified their disrespect for respectable British masculinity and family life. East End shoe manufacturer, William Silverstone, commented in 1902, 'a respectable and honest man that wants to get an honest living and bring his family up could never compete with them'.³¹¹

The majority of the hostility directed towards the Jewish immigrant population at grass-roots level was based on the newcomers as 'aliens' as opposed to 'Jews'. However, it was nevertheless a hostility that evoked older, popular anti-Semitic representations of 'the male Jew' as a venal middleman, antithetical to Christians in his lust for profit and thus detrimental to British society. 'The male Jewish entrepreneur's' exploitation via the sweating system had been highlighted by radicals as early as the mid-century and, significantly, had been referred to as 'white slavery'. A satirical piece about a Jewish haberdashery in the popular newspaper *Reynolds Miscellany* proclaimed in 1850: 'It is this accursed system [of competition] which makes the emporium of Messrs Aaron and Sons flourish for the benefit of its proprietors...Its foundations are built on the bones of the white slaves of England, male and female...'.³¹²

A minority of bourgeois anti-alienists sought to keep this anti-Semitic heritage alive and fan grass-roots protest against the Jewish immigrant population by presenting the newcomers as a race apart, detrimental to national progress. The most notorious within this group was the activist and journalist, Arnold White, a man whose career David Glover described as 'a key exemplar in the attempt to develop a sustained intellectual rationale for the exclusion of Jews from the state and civil society'.³¹³ Drawing upon the socio-scientific discourses of thinkers such as Henry Maudsley which suggested that society was an organic process at risk of being fatally inhibited by the degenerative nature of certain races, White set about rationalizing the Jewish immigrants' innate incompatibility with British life and the need for immigration restriction to avoid the contamination of the national stock by this new sector of the

311 RCAI, Cd.1742, Min.1829

312 'The Seamstress', *Reynolds's Miscellany* (June 1850), pp.341-356

313 Glover, D, *Literature, Immigration, & Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England. A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.12

urban poor.³¹⁴ Focussing, like his peers, on ‘the male alien’ or ‘the male Jew’, White lamented the country’s open-door immigration policy and its danger to metropole and empire in his 1899 anti-alienist work, *The Modern Jew*. Using a Social Darwinist tone, he averred:

This Jewish island in the sea of English life is small today. Few trades, interests, or classes are so directly affected by it as to create misgiving in the public mind that a danger menacing to national life has begun in our midst, is growing and must be abated if sinister consequences are to be avoided.³¹⁵

Crucially, this clique perpetuated the link between ‘the Jew’ and ‘white slavery’ following the term’s re-designation as a referent of trafficking during the first wave of anti-alienism between 1880 and 1905. In 1892 the anti-alienist WH Wilkins, insisting that ‘[i]n considering the nature of Jewish immigration, allusion should also be made to a species of infamy which...has been carried on for some time past at the London Docks’, described in his work *The Alien Invasion*, the ‘[m]en-sharks, and female harpies of all descriptions [both Jewish and non-Jewish]...on the look-out for [Jewesses of considerable personal attractions] as soon as they disembark’.³¹⁶ In 1903 Major William Evans Gordon, Conservative MP for the East End borough of Stepney, featured an epilogue dedicated to cases of the ‘certain noxious activities’ related to trafficking perpetrated by immigrants in his incendiary work, *The Alien Immigrant*.³¹⁷ Moreover, as well as evoking the relationship between ‘the alien’ and direct sexual exploitation, some prominent anti-alienists mobilized languages of race to emphasize the disastrous effect of ‘the male alien sweating master’s’ exploitative practices upon ‘the English woman’, emphasizing her importance as the guarantor of national progress. In a section of *The Alien Invasion* entitled ‘Woman’s Bitter Cry’, WH Wilkins declared:

These poor creatures have no time for the pure tender delights of motherhood...or to the many other little duties which gather around the English word ‘home’...What ‘hope of our race’ can we expect from the

314 See: Pick, D, *Faces of Degeneration. A European Disorder, c.1848 – c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.214-5

315 White, A, *The Modern Jew* (New York: Frederick A Stokes, 1899), pp. xii, 180-1

316 Wilkins, *The Alien Invasion*, pp.48-9

317 Evans-Gordon, Major WE, *The Alien Immigrant* (London: William Heinemann, 1903), pp.296-302

feeble, half-starved, and wholly overworked Englishwoman, who is thus thrust into the furnace of this fierce foreign competition!³¹⁸

White, in turn, scaremongered regarding the implications of women 'having had to take to the streets [as prostitutes] because of the misery to which they have been reduced' thereby entrenching the connection between 'the male Jew', venality and female sexual exploitation.³¹⁹

Anti-Semitic propaganda did not emanate exclusively from the experience of East European Jewish immigration. The South African War of 1899-1902 generated a significant backlash by some prominent Liberal critics of the Conservative government's imperial policy and the capitalist interests that supposedly underpinned it. In his 1900 work *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects*, JA Hobson, the most outspoken of this group, contended that the conflict was being fought principally on behalf of 'a class of financial capitalists of which the foreign Jew must be taken as the leading type' who had used its disproportionate power to both covertly manipulate the South African media and buy the English government's cooperation in pursuit of profit in the Rand.³²⁰ Hobson's ideas had resonance further left of the British political spectrum, including among Christian Socialists, the Fabians who criticized the 'imperialism of capitalism' in South Africa, and Labour anti-war supporters such as Keir Hardie and John Burns.³²¹ Interpretations of the South Africa War and empire by these figures, many of whom mounted strong ideological opposition to immigration restriction, increasingly came to rehearse and endorse the generations' old calumny regarding Jewish avarice, treachery and secret influence and thus paradoxically reinforced arguments for immigration legislation. 'Nominally the rulers of South Africa are Botha and his colleagues', the British Socialist Party declared as late as 1910, 'but the real rulers are Ecksteins, Wernhers, Beits, and all the sordid crew of cosmopolitan gold-grabbers whom they represent, and in whose interests the war was fought. South Africa to-day is under the

318 Wilkins, *The Alien Invasion* p.87

319 RCAI, Cd.1742, Min.1212

320 Hobson, JA, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London: Nisbet, 1900) p.189. See also: Hobson, JA, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: Nisbet, 1902) pp.56-8; Cain, PJ, *Hobson and Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) esp. pp.85-90

321 Cain, *Hobson*, p.97

veritable rule of Mammon [demon of avarice], and a pretty hell Mammon has made of it'.³²²

Variations of the anti-Semitic leitmotifs in such propaganda had for years resonated in popular literature. Analysing George du Maurier's best-selling 1894 novel *Trilby*, Neil Davison argued that 'the male Jew' was portrayed as occupying a "dangerous 'Third Sex'". The protagonist, Svengali, a Jewish musical impresario who uses his powers of hypnosis to influence others, he suggested, demonstrates the representation of 'the male Jew' as a dangerously exploitative 'homme/femme fatale', driven to manipulation to win influence and, in particular control women.³²³ David Glover, drawing upon an impressive array of literary works in his cultural history of the Aliens Act, demonstrated that even the relatively impoverished 'male Jew' and/or 'alien' of the East End was often cast as a threatening anti-national presence in the population. Referring to Margaret Harkness' 1891 novel *In Darkest London*, he highlighted how the protagonist Jane Hardy, a factory forewoman, indicted the local aliens for underselling English workers, for exacerbating the misery in the East End through their greed and for destroying the fabric of society as a whole.³²⁴ Crucially, Glover demonstrated that not all literary representations of Jewish difference were negative, highlighting the fact that, in the 1892 narrative of East End Jewish life, *Children of the Ghetto*, Israel Zangwill depicted the male Jewish sweating-master protagonist, Bear Belcovitch, as a sentimental and generous, pillar of his community.³²⁵ 'Anti-Semitism', Glover averred, 'was part of a wide-ranging and deeply contested racial imaginary...which formed a cultural matrix that allowed the possibility of anti-alien legislation to become thinkable'.³²⁶

Alongside increasing immigration levels and the growing purchase of anti-alienist doctrines, popular support for immigration legislation came to a head in 1902 when the country's first populist movement for restriction, the British Brothers' League,

322 *Justice* (11 June 1910), p.1

323 Davison, NR, "'The Jew' as Homme/Femme Fatale, Jewish (Art)ifice, *Trilby* and Dreyfus" *Jewish Social Studies*, 8, 2/3 (Winter-Spring 2002), pp. 73-111; Du Maurier, G, *Trilby* (London: Osgood McIlvaine, 1894). See also: Valman, N, *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century British Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.210-11; Glover, *Literature*, pp.95-7

324 Glover, *Literature*, ch.2, esp. pp.69-70. Law, J, *In Darkest London* (London: W. Reeves, 1891). Harkness wrote under the pseudonym, 'John Law'. Her work originally appeared in 1889 under the title, *Captain Lobe: A Story of the Salvation Army*.

325 Glover, *Literature*, pp.76-9; Zangwill, I, *Children of the Ghetto: Being Pictures of a Peculiar People* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1892)

326 Glover, *Literature*, ch.3

was founded in the East End. Rallying supporters under the slogan 'Britain for the British', the League organized a public meeting at the People's Palace upon its inauguration in January 1902, which was attended by over 4,000 people. The following year a petition it circulated attracted no fewer than 45,000 signatures and, that November, another 4,000 strong public rally for restriction was held at the People's Palace. As David Feldman observed, it is no coincidence that the popular protest group against alien immigration was called the British *Brothers* League given the negative definitions of Jewish masculinity that ran throughout anti-alienist discourses.³²⁷ In 1902 a Royal Commission on Alien Immigration (RCAI) was sanctioned to investigate the need for immigration legislation. Unsurprisingly, given that it was presided over, and heard evidence from, a disproportionate number of restrictionists, including WE Coote, the Commission found in favour of restriction and recommended measures which formed the basis of the Aliens Bill passed in 1905.³²⁸

The enactment of immigration legislation, however, restricted neither anti-alienism nor its anti-Semitic fringe. Indeed, both evils became more profound, with a connection being drawn between 'the male alien' or 'the male Jew' and criminality. The furore generated by the Houndsditch Outrage of 1910 in which three policeman were shot dead when apprehending a group of Latvian revolutionaries robbing a jewellers as well as that surrounding a similar incident in Tottenham the year before, are testament to this re-configured focus. *The Times* used its coverage of the Outrage to voice its views on the immigration question:

Houndsditch itself is highly respectable...Nor is anything to be said against a large proportion of the population in the Whitechapel area. But it does harbour some of the worst alien anarchists and criminal who seek our too hospitable shore. And these are men who use the pistol and the knife.³²⁹

Significantly, the new wave of prejudice brought with it explicit recognition of Jews' role in trafficking. In an anonymous letter to *The Standard*, a month after the Houndsditch Outrage, Arnold White branded 'the Jew', 'a keeper of gambling halls and disorderly

³²⁷Feldman, D, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914* (Newhaven& London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp.282-5

³²⁸ In 1889, a Commons Select Committee on Immigration concluded against Restriction and a Lords Select Committee on the Sweating System found that immigration was not causing increasing industrial exploitation.

³²⁹ *The Times* (19 December 1910). For analysis of the Tottenham and Houndsditch outrages see: Glover, *Literature*, ch.3

houses, a procurer and a bully', before declaring, "[p]rocurring for the 'white slave trade' and living upon the earnings of women, are now two of the regular professions of the alien Jew".³³⁰

Anti-alienism and anti-Semitism, then, constituted diseases that, despite government concessions to restrictionists and despite the subsequent screening of immigrants from 1906, appeared to be becoming more extreme, more mainstream and, from the perspective of the country's Jewish population old and new, more dangerous. The minority Jewish involvement in trafficking could no longer remain Jews' secret shame. It was fast becoming public property in what was an increasingly intolerant society.

Further, a more virulent epidemic of hatred towards 'the Jew' was sweeping Continental Europe. Russia may have been the only state sanctioning pogroms, but institutionalized anti-Semitism was rife in most countries hosting a significant Jewish population. Perhaps the most notorious moment of popular anti-Semitism was France's Dreyfus Affair. Erupting on the cusp of the period and drawing on anti-Semitic ideas promoted by the country's former populist Boulangist movement, the Affair was a protracted scandal surrounding the alleged treason of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a bourgeois French artillery officer of Jewish descent. It stirred debate regarding 'the Jew' and the nation and roused considerable public indignation in and beyond France that would rumble on for a decade.³³¹ By the new century, the promotion and appeal of racialized anti-Semitic ideas grew in Germany with the country's pursuit of its expansionist, nationalist *Weltpolitik* agenda such that discrimination against Jews became commonplace.³³² This manifested itself in an increasing flow of incendiary intellectual anti-Semitism such as Weininger's *Sex and Character* dissertation of 1903 which featured a section denigrating 'the Jew' as innately effeminate and racially inferior, as well as in a growing number of anti-Semitic outbursts.³³³ In 1900 anti-Semitic rioting rocked the West Prussian town of Konitz and government intervention was

330 *The Standard* (30 January 1911)

331 Lindemann, AS, *The Jew Accused. Three Anti-Semitic Affairs, 1894-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp.71-6. See also: Pick, D, *Svengali's Web: The Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p.190

332 Glover, *Literature*, pp.81-4

333 Weininger, O, *Sex and Character* (London: Heinemann, 1906)

prompted after accusations of ritual murder, reminiscent of the age-old anti-Semitic blood libel calumny, were falsely levelled against two Jewish men following the death of a local (Christian) student.³³⁴ From the 1870s, in German-speaking Austria, anti-Semitic rhetoric formed the bedrock of populist politics and incited widespread violence, with the Rightist figurehead Georg Ritter von Schönerer followed by the Christian Social Party's Karl Lueger playing heavily upon 'the Jew' as a ruthless, unpatriotic capitalist, responsible for orchestrating the Great Depression, liberalism and the country's suffering under these things.³³⁵

News of the key incidents comprising this Europe-wide rising tide of anti-Semitism quickly reached Britain and made waves. The Dreyfus Affair, in particular, was the subject of not only a significant amount of press coverage in Britain but also a great deal of concern by the country's Liberal intelligentsia, its philanthropic circles and, of course, its Jewish community. As Anne Summers has shown, a number of female British philanthropists from non-Jewish as well as Jewish backgrounds were intensely interested in the Affair and actively expressed concern for Dreyfus, offering their support to his wife throughout the ordeal.³³⁶

The strain of anti-Semitism flourishing on the Continent, then, appeared in danger of gripping Britain before long. The JAPGW's motivation behind its anti-trafficking programme was not simply a question of pride and posterity but of pragmatism and anxiety. The association was motivated to publicly differentiate the 'good' Jewish majority from the 'bad' Jewish minority and so assert the traditional purity of the Jews as a race, for it represented a means of stemming the seemingly rising tide of anti-Semitic and anti-alien prejudice threatening the place of Jews in the country with contradictory evidence of Jewish contrition, Jewish conscience, Jewish humanity and, crucially, Jewish similarity. Guided by ethnocentric ideas of its superiority among its fellow Jews as a *British* organization, the JAPGW was, moreover, motivated to *lead* this Jewish vindication project because its leadership, in its eyes, represented the best means of ensuring that this rising tide was stemmed internationally. While reticent

334 Smith, H Walser, *The Butcher's Tale. Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town* (New York: WW Norton, 2002)

335 Lindemann, *The Jew*, pp.21-9

336 Summers, A, "I have written to Madame Dreyfus' British Women and the Dreyfus Affair; some ambiguities of philo-Semitism", paper at the 'Antisemitism and English culture' Conference at Birkbeck College, London, 10 July 2007

about explaining this notion in public, the organization readily conceded it to its members. Claude Montefiore reported at a meeting of the JAPGW Council in 1902:

while public opinion was being aroused as to the...existing evil, the knowledge of the fact that the traffickers in girls and women were to a very large extent Jews and Jewesses became also public property. The fact however that Jews and Jewesses were doing their utmost to combat this horrible trade would...be the best antidote for anti-Semitism and against the charged levelled by the enemies of the Jewish against the whole of Jewry.³³⁷

It seems somewhat strange – although, as we will see, not uncharacteristic - that for all the focus on ‘the male alien’ or ‘male Jew’ in anti-Semitic diatribes, it was ‘the female Jew’ the organization focussed upon as the epitome of the shame brought by trafficking to the Jewish race.

The JAPGW’s prime motivation for fighting trafficking was, however, neither as straightforward nor as altruistic as saving the *entire* Jewish population from persecution and promoting the unconditional acceptance of *all* Jews in Britain. Despite the universalistic references to the Jewish race when outlining its *raison d’être*, the JAPGW was in fact referring chiefly to a specific sector of the Jewish people. It was partly compelled to make a stand against trafficking to protect its own community, the country’s wealthy assimilated Jewish elite, from being linked with the Jewish immigrant population. When it referred to a Jewish majority, it was referring to what it deemed the Jewish *moral* majority whose social standing, economic and political interests needed protection from the stigma of the ‘alien hordes’.

Anglo-Jewry doubtlessly felt a certain obligation and loyalty to the immigrant population based on their common religion. Nevertheless, many within its number saw the newcomers as opposed to its culture, unversed in respectability and therefore potentially dangerous to its wider interests such to need regulation and containment. Ideas of class and ethnic difference underpinned this attitude. As already intimated, to Anglo-Jewry, the East European Jewish immigrants represented poor, foreign cousins who, by association, threatened the prosperous, British ‘family businesses’ it had built over generations. The JAPGW’s motivation to confront trafficking must be understood in

337 HL, JAPGW, Minutes of Council, 11 February 1902

this light. To the organization, the very problems of Jewish trafficking, of Jewish fallenness, of the increasing persecution of 'the Jew', were all problems that emanated from the immigrant population and that would endure so long as such foreigners were left uncontrolled. Intervention to suppress foreign vice and so suppress the antipathy it engendered towards the Jewish community *as a whole* was therefore imperative to protecting the status that Anglo-Jewry had earned, even with formal immigration control from 1906. It was deemed the price that had to be paid for Britain's existing Jewish community to insure itself against the shortcomings of the new Jewish arrivals. It is no coincidence that in 1907 the organization wrote of how it was 'gratifying to find that our Association is recognized, both at home and abroad, as a standing protest of *British Jews* against an evil which they seek to suppress'.³³⁸

While largely understandable and in part courageous, the JAPGW's fight against trafficking was driven by a politics that transcended the abolition of such criminality and that, in many ways, combined the care and protection of girls and women with the care and protection of social capital. Faced with the growing phenomenon of trafficking and the increasing criminalization of 'the Jewish male', the organization was spurred and guided by a politics of strategic exclusion and inclusion in which gendered, ethno- and bourgeois-centric prejudices were key. That it presented itself as motivated to spearhead the international Jewish anti-trafficking movement because, as a *British* Jewish group, it was somehow best qualified evidences the significance of this hubristic politics in its agenda.

In this considerable difference lies a similarity between the organizations. The members of the NVA did not have the fear of ethno-religious hatred hanging over them and did not have their acceptance as British citizens at stake. However, they mobilized religion in a similar way to their JAPGW peers. The NVA represented the core incentive behind its anti-trafficking initiative as the protection of the status of the world's *Christian* nations as civilized and civilizing nations, and, above all, the protection of Britain's status, being the most civilized and civilizing. In its 1910 Annual Report it branded the National Committees' regular meetings under its auspices, 'a cause for our

338 JAPGW-1907, p.41

deepest gratitude to Him who is the Father of all mankind, and whose children of many nations we seek to save from the curse of this awful slavery'.³³⁹ Indeed, Coote suggested that the NVA's work was itself 'not of man, but of God'.³⁴⁰ Although facing different pressures, the NVA and JAPGW each strove to absolve and 'civilize' their respective co-religionists, influenced in part by religious zeal and ethnocentric delusions of grandeur.

'The Trafficked'

The way in which the NVA and JAPGW each represented 'the white slave' marks one of the keenest similarities in their portrayals of trafficking and one of the biggest differences between the new discourses of 'white slavery' and those which were dominant during the Belgian Affair. Confronted with the proliferating phenomenon of trafficking, both organizations all-but dropped the former 'English Rose' protagonist. They typically cast 'the white slave' as a foreigner of unspecified ethnicity and diversified the role she could play with the introduction of two distinct types of victim.³⁴¹

Like their predecessor, the two new 'white slaves' were cast as working-class girls or women who had ended up enslaved in exploitative sex work abroad and who had sustained some degree of irreconcilable moral and physical damage by this enslavement. However, the new 'white slaves' did not inherit the respectability, the innocence or the sympathy with which 'the English rose' had been endowed. Each 'white slave' was a different type of victim and was attributed a different story of exploitation. Each was apportioned a separate, yet always partial, level of oppression and deservingness, maturity and moral decay. The focus in the representation of trafficking had shifted from the means through which trafficked girls were held in slavery to the means through which *they* had got themselves into their sorry state. Moreover, 'the trafficked' had nigh-on lost her voice. The personal testimonials that had

339 NVA1910, pp.34-5

340 Coote, *Vision*, p.19

341 Each organization, focussing on prevention, underlined the *potential* for any 'unwary' girl to succumb to trafficking; although 'the trafficked' was cast as one of two types of 'foreigner'. While the NVA and JAPGW would identify the 'white slave' as a 'Christian' and a 'Jewess' respectively when outlining their motivations, when representing trafficking itself they each applied the generic label of 'foreigner' to her, only specifying her religion or 'race' if 'political advantageous'. The transition in the 'white slave' protagonist was slower at local level, with 'the English rose' having resonance into the new century. See: *Vigilance Record* (October 1907),p.79

characterized Dyer's synthesis seldom appeared in the new discourses of 'white slavery'. The story of 'the trafficked girl' was something that a morally attuned citizen, and preferably a morally attuned *male* citizen, should relay.

'The Naive'

The first and most common of the two new 'white slave' protagonists was 'the naive foreign girl'. This protagonist was an unworldly and capricious creature who had, in her youth, credulity and lack of intelligence, left her working-class family and typically her rural hometown in the hope of embarking upon a bright new life in a city abroad. She was presented as having fallen victim because she had either succumbed to the romantic proposals and extravagant offers of a trafficker in her country and so travelled away with 'him' or, less often, had, through her misguided ambition and materialistic cravings, embarked overseas, unaccompanied and unprepared, only to succumb to such overtures en route or fall foul of a phoney Employment Bureau. Chloroform and coerced kidnap were seldom represented as having precipitated this 'white slave's' demise. Her story of exploitation started because she had assumed she could strike out in the world by herself and because she had been so naive as to allow strange men to lead her astray: She wanted too much and thought too little and had rendered herself vulnerable. While during the Belgian Affair 'the white slave' was sometimes represented as an unprotected individual who had been victimized upon leaving home to find work in the city, the onus for her subjection was always placed with her exploiters, with the choices that she had made for herself being cast as circumstantial.

In the International Guild section of its reports and in its journal, the NVA presented exhaustive case histories of 'naive foreign girls' rescued from the clutches of 'the trafficker', which emphasized the 'white slave's' self-inflicted sexual danger. 'Real life' stories of suffering became cautionary tales revealing the type of girl with whom the organization had to deal. The notion that 'the naive white slave' made herself easy prey through her craving for wealth and beautiful clothes or glamorous work as an actress or dancer characterised a significant proportion of the NVA's case-histories. In 1902, the association reported a foiled French trafficking case:

An important capture was made yesterday...and five girls saved from a shameful life in Cape Town. A quiet hotel in Rue de Clichy had been chosen by the purveyors of this human merchandise. A certain Beaucourt, and his acolyte Georges Hayum, had recruited the girls under pretext of engaging them for a Cape Town music hall [as dancers]...M.Lespine, the commissary of the police, and some detectives raided the hotel...In one room were two frightened girls, who consented, after some coaxing, to talk. They gave their names as Louise S_ and Emma R_, both aged 19.³⁴²

The following year the organization told the story of Louise Sabre, another French girl, victimized, having been promised 'plenty of money, jewels, and fine dresses'.³⁴³

The JAPGW appropriated this same plot, making only slight adjustments to reflect its focus on the Jewish dimension of trafficking. Instead of the myriad of Continental countries featuring in the NVA's discourses, it typically cast 'the naive white slave' as coming from one of the rural villages of the Pale of Settlement and highlighted the significance of the clandestine Jewish marriage or *stille huppah* in how she had brought about her predicament. It, moreover, did not place such emphasis upon England as the main hub of trafficking. 'One class of cases requires special mention', the JAPGW informed subscribers in 1905,

We refer to the people who carry on the white slave traffic...Their agents work unceasingly in the towns and villages of Russia, Roumania, Galicia, and other countries. One of their favourite methods is to lure the girls on by posing as well-to-do young men in search of a wife. Their smart appearance and persuasive manners soon gain the confidence of their intended victim and even of the girl's parents. Once the girl is gathered into their fold, their fate can be better imagined than described. She consents to marry. These men are generally too cunning to go through a proper legal and religious ceremony, though bigamy is a light matter with them, but they get the parties concerned to agree to some secret marriage.³⁴⁴

In its 1907 Report, the JAPGW lamented traffickers 'taking advantage of innocent and ignorant girls' within the country:

We have mostly to deal with foreign girls, who do not understand the requirements of the English law with regard to marriage, and if one of them has not been in this country long and has had no proper guiding hand to help her, she sees nothing wrong in the proposal of a 'Stille Chuppa', which

342 *Vigilance Record* (April 1902),p.38

343 *Vigilance Record* (August 1903),pp.3-4

344 JAPGW-1905, p.24

is probably the commencement of her downfall...When the proposal is made to the girl to travel to some foreign country, she dare not refuse, and some even go willingly to hide their disgrace from their friends...³⁴⁵

Like the NVA, the JAPGW highlighted the role played in 'the naive foreign white slave's' demise by her desire for glamour and luxury and referred to the 'dazzling promises of good situations and large wages' that induced poor Jewish girls from the Pale to place their confidence in the trafficker.³⁴⁶

Indeed, the JAPGW's focus throughout its public discourses on the 'undecipherable' or, as it often called them, 'imperfect' addresses given its travellers' aid workers by young, unaccompanied female travellers is indicative of this notion of the credulity, ill-conceived ambition and sheer foreignness of 'the type of working-class girl who is trafficked'. The organization incorporated copies of these crudely written and phonetically-spelled addresses, usually with accompanying condescending commentary, in the majority of its annual reports. 'It might be thought that when the girls arrive with the addresses written out and safely treasured the Dock Agent's work would be a comparatively simple one', the JAPGW declared when reflecting upon its work in 1898,

but this is not always the case. It would puzzle many of our readers if they were asked to conduct a girl to: -

No.5, Quns Beldnksgs, Goshe St Betinalen, gren Rout E, London England

... It required some ingenuity on the part of Sternheim to recognise the [address as]:-

Queen's Buildings, Gossett Street, Bethnal Green Road.³⁴⁷

Crucially, 'the naive foreign white slave's' story of exploitation was most often portrayed by each organization as starting not simply because the girl in question had unrealistic aspirations, had left home and had foolishly placed her trust in an unsuitable man but because she had been *allowed* to do all of these things. The new 'white slave' was represented as a foreign working-class girl who had found herself a victim of trafficking because she had come from a household that had not afforded her an adequate amount of protection, nurturing, moral guidance and often also affection and

345 JAPGW-1907, pp.21-3

346 JAPGW-1905, p.4

347 JAPGW1898, p.52

opportunity. She had been brought up by parents that shared her mental and moral defects. She had been, as it was usually interpreted, under-mothered. In the final sentence of the case history of the Belgian run-away-turned-trafficking victim 'CB', the NVA stressed that following her rescue, '[o]ne of our workers took the girl back to her parents in Belgium, who, until the receipt of our telegram, had been in total ignorance of her escapade'.³⁴⁸ Similarly, in his RCAI testimonial, Coote emphasized the neglectful nature of the victim's father, suggesting that such 'unfatherly' desertion had led directly to his daughter's ensnarement and was intimately linked to his social status:

Just recently...a girl was brought from Paris, and her father came over to find her...The father had not the remotest idea she was doing anything wrong...She had been wooed, as she thought, in Paris, and as the father understood she was coming over here to get married, but...we found her at a flat at something like a rental of over £100 – this girl, aged 19. She was a shoemaker's daughter in Paris.³⁴⁹

That such portrayals featured no mother figure is significant. Parental neglect was read as maternal neglect by the NVA, the mother being seen as *the* figure responsible for nurturing her offspring. As Percy Corkhill, a Liverpoolian philanthropist and NVA supporter was later reported to have stated at a local meeting, '[m]uch has been said of the need for mothers warning their daughters of the evils of the world but...there are thousands of parents as ignorant of the terrible traps of vice as their own children'.³⁵⁰

The JAPGW laboured this notion. It incorporated moralistic pronouncements about 'the trafficked girl's' 'faulty upbringing' into its objective accounts of her path to victimhood, bringing 'the white slave's' parents to stand under the spotlight of blame as both the source of their daughter's weakness to trafficking and the enablers of her recruitment by the trafficker. It is no accident that the JAPGW chose to describe the girls arriving unaccompanied at the country's ports as 'unprotected' and in an urgent warning in 1891 chose the phrase 'of poor parentage' - a term that could connote social class as well as quality - to describe the foreign Jewish girl who was prone to being trafficked.³⁵¹ Addressing the 1910 Jewish International Conference, Moro declared:

348 *NVA1908*, p.11

349 Coote, RCAI, Cd.1742, min. 12588

350 Corkhill, P cited in: *Vigilance Record* (May 1911), p.34

351 See: *Vigilance Record* (August 1891), pp.80-1

We know that agents of these vile traffickers [of Russia and Roumania] induce girls to leave their homes under the pretence that they will obtain remunerative situations in other countries. In many instances these villains offer them marriage. Their ignorant and credulous parents imagine that their daughters' future has been secured, and lend a too-willing ear to the representations of these miscreants. They do not trouble to inquire into the character and antecedents of the suitors. They are in total ignorance of the existence of this trade and its wide ramifications.³⁵²

The NVA and JAPGW, then, each cast 'the naive foreign white slave' as a victim of not only her exploiter but also her blind ambition and inadequate upbringing, who was deserving of assistance but not so deserving that the assistance afforded her should be without caveats pertaining to her rehabilitation, re-education or repatriation.

'The Vicious'

The second of the two new 'white slaves' was the 'vicious female foreigner'. This protagonist, unlike her counterpart, was most often an older girl or woman who came from not simply the working class but a substratum therein. She had left her country with the deliberate intention of pursuing a vocation in vice, *knowing*, to an extent, what might be in store for her but accepting it and the 'easy life' that came from it nevertheless. She was portrayed as possessing a natural proclivity for wantonness such that she had allowed herself to become a victim either through a minimum amount of coaxing by a trafficker, whether in her country of origin or en route to her destination, or - as was usually the case - after having gravitated towards a trafficker or his accomplices of her own volition in what amounted to physically unassisted trafficking. Whichever scenario, she had accepted an invitation of work with her eyes wide open to the fact that she was entering into prostitution of some description. Unlike her 'naive' counterpart, she was often explicitly labelled foreign - or in certain cases, 'alien' - and was more likely to be represented as a prostitute who had, somewhere along the line, succumbed to trafficking as opposed to a trafficking victim who had, following a specific incident, been rendered a prostitute. Crucially, 'the vicious white slave' was usually evoked in conjunction with her status as an immigrant either trying to enter, or having gained entry into, the country for the purpose of pursuing her immoral vocation. She

352 Moro cited in: JAPGW, Jewish International Conference, pp.93-4

was cast as a dangerous other who had arrived in England because of the greater comfort (rather than material luxury per se) on offer there for those of her sort and was hostile to leaving.

