British Humanitarian Thought, The Morant Bay Massacre, and the Bulgarian Atrocities

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Thesis

Submitted to Flinders University

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

2nd August 2022

Table of Contents

Abstract

Many in the 21st century are familiar with the concepts of human rights and humanitarian action to alleviate the suffering of individuals around the world. Research in the political sciences has argued that the concepts of universal rights and modern humanitarianism was a result of the second world war and the reaction to the Holocaust. In the last two decades historians have attempted to historicise human rights and humanitarian action, especially in the Western European context. This thesis shows that within the British context during the long decade of 1865 to 1877, there was a clear development of humanitarian thought and rhetoric and a burgeoning sense of rights that apply beyond the immediate context of British subjecthood. As seen in the case studies of the British public response to the British massacres in Morant Bay, Jamaica, in 1865, and the Ottoman massacres in Bulgaria, in 1876, various strands of humanitarian thought can be identified. These strands fall into three broad categories: religiously motivated humanitarianism, a humanitarianism based in the concepts of law and international obligations, and a humanitarianism focused on the secular concepts of sympathy and liberal humanism. What is demonstrated is the idea that despite the motivations of individuals, there was a common language of humanity and humanitarianism that was used to express political discontent with either British imperial actions or British foreign policy distinctions. As such, humanitarianism and human rights discourse can be historicised into the 19th century British context, which in turn provides a more nuanced understanding of how individuals and groups frame their concern for those suffering from their predispositions. This in turn allows for a more nuanced understanding of modern humanitarian discourse and action.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed.....

Date: 02/08/2022

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been some time in the making. As such, a broad range of people have been influential and supportive in the development of this work.

Firstly, a large amount of thanks and appreciation for their help and professional advice over a long period of time must go to my supervisors Associate Professor Andrekos Varnava and Professor Matthew Fitzpatrick, both of Flinders University. Your advice, guidance, support, and gentle prodding have been invaluable and most appreciated.

The Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship has provided me the funding to have time and space to complete this thesis; without this funding it would not have been possible to begin, let alone complete my PhD.

Acknowledgement goes to Flinders University, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the staff, and HDR students, for their support, guidance, and feedback over the course of my candidature. In particular, the support of the College and the HDR Convenor, Associate Professor Cath Kevin, during a variety of challenges, allowed me the time and comfort to finish.

The Flinders University research scholarships provided funding for me to present at various conferences and undertake archival research, which has been invaluable.

This work has been developed through the professional feedback at a variety of seminars and conferences. The Flinders History Research Seminar allowed me to present my first ideas. The feedback from presenting at the Ecclesiastical History Conference at Cambridge University was invaluable. The professional connections and professional feedback from presenting at both the first and second Eric Richards Symposium, at Flinders University and University of New England, has also been valuable in the development of my ideas.

My family and friends have provided a sounding board for ideas and shown patience during my candidature. My late Grandfather would have been the first to read this and has inspired me throughout my PhD to push forward.

And finally, my patient wife and children, who over some years have encouraged, supported, and missed me during my PhD; thank you.

Introduction

In 1866, after months of public campaigning against the massacres of Afro-Jamaicans on the orders of Governor Edward Eyre, the editors of *The Times* published an article in which they retracted their previous disbelief of the cruelties perpetuated by Eyre and his soldiers and expressed their horror at the reports then reaching Britain from Jamaica. The editors felt compelled to admit publicly that the actions of the British government in Jamaica were 'an abuse of power' that could not be excused and could only be looked upon with 'shuddering.'[1] Their statement, drawn from a Royal Commission report, echoed the mood of those publicly agitating on the issue. It was based on the ideas of humanitarianism; that is that the lives of others are important and to be valued. In the words of Gary Bass, this type of language demonstrated a commitment to 'saving strangers.'[2] *The Times* was not anti-British, or anti-imperial, and had, in fact, defended the right of Eyre to suppress the uprising in the colony, but at this moment it became a vessel of humanitarian thought, confirming the idea that even colonial subjects were due some form of humane consideration and treatment.

This humanitarian sentiment, however, is also discernible in Britain in the middle third of the nineteenth century in situations when Britain was not directly involved. When news of the massacres of Bulgarian Christians at the hands of Ottoman irregulars reached Britain in the summer of 1876 there was also a significant public reaction. On 19 July 1876, the *Manchester Guardian*, a liberal leaning paper, published in its editorial:

> It may be true that, as Mr. Disraeli says, the quarrel is not one of religion; but it is not important. If the Mussulmans are not murdering Christians as Christians, they are murdering them none the less. The Mussulmans are the dominant and the Christians are the subject race, and the rage and recklessness with which the Mussulmans have avenged, and not avenged

[1] 'London, Monday, March 19, 1866', *The Times*, 19 March 1866.

[2] Gary J. Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).

> merely, but carried on and multiplied without limit, the injuries done to them is the rage of a ferocious ruling caste which cannot tolerate the shadow of resistance.[3]

Despite the clearly evident anti-Muslim sentiment it contains, the editorial is instructive. Inherent within its tone was the demand that the British government and people had to do something about the massacres occurring in Bulgaria. In particular, the focus here was on drawing a connection between the British and the Christians of Bulgaria. The major connection drawn here was one of shared religion; fellow Christians were being massacred by barbarous Muslims. The editors were demanding that the British people think of strangers (in this case strangers who were Christian) in a humanitarian way.

Between 1865 and 1880 *The Times* provided a window into a general political understanding of Britain, especially within London. While public opinion is a term that must be viewed cautiously, the way that the London establishment press wrote of atrocities reflected and framed a broader public response within Britain. The readers of *The Times* were generally different to the readers of the newer, more liberal press, such as *The Manchester Guardian*, or the radical press, such as *BeeHive*, however, the way that the press presented the attitudes around atrocity demonstrated a concern within editorial rooms and their readership for the suffering of strangers throughout the British Empire and more broadly.

The examples above speak to the argument of this thesis. From 1865 to 1876 there was an element within British political thought that expressed concerns for the victims of atrocities and massacres, whether committed by British authorities or foreign powers. This humanitarian element was not homogeneous, rather, each individual and group came to each issue with an intellectual framework that defined their humanitarianism. However, as this thesis argues, through both the Jamaican and Bulgarian cases, there were clear strands of humanitarian thought, that stemmed from different perspectives, and which contributed to a broadly based humanitarian movement. By examining the British response to the suppression of the Jamaican uprising, and the response to the Ottoman repression of the Bulgarians, it is clear that there are three clear, broad strains of humanitarian thought

[3] *Manchester Guardian*, 19 July 1876.

that run through both cases. These strands fall, generally, into the religious, legalistic, and moralistic traditions.

In the twentieth century, A. J. P. Taylor stated that 'the one continuous thing in British policy is not that it [British policy] has been universally accepted but that there has always been disagreement, controversy about it.'[4] For Taylor 'the dissenter repudiates its [the particular line of policy] aims, its methods, its principles. What is more, he claims to know better and to promote higher causes; he asserts a superiority, moral or intellectual.'[5] Though Taylor's specific argument pertains to those who dissented from British foreign policy more generally, this thesis borrows these ideas and argues that the history of those few in British society that spoke out regarding the suffering of others can be considered the forerunners of a particular form of intellectual humanitarianism. It also draws on Gary Bass' argument in *Freedom's Battle* that the rise of the free press and liberal democratic societies in Britain and France was a direct cause of individual's beginning to care about the fate of others.[6] In particular, it picks up Bass' argument that as liberal sentiments and the free press increased in Europe the ideas that were to form the elements of humanitarianism were able to find expression. This thesis explains in detail how this process resulted in the expression of a variety of forms of humanitarianism in nineteenth-century Britain.

By connecting these two sets of ideas, those of Taylor and Bass, this thesis examines the connection between the free press and Britain's burgeoning liberal democracy. It also investigates the environment they created in which individuals could dissent from established tradition and policy to argue for a more humane, moralistic, and humanitarian approach to imperial and foreign policy. This thesis will demonstrate that these humanitarian arguments were formulated in a variety of ways which reflected the tactical needs and intellectual impulse that motivated the individual or group dissenting. This plurality resulted in a broader dissenting humanitarian movement, a movement which included a variety of strands and ideas.

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[4] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792 – 1939*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958) 12.

[5] *ibid.,* 13.

[6] Bass, *Freedom's Battle.*

The core issue addressed in this thesis isto explore what caused the rise of the differing strands of humanitarian thought that can be identified during mid-Victorian Britain in response to massacres inside and outside the British Empire. In particular, it will be shown that the pre-existing intellectual movements of religious groups, those who focused on a legalistic British empire and a more rules-based international order, and a liberal moralism, intersected with imperial and foreign policy in a way that developed specific humanitarian ideas. Beneath this broader argument are various other, subsidiary arguments relating to howthe categories of humanitarian thought operated in similar ways across two different historical cases and a demonstration that these different strands of humanitarian thought came together to create a coherent approach to humanitarian action and policy. The thesis also investigates the main proponents of each strand of thought and demonstrates that there was significant cross-over of actors between the cases.. Each chapter and case study will examine the events in the same manner to demonstrate these arguments.

The argument in this thesis is that after developing through the earlier concerns for strangers, different strands of humanitarian thought can be identified between 1865 and 1880 in Britain which interacted with the pre-existing politics, philosophy, and religion of the humanitarians themselves.

Apart from the relevance of this study to the academic understanding of the history of the development of humanitarian ideas, the application goes beyond the academy. The last 20 years the UN member states have been existing in a world where the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine is an idea that, while debated over, is accepted as an idea in international politics.[7] R2P attempted to codify the responsibility of the international community to respond to instances of mass atrocities and crimes against humanity, when committed by sovereign states, or if sovereign states were unable to protect their citizens.[8] There has been much criticism in the last 17 years on the failure of the UN to enforce the R2P doctrine and the self centred nature of nation-states in their responses to atrocities. Therefore,

[7] For a critique of the development of R2P see Gareth Evans, "The Responsibility to Protect: An Idea Whose Time Has Come…And Gone?" *International Relations*, 22, no. 3 (2008):283-298.

[8] United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/1, *World Summit Outcome Document*, A/RES/60/1 (2005), available from https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml.

historicizing humanitarianism to this specific mid-Victorian period and understanding the different, yet inter-connected strains of political, humanitarian ideas, will assist in better understanding not only the origins and development of humanitarian thought, but also the current motivations and actions in the fight for humanitarianism today. When non-governmental organisations who are on the ground providing emergency humanitarian support, and nations are looking for reasons as to why there are a multitude of responses to atrocities and crimes against humanity, it can prove useful to look at the motivations of the humanitarians themselves and perhaps even connect with these to achieve support.

Morant Bay and Bulgaria

This thesis focuses specifically on events during and following the Jamaican uprising in 1865 and the Bulgarian massacres in 1876. Both of these events will be examined through a similar lens, even though the subject of the agitations was significantly different. In Jamaica it was a case of the British imperial apparatus violently suppressing colonial revolt. Afro-Jamaicans who had been freed from slavery only 20 years previously were still suppressed significantly by the landholding class of Jamaica. This spread to civil unrest, which was brutally repressed by Governor Edward Eyre under the use of martial law powers at his disposal.[9] The Bulgarian case, however, was a situation in which the Ottoman Empire suppressed a revolt within their own borders. The revolt in Bulgaria was not merely localized civil

[9] Stephen C. Russell, "'Slavery Dies Hard": A Radical Perspective on the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica', *Slavery & Abolition*,' (2021): 1-20; Christine Chivallon & David Howard 'Colonial Violence and civilizing utopias in the French and British Empires: The Morant Bay Rebellion (1865) and the Insurrection of the South (1870), *Slavery & Abolition*, 38, no. 3' (2017): 1-25; Robert Fraser, 'Race and religion in the Victorian age: Charles Kingsley, Governor Eyre and the Morant Bay Rising,' *The Victorian Web*, (2011), https://oro.open.ac.uk/28504/2/DDFE66B3.pdf (accessed 24 June 2017) ; Jack Webb, 'The Morant Bay Rebellion, British Colonial Policy, and Travelling Ideas about Haiti,' *Journal of Caribbean History*, 50, no. 1, (2016): 70-89; Rachel Flores "The Power of 'Retributive Justice': Punishment and the body in the Morant Bay rebellion, 1865", PhD diss., (The George Washington University, 2011); Sheshalatha Reddy, *British Empire and the Literature of Rebellion: Revolting Bodies, Laboring Subjects*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017),73-143; Gad Hueman, *"The Killing Time": The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica*, (London: Macmillan, 1994); Lord Olivier, *The Myth of Governor Eyre*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1933); Geoffrey Dutton, *The Hero as Murderer: The Life of Edward John Eyre, Australian Explorer and Governor of Jamaica, 1815 – 1901*, (Glasgow: Collins Cheshire, 1967); Howard W. Fulweiler, "The Strange Case of Governor Eyre: Race and the 'Victorian Frame of Mind"', *CLIO*, 29, no. 2 (2000), 119; Denis Judd, *Empire: The British Imperial Experience, From 1765 to the Present*, (London: Harper Collins, 1996).

unrest but reflected a broader movement for Balkan independence and represented a direct threat to Ottoman territorial integrity.[10] Whereas in Jamaica Eyre used regular British troops to suppress the unrest, the Ottomans used irregulars and local Muslim populations to suppress their revolt.

The decision to examine these two cases is deliberate. Rather than looking thematically at humanitarian interventions, as Davide Rodogno did in terms of the interventions in the Ottoman Empire,[11] or examining Jamaica in terms of a broader British imperial, racial issue, such as Catherine Hall,[12] there is a deliberate connection between two unconnected events. Whilst Jamaica was an internal, imperial issue and Bulgaria a foreign concern, the strands of humanitarian thought, and specific humanitarians, that were involved in both demonstrate a clear development of a broader humanitarian idea. It is the difference between the two cases that is of importance to the arguments herein, more than the similarities, for despite these differences, much of the pre-existing political concerns were still raised in similar ways, which demonstrate the beginnings of political ideas surrounding humanitarian action and human rights policy. Even though the events in Morant Bay occurred between the Lebanese intervention in 1866 and the Cretan Crisis in 1868, which both animated British public opinion, the comparison of the two different cases demonstrates the broader argument in a way that separates, at least somewhat, the issue from the specific geopolitical context of the Ottoman Empire, or the British Empire.

This thesis examines different strands of humanitarian thought across these two separate instances of humanitarian 'agitation' within Britain. In particular, it will demonstrate that during and

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[10] David Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Harold Temperley, "The Bulgarian and Other Atrocities, 1875-1878," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 17, (1931); Richard Millman, "The Bulgarian Massacres Reconsidered," *The Slavonic and East European Review,* 58, no. 2, (1980): 218-231; Peter Marsh, "Lord Salisbury and the Ottoman Massacres," *Journal of British Studies*, 11, no. 2, (1972): 63-83; James Reid, "Batak 1876: A Massacre and Its Significance," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2, no. 3, (2000): 375-409; Richard Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question: 1875-78, (*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

[11] Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914: The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011).

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

following both the Jamaican and Bulgarian massacres, British society responded with three clear approaches to humanitarianism: namely religious humanitarianism, legalistic humanitarianism, and liberal humanism. These three strands will be examined discretely for both cases, even though they overlapped in practice and involved some of the same people. Through this analysis, this thesis will demonstrate that what is broadly termed humanitarianism incorporated a number of different strands of thought, in which similar policies were advocated for, but stemmed from different intellectual starting points with differing assumptions.

It is necessary to define what is meant by these three strands prior to beginning this examination. When discussing these strands, it is important to define what is meant. In terms of the Morant Bay uprising the three strands that were present can be identified as follows. There was a religious backed humanitarianism that was defined and framed by the pre-existing anti-slavery movement and the missionary societies that were active in Jamaica at the time. There was a specific strand of thought that connected the events in Jamaica to a form of subjecthood and the legal rights of subjects of the British Empire, with a specific focus on the impact of government abuse of power on British citizens themselves. There were also ideas that were based in a more non-religious, political, liberalism. This was at times based in terms of sympathy, but also in a focus on the responsibility to not cause or allow suffering.

In relation to the Bulgarian atrocities the strands parallel but are slightly different to that of Morant Bay. There was a religious element that framed the humanitarian response in terms of the responsibility of British Christians to stand up for and protect Eastern Christians from the abuses of Ottoman Muslims. There was an element, defined herein tenuously as a legalistic impulse, that was focused on the development of a rules-based international order, which engaged with ideas of treaty responsibilities and the international obligations of the British government, especially in terms of the Ottoman Empire after the Crimean War. Finally, there was a more focused liberal, political response to Bulgaria, as opposed to Jamaica, framed around the concepts of a more radical Liberal Party and a declining Whig influence among radical MPs.

It is recognized that the labels used and the delineation between these strands of thought are arbitrary in nature. They are used taxonomically as a way to collect, examine, and categorise different elements of political thought. As such, there is significant cross-over between these strands of thought. For example, religious humanitarianism bleeds into liberal humanism in a way that really means that they should not be considered separate and distinct ideas. Further, the tenuous connection between subject rights within the British Empire and a burgeoning idea of a rules-based international order, focused on protecting certain victims of violence, while classified as legalistic herein, are in fact separate political ideas. However, these three strands have been chosen in a way that allows for classification of specific elements of the British political establishment, that were beginning to formalise humanitarian ideas based on their pre-existing ideas and beliefs. While these strands are being compared in a way to draw out similarities, the change over the decade between Jamaica and Bulgaria in the political environment is explored and incorporated as well.

Historiography

This thesis engages with the differing origins of humanitarian thought in mid-Victorian Britain. Some scholars have approached humanitarian ideas thematically and historically, some have addressed humanitarian ideas as a prelude or adjunct to the exploration of a separate matter entirely and there are those who have addressed the events explored here, yet do not acknowledge the separate but overlapping intellectual spaces occupied by those who expressed humanitarian ideals in different ways.

Morant Bay

The agitations examined in this thesis concern two incidents where the actions of groups and individuals was considered beyond the pale of appropriate behaviour. In the first case study of Jamaica, defenders of Governor Eyre had argued that there appeared to be a very real threat that the Afro-Jamaican uprising would have resulted in another massacre like Haiti, from 1791 to 1804, that eventually led to a massacre of white Haitians, if Governor Eyre had not responded with the punitive measures he had. There was however a significant element in Britain that defended the rights of Afro-

Jamaican subjects, and who decried the racial antagonism revealed in the events and called for criminal proceedings against Eyre and his officers.[13]

Explorations of the British response to the Morant Bay have been as significant in the historiography as studies of the uprising itself. Some works have positioned Morant Bay as the beginning of a nationalist struggle in Jamaica.[14] Over time, there have been different frames in which Morant Bay has been explored, from the chronicling of Hueman, Olivier, and Semmel, to analysing the events through the frame of post-colonialism, feminism, and racism.[15] Of particular interest, however, are the works by Bernard Semmel and R. W. Kostal due to the way that they framed the response to the events in Jamaica in terms of a British liberal politics and a legalistic impulse, respectively.[16]

Semmel's work explored the British response to the events in Jamaica after the Morant Bay uprising. This thesis explores the same events, the same people, and the same general tone of the agitation as a political response to an imperial event, however, this thesis takes these events further as evidence of a broader concept of humanitarian thought based in pre-existing political frameworks. Kostal, on the other hand, argued that the response to the repression in Jamaica was purely a legalistic and juridical response, with all else being subsidiary to this. While acknowledging the juridical and

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[13] Fulweiler, "The Strange Case of Governor Eyre"

[14] See for example Victor. S. Reid, *A New Day, (*New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949).