The NVA diverted considerable attention to constructing 'the vicious foreign white slave', especially in the run-up to the Aliens Act. In his RCAI testimonial, Coote focussed on highlighting the evils of this protagonist. He outlined the two types of woman that ended up as 'the vicious white slave' and the separate scenarios by which they succumbed to their fate, ascribing a different age group and status within the working class to each woman according to the level of consent she had given in her treatment:

There are two classes. First of all those who come of their own accord, because they get greater facilities for carrying on their trade, and those who are brought over by 'souteneurs'...and are thrown on the streets and kept there. The first class of women...to a very large extent, have already become demoralized in their own countries, and for obvious reasons leave their own countries, and come here; the other class are much younger women, and they are brought over and are very valuable products for the souteneurs...³⁵³

These two classes of women, Coote suggested, although arriving at their predicament through a different root, had entered 'white slavery' because they pursued what amounted to the same immoral calling and so merged when in the country to form a single, exceptionally vicious and noxious substratum of professional prostitutes who had succumbed to trafficking. Referring to all foreigners operating as prostitutes in England, he urged for action against, 'women of this class, who come over here simply for the purpose of pursuing this occupation', adding '[i]t is not that they err or slip into it, but they come deliberately to carry on this business, which is inimical to the welfare of every section of the community'.³⁵⁴

The NVA, moreover, portrayed 'the vicious foreign white slave' in implicitly racial terms. It cast her proclivity towards vice and avarice as innate and the ever-increasing presence of her immoral species in the population as inevitably resulting in the contamination of the moral fibre of the national body. It thereby presented her

353 Coote, RCAI, Cd. 1742, min. 12581

354 Ibid. min. 12596

wholesale removal from the country, her 'return to sender', as both imperative to national welfare and, given the foreignness of her vice, a matter far more pressing than removing English prostitutes from the streets. This was so before and after the Aliens Act. Having proudly drawn attention to his organization's contribution to the legislation, Bunting declared of the Act in 1906:

We hope that the same thing will be done [as with foreign bullies] in regard to some of the foreign women who resort to Piccadilly and the West End, and who, in the judgment of all who understand Rescue Work, do a great deal to demoralise even our worst characters. We believe that if some part of the West End could be relieved of the German, French and Belgian women who haunt our streets, by means of this Act, it would tend to the purification of our city.³⁵⁵

Understandably considering its motivation, the JAPGW paid less attention to 'the vicious white slave' and typically represented her without the same amount of antipathy or racialized content. She, as with the NVA, was portrayed as one of two types of woman who constituted a single, undesirable and undeserving sub-class. The first and least prevalent type of woman was cast as a vicious 'elder sister' of 'the naive white slave' who possessed many of the mental deficiencies of her 'sibling' but lacked her morality and sexual innocence. She was portrayed as succumbing to trafficking because she had the idea of working as a prostitute put in her head by 'the trafficker' and had wilfully accepted 'his' offer of employment. 'Our work', the organization wrote in its 1904 report, 'draws our attention to other countries; it is, and must be, international...The victims are often very weak, ignorant and helpless, sometimes not unwilling to be victims, constantly devoid of moral fibre, lacking religious teaching, of low education'.³⁵⁶ This type of 'vicious foreign white slave' was not always represented by the JAPGW in connection with her status as an immigrant.

The other type, however, was represented exclusively as an 'alien'. The JAPGW's second and most prevalent 'vicious foreign white slave' was the older girl who had entered Britain and accepted 'the trafficker's' job offer to pursue her vocation in foreign vice, whether in or outside the country, with the best possible return. The JAPGW also represented this figure as detrimental to society, or at least Anglo-Jewish society, and

³⁵⁵ *Vigilance Record* (May 1906), p.38

³⁵⁶ *JAPGW-1904*, pp.7-8

requiring expulsion post haste. While supporting certain clauses of the Aliens Act, the organization advocated the removal of its immoral female co-religionists from the country via its own mechanisms. 'There was much discussion concerning the number of foreign girls who come over from abroad...leading immoral lives who are not proper in nature for either of our houses', the JAPGW reported in November 1896, '...[s]ome steps must be taken [by us] to prevent the constant arrivals of such girls'. Its minutes went on to declare,

It was proposed...that Mrs Harris [Sara Pyke House worker] should inform the girls...if she should strongly suspect their respectability, that they could not be kept either in SP [Sara Pyke] or in Charcroft House, but must be sent away...It was proposed...that the names and addresses of the girls who come over here...who are living immoral lives should be sent to the Rabbis of their own towns and they be requested to take every step they can to prevent others from following them to England.³⁵⁷

While Lady Battersea tended to represent a more sympathetic view of her foreign co-religionists brought to work as prostitutes in London, emphasizing her concern that their younger counterparts did not share their fate, she was in a minority.³⁵⁸ The JAPGW highlighted a resolution made at the 1904 Congress that advocated the various National Committees 'hindering the recruiting in their respective countries of the foreign feminine element of evil and facilitating the rehabilitation of the victims of the traffic and of prostitution', thus presenting 'the vicious white slave' as less deserving than other trafficked women.³⁵⁹

This vicious foreign protagonist was, however, still cast by the NVA and JAPGW as a victim held in an exploitative form of commercialized sex abroad. Nevertheless, she was cast as a detestable and undeserving half-victim, a marginal 'white slave', because she had all-but volunteered for victimhood and was unrepentant about her fallenness. Bunting made this concept clear when addressing the 1899 Congress:

there are not a few cases in which the girls do know, before they start, what business they are going to. The procuress in London looks out for likely girls already on the streets, and holds out to them the hope of a still easier life and larger profits in some foreign or colonial city. These cases do not in an

357 HL, JAPGW, Third Minute Book, 6 November 1896

358 See: Battersea cited in: JAPGW, *Jewish International Conference*, pp.131-2

359 JAPGW-1906, p.31

equal degree appeal to our sense of indignation, but into these also the element of fraud enters; none the less they are sold, and...[it] comes to the same thing. It is still practically an immoral international traffic in human flesh.³⁶⁰

Equally, the JAPGW acknowledged that, '[s]ome girls go knowingly [abroad with traffickers], lured by the promise of ease and luxury...But they, too, are victims. They know nothing of the misery, debasement and slavery awaiting them'.³⁶¹

As with her 'naive' counterpart, this 'white slave' was suggested to have succumbed not just because of *her* flaws but because of those of her pedigree. However, unlike the more sympathetic victim, the supposed inadequacy of the parenting she received was not subjected to protracted explanation. Indeed, with the exception of the JAPGW's 'immoral sister' figure, the organizations' representations of 'the vicious white slave' are marked by a conspicuous absence of references to her family and upbringing. Her story of exploitation started with her saying 'yes' to 'the trafficker'. Her immorality was cast as natural. Thus through their silences and racialization of her fatal flaws, the NVA and JAPGW suggest that 'the vicious white slave' succumbed to victimhood because she came from the sort of stock whose daughters *would* end up in vice and was born of a woman who was probably as innately corrupt and corruptive as herself. She was un-mothered. It is perhaps no coincidence that the JAPGW spoke of 'ensuring the safety of the homes...of the poor'.³⁶² To the organizations, this type of 'white slave' was as much a victim of her fetid stock as she was a victim of her exploiter, and therefore was deserving of little more charity than a one-way Steamship ticket and some 'friendly advice' to leave the country, or from 1906, a government-obliged repatriation.

Each organization did relate the unfortunate nature of both types of 'white slave' that had led to their victimhood with the poverty and/or discrimination they might have faced in their home countries. Commending the efforts made by the JLS 'to protect foreign girls on their arrival at the docks [in London]', the NVA took the opportunity in its 1891 annual report to laud the fact that the young women who had

360 Moro cited in: NVA, *Transactions*, p.67

361 JAPGW-1904, pp.22-3

362 JAPGW-1908, p.14

no friends in the city 'but [who] are seeking shelter from the fierce persecutions of their own mistaken rulers' were offered 'the temporary shelter provided by these excellent ladies'.³⁶³ The JAPGW considered the wider, structural factors behind the two types of 'white slave' falling victim. At the 1910 Jewish International Conference, the organization and its kindred Jewish associations debated the relationship between the economic deprivation of oppressed Jews in the Pale and trafficking, and attended to the facets of Jewish culture and Judaic Law regarding purity, the education of women and marriage that might have facilitated 'the naive' and 'the vicious' foreigners' victimhood. Echoing a sentiment conveyed by many of his colleagues, Chief Rabbi Adler declared:

We can trace this deplorable change [the increase in Jewish trafficking] directly to the recrudescence of active Russian persecutions in 1881. We are deeply grieved, but we cannot be surprised if ill-treatment, oppression 'that maketh a wise man mad', defective education, persistent exclusion from honourable pursuits and consequent fear of starvation drive men and women to reprehensible means of earning a livelihood.³⁶⁴

However, the NVA and the JAPGW nevertheless presented poverty, persecution, and in the JAPGW's case, Judaic law, as merely contributory factors in the two 'white slave's' 'predicaments'. What they credited these evils with was the exacerbation and facilitation of the 'natural inferiority' of each 'white slave' such to render her even more vulnerable to trafficking. Mrs Henry Fawcett told the 1899 Congress, '[t]he cruel persecution of Jews in Russia, has, I am informed, been the cause of a terrible increase in the number of Russian Jewesses who have been the victims of the white slave trade'.³⁶⁵ Similarly, the JAPGW averred regarding 'the naive foreign white slave': 'Extreme poverty and miserable environment on the one hand, the seductive tongue and the vision of pleasure and plenty on the other. It is easy to imagine which is likely to appeal more to a hungry, weak-minded or desperate girl'.³⁶⁶

To the two organizations, 'the naive foreign girl' was duped, and her 'vicious' counterpart walked consentingly, into trafficking because they had neither the money

363 NVA1891, p.28

364 Chief Rabbi Adler cited in: JAPGW, *Jewish international Conference*, p.93

365 Fawcett, M, *International Congress: The White Slave Trade...Paper read June, 1899* (London:NVA,1899), p.2

366 JAPGW-1911, p.24

nor, in the eyes of the JAPGW, were immersed in a religious culture of sufficient value, to avoid victimhood.

The NVA and JAPGW, then, responded to the fact that increasing numbers of women and girls fleeing Continental Europe in the wake of economic hardship and often persecution were being exploited in trafficking with what, to Josephine Butler and her old feminist vanguard must have seemed like iconoclasm. They toppled the pedestal on which the working-class figure of 'the white slave' had been placed during the Belgian Affair to reveal her as having feet of clay. They each brought 'the white slave' down from her lofty position of immaculate victimhood and total worthiness to represent the two new faces of 'the trafficked' as belonging to women or girls who had, through their intrinsic shortcomings and their defective upbringings, facilitated their own victimhood and who had, as such, compromised the extent to which they were deserving of help. This is not to say that the figure of 'the white slave' had suddenly become credited with agency in her own destiny but rather was portrayed as having succumbed to victimhood through different and less masculinized forces. 'The young traveller' was partly responsible for becoming a victim because she was rendered passive to 'the trafficker' by her naivety, misguided ambition and lack of parental guidance. That her story was so often told incidentally, that is, through a narrative focussed on 'the trafficker' as the principal agent of change, reinforced this notion of 'the white slave's agency in passivity'. Equally, her 'vicious' counterpart was largely responsible for becoming a victim because she, while often electing to enter into vice, was driven by inherited natural impulses beyond her control that effectively rendered her passive to 'the trafficker'. '[P]lease bear in mind', Moro urged his co-religionists at the 1910 Jewish Conference, 'that almost invariably for each girl reduced to prostitution, a procurer, a bully, a brothel-keeper and their numerous allies have been concerned in her downfall'.³⁶⁷ The NVA and JAPGW may have taken the apparently progressive step of recognizing that a woman's consent to work as a prostitute did not preclude her from having been sexually exploited, but they did so whilst suggesting that her consent was

367 JAPGW, *Jewish international Conference*, p.34

both underpinned by passivity and was indicative of her defective moral fibre and therefore her unworthiness of sympathy. It is both highly fitting and ironic that the NVA's telegraphic address was 'CHIVALRY'.

Acting with a distinct lack of charity, the NVA and JAPGW each chose to overlook the fact that the poverty that most, and the persecution that many, trafficked women endured in their countries of origin might have been a prime reason for them wanting - or *needing* - to accept a trafficker's offer of employment. Each chose to overlook the fact that, as leading Jewish feminists such as the leader of Germany's Jüdischer Frauenbund, Bertha Pappenheim contended at the time and historians like Linda Gordon Kuzmack have since suggested, the socio-religious culture from which a considerable portion of these women and girls came *itself* rendered them exceptionally vulnerable to entering and staying in organized sexual exploitation.³⁶⁸ Too often the organizations interpreted 'the white slave's' eagerness to flee her country and earn a living as, first and foremost, evidence of either her extreme vanity and materialism or extreme vice and malignity. The JAPGW put forward a more broad-minded, sympathetic and realistic representation of the way in which women and girls came to be trafficked but it too focussed on these fatal flaws. It, the representative of female Jews and a specialist in Jewish culture, acknowledged but chose to marginalize the fact that Judaism's stipulation of the purity of its female members, as Bristow has argued in relation to Orthodox East European Jewry and trafficking, cultivated an ignorance of sex and naivety among Jewish girls, which, together with the position of weakness of 'the second sex' in Orthodox law, abetted 'the trafficker'.³⁶⁹ It marginalized the significance of what Kuzmack has described in her consideration of stille huppah as the Orthodox stipulations regarding marriage and divorce disadvantaging women such to facilitate

368 As opposed to the silence that typically surrounded the subject in the JAPGW, Bertha Pappenheim, together with a number of her acolytes in the Jüdischer Frauenbund, condemned Orthodox Judaism for relegating East European women to an inferior social and religious status in their local communities, and for allowing them to remain academically, socially and sexually ill-educated. The validity of Pappenheim's arguments on this subject – and particularly those concerning Orthodox religion pushing girls into a position of legal and religious inferiority such as to render the stille huppah a highly effective and dangerous form of entrapment - have been suggested by Edward Bristow and, albeit in less detail, Linda Gordon Kuzmack, when assessing the question of trafficking within the East European Jewish community. For an insightful analysis of Pappenheim's ideas in relation to Orthodox religion and prostitution see: Kaplan, M, *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany: The Campaigns of the Jüdischer Frauenbund, 1904-1938* (Westport, Conn. & London: Greenwood, 1979), pp.3, 115-7; Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp.51, 103-6; Kuzmack, Gordon L, *Woman's Cause. The Jewish Woman's Movement in England and the United States, 1881-1933* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1990), p.57

369 Bristow, *Prostitution*, p.51

traffickers attaining and holding onto their prey. It marginalized the possibility that the Jewish culture of consulting *Shadchans* or marriage brokers helped traffickers perpetrate exploitation by perpetuating the air of mystery surrounding romantic relationships among young Jews and endowing legitimacy to phoney romantic proposals.³⁷⁰ Similarly, the NVA chose to overlook the possibility that the Christian culture it endorsed might in some way have facilitated women and girl's entrance into, and participation in, trafficking. To the organizations, 'white slaves' became 'white slaves' because they, thanks to their mothers, either knew too little about sex and cared too much about 'fine dress' or knew too much about sex and cared too little about practising their immoral calling. They were pathetic angels or perverse she-devils. Their burden was something that should not be lifted from them without due suspicion and investigation as to their worthiness.

Ideas of ethnocentricity and class-bias underpin this reconfiguration. The new 'white slaves' were presented as having allowed themselves to become victims not simply because they were girls from what were assumed to be unprotected working-class backgrounds and who behaved in supposedly irresponsible working-class ways, but also because they were working-class *foreigners*. By excluding the former figure of 'the English white slave' from the role of injured party, the NVA and JAPGW cast trafficking as a singularly foreign working-class problem and, by extension, cast the acute and uncorrected 'naivety' or 'innate wantonness' of trafficking victims as singularly foreign working-class dispositions. Certainly, the global expansion of trafficking resulted in 'foreign girls' coming to represent the majority of those affected by such exploitation. The fact that the NVA and JAPGW did not tend to portray English girls as succumbing to trafficking is not in itself problematic. Rather, it was that they identified 'white slaves' as un-English females *and* cast them as having a certain set of inherent characteristics that induced their predicament which allowed trafficking to be presented as this foreign burden founded on foreign, working-class weaknesses. What it was about 'the white slave's' foreignness that rendered her vulnerable, apart from its alleged patent inferiority to Englishness, neither organization explained. The NVA and JAPGW simply

370 Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, p.57; Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp.103-6

worked according to the equation that, where trafficking was concerned, poor plus non-English plus female equalled either under-mothered, naive and materialistic 'sitting duck' deserving of some assistance or un-mothered, vicious and corruptive willing recruit, deserving of little. They thus issued a plea to their respective audiences to 'lock up your daughters' to prevent foreign ways infiltrating the nation's families and rendering English girls vulnerable to victimhood.

But there is more to observe. Further scrutiny of the NVA and JAPGW's portrayal of the two new types of 'white slave' provides a keen insight into the politics impacting upon, and the wider significance of, the organization's representations of trafficking. It demonstrates that, through the portrayal of 'the trafficked', the languages of 'white slavery' came to be inflected by, and endorse, three broader discourses which each had considerable currency in the culture of the day and so came to constitute far more than simply a statement of the need for action against trafficking.

Working-Class Women's Independence

The first of which was a discourse of criticism of women and girl's claims to independence. It was underscored by anxieties regarding working-class females' sexuality and individualist pursuit of social mobility. By portraying 'the naive white slave' as having fallen victim because she travelled away from home in search of a brighter life and a well-paid job, the NVA and JAPGW situate her desire to eschew domesticity for an unsuitable position in public life and the autonomy of wage labour as, along with her willingness to accept the advances of strange men, the root of her predicament. They cast her as credulous and materialistic *because* she sought to claim for herself a status that did not befit her, partake in a sexuality that was not normative, make use of technologies that were not designed for her, and encroach upon a domain that was not meant for her, but for men or women sufficiently respectable (and moneyed) to know their place. She was so flawed *because* she was trying to move physically and materially beyond her station, beyond her gendered, class identity and youth, beyond her domestic duties, sex role and dependence upon a father or husband in a bourgeois- and male-dominated society. That this 'white slave' might have been acting out of rational ambition or sheer necessity was given little credence. Her pursuit of independence and

a stake in civil society was, to the organizations, a misjudgement born of the folly of her youth and, as such, could only have the most dangerous consequences. 'It is on her arrival at a foreign railway station', the NVA declared in a typical rehearsal of preventive dogma in 1909,

that the young woman who has left her home for the first time begins to realise a sense of utter loneliness and a depression...She leaves her railway compartment half dazed with wonder at the rush and the strange sounds of the language she does not understand. At such a time, the person who approaches her with kind words, speaking her language, whether man or woman, will be...confidingly followed wherever he or she proposes to take her.³⁷¹

The NVA and JAPGW were evoking a working-class subsection of a broader, contemporary discourse which emphasized the dangers of the increasing independence, material and sexual, sought by and available to women and girls. When examining the panic surrounding the changing role of women in turn-of-the-century society, many gender historians have focussed on the middle-class 'new woman' and the responses provoked by her rejection of the traditional boundaries ascribed her sex. However, as Angelique Richardson and Chris Wilkins have suggested, the discourses of women's independence also featured working-class protagonists.³⁷² Like 'the new woman', 'the working-class girl' with a pretension to break free from domesticity and the boundaries of traditional femininity was represented as a liability whose presence in the population posed a threat to established gender norms, family life and therefore society at large. Her difference was often read as her degeneracy as a female in line with medico-scientific discourses. Her lack of entitlement to assume the position in society she was trying to achieve was thus portrayed as empirical and, rather like the figure of 'the alien', her apparent danger discussed in terms of national efficiency. The class of this protagonist mattered. That she was a *working-class* woman striving for independence, Sally Ledger has argued regarding working women's militant trade unionism during the fin de siècle, gave rise to anxieties over the danger she might bring to existing class relations and, specifically, to the dominance of the bourgeoisie and particularly its male

371 NVA1909, p.24

372 Richardson, A & Wilkins, C (eds.) *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin de Siècle Feminisms* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). See also: 'Feminist & Anti-Feminist Encounters in Edwardian Britain' *Historical Research*, 78:201 (August 2005), pp.377-99

members.³⁷³ Her youth and implicit lack of education as a socially ambitious pretender was juxtaposed, and seen as an affront, to the experience and erudition of this privileged social tier, making her liable to a vehement and racialized dressing-down. That the organizations represent 'the naive white slave' *aspiring* to flee to an independent role in the public sphere as an innocent liability and 'the vicious white slave' *already assuming* a level of autonomy in this domain as innately flawed and dangerous, seemingly endorses this racial theory.

A critique of modernity as the enabler of women's independence was also intrinsic to this discourse and to the NVA and JAPGW's respective evocations of it. Crucial in 'the naive foreign traveller's' demise in each organization's account was her willingness to take the opportunities presented her by modern advancements in transport and diversifications in the labour market regarding women's employment simply because they were on offer to her. She allowed herself to become a victim in her quest for independence because she was too naive and superficial to discern between the advantages and disadvantages proffered by modern times and make the right choices, and particularly the right *moral* choices, for herself. She, through her immanence and materialism in a modern era of declining morality and increasing secularization, of decadence and degeneration, did not have the capacity to realise that all that glistened was not gold.

This attitude can be seen most graphically in 'the naive white slave's' portrayal as being motivated to leave home to pursue a glamorous job overseas in the newly-expanded entertainment industry, only to be ensnared. In constructing this scene, the two organizations attribute their female protagonist's dangerous desire for independence as prompted not simply by her failing but by the corruptive allure of the trappings of modern life to girls of her unfortunate disposition. Having lamented the danger befalling girls 'attracted by the glamour of the stage', Bullock continues in his 1913 memorandum on trafficking, with characteristic scepticism:

To all such instances it has become the fashion to attach the stigma of the white slave traffic but it is not reasonable to suppose that with the modern desire for independence and liberty of action which has become a

373 Ledger, S, *Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp.47-8

characteristic of women, it is not only the man who is to blame for some of the deplorable consequences which follow in the search for a free and uncontrolled life?...[I]t is notorious that the change that has come over the habits, thoughts and employments of women has led them into dangers they little realize...moral and religious education and training should be provided to form the character of the men and women of the day.³⁷⁴

The figure of the actress, in particular, Christopher Kent has argued, carried a 'symbolic importance that transcended mere numbers' throughout turn-of-the-century culture both to girls craving independence and to those concerned with locating and preventing sexual danger.³⁷⁵ That many 'white slaves' in the organizations' discourses were girls from rural villages who were recruited by 'the trafficker' upon offer of work in the city, should also be read as, in part, a rehearsal of the critique of women's independence in modern times. As Walkowitz has demonstrated, in turn-of-the-century Britain, the modern metropolis symbolized a terrain which both allured and acted to corrupt the young, unsuspecting woman with misguided pretensions of independence.³⁷⁶ 'The unwary young traveller is a likely prey of the white slave trader', the International Guild declared in 1910, 'so many contingencies arise from one country to another...Railway connections are missed, or addresses are lost, and not infrequently purses also...Here is the opportunity of the unscrupulous, who are ever on the alert to ensnare the friendless and foolish young women'.³⁷⁷ That the NVA and JAPGW rarely portrayed English girls as being inclined towards such dangerous social and geographic mobility cast it as the disposition of inferior, foreign working-class girls. The new discourses of 'white slavery' thus came to function as a cautionary tale prescribing the parameters that should, and the liberties that should not, be allowed the nation's daughters if they were to avoid claiming a stake in the foreign girl's burden. Anti-trafficking had become about liberating the enslaved woman by chastising the free.

374 WL, *Traffic in Women Publications*, Bullock, 'White-Slave Traffic', p.7

375 Kent, C, 'Image and Reality: the Actress in Society' in Vicinus, M (ed.), *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977), pp.94-6

376 See: Walkowitz, *City*, esp. chs 1-3

377 *NVA1910*, p.11

Anti-Alienism & Anti-Semitism

The second discourse evoked by the NVA and JAPGW was a discourse of criticism of the unrestricted, or too loosely restricted, nature of immigration. In casting 'the vicious foreign woman' as a depraved outsider who not only gravitated towards a career in vice but came to the country expressly to pursue her immoral vocation, the organizations were fanning anti-alienist, if not also anti-Semitic, prejudices. Whether referring to a *Jewish* victim of trafficking or not, they, albeit to a lesser extent in the JAPGW's case, fuelled the conviction that 'the alien' or 'immigrant Jew' constituted a pathological element at odds with national progress.

As we have seen, anti-alienist rhetoric focussed upon 'the male alien' or 'the male Jew' when arguing for the revision of the country's immigration policy, with 'the female alien' or 'the female Jew' being marginalized. However, the NVA and JAPGW's representation of 'the vicious foreign white slave' as congenitally corrupt *as a woman*, irrepressibly venal and instinctively drawn to the male sexual exploiter that was 'the trafficker' nevertheless evoked - and developed - some of the key pillars of this rhetoric, including its most anti-Semitic elements. It, on one hand, substantiated the notion that 'the male alien' or 'Jew' was innately prone to occupying a dangerous 'third sex' and directing his libido at profit, whilst arguing that this was not exclusively the case in the male of the species. On the other hand, it substantiated the notion that 'the male alien' or 'Jew' was a perverse allurer and manipulator of women, whilst showing that this figure would stoop so low as to inflict his perversity on the women of his own race. That the two organizations portrayed the fact that 'the vicious white slave's' status as a member of a subclass lay at the heart of her inferiority, moreover, evoked images of 'the pauper (male) alien' and reinforced the 'common sense' of the extension of prejudice they were advocating. Thus the NVA and JAPGW each used the marginalized figure of 'the female alien' or 'the female Jew' to not only reinforce the prejudice that attended her male counterpart in anti-alienist and anti-Semitic discourses but also make a case for her being viewed alongside him as a hindrance to national progress against whose presence in the country the government should legislate. Moreover, that they typically invoked her in relation to her status as an immigrant desirous of entering

England and, in the NVA's case, implied that the country was the principal hub of trafficking endorsed anti-alienist convictions of the country representing the prime, deliberately-targeted destination of 'the undesirable alien'.

This is unsurprising given the NVA's vehement campaign against 'the vicious foreigner' before and after the Aliens Act. On inspection, though, it might seem perverse that the members of the JAPGW incorporated such rhetoric in their discourses given their *raison d'être*. However, when their representation of 'the white slave' is examined in relation to the wider politics of the organization, it can be understood that their negative anti-alienist representation of 'the foreigner' and particularly of 'the foreign woman' or 'the Jewess' constitutes another example of their attempt to exonerate the British Jewish majority by stressing the exceptionality of the fallen minority. Anti-trafficking had become, whether intentionally or not, anti-alienist and anti-Semitic propaganda.

Working-Class Life

The third and dominant discourse that was appropriated by the organizations was intimately related to the other two. It was a discourse of criticism of working-class domesticity, morality and ultimately, of the working-class populous itself, and above all its female members. By portraying a lack of parental or 'motherly' intervention as integral to the two working-class 'white slave' protagonists having fallen victim, the NVA and JAPGW establish a causal relationship between a girl's *class*, her upbringing and her susceptibility to sexual exploitation. They suggest that working-class family-units, and particularly mothers being the putative overseers of domesticity, provided a detrimental lack of protection and nurturing for their children, and particularly daughters, being members of 'the weaker sex'. To them, not only 'the trafficked girl's' ethnicity but also her class experience and upbringing were distinctly foreign and, as such, somehow inferior.

Moreover, by identifying 'the vicious white slave' as coming from a substratum of the working class, the organizations suggest that the poorer the working-class mother, the greater the likelihood of her natural immorality and disinclination to care for her offspring and therefore the greater likelihood of her daughters inheriting her

immorality wholesale, instinctively veering towards sexual danger and rendering themselves prone to trafficking. That the characteristics of 'the vicious white slave' were effectively racialized made this idea seem empirical. In the organizations' eyes, material wealth dictated moral fibre such that the working classes and the impoverished were, on a relative scale, priced out of adequate standards of domesticity and so simply could not rear children with the same values – or indeed *of* the same value - as the middle classes. It is no coincidence that both organizations present 'the naive foreign white slave' as the more deserving of the two types of trafficking victim. She implicitly came from the family with more money so, according to their logic, had the better upbringing and was, as such, literally worth more philanthropic investment. That each of the 'white slave' protagonists was foreign in nationality enhanced the relative foreignness of her material circumstances and upbringing.

The NVA and JAPGW were thus rehearsing a discourse disseminated by many of their bourgeois philanthropic peers which presented the protection, moral education, and sexual regulation of the population's poorest girls by middle-class 'mothers' as imperative to social purity. They perpetuated a discourse which privileged and tried to proselytize bourgeois cultures, alienated the poor, misunderstood working-class life, placed the onus of vice upon women and effectively entrenched the separate spheres dichotomy and double-standard of sexual morality that feminists like Butler had for years been challenging. This was in the name of charity. The JAPGW's 1910 Jewish International Conference concluded with the recommendation that 'selected Jewish girls from Eastern Europe...be lodged with suitable families, in order to learn domestic economy, with a view to imparting the knowledge they have gained, on their return to their own countries'.³⁷⁸

As Eugene Black suggested regarding the politics of Jewish philanthropy, there might also have been a more contrived element behind particularly the JAPGW's agenda. 'Anglo-Jewry', Black argued,

was organized to impose control on women, particularly single-women. A rhetoric of 'protection' could be invoked wherever family constraints were lacking....Thus could the Jewish image of high standards of sexual behaviour

³⁷⁸ JAPGW, *Jewish International Conference*, p.217

and strong family ties be sustained within the community and for the wider public.

This, he contended, produced a paradox in the female-led rescue and reform-based philanthropy practised by the JAPGW and its peers because “the expanding freedom, role and authority [it provided] for middle-class Jewish women came, in effect, to be based on constraining the ‘freedom’ of the ‘ignorant’ poor”. “[T]he opportunity to use the fervour of vigilance crusaders to socialize its own community was both irresistible, and in its eyes, necessary’, despite the majority of members of the Anglo-Jewish group not subscribing to the movement’s ideas of ‘the place of women’.³⁷⁹ Differing socio-religious pressures aside, the NVA’s discourses display a similar desire to control ‘the lower social orders’ and privilege middle-class women’s interests.

The attitudes held by the organizations regarding ‘the working-class foreign girl’ as well as those regarding the foreign boy apprentices of ‘the trafficker’ considered shortly should also be viewed in the context of wider anxieties among the philanthropic middle classes surrounding the future of the nation and the practical means of maintaining Britain’s optimal health as an imperial and world power. As Harry Hendrick has contended, the concept of national efficiency, the idea of the physical and moral fitness of the population, had increasing significance in the agenda of social reformers of the period. This was especially so in the wake of the panic over physical deterioration brought about by revelations of the poor condition of the country’s South African War recruits and by reports issued by social investigators such as Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree outlining the malnutrition and infirmity of alarming numbers of citizens. As a consequence, the figure of ‘the working-class adolescent’, particularly the male, was focussed on by reformers as a potentially dangerous body that needed to be controlled, instructed and have its natural impulses re-channelled so as to function for, rather than against, the interests of the imperial nation.³⁸⁰ This process occurred in conjunction with, and was endorsed by, the increasing purchase of the pseudo-science of Eugenics, established in 1907 by the psychologist Francis Galton as a way of

379 Black, *The Social*, p.224-36

380 Hendrick, H, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) esp. pp.92-3. See also: Pearson, G, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (London: Macmillan, 1983)

mitigating deterioration to the national body wrought by 'unfit citizens' via controlling fertility to ensure the prosperity of the putatively best stocks and decline of the worst.

While neither pursuing a eugenic programme nor typically articulating their intentions in a language of race, many philanthropic organizations concerned themselves with the problem of 'the working-class youth' and strove, in distinctly gendered ways, to nurture out the 'natural defects' of their charges. They endeavoured to supplement the work done by local schools whose curricula were increasingly influenced by notions of national efficiency by focussing on both physical and moral re-education. The efforts of the NVA and JAPGW ought to be seen in this light. Alongside the often-cited examples of the Boy Scout Movement, Girls' Brigade and later, the Girl Guide Movement, which emerged in the period, the organizations were stakeholders in the enterprise of national efficiency.³⁸¹ Further, as David Feldman suggested regarding groups such as the Jewish Lads' Brigade and the Jewish Girls' Club, efforts to control and instruct 'the working-class youth's' leisure time via intellectually, morally, and physically ameliorative pursuits had added importance among the country's Jewish community. They signified a means of anglicizing foreign Jews and highlighting to anti-alienist agitators both the value of the second generation and the fallacy of concepts of alien degeneration.³⁸²

The race-based hierarchy of oppression and the concept of immaculate victimhood that had characterized the representation of 'the white slave' during the Belgian Affair, and in which notions of class were merely implicit, came to be overshadowed by a class-based hierarchy and a concept of 'guilty victimhood' in which ideas of ethnicity and English-superiority were implicit. It was no longer a question of 'the white slave' who was most English being the purest victim and worthiest recipient of aid. It was now a question of 'the foreign white slave' from the best-off background being the victim who was least morally blighted, who had least brought her exploitation upon herself and who should have the fewest conditions placed upon her receipt of assistance from an ersatz middle-class mother. Wealth, the very thing that, when in

381 Pearson, *Hooligan*, pp.56-7

382 See: Feldman, *Englishmen*, pp.309-10; Bailey, P, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 1975)

excess, was portrayed as contributing to ‘the debauché’s’ corruption, had become the capital which separated the better ‘white slave’ from the worse and the capital that gave the bourgeois members of the NVA and JAPGW the tools to claim moral superiority and parental power of attorney over the troublesome foreign, working-class girls with whom they dealt.

‘The English Rose’ had departed from the dominant discourses of ‘white slavery’ not just because of the diversification of international trafficking networks but because the part she played no longer fit with what it now meant to be a ‘white slave’.

‘The Trafficker’

The two new figures of ‘the trafficked’ may have had the spotlight of blame cast upon them but this did not cause the extent of the culpability attributed to the new ‘leading villain’ that was ‘the trafficker’ to wane. He, for he was typically cast as male, was a ruthless foreign criminal mastermind whose aptitude in both orchestrating female sexual exploitation and manipulating anyone or anything obstructing his path knew no bounds. While also represented as a generic foreigner, ‘the trafficker’ was focussed on by each organization far less than his prey and was cast in a more simplistic manner, devoid of alternative typologies and a ‘story of the exploiter’ to narrate the prologue to his career. Moreover, he was not ascribed a conventional social class, portrayed instead as belonging to a certain type of evasive, foreign criminal elite whose transgressions were beyond the pale of any conventional form of criminality or masculinity. Addressing the Official Conference for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic in 1903, the Earl Of Aberdeen clarified that the meeting was ‘not an attempt to treat vice as a crime, but to treat crime as a crime, with a view to preventing its commission, and to secure the criminals – criminals, many of whom are of a description compared with which many a pickpocket might be regarded as relatively, and from a moral standpoint, as a sort of gentleman’.³⁸³

Indeed, ‘the trafficker’ was seldom referred to as possessing a physical, as opposed to this moral, lack of masculinity. Yet his ‘un-gentlemanliness’ was not

383 Earl of Aberdeen cited in: ‘Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, Official Conference’, *Vigilance Record* (April 1903), p.6

depicted as causing his serial female exploitation per se. Rather, his malevolence was attributed to his profound ingenuity, skill and ruthlessness in orchestrating such crime. Coote, in *A Vision and Its Fulfillment*, described the 'scientific method' of the criminal devices applied by traffickers to ensnare their victims, whilst his organization's annual reports featured warnings that, '[o]nce in the clutches of these human monsters, who traffic in girls, it is well-nigh impossible to release them from the iron grip of their unnatural masters...and there is no amount of cruelty or fraud to which these men will not descend to keep up the supply'.³⁸⁴ The JAPGW also cast 'the trafficker' as this unmanly yet exceptionally accomplished criminal. Evoking a typically misogynistic notion of his female co-religionists, Rev Singer described 'the trafficker's' criminality in an address in an NVA meeting in 1905:

The White slave Trafficker has nothing whatever that is picturesque about him; he is the most cowardly, the meanest, and the most despicable of his kind; he is the enemy of the human species. But his methods are cunning, devious and insidious, and it is necessary for us to be ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE ON THE ALERT, especially in the highways and byways, so that our poor women, though fools...may not err therein.³⁸⁵

'The trafficker' was not a lone predator. He was portrayed as operating as part of a secret, foreign criminal international that wielded disproportionate power. In its report of the attempted trafficking of French girl, Louise Sabre, in the *Vigilance Record*, the NVA was careful to emphasise the type of male criminal involved in the case. 'Mr C Mathews, on behalf of the Treasury...', it reported, 'said that the evidence disclosed a considerable scheme on the part of a gang of foreigners acting in confederacy abroad and in London, to import into this country young girls for immoral purposes'.³⁸⁶ Indeed, the organization cast 'the trafficker' as unstoppable because of this powerful, omnipresent network. On a rare occasion in which it allowed trafficked women a voice, the NVA declared in its report of its six months travellers' aid trial:

Why they [trafficked women] allow themselves to be thus kept in slavery can be best answered by the women themselves. 'If we leave them', say the women, referring to their owners, 'they have so many agents in other countries that our lives would not be safe'. Whether or not this is true,

384 Coote, *A Vision*, p.20; *NVA1898*, p.23

385 *Vigilance Record* (July 1905),p.56

386 *Ibid.* (August 1903), p.3

certain it is that this feeling is the secret of the despair in their lives, and their reluctance to give evidence against their heartless owners.³⁸⁷

It was on the secret nature of the 'evil vigilance associations' in which 'the trafficker' operated that Percy Bunting chose to warn the public in 1904, with reference to his organization's travellers' aid work. 'We want to spread the net so as to catch all the fish', he lamented, ' [b]ut we work against a very vigilant organization on the other side, and we may find that as soon as we have particular stations under observation out friend the enemy will try to find an underground way of getting girls through'.³⁸⁸ The JAPGW echoed this sentiment. In 1909 it warned readers, '[w]e have...reasons to fear that there are organized gangs who are always searching for young and helpless victims' and many of its reports bore insinuations that, '[t]he evil-doers we have to cope with are unscrupulous and clever; they have to be out-done and matched'.³⁸⁹

Women were represented as belonging to these clandestine foreign syndicates but were represented as assuming auxiliary, 'feminine' roles in trafficking. The JAPGW typecast the female conspirators in trafficking as the perversely 'maternal' figure of procuress or Madame to 'the trafficked', subservient to the male masterminds behind trafficking. 'At the end of 1909', Moro declared at the 1910 Jewish Conference regarding the report of his organization's Buenos Aires branch,

there were in that city 199 Licensed Brothels, and...over fifty per cent, were kept by Jewesses. These women were the wives or mistresses of traffickers, and the proceeds were handed over by the women to the men who did all the business and made the exchange of girls from house to house or imported fresh ones.³⁹⁰

The NVA and JAPGW not only quashed the ethnocentric notion of 'the English Rose' as sole victim but, by acknowledging women's role in perpetrating trafficking, reconfigured the female victim/male perpetrator dichotomy entrenched during the Belgian Affair. However, in portraying 'the foreign female conspirator' as merely an exploited moll obliged to carry out maternal duties, the organizations nevertheless kept this dichotomy in place, emphasizing ideas of female inferiority, passivity, and victimhood even more.

387 Ibid. (February 1904), p.6

388 Bunting cited in: *Vigilance Record* (December 1904), pp.5-7

389 JAPGW-1908, pp.15-6; JAPGW-1904, pp.7-8

390 JAPGW, *Jewish International Conference*, p.33

Investigating the possibility of hiring someone to infiltrate a London trafficking syndicate in 1900, the JAPGW took the 'decided opinion' of Mr Littlechild, a private detective, 'that a woman would be utterly useless for this purpose'.³⁹¹

Crucially, 'the trafficker' was not portrayed by the organizations as a wanton criminal. He was cast as an entrepreneur and, specifically, as a *business* mastermind who operated as an agent between 'product' and 'consumer' within a criminal/capitalist syndicate. He was represented as orchestrating female sexual exploitation according to the same basic business principles and incentive as any other capitalist enterprise and as having applied these principles with such skill that he had amassed the wealth and power to bring acute detriment to women. Thus, although cast as an exceptionally ingenious brute, the schema through which 'the trafficker' exercised his exceptional brutishness was portrayed as akin to that used by a standard business. 'No one can be surprised', Percy Bunting told the 1899 Congress,

that while vice is practised and money can be made out of it, it should give rise to a trade carried on by third persons, *entrepreneurs* and their agents, or that the trade should, with the facilities of modern civilization, have command of large capital and resources. Certain it is that there is a regular trade in young girls who are bought and sold, imported and exported, to and from the ports and cities of Europe; that the trade is influenced by the ordinary laws of supply and demand, and that the capitalists have their purveyors and agents in other countries than their own, who recruit likely subjects for business.³⁹²

Coote himself articulated this notion in his RCAI testimonial:

It [trafficking] was carried on on almost the same principle as ordinary merchandise; women were selected by certain agents, they were done up as if were in parcels, that is in companies, and they were sent from one country to another, and were in that country sold – literally sold – for a certain sum of money.³⁹³

At the 1910 Jewish International Conference, Moro acknowledged 'the trafficker's' business skills when considering the significance of poverty in precipitating trafficking:

We may even succeed, to some extent, in improving the lamentable economic conditions, if, by making the traffic difficult and dangerous, we

391 HL, JAPGW, Minutes with Case Committee Reports, 17 December 1900

392 Bunting cited in: NVA, *Transactions*, p.66

393 Coote, RCAI, Cd.1742, min.12574

can divert to better purposes the extraordinary intelligence, energy, ingenuity and enterprise now employed by the traffickers in successfully conducting their detestable trade. I have often thought wistfully of the benefit which would accrue to our people if these qualities, so admirable in themselves, could be put to better use.³⁹⁴

Indeed, although 'the trafficker' was implicitly rebuked for the way he earned his money, the *amount* of money he had accrued from his 'detestable trade' often solicited no moral commentary.

Unlike 'the naive white slave', 'the trafficker' was not portrayed in terms of his upbringing nor, like 'the vicious white slave', had his malevolence racialized. However, his deviant intelligence, criminality and acumen were portrayed as natural and in some way inherited. Indeed, the JAGPW portrayed trafficking as a 'family business' among foreign men whose basic skills and inclination to enslave women were inborn but whose 'talent' required nurturing. Speaking of Britain's newly-arrived foreign Jews, the organization suggested in its 1908 Report the system of apprenticeship in operation in the business of trafficking:

The members of our office staff have...watched several cases in which Jewish men were charged with living upon the proceeds of immorality. It has added to the deep regret which these cases give us that many of these men have been quite young. They eventually become the agents for the traffickers, and decoy and ensnare young girls for the abominable trade.³⁹⁵

Again, poverty and persecution were sometimes represented as contributing factors in 'the trafficker's' career choice.³⁹⁶ However, minimal significance was placed upon these factors. To each organization, 'the trafficker' became a trafficker because such an enterprise, given his foreignness and evil criminal-entrepreneurial talents, constituted his calling.

Like 'the alien prostitute', moreover, 'the trafficker' was also portrayed in conjunction with the issue of immigration restriction. As early as 1899, Percy Bunting, delineating the sexual division of labour in trafficking, declared that, 'the life of a prostitute, or a brothel-keeper, or a souteneur, is not good behaviour, nor is there any reason why the hospitality of a friendly country should be extended to her or him as

394 JAGPW, *Jewish International Conference*, pp.31,140

395 JAGPW-1908, p.15

396 See: 'Account of 5th International Congress' *The Suffragette* (11 July 1913) p.660

long as she or he carries on a disreputable business'.³⁹⁷ During the campaign for the Aliens Act, the NVA's restrictionist diatribes regarding these 'male parasites of evil' became increasingly pointed.³⁹⁸ Focussing on Anglo-Jewry-led immigration restriction operating parallel to the Act, the JAPGW insisted in relation to London's 'gambling dens and houses of assemble [sic] for men and women engaged in this nefarious traffic', that '[s]ome action will have to be taken by the Community very quickly to minimise the danger caused by these places' and spoke of the 'strenuous efforts' it was making to 'bring traffickers to justice'.³⁹⁹ However, 'the trafficker' featured far less in connection with restriction than 'the foreign prostitute' and did not, like her, have his character limited to that of 'undesirable alien'. The foreign figure of 'the trafficker' was cast by the NVA and JAPGW as simultaneously a sub-human exploiter, a human businessman and a super-human criminal/entrepreneurial genius whose modus operandi was more noteworthy than his actus reus.

Trafficking continued to be cast as a foreign crime that simply would not and, given the malignity involved, could not be perpetrated by a British citizen. However, such typecasting was now more complex and its implications far less clear-cut. Trafficking had become an economy in which investments were seemingly made in 'the leading villain' for a variety of reasons.

The representation of 'the male' and his malevolence in the economy of trafficking was exposed to major substantive reconfiguration with profound consequences. 'The Continental debauché' had been portrayed as naturally compelled by his perverse libido to use his wealth to exploit girls and had thereby been cast as irredeemably corrupt and repulsive. Now, however, 'the trafficker' was depicted as orchestrating exploitation due to an unsexualized urge as a criminal-entrepreneur mastermind to gain wealth. This did more than re-cast 'the leading villain' as an unscrupulously mercenary man. It challenged and undermined the former Manichean categorization of 'the leading villain' and the 'slavery' he facilitated as 'pure evil'.

397 Bunting cited in: NVA, *Transactions*, p.70

398 *Vigilance Record* (February 1904), pp.10-11

399 JAPGW-1907, p.23

I

Firstly, by casting ‘the trafficker’ as engaging in an entrepreneurialism that, however disreputable, was conducted according to the standard precepts of market capitalism, the organizations lent a normalcy and rationale to his criminality. The JAPGW’s portrayal of this figure as having risen like an apprentice in a ‘family business’ reinforced this. From the product of an unfathomable foreign perversion and absolute wickedness, trafficking was thereby demystified and endowed with a certain legitimacy. Sexual exploitation was rendered a banal form of evil that was too close to other aberrations in the business world to be represented via a Manichean schema of moral absolutes and to be attributed purely to foreign inferiority, as with ‘the white slave’. Speaking at the NVA’s 1907 annual meeting, the Earl of Lytton explained traffickers’ motivation: ‘not under the influence of love or of hate, not carried away under the domination of any violent or strong passion, but solely for the purpose of money, solely for the rewards they are able to obtain for their detestable service’.⁴⁰⁰

Indeed, a certain respect for ‘the trafficker’s’ business acumen is apparent in the organizations’ discourses. Coming from families that had typically prospered as industrialists and financiers respectively, many members of the NVA and JAPGW understood the value of enterprise. While they may have been on relatively safe-ground criticizing ‘the trafficker’ for plying his entrepreneurial skills in criminality, criticizing the skills themselves would have been both a difficult and risky business. These very skills were those which had allowed their families to live lives of bourgeois privilege. This was especially so in the JAPGW’s case given the proximity of ‘the financier’, acting as an intermediary between borrower and lenders, to that of ‘the trafficker’, acting as an ersatz agent between a girl and a pimp. Therefore, to the members of each organization, attacking ‘the trafficker’s’ basic business strategy was arguably somewhat alien and would have constituted a form of hypocrisy threatening to both their ‘family businesses’ and their credibility as philanthropists. While deploring their ‘absolutely unscrupulous’ nature, Moro, at the 1899 Congress, credited ‘traffickers, bullies, procurers, and brothel-keepers’ with ‘cunning’ and conceded with a little reverence that

400 Earl of Lytton cited in: ‘22nd Annual NVA Meeting’, *Vigilance Record* (May 1907), p.42

they were typically 'often very rich and well versed in the law', just as in 1910 he had highlighted their 'extraordinary intelligence, energy, ingenuity and enterprise'.⁴⁰¹ The luminaries of the NVA and JAPGW were not socialists and did not engage with the issue of economic exploitation. They were concerned with banishing trafficking and, it seems fair to suggest, protecting the wealth they and their families enjoyed.

II

But why might the NVA and JAPGW cast 'the trafficker' as an *entrepreneur* as well as a criminal and emphasize the normality of his business strategy if they wished to present trafficking as a grave abomination, requiring immediate action? Answers might lie in the nuances of the representation of this figure. While each organization's portrayal featured positive elements, we should not forget that this foreign figure's business *practices*, the means through which he went about generating wealth and the ethics he brought to the process, were cast as 'plain bad'. Nor should we forget that 'the trafficker's' enterprise was cast as a typical avenue for foreign business. These things are important. 'The trafficker' was not cast as an illegitimate businessman according to some universal standard of good business practice nor to establish parallels in the *world* of commerce. His illegitimacy as a businessman was implicitly measured according to a yardstick of *British* business practice and was arguably stressed to establish a specific comparison. His normality as a businessman was what allowed such an extraordinary criminal to be compared.

By emphasizing that 'the trafficker' was an entrepreneur whose wealth was derived from exploiting women and was therefore ill-gotten, the discourses of 'white slavery' became, it might be suggested, in part a means of contrasting capitalisms, of validating the good practice and underlining the equity of the profit made by Britain's businessmen, its industrialists, its owning classes, its capitalists. Referring to the 'foreign blight' of trafficking at a meeting of the NVA in Liverpool, the nonconformist leader, Arthur Black, spoke as a British citizen to resolve that '[w]e ought to make it one of our first duties to retrieve commerce from this degradation'.⁴⁰² Specifically, the new

401 Moro cited in: NVA, *Transactions*, p.148; Moro cited in: *1910 Jewish International Conference*, p.140

402 Arthur Black cited in: *Vigilance Record* (October 1907), p.80

discourses might be interpreted as a means by which the members of the NVA and JAPGW shored up, vindicated and affirmed the value, if not also assuaged the guilt, of the bourgeois, capitalist interests behind many of their members' 'family businesses'. Yet why might a self-vindication project of this sort and an emphasis on the relative justice of *British* capitalism have been so important as to interrupt the representation of the criminality inherent in trafficking? Answers might be found, if we look outside the world of social purity.

Around 1889 the British labour movement was subject to a major reconfiguration with the advent of New Unionism. Whereas before the majority of unionized workers came from skilled industries, this year bore witness to unprecedented numbers of unskilled labourers becoming unionized, many in national general unions, and to the growth of pre-existing trade unions. Notably, it also witnessed heightened industrial militancy, perhaps the most successful example being the month-long London Dock Workers' Strike. What would become the TUC gained strength and soon the General Federation of Trade Unions was formed to bring the countries unions together in a powerful, democratic structure. 'New Unionism', Derek Matthews has argued, meant that 'unskilled workers were able to take on and beat their employers...and extract significant and lasting improvements in their wages and conditions'.⁴⁰³ A critique of modernity was central to the discourses of protest produced by the labour movement. The exploitation of the workforce at the hands of 'the factory owner' or 'the entrepreneur' was represented as a product of the malaise of modern industrial capital and new unions were cast as the workers' solution to it. Leading new unionists and working-class socialists, Tom Mann and Ben Tillett, described the 'new enthusiasm' required among workers in 1890: 'The cause we have at heart is too sacred to admit of time being spent quarrelling amongst ourselves...we are prepared to work unceasingly for the economic emancipation of the workers'.⁴⁰⁴ As opposed to 1889-93 and, as will be seen in Section Three, 1910-14, the period under consideration witnessed little union militancy until 1908, with employers exercising coercive power

403 Matthews, D, '1889 and All That: New Views on the New Unionism' *International Review of Social History*, 36:1 (1991) pp.31-2; 36

404 Mann, T & Tillett, B, *The 'New' Trade Unionism* (London: Green and McAllen, 1890),p.16

over the workforce.⁴⁰⁵ The 1901 Taff Vale Judgement, which left unions unable to strike without facing bankruptcy, exacerbated this. However, that capitalists, abetted by the state, went to lengths to emasculate the workforce indicates that during these years there was still considerable unrest among workers and that the workforce engendered anxiety among employers over the possibility of strike action. Thus, however subdued New Unionism was at this moment, the striking worker and his or her union (women's unionism was also increasing) nevertheless represented a grave threat to employers.

Looking beyond the picket-line provides a greater insight into why this may have been so. Britain's middle-class led socialist movement had been in ascendancy since the mid-1880s, championing the interests of labour in the body politic. Its two principal pillars, the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and the Fabian Society, each founded in 1884, attacked the stranglehold of modern industrial capital on the worker and called for public ownership of industry. While the former group advocated violent social revolution and engaged in mass-demonstrations, and the latter, a passive agenda focussed on publishing didactic pamphlets, each succeeded in publicizing the message of socialism, despite internal divisions. Indeed, the Fabians were part of one of the first progressive political factions to succeed at the polls, joining the British Liberals in 1889 to take control of the London County Council.⁴⁰⁶ Working-class dominated socialist initiatives were also fruitful. In 1893 the Independent Labour Party (ILP) was established by James Keir Hardie, who, the previous year, had become Britain's first Labour MP. In 1900 the Labour Representative Committee was established to represent the workforce in parliament and was strengthened after the Taff Vale Judgment prompted many unions to affiliate with it. Having arranged an electoral pact with the Liberals in 1903 to avoid the vote against the Conservatives being split, the Committee won twenty-nine seats in 1906. It was renamed 'The Labour Party' and affiliated with the ILP. That year, the Party, under Ramsey Macdonald, successfully lobbied for the repeal of the Taff Vale Judgment. However, it exercised limited influence for the rest of the period, dogged by financial problems, particularly after the 1909 Osborne Judgment made it illegal for unions to raise a political levy from its members. Nevertheless, the Party's presence

405 Lovell, JC, *British Trade Unions, 1875-1933* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p.41

406 Bevir, M, *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton UP, 2001), ch.6

continued to be felt, and the voice of the worker heard, with Labour winning 42 seats in the December 1910 general election.⁴⁰⁷

Thus the growing presence of organized left-wing factions meant not only that the mounting discontent of the workforce in modern industrial society could be articulated in unprecedented ways but also that workers were empowered in their struggles and challenged the capitalist classes like never before. It is possible, then, that some of the members of the NVA and JAPGW deemed contradicting the labour movement's indictments and emphasizing the relative equity of their 'family businesses' in particular, and of British capitalism in general, of considerable importance in protecting both their wealth and their integrity as reformers. Representing 'the trafficker' as a corrupt foreign businessman could be interpreted as allowing them a safe means of performing this function.

And, seemingly, the organizations would not have been totally irrational in tailoring their discourses in this way. As will be explored in Section Three, during the progression through parliament of a Criminal Law Amendment Bill targeting trafficking in 1912, the socialist movement together with the proliferating women's suffrage movement would explicitly conflate the exploitation of 'the white slave' with that of 'the worker' and, crucially, would directly attack bourgeois social purity advocates whom they saw as fighting against 'white slavery' whilst perpetuating an economic 'slavery' of their own.

III

Moreover, the new representation of 'the leading villain' went towards not simply normalizing but glamorizing the malevolence of 'the trafficker'.

With rising literacy levels, the proliferation of public lending libraries and advancements in print technology allowing novels and magazines to be sold cheaply, popular crime fiction flourished in the first decades of the twentieth century, and especially that focussed on what was a new, modern source of criminality; the elite foreign criminal syndicate. Examining *The Four Just Men*, Edgar Wallace's best-selling 1905 novel about a band of foreign vigilantes, David Glover has pointed to how the

⁴⁰⁷ Hinton, J, *Labour and Socialism*(London: Wheatsheaf, 1983), esp. chs. 2-5

criminality and anarchy of foreign mobsters was popularized, romanticized and cast as legitimate in this Edwardian literary crime wave, which was directed at a male readership. Referring to the Just Men's plan to assassinate the Foreign Secretary for pandering to capitalist interests and endorsing an Aliens Extradition Bill that advocated the deportation of political dissidents they saw as patriots, Glover highlighted the 'curiously sympathetic remarks' made about the Men by the Prime Minister in the novel.⁴⁰⁸ Knepper, moreover, has demonstrated that the rose-tinted representation of the foreign, and particularly the *Jewish*, criminal syndicate extended to anarchists whose actions amounted to an 'unjust' form of terrorism. Analysing Joseph Conrad's 1907 work *The Secret Agent*, he contended that 'the Jew' operating as part of a leftist-anarchist enterprise became associated with the 'seductive' role of 'agent provocateur', covertly working for, yet against, his fellow conspirators and wielding, much as Hobson inter alia were contending, an 'invisible hand' in and outside the body politic. The criminality of 'the male alien' or 'Jew' was, he claimed, portrayed as inherent and dangerous to the nation, but simultaneously also useful, able to be commissioned in the interests of the state, exciting and intriguing.⁴⁰⁹ Both scholars have thus suggested how anti-alienism and/or anti-Semitism was simultaneously upheld and mitigated in crime fiction and how an inextricable link between criminality and capitalism was entrenched therein, as the modern threat of terrorism and the modern glamour of organized crime combined to be presented via a curious image of foreign undesirability and foreign desirability. However heinous, then, foreign gangsters and the business they transacted became the subject of fantasy in early twentieth-century culture and fantasy produced particularly for men.

In many ways, the NVA and JAPGW perpetuated this tendency. The two male-dominated organizations, whose anti-trafficking addresses were predominantly directed at men, rendered 'the trafficker' a figure of charisma and intrigue who, because of, rather than in spite of, his misdemeanours and foreign ways, was somehow impressive to men. They granted him a quasi-mythological status, as more an anti-hero in a crime-

408 Glover, D, 'Looking for Edgar Wallace: The Author as Consumer' *History Workshop*, 37 (Spring 1994), pp.152-4 & *Literature*, ch.; Wallace, E, *The Four Just Men* (London: Tallis Press, 1905), ch.4

409 Knepper, P, 'The Other Invisible Hand: Jews & Anarchists in London before the First World War' *Jewish History*, 22:3 (2008), pp.295-315

thriller than a ruthless sexual exploiter. Indeed, the articles on the 'White Slave Traffic' circulated by the London publisher 'M.A.P.' in 1910, which were only nominally independent of the organizations' influence, attest to this.

No one...knows exactly how the traffickers do their work. The procurers are habitually so plausible and so apparently well-educated, that a father or brother is often absolutely hoodwinked, when interviewing an agent on behalf of a daughter or sister, who is seeking an honest situation abroad... [T]he subject of the procurer and his trade is a delicate one, and as such has been shunned by newspaperdom...It is, however, publicity of the extremely clever methods adopted by these fiends which will give warning to all.⁴¹⁰

Similarly, the JAPGW declared in 1905, '[traffickers] know how to put every conceivable obstacle in the way of our search for evidence, and so frequently elude our strenuous efforts to bring them to justice'.⁴¹¹

'The leading villain's' wealth no longer functioned as a mark of his unparalleled corruptiveness as opposed to his success as a criminal/entrepreneur. His foreignness and abnormal masculinity that had been held as evidence of his inferiority became the critical factor that allowed him to be such a glamorous protagonist. Whether intentionally or not, the serious abuses upon women wrought by 'the trafficker' were positioned in a world of crime fantasy and were practically excused as an unfortunate by-product of the exploits of a curiously admirable mastermind. The acknowledgment of the relationship between 'the trafficker's' crime and poverty was undermined.

IV

The organizations also rehearsed an array of the most damning calumny regarding 'the male alien' or 'the male Jew' in anti-alienist and anti-Semitic rhetoric via their representation of 'the trafficker'.

Indeed, it might be said that the organizations invoked the anti-alienist leitmotif of 'the male foreigner' or 'Jew' as a businessman wholesale. Being portrayed as a malevolent *middleman* in business enabled the representation of 'the trafficker' to dovetail seamlessly with that of 'the alien sweatshop owner'. Both figures were accused

410 M.A.P., *The White Slave Traffic* (London: MAP, 1910), pp.10-1. The 'M.A.P.' articles were circulated by publisher Arthur Pearson, with the guidance of the NVA and JAPGW, and were originally produced anonymously.

411 JAPGW-1904, p.21

of the ruthless physical and economic exploitation of those from whose services they made a living. Both were thus accused of accruing wealth illegitimately and were termed 'parasitic'. Crucially, both were condemned for, whether directly or indirectly, forcing women into prostitution via their *unmanly* and foreign exploitative enterprise and thereby implicitly damaging society by compelling these citizens to 'negate the tender delights of motherhood'. Further, the NVA and JAPGW's portrayal of 'the trafficker' mirrored, albeit through a romanticized reflection, the representation of 'the male alien' as a ruthless, anarchic gangster that had been proliferating following the implementation of the Aliens Act. Damagingly, by painting trafficking as a vocation of 'the foreign man', the organizations' representation also endorsed Arnold White's damning pronouncement that, "[p]rocur[ing] for the 'white slave' trade and living upon the earnings of women, are now two of the regular professions of the alien Jew".⁴¹² Shortly after Major Evans-Gordon wrote in 1903 deploring that the country was subject to 'a systematic incursion of criminal and vicious persons for purposes of criminality and vice', the JAPGW bemoaned the professionalism of 'the criminal aliens' against whom it fought: 'Protracted trials in the Courts give us grave anxieties. The offenders study the law, most of them are well supplied with money. All of them are utterly unscrupulous. We have actual knowledge that their treatment of their victims is often indescribably wicked, cruel and violent'.⁴¹³ In 1904 the NVA lamented how such foreigners were 'engaged in dogging the footsteps of innocent girls with a cruel ingenuity that too often succeeds in luring them into an evil life, and, by the exercise of still greater cruelty, keeping them simply for the purpose of filling their coffers with the price of shame'.⁴¹⁴

Surprisingly, the portrayal of 'the trafficker' by the organizations also lies cheek-by-jowl with the most damning 'high-brow' anti-Semitic discourses emitted by Hobson inter alia regarding 'the Jew' as a venal and disloyal 'cosmopolitan controller' whose 'invisible hand' was detrimental to society, whose business empire challenged the health of nation and empire, and whose malignancy could not be neutralized by assimilation. Moreover, by casting 'the trafficker' as an unmanly foreigner who had no respect for women and whose lust was focussed on money rather than the female sex,

412 See: *The Times* (19 December 1910)

413 Evans-Gordon, *The Alien*, pp.255-6; *JAPGW-1904*, p.21

414 *Vigilance Record* (February 1904), p.6

the organizations corroborated the anti-Semitic calumny surrounding 'the Jewish alien' as comprising a degenerative 'third sex' and endorsed the idea of a natural relationship between 'the male Jew' or 'alien' and 'the prostitute'. As Sander Gilman theorized, 'the Jew' and 'the prostitute' were deemed to engage in sex out of venality as opposed to biological instinct or patriotism such that each represented a "'danger' to the economy, both fiscal and sexual, of the state".⁴¹⁵ Reflecting on 'the foreign trafficker', the Earl of Aberdeen lamented at an NVA conference in 1905: 'the desire for money; the greed of gain, will lead people to the greatest depth of wickedness'.⁴¹⁶ Again, it may seem surprising that the JAPGW in particular would evoke so many anti-Semitic stereotypes. However, it was an organization that saw itself as a group, firstly, of British citizens, secondly, of British citizens with certain class-interests to protect and, thirdly, of Jews. At the 1899 Congress, Moro declared regarding arrested traffickers: 'the prisoners are frequently members of a clique or gang, against whose machinations it is necessary to safeguard the prosecutrix and all the witnesses. The offenders make large profits out of their nefarious trades, and can afford to engage able solicitors and counsel in their defence'.⁴¹⁷

The line between anti-alienist or anti-Semitic discourses and anti-trafficking discourses became blurred and in places indeterminable, rendering them mutually reinforcing and the causes which each endorsed seemingly different aspects of a single issue. The NVA and JAPGW allowed 'the trafficker' to become an embodiment of the evils of both unrestricted foreign immigration and unrestricted foreign trade, two pillars of the restrictionist agenda. Their discourses became testament to the detrimental fissures being made in the nation's economic and social fabric by 'the male alien' and 'the male Jew', and endorsed the idea that, wherever in the country such outsiders settled, industry would degenerate and act against the interests of the labour force and the population at large.

415 Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp.119-122

416 Earl of Aberdeen cited in: 'NVA Conference on Station Work', *Vigilance Record* (July 1905), p.50

417 Moro, 1899 Congress, p.149

V

What is left unsaid about the economy of trafficking in the representation of 'the leading villain' also reveals a great deal about the ideologies and politics that guided the organizations. As we have seen, the role of 'the male consumer' of 'the trafficked' was displaced by 'the trafficker' in the new discourses of 'white slavery', with the expansion of international trafficking networks. What is unclear, however, is why in the new discourses there was a total absence of 'the male consumer'. The men who physically used trafficked women and girls were spared moral scrutiny, absolved of participation in sexual abuse and their exploitation of 'the trafficked' was cast as literally unremarkable. As well as entrenching the notion of male sexual license against which many of their members fought, the organizations thus situated the foreign protagonists comprising the economy of trafficking in a three-tier hierarchy of respectability, predicated on material wealth, investment and yield. 'The consumer' was at the top of the hierarchy implicitly because he had provided adequate remuneration for the services rendered to him whilst 'the trafficker' was on the tier below because he took 'the white slave' without paying for her but was not further down because he took her in such a cunning way. 'The white slave', was on the bottom because she allowed herself to be lured by the promise of a well-paid situation which she, being working-class, had not earned and could not rise from there because she did not have the romantic story requisite to have the gravity of her misdemeanour mitigated. Even the feminist NVA member, Mrs Henry Fawcett, broached this notion at the organization's 1904 annual meeting,

[t]he work [the NVA] has in hand is in many ways most difficult... No doubt the victims of vice are in a majority of cases, helpless, weak and ignorant, but it has to deal not only with the victims of vice, but with the sturdy ruffians whose trade is in vice...These men are posted up in all that the law allows them to do...'.⁴¹⁸

It was 'the trafficked' and not the men and women who used her whom the organizations pushed closest to bankrupting the attention-span of their respective audiences and it was *her* foreignness that was made to most signify inferiority and deter

418 Fawcett, M, 'NVA 19th Annual Meeting', *Vigilance Record* (July 1904), p.2

investors. As in all the facets of 'the leading villain's' representation, 'the trafficked woman's' sexual exploitation was portrayed as just another corporate misadventure. The new discourses of 'white slavery' had in part become an inadvertent statement of the paradoxes endorsed, the misjudgements made by, and the false economies inherent, in the anti-trafficking movement.