[15] Hueman, *The Killing Time*; Olivier, *The Myth of Governor Eyre*; Dutton, *The Hero as Murderer*; Fulweiler, "The Strange Case of Governor Eyre: Judd, *Empire*; Thomas R. Day, "Jamaican Revolts in British Press and Politics, 1760-1865," MA diss., (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2016); Hall, *Civilising Subjects*:; Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Russell, "'Slavery Dies Hard': A Radical Perspective on the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica,"; Christine Chivallon & David Howard, "Colonial Violence and civilizing utopias in the French and British Empires: The Morant Bay Rebellion (1865) and the Insurrection of the South (1870)," *Slavery & Abolition*, 38, no. 3 (2017): 1-25; Robert Fraser, "Race and religion in the Victorian age: Charles Kingsley, Governor Eyre and the Morant Bay Rising," *The Victorian Web*, (2011), https://oro.open.ac.uk/28504/2/DDFE66B3.pdf (accessed 24 June 2017); Jack Webb, "The Morant Bay Rebellion, British Colonial Policy, and Travelling Ideas About Haiti," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 50, no. 1, (2016): 70-89; Rachael Flores, "The Power of 'Retributive Justice': Punishment and the body in the Morant Bay rebellion, 1865", PhD diss., (The George Washington University, 2011); Sheshalatha Reddy, "Inspiriting Flesh/Fleshing Out Spirit: Bodies, Bondage, and the Morant Bay Rebellion," in Reddy, S., *British Empire and the Literature of Rebellion: Revolting Bodies, Laboring Subjects*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 73-143.

[16] Bernard Semmel, *The Governor Eyre Controversy*, (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1962).; Rande W. Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power: Victorian Empire and the Rule of Law*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

legalistic impulses within British society, this thesis demonstrates clearly that the response was far more multi-faceted than this and that even those who advocated a legalistic response framed their responses, at times, in a humanitarian manner.

The Morant Bay massacre and the response in Jamaica and Britain have been interpreted as part of the nationalist struggle of Afro-Jamaicans,[17] a history of the social breach that occurred in Britain around the 'Governor Eyre controversy',[18] which focused on Eyre and the political impact of a colonial Governor being tried for murder. The uprising has also inspired some histories that view the events at Morant Bay in terms of race and empire. Perhaps the most important of these are Howard W. Fulweiler's article in 2000,[19] and Catherine Hall's treatment within her book *Civilising Subjects* in 2002.[20] Both Fulwieler and Hall approach race as a defining feature of the British response to the events at Morant Bay. In Fulweiler's words 'the issue of race…was both overtly and covertly intertwined with the attitudes of both parties in the dispute and is the element which makes this moment both in Victorian domestic and colonial policy so important and so instructive' and Hall detailed the perceived necessity of British rule in Jamaica, due to prevailing attitudes of race. In *God's Empire* Hilary Carey has argued that whilst missionaries attempted to evangelise indigenous societies across the empire,[21] they were often overwhelmed by the whiteness of the settler populations.[22]

Semmel detailed the general British response to Eyre's reprisals, from the news of the uprising until the prosecutions of Eyre. Semmel focused specifically on the development of the agitation and its composition, without a detailed examination into the nature of the humanitarian thought expressed. Kostal's argument, in comparison, focuses specifically on the juridical aspects of the Eyre cases. In order to contextualise these Kostal also detailed the uprising, the reprisals and the British public

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[17] Reid, *A New Day.*.

[18] Gillian Workman, "Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy: An account with some new material," *Victorian Studies*, 18, no. 1, (1974): 77-102; Semmel, *The Governor Eyre Controversy*.

[19] Fulweiler, "The Strange Case of Governor Eyre".

[20] Hall, *Civilising Subjects*.

[21] In much of the scholarship around this issue, the African slaves in Jamaica were often treated contemporaneously to the indigenous inhabitants in other parts of the empire.

[22] Hilary Carey, *God's Empire,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 24.

response. In essence, Kostal argued that the entire Eyre controversy had to do with the legal understanding of the time, in particular the legal controversy surrounding martial law, especially in the colonies.[23] The legalistic strand of the Morant Bay argument offered here owes much to Kostal's initial work, although the argument here differs substantially in its coupling of this with other strands of humanitarianism, as well as in the focus on the ability of those forwarding a legalistic critique to also advocate a different variant of humanitarian imperial policy.

This thesis engages with the historical literature of the Morant Bay uprising, draws some of the ideas, especially from Kostal, Fulweiler, and Judd, but focuses specifically on the Morant Bay events as catalyst for specific arguments and responses within Britain itself. Much of the history of the incident is drawn from these works, and the archives on the matter, but apart from Hall and Kostal, who have a different focus than this thesis the historical material is similar, but the argument on the role of British humanitarian rhetoric is different.

Bulgaria

In the other case study, the Bulgarian massacres, the existing government direction was coloured by British and Russian antagonism, the existing tangle of the Eastern Question, expectations of a coming 'disintegration' of the Ottoman Empire, and a distaste for popular interference in a particularly sensitive aspect of foreign policy. However, immediately at the news of massacres a portion of middle to high British society led an enormously popular agitation supporting the Bulgarian victims and calling for Britain to end its support for the Ottoman Turks, at least initially.[24]

The Bulgarian massacres, the response in Britain, and the clash between William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli, as long-term leaders and figureheads of the Liberal and Conservative parties, are staples of British political and social histories.[25] From the mid-1850s Gladstone and Disraeli had been

[23] Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power*.

[24] Millman, "The Bulgarian Massacres Reconsidered," 1.

[25] Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876*; Temperley, "The Bulgarian and Other Atrocities, 1875-1878,"; Millman, "The Bulgarian Massacres Reconsidered,"; Marsh, "Lord Salisbury and the Ottoman Massacres,"; Reid, "Batak 1876: A

key figures as Prime Ministers, Chancellors of the Exchequer and vocal and public rivals. Their public political duels often colour the historiography of the period, as is fitting in a time period, where their specific personalities and political beliefs coloured and framed their parties' directions. David Harris, Harold Temperley and Richard Millman have all explored aspects of the Bulgarian matter yet situated them within the political sphere of the Eastern Question.[26] Davide Rodogno has also examined elements of the popular British agitation surrounding the Bulgarian massacres, focusing on how this expression of humanitarianism was an attempt to manage the Eastern Question, of which Bulgaria was merely one part.[27]

Of particular interest to this thesis are the works by Richard Shannon and Ann Pottinger Saab. Both addressed the agitation in Britain surrounding the Bulgarian events, known as the Bulgarian agitation. Richard Shannon focused particularly on the impact of Gladstone in the latter half of 1876 and how he impacted the atrocity movement and how it impacted on him.[28] Shannon's careful study of the agitation demonstrated that Gladstone arrived late to the movement and then through the actions of others was thrust to forefront of it. This argument is referenced throughout, as despite the lateness of Gladstone's involvement, his profile and political ability to ride the populist movement made him a vital part of the agitation.

Saab, on the other hand, attempted to take Shannon's study and layer it

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Massacre and Its Significance,"; Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question: 1875-78, (*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, (London: Frank Cass, 1935); Michelle Tusan, "At home in the Ottoman Empire: humanitarianism and the Victorian diplomat," in *The Cultural Construction of the British World*, Barry Crosbie & Mark Hampton (eds), (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); Alexis Heraclides & Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), chapter 8; Milos Kovic, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Alexander L. Macfie, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923,* 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 1996); Rebecca Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanitarianism and Relief in War, Britain 1870-1914,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); James Perkins, "British Liberalism and the Balkans, c. 1875-1925," PhD diss., (University of London, 2014); Leslie Rogne Schumacher, "A 'lasting solution': The Eastern Question and British Imperialism, 1875-1878," Phd diss., (The University of Minnesota, 2012).

[26] Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876*; Temperley, 'The Bulgarian and Other Atrocities; Millman, "The Bulgarian Massacres Reconsidered".

[27] Rodogno, *Against Massacre.*.

[28] Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation, 1876*, (London: Nelson, 1963).

with a psychological element on social movements and uprisings, again with a particular focus on Gladstone as a key figure within the movement. [29] Saab's broader argument was that the protest regarding Bulgaria seen in Britain was reflective of other mass movements and could be seen as an incident of collective behaviour, rather than an affair of high politics.[30]

Both Shannon and Saab explored the particularly strong domestic reaction to the events in Bulgaria by using Gladstone as their prism of study, albeit for differing reasons. Both works also addressed elements of the popular rhetoric regarding the 'Bulgarian Horrors' and the conservative response to it. Where this thesis differs from these works, however, is in discussing how the 'atrocitarians' represented the victims and perpetrators of the massacres. Shannon focused on the history of the movement, its political influence and weight, and the particularities of the Gladstone nexus, however he does not address most of the intellectual history. Saab examined the psychology of mass movements, however also without assessing the intellectual basis of the movement. What Shannon and Saab both offer are narrative histories of the movement from slightly different perspectives. Both works speak to the same progression of events, however, unlike these this thesis takes the same narrative of events to investigate the varying intellectual strands with British humanitarianism and how these intersected with British foreign policy to heighten its humanitarian dimension.

More recently than both Saab and Shannon, Michelle Tusan has situated the British response to the massacres in the Ottoman Empire to support her work into the Armenian genocide.[31] Tusan argued that the response in Britain to the Bulgarian massacres in 1876 had a direct role in 'defining a liberal vision of Britain in the world.'[32] Like Barnett and Rodogno, Tusan, in part, puts this rise of a liberating imperialism in terms of the rise of the free, popular press in Britain, however, like Abigail

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[29] Ann Pottinger Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria, and the Working Classes, 1856-1878*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[30] Ibid., 12.

[31] Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes.*

[32] Ibid., 5.

Green, she also attributes it in part to an 'evangelical religious revivalism.'[33] This thesis is situated within this argument of Tusan's in that it acknowledges both the role of the rise of liberal imperialism, the free press, and evangelical revivalism, in the motivations behind expressions of humanitarianism. Whilst Tusan focused specifically on the Eastern Question and the connection between Bulgaria and the Armenian massacres in 1896 and 1909, and the Armenian genocide in 1915, this thesis focuses on the earlier development of British humanitarianism.

Humanitarianism

There is a group of studies that examine humanitarian interventions; that is political, armed breaches of another's sovereignty undertaken with the stated purpose of upholding the rights, or humanity, of a particular group of people in another country. Gary J. Bass, Davide Rodogno, Michael Barnett and D. J. B. Trim and Bernard Simms are the most prominent historians of humanitarian intervention, though each approaches the concept with a different focus. [34]

For his part, Gary Bass has argued that the history of humanitarian intervention and popular domestic agitations in Britain and France demonstrate that by the nineteenth century there was an established and developed idea of solidarity with strangers, established through democratic societies and a free press. Bass argued that 'humanitarian intervention [in the nineteenth century] emerged as a fundamentally liberal enterprise, wrapped in the progress of liberal ideas and institutions.'[35] For Bass, while the basis of Christianity and realpolitik were at work, more important were the institutions of liberal democracy and free societies that created an environment through which expressions of humanitarianism could be found. This thesis situates itself within the broader idea that Bass suggests, in terms of the basis of Christianity and liberal democratic institutions that allowed for the development

[33] Ibid., 5; see also Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; and Abigail Green, "Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context: Religious, gendered, national?" *The Historical Journal*, 57, no. 4, (2014): 1157 - 1175.

[34] Bass, *Freedom's Battle*; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Brendan Simms & D. J. B. Trim eds., *Humanitarian Intervention: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[35] Bass, *Freedom's Battle,* 5.

of a specifically humanitarian political sentiment. More specifically than Bass, however, is the idea that there were discernible strands of humanitarian ideas, which were framed by pre-existing ideas.

In their work, Simms and Trim argued that there was a discernible progression from individuals connecting with like-minded foreigners in the sixteenth century to a developing sense of connection with distant strangers in the nineteenth century. Their edited volume illustrated that the nature of humanitarian intervention was not always military and changed over time, from pan-Christian solidarists, towards a more universal, liberal idea in the nineteenth century. They argued that the law of nations allowed modern states to interfere and that the 'emergence of the humanitarian impulse can be traced back to universalism in the enlightenment.'[36] While this idea is debated, it is clear from the events in Morant Bay and Bulgaria that there was an understanding in mid-Victorian Britain that there was an imagined solidarity with specific communities due to elements of the enlightenment: religion, liberalism, sympathy, and legal responsibilities.

Opposed to this broader humanitarian historiography is a school of thought that argues that humanitarian intervention and its attached rhetoric was more political than moral. In particular, Davide Rodogno has argued that humanitarianism was less to do with solidarity or compassion and more a question of imperialism, foreign policy, and realpolitik. Rodogno focused on the cooperative nature of nineteenth century interventions and addressed, specifically, questions of intervention in the Ottoman Empire.[37] Having examined a variety of perspectives, Rodogno's overarching argument was that interventions did not occur unless political expediency dictated it and the moral nature of the humanitarians always was subsumed by the needs of the state. While this thesis addresses political thought specifically, rather than instances of military interventionism, it is clear that the impulse as suggested by Rodogno was present; in fact, this is the entire argument of this thesis. Humanitarianism, and its associated act of humanitarian intervention, was not apolitical, but rather framed within the pre-existing political frameworks of its advocates and adherents.

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[36] Simms and Trim, 'Introduction', in Simms & Trim, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 21.

[37] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 10.

Moving beyond humanitarian intervention as an armed political move, there is also another school of thought that looks at humanitarianism in terms of its ability to provide aid and save victims. Michael Barnett focused on the rise of humanitarian organisations in Europe that demonstrated a particular concern for saving strangers. Rather than focusing on armed, humanitarian interventions, Barnett explored the softer intervention of humanitarian agencies. One of Barnett's more useful distinctions for the argument of this thesis, is the idea that there are two forms of humanitarianism; the 'emergency' form, devoted to lives, and the 'alchemical' form, which sought to address the structural causes of the suffering.[38]

Rodogno correctly argued that armed intervention was inherently political, in that states would not engage in intervention unless it was politically expedient for their foreign policy. This worked in the inverse as well; as Benjamin Disraeli, the British Conservative Prime Minister, argued in the Bulgarian case, intervention in Bulgaria would open the way for Russian influence in the near east which was inherently against British interests.[39] However, Simms and Trim are also correct in their examination of the historicity of the trends of humanitarianism from sixteenth century Britain. This thesis draws on this historiography but narrows the issue and examines the different forms of humanitarian thought, from the pan-Christian motivations as explored by Simms and Trim, the functions of liberal society in Bass, the political considerations explored by Rodogno, and the liberal, humanist impulse explored by Barnett to argue that all of these threads were present within Britain during the nineteenth century and produced a complex and often contradictory humanitarianism.

There are of course other voices in this debate which moved beyond the political aims of humanitarian intervention to a broader understanding of humanitarianism as a field of thought. Fabian Klose and Mirjam Thulin edited a volume called *Humanity*, which explored the intersection of humanitarianism with Christianity, morality, international law, and charity.[40] The authors in the volume

[38] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 40.

[39] United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, House of Lords, vol. 232, (1877).

[40] Fabian Klose & Mirjam Thulin eds, *Humanity. A History of European Concepts in practice From the Sixteenth Century to the Present*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co., 2016).

demonstrate a clear historical progression of conceptions of humanity across a wide range of circumstances and across time. Their exploration of events, concepts, and ideas mirror, in a way, the concerns of this thesis, although the following investigates specific events in greater detail so as to uncover the particular strands of humanitarian thought emerging within Britain in the nineteenth century.

Other recent works have also looked at the intersection of humanitarian thought and colonial governance.[41] With a particular focus on Indigenous Australians, Amanda Nettlebeck argued that while there was some humanitarian guided reform in colonial governance this was always dependent on Indigenous reform – resulting in the British public and politicians feeling better for having enacted reform, but also resulting in overwhelming control over Indigenous people, their bodies and their communities.[42] The elements that Nettlebeck explored, especially in terms of the effects of colonial governance and humanitarian reform, are similarly addressed in this thesis in the context of the Jamaican case and the role of British reform of colonial rule in the aftermath of the revolt. Nettlebeck's arguments and examination of the political arguments surrounding colonial governance and the interaction with the anti-slavery societies and religious organisations is key to understanding the political context of the Jamaican case. Whilst Australia and Jamaica were colonies that were different in kind, the historiography of British debates around the appropriate treatment of subject populations is key to understanding the political framework of the humanitarian response to Morant Bay. What is interesting in these terms is the way that Governor Eyre had spent time in Australia, New Zealand, Saint Vincent, and Antigua and so was also heavily involved in the periods and movements that Nettlebeck explored.

Following a similar theme, Alan Lester and Fae Dusart have explored the paradox of mandated humanitarian governance that accompanied an expansion of colonisation attempts across the world.[43]

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[41] Amanda Nettlebeck, *Indigenous Rights and Colonial Subjecthood*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[42] Ibid.

[43] Alan Lester & Fae Dusart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014).

While focusing on the indigenous relations of the major settler colonies—Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada—Lester and Dusart argued that violent colonial conquest was integral to the notions of humanitarian governance.[44] Though focused on a different period of history than the subjects of this thesis, this argument by Lester and Dusart feeds into the ideas explored in the chapters on Jamaica, namely that the violent history of British rule in Jamaica was a core contributor to the violence that erupted and the means with which Eyre suppressed it. This same violent history was used as a reason by humanitarians in the aftermath of massacre to criticize the actions of Eyre. The core connection between this thesis and this historiography is the political framework of the response to Morant Bay. As Lester and Dusart demonstrate violent conquest was integral to humanitarian governance, however, as Morant Bay showed, this was recognized and criticised by contemporaries in Britain. While it is clear that attempts at colonial humanitarian governance were inherently suppressive and violence, these same attempts were criticised, at the time, from a variety of perspectives.

Moving to a more theoretical perspective of humanitarianism, Abigail Green has argued that the rise of a liberal humanitarianism in mid-nineteenth century Britain was a direct result of an evangelical religious revivalism. While Green connects her argument to the development of human rights discourse at the same time, her focus was on the

> interplay between transnational humanitarianism and a more overtly political cosmopolitan radicalism…the central role of women in shaping traditions of humanitarian activism, as well as to the distinctive religious and national cultures that underpinned this humanitarian activity.[45]

Green's argument is invaluable in this thesis, due to the focus on the interplay between a liberal, radical politics and evangelical religious movements. However, there is more in this than explored by Green, in that not only did these ideas exist side by side in Britain, but rather they can be explored as distinct strains of humanitarian thought, based on the political motivation and background of the humanitarian.

There has been significant work examining the anti-slavery impulse in Britain that put pressure on the British government, and through them foreign governments, to end the slave trade. In fact,

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Green, *Humanitarianism*, 1160.

William Mulligan specifically credited the British public for putting enough pressure on the British government to commit to ending the slave trade.[46] Mulligan has argued extensively that there was specific and deliberate concern over the slave trade for humanitarian reasons, which specifically led to attempts to stop the slave trade. This anti-slavery impulse is often expressed as a beginning to the nineteenth century era of humanitarian concern and a form of armed intervention in its own right.[47] As was demonstrated in the section on Morant Bay, at times the history of the Morant Bay uprising has been framed in terms of a reaction to the lingering effects of slavery and the reaction in Britain as a continuation of the anti-slavery movement. Whilst it is clear that the same people that were active in the abolitionist campaign were active in the Morant Bay agitation, it is made clear that the agitation quickly moved beyond them and the anti-slavery movement. However, as Mulligan correctly argued, the anti-slavery movement maintained an intellectual and spiritual hold on the broader humanitarian movement, at least until there was a distinct separation with the legalistic agitators.

However, the historiography of humanitarianism and humanitarian intervention is embedded in a broader intellectual history.[48] This history can be split broadly between the study of humanitarianism and human rights.