Conclusion: 'The Traffic'

There is, though, a greater irony than that inherent in the portrayal of 'the trafficker' at the core of these discourses. For all the individuals vilified, structural factors contributing to their transgressions underplayed, and ethnocentric assumptions aired throughout each organization's discourses, the crime of trafficking was not represented as caused ultimately by people but by the prevailing international, socio-economic conditions. However, this apparent volte-face does not signify some eleventh hour epiphany by the NVA and JAPGW regarding the significance of the adverse circumstances which afflicted many trafficked women and traffickers prior to their 'fall'. Rather, it signifies yet another false economy in the organizations' discourses which further distanced trafficking from being represented and remedied as, above all, a problem of economic hardship.

The new languages of 'white slavery' did not simply evoke many individual discourses which have at their core a critique of modernity. They themselves represent such a critique. Unlike many of these discourses, however, they do not constitute a criticism of modern times per se, casting trafficking as a consequence of the negative elements of 'the new era'. The NVA did implicate the supposed 'modern blights' of the weakening protection of the home and the delocalization of job prospects in young women availing themselves to this exploitation. Yet it accorded these things an ancillary role in the orchestration of trafficking itself. Rather, in the new discourses, trafficking was portrayed as an unfortunate side-effect of the positive aspects of modern times. It was a 'blot upon civilization' enabled by the coalescence of the advantages of modernity, of technological, commercial and industrial developments, and by both their misappropriation by 'the foreign working-class girl' and their manipulation by 'the foreign male trafficker'. Gone was the use of 'white slavery' as a racialized symbol of the

superior suffering of 'the trafficked' compared to 'the black slave' of past generations. Such a hierarchy of oppression was taken for granted along with the abhorrence of trafficking. 'White slavery' was now, on the few occasions that the phenomenon of trafficking itself was considered, a paradoxical symbol of the advancement of society in comparison to the backwardness of past generations. It was the by-product of the accumulation of the benefits of modernity and their abuse by foreigners with dubious moral fibre.

Having condemned the fact that the lack of protection afforded working-class girls led them to stray beyond their homes in search of work and become 'the easy prey of adventurers, vicious and unscrupulous', the NVA warned in 1909:

If these sins and perils are frequently rife in the ordinary run of home life, they are violently intensified by the increasing facilities of modern international commerce. For a girl to get a place was once a matter of negotiation among friends in her own neighbourhood....The vast capitals of modern industry brought new problems, and the dangers of the young female life grew, in the end, to hideous proportions. In later days, however, the habit of foreign travel and the increased facilities for transit have multiplied these dangers tenfold, and the white slave trade is only the most startling outcome of this new habit of modern life.⁴¹⁹

Towards the end of the period, the organization evoked this sentiment in shorthand, as if it were conventional wisdom that modern progress and transnational sexual exploitation were inextricably linked and that this progress was the most significant cause of trafficking. 'The slavery it attacks', the NVA declared when highlighting the importance of its anti-trafficking work in 1911, 'is a deep seated disease of civilization, fortified by all the resources of modern transport, intercommunication and finance, exploiting modern vice and preying upon the vital principles of modern life'.⁴²⁰ Bullock too, emphasized this notion. After explaining the significance in anti-trafficking work of the country being encircled by seaports and hosting a 'population engaged in all sorts of industry and commerce', he clarified:

It is necessary to emphasize this situation because the subjects for consideration include such questions as the protection of girls on emigrant ships, in the colonies and abroad, at post offices and theatrical

⁴¹⁹ *NVA1909*, pp.5-6

⁴²⁰ *Vigilance Record* (August 1911), p.62. See also: *NVA1911*, p.7

performances, at public houses and refreshment bars, from the insidious invitations of newspaper advertisements, and employment agencies, in fact every walk of life, and by every device that the scientific developments of electricity and steam have placed at the disposal of the evildoer as well as that of the good citizen.⁴²¹

While, as we have seen, the JAPGW ruminated upon the part played by poverty, persecution, and socio-religious culture in its co-religionists' participation in trafficking, the reason why the victims and perpetrators of this problem had allowed themselves to fall into immorality was of greater concern to it than the causal context of trafficking. The organization did, however, obliquely implicate modernity in trafficking in the moralistic condemnations that pepper its discourses, tacitly echoing the ideas of 'the new era' propounded by the NVA. In his opening speech to the 1910 Jewish Conference, Moro, evoking 'The Maiden Tribute' series, offered thanks to delegates for travelling to London

to help us in our search for the best weapons with which to fight the *modern Minotaur* – to lend their invaluable aid towards closing in, within the meshes of an unbreakable net which shall render them powerless, the miscreants who trade on the ignorance, the helplessness, the credulity, and the weaknesses of their fellow creatures.⁴²²

Similarly, the JAPGW often evoked the significance of modern advancements when justifying why the instances of trafficking had *not* proliferated in a given year, drawing a causal relationship between 'the new era' and such criminality. In its 1908 report, it announced:

[t]he strict regulations which were made owing to the visitation of cholera in Russia, the direct means of communication between the Continent and America, Canada, etc, and the state of business in those countries, have also deterred many thousands from leaving their homes, or from travelling via English ports.⁴²³

Thus - and this is where the supreme irony in the new discourses of 'white slavery' lies - rather than being shown for what it is, as a problem rooted chiefly in poverty, prejudicial socio-religious cultures, political persecution and social dislocation, trafficking was represented as a problem rooted in prosperity, opportunity and

421 WL, Traffic in Women Publications, Bullock, 'White-Slave Traffic', p.2

422 JAPGW-1910, p.10

423 JAPGW-1908, p.13

affordable luxuries, education and innovation, entertainment and commodities, long-distance communications and overseas travel. Yet, in being recognized as this type of problem, it was not suggested to be a product of the malaise of modern times or of modern capital that should be excised from the international body forthwith. Rather, it was accepted as a downside of the affluence of modernity – the rough with the smooth – that could only be suppressed wholesale by jettisoning all that was good about ‘the new era’ and that was neither possible nor preferable. Trafficking was wrested from the hands of individual men and women, only to be rendered an inevitable and permanent evil that *had* to be endured alongside the advantages of modern life and that organizations could, at best, strive to contain as opposed to successfully combat. In turn, all of the ideas that were intrinsic to its representation – the innate malignity of ‘the alien’ and ‘the Jew’, the natural moral inferiority of the working class and the need for certain women to be circumscribed to the private sphere – were also cast as somehow inevitable and permanent, as if intrinsic truths of modern society. Trafficking was represented as a condition caused by far deeper and broader structural symptoms than any particular individual’s moral fibre, but it was nevertheless misdiagnosed to the detriment of the specific classes and ethnic groups unjustly implicated in fuelling it, the welfare of the women and girls affected by it, and, ultimately, practical initiatives designed to alleviate it. There could be no greater sign of the fundamental misunderstandings that blighted the new British response to trafficking.

Addressing the Fourth International Congress in 1913, the Earl of Aberdeen speculated on the subject of the inauguration of the movement fourteen years earlier, much to the approval of his audience:

The modern historian calmly surveying those distant events may discuss whether the efforts were worth making, and whether the zeal was well founded. But no future historian of our time will be able to question the need and the worth of this crusade, for it depends not on opinion, or creed, or policy, but upon the eternal distinction between right and wrong and the sacred claims of justice and humanity.⁴²⁴

While the need for a crusade against sex trafficking during the years under consideration is beyond question, we should not take for granted the value of *the*

424 *Vigilance Record* (July & August 1913), p.51

crusade that took place. Together, the NVA and JAPGW turned anti-trafficking into a serious international cause. They united existing, and created new, like-minded groups, forming global communities and one overarching global network to rival those established by 'the trafficker'. They raised public awareness of the severity of trafficking and drew into their cause sectors of religious and civil society that had previously overlooked the sex crimes perpetrated by, and perpetrated upon, their number. They, albeit with questionable outcomes, pushed the government to end its indifference about their cause. They built the foundations of the League of Nation's global initiative against trafficking that was rolled out following the First World War, as well as the global initiatives conducted today by such bodies as the United Nations and the Council of Europe. We should not underestimate the achievements of the two organizations. However, we must, in the spirit of the organizations themselves, put a price on these achievements. We must, once again, ask, 'at what cost?'

The Earl of Aberdeen's pronouncement exposes another irony inherent in the British response to trafficking. For, more than anything else, it was upon 'opinion', 'creed', and 'policy' that the NVA and JAPGW's crusades depended. It was upon, the opinion, creed and policy of the country's patriarchal middle class that their struggles were hinged. As such, it was so often at the expense of 'the sacred claims of justice and humanity' that each operated whilst fighting against trafficking. As representatives of the British and international anti-trafficking movements, the organizations could have used their voices to speak out about the need to check the gross injustice of the sexual exploitation perpetrated across the world through trafficking, about the need to succour and rehabilitate the women and girls subjected to such abuse, about the need to afford unconditional and apposite assistance to those vulnerable to being abused.

Yet on these subjects they said surprisingly little. Instead, the NVA and JAPGW chose to make a myriad of statements to the contrary through discourses that fundamentally misrepresented the problem of trafficking and marginalized female sexual exploitation in what was a regressive, foreign romance. They cast 'the trafficked' as complicit in her own victimhood given her fundamental flaws as a working-class foreigner and cast 'the trafficker' as partly absolved in victimizing her given his unique talent for extracting profit from 'natural resources'. They portrayed her as worthy of

censure and only limited help whilst they portrayed him as worthy of acclaim and limitless attention, casting the suffering she endured and the exploitation he perpetrated as, in some respect, normal occurrences in the world of commerce. They maintained that there was one rule for a woman and another for a man where moral standards, the 'burden of foreignness' and agency were concerned. They represented 'the working-class mother' as unable to afford to adequately nurture her children, for she did not comprise the British middle-class moral majority and represented independence and social mobility as luxuries which were too costly for working-class girls. They cast the anti-feminist strictures of their respective religions as unimpeachable and, perversely, the most vehement anti-alienist and anti-Semitic diatribes of the day as, to some extent, valid. Most loudly and clearly of all, the organizations presented trafficking as an economy in which the interests of the British bourgeois few were of more importance than the interests of the impoverished foreign masses, in which money talked to money and in which everyone and everything had a price. The people to whom the NVA and JAPGW attached the lowest price, in whom they encouraged the lowest investment, and at whose expense they often operated, were the very women and girls whose welfare they should have valued the most. When more and more female citizens were being trafficked and more and more effort was being ploughed into preventive work, the will to give unconditional help to women and girls exposed to such sexual exploitation was more distant than when trafficking was a minor cross-Channel phenomenon. Anti-trafficking was no longer simply a fight against trafficking but a fight against all those people and things going against what the NVA and JAPGW, and the dominant bourgeois culture of the day, deemed respectable.

This chapter in Britain's response to trafficking sheds further light on the ongoing transition from liberalism. It suggests that by 1899-1910, the process of change in some of the country's principal moral and sexual reform organizations to the role of 'devotees of the state' was consolidated, and the part such groups played in abetting the transition was galvanized, as a reconfiguration in the politics of the members of the anti-trafficking movement took place.

The anti-trafficking movement was no longer run by a male-dominated phalanx of reformers that merely looked to the state as the source of the solution to trafficking, and that was still, in part, influenced by the egalitarian radical traditions that had guided Butler's repeal campaign. Instead, it was run by a male-dominated coterie that actively sought to, and often did, ally with the state, and that sympathized with the emerging, dominant bourgeois capitalist forces so influential in reconfiguring state power and facilitating the transition from liberalism. The members of the coterie reformed on the basis of the superiority of their class and, through their philanthropy, they promoted their class mores, which were largely also those held by the new capitalist elite. They thus proselytized the working-class subjects they deemed deserving with the very 'unthreatening bourgeois values' that were endorsed by the elite, and entrenched the pre-eminence of the white, British, middle-class male, intrinsic to these values. They tacitly defended the system of capital from which the dominant capitalist class drew its wealth and the status quo that supported the system.

Validating the very ideas and interests intrinsic to state power, then, the anti-trafficking movement and its proponents, the forces of social purity, thus functioned as *active agents* of the transition from liberalism, as well as indirect provocateurs of the radical rebellion against the state that, as we will see, would soon come to the fore. They were empowered by, and in turn, empowered, the transitions in the nature of the state that were taking place. However, they were far from harbingers of a new non-liberal age. They stood with one foot in a latter-day incarnation of the bourgeois-centric, philanthropic traditional of laissez-faire liberalism (devoid of the feminist reworking of the repeal movement) and the other foot in the 'modern' doctrine of interventionism. They fostered successful rapprochements with the state in certain areas but were often kept at arm's length by the state in others. They were not averse to criticizing state policy at specific moments. They provide an insight into the work-in-progress of the broader transition to which they contributed.

A minority of contemporary commentators highlighted the conspicuous power of the new, state-allied philanthropic bodies. As early as 1885, Dr Charles Bell Taylor averred at the annual meeting of the libertarian Vigilance Association on the misnomer of political representation: 'In fact we are living under a despotism of self-righteous,

semi-virtuous, *soi-distant* philanthropists, - would be sanitorians and goody-goody people , - who threaten us with their silly laws more and more every day...'.⁴²⁵ Such ideas, however, were held by a minority and did not impinge upon the circumstantial empowerment of some of the country's prominent philanthropic bodies dealing with moral and sexual questions at this moment of the transition from liberalism.

425 Bell Taylor, C, '*For Liberty*'. *A Speech by Dr Bell Taylor at the Annual Meeting of the Vigilance Association* (Nottingham: Stevenson, Bailey & Smith, 1885), pp.11-2

Section Three

Competing Slavery: Radical Politics, the Edwardian Crisis & the Struggle for the 1912 Criminal Law Amendment Act

Chapter Five

Between 1910 and 1912, there is no evidence to suggest that the traffic in women underwent any significant substantive reconfiguration. While the figures from the JAPGW point to a particularly high instance of suspected or reported cases of trafficking in 1909, these trafficking levels returned more or less to the average for the period 1898 to 1914. Favoured trafficking destinations appear to have remained the same and so too do the ethnic origins of 'the trafficker' and 'the trafficked'. What had changed by 1912, however, were the dominant discourses of 'white slavery', the parties mobilizing them, and the reasons why they did so, as the problem of trafficking was addressed at Westminster amid a body politic in crisis.

A Criminal Law Amendment (CLA) Bill, based on the Conjoint Committee's suggestions about how to combat trafficking, was progressing through parliament that year. It sparked an escalating furore which saw the struggle for the representation of trafficking shift from the philanthropic to the radical political domain. The voices of the NVA and JAPGW were joined by the clamours of a myriad of extra-parliamentary campaign groups contending for recognition at Westminster, which were engaging with the 'white slave' question so as to either promote or refute the need for the CLA Bill. The bastions of social purity no longer had exclusive and uncontested possession of the issue of trafficking. Their credibility and philanthropic credentials were no longer taken for granted. Trafficking was now most forcefully engaged with in radical political campaigns whose priorities, to varying degrees, did not wholly reside in the anti-trafficking-cause. The so-called Edwardian Crisis – the period of intensifying political insurrection and social unrest, extra-parliamentary mobilization and violent protest against the government on a number of fronts between c.1910 and the dawn of the First World War – had set in and, with the CLA Bill having been introduced in its midst,

the politics accompanying the dominant discourses of 'white slavery' underwent a sea change.

Crucially, among other significant modifications, this re-appropriation of the issue of trafficking also saw the introduction of several other types of 'slavery' in the new discourses for the purpose of representing the relative severity of the traffic in women and its value as a subject of political reform. 'White slavery' became one of many competing 'slaveries' in radical rhetoric and assumed a political application and significance that it had never had before as debate over the need for, and format of, anti-trafficking legislation raged. Moreover, it became a 'slavery' represented in the context of not only political turmoil but also moral panic. More than at any other point in the broader period 1880-1912, 'white slavery' came to be sensationalized and was cast as a real and present threat to the social order. Whether their proponents unconsciously promoted or condemned the panic, the new discourses of 'white slavery' were shaped by anxiety, and the representation of trafficking was reconfigured as a result. As Bullock observed in his 1913 report:

The discussions consequent upon the introduction of recent legislation on the subject of White Slave Traffic [in 1912] had a curious result in England, for no sooner was the subject mentioned in the public prints than a remarkable manifestation of anxiety was exhibited in regard to the dangers run by women and girls in the streets of London, for which there was in fact no justification or foundation. All sorts of stories, sensational and wholly improbable were repeated from mouth to mouth, of sudden disappearances, abductions and attempts to entice and allure innocent girls, which on investigation proved to be absolutely without foundation and are only mentioned now to show how sensitive the people of this country are to questions of this kind...⁴²⁶

This section will explore the discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized within two of the radical movements that were active during the Edwardian Crisis and whose voices dominated the new representations of trafficking, namely, the women's suffrage movement and the socialist (including the labour) movement. It will consider what the discourses used by these groups tell us about not only the new representations of

426 WL, Traffic in Women Publications, Bullock, 'White-Slave Traffic', p.4

trafficking and the politics underpinning them but also the dynamics of the Edwardian Crisis and the transition from liberalism of which the Crisis constituted an acute phase.

Before this, a brief outline of the Edwardian Crisis, and of the two movements upon which analysis will focus, is necessary.

The Edwardian Crisis

Constitutional Crisis

In January 1910, a general election called by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith following the controversial rejection of his Liberal Government's progressive People's Budget by the House of Lords, returned a hung parliament. To remain in power the Liberal Party was forced to solicit the backing of John Redmond's Irish Nationalists by agreeing to introduce both a Home Rule Bill for Ireland and a Parliament Bill to prevent the Tory-dominated Lords throwing-out measures that had received the backing of the Commons, as had been the case with previous Home Rule Bills. The Budget was passed that April, and after a great deal of wrangling, the Lords acceded to the Parliament Bill the following year, which prevented the Lords from suspending Bills passed by the Commons for more than two years.⁴²⁷ Redmond's Party's first demand, however, would prove decidedly more controversial and led to decades of hostility in Ireland between Nationalists and Unionists.

Home Rule

The Third Home Rule Bill was introduced into parliament in April 1912 to come into law if unopposed in 1914 and instantly provoked Unionist indignation. July witnessed a mass showing of support for Unionism at a Conservative rally at Blenheim whilst in September, as the Bill gained ground, the Solemn League and Covenant was signed, in which over 450,000 people vowed to do all in their power to prevent the establishment of a Home Rule parliament and to refuse to recognize its authority. The establishment of armed paramilitary resistance groups ensued. In January 1913, with the Bill making steady progress, the Ulster Volunteer Force was inaugurated to oppose

427 Murray, BK, *The People's Budget 1909-10: Lloyd George & Liberal Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Searle, GR, *The Liberal Party. Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp.74-83

Home Rule. At the close of that year, Nationalists set up their own paramilitary force, the Irish Volunteers, to reinforce their fight for self-government. Both groups strengthened and mobilized over the following months. With the passage of the Bill seemingly imminent, tensions were inflamed in March 1914, when the Curragh Mutiny in which British troops refused to repel Ulster Volunteer violence, demonstrated that the government could not rely on the loyalty of its army in the event of Unionist insurrection.⁴²⁸ This was especially alarming in light of the mass, illicit importation of arms by the Ulster Volunteers that was tolerated by the local British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary. Following the third reading of the Home Rule Bill that May, an all-party conference was convened to formulate a compromise agreeable to both Unionists and Nationalists, but it ended without consensus. Ireland seemed on the cusp of civil war. With Britain's entry into the First World War, however, the government decided to put the implementation of Home Rule on ice and tensions were cooled momentarily.⁴²⁹

Suffrage

Albeit without a similar threat of armed opposition, resistance by members of the movement for female suffrage was also reaching a peak at this time. Characterized by many internal tensions, the movement was diverse and comprised three principal organizations, with other smaller groups also active.

The NUWSS

The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was an amalgamation of many of the country's regional and metropolitan suffrage groups and had roots dating back to 1897. It was led by the NVA luminary Millicent Garrett Fawcett and maintained that the campaign for votes for women should be fought using constitutional means including canvassing support for suffrage among Members of Parliament and encouraging the introduction of pro-suffrage Private Members' Bills. It condemned violent protest as 'the meat and drink of Anti-Suffragists'.⁴³⁰ The NUWSS also championed the extension of women's social and economic rights, paying particular

428 Jackson, A, *Home Rule: An Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Ch.2

429 See: Jackson, DM, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2009)

430 Fawcett, M cited in: *The Common Cause* (14 March 1912), p.832

attention to the labour question as it affected women, and attracted a considerable working-class following.⁴³¹ It, however, represented female enfranchisement as the key to gaining these rights, evoking, like many of its fellow suffragist groups, a separate spheres logic that highlighted women's exceptionality as mothers and nurturers. It averred in a pro-suffrage argument in 1910:

suffragists see that men, being chiefly interested in making things, in sport, in fighting and getting power and money, are not able to pay enough attention to what women are chiefly interested into – the bearing and rearing of children, the making of happy and healthy homes, the nursing of the sick, the protection of the weak...⁴³²

The WSPU

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded in 1903 following a breakaway from the NUWSS in frustration at its slow-progress and reliance on constitutionalism, and was led by Emmeline Pankhurst, aided particularly by her daughter, Christabel. Unlike Fawcett's organization, it was all-female, pursued a more limited reform programme and embraced civil disobedience as well as an array of violent militant strategies as its protest method of choice. It, as Emmeline recalled in 1914, was to be 'satisfied with nothing but action on our question. Deeds not words was to be our permanent motto'.⁴³³ The WSPU advocated the extension of the franchise to women according to the same property criteria used in local elections, 'firstly', as it proclaimed in 1911, 'in order that [women's] point of view may be brought to bear on the problems which confront the Government' and 'secondly, in order that the laws may be made and administered fairly as between men and women, and that the status of women in the country may be put on a proper level'.⁴³⁴ The ILP, of which the Pankhursts were committed followers, lent its support to the new group in its early years. By 1906, however, dissatisfaction, not least at the ILP's inclination to support universal adult suffrage rather than women's suffrage, prompted the organization to

431 Liddington, J & Norris, J, *'One Hand Tied Behind Us' The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Virago, 1978)

432 *The Common Cause* (6 October 1910), p.411

433 Pankhurst, E, *My Own Story* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914), p.32

434 *Votes for Women* (14 July 1911), p.669

renounce its ties with the Party.⁴³⁵ Having originally sought alliances within the Liberal Party, the NUWSS came increasingly to lend its support to the ILP and, from 1912, the Labour Party.⁴³⁶

The WFL

The Women's Freedom League (WFL) was formed in 1907 by a breakaway from the WSPU precipitated by the group's renunciation of the ILP and the perceived despotism of the Pankhursts. It was run by Charlotte Despard assisted by Edith How-Martyn and Teresa Billington-Greig and, like the WSPU, had a predominantly middle-class demographic. It adopted militant but pacifist campaign strategies, vowing not to 'set out to damage persons or property'.⁴³⁷ These included tax resistance, peaceful demonstrations and canvassing for pro-suffrage, or against anti-suffrage, candidates at local elections. Unlike the WSPU, the WFL defined women's freedom as something that entailed more than simply the inclusion of a certain category of women in the electorate. In addition to its campaign for full female enfranchisement and the extension of women's legal rights, it strove for a more equitable relationship between the sexes via debate and raising public awareness regarding sexual issues.⁴³⁸ Its slogan was 'Dare to be Free'. Combining socialist and suffragist rhetorics, Charlotte Despard declared on behalf of her organization:

[t]he highest of all the laws of Nature is that which knits us together in the bonds of a common humanity; through disobedience to that law the woman and the worker are being deprived of liberty...we are working towards unity [between the sexes]... as a moving, renovating power and influence in our everyday lives.⁴³⁹

Indeed, the WFL retained strong associations with the socialist movement and ILP throughout its decades in operation.

435 Bartley, P, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Routledge, 2002), esp. Ch.3

436 Purvis, J, 'Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) & Votes for Women' in Purvis, J & Holton, S Stanley (eds.), *Votes for Women* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), esp. pp.114-119

437 WL, WFL Records, 2WFL/1/01, First National Executive Committee Minute Book, November 1908

438 Frances, H, "'Dare to be Free!' The Women's Freedom League and its Legacy' in Purvis & Holton (eds.), *Votes*, p.181

439 *The Vote* (10 January 1913), p.180

The Votes for Women Fellowship

Disputes over the escalating violence deployed by the WSPU caused a major schism in its executive in 1912. A small yet significant phalanx led by Emmeline and Frederick Pethick Lawrence, with encouragement from the Pankhursts, left the organization objecting to its tactics and formed the militant but more moderate Votes for Women Fellowship.

The Freewoman

The Freewoman, a 'Weekly Feminist Review', aired an array of opinions regarding votes for women and ought not to be omitted from a consideration of the suffrage movement. A groundbreaking and controversial independent journal, *The Freewoman* was founded in 1911 by Dora Marsden, a disillusioned former WSPU member, and was edited by herself and the socialist and feminist activist, Mary Gawthorpe.⁴⁴⁰ It hosted candid debates on the role of women, marriage, maternity and sex, as well as suffrage and the suffrage movement, retaining a feminist-individualist stance. Its first edition announced, '[t]he publication of the Freewoman marks an epoch. It marks the point at which Feminism in England ceases to be impulsive and unaware of its own features, and becomes definitely self-conscious and introspective'.⁴⁴¹ As well as having many contributors opposed to votes for women, not to mention the state-machine, *The Freewoman*, was a harsh critic of the formal suffrage movement. As Lucy Delap has demonstrated, it strove to differentiate itself from these groups by painting the campaign for female emancipation as philosophically, spiritually and politically inferior, 'fixated' with the vote and integrating women into a defunct system of government with no idea of what should come next.⁴⁴² 'The Suffragists - less and more - want the vote and they would like it now', it averred in 1912, '[w]hy? No reason, except that men have it...In their official capacity Suffragists are devoid of all social, political, or

440 Marsden tried to get the WFL to subsidize *The Freewoman* but was refused because of the journal's criticism of the country's suffragist groups. Frances, "'Dare'", p.191

441 *The Freewoman* (23 November 1911), p.3

442 Delap, L "'Philosophical Vacuity and Political Ineptitude': The Freewoman's Critique of the Suffrage Movement" *Women's History Review*, 11 (2002), pp.613-30

religious philosophy...And the more rebellious the rebels are, the more this holds true. There is no feminism in Suffragism nor is there any penetrating humanism'.⁴⁴³

The hopes of the women's suffrage movement were raised when, following the years of inaction on the question by Balfour's Tory administration, the Liberals came to power led by Campbell-Bannerman and, although refusing to concede to female suffrage, brought in a Qualification of Women Act in 1907 which empowered women to become mayors and serve on local councils. They were raised higher still in 1908 when a Woman Suffrage Bill, a Private Member's Bill introduced by the Liberal MP HY Stanger allowing for limited female enfranchisement, passed its first reading . When Asquith came to power that year, however, he declined to give facilities to the Bill, despite it receiving a good majority on its second reading, and later reneged on a promise to introduce a franchise reform Bill with an amendment which would provide for some women to have the vote.

The groups comprising the suffrage movement stepped up their respective campaigns for government action following Asquith's apparent volte-face, bringing the question of votes for women before the public like never before. Sympathetic to the principle of female enfranchisement and eager to curb the militant elements of these campaigns, a number of politicians formed a cross-party Conciliation Committee in the wake of the January 1910 election. Shortly afterwards, a Conciliation Bill was introduced by the Committee via the Labour MP David Shackleton containing provision for female-householders to be brought into the electorate on the same terms as men. It passed its first and second readings but the supporters of suffrage in parliament were too diverse, and the opponents of suffrage too strong, for the Bill to progress any further. Having called a ceasefire on its militancy when the measure was announced, the WSPU stepped up its violent protest following the Bill's defeat, marching on the Commons in the immediate aftermath in an episode known as Black Friday.⁴⁴⁴ A Conciliation Bill, adapted to include all women householders, was re-introduced in 1911 and met with even stronger cross-party support. However, Asquith refused to back it, declaring that his

443 *The Freewoman* (4 July 1912), p.123

444 Bartley, P, *Votes for Women 1860-1928* (London: Hodder Arnold, 1998), Ch.4. For a contemporary outline of the struggle for female suffrage see: *The Common Cause* (25 February 1911), pp.765-7

administration was planning to introduce a franchise measure the following year. While the NUWSS invested some faith in this decision, the militant suffrage groups condemned it and stepped up their campaigns. The following year the Labour Party came out in support of female suffrage and the first Conciliation Bill was reintroduced. However, unlike the other Bills, it was defeated upon its second reading by a narrow margin, with Irish Nationalists voting against the Bill out of fear that the parliamentary time given the question would harm the chances of the Home Rule Bill being passed. This angered campaigners across the suffrage movement - many of whom blamed the Liberals, their former allies, for this defeat - and caused an upsurge in suffrage militancy, with public demonstrations, spates of window-smashing and civil disobedience reaching a high and new forms of protest such as the arson attack being deployed.

Later in 1912 Asquith introduced his alternative measure, a Manhood Suffrage Bill, which had tacked onto it a series of amendments allowing for the enfranchisement of certain women according to property-based criteria. Its amendments were, however, ruled inadmissible, and the whole Bill was withdrawn in 1913. With the government having refused a female suffrage amendment to the Home Rule Bill that autumn and facing a number of heated political questions, the chances of votes being granted to women that year or the next looked slim. The mounting suffragist militancy did little to change things.

The government did, however, enact preventive legislation aimed at militants. While hunger striking by imprisoned militant suffragists had been deployed since 1909, its proliferation by 1913 caused the government to bring in the 'Cat and Mouse' Act which allowed women prisoners who were weakened by hunger to be released from jail and re-arrested upon recovery. This did not of itself abate militancy. However, by 1914, while protest continued, the most militant facets of the campaign for female suffrage began to lose momentum, wrought with internal divisions and alienated from the movement at large. Cross-party sympathy for the votes for women question remained but so did concerns about the impact of female emancipation on party politics and the

determination not to concede to suffragist violence. The start of the War cooled the campaign for women's suffrage considerably.⁴⁴⁵

Labour Unrest

The third source of unrest contributing to the Edwardian Crisis was the labour movement. A crescendo of labour unrest began during 1908-09 and reached a deafening pitch by the outbreak of the War. In the years under consideration, membership of the country's trade unions increased by over 50%, the TUC gained nearly a million members and strike levels quadrupled compared to the 1900s.⁴⁴⁶ In 1912 alone it has been estimated that 36 million working days were lost through strike action whilst the year after almost 1,500 separate disputes broke out.⁴⁴⁷ Along with swathes of strikes, hostility erupted in the country's principal industrial cities throughout the years of the Edwardian Crisis and increasingly violent means of direct action were deployed or threatened of a type not too far removed from those orchestrated by syndicalists on the Continent.