Human Rights

Human rights as an intellectual field is different from, yet connected with, humanitarianism. While human rights is a far more legal term, humanitarianism is arguably a morally and ethically weighted approach to policy formation. Human rights, as opposed to the more concrete versions of

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[46] William Mulligan, "British anti-slave trade and anti-slavery policy," in *Humanitarian intervention*, eds Simms and Trim, 262.

[47] Simms & Trim eds, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 21.

[48] Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Samuel Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History, (*New York: Verso, 2014); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007); Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, (New York: Viking Books, 1963); Samuel Moyn, "Empathy in History, Empathizing with Humanity," *History and Theory*, 45, (October 2006): 397-415; Norman S. Fiering, "Irresistible Compassion: An aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 37, no. 2, (1976): 195-218; David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)..

humanitarianism and humanitarian intervention, is also a much more philosophically complex concept. Human rights do not exist naturally and are therefore subject to cultural and societal change, despite being often posed as universal.[49] The definition of human rights, in and of itself, is contested, however according to Michael Barnett, human rights emphasised individual 'rights, law, and justice', whereas humanitarianism focused on needs and charity.[50] Recently, however, Samuel Moyn has criticised this differentiation of humanitarianism and human rights and Barnett has suggested that the great difficulty in defining humanitarianism and human rights is that they are both social constructions with no fixed meaning, and thus are defined by the scholars and practicitioners that wield the terms.[51]

While this thesis does not take Moyn's narrow definition of human rights as only existing in a recognizable form since the second world war generally and since the 1990s specifically, it is recognised that the terms that separate humanitarianism from human rights are contested, socially constructed and nebulous. As such, at times in this thesis humanitarian rhetoric and human rights theory intersect, however, the major difference between the two is that humanitarian rhetoric was often focused on a reaction to a perceived atrocity and how the suffering could be addressed, whereas human rights was a more structural and legalistic idea that worked on creating structures and laws to protect certain groups of people. As Barnett has argued, humanitarian rhetoric in response to human rights violations often results in emotional responses, anger, pity, and compassion, with a layering of guilt.[52] Human rights on the other hand are more dispassionate and focused on legal, rational outcomes, rather than emotional responses.

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[49] Kenneth Cmiel, "The recent history of human rights," *The American Historical Review,* 109, no. 1 (2004): 117-135; Ken Booth, "Three tyrannies", in *Human rights in global politics,* Tim Dunne & Nicholas Wheeler eds,, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 31-70; Eric A. Posner, *The Twilight of Human Rights Law,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Alison Brysk & Michael Stohl, eds, *Contesting Human Rights: Norms, Institutions and Practice,* Elgar Studies in Human Rights, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2019); Randall Williams, *The Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Robert Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights*, (New York: Columbus University Press, 2011).

[50] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*.

[51] Michael Barnett, 'Introduction: Worlds of Difference,' in *Humanitarianism and Human Rights: A World of Differences?* Michael Barnett (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[52] Barnett, 'Introduction', 9.

This thesis, therefore, situates human rights under a broader umbrella of humanitarian rhetoric. There was an attempt, at points, to create an idea of a limited form of human rights in both the Morant Bay and Bulgarian cases. However, human rights in an international relations sense must be considered a recent phenomenon.[53] There are some scholars, however, who have attempted to trace the history of the development of human rights prior to World War II. Lynn Hunt and Paul Gordon Lauren have attempted to historicise human rights back to the eighteenth century through the French Revolution and the Enlightenment.[54] Hunt attempted to demonstrate that there was a distinctive point in time when people began to see other people as humans. Though she attempted to demonstrate the rise of sentimental texts to a mass audience as the instigator of a general concern for a broader recognition of the welfare of other humans this is quite a limited view. As A. H. Roberston and J. G. Merrils have argued, such an approach lacks a view to the long-term historical fact that 'the struggle for human rights is as old as history itself, because it concerns the need to protect the individual against the abuse of power by the monarch, the tyrant, or the state.'[55] In relation to this, Lauren has argued that most societies throughout history have approached the question of responsibility toward others.[56] As this thesis demonstrates, during the latter-half of the nineteenth century British society had become comfortable enough discussing the welfare of their own imperial subjects, as well as individuals further across Europe, that different strands of this thought can be identified.

Lauren drew on some of the often-cited examples from the nineteenth century in his argument: the anti-slavery movement, the establishment of the Red Cross, the agitations against massacre in the Ottoman Empire. For Lauren these developments contributed to the establishment of norms that led to the recognition of human rights. This thesis also goes on to demonstrate Lauren's assertion that:

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[53] Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History*; Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Moyn, *The Last Utopia*; Booth, "Three Tyrannies"; Jack Donnelly & Daniel J Whelan, *International Human Rights*, 6th ed., (New York: Routledge, 2020).

[54] Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights.*

[55] A.H. Robertson & J. G. Merrills, *Human Rights in the World*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 9.

[56] Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen,* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

> The power of visions of human rights prior to the nineteenth century could be seen largely in inspiration, in their ability to create and then nurture an ideal of compassion and respect for others simply because they were human brothers and sisters. Their capacity to influence actual behaviour, however, was largely confined to specific individuals, locales, regions, or in a very small number of cases, groups within nations.[57]

Whilst also examining the historical basis behind human rights, Lynn Festa argued that the beginning of the liberal period in Britain and France (which she termed the 'sentimental' period) at the end of the eighteenth century was a product of texts that allowed the British and French to 'reel the world home in their mind.'[58] Though not specifically connected by Festa, the period being addressed and the works of fiction looked at, suggest that part of this reeling home phenomena was the result of imperialism as a structure and the habit of the metropole not only influencing the colonies, but the empire itself impacting on the mind of the metropole.[59] For her part, Festa argued that:

> Sentimental texts helped create the terms for thinking about agency and intent across the geographic expanse of the globe by giving shape and local habitation to the perpetrators, victims, and causal forces of empire…By designating certain kinds of figures as worthy of emotional expenditure and structuring the circulation of affect between subjects and objects of feeling, the sentimental mode allowed readers to identify with and feel for the plight of other people while upholding distinctive cultural and personal identities; it thus consolidated a sense of metropolitan community grounded in the selective recognition of the humanity of other populations.[60]

Though Festa narrowed her study somewhat, her argument is similar to that of Lauren and Hunt. For Hunt human rights became self-evident, politically, through the workings of emotion and when 'we feel

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[57] *Ibid,* 43.

[58] Lynn M. Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 2.

[59] See particularly, Andrew S. Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, (London: Routledge, 2005).

[60] Festa*, Sentimental Figures*, 2.

horrified by its [the instance of assumed rights] violation.[61] While Festa and Hunt saw the sentimental texts of the end of the eighteenth century, which were consumed by more people than ever before, as having allowed the common (though educated) European to see others as 'worthy' of caring (even if this was created deliberately by the author of the text),[62] Lauren argued, rather, that human rights in the nineteenth century represented an expansion of a limited concern for a particular people, as opposed by those in power.[63]

Arguably, these three writers hold a shared position, which is that human rights, or the concerns over others not connected to oneself, began to expand in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, as a result of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the burgeoning power of sentimental literature, and religious ideals. This thesis, in part, agrees with this position, arguing that much of the drive behind the humanitarian rhetoric in nineteenth century Britain was as a result of Enlightenment values. However, it differs in how it breaks down the strands of humanitarian thought. Rather than focusing on sentimental texts, the British humanitarians drew on pre-conceived ideas of religion, law and morality to frame their humanitarian responses. There was some connection with sentimentality and these texts, especially in terms of the liberal humanism expressed, but there is no focus on this.

Opposed to this position, however, is a trenchant critique offered by Samuel Moyn, who perceived only a loose connection 'between the eighteenth century rise of humanitarian sentiment and the new wave of rights claims,'.[64] Moyn has argued that

> a series of interlocking contexts for the revolutionary rights at the center of Hunt's book shows that they need to be differentiated from contemporary "human rights," rather than seen as paving the way for their eventual triumph. So the difficulty is not just that many of the rights of

[61] Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*.

[62] Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 2.

[63] Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights*, 2.

[64] Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History*, 8. For Moyn's entire critique, see also: Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* and Moyn, *The Last Utopia.*

> the era are left out of account but that those that are examined need to be put in the proper context.[65]

For Moyn, human rights, as understood today, were invented in the 1970s as a specific reaction to the historical events at the time.[66] Moyn also labelled the humanitarianism studied by Festa, not kindly, as 'sentimental humanitarianism'.[67] In this Moyn is not alone, though he is different in approach to the other writers that deal with the post-Holocaust appearance of human rights. These writers, many of whom are not historians, view human rights through the prism of international relations, see the devastating events in Europe during the twentieth century as the impulse for peoples to jettison the previous religious ideas and the codification of human rights.

More recently, Moyn has suggested that human rights prior to the 1970s should be reserved, 'to a very great extent' for discussion of citizenship politics, whereas humanitarianism addressed suffering abroad.[68] This distinction, while accurate in a general degree, does not reflect the reality of the contrasting cases of the Morant Bay massacre and the Bulgarian massacres. To be sure there was a key role played by ideas of subjecthood and the rights of British subjects in the Morant Bay case, especially with the Afro-Jamaicans holding a position as proxies for British citizens in the British Isles, however, there was a more general discussion around the responsibility to legal and rights-based governance of colonial subjects. The difference is even more striking in the Bulgarian case, even though the amount of discussion surrounding forms of rights was much less than in the Jamaican case. The Bulgarian rights that were discussed were in terms of a broader human right to safety from massacre, as explored by Hunt, rather than rights tied to a nation-state as suggested by Moyn. There developed calls to create a new Bulgarian state as a tool to protect these citizenship rights, but this was post-hoc, not the animating cause behind the rights discussion, which was rather that the right to not be massacred due to religion was already in force, but there may need to be a state apparatus to protect this right.

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[65] Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History*, 8.

[66] Ibid, 16.

[67] Ibid, 41.

[68] Samuel Moyn, "Human Rights and Humanitarianization," in *Humanitarianism and Human Rights: A World of Differences?* Michael Barnett (ed.).

As indicated, this thesis intersects with these debates on human rights in its scrutiny of some of the rhetoric expressed in Britain. In both the Morant Bay case and the Bulgarian case there were elements of the agitations that addressed the violence in terms of a broader focus on the rights of imperial subjects or the rights of Christians in Europe. However, the focus on human rights in this thesis agrees only in part with Moyn. Given that there was a clear intellectual and rhetorical connection between how the rights of subjects and Christians were understood and an emerging demand for appropriate humanitarian treatment and response, Moyn's argument that the post-World War II environment saw a radical break in the understanding of human rights only offers half of the picture.

Imperialism

The case studies engage with empire in two different ways. In Jamaica in 1865 Britain had been the direct ruling power for two centuries. Jamaica was a self-governing colony, with a locally elected house of assembly, with the only direct interference from Britain being a royally appointed governor who then appointed his own privy council.[69] This changed after the Morant Bay uprising and Jamaica became a Crown colony, where the local representative councils had no real authority. Of central importance to the imperial history of Jamaica is that in 1865 it was Afro-Jamaicans who were British subjects who were massacred by the British army.[70]

Later, in the case of the Bulgarian massacre, the element of British imperialism that mattered most was the combative imperialism of a great European power. Britain had a stake in the issues it raised because of Britain's imperial obligations and its focus on restricting Russian influence in the region by propping up a significantly weak Ottoman state. However, the events in Bulgaria, the

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[69] In reference to the changing nature of the West Indies colonial status, Hume Wrong mentioned that 'The phrase 'Crown Colony Government' is used with various meanings. In the broadest, and perhaps most correct, sense it is applied to all the colonies in which the Crown retains the real control of the executive (i.e., to all the West Indian colonies). By both official and common usage, however, it is often narrowed as to exclude colonies with elected Assemblies, though without a responsible executive.' (Hume Wrong, *Government of the West Indies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), 71.)

[70] For a summary of the nature of the British empire see Andrew Porter, *The Nineteenth Century, The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

massacres of the Bulgarians, was a direct result of imperial rule by the Ottoman Empire. Added to this was Britain's imperial ambitions in the Ottoman Empire, and into Persia and Afghanistan. While the ambitions were often presented positively, they were inherently negative. Britain's dominant desire was to restrict Russian interference in the Ottoman Empire to preserve the Ottoman state as a buffer between Russia and British interests in the Middle East: Afghanistan, Persia, and most significantly India. These were directly threatened by Russian interference in the Ottoman Empire and the foreign policy objectives of Britain to restrain Russian influence and interference in the region.

Empire itself has been the subject of a variety of theories. Most relevant to this thesis are the theories of empire that emphasise economic imperialism, British liberal imperialism, and Ottoman imperialism. Perhaps most famously, John Hobson argued that the drivers of British imperialism were economic, with empire sought and controlled for the purposes of capitalist expansion.[71] Hobson's ideas were also used by a variety of other thinkers such as Vladimir Lenin and Hannah Arendt in their criticisms of capitalistic empire.[72] Hobson's position has also, of course, been contested, perhaps most famously by David K. Fieldhouse,[73] and John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson.[74]

Connected to the type of imperialism at play in Jamaica, is Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins' study of the economic context of British imperialism.[75] Cain and Hopkins argued that the course of the British Empire was

> from a particular pattern of economic development, centred upon finance and commercial services, which was set in train at the close of the seventeenth century and survived to the end of empire and indeed beyond.[76]

They wrote of the concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism' and the role that the empire played in providing men of the metropole opportunities to become 'products of the most successful part of British

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[71] John A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1948).

[72] Vladimir I. Lenin, 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism', in *Lenin's Selected Works*, Vol. 1, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), 667-766; Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (Boston: Mariner Books, 1973).

[73] David K. Fieldhouse, "'Imperialism': An Historiographical Revision," *Economic History Review*,14, no. 2, (1961): 187-209.

[74] John Gallagher & Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade" *Economic History Review*, 6, no. 1, (1953): 1-15.

[75] P.J. Cain & A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: 1688-2015*, 3rd vol. (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

[76] Ibid., 692.

capitalism.'[77] Further to this argument, Shigeru Akita focused on the impact of this gentlemanly capitalism on the periphery, in particular, east Asia.[78] Whilst Cain and Hopkins examined the role of British capitalism in framing the empire, Akita focused on the impacts of this operation on the periphery in the same empire. Akita critiques the concept of informal, or invisible empire, expressed by Cain and Hopkins, in that though Britain did indeed exert an invisible force through trade, especially maritime trade, this invisibility could become visible and hard very quickly.[79] The connection here, as mentioned above, is in the role that Jamaican trade, ex-slavery, and the role of British force played in the Morant Bay incident. In particular, the pre-existing connection that opponents of slavery and the economic and political exploitation in the colonies had with the victims of the massacre.

Whereas Hobson, Gallagher, Robinson, Cain, and Hopkins all focused on the economic nature of the British Empire, there has also been scholarly focus directed to the impact this empire had on those it ruled. Gautam Chakravarty's description of the predominant attitude in Britain during the Indian Mutiny is instructive in these ideas. Chakravarty examined British writings on the Mutiny to demonstrate that in the popular British imagination was a

> relation between national expansion and literary writing, and on the characteristic and habits of culture of an expatriate community, stratified by administrative and military rank, and ruling over vastly different people.[80]

Connected to Chakravarty's ideas are Paul Gilroy's work, where he examined the inherent racial antagonism present in the British Empire. Gilroy insisted that 'racism and nationalism should not be artificially separated and had been densely interwoven in modern British history.'[81] Alongside Chakravarty and Gilroy, other works examining race and race relations in the British Empire are

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[77] Ibid., 40.

[78] Shigeru Akita ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism, Imperialism and Global History*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

[79] Shigeru Akita, 'Introduction', in Shigeru Akita, *Gentlemanly Capitalism, Imperialism and Global History*, 5. For Cain and Hopkins response to this, see P.J. Cain & A. G. Hopkins, 'The Peculiarities of British Capitalism: Imperialism and World Development', in Shigeru Akita, *Gentlemanly Capitalism, Imperialism and Global History*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)., 207-255.

[80] Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny in the British Imagination*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.

[81] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture,* (London: Routledge, 2004).

significant to this thesis in the way that racial attitudes influenced ideas around rights, responsibilities, and the reaction to massacres.[82]

John Mackenzie has also offered a salient view of empire, demonstrating that the British Empire was a deliberate affair.[83] This contradicted the notion that the British ruled the world 'in a fit of absence of mind.'[84] For Mackenzie, the deliberate attempt of the British government to shape perception of empire through the use of propaganda demonstrated the deliberate nature of British Imperialism. In contrast to Mackenzie, Bernard Porter has argued that though Britain was imperialist and there was 'no non-imperial choice for Britain',[85] most Britons were not in fact very imperialist, but used the imperial nature of Britain for their own ends (Christianity, liberalism, capitalism, and others). Certainly, however, there was nothing absent minded about the Morant Bay incident, which needs to be assessed as a clear example of Britain's active and deliberate imperial power as it intersected with the agency of colonised people. Eyre did not repress a revolt by accident, rather he responded to the imperatives of gentlemanly capitalism, racialised understandings, and the propaganda instituted by the empire itself in his deliberations. This thesis argues that there is a clear connection between the active role of British imperial power in repressing the revolt in Morant Bay and the critiques of this action within humanitarian rhetoric. The argument is not that the humanitarian rhetoric argued against explicit imperial governance, but rather that there were to be moral responsibilities of rulers within the empire from religious, legal, or liberal humanist perspectives.

When responding to the imperialism of their own nation, the British people had conflicting ideas, desires, and fears. It is therefore important to understand the intellectual currents of the British imperial metropole, which in the time period studied had a tradition of liberal thought and action that determined its behaviour towards empire. This point has been made clearly by Uday Singh Mehta, who examined the role that liberalism interacted with empire in nineteenth century Britain and the way that

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[82] See Hall, *Civilising Subjects*.

[83] John Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880 – 1960*, (Manchester" Manchester University Press, 1986).

[84] John Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914), 10.

[85] Bernard Porter, *The Absent Minded Imperialists*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 243.

the nature of empire resulted in liberal justifications for that empire.[86] So too Jennifer Pitts has argued that after the critics of empire in Britain and France in the late eighteenth century, the nineteenth century saw a 'liberal turn' to empire and more of a focus on the dichotomy between 'barbarism and civilizations',[87] a dichotomy that will be highlighted within the thesis, especially in terms of how the liberal element of humanitarianism focused a great deal on civilizational responsibility and the role of the British to lift up not only the Afro-Jamaicans to a state of civilization, but also the Bulgarian Christians.

By the late 1830s a loose coalition of the aristocratic Whig party, mainly in the House of Lords, and Radical members of Parliament in the House of Commons, had formed the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party gave an avenue for those who saw little benefit in the empire to criticise the direction of the British government. Richard Cobden and John Bright, both products of the new industrial cities, criticised the British Empire significantly. Andrekos Varnava has argued that these individuals

> believed in social reform, personal liberty, reducing the powers of the Crown and the Church of England, free trade and in avoiding war, foreign alliances, and imperial expansion…they argued that with the exception of a few dependencies, namely Australia, the forging of the British Empire had cost too much (in wars, administration, and defense) and provided very little to the British.[88]

This liberal opposition to empire deeply imprinted on William Gladstone, which led to a bifurcation between two types of imperialism in the 1870s, that is Gladstonian imperialism and Beaconsfieldism, as personified by Benjamin Disraeli. However, as both Singh and Pitts have argued, after the earlier criticisms of empire, the way that liberalism and imperialism blended together changed both the nature of imperialism and liberalism in the latter half of the nineteenth century to create a form of liberal

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[86] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 2.

[87] Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.

[88] Andrekos Varnava, 'British and Greek Liberalism and Imperialism in the Long Nineteenth Century' in Matthew Fitzpatrick ed., *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 226.

imperialism, that would crystallise towards the end of the century.[89] Opposed to this concept of liberal imperialism Benjamin Disraeli, in the 1870s, took the Conservative Party towards focusing on the aggrandisement of Britain, to the extent that he pushed the naming of Queen Elizabeth as the Empress of India. The idea of liberal imperialism that was developing during the late nineteenth century was not fixed or standard within Britain. As Andrew Fitzmaurice has argued, while 'liberalism acted as an engine of empire…the liberal tradition also generated debates over the justice of empire. Self-described "liberal" thinkers opposed and critiqued empire from a variety of motives.'[90]

This thesis interacts with all of these different strands of imperialist thought within the humanitarian coalition in both the Morant Bay and Bulgarian circumstances. Some strident liberal supporters of imperialism will be addressed, such as John Stuart Mill and James Fitzjames Stephen, along with the burgeoning liberal imperialists, such as William Gladstone, religious advocates of empire, such as Canon Maccoll, and anti-imperialists, like William Forster.

Paternalism

Michael Barnett has demonstrated in a variety of works, the inherent connection between paternalism and humanitarianism.[91] It is important in understanding mid-Victorian humanitarian sentiment to also see and understand the embedded paternalistic attitudes that were connected. Gerald Dworkin defined paternalism as 'roughly the interference with a person's liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced.'[92] The basic concept of paternalism as discussed by Dworkin in a philosophical mode and Barnett in terms of humanitarianism is that the motivation of the individual is that of the well-being of their target.

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[89] Pitts, *A Turn to Empire* & Singh, *Liberalism and Empire.*

[90] Andrew Fitzmaurice, "Liberalism and Empire in Nineteenth-Century International Law", *The American Historical Review*, 117, no. 1 (February 2012), 123

[91] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Michael Barnett (ed), *Paternalism Beyond Borders*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[92] Gerald Dworkin, "Paternalism," in *Morality and the Law*, ed. Richard A. Wasserstrom, (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1971), 108.

It will be shown, especially in the Morant Bay case, but also in the Bulgarian agitation, that the concepts of humanitarianism, paternalism, and empire were and are intertwined. Barnett has argued that 'the concept of paternalism encapsulates many of the central ambiguities of humanitarianism. Humanitarianism and paternalism overlap in various ways.'[93] Barnett's connection between paternalism and humanitarianism, which is critically examined in the following chapters, is based on the earlier debates on the philosophical and legal definitions of paternalism.[94]

In the abolitionist movement it has been argued that the abolitionists could not remove from themselves their inherent paternalism. In their discussion on the nature of British anti-slavery rhetoric in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth-centuries, Urbaniak and Motsisi argue that while White evangelical abolitionists spread a rhetoric of equality, they 'failed by and large to embrace the liberative praxis as a means of effecting such equality and agency for black people.'[95] Therefore, they 'did little to nothing to challenge the covert white paternalism inherent in the mindset of white British Christians and thus left many aspects of modern structural racism intact.'[96] While Urbaniak and Motsisi discuss a pernicious, 'covert white paternalism', Barnett argued that paternalism as such was not inherently pernicious, but rather focused on overriding agency for a perceived 'better' outcome.[97] This is connected explicitly to not only the Morant Bay case, in terms of the interaction between imperial White humanitarians, but also in terms of how the humanitarians viewed the less civilized and marginally European Bulgarians. The paternalism expressed in both cases links back to this covert paternalism, but also engages with Barnett's ideas that despite the perniciousness there is no separating paternalism from humanitarianism.

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[93] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 34.

[94] Donald VanDeVeer, *Paternalistic Intervention: The Moral Bounds on Benevolence*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986); Bernard Gert & Charles Culver, "Paternalistic Behaviour." *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 6, no. 1 (1976): 45-57; Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Gerald Dworkin, "Moral Paternalism," *Law and Philosophy*, 24 (2005): 305-319; Robert Young, "John Stuart Mill, Ronald Dworkin, and Paternalism," in John Stuart Mill, *'On Liberty': A Critical Guide*, ed. C. L. Ten, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 209-27.

[95] Jakub Urbaniak & Mooketsi Motsisi, "Between Apologetics, Emancipation and Imperial Paternalism: Mapping a Proto-liberation Theology behind the British Abolitionist Movement?" *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 14 (2020), 100-127.

[96] Ibid., 122.

[97] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 34.

Not only is paternalism and humanitarianism intertwined, but paternalism and imperialism are also entangled. As has been demonstrated above, the humanitarian responses to both Morant Bay and Bulgaria were inseparably tied to different notions of Britain's imperial place in the world. Connected with paternalism, these connections are demonstrated even stronger. In his argument about the contemporary trade imbalance between the global south and the global north, J. P. Singh argued that paternalism as trade policy was integrated into colonial policy and extended beyond in post-second world war international organisations.[98]

Jessie Mitchell has argued that the colonization attempts of Australia between 1825 and 1855 could be seen from a variety of perspectives, including philanthropy, race, empire, charity, and paternalism.[99] Mitchell argued that 'concepts of Indigenous entitlements were shaped, therefore, by beliefs about religion, paternalism and the civilizing obligations of empire.'[100] This is an important thread that will run through this thesis. The concept of paternalism is connected with the imperial ideas of civilization. Catherine Hall, as discussed in the section on Morant Bay, focused her study on the way that civilizing imperial subjects was the focus of the mid-nineteenth century British colonial governance.[101] Whilst Hall focused specifically on a narrow British time period, Kenneth Pomeranz has explored the nature of empires and their 'civilising' missions.[102] Pomeranz argued that the development of empires in the nineteenth century led to civilizational models based on the metropole, requiring 'lessons' to be taught to the periphery and 'development' to occur along the metropole model.[103]

British writers, thinkers and politicians, whilst demonstrating dissenting humanitarian attitudes towards the victims of massacres, as members of the dominant culture, participated in a process of

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[98] J. P. Singh, *Sweet Talk: Paternalism and Collective Action in North-South Trade Relations*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

[99] Jessie Mitchell, *In Good Faith? Governing Indigenous Australia Through God, Charity and Empire, 1825-1855*, (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2011).

[100] Ibid.

[101] Hall, *Civilising Subjects.*

[102] Kenneth Pomeranz, "Empire & 'Civilizing' Mission, Past & Present," *Daedalus*, 134, no. 2 (2005): 34-45. See also Harry Liebersohn, "Introduction: The Civilizing Mission," *Journal of World History*, 27, no. 3 (2016): 383-387.

[103] Ibid., 37.

othering that was inherently paternalistic. It is important to note that the British also began to see themselves through contrasts and comparisons with these other societies, such as Jamaica. As Andrew Thompson has argued, the empire reflected back into British political and cultural society the imperial nature of Britain, hence Thompson's title *The Empire Strikes Back.*[104] Like Mackenzie, Thompson argued that most Britons were aware of the empire but suggests that there was not necessarily wide-ranging imperial sentiment. Rather, Thompson argued 'that the effects of empire on the structure of British society, the development of British institutions and the shaping of British identities were complex and (at times) contradictory.'[105] Thompson's view, that the same influence that the metropole played on the periphery, was also reflected from the periphery to the metropole is to some extent confirmed by this thesis.

This thesis engages with all these ideas and contributes to the arguments by Mitchell, Hall, and Pomeranz around the role of a civilizational discourse in Britain surrounding not only its own imperial colonies, but also the less developed Europeans of Bulgaria. In fact, there can be little doubt that humanitarian rhetoric is paternalistic, however, it is not always the pernicious paternalism as explored by Urbaniak and Motsisi (though this was definitely present). However, humanitarianism and liberal imperialism was paternalistic in attitude, from the ideas of the metropole out, as will be demonstrated.

The 'Other'

Another central element is the focus on how the British perceived the massacres of non-British people (in the Jamaican case, people not of the British Isles). To do this successfully, it is necessary to consider how alterity was represented and established in British culture, at least during the middle of the nineteenth century. Over the past fifty years it has been argued extensively that the way British people viewed individuals and societies in the nineteenth century was through the prism of race. This was argued most prominently by Edward Said, who contended that the Occident, or the west, came to

[104] Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?* i..

[105] Ibid., iv.

identify itself throughout the nineteenth century in contradistinction to the Orient.[106] Following on from Said's argument and methodology writers such as Dipesh Chakrabarty have suggested that, even if not inherently racist, the all-encompassing view of 'Europe' and elsewhere were imagined, and placed upon the empire with no concern for reality or the views of the subject populations.[107] Said has been praised and critiqued on a variety of levels, for this view.[108] How this might impact on British views in the Bulgarian case with reference to the othering of the Ottomans and to an extent the Bulgarian victims, is clear. However, while Said specifically focused on the Orient, a similar form of 'othering' is discernible in how the British viewed those in the Caribbean periphery in the Jamaican case.

Balkans and Ottoman History

Maria Todorova has applied Said's methodology to the Balkans and concluded that within the Balkan situation, beginning in the nineteenth century, Europeans would also classify communities that did not fit the dichotomy of east and west, and through this representation also define themselves.[109] Todorova argued that while the West defined themselves against the Orient, they also used the same classification method to compare themselves to other populations. While not as 'different' as the Orient, Todorova argued that the Balkans were 'othered' in such a way that Europeans could say that they were part of Europe, but not yet European enough to warrant the same treatment as the rest of Europe. This, to Todorova, supported the power imbalance between the European powers and any population that they wished to classify in opposition to themselves.[110]

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[106] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[107] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), iv.

[108] For the school of thought expressed herein see: Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies*, (London: Penguin Books, 2006); Kathryn E. Fleming, "*Orientalism*, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," *American Historical Review*, 105, no. 4, (October 2000): 1218-1233; Ibn Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*, (New York: Prometheus Books, 2007); and see Martin Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*, (Washington D. C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001), especially Chapter 2 'Said's Splash' for a thorough examination of Said's work.

[109] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[110] Ibid.

Todorova's quotation of James Carrier crystallises the difficulties related to both orientalism and imagining the other in general.

> Seeing Orientalism as a dialectical process helps us recognize that it is not merely a Western imposition of a reified identity on some alien set of people. It is also the imposition of an identity created in dialectical opposition to another identity, one likely to be equally reified, that of the West. Westerners, then, define the Orient in terms of the West, but so Others define themselves in terms of the West, just as each defines the West in terms of the Other.[111]

This article of Carrier's attempted to model the way that societies understood other societies. Embedded in unequal power relationships Carrier viewed the 'imposition of identity' of the other in terms of this power imbalance, with both societies, the Western one and the 'alien' one, viewing each other and themselves through the prism of the power imbalance.[112]

In the context of this thesis, it becomes clear that Said's analysis is at once too restrictive and too broad. As Joanne Laycock has argued, in her work on the Armenian relation to the 'West',

> the case of "minorities" raises important questions regarding the dichotomy between East and West which underpins Said's argument. None of the Christian minorities which attracted the support of the European nations…fitted neatly into the opposing categories of East or West.[113]

Confirming this view, Varnava has shown that the British rule of Cyprus was just such a case of an imagined Cypriot identity failing to match reality.[114]

Method

The thesis has been organised in such a way as to allow for an in-depth analysis of the strands of humanitarianism in terms of the two case studies. While the case studies are presented in parallel, one

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[111] James Carrier, "Orientalism: The World Turned Upside Down," *American Ethnologist,*19, no. 2, (1992): 197.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Joanne Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 26.

[114] Andrekos Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus, 1878-1915: the inconsequential possession*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

after the other, there is a clear comparison between the two. The change over time, between people, politics, and experiences, is also highlighted in the way that the thesis is structured. The structure involves three sections, with each of the sections addressing a specific strand of humanitarian thought, while the two chapters in each section analyses the strand of humanitarianism in terms of either the Jamaican or the Bulgarian case study. The structure is done this way in order to allow for a thematic progression, rather than a chronological one. As such the sections cover the same chronology and history, however, the focus is rather on the strands of political and humanitarian thought across both cases.

The first section addresses the religious elements of the responses to both the Jamaican and Bulgarian massacres. Chapter one examines the religious response to the Morant Bay massacre and demonstrates that the pre-existing relationships between the British Baptist missionary societies and the religiously based anti-slavery societies had a significant influence on the beginning of the agitation. It will be demonstrated that these religious groups presented their fellow Britons with religiously based humanitarian sentiment in the immediate aftermath of the massacre, which focused significantly on the protection of victims, rather than the prosecution of Eyre.

In order to compare the role played by religious humanitarian sentiment elsewhere, the Bulgarian agitation will be examined in chapter two. It will be established that in the Bulgarian agitation the initial force of the agitation was driven by nonconformist Christians in the north of Britain. The access these nonconformists had to the new provincial press and the connections to radical politicians led to the development of a religiously based political agitation.

The second section discusses how legalism and the burgeoning field of international relations interacted with expressions of humanitarianism. Chapter three addresses the Morant Bay massacre and the role that legalism played in the response to it in Britain. Rather than drawing a hard distinction between legalistic rhetoric and humanitarian impulses, it will be argued that the legalism that was expressed contributed to the broader humanitarian agitation for the moral governance of the British Empire. Various public thinkers and agitators will be examined including John Stuart Mill and John Bright, and it will be demonstrated that they viewed the Morant Bay massacre in terms of the rights of

British subjects, the role that moral governance was to play in colonial governance, and the limitations of absolute power under martial law.

In the Bulgarian case, however, which will be examined in chapter four, the impulses were rather different. It will be argued that there was a focus on a form of human rights protection, which whilst framed in terms of a form of universalism was actually based on a relationship to an idea of pan-Christianity and civilizational discourse. In this chapter, there is a focus on the nature of the role of British international agreements and the role of the European concert to protect victims of massacre. It will be established that in the broader humanitarian movement there was a clear element of British society that used the concepts of (limited) human rights, international agreements, and the role of 'civilised' nations for the purpose of advocating humanitarian policies.

The third section focuses on liberal humanism and the way it was expressed in both cases. Chapter five examines the more liberal elements of the response to the Morant Bay massacre, especially after the agitation moved from a religiously driven one to a legalistic agitation. It will be demonstrated that there were clear sections of British society, particularly among politicians and a group of anti-slavery activists that did not express their agitation in terms of religion or the legal responsibilities of government, but rather via the language of liberal humanism and liberal morality. This sort of language, especially in the mid-Victorian context, can never be truly divorced from the religious, Christian context in which it was embedded, however, it will be argued that some elements of society made a deliberate attempt to use the language of a more secular liberalism to advocate the protection of the victims of massacre.

Following from this, in chapter six, the Bulgarian movement will also be examined from a liberal humanist perspective. As with the Morant Bay case the religious context cannot be divorced from the rhetoric and language of humanitarianism, however, it is argued that there were sections of British society, at times crossing over with the other types of humanitarianism, who expressed liberal humanist and generally secular liberal views on the Bulgarian massacres. Specifically, it will be demonstrated that though there was an argument mounted promoting universal protection from

violence, this rhetoric often connected with the concepts of civilization and barbarism and the correct actions of those who claim to be civilized.

Overall, the thesis argues that humanitarianism in mid-Victorian Britain, was multi-faceted and housed a number of differing intellectual and political strains that together comprised the broader humanitarian movement. Those who advocated for the protection of the victims of massacre did so through a variety of argumentative frameworks. These frameworks at times overlapped, where, for example, a nonconformist could also express their views in terms of liberal humanism. It will be demonstrated that there are at least three clear frameworks through which elements of British society expressed humanitarian sentiments in the mid-Victorian era. It will also be demonstrated that the context of the humanitarian agitation framed the response, however, there is clear change over time in terms of how the British public responded to atrocity. This response was dependent on the political context, the prior involvement with the victims, but also due to a change in liberal politics, the influence of the nonconformist and radical press and the rise of a new generation of agitators beyond the anti-slavery activists. This will be shown through the words of those who expressed their humanitarianism at the time, or more specifically through an examination of the words of those who had access to the media, the printing press, the oratory stump, parliament, and the church pulpit can be examined in the public domain.

This thesis makes use of the various newspapers at the time, including the major ones such as *The Times, Manchester Guardian,* and the *Daily News*, as well as the provincial press, such as *The Northern Echo*, and the more specialized papers, such as *The Spectator, Punch,* and *The Daily Bee*. It is acknowledged throughout that while the newspapers of the time had a role in reporting news, they also had a role in shaping public opinion. Each of the papers had an ideological leaning and therefore are not only used as repositories of information about what happened but are also used as primary sources in and of themselves.

As humanitarian ideas were also inherently political many of the leading figures in both cases were politicians. These politicians spoke for a vocation and had a significant influence on the direction of British policy and British public opinion. As such their words in parliament will be examined

directly, using *Hansard,* and their speeches will be examined through the media of the time. The letters and dispatches from these politicians will also be used to develop an understanding of their private, official, and public ideas to form a coherent narrative of how these politicians viewed the events and structured their responses.

Many of these same politicians, but also key public figures like academics and ministers, used pamphlets as a way to get information out in a short amount of time to a mass audience. Along with the burgeoning newspaper business, in nineteenth century Britain much use was made of pamphlets designed for broad dissemination. Books were expensive and cumbersome, and often only available to the elite, whereas pamphlets were cheaper, less bulky, and available to the masses. While many of the public figures were on good terms with editors of various papers and could be published as needed, pamphlets provided an important conduit for ideas and information from these figures to elements of British society. Given how cheap many of these pamphlets were, they also provided a link between these individuals and the lower-middle and upper-lower classes of British, especially London, society. Many of these pamphlets are consulted in this thesis from politicians, ministers, academics, missionary organisations, and anti-slavery organisations. Some were found in the archives as collected by the relevant government departments, such as the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office, but many are now available online and readily accessible. These pamphlets provide information not just on what was thought by these public figures, but the manner in which they presented their thoughts to a mass readership in a way for them to respond politically.

For Morant Bay, the majority of the archives examined are from the Colonial Office, which includes correspondence between the Colonial Office, Jamaica, and various letters and petitions to the government. The material of significance for this thesis ranges from the first reports of the Morant Bay rebellion, through to the changes to martial law implemented by Lord Carnarvon. During the beginning of the agitation much of the material is letters between Edward Cardwell, the Colonial Secretary, and Edward Eyre, the governor of Jamaica. The archive contains these letters, as well as other information gathered by the Colonial Office in their examination of the events, such as the letters and news articles before the rebellion and petitions to the government from various groups. Many of the reports are

minuted by the Colonial Office staff, in particular William Edward Forster, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and Frederic Rogers, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, which provides insight into the internal workings of not only the Colonial Office, but also the partisan emotions at play.

These archives from Morant Bay provide the researcher with evidence of the workings of the Colonial Office. Tracking the reports from Jamaica, with the news reports and petitions being gathered in Britain, it is possible to trace Cardwell's response, especially in absence of Cardwell's personal reflections. While the records contain the thoughts and ideas of Cardwell's staff in the Jamaica division of the Colonial Office, it does not show anything of Cardwell beyond his official statements. There are also reports from the War Office and Admiralty in terms of the military involvement, including the Courts Martials in Jamaica and the resulting Courts Martials in Britain. For the understanding of the political and legal response to Morant Bay, especially in response to public pressure, the archives are very important.

While much of the archival material for Jamaica was contained in the Colonial Office archives, in the Bulgarian case the main archives used are from the Foreign Office, which include correspondence from the politicians at the time, such as Gladstone, Derby, Salisbury, as well as more of a variety of personal archives. Unlike the Colonial Office whose records were kept chronologically and resulted in the archives of Jamaica, the Foreign Office archives include a section that has collated the archives of the 'Atrocities in Bulgaria' in six volumes, within the broader Ottoman Empire archives.