The first major strike wave during the period was in the mining industry. In 1910 wage cuts in the industry and a law limiting working hours without any adjustment to the piece rate sparked what became a ten month long strike at the South Wales coalfield, involving more than 30,000 men. It turned progressively violent such that army intervention was threatened. Under the auspices of the rapidly growing Miners' Federation of Great Britain, March 1911 saw nearly one million miners come out on strike to demand a national minimum wage, causing the industry to come to a virtual standstill. The government quickly pushed through a Minimum Wage Bill which allowed for district-specific minimum wages but these were below the level demanded and only momentarily quelled strike action. During this dispute, a strike wave broke out in the summer among transport and dock workers which provoked army intervention. Shortly afterwards, Liverpool's railwaymen instigated the first national railway strike which bore witness to heightening militancy. Troops were quickly drafted in to support the various

445 Kent, S Kingsley, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 1995), Ch.7

446 Hinton, *Labour*, p.84

447 Dangerfield, G, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935, reprinted 1966. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), p.290

railway companies and martial law was declared extensively. Many casualties occurred as the army clashed with protestors and a series of sympathy strikes took place in other beleaguered industries. The government eventually convinced the owners of the railway companies to accept a conciliation deal and the national strike was called off. The deal, however, did not significantly improve the lot of railway workers and a series of further strikes occurred over the following two years. Shortly after the miners' strike in April 1912, the National Transport Workers' Federation staged an unsuccessful strike at the London Docks and the following year Dublin's transport workers engaged in mass action. Meanwhile, a series of localized strikes took place across the United Kingdom.⁴⁴⁸

Adding to government anxiety over the increasing strength of the workforce, many of the country's unions were merging and consolidating their power throughout the period. By 1912, the Miners' and the Transport Workers' Federations had joined with the National Union of railwaymen to form the Triple Alliance so as to achieve collective security in the event of further industrial action. It is possible that the Alliance might have staged a general strike if war had not broken out.

The Labour Party

A précis of the early history of the Labour Party and the organizations comprising the socialist movement was given in the previous section. This outline will build upon it.

The Labour Party, despite the financial impediment inflicted by the Osborne Judgment, enjoyed significant success at the polls throughout the period. However, its success was extremely fragile. It was bound to the Liberals and did not feel at liberty to promote some of its more radical ideas. Of the forty-two seats it won in the December 1910 election, only two had come from defeating a Liberal candidate, with the remainder coming from its electoral pact with Asquith's Party. Moreover, the Labour Party was wracked by internal divisions, not least over the key questions of National Insurance and Women's Suffrage and was increasingly criticized by both its ILP affiliates and its rank-and-file for its weakness and abrogation of socialism.⁴⁴⁹ The overt disdain of

448 See: Hinton, *Labour*, Ch.5; Rubinstein, D, 'Trade Unions, Politicians and Public Opinion 1906-1914' in Pimlott, B & Cook, C (eds.), *Trade Unions in British Politics* (London: Longman, 1982), pp.58-78

449 Pugh, M, *The Making of Modern British Politics, 1867-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.139

union activity by many Labour luminaries, together with their Party's open alliance with the government, compounded the impression that Labour was shunning the worker. In his 1913 work *Socialism and Syndicalism*, the revered Labour MP and one time Chair of the ILP, Philip Snowden denounced syndicalism as 'fundamentally different from Socialism' and as an 'utterly impractical and undesirable' mode of industrial politics thus distancing the Labour Party from considerable numbers of its grass-root supporters.⁴⁵⁰ Indeed, despite considerable increases in trade union and socialist group affiliation to the Party throughout the period, the heightening labour unrest was arguably testament to the workforce's will to represent itself rather than relying on its representatives in parliament, as was the significant number of trade unions opting out of the political levy to the Party following the 1913 Trade Union Act.⁴⁵¹

The ILP & the BSP

Developments in the country's socialist movement during the period also attest to the disenchantment with the Labour Party. After nearly inciting the ILP rank-and-file to mutiny against the Party in 1907, the maverick ILP MP Victor Grayson gathered a group of ILP rebels together with the Socialist Democratic Party and numerous individual socialist factions to form the British Socialist Party (BSP) in the wake of the strike waves of 1911. The BSP, however, which was lead by the SDP founder HM Hyndman, was soon divided over the question of intervention in strike activity - it officially opposed intervention - and from 1912, it steadily lost the majority of its 37,000 members to what was a growing militant, syndicalist movement. The ILP was similarly divided and lost many members on the same issue, the majority of its leadership condemning union militancy as well as most strike action. These groups nevertheless assumed a symbolic significance on the Left, never actually challenging the Labour Party but rather standing as evidence of the mounting dissatisfaction towards Labour policies among socialists.⁴⁵² Like the Labour Party and its fellow socialist organizations, the BSP

450 Snowden, P, *Socialism and Syndicalism* (London: Collins, 1913), esp. pp. 214, 242; McKibbin, R, *The Evolution of the Labour Party 1910-1924* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), chs. 1-3; Pugh, M, *Speak for Britain! A New History of the Labour Party* (London: The Bodley Head, 2010), Ch.3

451 Powell, D, *The Edwardian Crisis. Britain, 1901-1914* (London, Macmillan, 1996) p.113

452 See also: Schwarz, B & Durham, M, 'A safe and sane labourism' *Socialism and the state, 1910-24* in Hall & Schwarz, *Crises*, pp.126-50

came to support adult- as opposed to women's suffrage, believing that women should not have precedence for emancipation or, as one ILP circular put it, that '[t]he man who votes for the removal of sex disqualification...votes for inequality between the sexes'.⁴⁵³

The suffragist militancy practised by the WSPU sparked particular public vitriol from within the socialist movement, often on class-lines.⁴⁵⁴ 'I have the very strongest objection to childishness masquerading as revolution', the Labour Party's Ramsey Macdonald bemoaned regarding the organization's militancy, before branding WSPU members 'pettifogging middle-class damsels'.⁴⁵⁵ Despite its original advocacy of 'bloody revolution', the BSP voiced its strong opposition to such women of the 'master class' and their "'militant' methods which...are absolutely criminal, are not warranted by the end in view, and are, above all, calculated to injure, rather than advance, the cause of women's political advancement'.⁴⁵⁶ Unlike the NUWSS and the WFL which, as we have seen, merely registered a certain scorn on the subject, *The Freewoman* was one of the most outspoken critics of the WSPU's militancy and echoed aspects of the socialist groups' sentiment. After a spate of WSPU violence and arrests in 1911, it proclaimed:

[Christabel Pankhurst] has lost her political balance. She is making an unreasonable demand, which she knows will not be conceded, and she is urging others, who do not know this so well, to suffer seriously in a vain attempt to force its concession. We condemn her present move...as lacking political insight and even common sense.⁴⁵⁷

The Clarion

Socialist activity beyond the ILP and BSP was also diversifying. The Fabians, a faction also regularly at odds with the Labour Party, developed what would become the Fabian Research Department in 1912 to provide information to unions inter alia to foster passive campaigning. Meanwhile, socialist clusters surrounding journals such as *The Clarion* flourished.

The Clarion, its publications throughout the period declared, 'is the leading labour and socialist organ. It has a circulation of over 60,000 weekly. More than any

453 'ILP Circular' cited in: *The Common Cause* (2 May 1912), p.51

454 WL, Papers of Katie Gliddon, 7KGG/2/1, Letters from Katie Gliddon, Notebook 1912.

455 Macdonald, R, cited in: Marquand, D, *Ramsey Macdonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), p.148

456 *Justice* (26 October 1912), p.1

457 *The Freewoman* (23 November 1911), p.4

other influence it has been instrumental in bringing the question of socialism so prominently before the public'.⁴⁵⁸ Founded in 1891 by the one-time SDF sympathiser Robert Blatchford, the journal was established with the intention of spreading the message of socialism and espoused what might be referred to as a utopian socialism. From its earliest years, it organized social clubs centred around healthy outdoor pursuits such as cycling and hiking and encouraged the politicization of the workforce. As Blatchford wrote in his 1894 bestselling work *Merrie England*, which was serialized in *The Clarion*: 'I think that the best way to realise Socialism is to make Socialists...My advice to you working men is to return working-men representatives, with definite and imperative instructions, to parliament and to all other governing bodies'.⁴⁵⁹ Like many of the journals of the main socialist groups, *The Clarion* featured a 'Woman's Outlook' column throughout the period which aired pro-suffrage ideas. The journal, however, maintained opposition to female enfranchisement throughout the publication at large. Although having no formal affiliation with a particular faction, *The Clarion* shared the disillusionment with the ILP leadership felt by many socialists and supported Grayson's short-lived breakaway movement. It enjoyed an increasing following alongside the growing purchase of the Labour Party and continued to prosper as an independent socialist organ until the brink of War.⁴⁶⁰

The New Age

Meanwhile, *The New Age*, 'an independent socialist review of politics, literature and art', espoused a guild socialist stance throughout the period as an alternative to industrial syndicalism and mainstream socialism, endorsing, like the prominent socialist thinkers William Morris and GDH Cole, the control of industry by the workforce via guilds. Comprising work by a number of notable modernist and/or left-wing writers such as Henry James, Ezra Pound and George Bernard Shaw, the periodical was edited by the teacher-turned-journalist Alfred Richard Orage from 1907. In some respects like *The Freewoman*, *The New Age* maintained a modernist outlook, drawing upon influences as

458 See: Lyons, NA, *White Slaves and Nasty Nonsense* (London: The Clarion Press, 1912)

459 Blatchford, R, *Merrie England* (London: Clarion Newspaper Co, 1894), p.197

460 'The Clarion' in Brake, L & Demoor, M (eds.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), pp.122-3

diverse as theosophy and psychoanalysis, and regularly featuring debates on the nature of modernism, modern politics and society. 'In view of the gradual emergence from the tangle of sociological theory of a distinctly Socialist conception of Society', its first edition declared, 'the time seems ripe for the appearance of a weekly Review devoted to the intelligent discussion and criticism, both of existing institutions and of plans and organizations for their reform'.⁴⁶¹

Imperial and Foreign Relations

Although seldom recognized by historians, the Edwardian Crisis was also a crisis in which the country's imperial and foreign relations played a significant part, providing fuel for the various groups campaigning for political recognition and subjecting the beleaguered government to additional strain. Woven through the increasingly militant spates of protest against the government by the Home Rule, labour, socialist and female suffrage movements respectively were discourses of criticism predicated on the government's supposed mismanagement of its foreign affairs, the double-standards inherent in its policies in this sphere and the patent disdain for the welfare of the very citizens that had made the empire great.

As we will see, growing disillusionment with empire fuelled not least by Britain's defeat in the South African War and the revelations of British-orchestrated abuses on Boer women and children during the conflict combined with antipathy over the government seemingly prioritizing humanitarian causes and labour questions abroad.⁴⁶² British intervention in rival powers' imperial affairs also solicited criticism. The decades leading up to the First World War witnessed the formation of a series of alliances among European powers for collective security and the formal recognition of colonial claims. In 1904 Britain and France entered into the Entente Cordiale and three years later Russia had joined, forming the Triple Entente. The Entente countered the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, which had been formed in the 1880s. Member countries were preoccupied with defending their claims to territories *as well as* defending those of their Treaty partners. The British government was exposed to

⁴⁶¹ *The New Age* (2 May 1907), p.8. See: Jackson, P, *Great War Modernisms and 'The New Age' Magazine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012)

⁴⁶² See: Gooch, J (ed), *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (Portland: Frank Cass, 2000)

criticism for giving precedence to its foreign affairs, and particularly those relating to its business interests, when in the 1911 Agadir Crisis, it threatened to repel German attempts to resist a French imperial expansion in Morocco, an area with which it had commercial ties. It had received some condemnation for carrying out a similar threat five years earlier during the Moroccan Crisis.⁴⁶³ Similarly, Britain's intervention in the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, in which the country cooperated with Germany to achieve settlements to temporarily abate conflict, solicited indictments of the government's 'unpatriotic priorities'.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill

And amid the tumult of intensifying discontent and militancy, of conflicting demands for reform and political recognition that characterized the Edwardian Crisis, came the struggle over what was initially branded the Criminal Law Amendment (White Slave Traffic) Bill.

The CLA Bill was by no means one of the pivotal political questions of the day when it was progressing through parliament in 1912. Compared to Irish Home Rule, female suffrage or workers' rights, its role in precipitating the Edwardian Crisis was negligible. However, it will be suggested that both the debates generated, and languages of 'white slavery' mobilized, by suffrage and socialist organizations over the proposed legislation shed light not only on how female sexual exploitation was reconfigured at this moment but crucially also on the political climate during the Edwardian Crisis. They provide an insight into the philosophies espoused by, and the relations between, these organizations, the rhetorical culture within radical politics and, specifically, how, at the core of this culture, lay a network of competing hierarchies of oppressions in which specific causes were pitted against, and privileged above, others according to the priorities of individual radical groupings.

The Bill's long journey to the Statute Books began in earnest in 1911 when a Private Member's Bill based on the Conjoint Committee's draft legislation was introduced in the Commons by the Unionist MP Alan Burgoyne. Over four clauses, it

⁴⁶³ McDonough, 'The Conservative Party and the Anglo-French Entente, 1905-14' in Sharp, A & Stone, G (eds), *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2000), esp. pp.42-3

provided for the arrest without warrant of suspected procurers, harsher penalties for brothel-keepers and souteneurs living off 'immoral earnings' including the flogging upon second conviction of men in the latter class, action against landlords whose premises were used for prostitution, and the broadening of the definition of 'solicitation' to include women as well as men.⁴⁶⁴ The measure started to gain ground when it was reintroduced upon its second reading in spring 1912 by Burgoyne's fellow Party member, Arthur Lee, a staunch anti-suffragist and reputed 'free-thinker' whom the Conjoint Committee had managed to recruit as its parliamentary agent.⁴⁶⁵ Lee, with help from Home Secretary Reginald McKenna managed to steer the Bill through its Committee Stages, despite significant opposition.

Asquith's Liberals were subjected to increasing public pressure to support the Bill, with the NVA, the social purity-orientated repeal group, the Ladies' National Association (LNA), and the National Union of Women's Workers promoting the measure among their respective members. The government, however, preoccupied with setting in motion a programme of measures including manhood suffrage, Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment in that parliament and dealing with the heightening militancy of the suffrage and labour movements, gave the Bill short shrift. Starved of government support, the CLA Bill eventually ran aground, filibustered by the Unionist MP Frederick Banbury and the Liberal MP Frederick Handel Booth, two men the NUWSS branded 'champion blockers [whose]...opposition is not directed against this Bill, but against all private measures introducing legal challenges'.⁴⁶⁶ Banbury and Booth would prove to be the Bill's staunchest opponents. Each saw the measure as unnecessary and fundamentally unfit for purpose. Booth shunned such moral legislation and instead endorsed sex education, declaring in the Commons upon the Bill's second reading: 'I consider the real responsibility of the grave evils with which we are now faced arise in large measure from the ignorance of these youthful people [trafficked girls], an ignorance which has been encouraged by the prudery of older people'.⁴⁶⁷

464 See: Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, 5th Series, XXI, Col.1549 (20 February 1911); Criminal Law Amendment (White Slave Traffic). A Bill to amend the Criminal Law Amendment Acts, 1885, the Vagrancy Act, 1898 and the Immoral Traffic (Scotland) Act, *P.P.*, 1912-3, (23), I

465 *The Common Cause* (2 May 1912), p.53

466 *Idem.*

467 Handel Booth, F, Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, XXXIX, Col.580 (10 June 1912)

It was due to the repeated blocking of the measure that many of the groups comprising the women's suffrage movement started to engage more rigorously with the issue of trafficking and the possibility of a legislative solution to it.⁴⁶⁸ The NUWSS was the first group to champion the 'white slave' question, perhaps seeing the CLA Bill as a consolation prize after the failure of the Conciliation Bill. Significantly, it was also the first organization to seize and play heavily upon the fact that WT Stead, the very man deemed responsible for the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, had died in the Titanic disaster just days prior to the present CLA Bill failing that April. It cited the government's indifference to the Bill as typical of its reaction to Criminal Law Amendment Bills and, taking up a suggestion by the writer and feminist Mrs Archibald Little, pronounced that there could be 'no more fitting memorial' to 'The Maiden Tribute' author's work than the proposed legislation.⁴⁶⁹ Having reminisced about Stead's awakening of 'the moral conscience of the country' in 1885, the 'In Memoriam' article that Millicent Fawcett, a fellow NVA member, wrote for the crusading journalist in the NUWSS journal *The Common Cause*, concluded with the declaration:

[t]here is a new Criminal Law Amendment Bill before the House of Commons now: it deals another blow to the White Slave Trade. It is blocked just as the Bill of 1885 was, but we are not where we were then. We are in a better position, and we owe a great deal of that betterment to the man who was lost in the 'Titanic' on April 15th.⁴⁷⁰

Soon, calls for the Bill to be passed as a tribute to Stead were being echoed by the other principal suffrage groups and further politicized obituaries of the revered reformer were produced.⁴⁷¹ The 'white slave' question became an established feature of suffrage discourses at this point.⁴⁷² That May, with the support of members of the NVA, NUWSS and WFL, a Pass the Bill Committee was formed which organized regular meetings and deputations to push for action against trafficking in Stead's honour, and it quickly grew

468 Many suffrage groups were considering the need for anti-trafficking legislation prior to 1912. See: *The Common Cause* (17 March 1910)

469 *The Common Cause* (17 May 1912), p.53

470 *The Common Cause* (25 April 1912), p.37 & (26 May 1912), p.86

471 See: *Votes for Women* (3 May 1912), pp.481-4; *Vote* (22 June 1912), p.150

472 At this early stage, the NUWSS even produced a pamphlet entitled 'The White Slave Traffic'. See: *The Common Cause* (23 May 1912), p. 105

to have hundreds of members. While sympathetic to the Committee's views, the government nevertheless declined to support the Bill.

By June, however, following a persuasive deputation by the Women's Liberal Federation in the wake of mounting public pressure for the Bill, Asquith agreed to give facilities to the measure, provided it passed its second reading. It was perhaps no coincidence that this concession was granted at a time of increasing suffragist militancy. After considerable debate, the Bill passed its second reading without division. The CLA Bill and the 'white slave' question it addressed had become a hot political topic. At this point, many of the country's prominent socialist groups entered the fray, publically voicing their opinions of the measure to their respective members.

The Bill was significantly diluted in Committee that July, sparking much controversy among suffrage and socialist groups, not least because Clause I had been revised such that only a policeman above the rank of sergeant could undertake an 'arrest on suspicion'. Its 'White Slave Traffic' subtitle was dropped at this point too. That October, the Home Secretary announced the government's intention to press for the restoration of the CLA Bill to its original form, citing the 'manifestations of opinion in the country' on the matter.⁴⁷³ This raised the hopes that the measure would soon enter the Statute Books. It also raised heated debate in parliament. With the likelihood of the Bill succeeding, MPs started to scrutinise its provisions more seriously and especially the provision which had crept through the Bill's Committee Stage intact and had hitherto evaded controversy, the so-called Flogging Clauses. Previously, flogging had been a punishment reserved for three groups of 'offenders' whose 'crimes' were associated with deviance or excessive violence, namely, incarcerated men who incited mutiny and/or attacked prison officers under the 1898 Prisons Act, homosexuals under the 1898 Vagrancy Act, and robbers who deployed considerable violence under the 1863 Garrotters' Act. The CLA Bill threatened a significant expansion of this form of corporal punishment. During the Bill's progress through parliament, the extension of flogging to procurers of both sexes was discussed, but flogging was never officially represented as anything but a 'male punishment'.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷³ McKenna, R, Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, 5th series, XLII, col. 781 (14 October 1912)

⁴⁷⁴ See: Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, 5th Series, XLIII, cols. 1842-950 (12 November 1912)

From the time of the government's declared support through to the Bill's third reading that November, the question of flogging dominated much of the parliamentary time dedicated to the Bill. It solicited vociferous support among certain parliamentarians, some of whom calling for the Flogging Clauses to be extended to first-time offenders, and engendered damning indictments from others, particularly on humanitarian grounds. The outspoken Labour MP Will Crooks, demonstrating that approval of the punishment was a cross-party pursuit, enthused about the proposed treatment of male procurers, '[I]'d flog them! I'd like to have the pleasure of laying it about them myself!', and declared defiantly, '[t]here's a lot of maudlin sentiment about all this. I'm glad these scoundrels have a skin that can be tanned'.⁴⁷⁵ Flogging was harmless, according to the Tory MP, Colonel Lockwood: 'I cannot understand the argument of hon. Members opposite when they take this violent line against the punishment of people who have lost all sense and all ideas of honour and all ideas of anything which makes a man a man'.⁴⁷⁶ The notion of flogging as a punishment that was for the unmanly and that de-masculinized was, as we will see, at the core of the rhetorical struggle over the Flogging Clauses. The then Liberal MP Josiah Wedgwood, by contrast, condemned the measure, explaining, '[I] cannot bring myself to believe that in any case the infliction of torture upon a fellow-creature can be for the good of the community in the long run' whilst Asquith himself registered his disapproval of flogging as early as August, presenting the punishment as counterproductive:

You may depend upon it that in most of them [bullies] there are latent, but still present sparks of self-respect, and a sense of human dignity, which if carefully watched and tended might, in a course of time, burn into a purifying glow, which would be in great danger of extinction by such measures.⁴⁷⁷

The Flogging Clauses also dominated the debate over the CLA Bill within the suffragist and the socialist movements and opinions of equivalent strength reverberated on the issue. Indeed, in the eyes of many commentators, the Flogging Clauses came to represent either all that was right or all that was wrong with the CLA Bill and heated

475 Crooks, W, cited in: 'Misdirected zeal' in *Justice* (9 November 1912),p.1

476 Lockwood, Col., Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, 5th Series, XLIII, col. 1861 (12 November 1912)

477 Wedgwood, J, Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, 5th ser., XLII, col. 781 (14 October 1912); Asquith, HH cited in: *The Common Cause* (15 August 1912),p.531

pronouncements on the subject were still being made long after the measure passed into law.

During the Report Stage of the Bill later in November, the Bill had its first Clause reinstated. More controversially, the Commons voted by a slim majority to reconfigure the Bill to make men convicted just once for procuring liable to flogging at a magistrate's discretion. With the help of *its* whips, however, the government managed to return the Clause to its former state. Eventually, amid a mass-demonstration by the Pass the Bill Committee, the Bill passed its third reading without division. Notably, the Labour Party came out in support of the legislation before the culmination of the third reading, much to the consternation of some of its members and many of its fellow socialist groups.

Upon going to the Lords, the Flogging Clauses were again debated at length regarding whether, as the Liberal Lord Eversley put it, 'there is reason to believe that [the punishment] will be efficacious as a deterrent, and whether this kind of punishment is not attended with other evils which make it undesirable to apply it'.⁴⁷⁸ By a majority of seventy-seven, the Lords voted in favour of flogging for male procurers on their first offence and the Bill was passed in this form. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill (1912) received the Royal Assent on 13th December to be implemented on New Year's Day.

The CLA Bill was focussed upon by the country's suffrage and socialist organizations only at controversial moments of its progress through parliament when it provided them with useful propaganda, and then very briefly. However, the organizations' representations of this proposed legal antidote to the 'white slave traffic' can help us think about the Edwardian Crisis as a whole. For, as well as a Crisis characterized by political schisms, popular discontent and group insurgency, the Edwardian Crisis was also a crisis in which languages of slavery resonated and held a particular power. It was a crisis in which the pitting of exploitation against exploitation, woman against man, white people against people of colour, working class against

⁴⁷⁸ Lord Eversley, Hansard, *House of Lords Debates*, 5th Series, XIII, col. 108 (9 December 1912)

bourgeoisie, was frequently called upon by radical political campaigners for the anticipated benefits such politicized comparisons might bring *their* particular cause.

The way in which the groups comprising these movements, so influential in stirring the Edwardian Crisis, represented and exploited the issue of 'white slavery' in their respective discourses is therefore illustrative of the politics in play during the Crisis. It allows us an insight into not only some of the ideologies and strategies of these individual radical groups but also the harmonies or conflicts that characterized their relations. It shows us how, in these relations, hierarchies of oppressions based on concepts of enslavement and emancipation were key and permits us to see how 'white slavery' came to be used as a floating signifier with particular meanings at particular times of the CLA Bill's passage. 'White slavery' went from being just a term around which there was a body of discourses regarding female sexual exploitation to being also a multivalent currency, tendered by radical groupings, to outbid, or be outbid by, other 'slaveries' in a tense radical political climate characterized by struggles for government-sanctioned political liberation and competing campaign strategies. Analysis of the rhetorical struggles over the liberation of 'the trafficked woman' gives us a keener understanding of the implications of this reconfiguration, the nature of the radical political domain and the functioning of hierarchies of oppressions within it, as well as the Crisis which those within the domain helped generate and its wider significance.

It, moreover, reveals a great deal about how the discourses of 'white slavery' were reconfigured and, in turn, the impact of this reconfiguration on the representation of female sexual exploitation. Despite their limited coverage of the CLA Bill, the country's main suffragist and socialist groups came to be the dominant proponents of the discourses, the little that they said being said with great resonance and effecting several important changes to the representation of trafficking. This, as we have seen, was independent of significant changes in the nature of the traffic in women itself.

The Discourses of 'White Slavery'

With the controversy over the CLA Bill, the protagonists, the scenarios and the stories of exploitation constructed by the NVA and JAPGW were abandoned. Trafficking was no longer cast as a multinational crime in which Britain acted as a conduit for

foreign casualties and criminals. It returned to being represented as a nation-specific crime in which English girls were victimized by foreign others. The new proponents of the discourses of 'white slavery', with few exceptions, resurrected a variation of the London Committee's Manichean melodrama, complete with its anti-feminist and ethnocentric binaries, and, crucially, reprised 'the English rose' as the victim of trafficking.

But they did not resurrect the melodrama wholesale. They simultaneously condensed and expanded it. The principal figure of 'the consumer of the trafficked' once occupied by 'the Continental Debauché' was reinstated yet was stripped of a distinct ethnic identity. He was cast simply as a foreigner without qualification. An awareness of the evolving nature of trafficking that had characterized the NVA and the JAPGW's propaganda was absent from the new discourses of 'white slavery'. Meanwhile, 'the foreign (male) trafficker' figure that had been brought to prominence by the two social purity groups was retained along with the auxiliary role played by 'the foreign female perpetrator'. The vividly-described foreign landscapes in which these protagonists had operated were scrapped and replaced with stories of exploitation which focussed to a great extent on the inequitable relationship between victim and perpetrator. Thus trafficking was cast in more forceful terms, albeit with broader brushstrokes, as a heinous crime orchestrated by male foreigners on the bodies of innocent English girls.

Significantly, a series of more explicit and vitriolic images of race were co-opted into the London Committee's melodrama. The discourses of 'white slavery' no longer featured just a basic 'white slavery vs black slavery' comparison. They highlighted the 'slavery' of an array of supposed racial others and the help afforded these injured subjects by the British government in order to push for the form of action against trafficking that the particular proponent of the discourses deemed necessary. The discourses of 'white slavery' became more pointedly ethnocentric and political in content, emphasizing not simply the profound injustice of trafficking but also the profound injustice of the fact that the government had unpatriotically prioritized remedying the 'enslavement' of members of various 'inferior races' rather than 'the white slave' or, indeed, other deserving groups of 'enslaved' citizens in Britain. 'The

white slave', as a consequence, was placed by her new found supporters on a higher pedestal, with her purity and moral significance underscored like never before.

The new discourses of 'white slavery' were, moreover, laced with a cynicism that had been altogether absent from the former discourses. As will be seen, with the discourses entering the 'open market' during the Edwardian Crisis, many of their new proponents turned on those who had formerly commanded a monopoly on the 'white slave franchise'. The righteous reformers of the NVA and the JAPGW, as well as the LNA, who had been lauded for their anti-trafficking efforts, were increasingly condemned and derided by some organizations within the suffragist and socialist movements for spinning yarns about the nature of trafficking and for bringing an oppressive and hypocritical politics to their campaigns. Such criticism became integral to many of the new representations of trafficking as the value of not only the issue of trafficking, but also those championing a legal antidote to it, began to matter. There was no longer an unopposed authority on trafficking. The words and actions of any group pretending to ownership of the issue were weighed according to a system in which categories of gender and class, and issues of religious- and/or organizational-affiliation, informed the balance of opinion. Moreover, 'the truth' became something that was debated within the new representations of trafficking and that existed in multiple variations across the discourses of 'white slavery' as a whole. In an article entitled 'The Truth About White Slavery' that featured in the *English Review* after the passage of the Bill, the former WFL member Teresa Billington-Greig disputed the integrity of both social purity advocates and the 'Pankhurst-ocracy' that was the militant WSPU. Presenting the report of an inquiry that she conducted into the prevalence of trafficking having 'learnt by an inadvertence that an inquirer applying to the [Pass the Bill] Committee for one proven case of trapping [of a young girl] could not be satisfied', she averred:

These dabblers in debauchery by word of mouth have given us a shocking exhibition of unlicensed slander...They have discredited themselves. That this exhibition has been possible is due in no small measure to the Pankhurst domination. It prepared the soil; it unbalanced the judgment; it

set women on the rampage against evils they knew nothing of, for remedies they knew nothing about.⁴⁷⁹

'White slavery' itself was now, as a discursive field, a contested terrain.

479 Billington-Greig, T, 'The Truth About White Slavery' *English Review* (June 1913), pp.430-44

Chapter Six

The CLA Bill has featured in few histories of the suffragist or the socialist movements and in fewer still of the Edwardian Crisis. It was the subject of a handful of fleeting references in Jane Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton's edited work *Votes for Women* whilst, in her study of the suffrage movement, Susan Kingsley Kent, referred to the Bill only in terms of the fact that its inadequacy was seized upon by the Pankhursts "to demonstrate that parliament and the courts were determined to ensure men's access to women as 'a subject sex created entirely for sex uses'".⁴⁸⁰ As we have seen, the campaign for the legislation has been examined more rigorously in scholarship on moral and sexual politics yet remains treated as an incidental episode.⁴⁸¹ Ian C Fletcher's aforementioned article on the debate over the CLA Bill in the suffragist and the socialist press broke this precedent. Analysing the journals of the movements' principal organizations, Fletcher provided an important insight into not only how the Bill and trafficking were represented but also how the perceived legitimacy of government was damaged during the Edwardian Crisis. He, though, while briefly examining the ideas of race deployed in representations of trafficking, analysed the rhetorics surrounding the Bill in isolation and, consequently, limited what we can glean about the 'white slave' question and the political climate in which it was being raised. Nevertheless, his work takes important steps towards a better understanding of the wider significance of the CLA Bill and the languages of 'white slavery' mobilized in response to the measure and, moreover, makes a compelling case for the value of the radical press in achieving such an understanding.⁴⁸²

This chapter will consciously follow down the path on which Fletcher began. It too will examine the representations of the CLA Bill put forward by a selection of the country's main suffragist and socialist organizations, focussing on one of the most current and indicative forms of group-expression throughout what was a fluctuating debate, the periodical. However, it will also focus on contextualizing and analysing the wider significance of the key rhetorical struggles over both the Bill and trafficking,

480 See: Frances, "'Dare'", pp.92-4; Kent, *Sex*, p.161

481 See: Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, pp. 109-14; Bartley, *Prostitution*, esp. pp.170-2; Bland, *Banishing*, pp.301-2

482 Fletcher, 'Opposition', pp. 88-114

looking at the implications of these struggles on how sexual exploitation was represented and on how politics was conducted within and across the country's principal radical movements during the Edwardian Crisis. Crucially, this chapter will be predicated on an understanding of the Edwardian Crisis as a crisis underscored by notions of enslavement and emancipation. The concept of 'white slavery' was one of many 'slaveries' competing for redress within the Crisis and it is important to locate the significance afforded 'white slavery' among the other forms of 'slavery' enjoying currency in the culture of the day.

Two of the conflicts integral to the 'white slave' question during the Crisis will form the basis of analysis: firstly, that which saw 'the enslaved woman' pitted against 'the enslaved man' based on attitudes towards both the value of the Bill and the justice of the punishments it prescribed, and, secondly, that which saw 'the English white slave' pitted against 'the foreign slave'. Each of these conflicts revolves around the question of which putatively enslaved citizens should or should not be the focus of government attention and reforming legislation.

The journals that will be examined are the NUWSS's *The Common Cause* which was edited throughout the period by organization member Helena Swanwick; *Votes for Women*, which until the 1912 schism in the organization was the voice of the WSPU and thereafter of Pethick Lawrences' breakaway Votes for Women Fellowship; *The Suffragette*, which was the post-split WSPU publication edited by the Pankhursts'; *Vote*, the journal of the WFL, which was edited through most of the CLA Bill controversy by organization-leader Charlotte Despard, and *The Freewoman*. From the socialist movement, the journals under consideration will be the Labour-Party backed, *The Daily Herald* which was edited by Rowland Kenney, brother of the revered suffrage activist Annie Kenney; *Labour Leader*, the official journal of the ILP, which was edited by JT Mills; *Justice*, the BSP's periodical, which had the committed socialist and journalist Harry Quelch as its long-standing editor; the *Clarion* and *The New Age*. Many of these journals shared not only sympathies but also contributors. The committed suffragist and socialist Dora Montefiore, for example, was a regular contributor to *Justice*, wrote on occasion for *The Clarion* and had her opinions aired in a number of suffragist journals, most notably the WSPU's *Votes for Women*.