These archives include the letters between the government and Henry Elliot in Constantinople, and also includes newspaper reports and petitions to the government, in a similar way that the Colonial Office did. There are also minutes from Lord Tenterden, the Permanent Under Secretary of State, who was opposed to Salisbury's diplomacy, and Robert Bourke, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, which provides some insight into the working of the Foreign Office and the influences on Derby and Disraeli during the crisis.

Like the Colonial Office archives, the Foreign Office archives also included a large number of petitions, letters, and news articles that are suggestive of the public feeling during the last few months of 1876. By using the archives, in tandem with personal archives and news articles, the story of the

public feeling, the agitation, and the political response can be analysed and pieced together. As in the Jamaican archives, what is substantially missing from these archives are the personal reflections, or comments of the major decision makers, such as Derby and Disraeli.

In both the Jamaican case and the Bulgarian case at points, to achieve the breadth of understanding this thesis required, it was necessary to go beyond the official government archives. As such it was necessary to draw on the Gladstone archives in the British Library to go beyond the pamphlets and examine the nature of Gladstone's ideas in communication with others. To gain a deeper understanding of the anti-slavery impulse in the Jamaican agitation it was also necessary to access the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society archives at the John Rylands Library in Manchester. Other smaller, subsidiary, archives, were also accessed in order to obtain specialized and individualized information on certain people. For example, to obtain some of Salisbury's personal letters it was necessary to obtain these from Hatfield House, and the Royal Archives were accessed for some personal insight from Queen Victoria.

While the government archives were accessed and used to gain an insight and were useful in terms of the information that was obtained and sent by the decision makers in the British Government, much of the personal information and ideas were collected from smaller archives, books of letters that were published after the individual's death or through pamphlets and news articles.

While many others have used the same sources to research both the Morant Bay agitation and the Bulgarian agitation, the sources used herein are used in a way to provide a comparison between two different cases that provides an overview of a particular political movement in mid-Victorian Britain. The newspapers, as mentioned, are not just used as repositories of information, but as actors in and of themselves. The pamphlets examined are looked at not just for their reflection of the views of their author, but in the way they would be read by a mass audience and the impact this would have on the political movement.

As in all research, the sources that were collected and used have been collected, collated, and disseminated in a way that is inherently prejudicial. As such the entire record of the agitations of both the Morant Bay uprising and the Bulgarian massacres cannot be incorporated into a limited study. As

such, the sources that link to the ideas of humanitarianism and human rights, especially in terms of rhetorical and political ideas have been prioritized. Much has been discarded and many individuals that were involved in smaller ways, yet no less important ways, have been left out of the story. However, in the final organization of the sources and information used, there has been an attempt to present an honest representation of the thoughts, ideas, and language of the actors at the time.

Finally, this thesis focuses on the role of public men in general. As the influencers at the upper echelon of the British politics were in the main white men, these remain the default subjects of study. It is acknowledged that women during this time played a vital role in organizing philanthropical movements around both the Jamaican and the Bulgarian cases, however, because this thesis focuses on the public rhetoric of humanitarianism and how this interacts with politics, much of the focus is on the men in power. It is also acknowledged that the voices of the victims and the voices of the 'other' are to some extent missing here, an inevitable consequence of that the thesis' focus on British society, or at least parts of it, and how it responded to instances of massacre. It is recognized that the perceptions of these men were often racist and misogynistic, however, understanding how these prejudices functioned within humanitarian discourse is part of the analysis.

Section 1 - Religious Humanitarianism in the Jamaican and Bulgarian Agitations

Chapter 1 – Religious Humanitarianism and the Morant Bay Massacre

Introduction

This chapter examines Morant Bay from the perspective of Britain's religious humanitarians, in particular the 'missionary men,'[1] and their supporters in the missionary organisations of Britain. Through this examination it will be established that at the beginning of the agitation surrounding Eyre's response in Morant Bay there was a distinct, vocal, and knowledgeable portion of the public who agitated from a distinctly religious point of view. For these agitators, the repression at Morant Bay, and after, was wrong because of the religious convictions held by the agitators. In a very real way, the beginning of the Morant Bay agitation demonstrated what Abigail Green has referred to as 'the central role of religious and moral imperatives in shaping nineteenth century political practices.'[2]

Much of the religious agitation surrounding Morant Bay was driven by pre-existing interest groups in the Jamaican case. In particular, Christian missionaries and anti-slavery activists were prominent in making the religious case for moral governance in Jamaica and against the actions of Governor Eyre. The influence of Christian missionaries and philanthropists on the Jamaican case began before the outbreak had even taken place. Initially it was the domestic pressure of the anti-slavery lobby that eventually resulted in the Jamaican slaves gaining their freedom. This case, as well as the influence that Baptist missionaries held within Jamaica itself, created an environment where the Christian philanthropists and missionary societies felt an almost paternal responsibility for Afro-Jamaicans. There has been significant research into the role that Christian missionaries and the anti-slavery societies played in the expansion of the British Empire, however, as Richard Huzzey has noted, this research has often been disconnected from British and imperial narratives.[3] Richard Huzzey argued comprehensively that there were significant elements of the British population that presented different

[1] Hall, *Civilising* Subjects, 209.

[2] Abigail Green, "Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context: Religious, gendered, national?", *The Historical Journal*, 57, no. 4, (2014): 1165.

[3] Richard Huzzey, "Minding Civilisation and Humanity in 1867: A Case Study in British Imperial Culture and Victorian Anti-Slavery," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 40, no. 5, (2012): 807-825

ideas of anti-slavery, but the anti-slavery societies were mainly unpopular, calling the work of the British and Foreign Antislavery Society 'sidelined as quixotic and unworldly.'[4]

At the beginning of this chapter, it is important to note Michael Barnett's argument that all humanitarianism is in effect paternalistic.[5] Of particular importance is the view within British society of the civilising mission towards those that they had colonised. Writing of the responsibility of humanitarians to become involved in politics, Barnett argued that

> paternalism has always been imminent or present. The nineteenth-century missionaries and liberal humanitarians were paternalistic, often quite unapologetically so, on the assumption that these 'childlike' populations needed adults to civilize them.[6]

The negative aspect of this paternalism would come to the fore in the latter part of the nineteenth century, with the rise of scientific racism and the categorisation of the races, however, at least for the abolitionists and religious groups who organised to support the African-Jamaicans after Morant Bay, Barnett argued that the paternalistic impulse was generally a benevolent one of *noblesse oblige*, a view held by elites over all lower classes of whatever race, when moral superiority is assumed.

It is also necessary to acknowledge the ideas explored by Thomas Haskell and Christopher Leslie Brown, who trace the religious idea within the abolitionist movement to the 'evils' of the Caribbean slave experience. In particular, Haskell argued that through the Caribbean slave experience anti-slavery activists expanded the idea of moral responsibility to include a humane imperative to intervene on behalf of suffering slaves, because a failure to act 'would constitute a suspension of routine' and thus contribute to the ongoing suffering.[7] This view, which was held and strongly propagated by abolitionists and through the new media, had a direct influence on the response to Morant Bay by these groups.

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[4] Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning,* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012), 205.

[5] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 41.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Thomas Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1," *The American Historical Review*, 90, no. 2, (1985): 359.

Connected to Haskell's argument, Brown has argued further that the anti-slavery campaign deliberately sought to atone for the national sin of slavery, which was pushed throughout the campaign via pamphlets and the media.[8] Alan Lester and Fae Dussart suggested that this national consciousness, developed through the abolition movement, resulted in 'a specifically humanitarian way of *governing* [which] was brought to Britain's colonial possessions, as ameliorating policies were effected until such time as enslaved peoples were considered ready for their freedom, some thirty years later.'[9] Connecting Lester, Dussart, Brown, Haskell, and Huzzey is a view that the anti-slavery activists in 1865 were looking at the British empire in a particular manner. The activists saw the battle in 1865 as a continuation of a historical struggle to atone for the sin of slavery. Therefore, as the effort was an 'atoning' one, the perception of the British Empire's efforts to cleanse slavery and its 'legacies' was a positive one. [10] It will be demonstrated here that this perception was held in a significant portion of the population, which attempted, and at times succeeded in influencing British politics. More recently R. W. Kostal has argued that the moral sentiment of the British agitators against Governor Eyre's actions has been exaggerated within the historiography and that the Eyre controversy was primarily based on the rule of law, or legalism,[11] however, this chapter questions Kostal's argument and demonstrates that, at least initially, the agitation, in Britain, after the Morant Bay massacre was driven by a religiously motivated agitation.

The Agitation

The importance of the pre-existing religiously minded organisations that began the agitation in the Morant Bay case can be seen from the initially unsympathetic press. After news of the Morant Bay uprising had reached Britain, *The Times* was initially supportive of Eyre and dismissive of those that

[8] Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[9] Lester & Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, 13.

[10] W.E. Forster, "Letter," *Leeds Mercury,* 12 Jan. 1867, 14.

[11] Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power.*

were agitating against him. In a targeted attack on these groups, *The Times* editorial on 4 November was vilifying.

> He, who has come in as the favoured heir of a civilization in which he had no previous share – he, petted by philanthropists and statesmen and preachers into the precocious enjoyment of rights and immunities which other races have been too glad to acquire by centuries of struggles, of repulses, and of endurance – he, dandled into legislative and official grandeur by the commiseration of England, - that he should have chosen…to revolt…this is a thing so incredible that we will not venture to believe it now.[12]

For *The Times*, in the initial stages of the incident, and through to January 1866, the issue was a racial one. Jamaica had been an experiment in self-governance, where white and black populations were supposed to live in post-emancipation harmony. The article explored that self-governance had only been given to white colonies (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa), whereas Jamaica was said to be different. This fits within what Douglas Lorimer and Catherine Hall have explored as the racial backbone of how the British viewed their colonial subjects. As Lorimer has argued, by the 1850s and the 1860s the rise of scientific racism had changed 'English racial attitudes from the humanitarian response of the early nineteenth century to the racialism of the imperialist era at the close of the Victorian age.'[13] Hall has argued that during the period in question 'Britons might indeed hate slavery, but their enthusiasm for racialized others was strictly limited.'[14] This interpretation of the British perception of the periphery was abundantly clear in *The Times* article at the beginning of the agitation, defending Eyre against his detractors.

In 1859 Edward Underhill, the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), had visited Jamaica and then written a book on the West Indies, which was scathing in its view of the African-

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[12] 'London, Saturday, November 4, 1865, *The Times*, 4 November 1865, 7.

[13] Douglas Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the mid-nineteenth century*, (Leicester: Leicester University press, 1978), 13.

[14] Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 379.

Jamaican condition, and the economic laws in place that discriminated against ex-slaves.[15] In 1865 Underhill wrote to Edward Cardwell, the Colonial Secretary, detailing the reports he (Underhill) was receiving from Jamaica and pointing Cardwell's attention to the 'continuously increasing distress of the coloured population.'[16] Referencing 'severe poverty and distress', Underhill asked Cardwell for a searching inquiry.[17] Cardwell sent the note to Governor Eyre, who responded with disdain. To Eyre, Underhill's claims were 'very exaggerated.'[18] Despite providing significant evidence to support his view that Underhill was exaggerating, much of the evidence provided by Eyre also supported Underhill's view that 'deterioration, decadence and decay are everywhere noticeable.'[19] The difference between Eyre and Underhill was in the animating factor of this deterioration and poverty. Underhill was trying to have Cardwell understand that the situation of the Afro-Jamaicans was a direct result of discriminating policies, whereas Eyre retorted that their situation, whilst dire, was of their own making. Cardwell, whilst the Colonial Secretary, had only been in the position for a year and was not personally familiar with the Jamaican condition, naturally deferred to his Governor. The established line of the Colonial Office became that the population in Jamaica were 'not suffering from any general or continuous distress from which they would not be at once relieved by settled industry.'[20]

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Edward Cardwell, Viscount Cardwell, Secretary of State for the Colonies.[21]

[15] E. B. Underhill, *The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Condition*, (London: Jackson, Walford and Hodder, 1862). More discussion of the legal case in the agitation will be presented in Section 2 of this thesis.

[16] Underhill to Cardwell, quoted in Eyre to Cardwell, 2 March 1865, CO 137/388/25.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Eyre to Cardwell, 19 April 1865, CO 137/390/4.

[20] Eyre to Cardwell, 19 April 1865, CO 137/390/90.

[21] Lock & Whitfield, *Edward Cardwell, Viscount Cardwell*, Photograph, (National Portrait Gallery, London, 1878), https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw124062/Edward-Cardwell-Viscount-Cardwell?LinkID=mp00744&role=sit&rNo=10

Underhill's letter found its way into the Jamaican press and became the catalyst for a series of meetings across the Island, referred to as 'Underhill meetings', which resulted in a series of petitions for redress and political change. One of these was a petition to the Queen for an inquiry to address the grievances experienced by the Afro-Jamaican community. This petition was initially addressed by the chairman and secretary of the local Baptist minister's association, however a local meeting held by other Baptists ministers was far more inflammatory.[22] The initial petitions were organised by the Underhill Convention – a group of Afro-Jamaican Baptists who supported Underhill's comments.[23] The meetings in the major centres of Kingston, Spanish Town, and St. David were often chaired by prominent Afro-Jamaicans. For instance, the Kingston meeting was chaired by George William Gordon, the son of a Scottish father and Afro-Jamaican mother and a member of the Jamaican House of Assembly.[24] As the meetings spread across Jamaica, they moved away from the influence of the missionary societies the meetings became more acrimonious.[25]

As a result of these meetings a further 108 names were added to the petition from 'the poor people of Jamaica and the parish of Saint Ann's'.[26] These petitioners complained that their conditions had not materially improved since emancipation, with continuing high taxes, high rent, and low wages. Crucially Eyre attached comments to this petition, blaming the perception among the Jamaican population on Underhill's agitation, and specifically Underhill's letter to Cardwell. As he had previously indicated, Eyre placed the blame directly on the Afro-Jamaicans themselves for their condition. Specifically, Eyre noted that 'my own conviction is that the pressure which now undoubtedly exists amongst a portion of the population…owes its origin in a great measure to the habits and character of the people.'[27] This note from Eyre framed the Queen's response, though this was written by Henry Taylor at the West Indies desk at the Colonial Office.[28] 'The Queen's Advice', as it became known, was

[22] Eyre to Cardwell, 25 April 1865, CO 137/390/33.

[23] "Letter to the Editor," *Morning Journal*, 16 June 1865, 2.

[24] Gad Heuman, "1865: Prologue to the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica," *New West Indian Guide,* 65, no. 3/4, 1991, 115.

[25] Ibid, 117.

[26] Eyre to Cardwell, 25 April 1865, CO 137/390/33.

[27] Eyre to Cardwell, 6 May 1865, CO 137/391/128.

[28] Cardwell to Eyre, 14 June 1865, CO 137/390/222.

widely disseminated by Eyre across the Island, and contained the idea that the people's 'prosperity…depends in Jamaica, and in other Countries, upon their working for Wages, not uncertainly or capriciously, but steadily and continuously, at the times when their labour is wanted, and for so long as it is wanted' and that 'it is their own industry and prudence, in availing themselves of the means of prospering that are before them, and not from any such schemes as have been suggested to them, that they must look for improvement to their condition.'[29]

The 'Queen's Letter' became a rallying point for disaffection that led directly to the uprising in October.[30] All of this not only had Eyre and the Jamaican government believing that a general uprising was imminent, but it increased the concern felt by the British BMS and others who had a vested interest in the welfare of the Afro-Jamaicans. As Gad Heuman has noted, the letter, which was widely known to have been from the Colonial Office, resulted in the Baptist Missionaries who had organised some of the Underhill meetings earlier, increasing the intensity of the dissent within Jamaica by organising more vocal protests.[31] The Queen's advice resulted in a loss of trust in the Colonial Office. Taylor's words in the Queen's Advice made it clear to the missionaries in Jamaica and the Afro-Jamaicans themselves that they had no political allies in London. It is, therefore, not surprising that when news of the outbreak and its subsequent repression arrived in England toward the end of November, the BMS and other religiously motivated organisations saw it as their duty to respond to what, in their opinion, was deliberate provocation by the government towards the Afro-Jamaicans.

On 11 October 1865 a group of Black Jamaican men and women crowded in front of the courthouse at Morant Bay, the vestry town of the parish Saint Thomas-in-the-East, the south-eastern most parish on the Island of Jamaica. Protesting a variety of grievances, ranging from unequal land distribution and unfair working conditions, the protest quickly turned violent when the Government forces assembled at the courthouse fired on the protesting group. In the aftermath the Chief

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[29] Cardwell to Eyre, 14 June 1865, CO 137/390/33, see Taylor's minute on 3 June.

[30] Gordon's inflammatory addresses in July, regarding the 'Queen's Letter', where he advocated that the people (Afro-Jamaicans) could no 'longer bear to be afflicted by this enemy to your peace…Try to help yourselves and Heaven will help you!' (Address contained in Eyre to Cardwell, 22 August 1865, CO 137/392/54.

[31] Heuman, *"The Killing Time,"* 55.

Magistrate, Baron von Ketelhodt, seven volunteer militia, one police officer and six other people were killed.[32] Perceiving the events at Morant Bay as an uprising, the Governor of Jamaica, Edward John Eyre, despatched 150 troops under the command of Colonel (to be made Brigadier-General) Abercrombie Nelson, to St Thomas-in-the-East to repress the 'wicked and unprovoked rebellion'.[33]

On arrival to St Thomas-in-the-East Nelson proceeded to hunt down the 'rebels' through the bush of inland Jamaica. Eyre's reports to the Colonial Office indicate a belief, at least among the governing White class in Kingston, that the rebellion was widespread across the eastern part of the Island and that only military action could put it down. As such Eyre proclaimed Martial Law in St Thomas-in-the-east and the neighbouring Portland Parish. Therefore, together with an offensive military campaign among the bush of Jamaica, military tribunals were quickly set up to enact severe and immediate punishment on any rebel found in the area. In defence of this action, Eyre wrote to Edward Cardwell, the Colonial Secretary on 8 December 1865

> it became a matter of absolute necessity and self defence, not only promptly to put down the outbreak by proclaiming Martial Law in the districts where it existed and contiguous thereto, to ensure that the Punishment inflicted should be summary and severe…it was necessary to make an example which by striking terror might deter other districts from following the horrible example of St Thomas in the East…In the long run and viewed as a whole any amount of just severity thus exercised became a mercy, and the exaction of the last penalty for Rebellion from the few, has in all human probability saved the lives of the many as well as relieved the Colony and Great Britain from a long protracted, bloody and expensive strife.[34]

By 15 October the rebellion was effectively over, though Eyre authorised a continuing Military presence in the effected districts to ensure the safety of the colony, because in Eyre's opinion 'there is

[32] Olivier, *The Myth of Governor Eyre*, 9-10.

[33] Edward Eyre, in speech to the Jamaican Legislative assembly on 7 November 1865, quoted in CO 137/394/24, 8 November 1865.

[34] Edward Eyre, 8 December 1865, CO 137/396/14.

scarcely a district or a parish in the Island where disloyalty, sedition and murderous intentions are not widely disseminated, and in many instances, openly expressed' and

> a mighty danger threatens the land and, in order to concert measures to avert it, and prevent, so far as human wisdom can, any future recurrence of a similar state of things, we must examine boldly, deeply, and unflinchingly into the causes which have led to this danger.'[35]

During the rebellion and the military occupation many were shot during 'skirmish[es]',[36] to an extent that it was impossible to gain a correct number of those shot in the bush. In parallel to this military campaign was a variety of executions that occurred due to Courts Martial. Initially Paul Bogle, an Afro-Jamaican resident of Morant Bay, was captured and executed within only a few days of the uprising he was an instigator of. One of Eyre's most debatable (at the time) actions was his dealings with William Thomas Gordon. Gordon was taken from his residence in Kingston, by Eyre himself, placed on a Navy ship, transported to Morant Bay, where he was tried under Court Martial and executed, with the knowledge and approval of Eyre himself. In a letter to the Colonial Office Eyre proclaimed that he had

> reason to believe that Mr Gordon was the proximate cause of the rebellion… I had no doubt of Mr Gordon's guilt and I believed it necessary for the preservation of life and property and the prevention of further rebellion that an immediate and signal example should be made.'[37]

Eyre perceived that Gordon's execution was the capstone of his repression of the uprising. As Eyre wrote to Cardwell,

> That the evil disposed generally were intimidated and restrained by the punishment of Mr Gordon there can be no doubt what ever and I regard it as the one crowning act which enabled the government to cope successfully with the spirit of disaffection and sedition which was so general and so wide spread through the land.'[38]

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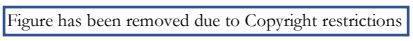
[35] Edward Eyre, speech to the Jamaican Legislative assembly on 7 November 1865, CO 137/394/24, 8 November 1865.

[36] Eyre, 137/400/2.

[37] Eyre to Colonial Office through Governor Storks, 22 January 1866, CO 137/402/2

[38] Eyre to Colonial Office through Governor Storks, 22 January 1866, CO 137/402/2



Carol Fort, "Edward John Eyre,"[39]

Religious Societies and the Origins of the Jamaican Committee

News of the outbreak arrived in England in November 1865. The executives of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) and the Freedmen's Aid Society met on 30 November at Exeter Hall. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, 3rd Baronet and anti-slavery activist, Liberal MP for King's Lynn and an Evangelical Anglican, held the Chair and agreed to form a united front on the Jamaican issue. [40] The attendees also agreed to create a committee to coordinate their efforts to express their concerns in a coordinated manner.[41] Peter Taylor, MP for Leicester and prominent figure in the anti-slavery movement and significant force in pushing for manhood suffrage, was convinced to put his name to the new Jamaica Committee's circular advertising its founding meeting. Frederick Chesson, who was in attendance as the provisional secretary, reported that the attendees were 'red hot' regarding the events in Jamaica and it was agreed that the various societies should join forces and create a committee devoted only to the Jamaican issue.[42] This was the beginning stages of the new Jamaica Committee, which would gather like-minded politicians, churchmen, antislavery activists, and humanitarians from across the country and give them a coordinated voice with which to condemn Eyre's heavy-handed response to the uprising at Morant Bay. Keeping with the established tradition, from emancipation

[39] Carol Fort, "Edward John Eyre," *SA History Hub*, History Trust of South Australia, https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/people/edward-john-eyre, accessed 8 March 2020.

[40] The Buxton family included multiple generations of politicians. Abolitionists, and anti-slavery activists. Thomas Fowell Buxton, 1st Baronet Buxton, was the son of a Quaker, but a member of the Church of England, and made money in the brewing industry. Buxton married into the Gurney family – a Quaker family heavily involved in the abolitionist movement. Buxton had 4 children, one of which was Charles Buxton, the politician, Priscilla Buxton, co-secretary of the London Female Anti-slavery society, and through the 2nd Baronet, the 3rd baronet Thomas Fowell Buxton, who was involved in the Jamaica committee.

[41] *Frederick Chesson Diary*, 30 November 1865.

[42] *Ibid.*

times, of referring to the anti-slavery movement in terms of their meeting place, the Jamaica Committee became synonymous with Exeter Hall.

The beginnings of the Jamaica Committee, though encompassing a broad range of individuals, was clearly religious, non-conformist and evangelical. Prior to the formal coordination of the new Jamaica Committee, regional 'Jamaica meetings' had taken place throughout England. These meetings put into mass gathering exactly what the major societies were discussing at the same time. Many of the meetings held a legalistic tone and it is clear that this coalition held individuals who were motivated not by religious feelings, but rather legalistic or liberal moralism. Nonetheless, the leaders of the coalition at this time were the anti-slavery and missionary societies, who were primarily motivated by their religious feelings.

Many meetings resulted in deputations sent to Russell or Cardwell. On 9 December, a delegation from the BFASS presented Cardwell with a petition regarding Jamaica. Among the delegation were delegates from Bristol, Brighton, Gloucester, Bradford, Cirencester, Reading, Sunderland, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Canterbury, Worcester, Woburn, Oxford, Southampton, Kendal, Southwick, Rochester, Glasgow, Warrington, Lewes, Hertford, Gravesend, Chelmsford, Croydon, Ipswich, Chatham, Woodford, Nottingham, and Stroud.[43] That these delegates would congregate in London to present their united petition to Russell and Cardwell is evidence of the strength of feeling held across England and Scotland. Many Members of Parliament accompanied these delegates. Among these were: Samuel Morley (Liberal MP for Nottingham and a leader of his local Congregationalist church), Samuel Gurney (Independent for Penryn and Falmouth and President of the Anti-Slavery Society), Tom Hughes (Liberal MP for Lambeth, writer and trade unionist), and Fowell Buxton.

[43] "London, Monday December 11," *The Times*, 11 December 1865,12.

The Times estimated that more than 250 individuals were involved in this delegation to Downing Street. Louis Chamerovzow,[44] the Secretary of the BFASS, read a memorial to Cardwell (Russell had extended his apologies), where it was stated that in a joint meeting of the various missionary societies 'and others interested in the Anti-Slavery cause', it was decided that they should call for an immediate, impartial investigation 'into the deplorable events which have recently occurred in Jamaica, and the causes which have occasioned them.'[45] He continued that it did not feel that to the delegates, given the narrative 'set forth in the despatch of Lieutenant-Governor Eyre', there was any cause to believe in the 'assumption of a preconcerted [sic] movement among the negroes.' Relating that the committee condemned the behaviour of 'the infuriated populace,' the delegation 'affirm[ed] that the firing into the mob by the volunteers was a rash and unwarrantable act, involving the innocent with the guilty.'[46] Chamerovzow connected these comments to the proclamation of martial law and 'the indiscriminate massacre of the coloured people' by the military, even after the disturbances had ceased and called them 'proceedings deserving the strongest reprobation.' Gordon's Court Martial was referenced and the committee 'emphatically question[ed] the competency of a drum-head court-martial…to try Mr. Gordon for a civil offence.'[47] The Committee was prepared to believe that there had been an existing 'great disaffection', they proclaimed that this was a result of

> maladministration of justice, the numerous vexations to which they are subjected, the excessive taxation which burdens them, and the severe privations they have undergone…they [the committee] are not prepared to admit that the emancipated classes are disloyal, still less that there has been produced any evidence of the existence of a wide-spread conspiracy to treble against the Queen's authority, to massacre the white and brown inhabitants, and to establish themselves as an independent people.[48]

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[44] Chamerovzow at this time was the secretary of the BFASS. He was born in Brighton to Russian parents. He had been involved in the anti-slavery movement for most of his adult life. Well known from the 1850s for editing the memoirs of the slave John Brown, Chamerovzow was an author, anti-slavery activist, and journalist.

[45] "London, Monday December 11," *The Times*, 11 December 1865,12.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

In an appendix to the written petition, the Committee called for Russell to immediately recall Eyre, institute an investigation, and suspend all officers who were involved in the suppression of the uprising.

After the petition was read and Chamerovzow had finished, he was followed by two Reverends, the Quaker George W. Alexander, also the President of the BFASS, and the Wesleyan William Arthur, also Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society. Alexander criticised Eyre for his disparagements of the 'Pseudo-Philanthropists' who had the interests of Afro-Jamaicans at heart, asking whether they should be 'spoken of so contemptuously' just because they were 'friends' of the Afro-Jamaicans.[49] Arthur claimed that the Queen's subjects, who had previously been slaves, were 'man for man, against any other class for loyalty to her person, and their attachment to law and order.'[50] Arthur also criticised the 'old paternal' feeling with which English 'Whites' viewed 'the coloured people of the Colonies' which 'had for sometime been changing its English character for that contemptuous indifference to the rights of property and life which had marked the conduct of the Spaniards under similar circumstances.'[51] Arthur also drew specifically on the historical tendency that has been identified by Lorimer and Hall, namely an increasing tendency towards racial understandings of empire. There indeed was a growing tendency in Britain, during the previous two decades away from the anti-slavery 'consensus' (if such a thing had even existed), to what Lorimer identified as a 'more strident racialism' as opposed to an earlier 'ethnocentrism' and paternalism.[52]

Alexander and Arthur both presented interesting points here. Alexander recognised the charge often levied against abolitionists of being friends with those that were slaves. Eyre held the view of the British missionaries in Jamaica as being 'a wolf in sheep's clothing; not the friend, but the enemy of mankind' in the words of a previous Governor of Jamaica, Lord Metcalfe, due to their one-sided intervention in the colony's social struggle.[53] There was a generic feeling, among supporters of Eyre and

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[49] *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 1865, 3.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *ibid.*

[52] Lorimer, *Colour, Class, and the Victorians*, 107.

[53] John William Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe: Late Governor-General of India, Governor of Jamaica, and Governor-General of Canada,* Vol. II, (London: Richard Bentley, 1854), 379.

the racist element of British society personified in Thomas Carlyle, that missionary concern for the material wellbeing of Afro-Jamaicans was merely a pretence for a desire and tangible support for a free Jamaica.[54] This charge levelled at the agitators has links to a concept explored by Charles Dickens in *Bleak House*. Dickens titled the fourth chapter of his novel 'Telescopic Philanthropy' and used the character of Miss Jellyby to criticise the philanthropists who would agitate against the suffering of those overseas but pass thousands of people suffering in their own neighbourhood every day.[55] This generally was not the case. The missionary societies were not advocating a revolution against British rule but were advocating an improvement in material wellbeing. The extra layer of complexity placed upon this is the subconscious attitudes of these missionaries towards their charges. Arthur pushed back on the charge of paternalism held by white missionaries; however, any effective analysis demonstrates this paternalism at every stage, as illustrated above in Barnett's work.

Barnett is not the only one to point to the complexity of the missionaries' attitudes towards the colonised. According to John Comaroff, the work of the missionaries might well be described as 'civilising colonialism'.[56] Frantz Fanon argued that this 'civilising' missionary colonialism was deeply complicit with broader colonising endeavours: 'The Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor.'[57] Only partially agreeing with Fanon, Hilary Carey examined the relationship between the missionaries who went out from the metropole and the role of empire in the periphery.[58] This relationship, Carey argued, was complex, benevolent, racist, paternalistic and imperialist all at once, though was mainly based in the power of the metropole over the periphery.

Hall furthered Fanon's argument and argued that the missionary attitudes in the 1850s shifted towards a focus on employment, yet links this concern to 'serious anxieties about African indolence

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[54] Eyre to Henderson, in Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 254

[55] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House, (*London: Bradbury & Evans, 1853), 24.

[56] John Comaroff, 'Images of Empire, contests of Conscience: Models of colonial domination in South Africa', *Journal of the American Ethnological Society*, 16, no. 4, (1989)": 661-685.

[57] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Marmann, (London: Pluto Press, 1952), 32.

[58] Carey, *God's Empire.*

and immorality' which ostensibly 'underpinned their thinking'.[59] Hall argued that there was a decrease in confidence in 'the African' and therefore the abolitionist view became more 'negative' after their 'utopian dreams of pious and grateful freed peoples benefitting from a society dominated by Baptist missionaries' did not come to pass after abolition.'[60] In view of Alexander and Arthur's responses to the criticisms of the missionary societies, the missionaries and abolitionists seemingly believed they were acting out of a religious moralism, but this religiosity and moralism was compromised by pre-existing attitudes and desires. Hall argued that this change of attitude led to increased racial identification in Jamaica, which was also explored by Lorimer, in particular the rise of 'cheap sensational fiction and theatrical entertainments' that transformed the public image of African subjects away from that propagated by the anti-slavery societies, towards a more stereotypical view of 'the more crassly racist figure of the comic minstrel.'[61] This combined with a growing secular culture, Lorimer argued, contributed to reducing the influence of the anti-slavery organisations and a growing racism. Alexander and Arthur, and the other missionary societies, were not generally influenced by these minstrel fantasies, however, which were more focused on the working-class masses. Those in the religious and anti-slavery hierarchy were more influenced by the civilisational assumptions as argued by Hall and Fanon.

What can be seen from the early involvement in the Morant Bay agitation by Exeter Hall and the associated organisations, is that despite the growing racialisation, racism, and secularisation of British society as detailed by Lorimer, Hall, and others, the agitators at Exeter Hall saw themselves as religiously motivated and part of the great tradition of the abolitionists. Most of these abolitionists, anti-slavery activists, and missionary societies were drawn around the central concept of 'humanity' as defined by their religious beliefs. Abigail Green makes it clear that when discussing the Victorian concept of humanitarianism, however, it is necessary to view this in terms of 'privileging Anglo-

[59] Hall, *Civilising Subjects,* 252.

[60] *Ibid., 253*

[61] Lorimer, *Colour, Class, and the* Victorians, 69.

American political traditions and Protestant religious culture.'[62] Despite significant cross-fertilisation of ideas across Europe and the United States, the religious culture of the anti-slavery activists was inherently occidental, to use Said's phrase.

The involvement of some of the original abolitionists, in particular the Buxton family, contributed to this. The Christian agitators still saw slavery as the great sin, including the negative effects still present on the ex-slave populations, and focused on the importance of a national atonement for this sin. As the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* editorial suggested in 1865, there was a hope that the 1865 general election would bring to pass a government that 'will not pass without gains, not only to the cause of negro freedom, but to liberty and human rights in general.'[63]

Thus, without hagiographically treating the anti-slavery or humanitarian movements of Victorian Britain, it is important to understand the multi-faceted nature of the humanitarian impulse. The religious motivations of the agitators in the Jamaican case demonstrated a clear desire to prevent any unnecessary suffering in any individual, especially an individual under the authority of the British Imperial government. Whilst engaging in direct paternalism, racism and contributing to a system of repression and exploitation, there were significantly sincere movements for a more humane British imperial policy. Initially, this was driven by a religious impulse; in other words, all individuals had inherent worth as human beings (though some needed to further progress along the civilisational path), as asserted by the anti-slavery movement, and the moral responsibility of the Christian British government to rule humanely and reduce the suffering inflicted on subject populations. This was despite, not because of, the prejudiced attitudes held at the time.

The Jamaica Committee called for government transparency regarding providing specific details of which individuals were involved in the violence that was perpetrated against the Afro-Jamaicans. Unaffiliated individuals also had their brief say, with Tom Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's School Days* and Liberal MP for Lambeth, stating that he was not present as part of the committee, but as 'representing a great constituency close by, in which, so far as he had been able to ascertain there was

[62] Abigail Green, 'Humanitarianism', 1169.

[63] *Anti-Slavery Reporter,* August 1, 1865, in series 3, vol. 13, 197-198.

but one opinion on the subject… He was present as an Englishman, jealous of the honour of England.'[64] William McCullagh Torrens an Irish Liberal MP stated that the concern then was

> their own honour as a people. That honour had been slighted, and their conscience as a nation had been stung as it never had before. As long as the grip of triumphant repression was upon the throat of the colony, they would never hear the truth.[65]

Peter Taylor expressed that 'the honour of England and the security of the Government required the instant recall of Governor Eyre', and the Reverend David Thomas (Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales) stated that

> no words of his could adequately express the anxious and intense feeling of the Congregational churches of England and Wales on this subject, and the attitude of expectancy with which they were looking forward to the action of the Government.[66]

Taylor's comments demonstrated Carey's argument that there was no separation in the minds of these activists between religion, humanitarianism, and the British empire. There is no questioning of the existence of the empire in these critiques, rather that the empire needed to be administered justly and according to religious principles.

Cardwell listened and explained that Russell would have said the same thing he now said, that 'no words could express the pain and anxiety which the consideration of this subject had given to him, and to every member of his government.'[67] Cardwell intimated that the Government had anticipated the request for an inquiry and there would be a commission of inquiry sent to Jamaica. Maintaining his balanced position Cardwell claimed that he did not know Eyre personally, only by reputation, and his reputation 'had always been that of a man of courage and humanity.' Consideration of Eyre's circumstances was called for and a suspension of judgement until all the facts were known. He mentioned that an inquiry would be held and that it would be 'full and complete, and by the result of

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[64] "London, Monday December 11, 1865," *The Times*, 11 December 1865, London, England, 12.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

that inquiry his [Cardwell's] conduct for one should be guided.'[68] By this point Cardwell, though he would not admit it to the petitioners, had become uncomfortable with reports out of Jamaica and Eyre's apparent unwillingness to provide further details.[69]

This incident is instructive of the early religious influence on the agitation. The agitation was geographically widespread, but the focal point was Exeter Hall.[70] Exeter Hall in this case included the established and institutionalised anti-slavery organisations, with their various links to religious organisations. Combined with these anti-slavery organisations were the various missionary organisations of the nonconformist denominations. Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, and Presbyterians gathered themselves together to protest the actions of Eyre in Jamaica. The variety of organisations who raised their voice in this deputation covered legalism, religious concern, and liberal humanitarianism, as will be discussed in future chapters.

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Exeter Hall, 18 May 1844[71]

The initial agitation saw religious and anti-slavery groups emerge as the leadership and organisational backbone of the early Morant Bay movement. The prominent individuals leading the response to Eyre's Jamaican atrocities had ties to evangelical groups, to missionary societies and to anti-slavery societies. Though within their ranks people like Hughes could express concern for the image of Britain,[72] the initial framework was provided by Exeter Hall. The words expressed were designed to include the wide variety of stake holders, but the basis of the delegation was religious and

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[68] "London, Monday December 1865," *The Times*, 11 December 1865, London, England, 12.

[69] See for example, Cardwell to Eyre, 1 December 1865, CO 137/394/15.

[70] Exeter Hall was synonymous with the anti-slavery and evangelical movements in the middle of the nineteenth century. David Bebbington stated that Exeter Hall lay at the 'epicentre of the global [evangelical]movement.' (David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity press, 2005), 72.) See also: Diarmid A. Finnegan, "Exeter-Hall Science and Evangelical Rhetoric in Mid-Victorian Britain," *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 16, no. 1, (2011): 46-64.

[71] 'May meetings in Exeter Hall', *Illustrated London News*, 18 May 1844, 5.

[72] "London, Monday December 11, 1865," *The Times*, 11 December 1865, London, England, 12.

philanthropic. It included societies and individuals like Reverend Thomas, who represented a significant section of Evangelical Christianity in England and Wales.

The deputation to Cardwell referenced Gordon who had been hanged after court-martial and whose final letter had been sent to the British press from Chamerovzow on 1 December.[73] In his foreword to the letter, Chamerovzow had stated that Gordon had died as a Christian 'martyr' and expressed his hope that the reaction to the letter would be successful in 'obtaining justice for his memory'.[74] Along with Chamerovzow's religious layering, Gordon's own words reinforced the religious interest in the agitation. A member of the legislative assembly in Jamaica, Gordon was also a devout evangelical Baptist. Referencing his innocence, Gordon suggested that his fate was a result of his obedience to God in relieving 'the poor and needy' and protecting, 'so far as I was able, the oppressed'.[75] Quoting Saint Paul, Gordon suggested that he had fought the fight of righteousness and therefore would be blessed in the life to come. Gordon, in recounting his trial stated that 'it seemed that I was to be sacrificed', further reinforcing the religious imagery.[76] Furthering the religious feelings of the readers, Gordon asked the Lord to bless General Nelson, 'and the soldiers and sailors, and all men'.[77]

Gordon's letter was that written by a deeply religious man and gave the impression to the British public that a religious, political opponent of Eyre, who claimed to have nothing to do with the uprising, was removed from his home, detained, sent to another area which was under martial law and executed with no fair trial. *The Times* reported the 'Trial of Gordon' and included the letter verbatim in the news section, but there was no editorial comment.[78] The writers of *The Spectator* wrote that Gordon's final statement that 'the Lord bless him [General Nelson], and all the soldiers, and sailors, and all men' sounded somewhat like 'artificial piety' but in the end 'we see no reason why it should not

[73] This was sent to all the major papers, see "The Insurrection in Jamaica," *The Times,* 1 December 1865, 8.