The periodical represented a key weapon for radical groups during the Edwardian Crisis given the rapidly fluctuating nature of the political climate and the proliferation of the press. It is an excellent source for gauging the way in which the CLA Bill and trafficking were portrayed at specific moments and discerning the points at which their portrayal was significantly reconfigured and/or contested. However, it is not the only source. The chapter will also draw upon the few archival sources from the country's principal suffragist and socialist groups pertaining to the CLA Bill.

Woman vs Man

Legislation

The fundamental point of difference between the radical organizations over the CLA Bill concerned the Bill's efficacy in tackling sex trafficking. At its core was a rhetorical struggle over exactly which group of putatively enslaved citizens should be the focus of government legislation to remedy the problem of 'white slavery' and what form this emancipation should take. There was a four-way split in opinion on the issue and, in turn, a four-way split in how the organizations pitted 'the enslaved woman' against 'the enslaved man' which endured from the Bill's second reading.

The first and dominant opinion was predicated on a basic advocacy of the Bill. It held that direct legislation to prevent women and girls being trafficked was the right course of action in a male body politic that was averse to implementing the more substantial, structural reforms focussed on women that would alter the fabric of society and decisively check trafficking: The Bill was a flawed, but nevertheless welcome, gift-horse to the nation's women.

This view was espoused by all three of the main suffrage groups. As the WSPU declared when the Bill was in Committee, having branded the measure a cynical attempt to 'weaken the case for Woman Suffrage, and thereby cool the ardour of militants': '[w]hether the Bill now before Parliament is strong enough to meet the terrible needs of the case is another matter, but it will be a step in the right direction...If...even one woman is saved from being trapped into this worse kind of

slavery, the passage of the Bill will be worthwhile'.⁴⁸³ Similarly, the NUWSS pronounced with some caution:

[w]e think that it is never any excuse whatever for not doing the small thing in your power, that you see a much larger thing which is not in your power, but there is always the danger, when an agitation results in the passing of a smaller measure, that this may delay more fundamental reforms.⁴⁸⁴

Indeed, diagnosing 'white slavery' as an evil partly rooted in the moral impurity of a male-dominated society and, specifically, in the demand for vice that *men* created, the organizations presented trafficking as a problem that would only be remedied fully by empowering women to legislate on behalf of their sex and thus subject society to what the WSPU termed a 'moral spring-cleaning'. The feminist commentator C Merivale Mayer made the WFL's view manifest in an article written following the Bill's revision, entitled 'The Shame of the White Slave Traffic Bill'.

It is appalling to think that the one sex which governs the world is the sex whose nauseating and unbridled lust has brought the whole traffic into being...How can we hope that a body of gentlemen who regulate life upon a basis of a double standard of morality can possibly do right in dealing with this matter, when their mental and moral outlook upon such questions has been rendered oblique owing to the pernicious influence of their education and the habits of their life?

Evoking Stead's legacy to acknowledge that among this body 'a modern Theseus, will not be found', she continued to rally her suffragist allies by turning around the criticism of an anti-suffragist:

[w]e realise a little more vividly since the White Slave Traffic Bill experiment, that the men who make the laws '*are not* willing to accord women even an elementary measure of protection'...Therefore 'the attitude of the anti-suffragist' *is* 'inexcusable and his position untenable', for we know that until we are armed with the franchise we shall not be able to force the men to do justice in this matter.⁴⁸⁵

483 *Votes for Women* (3 May 1912), p.481

484 *The Common Cause* (20 June 1912), p.166

485 Merivale-Mayer, C, 'The Sham of the White Slave Traffic Bill' *Vote* (7 September 1912) p.37

Going further, Christabel Pankhurst wrote in her 1913 pamphlet, *Plain Facts on a Great Evil*, '[t]he fact is that the Government are themselves White Slavemongers and upholders of vice. That is why they dare not meet the judgment of women voters'.⁴⁸⁶

The three groups also represented suffrage as essential in allowing women to throw off the inequitable economic position that caused them to be drawn into the supposedly inter-connected problems of prostitution and 'white slavery'. 'It is not by any partial measure such as the White Slave Bill that the evil against which it is directed can be destroyed', the WSPU wrote in November, '[u]nder payment of women and the laws affecting the unmarried mother are important factors in the situation. Both a moral and a legislative revolution are required before this becomes a safe world for women. In a word, women must have the vote'.⁴⁸⁷

A variation of the same stance, albeit a more patriarchal one, was propagated by the ILP and the Labour Party. They presented the CLA Bill as a necessary preliminary act of chivalry in the fight against 'white slavery' ahead of the creation of a more equitable economic distribution via legislation, in the first instance, to ensure that women received equal pay to men. At the heart of a long article entitled 'Stop the White Slave Traffic!' by the outspoken socialist Archibald Fenner Brockway following the revision of the Bill, the *Labour Leader* published a striking pre-Raphaelite image of a bound-up damsel in distress under threat from a dragon labelled 'white slave traffic'. Coming to the damsel's aid is a knight poised to release her with a spear marked 'economic freedom'. The image bore the caption: 'The White Slave Bill will do much to rescue girls from the hands of villains who carry on this trade, but Socialism and Economic Freedom can alone ensure that no woman shall be compelled to sell her body for bread'.*(Fig.3)* Working on the assumption that prostitution and 'white slavery' were one and the same semi-moral defect, Brockway continued to critique the Bill:

We know that prostitution will not be abolished by this means. It is the product of poverty on the one hand, and a low moral standard on the other, both in turn the product of a bad social system... Where honest toil is hard and without interest, where wages are so low that they necessitate semi-starvation, where there is no hope for the future, and life is without

⁴⁸⁶ Pankhurst, C, *Plain Facts About a Great Evil* (London: David Nutt, 1913), p.148

⁴⁸⁷ *Suffragette* (11 November 1912), pp.46-7

laughter and colour – there is to be found the recruiting-ground of prostitution. The passions of human nature may always lead men and women astray, but the economic motive of prostitution can at least be abolished. A time shall come when no woman shall be compelled to sell her body for bread; a time shall come when health, and joy, and leisure, and opportunity for the highest self-development shall be the right of every woman. Then no woman will choose prostitution as a means of livelihood.

That time will be Socialism.⁴⁸⁸

Similarly, in a vindication of the socialist cause in his work *Socialism and Syndicalism*, Phillip Snowden described how, ‘a White Slave Traffic Act was passed in 1912 by the British House of Commons which is intended to deal in a moderate way with a gigantic traffic in the bodies of young girls’.⁴⁸⁹

These views were echoed, albeit without the same overt patriarchal tone, by the Labour Party via *The Daily Herald*.⁴⁹⁰

The second distinct opinion regarding the Bill established a similar binary between the sexes but altogether rejected the measure, positioning female suffrage as the only means of countering the evils afflicting women under the male government. It was espoused by the newly-constituted Votes for Women Fellowship. ‘[W]e emphasise afresh the futility, even in some cases the danger’, the Fellowship declared following the government’s endorsement of the Bill’s restoration, ‘of attempting to cope with a world-wide evil of this sort without giving to women the political weapon by which alone they can effectually fight against it...To fight hard for the enfranchisement of women is to start on the straight road towards the abolition of the white slave trade’.⁴⁹¹

Indeed, the Fellowship often inflected its arguments with notions of race, degeneration and patriotism. Promoting suffrage as the only tenable solution to trafficking, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence asserted following the CLA Bill’s third reading:

[A]mongst many other things, having the vote means having the power to put a stop to the white slave traffic...to a very large extent women are the keepers of the keys of destiny so far as the future of race improvement and development is concerned...For while the bodies of women have ever been

488 Fenner Brockway, A cited in: *Labour Leader* (22 August 1912) p.539

489 Snowden, *Socialism*, p.194

490 See: *Daily Herald* (13 November 1912), p.1 & (8 July 1912), p.2. The Herald’s ‘Woman and Citizenship’ page featured tacit support for the Bill was accompanied by an array of socialist and suffragist cures for trafficking.

491 *Votes for Women* (25 October 1912), p.50

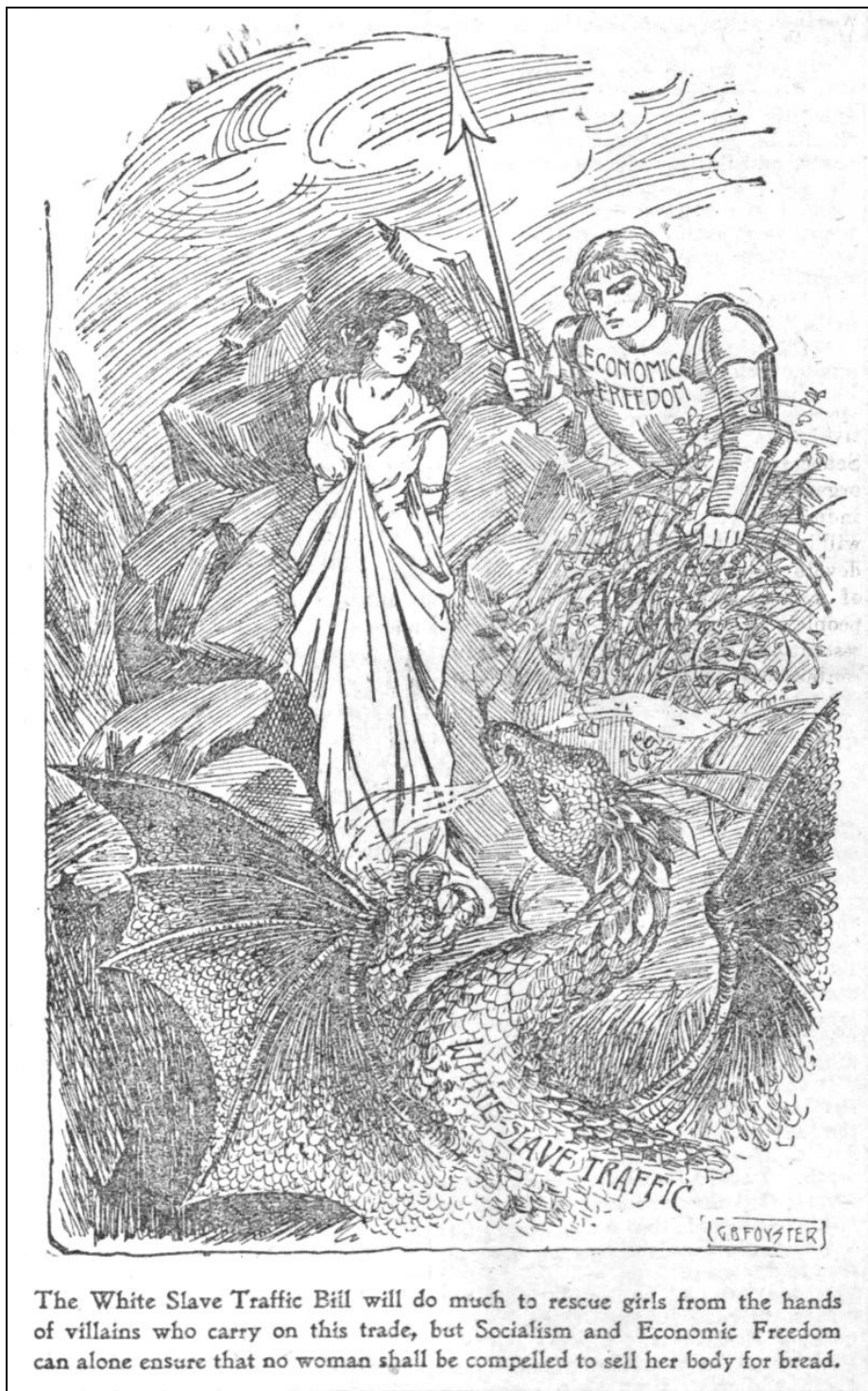


Fig. 3 – Cartoon from Fenner Brockway's 'Stop the White Slave Traffic!' article in the *Labour Leader* (22 August 1912)

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laid as a willing sacrifice upon the altar that is consecrated to the future of the human race, it is a very terrible perversion that they should be sacrificed as they are to-day to disease-dealing and death bringing vice, fatal to humanity.⁴⁹²

This interchangeable use of race and nation was intrinsic to suffragist discourses. The politics of suffrage, as Laura E. Nym Mayhall and Philippa Levine have suggested, were 'constitutive of, as well as shaped by, the national and imperial politics of the day'.⁴⁹³ At a time when anxieties regarding national health and racial degeneration were being exacerbated by the country's steadily declining birth rate, suffragists came to assert women's worthiness of the vote and worth as voters by mobilizing a racialized lexicon. They did this, above all, by their emphases on women's sacrifice to society, and special value in the body politic, as mothers and bearers of the next generation. The discussion of '(male) sexual vice' provided a fruitful avenue for what Mariana Valverde termed this 'incorporation of existing racist evolutionary paradigms into feminism'.⁴⁹⁴ It provided suffragists with a powerful image of the physical danger posed to women in a male state from which they could exhort the significance of women as not only the source,⁴⁹⁵ but also the all-important guardians of the future of the British race and present their emancipation as imperative for the sake of the nation. It also provided them with the ammunition to cast the male government, men in general as well as all citizens opposed to suffrage as degenerate, anti-national and in need of correction for allowing the grievous subjection of these true patriots who were responsible for Britain's future prosperity.⁴⁹⁵ As Christabel Pankhurst declared regarding trafficking in an address to suffrage advocates at the Albert Hall in October 1912:

Now I say to the men in this meeting, can you put an end to this horrible degradation of the race without our help? It is you who are responsible for the present state of things. You have inherited it...but you are responsible

492 Pethick-Lawrence, E cited in: *Votes for Women* (29 November 1912), p.137.

493 Fletcher, IC, Mayhall Nym, LE & Philippa, L (eds.), *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.xiv.

494 Valverde, M, "'Racial Poison': Drink, Male Vice and Degeneration in First-Wave Feminism", in *ibid.* pp.33-50

495 Christabel Pankhurst made this connection in her notorious pamphlet *The Great Scourge and How to End It*, which presented men as the harmful, anti-national carriers of venereal disease. Pankhurst, C, *The Great Scourge and How to End It* (London: E Pankhurst, 1913)

so long as you refuse to women the right to help you to deal with the evils which you are admittedly unable to cope with by yourselves.⁴⁹⁶

The Fellowship together with the NUWSS, WSPU and WFL had no particular investment in the issue of trafficking, viewing 'the white slave' as one of many types of 'female slave' under a male government. While, as Anne Summers has contended, many women entered into campaigning for the vote specifically to rebuke the double-standard of sexual morality, 'white slavery' was, as the WSPU put it, just one thing '[a]mongst many other (inter-related) things' afflicting women which the vote would alleviate.⁴⁹⁷ In October the WFL's *Vote* carried the cartoon 'Woman's Danger' on its front page with the caption 'The Scylla and Charybdis of the Working Woman', depicting a woman in a boat negotiating her way between the sinister tendrils of 'sweated labour' on one side, and a whirlpool that was 'white slavery' on the other, so as to reach an opulent city enshrouded in light. (Fig.4) Similarly, writing to defend her actions following her arrest for breaking a window, WSPU member Katie Gliddon declared in 1912: 'It is absolutely impossible for me today to do nothing when I face the facts that little children...are often outraged by grown men; that young girls are kidnapped & sold in the white slave traffic; that a husband has the right to say whether his wife or unborn child shall be saved if at birth it is a question of saving one or the other'.⁴⁹⁸ '[S]uffrage Societies,' as the WFL itself later stated with reference to the CLA Bill and trafficking, 'have never specialized on any of these particular problems [sic]'.⁴⁹⁹

The third opinion was espoused by the BSP and the *Clarion*. Categorizing trafficking as a problem rooted in the capitalist system and akin to prostitution, the organizations dismissed the Bill as an ineffectual product of bourgeois hypocrisy and, with acute patriarchal bias, advocated economic legislation directed at men as the most effective solution. The BSP prescribed legislation against the male *economic* exploiters of women - namely, what it approvingly cited Labour MP George Barnes as terming 'the

496 Pankhurst, E cited in: *Suffragette* (25 October 1912) p.16

497 Summers, 'Which Women?', pp.220-1. *Votes for Women* (29 November 1912), p.137

498 WL, Papers of Katie Gliddon, Notebook 1912

499 *Vote* (13 June 1913), p.106



Fig. 4 – 'Woman's Danger' cartoon in *The Vote* (5 October 1912)

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men who sweat poor innocent women and children' - as the best means to remedy trafficking.⁵⁰⁰ It pronounced upon the Bill's third reading:

The basis of that vile trade is poverty; its victims are drawn from the women and girls of our class... [I]t is quite clear that these conditions offer a fruitful field for the procurers; that his patrons and those who manufacture his victims belong to the same class, and that while Parliamentary fulminations are being hurled at the agent, and fresh means for punishing him are being devised, the principal himself ought not to be allowed to go scot free. Here, as in so many other cases, we find that capitalism is the enemy.⁵⁰¹

The *Clarion*, meanwhile, presented laws directed at the male *worker* as the true solution to trafficking in its most influential analyses. The satirist A. Neil Lyons' two-part article 'White Slaves and Nasty Nonsense' attests to this. Having proclaimed that, '[p]eople who know anything know perfectly well that there are only two practical causes of this evil [prostitution]: i) The poverty of women; ii) The passions of men', Lyons presented his interpretation of necessary legislation in a misogynistic analysis of the cause of 'white slavery' in which prejudicial notions of 'the Jew' as a financial-cum-sexual exploiter were evoked and all male libido was sanctioned. Addressing the female social purity activists of the LNA endorsing the CLA Bill, a group he branded 'silly, morbid, nasty, sentimental fools' compared to whom '[t]he pert, soiled sister of the pavement...is worth a hundred..., in common sense, in intellect, in charity, in pluck, and in intrinsic womanliness', he declared:

The cure for the evil is a purely economic one. If you make it possible for poor women to obtain good food, reasonable leisure, comfortable lodging, and week-ends in Brighton in return for honourable labour, they will cease from commercializing the most sacred of their functions... Of all my little sisters, [factory workers] are most hardly used. Not only do they have to work for the support of Mr Hoggenheim by day, but they have also to minister to the recreations of his innumerable nephews by night...If, by correcting your social and economic standpoint, you can render it possible for every decent young man to enter a decent union with a decent young woman; if you can assure to him, in the period of his splendid youth, a return for his labour sufficient to support in dignity the woman of his choice... then I think that man's desire for evil practises will die in him.⁵⁰²

500 *Justice* (9 November 1912), p.5

501 *Justice* (9 November 1912), p.1

502 Lyons, N, 'White Slaves and Nasty Nonsense' *Clarion* (6 December 1912), p.5

The fourth opinion was held by *The Freewoman*. Unlike the three other struggles between the sexes constructed by the organizations, the modernist-feminist periodical, in its limited coverage of the CLA Bill, rejected the proposed legislation and instead placed women and men on a level playing field as recipients of reform capable of abolishing trafficking.⁵⁰³ Identifying ‘white slavery and prostitution [as] twin evils’ rooted in the economic system, like the BSP and the *Clarion*, *The Freewoman* shunned the Bill as ‘vicious’ and ‘not curative but oppressive’. It dismissed the measure’s chief proponents in social purity circles as, what contributor CH Norman termed in his article ‘Champions of Morality’, a hypocritical ‘plot of persecuting faddists’ bankrolled by ‘moneys derived from dividends drawn from abominably sweated labour of women and girls’ who, along with the government, had no interest in examining the economic root of the problem. The so-called ‘Puritan Labour Party’ was also the subject of its scorn for its apparent ‘disinclination to urge the Government to set on foot such an investigation’.⁵⁰⁴ *The Freewoman’s* only explicit suggestion of a legislative solution to these ‘social evils’ was presented in the debate sparked by Norman’s original article on the journal’s correspondence pages in the ensuing weeks and came in the form of ‘an Alternative Bill’ crafted by the author himself. Responding to the second of a string of indictments of his piece by the Pass the Bill Committee’s Catherine Vulliamy, Norman penned his legislation as a tongue-in-cheek means of communicating his considered views on how to solve trafficking, presenting a measure comprising seventeen sections which all referred back to the first provision:

[w]hen any person employed by an employer can prove to the satisfaction of a jury that the remuneration for such employment in coin and/or kind is inadequate, or that the conditions of such employment are unclean, insanitary, dangerous, harsh and/or oppressive, an offence shall be deemed to have been committed under this Bill.

‘This Bill’, he explained in conclusion, would ‘be a menace to exploitation in every form of industry, in clerical occupations, and in domestic service. Its punitive character is

503 Although declaring that ‘any genuine proposal likely to end [trafficking] should and would be supported by all humanist reformers’, the journal did not consider the CLA Bill capable of yielding success. Norman, CH, ‘Champions of Morality’ *Freewoman* (6 June 1912), p.45 & *The Freewoman*(8 August 1912), p.228.

504 Norman, CH, ‘Champions of Morality’. See also: *The Freewoman* (11 July 1912), p.143

founded upon the principle [that]...[t]he exploitation of men and women for material gain is a moral crime...'.⁵⁰⁵

It is no coincidence that this alternative law stood alone in *The Freewoman's* coverage of the CLA Bill. The journal represented trafficking as a problem sewn into the social fabric and therefore one that could not realistically be solved and especially by what it deemed an inept and structurally flawed body politic. The anti-capitalist, anti-establishment, and anti-Semitic indictment of the condition of the nation delivered by Dora Marsden in one of the final leading articles printed before the journal disbanded that September attests to this. Marsden presented trafficking as one of the many inevitable economic slaveries that would be incurable so long as society and the Labour Party continued to avail themselves to being governed by a dangerous and obsolete state led by Jewish capitalist interests, and that was deserved so long as the population did not actively contest the status quo.⁵⁰⁶

The New Age proffered an equally pessimistic reading of the futility of legislation to remedy trafficking in present-day society. However, it intentionally neglected to present a definite view of an alternative legal solution to the CLA Bill, forwarding what was a complex, fatalistic analysis of the origins of the measure.

Whether through the efforts of those groups advocating the Bill to co-opt the 'white slave' question or through the efforts of those groups against the legislation to marginalise its value, trafficking was compartmentalized as a 'women's issue' involving unfortunate (read working-class) female others that had to be solved on their behalf from above. 'The white slave' became a victim juxtaposed to her supposed social superiors and not just her empowered male counterparts as in the London Committee's discourses but all those citizens who happened to have the power, agency and often also the moral fibre not to be afflicted by such 'serious slavery', be it 'the enlightened middle-class suffragist' striving to help her, 'the working-class man or woman capable of activism' or, in *The Freewoman's* case, 'the citizen-cum-anarchist'. 'Sexual slavery', that affliction deemed peculiar to women, in turn, came to be represented as an object-

505 See: Vulliamy, C cited in: *The Freewoman* (13 June 1912), p.76 & (20 June 1912) p.84; Norman cited: in *The Freewoman* (20 June 1912), p.84

506 Marsden, D, 'The Slave' *Freewoman* (12 September 1912), pp.321-3

lesson in female vulnerability and the inevitable dependency of certain working-class women. The inextricable link forged by such groups as the WSPU and Votes for Women Fellowship between the prosperity of the British race, female suffrage and a legislative solution to 'white slavery' served to compound this idea. It marked women out as hallowed others whose bodies signified both their special importance in national life and their special vulnerabilities that might render some within their number, who were particularly unprotected, unable to fulfil their 'natural role'. Meanwhile, the implication that trafficking caused racial degeneration through its adverse effects on the nation's female guarantors painted trafficked women as degenerates incapable of rehabilitation and unworthy of considerable support.

Although offering a seemingly contrasting interpretation of the issue, *The Freewoman* did not emit a very different message. 'Sexual slavery' might have been, in its eyes, just one of many 'slaveries' visited upon a supine society, and 'the white slave' might have stood together with male slaves in her predicament, but trafficking nevertheless represented an affliction that affected women because they lacked the agency to rebuff it and an affliction that was pointless to fight against because it would prevail until society was subject to major change. That, moreover, the journal suggested that all slaves brought their state upon themselves through their passive acquiescence to the status quo and, as such, *deserved* their affliction, paradoxically also cast 'the white slave' as an agent in her own suffering and cast trafficking as a punishment tolerated by some women for the sins of their sex. Indeed, whether intentionally or not, the fact that all of the organizations debated the necessity of specific legislation to combat women's 'slavery' in trafficking and many posited alternative legal solutions that targeted 'bigger issues', led to such criminality being cast as a minor offence that barely merited direct action.

Thus the wider socio-economic circumstances precipitating trafficking were finally given due attention and a Butler-esque radical critique of the corruption of the male state was finally restored but only with the outcome of further stigmatizing 'the trafficked woman', trivializing the crime to which she had been subjected and/or casting her as responsible for her own destiny. That prostitution and 'white slavery' were often conflated and diagnosed as rooted in the same problem of poverty also took the edge

off the severity of the criminality, coercion and organization inherent in trafficking. Further, the explicit association of 'the Jew' and sexual exploitation, both through physical perpetration and, indirectly, through financial monopoly, demonstrates how the heightened sensitivity to the socio-economic context of trafficking resulted in the new representation of such criminality becoming interspersed with heightened insensitivity towards the Jewish population. This worked to depreciate the suffering of Jewish trafficking victims and legitimize the anti-Semitic abuse already present in society. Although not having quite such a destructive influence, the fact that criticism of the CLA Bill was increasingly accompanied by criticism of the Labour Party's inaction, made opposition to the parliamentary party most committed to implementing socialist policies that might ease some of the factors drawing men and women into trafficking a significant dimension of the new discourses of 'white slavery'.

And this is to say nothing of the implications of the denigration of the members of organized anti-trafficking initiatives.

Flogging

The struggle of the sexes that played out in the rhetoric of the organizations comprising the suffrage and the socialist movements was not limited to the question of who should be the subject of reforming legislation to solve the 'white slave traffic' but also encompassed who, under the proposed CLA Bill, would be subjected by it. The second crystallization of ideas of gender and slavery in this struggle surrounded the focus of the punishments prescribed by the Bill and no punishment more so than that of the flogging of men convicted of procuration. It saw 'the woman enslaved through trafficking' pitted against 'the potentially enslaved male trafficking suspect' as the victims of oppression, with the blind desire to liberate the former being held as inducing an enslavement of the latter. This struggle was principally conducted unilaterally by the organizations that were the staunchest critics of the CLA Bill and was directed at those promoting the measure.

The rhetorical struggle over the Flogging Clauses was at its height between October and December 1912, as the CLA Bill went through its third reading and report stage. It took place in a political environment dominated by not only debates over Home

Rule, women's suffrage and the rights of labour but also questions of what the state should do with citizens deemed detrimental to society and of what rights these supposedly anti-social citizens should be afforded. Prior to the controversy over flogging, the Mental Deficiency Bill or what was often referred to as 'The Feeble-Minded Persons (Control) Bill' was being debated in parliament. Founded in eugenic theory, the Bill provided for the social segregation of 'mentally defective' individuals to prevent society being damaged by their degenerative nature and to protect such 'unfit beings' from themselves.⁵⁰⁷ Perhaps surprisingly, the Bill received a great deal of support from within progressive circles for preventing 'a new generation of mentally and physically degenerate children', and this support came to the fore in Autumn 1912 after the measure had been dropped that July.⁵⁰⁸ Criticism of the Bill was also widespread, with the outspoken writer and leftist thinker GK Chesterton suggesting that the proponents of the Bill were hand-in-glove with what he deemed the country's dangerously misguided Eugenics Society.⁵⁰⁹ The CLA Bill and the Mental Deficiency Bill were often explicitly mentioned in the radical press as two symptoms of the same disease of repression and inhumanity. As part of a condemnation of the suffrage movement, *The Daily Herald* commentator Harry de Pass referred to both measures as 'legislation of a restrictive character', behind which lay the 'pressure of such women's [suffragists'] opinions.'⁵¹⁰ The controversy over the CLA Bill's Flogging Clauses was not just about whether the state should sanction the beating of male procurers. It was about whether the physical suppression that was brutal corporal punishment was appropriate for ridding the social body of the degenerative type that was 'the male sexual exploiter' and whether the state had licence for such heavy-handed action against those whom it deemed unfit.

The Flogging Clauses were criticized by most organizations under consideration in humanitarian terms for sanctioning an outdated punishment that was, as the ILP put it, 'cruel and bestial', 'brutal' and 'demoralizing' to 'not only the poor wreck whose back

507 Searle, GR, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain, 1900-1914* (New York: Springer, 1976), ch.9

508 *The Times* (28 November 1912)

509 Chesterton, GK, 'A Chartered Libertine' in *A Miscellany of Men* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1912), pp.292-3

510 De Pass, H cited in: *Daily Herald* (12 December 1912), p.2

it bleeds, but the whole community that looks on and permits it'.⁵¹¹ Socialist groups often inflected these arguments with a language of class. The BSP condemned flogging as a futile 'ruling class' punishment proposed by parliamentarians 'who, as at Eton, have been brutalized by it themselves' without curing 'their social failings' and argued that 'if flogging is deserved by procurers....then surely at least as severe a punishment should be meted out to those who by maintaining a system of industrial slavery for women make the trade of the procurer possible'.⁵¹² Criticism of flogging did not, however, preclude nominal advocacy of the punishment by certain groups. The WFL declared that 'the stern insistence on flogging as a penalty for the first offence' together with the restoration of Clause I gave it 'new hopes of the House of Commons'.⁵¹³ Yet, like the WSPU, the group denounced the fact that flogging was advocated simply for male procurers, averring that '[t]he man who sells an innocent girl into slavery bitterer than death is a moral leper. So is the woman. And they deserve the same fate'.⁵¹⁴

What is more interesting for the purposes of this analysis, however, are the gendered arguments forwarded by the most vocal critics of the Flogging Clauses regarding the brutality the Clauses sanctioned and the Clauses' apparent bias against men. These arguments, which were predominantly forwarded from within the socialist movement, pitted the sexes directly against one another in exceptionally vitriolic indictments directed most forcefully not at the parliamentarians, but at the social purity advocates, promoting the Bill. At the core of this struggle lay diverse notions of slavery.

The punishment of flogging and slavery had long been linked in the British popular consciousness, their relationship having been forged through a variety of abolitionist discourses. As Henrice Altink argued, abolitionists between the 1770s and 1830s emphasized the flogging of black slaves in Jamaica, focussing particularly on the infliction of the punishment on enslaved women, as bodily evidence of the inhumanity and injustice endemic in slavery.⁵¹⁵ The 1831-2 Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery attests to this emphasis on the lash in abolitionist rhetoric, as does the coverage of the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion. Between the 1820s and 1840s, the flogging of

511 *Labour Leader* (7 November 1912), p.271

512 *Justice* (9 November 1912), p.5 & (14 December 1912) p.1

513 *Vote* (9 November 1912), p.24

514 *Vote* (16 November 1912), p.38. See: *Suffragette* (6 December 1912)

515 Altink, "'An Outrage'", pp.107-22

deportees to the penal colonies of Australia became a principal focus of abolitionists.⁵¹⁶ As Liberal MP Sir William Molesworth commented of the Colonies in 1840, '[e]very kind of gentle feeling of human nature is constantly outraged by the perpetual spectacle of the lash'.⁵¹⁷ Parallel to these scandals were furores over the flogging of 'slaves' on home soil. During the factory reform movement, the flogging of that other 'white slave', the exploited worker, was being rallied against as an equivalent atrocity to the flogging of black slaves. Referring to the controversy over the use of the punishment within the army, the radical newspaper *Black Dwarf* asked in 1823:

if flogging is abominable when applied to those who have subjected themselves to military discipline, what shall we say to a brace of magistrates ordering the flesh of a workman to be torn from his bones, on the complaint of his employer that he neglected his work. What will Mr Wilberforce say to this?⁵¹⁸

Memories were refreshed of the link between flogging and slavery at the turn of the century, with moral outcries over the extension of the punishment by the English authorities in South Africa to black male offenders, not least for sex crimes, and, later, over the use of the lash by English mine-owners on indentured Chinese labourers.⁵¹⁹

Significantly, flogging was typically gendered as a male form of punishment, a means of marking on the body and impressing on the mind of 'the stronger sex' his physical emasculation and subordination to his male superiors. The indignation that arose over the flogging of 'the female slave' and the lack of chivalry such treatment denoted suggests this. Crucially, through its link to slavery in the public mind, flogging was, in turn, associated with notions of masculinity and patriotism: To be flogged was to be treated like a slave therefore to be flogged was a violation of the historical rights of the Englishman and an anathema in his anti-slavery nation. The BSP objected to the CLA Bill owing to its 'deadly blow at that personal liberty which has always been regarded as

516 Gilchrist, C, "'This Relic of the Cities of the Plain': Penal Flogging, Convict Morality and the Colonial Imagination" *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 9 (2007), pp.1-29

517 Molesworth, Sir W, *Speech of Sir William Molesworth, Bart. on Transportation. Delivered in the House of Commons on the 5th May 1840* (London: H. Hooper, 1840)

518 *Black Dwarf* (6 August 1823)

519 See: Peté, S & Devenish, A, 'Flogging, Fear and Food: Punishment and Race in Colonial Natal' *Journal of South African Studies* 31:1 (March 2005), pp.3-21. The 'Black Peril' sexual assaults perpetrated by black men on white women were punishable by flogging, perpetuating the link between 'the lash' and the 'sex crime'.

one of the heritages of Englishmen'.⁵²⁰ By extension, anyone who advocated the flogging of men on English soil was deemed not only brutal but also automatically opposed to English masculinity and society, and therefore profoundly unpatriotic.