[74] George Gordon, 'G. W. Gordon's Last Letter to His Wife', Bristol Selected Pamphlets, *JSTOR*, 2 December 2011.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] "The Insurrection in Jamaica," *The Times*, 1 December 1865, 8.

have been the heartfelt effort of a sincerely religious man to forgive his enemies before his death. A strict account will assuredly be demanded of his executioners.'[79]

Chamerovzow's release of the letter, apart from the fact that it was requested of him, was done with the purpose of placing Gordon in the position of a martyr, as a Christ-like figure within the Jamaican uprising. Gordon was positioned as a figure who might be recognised by the British public as a pious, religious man, who wished nothing but the best for all. The Gordon issue would be a major theme throughout the entirety of the agitation, and it did not take long for the legal and moral elements of the agitation to adopt the Gordon issue for their own purposes. However, the religious element of Gordon's death should not be understated. The *Daily News* was scathing in its response to Gordon's letter, as will be examined in later chapters. However, in the middle of describing Jamaica as descending into 'hell', not at the hands of the Afro-Jamaicans, but the White inhabitants and rulers of the island, the editorial suggested that the British soldiers who 'torture' and 'flog naked women and children' also 'blaspheme Almighty God with their thanks for his mercies vouchsafed in delivering their enemies into their hands.'[80] There was a discernibly religious undertone to the burgeoning agitation, often focused on the religious personage of Gordon.

In the press the religious elements of the uprising were debated on both sides. Among the supporters of Eyre, it became a staple of understanding that 'the Baptists' were at the bottom of the plot to revolt in Jamaica. *The Times* specifically claimed, in November, that 'Baptist missionaries' were to blame for the insurrection. The editorial of *The Times* on 20 November was harsh in its condemnation, not just of those who rose up, but their defenders. Referring to the 'platitudes of rhetorical sentimentality' the paper claimed that 'the negro had no grievances—no grievances, at least, but what he had a legal mode of addressing.'[81] The paper also blamed the influence of Baptist missionaries on the actions of the Afro-Jamaicans at Morant Bay. In its vitriol, the article elucidates an important point about the role religion played in Jamaica and was playing in the subsequent agitation. In the writers'

[79] *The Spectator*, 2 December 1865, 1.

[80] *London Daily News*, 1 December 1865, 2.

[81] "London, Monday, November 20, 1865," *The Times,* 20 November 1865, 8.

opinion the greed for more land and conceit of superiority, among Afro-Jamaicans, was 'supplemented by the promptings of what in Jamaica is called Religion.'[82] This 'Religion', so clearly scorned by the newspaper, created an impression of equality, which, combined with the outcome of the American Civil War and uprising in San Domingo, had resulted in conditions for an uprising. Coming from *The Times*, an establishment paper, the level of aggression displayed towards the Baptists can be jarring. However, it demonstrates aptly the contemporaneous belief that the initial push in the agitation was from these religious organisations and individuals who were expressing political remedies in religious terms.

In a letter, initially to *The Times*, but when unprinted sent to *The Daily News,* Dr. Joseph Angus, a Baptist minister and Principal of Stepney College, wrote that the situation was more complex than *The Times* represented. Angus referred to 'native Baptists' and the differences between Afro-Jamaican Baptist congregations, congregations set up by English Baptist missionaries and others, claiming that 'to compare, or still more to confound them, is to both parties odious and unjust.'[83] Angus also referred to the slave uprising in Jamaica in 1831-2 and expressed that he had hoped some of the nuance would be present when discussing the most recent outbreak. On 1 December the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* reported on William Arthur, who argued that the Jamaican issue endangered the 'moral influence' of England. Arthur complained that an attempt had arisen 'to destroy the Old British sentiment of kindness and generosity towards the black' and replace it with racial antagonism.[84] Within much of this discourse, as previously mentioned, there is very little that pushes back on the idea of Imperial Britain itself. Instead, as the Duke of Argyll said during a visit of a prominent American abolitionist after the Civil War, 'Providence interposes to prevent the permanent triumph of evil. It interposes, not visibly or by the thunderbolt, but by inspiring and sustaining high moral effort and heroic lives.'[85] Argyll also praised not only 'the redemption of the negro race from slavery', but also 'that which is a higher object than the

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] *Western Daily press*, 24 November 1865, 3.

[84] *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1 December 1865, Series 3, vol. 13, 306-7

[85] *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 10 July 1867, 1.

redemption of any single race, the vindication of the universal principles of humanity and justice.'[86] Referencing the role of anti-slavery activists, Argyll references the moral effort of improving the lives of others, however, there is no mention of the way that imperialism contributed to events like the Morant bay massacre.

On 12 December, the same day as the Government announced the decision to create a Royal Commission to investigate the causes of rebellion in Jamaica and the nature of its suppression, the BFASS held a large meeting at Exeter Hall. Chaired by Samuel Gurney, *The Times* noted that on the platform along with the politicians and society individuals were three reverends and 'many other Nonconformist ministers.'[87] The first resolution, as read by William Coningham, the previous MP for Brighton and son of an Irish Wesleyan minister, condemned the African Jamaican rioters for contributing to loss of life, though they were motivated by the 'grossest provocation', which he followed with the statement that,

> the means adopted to restore order in the disturbed district were characterized by a severity totally unjustifiable, most revolting to humanity, and calculated to bring the national character into disrepute throughout the civilized world.[88]

G. W. Alexander asked 'whether Christian men could sleep in their beds without first uttering their most earnest and even their passionate protests against such acts.'[89] Following the first resolution, W. Arthur, stated 'if England adopted into her moral code the dogma of precautionary massacres, because "it is said" the negroes were going to rise against the white race on Christmas-day, the foundations of her transmarine empire would be surely sapped.'[90] Arthur's statements once again demonstrated the inherent imperialism of the religious view towards Jamaica; the fight was not against the empire as such, but rather to refine it into a moral, virtuous, and God-fearing one.

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[86] *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper,* 7 July 1867, 7.

[87] "The Insurrection in Jamaica," *The Times*, 13 December 1865, 12.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

This meeting was fundamentally different to the local meetings that occurred around it. First the local meetings were predominantly pushed by Liberal MPs, who focused specifically on the legalism of the matter – as will be discussed in the next section. The BFASS meeting was, however, fundamentally religious, in fact evangelical. Coningham, the son of a Wesleyan minister, and a Liberal politician who was a follower of Palmerston, represented the most political of the speakers, whilst Alexander was a Quaker and Arthur a Wesleyan. A predominant theme throughout this meeting was the responsibility of men, especially British men, to be concerned with others in the world, especially those over whom they had a responsibility. This was a particularly strong theme throughout the emancipation fight, and it is not surprising similar themes were found in BFASS meetings. Coningham and Arthur also specifically tied British international prestige to how the British treated their subject populations, in particular, how this reflected on the 'honour' of the English.

This type of language links to the 'missionary philanthropic movement' that Alison Twells identified though dealing with a slightly earlier generation, Twells' descriptions of this movement as having sought 'no less than national and global reformation' is vindicated by the ideas expressed by Exeter Hall in December of 1865.[91] This movement, combined with a more political culture of exerting British influence across the globe, as described in detail by C. C. Eldridge,[92] and how this political influence would look, created moments where religious agitators would call upon their audiences to further the cause of the great British Liberal Empire. Eldridge argued that within this animating influence was a 'stoic self-satisfaction' and that many of the leading thinkers and politicians in Britain were 'looking forward, like Gladstone, to the creation of 'so many happy Englands.'[93]

Further to these ideas, Yianni Cartledge has argued that as early as the Greek war of independence, 'Christianity propelled early British humanitarianism towards the Greeks.'[94] Cartledge argued that the established Anglican organisation had a religious and cultural affinity with the Christian

[91] Allison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 2.

[92] C. C. Eldridge, *England's Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone & Disraeli, 1868-1880*, (London: MacMillan, 1973).

[93] Ibid, 45.

[94] Yianni Cartledge, 'The Chios Massacre (1822) and early British Christian-humanitarianism', *Historical* Research, 93, no. 259, (2020): 72.

Greeks and structured their response around this co-religiosity, while at the same time othering the Ottomans as Barbarians.[95] While this comparison will be made clear in the Bulgarian case, the links are clear to see in the Jamaican case too. The identification, in this case by Evangelical Christians, with the victims of massacre, placed obligations and responsibilities on those within Britain and the British government itself.

The Jamaica Committee

On 19 December, the first meeting of the 'Jamaica Committee' was held. The provisional committee of Chesson, Bright, Chamerovzow and Charles Buxton (uncle of Fowell Buxton, philanthropist and Liberal MP), advertised the meeting and obtained legal counsel from Edward James Q.C and James Fitzjames Stephen. The committee had collected within itself some of the most well-known philanthropists and anti-slavery activists of the day. Charles Buxton was elected chair, as he was a prominent abolitionist and politician, and had been prominent in the agitation against British atrocities in India less than a decade previously.[96]

The Committee was dominated at the top by religious and philanthropic individuals with deep ties to nonconformist and evangelical missionary societies and anti-slavery societies. The base of the Committee, however, was significantly radical, many of whom were focused on the legalistic aspects of the case. With the formation of the Jamaica Committee an interesting dynamic emerged. The legal moralists were drawn to Exeter Hall due to its ability to organise large scale agitation. The radical politicians also found a place that they could band together in numbers. For these two groups to do this they were required initially to subsume their points of view within the existing religious and philanthropic basis of Exeter Hall. This was formalised in the Jamaica Committee. Initially, the heavy dominance of Chesson, Chamerovzow, Fowell Buxton, Buxton, and their societies meant that Bright, John Stuart Mill, and Hughes were required to support the Committee's lines. This resulted in both Mill and Bright discussing terms such as 'justice and humanity', which they undoubtedly supported, but

[95] Ibid, 52.

[96] See for example, *Hansard*, H. C., 18 March 1857, vol. 144 Col. 360.

initially they were required to support the religious and philanthropic base of the Committee. This changed in the middle of 1866 when the legalist push within the Committee resulted in Buxton resigning the Chairmanship because he could not support the new direction, as will be discussed below.

The mass meetings, the committee and the broader agitation movement had definitive aims in mind. Leaving aside the way the Committee would change focus, which will be addressed in section 2, the religious organisations and the anti-slavery groups engaged in agitation to achieve a humanitarian and political outcome. Unlike the Bulgarian agitation the political change was not in foreign policy, but in colonial policy. The aims were also quite limited. The Jamaican case was about Jamaica, rather than a broader critique of colonial rule, at least initially. There was an immediate concern in Jamaica, in particular regarding the misgovernment of Eyre, and this was the focal point of the agitation, along with the immediate demand for the cessation of retaliatory violence by the British authorities.

Much of the religious and anti-slavery opposition to the Morant Bay reaction had to do with pre-existing networks of compassion and religiosity between Britain and Jamaica. What the religious agitators were attempting to accomplish in the aftermath is what Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown refer to as mobilising sympathy.[97] While others attempted to mobilise this sympathy through legal or moral arguments, there was a distinct section of the agitation, especially at the beginning, that attempted to use its credentials as abolitionists and its connection with the religious congregations in Jamaica to mobilise support.

There was a period of quiet around the agitation, due to Cardwell's announcement in December that a Royal Commission would be initiated, headed by Sir Henry Storks, who would also replace the recalled Eyre. The initial aims of the Jamaica committee were met at the end of 1865 and the beginning of 1866. Cardwell had initiated a Royal Commission; Eyre had been withdrawn and the violence in Jamaica had ceased. The Committee went into a period of waiting for the report from the Commission to arrive.

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[97] Richard Ashby Wilson & Richard D Brown, *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, Richard Ashby Wilson, Richard D Brown, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2008).

During this period the action of the Government had a detrimental effect on the influence of the religious element of the Committee and the agitation as a whole. As detailed above, the motivations behind the religious and philanthropic elements of the agitation were for improvements to be made in the condition of the Afro-Jamaicans. With Eyre's removal there was a tacit admission that he had reacted incorrectly and had contributed to the conditions in Jamaica. Cardwell had demonstrated a propensity to take the matter seriously and address all elements of the case in a serious manner. Although the role that the religious organisations and individuals played at the beginning of the agitation supports Abigail Green's contention that 'religious and moral imperatives' played a central role 'in shaping nineteenth century political practices,'[98] this does not mean that religious agitation was the sole factor in Cardwell's push for an inquiry, or the Government's subsequent policies towards Jamaica.

The initial push of the agitation, resulting in a commission of enquiry, resulted in far more than was initially demanded. In fact, after Eyre's final step to remove many of the freedoms within Jamaica as a response to the uprising, the Tory government, which came into power in 1866, through the Colonial Secretary Lord Carnarvon and the new Jamaican Governor, John Grant, implemented sweeping political, social, and economic reforms across Jamaica which resulted in it becoming a Crown Colony, rather than the self-governing one it had been, thus ensuring the control of the central government over the actions of the Jamaican administrators.

In June 1866, the Jamaica Committee experienced an internal power struggle. With the alleviation of the flashpoints in Jamaica and the emerging political actions of the Disraeli government, the influence of the religious and abolitionist elements was diminishing. Still concerned and involved, these religious elements were nonetheless sidelined by the political machinations of the rest of the committee. During June of 1866 John Stuart Mill was asked to return to England from France and take over as chair as the committee became focused on prosecuting Eyre. Charles Buxton was called upon to defend his position of philanthropic humanitarianism. An ardent anti-slavery activist, and liberal at

[98] Green, "Humanitarianism," 1165.

heart, Buxton had represented the conservative middle ground of Exeter Hall – an evangelical, who was focused on the philanthropic elements, rather than on expanding missionary activity or undertaking legal action; however, as will be demonstrated, Buxton was representative of those who straddled the lines between Exeter Hall's increasingly disparate aims.

Buxton was supported heavily by his nephew Fowell Buxton, during the period of the challenge to his leadership of the Committee by Mill. In the meeting of 9 June, Buxton was accused of sabotaging the Committee's efforts by sending a letter to *The Times* stating that he disagreed with the decision to pressure the government to prosecute Eyre. In attempting to explain himself, Buxton stated that

> he did not consider Mr. Eyre as guilty of wilful murder, but that he looked upon him as a man who most shamefully, criminally, and cruelly misgoverned the colony of Jamaica, and that he acted in the most scandalous manner towards the people committed to his charge.'[99]

With the decision of the Committee made in favour of Mill and Bright, Buxton and Fowell Buxton took their leave and had no more to do with the committee. It no longer represented their interest in the matter as it had become too radical in its aims to prosecute Eyre. For Buxton, as he tried to explain, the nature of a legal charge was irrelevant. The Committee had fulfilled its purpose by putting pressure on the Government to ensure the cessation of any further atrocities, to remove Eyre and institute action against specific cases of cruelty. Any prosecution of Eyre appeared to Buxton to detract from the purpose of looking after the victims of the repression, which for him was the primary focus.[100]

This argument between Buxton and Mill is demonstrative of the tensions within humanitarian movements. Exeter Hall was a conglomeration of disparate groups and individuals who had various reasons for agitating against Eyre's actions. The religious impulse, as demonstrated by Buxton, was to maintain the soul of the British Empire in treating its subject peoples with fairness. The action of removing Eyre and implementing political changes inside Jamaica achieved the purposes of this religious agitation. The expansion of the agitation beyond the cessation of suffering to a legal challenge on the nature of colonial rule, went beyond the scope of the religious humanitarians. Apart from

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[99] "The Jamaica Committee," *The Times*, 10 July 1866, 5.

[100] Ibid.

allowing space to civilise the subjects of the British Empire and not actively harming these subjects, there was little more to do beyond incremental political improvements in living conditions.

Bright and Mill on the other hand had a vested interest in prosecuting Eyre. As will be explored in depth in section two, the legalist impulse had far more to do with the rights of British subjects living inside of Britain, than necessarily in the welfare of the Afro-Jamaicans. While the religious view of the Buxtons expressed a more universalist version of humanitarian governance, the narrowness of the legal position on focusing on the parallel between colonial subjects and the (implicitly) more important working-class English in terms of government power represented a clear divide. While Mill, and at points Bright, could discuss justice and humanity in terms of humanitarian governance, this was framed in terms of specific legal responsibilities and the rights of subjects, whereas the humanitarianism expressed by the Buxtons and Chamerovzow was a more sympathetic one, based in a religious sensibility – which aimed to reduce suffering, because suffering, in itself, was unfair and not befitting a Christian nation.

Conclusion

The first flash of the agitation regarding Jamaica was religious and philanthropic, driven by the evangelical and nonconformist missionary societies and the anti-slavery societies. This was a natural extension of their existing interest in Jamaica. These societies also had an established network for undertaking political agitations, namely Exeter Hall, and was thus a natural starting place for the Jamaican agitation. This first flash did not long last, however, as very quickly the dominant tone of the agitation transformed from a religious one to a secular and legal one. This was natural, as the issue at hand was not slavery, nor purely the Baptist (and other Christian) interest in the Afro-Jamaican communities, but rather the broader concerns surrounding the legal treatment of British subjects, along with subject rights, together with the liberal idea of a benevolent and caring Britain, which will be discussed in the following sections. The religious element of the agitation had succeeded in mobilising empathy, via their pre-existing structure. Their success saw them colonised by political and legal campaigners willing to join themselves, at least initially, with the evangelical campaign of Exeter Hall.

These pre-existing connections are important in terms of how humanitarianism as an idea, especially within the strands of thought, was expressed in the middle third of the nineteenth century. The religious connections to the anti-slavery movement clearly animated and motivated the movement in Jamaica. The connections to the 'sin' of British slavery was still recent and raw. As has been shown, there were specific connections drawn between the condition of the afro-Jamaicans which resulted in the Morant Bay protest and repression, and the nature of slavery and the way it was ended.

This continuity between the anti-slavery movement and Morant Bay, especially in terms of the religiously motivated, demonstrated ways that humanitarianism as an idea formed and grew during the middle third of the nineteenth century. As has been shown there were concerns raised in the press and politics surrounding indigenous issues in Australia and New Zealand, as well as the ongoing abolition movement. However, the specific trigger of the Morant Bay repression resulted in a more sophisticated and drawn out agitation than the previous ones, except for the abolitionist movement. The instance of a representative of the British Crown invoking martial law to hunt down and execute a variety of individuals who, to the agitators' minds were only in that position due to the crimes of slavery, created a response based in a religious understanding of imperial rule that had developed and shifted over time.

As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, this imagined responsibility and solidarity with the victims of Eyre's repression was the product of a moment in time, rather than a definitive shift in the British public's psyche. In the Bulgarian case the religiously motivated agitators created their own networks and used different humanitarian language in a way to connect with different victims of massacre. As such, though a similar methodology of agitation was followed, the humanitarian response to atrocity was dependent on how the British agitators themselves saw, imagined, and processed the incident themselves. Humanitarian rhetoric was then based as much on an imagined conception of community with or responsibility over the victims as it was on the moral failings of the perpetrators, which imagined community became the core conceptual point around which the pre-existing animus of the agitation pivoted.