The significance of the proposal for the flogging of men, and particularly flogging for the crime of 'white slavery', was not lost on the critics of the CLA Bill, even in connection with the flagellation of foreigner, male procurers on English soil. Nor was the significance of the fact that women in social purity organizations were one of the leading groups of extra-parliamentary proponents of the provision. With anti-suffragists playing on the notion that women, once emancipated, would 'invade their [men's] province' and vie to tyrannise the male population, and with militant suffragists producing damning and inflammatory anti-male rhetoric, the association made by the critics of the Bill between the Flogging Clauses and the Bill's female advocates was explosive.⁵²¹

Neil Lyon's *Clarion* article, 'White Slaves and Nasty Nonsense', which was printed at the height of the debate over flogging, demonstrates this. Lyons focussed his whole critique of the CLA Bill on the Flogging Clauses, casting them as the epitome of all that was wrong with the measure to the extent that he referred to the proposed legislation as 'The Flogging Act'. Notably, he did so by extending his verbal assault on the 'Pure Ladies' of the LNA and co-opting into his extreme misogyny multiple definitions of 'slavery'. He represented the Flogging Clauses and the CLA Bill itself as products of a perverse desire by these out-of-touch, 'unfeminine' bourgeois women who were (mentally) 'enslaved' by Pecksniffian persecutory complexes to (physically) enslave and oppress men connected with trafficking as violently as possible via the state, on the pretext of liberating trafficked women. In short, 'white slavery' was, to him, largely a sadistic ploy by hysterical, female social purity advocates to steal men's liberty. Indeed, he introduced himself as one of the men 'personally injured' by the 'Pure Ladies' due to the 'nasty nonsense' enclosed in the anti-trafficking pamphlet they had inflicted upon *his* wife. Having announced that 'the Peril' outlined in the offending text, excepting 'glimmerings of truth', 'simply did not exist' and that neither flogging nor

⁵²⁰ *Justice* (16 November 1912), p.1

⁵²¹ See: *Anti-Suffragist Review* (January 1910)

the Bill would stop trafficking, Lyons reached the meat of his grievance with the 'Amalgamated Puritans' of the LNA. He represented his article as his 'diagnosis of their disease' and referring repeatedly to 'the mental pathology of the unfortunate ladies', he explained the social purity activists' promotion of the flogging of men in psychological terms, as indicative of insanity or, more specifically, an unhealthy and irredeemable 'hysterical' sexual perversion:

I look again at the unreasonable and unpleasant document [the LNA pamphlet] which lies before me. And, in a flash of inspiration, as it were, I perceive the real nature and importance of this document. It is merely what the modern mental pathologist would call the 'rationalization of a complex'.

When a 'complex' becomes unduly exaggerated, and exercises an immoderate influence over the actions and behaviour of its possessor, doctors, employing another technical expression, call that individual 'insane'.

But it is an absolute, though widespread, fallacy to suppose that insane people are irrational...The gentleman who disrobes in an omnibus will offer you reasons for that proceeding which are quite convincing in themselves. It is only the premises which are wrong. The exhibition of this extremely clear reasoning faculty in the insane constitute an act which is caked by mental experts 'Rationalizing the Complex'.

Now, it is evident to me that the Ladies of Tothill Street [the LNA] possess a complex which is composed of certain fixed ideas about whipping, drugging, organized procuration, etc. Having endeavoured to reconcile this complex with the facts of existence as they are known to me, I am forced to the conclusion that the complex is an exaggerated and unhealthy one...however perfect the process of 'rationalization'.

Lyons concluded by representing the female members of the LNA as somehow outside the nation at large, proclaiming, '[i]t is an insult to the men and women of this country and a stultification of the human brain to come before them with a proposal to rescue hungry girls from degradation by--flogging the men they love [ie their bully]'.⁵²²

The author and feminist Rebecca West's earlier *Clarion* article 'The Archbishop's Bloodlust', which indicted the Archbishop of York's hearty advocacy of flogging, also presented the punishment as indicative of a psychological complex to torture and enslave but attributed the complex to the *male* advocates of the provision in

522 Lyons, 'White Slaves' *Clarion* (29 November 1912), p.5 & (6 December 1912), p.5

parliament. 'Our instincts tell us', she declared, 'that normal, healthy people do not flog other people any more than they skin alive cats in the back garden. And many psychologists hold that flogging is the amusement of men of evil character...'.⁵²³

These references to the seemingly modern concepts of the psychological and the sexual should not surprise us. They were written at a time when the pseudo-scientific discipline of sexology, a discipline intimately related to the eugenic movement, was slowly gaining currency in progressive bourgeois circles. That is, they were written when putatively criminal, subversive or anti-social sexual behaviour, outside hetero-normative unions, was being scrutinized and classified in terms of mental pathology, biological dysfunction, and, ultimately, racial degeneracy. The Austro-German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing and the British-born psychologist, physician and prominent Eugenist Havelock Ellis were two principal pioneers of sexology. In his influential 1886 work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Krafft-Ebing set about classifying numerous typologies of pathological and degenerative sexual deviance in men and women to provide a forensic reference for use in psychiatry, medical science and law. Ellis, with JA Symonds, co-authored the first work in the English language on homosexuality, female libido and 'auto-eroticism' in 1897.⁵²⁴ Particularly relevant in the misogynistic tirades that accompanied criticism of the CLA Bill is the relationship between the rise of sexology and the proliferation of the women's movement. While several leading sexologists supported feminists' claims, sexological theories of pathological typologies of female sexuality undoubtedly provided a language for, and reinforced the central tenets of, anti-suffragist rhetoric.⁵²⁵ In a letter to *The Times* on 'militant hysteria', the revered immunologist and outspoken anti-suffragist Sir Almroth Wright proclaimed, '[f]or man the physiology and psychology of woman is full of difficulties. He is not a little mystified when he encounters in her periodically recurring phases of hypersensitiveness, unreasonableness, and loss of the sense of proportion'.⁵²⁶

523 West, R, 'The Archbishop's Bloodlust' *Clarion* (22 November 1912), p.4

524 von Krafft-Ebing, R, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, trans. Klaf, SF (reprint: New York: Stein & Day, 1978); Ellis, H, & Symonds, JA, *Sexual Inversion* (London : Wilson & Macmillan, 1897) *Sexual Inversion* was originally published in Germany in 1896.

525 Bland, *Banishing*, pp.256-7

526 Sir Wright, A, 'Suffrage Fallacies: Sir Almroth Wright on Militant Hysteria', *The Times* (28 March 1912) pp.7-8

We should also not be surprised that Lyons and West evoked notions of the psychological and the sexual surrounding the Flogging Clauses. Through their scrutiny of sadomasochism and its various perceived denominations, sexologists focussed considerable attention on flagellation, a behaviour that had long been the subject of anxiety within political, medical and reform circles when applied in schools, the armed forces, the penal system or forms of slavery.⁵²⁷ This led to the punishment becoming classified and portrayed as rooted in a form of pathological sexual deviance in its own right and, moreover, a deviance related to perverse female sexuality and/or homosexuality, as well as one that was, as in Lyon and West's class-based attack of the Flogging Clauses, a particular proclivity of 'the better classes of society [who] have no other aim in life than to gratify their sexual desires'.⁵²⁸ The desire to flog was branded 'Flagellomania' and its purported nature and implications carried weight as scientific fact. Significantly, flagellomania was categorized as a transferrable form of pathology, validating longer-standing concerns that the punishment would, in administrator *and* recipient, brutalize and even stimulate 'misdirected sexual desire'.⁵²⁹ Sexology gave these ideas a particular air of scientific legitimacy. Soon, social commentators, educationalists, and reformers were using a language of sexology in their explanations of the adverse consequences of flogging.⁵³⁰

The New Age took concepts of sexual deviance further than its radical peers in its attack on the Flogging Clauses, evoking diverse notions of slavery whilst pitting women against men as well as homosexual men against straight men in unprecedentedly noxious configurations. It set out its view in a long article in its 'Notes of the Week' pages just before the Bill's third reading. To the journal, the Flogging Clauses had come about because womankind, as embodied by 'the women's movement', which was obsessed with persecuting and enslaving men, had duped a 'sex-

527 Largier, N (Harman, G trans) *In Praise of the Whip: A Cultural History of Arousal* (New York: Zone Books, 2007) Ch.6; Gibson, I, *The English Vice: Sex, Shame and Beating in Victorian England and After* (London: Duckworth, 1978)

528 Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia*, pp.69-71, 130

529 See: Wynn Williams, L, *Education: Disciplinary, Civic and Moral* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1903), Ch.9. As Catie Gilchrist suggested, the flogging practised in the Australian Penal Colonies sparked fears of inducing homosexuality. Gilchrist, C, "'This Relic'", pp.1-29

530 In his analysis of 'the lash' and school children, Wynn Williams cites Krafft-Ebing's theories. Wynn Williams, *Education*, Ch.9

infatuated parliament, press and public' as to its good character and convinced the former body to legislate for it:

[T]he fact that [the CLA Bill] is offered with the presumed collusion of the women and, at any rate, without their protest, is enough to show men the direction in which we are travelling under women's influence. No doubt about it, women at the same time that they are complaining of their powerlessness are increasing their power; and increasing it, we think for evil. Already, without the vote and merely in anticipation of, and substitution for it, new penalties either have been, or are about to be, imposed upon men in the supposed interests of women. This Bill is really the climax. For men and men only there is to be flogging as well as imprisonment, deportation and God knows what else if the tender female eugenists have their way...If this is, a specimen of women's legislation, of legislation designed at least to please them, what may we not expect as they obtain more and more power?⁵³¹

The Flogging Clauses, meanwhile, were, according to *The New Age*, being helped through parliament because they were advocated by sexually perverted male parliamentarians who craved the satiation of their lusts via inflicting corporal punishment on men:

The necessity for flogging is in the minds of the floggers, and there only...The flagellomaniacs are, fortunately for their comfort if not for their souls unaware of the savage lusts still prowling for their prey in the depths of their mind. Under cover of righteous indignation and the good of society, they seek all unknowingly for a means of satisfying the lust that secretly possesses them. Mr. Will Crooks, the Bishop of London and the rest of the floggers, doubtless believe with all the sincerity of which they are capable that the bloody mauling of a man's body will do the man good and society good; it is not conceivable that they should be loose in society if they were not sincere in their belief; but psychology and humanity will tell them that they are wrong and grievously misinformed about their own minds.⁵³²

A previous 'Notes of the Week' article on the CLA Bill, focussed on this notion of the sexual perversion inherent in the will to flog, casting the 'Pecksniffian' women and their 'Pharisaical' male parliamentarian friends supporting the flogging of men as sadomasochistic sexual deviants and, in the case of the latter group, implicitly homosexual ones:

531 *The New Age* (7 November 1912), pp.1-2

532 Ibid. p.3

As remote from the normal as their views are of what sex relations ought to be may be their views of what sex relations are – and not their views only. We confess that, just as we look with suspicion on any social reformer who sets up an extravagant ideal with the intention of punishing people who decline to accept it, we look with suspicion on purity propagandists who carry a whip for flagellation. The whip, we conclude, is what they fancy others need, because they secretly fancy they need it themselves. Nobody desires to punish another for doing what is altogether different to himself...The temper, we repeat, of the backers of the Bill needs explaining; it is not normal; it is not balanced, it is not healthy.⁵³³

Although without the same pseudo-psychological emphasis, some of the socialist organizations also voiced opinions regarding the Flogging Clauses via class-based attacks on female social purity advocates and/or suffragists. The Labour Party via *The Daily Herald* explicitly praised both Lyons' article and the misogynistic piece in *The New Age* for highlighting the 'misguided viciousness of the preachers of the White Slave Jihad'.⁵³⁴ The BSP, meanwhile, cast the punishment as indicative of the desire to tyrannize men by militant suffragists 'to whom the lives of the children [of the poor], to say nothing of men and women, are of no moment compared with votes for bourgeois women'.⁵³⁵

Thus trafficking came to be irredeemably associated, in some way, with fallacy and fantasy and treated as a ruse by cynical, bourgeois reformers who wanted to, whether consciously or not, sway opinion in favour of a broader and more sinister agenda. Indeed, rather than treated as a crime with serious implications and real victims, trafficking was relegated to the status of a mere *symptom* of the mental or moral malaise of reactionary middle-class conservatives with axes to grind, profits to make, or fancies to tickle. It was rendered a complex to be scrutinized, explained and warned against in the interests of a healthy society. Perhaps most problematically, trafficking was reduced from a sexual crime perpetrated against women to a reflection of a slavish, sexualized obsession to persecute and 'enslave' men held by women as well

533 *The New Age* (24 October 1912) pp.601-2. See also: Norman, CH, *The New Age* (23 January 1913), p.277. In the heated debate over the 'Flogging Clauses' she had with Gwendolyn Bax in the *New Age's* correspondence page, regular contributor Beatrice Hastings, similarly highlighted the 'sexual perversion' of the CLA Bill's advocates. Hastings, B cited in: *The New Age* (19 December 1912), p.152

534 *Daily Herald* (11 January 1913), p.5

535 *Justice* (14 December 1912), p.1

as some homosexuals, the putative effeminate members of a 'third sex'. It therefore became an issue held by certain women as well as a 'women's issue'. It was cast as the subject of a faddish and violent, bourgeois sex war - the latest excuse for deviance - that was dangerous, physically as well as morally, but not as much to women as to *true men*, to the masculinized body politic and to the nation at large. The campaigners against trafficking, meanwhile, fared little better. They were cast as hypocritical tyrants who profited from the system of industrial exploitation that induced 'white slavery', whilst their actions were presented as devoid of credibility due to both their danger to men and their superfluity to the women at whom they were aimed. In a manuscript for an article she drafted in 1913 entitled 'The Salvation of the White Slave', former WFL member Teresa Billington-Greig went so far as to accuse the 'over-righteous community' the campaigners comprised as itself contributing to girls entering 'white slavery'.⁵³⁶

In the rhetorical struggle over flogging, the portrayals of potential violence and danger, and the petitions for sympathy and redress, associated with the fight against trafficking were displaced from 'the white slave' to 'the imminently-enslaved innocent man', pushing the plight of 'the trafficked woman' further into obscurity. The story of 'white slavery', in turn, came to be focussed on a sub-drama of victimhood in which the middle-class reformer or parliamentarian - the new 'elite debauché' - was the perpetrator and 'the Englishman that might be punished through their efforts' was the victim. This painted trafficking as a question of politics, of choice, of class-abuse, of sex-bias but not one of crime. While the most damning, gendered indictments of flogging were voiced by a small number of the organizations in question, they were organizations with loud voices and influential readers.

The *New Age's* interpretation of the origin of the CLA Bill that accompanied its first indictment of the Flogging Clauses that October constitutes an extreme representation of 'white slavery' as a dangerous farce instigated by social purity groups with a mission to 'enslave'. As already mentioned, the *New Age* refrained from presenting an alternative legal solution to trafficking. This was because the journal did

536 WL: Papers of Teresa Billington-Greig, 7TBG/2/G/6/14, Weekly Syndicated Article: The Salvation of the White Slave, 11 July 1913

not accept that trafficking was a genuine social problem. Rather, it portrayed 'white slavery' as a *reflection* of a crisis of capitalism from which society could never realistically recover unless, by some miracle, social redistribution were implemented, and, in a new take on the notion of the hypocrisy of the Bill's bourgeois promoters, it portrayed those campaigning against trafficking as nothing but the state-allied minions of capitalism. Branding them sensationalist 'puritan evangelists' whose 'picture-palace view of life' led them to perceive the procurer as a 'fiend from hell' and the police as 'St George against the Dragon' when conducting their 'social freemasonry', the journal cast these campaigners as out-of-touch dupes of the irrepressible capitalist machine that governed society, unconsciously abetting the creation of a 'future slave state' by promoting capitalist interests through their work.⁵³⁷

From the perspective of the Edwardian Crisis, the two-fold rhetorical struggle in the debate over the CLA Bill which pitted 'the woman' against 'the man' is particularly insightful. It provides an example of how, as the Crisis intensified, the necessity of proposed laws, however noble their goal was deemed, became negotiable, their virtue contested, their form rhetorically redrafted, and their priority in the burgeoning reform queue of the day weighed, not according to their own merits but against those of competing priorities. It displays how many social problems during this turbulent period came to be analysed and dealt with according to diverse sets of political interests vested, first and foremost, in other campaigns, other ideologies, and other 'slaveries' of a broader variety. Commitment to a particular reform outside that which was an organization's top priority was unwanted in a rapidly moving political climate in which a Bill could all too easily fall from top priority to bottom of the pile and so lose value to activists looking for a political lever. Radical organizations felt no compunction in conscripting a host of anti-figures – 'the rabid social purity reformer', 'the capitalist', 'the Jew' - to demonstrate the relative inadequacy of legislation and gain political advantage. Nor did they feel any compunction in using racist, homophobic, misogynistic or class-based languages of hate to convey their views. To many radical organizations, a great deal of reforming legislation outside their immediate field of interest had become

⁵³⁷ *The New Age* (24 October 1912), pp.602-3

less about what it could do for its intended recipients and more about what its co-option as a focus of protest could do for their campaign.

Moreover, the indictments of (male) parliamentarians and (female) social purity advocates that featured in certain radical organizations' criticisms of the CLA Bill and/or its Flogging Clauses are revealing. They provide an example of the weakening faith in parliament, if not also the system of government in general, and its putative allies in civil society that characterized the political climate during the Edwardian Crisis. CH Norman's attack in *The Freewoman* on the incompetence of the government, 'the Puritan Labour Party' and the hypocritical 'persecuting faddists' advocating the Bill, or the *New Age's* condemnation of the perverse 'Pharisaical' parliamentarians and the rabid female social reformers vying to persecute men via the law, attest to this.

White Slave vs Foreign Slave

Another principal rhetorical struggle over the CLA Bill arose over the question of exactly which country's exploited citizens should or should not be prioritized by the government for legal protection and saw notions of race and slavery converge to pit 'the (English) white slave' against 'the foreign slave of colour'. This was a struggle waged by the organizations promoting the CLA Bill upon the government.

News of three instances of 'enslavement' taking place overseas came to light at various points in the years leading up to, and during, the CLA Bill's journey through parliament, each sparking considerable public indignation and leading to concerted government action. The first entered popular consciousness in 1904, following a government-commissioned investigation by British Consul Roger Casement and was centred on the exploitation of workers in the rubber plantations of the Congo Free State under Belgian Rule.⁵³⁸ The second was that of so-called 'Coolie' or Chinese indentured labour under the British in the mines of the Transvaal, South Africa and provoked public indignation between 1904 and 1906.⁵³⁹ Significantly, it was often referred to as 'yellow slavery' in the radical press, inviting direct comparison with 'white slavery'. The third of the 'new slaveries', and the one that ignited scandal and official intervention as the CLA

538 See: Burroughs, RM, *Travel Writing and Atrocities. Eye Witness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola and the Putumayo* (New York: Routledge, 2011), ch.3

539 Grant, K, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slaveries in Africa, 1884-1926* (London: Routledge, 2004), ch.3

Bill was passing through parliament, was that afflicting the Huitotos Indians and Barbadian citizens in the rubber plantations of Putumayo in Peru under the British-directed rubber giant, the Peruvian Amazon Company. Casement also played an influential part in bringing this injustice to light.⁵⁴⁰

Those looking to draw close parallels between the level of attention the government had given, or was giving, foreign abuses and that which it was giving the 'slaveries' taking place on home soil had ample material from which to do so. This opportunity was grasped with both hands by some of the more out-spoken organizations supporting the CLA Bill.

Variations of the former 'white slave/black slave' parallel that had long characterized anti-trafficking discourses were not abandoned by the suffragist and socialist groups. Indeed, some of the principal suffrage organizations retained a version of the original 'white slavery' metaphor as the sole racialized device in their representations of the Bill and, notably, not usually to privilege 'the trafficked (English) woman's' suffering but to emphasize the equivalence of her suffering with 'the black slave' of old. This is particularly evident in the case of The Votes for Women Fellowship. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence posited in the Fellowship's journal the legislative solution to trafficking that would be pursued once women were enfranchised:

The Black Slave Traffic was killed when it was attacked financially, first by legislation and then by the administration of the law. That is to say, laws were passed making it illegal to capture black men, to ship them away from their native land and to sell them for purposes of industry...And so this traffic died. The White Slave Traffic to-day is...a very profitable business indeed. Its promoters grow rich by the capture and sale of young white girls, and not for purposes of industry, but for purposes of vice. That trade can be killed as the Black Slave Trade was killed by laws and administration, rendering it financially unprofitable.⁵⁴¹

Moreover, in a new configuration of the comparison of 'the white slave' to 'the black slave', the NUWSS and WFL evoked trafficking in conjunction with the contemporary 'Black Peril' attacks in Rhodesia and South Africa involving the alleged

540 Hardenburg, E (ed.), *The Putumayo, The Devil's Paradise: Travels in the Peruvian Amazon Region and an Account of the Atrocities Committed upon the Indians therein...together with extracts from the Report of Sir Roger Casement Confirming the Occurrences* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), ch.8

541 Pethick Lawrence, E cited in: *Votes for Women* (29 November 1912), p.137

sexual assault of white settler women by black men as retribution for white male settlers' alleged assaults on black women. Although engendering fears of the subordination and adulteration of the British race in key colonial areas, the attacks, again, were not evoked chiefly to marginalize black subjects but rather to establish an inter-racial communion of suffering for 'female slaves' and to register the culpability of their male enslavers. In what was an uncharacteristically tame leader by organization member Nina Boyle that May entitled 'Who Pays?', the WFL established the parallel. Characterizing trafficking as a Jewish attack on Christians, Boyle declared as a part of a pro-suffrage rumination:

If the 'Black Peril' in South Africa be indeed a Black Peril, what price does not the woman pay?...There have been cases known of immigrant Russian and Polish Jews, engaged in the traffic in womanhood and prosecuted for living on the proceeds of immorality, and their reason for embarking on that career has been the hideous outraging of their daughters in Russian prisons; it is the daughters, not the sons, of Christians, who are made to pay.⁵⁴²

The dominant comparison of the races in the new discourses of 'white slavery', however, featured 'the white slave' and 'the new foreign slaves', and was based on foregrounding 'the English trafficking victim's' suffering and worthiness of government attention.

No group was more vitriolic in this direction than the WFL and no individual more so than Nina Boyle, a vocal supporter of empire and opponent of Home Rule. In a letter to *The Daily Herald* entitled 'Putumayo v. England' published that August following the disappointment of the CLA Bill's revision and the recent publication of the trafficking exposé *The White Slave Market* by Mrs Archibald Mackirdy and Mr WN Willis, Boyle chastised all members of the male public sphere for focussing on freeing 'foreign slaves' outside the Empire and neglecting the country's enslaved, (white) women.⁵⁴³ Concentrating on the abuses revealed by Casement and directing her words at the newspaper's editor, Boyle proclaimed in a pro-suffrage tirade that was reproduced in her organization's journal soon afterwards:

542 Boyle, N, *The Vote* (25 May 1912) p.92. See also: *The Common Cause* (21 September 1911) p.408

543 Mackirdy, A & Willis, WN, *The White Slave Market* (London: Stanley Paul, 1912). Mackirdy and Willis' work solicited widespread criticism for its sensationalism. Evidence suggests that the 'MAP' trafficking revelations were authored by the same writers. Another work on trafficking to achieve considerable popularity as the CLA Bill was in parliament was WR Kauffman's *Daughter's of Ishmael*; a work originally published in 1910.

Your columns and those of other dailies have devoted much space to the Putumayo atrocities. It seems that it is quite sufficient to be a coloured man to enlist the sympathy of British philanthropists, Parliamentarians, politicians, and other public persons. Not one word, however, had been published in your paper, nor in other journals, nor has anything been disclosed in the Parliamentary discussions on the CLA Bill about the atrocities committed on the persons of young girls and women, entrapped to provide amusement and indulgence for some men and profits for others...

The appalling exposition of the trade in girls...in the 'The White Slave Market'... contains matter infinitely more shocking than the Congo or Putumayo atrocities, and is sanctioned under the British flag. No international action is being urged by any influential section of the public, as our negrophile philanthropists, are urging on behalf of Peruvian subjects...And men still have the effrontery to deride and defame the women who want votes and power to alter this infamous state of things! They have the effrontery to talk of 'sex war'. Who started it, by sacrificing women wholesale to male lust?⁵⁴⁴

Again decrying the inefficacy, or 'quixotic' nature, of the male-dominated state, Boyle rehearsed most of this tirade that November as the CLA Bill was receiving its third reading and as the government had promised to take action on Casement's Putumayo revelations, in a piece entitled 'Modern Don Quixotes'.⁵⁴⁵

A similar, yet more placid, line was taken by the NUWSS and the ILP regarding 'the Chinese slave'. A review of *The White Slave Market* by the former group in July declared that its author 'speaks with some justifiable indignation at the one-sided nature of men's sympathies which went out to the 'Chinese Slavery' in South Africa, and placidly tolerated far worse slavery, when it is the slavery of women'.⁵⁴⁶ A letter by the feminist Winifred Mayo in the ILP's journal three months later, meanwhile, contended that, "[t]he horrors of white slavery are far greater than those attendant upon 'Chinese Slavery', which roused the electorate to such a pitch of excitement a few years ago, but as the horrors are experienced by women, they are viewed with a callousness which is nothing short of disgraceful".⁵⁴⁷

544 Boyle, N cited in: *Daily Herald* (15 August 1912), p.2. Reprinted in: *Vote* (24 August 1912), p.312

545 Boyle, N, 'Modern Don Quixotes' *Vote* (23 November 1912), p.58

546 *The Common Cause* (25 July 1912), p.277

547 *Labour Leader* (12 September 1912), p.596

Indeed, some of the organizations capitalized on the burning political questions of the day and created 'foreign slaves' to condemn the inaction against 'women's questions' such as trafficking. That October the WSPU conscripted 'the Macedonian slave' in a cartoon entitled 'Liberalism Begins at Home' to lament Liberal journalists' focus on the Balkan conflict. It depicted an inkwell labelled 'Liberal Press' trying unsuccessfully to stop an attack by two Turkish soldiers and shedding tears above a prostrate man representing Macedonia whilst a female warrior representing the organization protected a cowering 'voteless woman' bound up by the afflictions of 'sweated labour', 'white slaves' and 'child victims'. The caption read, 'Liberal Press (To Turkey): You can't blame him for wanting to fight. Remove his grievance and give political freedom to his brother in Macedonia if you wish to have peace. WSPU (aside): Why doesn't he say that to the British Government about me?' (Fig.5)

As Anne Summers has suggested, though, to represent the suffrage movement as being opposed to help being afforded to 'foreign slaves' is to do the movement a disservice and oversimplify the nature of suffragist and/or feminist protest. From the mid 1860s, the feminist vanguard that would comprise the country's main non-militant suffrage organizations took an active interest in international women's oppressions, highlighting the need for the Christian women of Armenia and Bulgaria to be saved from both Turkish violence and the harem. Significantly, Summers has argued that in both the campaigns over the plight of Armenian and Bulgarian women and the struggle against the systematic abuse of Boer women and children in British-run concentration camps in the early twentieth century, ideas of 'sexual slavery' were to the fore.⁵⁴⁸ The suffrage movement, in this respect, was concerned with a number of 'white slaveries' in and beyond the nation. However, during the struggle for the CLA Bill, it brought its focus closer to home, privileging the 'white slavery' of English girls in trafficking.⁵⁴⁹

548 Summers, 'Hearth and Harem', esp. p.9

549 The BSP and the New Age evoked a broad array of 'slaveries' in their discourses. However, they did not do so in order to pit 'the white slave' against the 'foreign slave', but rather to highlight the plight of the 'wage slave' internationally. See: *Justice* (20 July 1912), p.1; *The New Age* (1 August 1912), p.318



Fig. 5 – 'Liberalism Begins at Home' cartoon in *Votes for Women* (11 October 1912)

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'White slavery', then, became a question of the unjust subjection of white English women and came to feature more prominently the dismissal of the suffering and civilization of a series of subjected racial others as a means of mustering political attention for the country's trafficked women. In an uncompromising hierarchy of oppression, certain slaveries became marked out as more serious and important than others, depending on who they were perceived to afflict as well as *how* they afflicted their bodies. Government action was portrayed forcefully as something that 'the trafficked woman' was entitled to by virtue of her race and the *sexual* nature of her exploitation, and something for which foreigners, particularly because their subjection was supposedly unsexualized and therefore not as great, should wait in line. 'The Englishwoman's' body was thus cast even more comprehensively than in the London Committee's discourses as signifying her unparalleled attractiveness as well as her curse as an eternal victim-in-waiting.

'The English rose' was again placed at the top of a hierarchy of oppression - and one far broader than that constructed by Dyer - by virtue of her ethnicity. Trafficking, despite its trivialization, was, as such, marked out as a crime demonstrative of white, English pre-eminence and 'slavery' was marked out as a fate that some people, namely the non-English and especially the non-English male, deserved more than others. The fact that the organizations objected to the government putting a higher value on certain foreigners to, amongst other things, protect the interests of big business, suggests how this hierarchy was in some way monetized. Trafficking was seen as a crime inflicted upon helpless, working-class girls and allowed to happen because of the private interests of a corrupt body politic driven not only by the profit motive but also by the desire to keep women from sharing in the valuable commodity that was the vote.

The broadening of the racial hierarchy of oppression in the discourses of 'white slavery' demonstrates how, during the Edwardian Crisis, injuries, however serious and detrimental to those afflicted, became in some part exploited for political advantage. One 'enslaved' population's liberty was often represented as directly at the expense of another's, with radical organizations constructing a myriad of rhetorical zero-sum games to dismiss the claims of any group that looked likely to steal the government's attention, regardless of how worthy it may have been. Indeed, *The New Age* derided the struggle

of the slaveries in the political climate of the day. 'Torture is to the front', it observed sardonically regarding Casement's South American revelations and the situation following Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, "[t]he Putumayo people have got a lengthy start, but they are finding a serious competitor in the Japanese Government, which has recently been 'questioning' a batch of unfortunate Koreans into implicating an American mission in some cock-and-bull plot".⁵⁵⁰

Particularly, the new hierarchy demonstrates how notions of English or British superiority underpinned many of the most influential radical rhetorics, providing a trump card to activists highlighting the worthiness of a particular social group to a government whose foreign interests were increasingly occupying its time and whose reforming legacy as a great emancipator was not matching up to its present performance.

As with the aforementioned condemnation of the 'Pharisaical' parliamentarians, and bourgeois social purity reformers, the struggle over the relative claims of 'the white slave' and 'the foreign slave(s)' provides an example of the loss of confidence in the status quo central to the Edwardian Crisis. It implies how the government, the state, its perceived puppets and 'puppet-masters' - liberal hegemony and its foundations - were increasingly seen by some of the country's principal extra-parliamentary political forces as illegitimate and unrepresentative bodies, disconnected from society and needing to be replaced by representatives of the true nation. The fact that, of all citizens, the supposedly inferior 'foreign slave' was assisted in preference to 'the white slave' was, to many, confirmation of this disjuncture.

Conclusion

Once used as a single-phrase reminder of the injustice of trafficking, 'white slavery', during that decisive moment of the transition from liberalism that was the Edwardian Crisis, was pressed into use by a number of radical groups beyond anti-trafficling circles that recognized the term as having a transferable and malleable value as a rhetorical device. Without exception, those groups recycling the phrase were not actively vying to stop trafficking per se. They were groups wanting to draw upon a

550 *The New Age* (1 August 1912), p.318

salient political symbol to achieve a broader, and implicitly more important, political goal. 'White slavery' became a cause of great or little value depending on the symbolic power it could yield at a given time.

While the CLA Bill was a mere speck on the political landscape, the furore it caused within radical circles gives a valuable insight into the political climate of the day. It suggests that one of the features of the extra-parliamentary political struggles that made the Edwardian Crisis a crisis, at least as far as the socialist and suffragist movement's were concerned, was a network of competing 'slaveries' constructed from separate, gradated menus of oppressions that radical organizations compiled in order to elevate a given cause, discredit the claims of rival groups, and/or demonstrate the illegitimacy of the government and the state. It suggests, moreover, that, with the exception of the particular oppression in whose name they fought, these respective groups deployed the 'slaveries' of the day in a casual manner, for what immediate political advantage they might proffer and without intention of making a significant political investment in them. The extra-parliamentary political culture in which they operated thus came to have running through it a 'quick-fix and throw-away' mentality regarding ulterior oppressions which facilitated the rapid mobilization and empowerment of its participants in what was a rapidly fluctuating body politic.

But again, we must ask, 'at what cost?' The value conferred upon the various 'slaveries' in play during the Edwardian Crisis which allowed this empowerment of extra-parliamentary forces - that something and nothingness these injustices became worth -, ultimately, came at a high price. It came at the expense of the 'slaveries', the social problems, that were mobilized for political gain. It came at the expense of a stable political climate in which such problems could be solved effectively. Ultimately, it came at the expense of a coherent body of opposition to the status quo capable of compelling permanent change on its own terms. In this respect, the groups within the suffrage and the socialist movements invested cheaply and ended up undercutting those to whom they supposedly had a commitment.

We should not overlook the power of the radical press in this process. As we have had demonstrated in today's society, the newspaper and the journal are powerful tools which advance political agendas, foster political cultures and facilitate political

flux, with little expense to their editors and owners, and at considerable long term expense to society. The efficacy of what Fletcher calls the suffrage and the socialist movement's 'opposition by journalism' to the CLA Bill might be disputed but the fact that these journals helped put a prohibitive price tag on the very things the movements claimed to stand for, cannot.

There is perhaps an irony in the fact that this insight into the Edwardian Crisis has been reached through analysis of a debate about a solution to a form of organized prostitution. It might be said that the putative slavery that was trafficking, through its casual 'purchase', selfish exploitation and abandonment after use, was itself prostituted by the majority of groups comprising the suffrage and the socialist movements. In turn, it might be said that these groups prostituted their followers by making them invest in these symbols of slavery in such an exploitative manner. There is much to disagree with *The Freewoman* about but its criticism of the WSPU in relation to its recruitment of followers seems to ring at least half true of even the most critical of the organizations that have been considered in this section:

The sinfulness of prostitution, to our mind, lies in its *exploitation* of emotional appeal, and we cannot help feeling that to advance gentle, sincere women to represent the harsh, cruel arrogance of the WSPU is to be guilty of spiritual prostitution, which, to our mind, is worse, because it is an exploitation of higher, finer, subtler, more spiritual wares. And if this is a type of spiritual prostitution, the methods they use to secure some of their followers...is nothing short of emotional seduction.⁵⁵¹

As well as the dynamics of a key moment in the transition from liberalism, this episode in the history of the discourses of 'white slavery' throws light on the transition as a whole. It suggests how, by 1912, the crisis of the state that was propelling the transition from liberalism had entered an acute phase characterized by the increasing insurgency of radical, extra-parliamentary campaign groups. The power that had previously been enjoyed by the state-allied forces of social purity was, along with the state itself, thrown into crisis, and the role social purity associations had played in facilitating the transition was thrown into hiatus, by the mounting, organized political

551 *The Freewoman* (14 March 1912), p.324

opposition to the state and, specifically, the Liberal government. During the Edwardian Crisis, the transition from liberalism was spurred predominantly from below rather than above, by mass-action and militancy rather than the passive acquiescence to state power by influential philanthropic bodies. A significant alteration in the relations of force in the political sphere took place at this moment. Extra-parliamentary political alliances of sufficient coherence and self-awareness emerged to wage an effective struggle on the ideological terrain and make substantial inroads into undermining the power of liberal hegemony, forcing those bodies which were allied with the state and those interests promoted by the state to, temporarily, take a back seat.

Conclusion

'There are few more interesting and educative occupations than tracing what may be called the family tree of great movements towards freedom and the awakening of the social conscience'.⁵⁵²

So wrote Millicent Garrett Fawcett in the introduction to Coote's 1916 commemorative history of the NVA, *A Romance of Philanthropy*.

Sexual Exploitation:

The discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized between c.1880 and 1912 reveal how, with trafficking entering public consciousness and organized anti-trafficking initiatives being inaugurated in Britain, representations of female sexual exploitation became inseparable from, and dependent upon, prejudicial ideas of racial otherness which foregrounded 'the white English citizen' whilst marginalizing and/or criminalizing foreign men and women. They display how these representations came to draw rhetorical power by establishing negative comparisons between various races on ethnocentric lines whereby a particular group of the country's citizens was exalted through the demotion of other groups of foreign citizens - whether via the construction of hierarchies of oppressions to convey 'the trafficked woman's' relative plight or the construction of hierarchies of respectability to convey the extent of the moral fibre and culpability of certain trafficked women and/or her trafficker.

Further, the discourses demonstrate how the pejorative ideas of race and nation brought to representations of trafficking were neither static nor pre-ordained but were reconfigured according to the moment in which they were deployed. To assume that 'white slavery' remained a simple metaphor to establish a binary between 'the white English trafficking victim' and 'the former black slave' on the basis of civilization and suffering, and to emphasize the country's proud legacy as a great emancipator, is to underestimate the malleability and politicization of the term. The set of notions of race and nation brought to representations of sexual exploitation varied according to the nature of trafficking, the perceived efficacy of the government in dealing with such

552 Fawcett, M, 'Introduction' in Coote, *A Romance*, p.xvi

problems, the pressing domestic and foreign policy questions, the cultural capital generated by certain concepts of race and slavery and by the rhetoric of 'white slavery' itself, the power exercised by anti-trafficking organizations, and the prejudices surrounding class, ethnicity, and gender of those representing trafficking at particular moments. 'White slavery' was a floating signifier adapted to take on different meanings and perform different functions as a way of representing female sexual exploitation by different groups at different times, using specific, bespoke constellations of ethnocentric ideas. The discourses of 'white slavery' are, as such, reflective of the imperatives and ideologies guiding the factions that engaged with the issue of sex trafficking - whether within the anti-trafficking movement or outside it - and, in particular, are reflective of the relationship and balance of power between the factions and the government at given moments. Their intrinsic notions of race were not just used to urge a particular type of legal remedy but also to respond to specific external pressures and grind specific axes.

The discourses of 'white slavery' tell us that the most explicit, vitriolic and multifaceted, slavery-based comparisons which privileged 'the white English woman' did not feature by accident. Such comparisons were introduced into representations of sexual exploitation at times when extra-parliamentary struggle for a specific legislative remedy to trafficking and extra-parliamentary dissatisfaction with the government were most acute, when ulterior 'slaveries' and concepts of ethnic otherness were enjoying particular rhetorical currency, when anti-trafficking groups faced particular government indifference, and/or when the issue of trafficking was being deployed by external organizations in wider political campaigns. Tellingly, these representations, which functioned by comparing the attention that the government had given, or was giving, 'enslaved' foreign others with that given its own 'enslaved' female citizens, did not occur in conjunction with fluctuations in the traffic in women or with mounting evidence of the victimization of English women and girls by traffickers. The discourses of 'white slavery' in currency between 1880 and 1882 drew heavily upon images that downplayed the suffering of formerly enslaved black people and were mobilized following revelations of a minor trade in women between Britain and the near Continent by a small anti-trafficking group that was consistently receiving short shrift

from the government. The discourses mobilized in 1912 featured an array of exceptionally vitriolic slavery comparisons that altogether dismissed the suffering of a series of 'foreign slaves'. They were mobilized when the proposed anti-trafficking measure, the CLA Bill, was being engaged with by numerous radical groups outside the country's anti-trafficking movement and when it was making uncertain progress through parliament in a political climate characterized by hostility to the government by those radical groups. They were mobilized, moreover, when the traffic in women had not been subject to significant change for years and involved a tiny minority of Britons, and when revelations of a host of 'new foreign slaveries' were soliciting government attention and capturing the public imagination.

The discourses of 'white slavery' also tell us that slavery-based comparisons were replaced by a different type of pejorative racialized construction once principal 'ownership' of the discourses was transferred from radical political groupings to state-allied social organizations which commanded prestige as leaders of an international anti-trafficking taskforce. At the same time, trafficking was growing exponentially in line with European mass-migration and the Eastern European Jewish Diaspora, and became associated with foreigner others and anxieties over immigration. The use of alternative racialized constructions can be seen in the discourses mobilized between the first revelations of such criminality and the furore over the CLA Bill, in the period 1899-1910. These discourses featured a more subtle, self-interested ethnocentricity based on tacit comparisons between the 'respectable rank' from which the country's anti-trafficking campaigners came and the 'disreputable foreign rank' from which the victims and perpetrators of trafficking came. Concerns regarding status, sexual danger and 'the alien influx' had gripped the bourgeois activists representing sexual exploitation.

Thus the discourses of 'white slavery' show how particular pejorative concepts of race were deployed strategically in representations of female sexual exploitation to either attack the ruling classes for reneging on their responsibility as trustees of a liberating nation and ignoring the 'enslavement' of its own citizens or to defend the status and legitimacy of those claiming authority in the fight against trafficking. This depended, above all else, on the relationship of the particular organization representing sexual exploitation with the government, the specific group-interests it had tied up in

the issue of trafficking and the specific cultural resources it had to draw upon. 'White slavery' cannot be seen as a representation of merely the traffic in women at a given time, the ideas of race contained therein cannot be seen as *non-political*.

Indeed, the ideas of race brought to the discourses of 'white slavery' give a valuable insight into the notions of class and gender that underpinned the dominant representations of systematic female sexual exploitation at particular moments in the period, as well as the class and gender biases behind those forwarding these representations. They reveal how bourgeois-centricity and misogyny, and particularly the denigration of both the working classes and women, increasingly inflected the portrayal of systematic sexual exploitation. This resulted in 'the sexually exploited woman' being progressively cast in a negative and emasculatory manner as a specific type of working-class female who lacked the power and intelligence to defy her exploiter and who could not assume any other role than that of a victim dependent upon her social superiors for her welfare. Similarly, it led to women of her type who did not happen to have been exploited, being cast as victims-in-waiting. Meanwhile, 'the sexual exploiter' was progressively marked out a depraved, foreign man who burdened the English with the criminal business he stimulated and whose presence in the nation was thoroughly undesirable. Male victimhood simply was not acknowledged.

The same women and men were not cast in these roles throughout the period. What had been represented as a crime targeting 'the pure, white English working-class girl' and fuelled by her debauched, upper-class consumers on the continent when trafficking was a new phenomenon, came to be cast as a crime targeting 'the credulous foreign working-class girl' and perpetrated by her criminal, foreign 'brothers' when trafficking proliferated alongside mass-migration from Europe and anti-trafficking initiatives became allied with the state. It switched to being portrayed as an affront against 'the working-class English heroine' by a foreign male elite when a law against trafficking looked in sight. However, the helplessness and easy victim status of 'the type of woman who is trafficked' and the malignity and twisted skill of 'the type of man who orchestrates trafficking' were nevertheless represented all the more forcefully.

The development of the languages of 'white slavery' with the proliferation of trafficking had the consequence of rendering female sexual exploitation a crime

increasingly associated with the superior civilization and sensibilities of certain classes of white English citizen and the inferiority, if not the plain malevolence, of certain categories of foreigner. It rendered female sexual exploitation a crime increasingly associated, on one hand, with vulnerable, working-class women who were in some way responsible for their predicament on account of their desire for paid employment or on account of their dangerously desirable bodies, and, on the other hand, with malicious foreign men who thrived on the innate flaws of such helpless women and so jeopardized the welfare of the nation. Systematic sexual exploitation came to be cast as a racial assault on 'the weaker sex' - whether inter- or intra- racial - and came to be discussed using languages of ethnic otherness that entrenched not only racial but also class- and gender-based prejudices in society.⁵⁵³ And it was Britain's voice that spoke loudest in the international efforts against trafficking throughout the period and which proved to be a dominant influence in other countries' anti-trafficking programmes.

The discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized in Britain between 1880 and 1912 and the 'racial turn' they solicited led to the gross misrepresentation, and detrimental obfuscation, of the causes of systematic sexual exploitation and, specifically, of sex trafficking - a crime rooted not in racial antagonism but in poverty and social dislocation, in the inequitable distribution of wealth both within and between individual countries, as it effects both women and men. It prevented viable remedies being found to these problems and effective help being administered to those women who were being sexually exploited. Justice for some was demanded counterproductively and at the expense of justice for others.

Through their insight into the changing nature and politics of representations of female sexual exploitation, the discourses of 'white slavery' provide valuable clues about the broader, hegemonic notions of race, gender and class at particular moments of the period in question as well as the way in which certain extra-parliamentary groups extrapolated these ideas and deployed them to function as rhetorical tools in their

⁵⁵³ Richard Huzzey has noted a similar tendency in the languages of slavery mobilized by reform groups during the 19th century. 'The triumph of anti-slavery ideas', he suggests, 'ironically, gave a new life to British racial prejudice...With British slavery and the slave trade placed beyond mainstream political debate, Britons were freer to villanize and mock Africans, African Americans, and British blacks without condoning human bondage. Anti-Slavery had never challenged the fundamental notion that black people, poor men, and all women were incapable of being full agents. Huzzey, R, *Freedom Burning* pp.209-10

respective discourses. Indeed, the discourses of 'white slavery', at least in part, constitute evolving discourses of race and trafficking, a culturally-specific, racialized crime. From them we can glean a great deal of information about what it was to be English or British, the double standards entrenched in this definition, the ideas attached to ethnic otherness, together with the developing significance of concepts of slavery in ideas of national identity at specific points during turn-of-the-century society. They, in turn, provide us with important clues about the specific social actors who were empowered at these points - namely, 'the white, middle-class English man' - and those who were not - namely, 'the woman', 'the working-class citizen', 'the foreigner', 'the sexually exploited' -, as well as the hierarchies that were formed on this basis in the culture of the day.

Liberal Hegemony:

Further, the reconfigurations in the discourses of 'white slavery' and the politics behind the discourses shed light on the nature of, and fluctuations within, the social and political climate between c.1880 and 1912. More specifically, they shed light on the deepening crisis of, and transition from, liberalism that was in train during this period. The reconfigurations allow us to trace not only some of the dynamics of the transition regarding the relationship between certain extra-parliamentary groups and the state, and the role of these groups in the transition, but also some of the implications of the transition upon the policing of moral and sexual questions. Particularly, they allow us to trace the implications of the transition on the structure of some of the principal radical or philanthropic organizational responses to these questions and on the relationship of such responses to the state, society and, more broadly, liberal hegemony.

Firstly, the reconfigurations of the discourses of 'white slavery' allow us to see how during the phase of the transition between 1880 and 1910, and, specifically, between the two distinct moments in the representation of sex trafficking which are 1880-2 and 1899-1910, not all extra-parliamentary organizations tackling moral and sexual questions targeted at the working classes were engaged in active struggle with the state, not all rejected its legitimacy and vied to exploit the schisms developing within the government, not all had, or wanted to have, an active role in hacking away at

liberal hegemony. The transition from liberalism was promoted by rapprochements as well as struggles, passive acquiescence to, as well as active attempts to effect, structural changes in state power. The reconfigurations to the language of 'white slavery' allow us to see how, during this part of the transition, the extra-parliamentary campaign surrounding one of the most pressing moral and sexual issues of the day - not to mention one of the dominant 'women's questions' of the moment - in fact, progressively sought to ally with the state and resolved to work within pre-existing state structures, perceiving legislation as the key tool in achieving its ends. The campaign against trafficking acquiesced to state power and to the fluctuations being brought to it from both the remaking of the capitalist classes and the mobilization of working-class orientated movements. It clung to the status quo on its transitional path rather than agitating for radical changes to the structure of the state on its own terms.

Thus Hall and Schwarz's argument that the 'mass feminist movement' constituted an extra-parliamentary movement rooted partly in the 'remade working class' which, through its struggle for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and, above all, for female suffrage, 'imposed a further degree of fragmentation on the political and social alliances organized around the Liberal Party', requires some nuance and amendment in light of the campaign against trafficking.⁵⁵⁴ For, while few would dispute the profound influence of the repeal campaign, and particularly of the suffrage movement from 1910, in challenging the authority of the government and the foundations of state power, to pass judgment on the feminist movement and cite it as an example of hegemony-compromising struggle without considering the issue of trafficking is to leave a story half told. The campaign against trafficking between 1880 and 1910, which was feminist in name and affiliation if not in deeds, contradicts the notion of 'the mass-feminist movement' as a working-class focussed agent of 'fragmentation' to liberal hegemony throughout the years of crisis. Moreover, it and its accompanying discourses arguably ought to hold more weight in considerations of the crisis of liberalism than the campaign for repeal and the discourses that surrounded it, considering that the issue of trafficking became more prominent throughout the years

554 Hall & Schwarz, 'State', pp.14-5

of crisis whereas, after 1886 when the Contagious Diseases Acts were abandoned in Britain, the movement against the state regulation of prostitution focussed its efforts abroad.

As Hall and Schwarz observed, '[t]he rationale for [the] objective [of the feminist movement] was drawn in part from liberal philosophy, but at the same time challenged a principled liberalism on its own terms'.⁵⁵⁵ That is to say, the campaign for repeal worked by drawing upon a brand of liberal individualism that emphasized the immorality of the male state in interfering with working-class women's welfare through regulating prostitution. It was a radical, extra-parliamentary campaign that directly attacked the state and encouraged the public to follow suit, and that represented female sexual exploitation in feminist terms as a gross abomination on working-class women being licensed by the male body politic via the Contagious Diseases Acts. The campaign against trafficking, which was a philanthropy-based social purity campaign espousing a curious hybrid of laissez-faire liberalism in its grass roots philanthropy and interventionism in its legal and diplomatic agenda, cannot be said to follow this pattern. As the discourses of 'white slavery' used during the first scandal surrounding trafficking between 1880 and 1882 tell us, the anti-trafficking movement gradually slipped from the hands of the feminist and female-dominated repeal movement with its anti-statist, or at least libertarian, ideologies and radical methodologies. It increasingly became the possession of a new, nominally feminist, but male-dominated, anti-trafficking taskforce which accepted state power, looked to the state for solutions and represented female sexual exploitation as an ethnic-specific crime on working-class women mobilizing the concepts of national superiority and female difference that were hegemonic in the culture of the day. Indeed, it should be borne in mind that, however much subsequent suffrage groups challenged and successfully weakened liberal hegemony, they, with few exceptions, argued for votes for women on the basis of variations of hegemonic notions of female biological and sexual difference.

Moreover, between 1899 and 1910, the departure of the campaign against trafficking from being an anti-statist bloc which was guided by principled liberalism and,

555 Ibid., p.15

which, as in Hall and Schwarz's characterization, contested liberal hegemony, became more acute as the campaign itself became increasingly international in scope. During this stage of the transition from liberalism, the campaign not only became more formally allied with the state and in advocacy of state intervention, to the extent that anti-trafficking groups actively cooperated with the state in international initiatives. It crucially also moved further away from the ideology and politics guiding the repeal campaign. This departure, like the forces underpinning the transition from liberalism as a whole, had at its core questions of class. Neither the executive of the campaign for repeal nor that of the campaign against trafficking was working-class. Both were bourgeois-led initiatives. However, the former campaign espoused a more egalitarian outlook as far as class difference was concerned, seeing working-class women affected by the Contagious Diseases Acts as victims of a corrupt elite male body politic, and was not devoted to a distinct class position which depended on marginalizing and/or denigrating the culture of the working classes. At this moment, the campaign against trafficking no longer fits into Hall and Schwarz's category of a branch of 'remade working-class resistance'.

The reconfiguration of the discourses of 'white slavery' between 1899 and 1910 attests to how, as well as fostering rapprochements with an increasingly interventionist state, organizational responses to key moral and sexual questions, and particularly those affecting women - that is, practical responses within social purity circles rather than broader campaigns for female suffrage -, came increasingly to operate on the basis of the mores of the developing, dominant capitalist class. What was by this time a thriving campaign against trafficking came to be run by bourgeois activists who, albeit tacitly, sympathized with the very group whose views and interests were increasingly being represented by the state. The campaign came to function according to the assumption of the moral superiority of the class-position, gender roles and ethnic identity exalted, as well as the righteousness of the accrual of wealth, and the financial system built, by this group. Extra-parliamentary organizations tackling moral and sexual questions, especially the social purity groups that dominated the fight against trafficking, thus played a role in the transition from liberalism at this time not by

struggle against the state or by espousing anti-liberal ideologies per se, but by validating many of the ideas and imperatives that were central to state power.

To say that these organizations were increasingly allied with the state, is not to say that they were uncritical of it, or approved of its actions wholeheartedly, or even, had their deference to the state significantly reciprocated. They were *statist* organizations rather than state bodies. They were often at odds with what they saw as the slow-moving cogs or the temperamental nature of the state-machine and, indeed, were for much of the period kept at arm's-length by the state. The shift towards interventionism and collectivism in the body politic did not lead to organizational responses to moral and sexual questions being subsumed within, or usurped by, state-run programmes, as with other social questions of the day. Rather, the organizations dealing with issues of morality and sexuality acted in a quasi-autonomous manner, looking to the state for the solutions to the problems with which they were concerned and perceiving legislation as the principal elixir to society's problems. The state, throughout the whole of the broader period 1880 to 1912, played the role of reluctant partner, legislating on a needs-must basis to define illegitimate sexualities as opposed to suppress them per se, in line with external pressure within and outside these groups and according to the standards of normative sexuality – of respectability and of deviance - offered by these groups and validated by the culture of the day. Thus the discourses of 'white slavery' suggest that Foucault's emphasis on modern sexuality as a system defined by predominantly discursive power arranged through complex webs of knowledge, social mores and practices, rather than a system guided by power derived from the law or the state, censorship and control, warrants correction. In the period under examination, the two arms of power were interlocked.

The law, not least by way of the Criminal Law Amendment Acts of 1885 and 1912, prevailed in defining sexuality. It selectively drew upon the ideas and demands of external social purity groups dealing with questions of sex and morality, which themselves constituted prime discursive forces in that field. The law thus served to entrench as well as inform the norms established by discursive forms of power regarding sexuality. Social purity groups were, in turn, empowered as 'moral professionals', having had many of their ideologies accredited by the state. Through this

empowerment, their sensibilities were permitted even more resonance and, being distinctly statist in nature, acted so as to endorse state power all the more.

The discourses of 'white slavery' that had currency in 1912, however, suggest that, by this phase of the transition, the country's state-allied social purity organizations had themselves reached a moment of crisis whereby they no longer commanded the authority and acceptance in society they once did. Further, they suggest that during this moment, the crisis of liberalism deepened and the transition from liberalism stepped up a gear, as organized political opposition to the government, the state, and to its putative agents in society from below, and not least from the socialist movement and the suffrage movements, intensified. Relations of force in the body politic altered such to allow radical extra-parliamentary groups to wage an effective struggle on the ideological terrain and contest liberal hegemony.

This escalation of antipathy and mass-action against the status quo engendered not only mounting criticism of the vested interests and statist alliances that characterized the country's elite social purity organizations but also the liberation and re-designation of the issues over which these organizations claimed ownership. The discourses of 'white slavery' used at this moment tell us that, as the crisis of liberalism came increasingly to feature extra-parliamentary insurgency on a number of fronts, the politics behind the appropriation of these issues changed. Whereas the pressing moral and sexual questions of the day had previously been embraced largely by reformers actively vying to achieve solutions to them, these same questions were now increasingly evoked by activists in the suffrage and the socialist movements unofficially, as an aside to votes for women and worker's rights respectively, and without a great deal of commitment, for the benefit they might bring the movements' core campaigns. The key moral and sexual questions of the day that were external or ephemeral to the immediate legislative goals of the movements were often used and re-used as multivalent signifiers of relative injustice in a rapidly fluctuating political climate to fulfil the short-term ends of activist groups.

Thus the deepening crisis of liberalism prompted the reconfiguration of the symbolic value and the broadening of the 'ownership' of these questions. The movements that had once called these questions their own had their credibility

temporarily besmirched and their monopoly over the issue of sex trafficking wrested from them during this moment by a number of radical groups which together spawned a political culture in which deriving advantage from, rather than directly bringing advantage to, such questions became the order of the day.⁵⁵⁶

The discourses of 'white slavery' mobilized between 1880 and 1912, then, provide a valuable insight into the nature of the intensifying crisis of liberal hegemony and the transition from liberalism developing throughout these years, as well as the implications of the transition on how issues of morality and sexuality were addressed, the significance(s) attached to such issues, and the power relations of those engaging with them. They demonstrate that the representations of trafficking throughout the period have great relevance not simply in our understanding of the way in which such sex crime and, more broadly, female sexual exploitation was thought about but also in our understanding of what was a major reconfiguration of the social formation.

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While the discourses of 'white slavery' steadily dissipated from 1912, trafficking itself did not. Today, that problem of poverty in an age of mass-migration, of social dislocation, silent exploitation and ineffectual legislation, is more pervasive than ever. This thesis is written in the wake of the publication of the shocking interim report of The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, which unearthed 2,409 confirmed cases of sexual exploitation between August 2010 and October 2011, and 16,500 children at severe risk of abuse between April 2010 and March 2011.⁵⁵⁷ If an equivalent inquiry were undertaken into organized sexual exploitation among adults it is likely that similarly disturbing findings would be made.

Britain's extra-parliamentary anti-trafficking movement has developed in parallel to the expansion of such criminality. ECPAT UK, the national division of the

556 Carol Miller suggested that this loss of faith in the male-dominated forces of social purity was still apparent to some extent well after the First World War, with the female-directed Advisory Committee in the Social Section of the newly inaugurated League of Nations contesting the repressive and 'anti-feminist' policies of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and instead championing what Anne Summers termed a 'liberal feminist abolitionist' stance. Miller, CA, 'The Social Section and Advisory Committee on Social Questions of the League of Nations' in Weindling, P (ed.), *International Health Organizations and Movements, 1918-1939* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp.154-75; Summer, 'Which Women?', pp.221-2

557 Office of the Children's Commissioner, *'I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world'. Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. Interim Report, November 2012* (London Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012), esp. pp.53-4

international initiative to End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, is 'active in research, campaigning and lobbying government to prevent child exploitation and protect children in tourism and child victims of trafficking'.⁵⁵⁸ The human rights group, the Helen Bamber Foundation, is dedicated to treating and rehabilitating trafficking victims of all ages, the Eaves charity's Poppy Project offers support and advocacy for trafficked women, and the public's attention is drawn to the issue by such groups as Glasgow's Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA). Kalayaan and the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association defend the rights of foreign trafficking victims brought to the country whilst the British branches of the major worldwide groups Amnesty International, Anti Slavery International, and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) champion the rights of women and children and call for united government action against trafficking. Following Britain's implementation in 2009 of the Council of Europe's Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings - the first international treaty obliging states to adopt minimum standards to assist and protect the rights of trafficked persons - , these organizations joined to form the country's Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group. Together, the organizations observe, and share information about, the implementation of the Convention in the United Kingdom in lieu of the official monitoring system recommended by the Convention which the government declined to inaugurate. They are helped by a host of legal groups, children's charities and hostels throughout the country.

Crucially, the country's anti-trafficking groups and the authors of the new interim report have refrained from making many of the mistakes of their predecessors. Male victimhood and female perpetration are acknowledged and so too is the fact that trafficking is not an ethno-specific phenomenon. Trafficking is set in the context of poverty and desperation and is not accompanied by a moral language that detracts from our understanding of its severity and/or the plight of those who are trafficked. Immigration restriction is not viewed as a cure-all to the problem and the rights of asylum are upheld.

558 <http://www.ecpat.org.uk/frontpage>. Accessed 30.11.12. ECPAT UK, *Safeguarding Children: Top Ten Questions on Child Trafficking* (London: Printed Word, 2009)

But, as we have seen, the success of any practical, anti-trafficking programme rests, in part, with the government and its willingness to support legislation and programmes, national and international, on the subject. British law and government-led anti-trafficking initiatives have developed since 1912, and particularly so in recent years. In 2002, the offence of trafficking into, within, and out of the United Kingdom for the purposes of prostitution was introduced as an offence before being repealed and re-enacted under the 2003 Sexual Offences Act, which covers 'sexually exploitative behaviour' more comprehensively. The government supports the Council of Europe's Convention as well as the 2009 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) including its optional protocol regarding the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. It, and the preceding administration, have created more support for child trafficking victims and improved victim identification through the National Referral Mechanism. It operates the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre, a statutory agency working with the UK Border Agency, the Crown Prosecution Service, HM Revenue & Customs, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority as well as a number of non-governmental organizations to prevent trafficking, protect its victims, and prosecute its perpetrators. Indeed, that the government-supported Office of the Children's Commissioner, a body which itself ensures that the UNCRC is adhered to, conducted the recent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in part shows the government's commitment to combatting trafficking.⁵⁵⁹

Despite these developments, however, the country's key organizations fighting against child sexual exploitation agree that the framework of the government's anti-trafficking programme is blighted by its closed and insular nature, particularly its reliance on pre-existing, non-specialized authorities to detect and protect trafficking victims, and they consequently claim that it does not do enough to protect victims of trafficking.⁵⁶⁰ Many of these groups, and ECPAT UK in particular, are committed to lobbying the government to replace its Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Trafficking with an Independent Anti-Trafficking Commissioner to collate statistics

559 <http://www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/about-the-ukhtc>. Accessed 30.11.12

560 Basic solicitation laws and conditions surrounding organized sex work are widely criticized by feminists for their regressive and oppressive nature See: Laite, J, 'Paying the Price Again: Prostitution Policy in Historical Perspective' *History and Policy* (November 2006). <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-46.html>. Accessed 30.11.12

regarding trafficking, 'monitor and measure the anti-trafficking activities of state institutions', and make recommendations to the government regarding legislation, the identification and care of victims, international initiatives and immigration policy. They are also determined to secure an effective system of guardianship for underage victims of trafficking, providing a structured programme of welfare provision and legal representation to protect victims' interests, and they are lobbying to have considerable authority conferred to specialized anti-trafficking organizations in the National Referral Mechanism.⁵⁶¹ This was recommended in the Council of Europe Convention as well as in the 2011 European Union (EU) Directive on 'preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims', which the government is bound to adhere to by 2013 but has hitherto been overlooked by ministers.⁵⁶² Indeed, the United Kingdom was one of the last two EU member states to opt into the new Directive, the other being the Netherlands which already had a coherent, independent anti-trafficking watchdog and a specialized system of guardianship in place.⁵⁶³

On Anti-Slavery Day, 18th October 2012, a hundred long years after the CLA Bill's passage, the government admitted that the number of children trafficked into the United Kingdom was increasing.⁵⁶⁴ It has yet to submit a revised plan about how to stop the damage wrought through sex trafficking and protect trafficked persons. The new interim report from The Office of the Children's Commissioner's inquiry might change things. However, as a prudent historian might say, only time will tell.

561 ECPAT UK, *Connect to Protect: 'Just one person I can call anytime'. Campaigning for guardianship for child victims of trafficking* (London: The Printed Word, 2010)

562 <http://www.ecpat.org.uk/content/anti-trafficking-commissioner-campaign>. Accessed 30.11.12

563 <http://www.ecpat.org.uk/media/ecpat-uk-calls-uk-government-opt-eu-trafficking-directive>. Accessed 30.11.12

564 ECPAT UK was one of the organizations lobbying for the inauguration of 'Anti-Slavery Day'.

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