What must be recognised, though, in the religious spark of the agitation is the attempt to retain their relevance that was made by these organisations. Christopher Leslie Brown has argued that

abolitionism was always, from the beginning, as much about the abolitionists themselves, their world view, religious beliefs and identity, as it was about the enslaved.[101] Douglas Lorimer too has suggested, in a Saidian, fashion that the Jamaican controversy 'acted like a mirror in which Englishmen saw themselves and their own society reflected.'[102] In an increasingly secular society, with the declining influence of abolitionist sentiment, and the growing racialism from the middle of the century, the religious organisations felt the necessity of becoming politically involved. As will be demonstrated in the Bulgarian case, only 10 years later, the coalition of Exeter Hall would not mobilise for foreign victims of massacre as they did for the ex-slaves of Jamaica. Lorimer has suggested that this is because 'it was not the blacks in Jamaica, nor the subject races in other parts of the Empire, who had changed in the eyes of the mid-Victorians, but rather it was Englishmen themselves who had altered.'[103]

In fact, Christopher Herbert suggested that one of the reasons the religious element of the humanitarian response was so active in the Jamaican case was because they had failed abjectly at protesting the excessive violence visited upon those that revolted in India in 1856.[104] In particular Herbert references the destabilising effects, within British society and the British psyche, that the Indian uprising had, especially on the 'national-belief' in 'the powerful nexus of evangelical Christianity, the dominant cultural influence through at least the first half of the nineteenth century, and its philosophical adversary, rigorously rationalistic Benthamite Utilitarianism.'[105]

However, despite the change in the British public themselves, a change that would be far more noticeable a decade later, Green's argument that the liberal radicalism of the period interacted with a clear evangelical tone must be acknowledged.[106] Whilst this a different type of Evangelical movement to that expressed in the Bulgarian case, the existing religious movements, connections, and anti-slavery movements, sparked an agitation that was inherently political in nature. This movement expressed

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[101] Brown, *Moral Capital.*

[102] Lorimer, *Colour, Class, and the Victorians,* 200.

[103] *Ibid.,*

[104] Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[105] *Ibid.,* 28.

[106] Green, "Humanitarianism".

concern for a religiously motivated British imperial policy, based in their understanding of religious governance.

This battle between evangelical Christianity and the Benthamite ideas personified in Mill, were played out on the same side in the Jamaican agitation. In the later phase of humanitarian agitation, Mill's utilitarianism came to dominate, however, it could only do so in the wake of the important contribution made by the representatives of British evangelical Christianity. It is clear from the Jamaican case that there was still a religious element, a powerfully political element, that could mobilise to express humanitarian ideas with the view to changing British political direction. 10 years later during the Bulgarian crisis, this coalition would look different, with the last gasps of the grand abolitionist tradition giving way to a different evangelicalism that was infused with radical politics.

Chapter 2 - Religious Humanitarianism and the Bulgarian Agitation

Introduction

Much of the earlier interpretations of the movement in Britain against the Ottoman massacres in Bulgaria have examined the political dimension of the so-called 'Bulgarian agitation'. Some more recent works, however, have attempted to depict the agitation as a humanitarian response.[1] However, even those most overtly stressing humanitarianism contextualise the events in the agitation within the broader moralistic nature of the Liberal Party, the moral influence that Gladstone wielded across British political culture and the push for intervention to relieve suffering. While it is recognised by these histories that Gladstone was inherently religious, much of the analysis has stressed his political motivations or events such as the expansion of the Liberal Party, Gladstone's return to politics, and the broader British movement for humanitarian intervention. What remains scarce in the historiography is a treatment of the agitation that takes seriously the religious humanitarian impulse as an important foundation of the agitation movement.

This chapter will examine the religious humanitarian rhetoric within the Bulgarian agitation in Britain to question the notion that these were intrinsically political expressions, but rather, as Abigail Green has noted, expressions that demonstrate the natural confluence between religious humanitarianism and political action.[2] What makes their statements humanitarian in tone, in the same vein as the Jamaican case, is that through their religious framework there was a definite focus on the welfare and wellbeing of the Bulgarian victims. There is also a clear strain, within the religious humanitarian rhetoric, that claimed a form of 'universal' rights for those that believe in the Christian God. [3] This type of rhetoric also drifted from supporting Bulgarian Christians and decrying Muslim

[1] See for example Rodogno, *Against Massacre,* 2011; Michelle Tusan, "Britain and the Middle East: New Historical Perspectives on the Eastern Question," *History Compass*, 8, no. 3, (2010): 212-222; Cameron Whitehead, *The Bulgarian Horrors: Culture and the International History of the Great Eastern Crisis, 1876-1878,* PhD diss., The University of British Columbia, 2014.

[2] Green, "Humanitarianism"..

[3] Once again, this study is written from the perspective of the British Humanitarians. It will be examined herein the inherent Christian chauvinism of this statement and the ideas explored that 'universal' in this case still meant 'people more like us than the others.'

atrocities and excesses, to specific attacks on Islam itself and a shift from defending the welfare and rights of Bulgarians to rhetorically attacking Ottoman rule on the basis of religion.

Further to Green, there are clear parallels between the British religious response to Bulgaria and the events in the Greek war of independence 50 years previously. As Cartledge has demonstrated, there was a clear religious element in viewing the Greek victims of the Chios massacre as fellow Christians, whereas the Ottoman forces were 'Islamic' and 'Barbarian'.[4] As would be the case in the Bulgarian agitation, Cartledge argued that through the actions of British Christians in their response to Chios, the Greeks had transitioned to 'fellow Christians, worthy of humanitarian support', just as would be the case for the views of the Bulgarians.[5]

The events in Bulgaria intersected with the concepts of humanitarianism and the role of imperial Britain in the international system. While Jamaica was an internal, imperial matter, Bulgaria resulted in the British empire acting in the international realm. Amalia Forclaz has explored how anti-slavery activisim from 1880 developed through formal anti-slavery organisations. Forclaz argued that despite the transnational links of anti-slavery organisations, it is important to view them as being an integral part of their 'national and imperial contexts.'[6] Further to Forclaz, and with a more general focus, Richard Huzzey makes the argument that, within the Jamaican context, it was necessary to view the involvement of the anti-slavery organisations within the imperial context.[7]

Bringing this concept into the role of imperial Britain internationally, Davide Rodogno has argued that 'humanitarian interventions undertaken by European governments were based on the same basic assumptions of imperialism.'[8] This humanitarian liberalism was often not questioned by the very

[4] Cartledge, "The Chios Massacre," 52.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Amalia Ribi Forclaz, *Humanitarian Imperialism: The Politics of Anti-Slavery Activisim, 1880-1940*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5.

[7] Huzzey, 'Minding Civilisation,' 812.

[8] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 12.

humanitarians who were advocating for a form of self-determination in Christian Bulgaria – it was here, as Rodogno suggests, that these humanitarians were willing to export their civilisation.[9]

Unlike the Jamaican agitation, those involved in the Bulgarian agitation were not necessarily part of pre-existing religious pressure groups such as the BFASS or the other anti-slavery organisations. The situation in Bulgaria also lent itself to distinctly religious interpretation. Muslim soldiers and irregulars had attacked Christian dominated vilayets,[10] entered Christian homes, murdered Christian men, women, and children, stolen Christian property and committed 'atrocities' against Christians. Outside the fighting and atrocities, the agitation began with defining the parties by religion. Contemporary British reports on death and destruction, though probably inflated,[11] stated that fifteen thousand Bulgarian men, women and children were killed and over seventy villages, two hundred schools, and ten monasteries were destroyed.[12] In response Ottoman officials claimed that their actions in Bulgaria were a response to Bulgarian revolutionaries who had targeted local officials, Muslim prayer leaders, and had ostensibly set up armed fortifications, refused to surrender, and then set their own houses on fire.[13] Edib Effendi from Edirne Vilayet and Chakir Bey from Daube Vilayet, reported that hundreds of local Muslim officials had been murdered and the violent response had mostly been from the local Muslim populations, rather than imported soldiers and Bashi-Bazouks.[14] From the moment that the news of the violence had left Bulgaria many people in Britain were already primed to see the matter from a distinctly religious perspective.

It is important to note that, as in the Jamaican case, though in a distinctly different manner, there was pre-existing interest in the areas around Bulgaria from religiously motivated groups. While

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[9] Ibid. On Humanitarianism imperialism see also Haskell, 'Capitalism and the origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility'; Laidlaw, 'Investigating Empire'; Lester and Dussart, *Colonisation and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance.*

[10] Though vilayets were under direct control of the Porte, many of the vilayets in Bulgaria were predominantly Christian and recognised as such by the Porte.

[11] "The accepted reality of the massacres is largely myth," Millman, 218.

[12] These numbers are found in Elliot's dispatch containing Baring's report to Derby in *Report by Mr Baring on the Atrocities Committed upon the Christians in Bulgaria*, FO 881/2936B, September 19, 1876

[13] Reported in Baring to Elliot, Philippopolis (Plovdiv), 27 July 1876, FO 424/43, no. 114.

[14] Reported by Baring to Elliot, Philippopolis (Plovdiv), 22 July 1876, FO 424/43, no. 4; and Elliot to Derby, 9 August 1876, FO 424/43, no. 85.

these groups were not the same as the abolitionist groups or the missionary societies that had a vested interest in the Jamaicans, these groups were invested in the religious freedom of what was viewed as 'European Turkey,'[15] and Christian self-determination in areas like Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Herzegovina and the other European proto-nationalist areas within the Ottoman Empire. In addition, there was considerable concern in Britain over the influence that Russia had over Slavic Christians, especially when Russia would hold itself as the protector, not only of the Slavs, but also of all Eastern Christians, in defiance of the British interpretation of the treaty of Paris in 1856 after the Crimean war, which had placed this responsibility onto France.[16]

There had been great interest in Britain in the future of the 'Eastern' Christians for the majority of the nineteenth century. From the Greek Independence movement onwards elements of the British population spent significant time, effort, and money supporting a variety of independence movements in the Balkans. By the time of the Bulgarian massacres there was widespread interest in the specific nationalistic movements spreading across the Ottoman Empire's European lands. 'The Friends of the Suffering Rayah of Bosnia and Herzegovina', and the 'Christian League in Aid of the Christians of Turkey',[17] for example, built on historical movements in Greece, Italy, Serbia, and Germany. William Stead, who will be examined in depth below, was very much involved in the British agitation for Serbian independence.

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[15] Officially the Ottoman Empire, ruled by the Government in Constantinople referred to as the Sublime Porte, many contemporaries, in Britain, referred to the Ottoman Empire as 'Turkey', the 'Turks', and 'Turkish' customs. Many contemporaries delineated the European portion of the Ottoman state as 'Turkey in Europe' as opposed to 'Asian' Turkey, or 'Turkey in Asia'. It is acknowledged that the phrase Turk is incomplete to represent inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, however, contemporary usage will be followed when in context.

[16] The Treaty of Paris officially split the protection of Christians in the Ottoman Empire between France and Russia. France was responsible for Latin Christians and Russia for Orthodox Christians. Though embedded in the treaty Britain saw the Russian 'protection' as a front for westward expansion of influence and pushed back on this duty.
See: Victor Taki, "Limits of Protection: Russia and the Orthodox Coreligionists in the Ottoman Empire," *The Carl Beck Papers*, eds W. Chase, B. Donnorummo, A. Konitzer, R. Hayden, No. 2401, (Ohio: University of Pittsburgh, 2015); Robert P Geraci & Michael Khodarkovsky, ed., *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia, (*New York: Cornell University Press, 2001).

[17] "Letter to the editor," *John Bull*, 11 December 1875, 5; "Herzegovina and Bosnia," *London Evening Standard*, 10 September 1875, 2.

The Foreign Office archives, which contain extensive records from this period, collated many of the depositions and letters to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby, during the initial agitation. These archives have been examined thoroughly, however, it is clear from this study that there was a distinctive, early religious strain, especially from the North of the country, that grew out of the pre-existing concern around the Ottoman treatment of its Christian populations. In effect, the process was similar in the Bulgarian case to that of the Jamaican one a decade earlier. Groups and individuals held meetings to express their dissatisfaction surrounding British foreign policy (in this case, imperial policy in the Jamaican), and sent official deputations or depositions to the Secretary responsible.

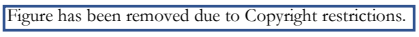
Though the agitation surrounding the Bulgarian atrocities very quickly moved beyond these pre-existing interest groups, these religious groups who maintained an interest in the freedom and independence movements in the Balkans offered a particularly important impetus to the initial agitation. As will be demonstrated below, individuals from these associations spread across the movement giving it a particularly evangelical flavour.

Beginnings of the Agitation

The initial information regarding the massacres in Bulgaria was received in Britain in May and June 1876. *The Daily News* was the first major paper to report on the atrocities, with the most important reports coming through on 23 June 1876, due to information received by their correspondent Edwin Pears, who was a British lawyer living in Constantinople. The initial spark of agitation came from a small paper in the North Country in Durham. William Stead, a young journalist in his late twenties, was the editor of the *Northern Echo*, based in Darlington, Durham. Stead was already something of a campaigner and a proud nonconformist Christian prior to the Bulgarian massacres. The *Echo* did not have the resources to receive direct information from Bulgaria and as such much of the information that Stead used came direct from the *Daily News*.

Richard Shannon has argued that 'the inauguration of Stead's "atrocity" campaign in the north on 23 August was the most important development in the actual process of agitation before the

publication on 6 September of Gladstone's *Bulgarian Horrors*.'[18] Shannon compressed the timeline into the latter days of August 1876 and charged Stead with joining a pre-existing movement, sparked by others, however Stead had been across the news from Bulgaria since the *Daily News* had begun reporting in June.[19] While Pears and the *Daily News* under the editorship of Frank Hill were unapologetically Liberal, having a history of supporting Italian independence and the North in the US Civil War, the paper was still an establishment paper. It was Liberal, but it was not radical, or overtly religious. The *Daily News,* while initially reporting Pears' information, approached the issue from a distinctly liberal stance, rather than religious, but Stead's campaign on the back of the information from the *News* combined his penchant for social agitation with his nonconformist, evangelical passion.



W. T. Stead, Editor in Chief of the *Pall Mall Gazette,* 1881.[20]

Stead wrote an editorial on Pears' information on 24 June where he wrote that 'Men, women, and children, have been ruthlessly murdered,' and the Bashi-Bazouks were let loose on the Bulgarian population such as 'never had dogs pursued their game more mercilessly.'[21] For Stead the biggest concern and point of focus, was not the international problems developing, as explored by Pears, but rather the nature of the acts of violence and atrocities that had been committed. Exploring these in his characteristically blunt style, Stead also wrote of Bulgarian Christian women being 'carried off as legitimate prizes by the Bashi-Bazouks.'[22] This focus on women, especially their rape in war, was a general theme in British social agitations and a specific theme in the Bulgarian agitation. The focus on rape very distinctly and specifically placed the innocence of the victim and the guilt of the perpetrator in the readers' minds. This linked back to the idea of honour and civilisation and barbarianism that

[18] Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, 49.

[19] See in particular Stead's editorials in the *Northern Echo* from April through June 1876.

[20] Unknown author, *William Stead*, https://attackingthedevil.co.uk/gallery.php.

[21] *Northern Echo*, 24 June 1876.

[22] *Ibid.*

would become key ideas in the agitation. This became a running theme throughout the agitation, with Stead at the forefront of this message, especially with the acknowledgement that the innocent women who were raped and the innocent children who were murdered, were also innocent *Christian* women and innocent *Christian* children. In other words, the women and child victims of Ottoman violence, were supposed to be read as in the place of the readers' wives and children.

The events in Bulgaria were covered in the *Echo* throughout June and July and Stead supported the first public meeting that was held to agitate against the Ottoman atrocities and the British government's complicity, chaired by Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury in the middle of July.[23] Stead wrote on 13 July, that 'North Countrymen, in spite of diplomatists…know too well that the Servian and the Montenegrin, the Bosnian and the Bulgarian, are fighting for the sacred rights of human beings, in obedience to one of the noblest instincts of humanity.'[24] Making reference to the Jamaican incident Stead wrote in criticism of those 'who have the effrontery to condemn the execrations excited by the atrocities of the Moslem by a reference to the misdeeds of that Governor Eyre, whom they defended against the indignant impeachment of the English people.'[25] Here Stead overtly connected the violence which Eyre used to put down the Morant Bay rebellion with the actions of the Porte, and by so doing criticised those in the British government, implicitly Prime Minister Disraeli, who defended Eyre and defended the Porte. This approach became a focus for the agitators, who saw the response of Disraeli as at most approving, or at least ignoring, the behaviour of the Ottoman soldiers and irregulars in Bulgaria.

In his paper, Stead called on 'the people of England' to speak 'out on this question, for it is a question which appeals to every one of them' for the 'solidarity of mankind, the consciousness of brotherhood is stronger among the toiling myriads than in the Upper Tea [British aristocracy].'[26] Issuing a call for those in England to support the Christians in the Ottoman Empire, Stead referred to

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[23] Cooper was a Conservative member of the House of Lords, but was involved in social causes, philanthropy and charities his entire life.

[24] "England and the Eastern Insurgents," *Northern Echo*, 13 July 1876, 2.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*

the 'brotherhood' and 'solidarity of mankind' and the unwillingness of the British government to fight 'for the cause of the oppressed'.[27] Stead counteracted the response that the Bulgarian Christians were too different from the British Christians by writing that

> We do not ask for the sympathy of England for them as enlightened Christians, or as Christians at all. To us, they are simply men, and on the broad ground of humanity they appeal to us for our moral support. They are degraded – they are semi-barbarians, some of them – and are as cruel, perhaps as their Moslem lords. What then? Are we never to sympathise with a man who is struggling for liberty until he has acquired all the virtues and accomplishments of a civilized Englishmen?[28]

Stead here was slightly disingenuous. He drew on a very specific language of humanity, justice, and liberty and made mention that the right the Bulgarians have to humane treatment is embedded in their very humanity. The humanitarian language here is that the Bulgarian revolution was a movement for freedom from the Ottoman Empire and it was the duty of the British 'to sympathise with those who are struggling for freedom.'[29]

This links with what might be seen as human rights discourse, and its connection to political action. The disingenuousness here, however, lies with how Stead attempted to distance himself from the religiosity of the movement. Stead understood the Bulgarian matter through his religiosity. As could be seen at various times through various public figures, there was a public/private split for Stead. Publicly, at times especially when it was politically convenient, he argued for the political rights of the Bulgarians, however, in his private correspondence and journal he made it clear that his prime motivating force was his religious beliefs. 'Men' because they are such, deserve 'moral support', was an idea that came from the religious belief that people hold intrinsic value. What is interesting to note here, however, is despite Stead's religiosity, the expression of the concern for rights. Samuel Moyn has argued that 'if there was a rights of man movement in the nineteenth century, it was liberal

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[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] *Ibid.,* 3.

nationalism.'[30] Indeed, Stead was a liberal nationalist, insofar as he saw this as a vehicle for what he saw to be the will of God, expressed by all those who were 'struggling for liberty'.

The nexus here between Stead's humanitarian concern over the suffering of fellow humans and his desire for a human-wide struggle for liberty is precisely what Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown explored.[31] Wilson and Brown argued that the difference between humanitarianism and human rights movements was 'the difference between immediate action to achieve individual results and unrelenting, generations-long efforts to establish new legal and political arrangements for whole classes of people.'[32] The former is exactly what Stead was campaigning for, from his evangelical, religious position. He argued for immediate intervention to cease suffering of the individuals involved and called on governments to protect the liberty of entire groups of people. What Stead was trying to do is what Thomas Laqueur referred to as expanding the field for human sympathy.[33]

What defined Stead's humanitarianism, though couched, at times, in liberal morality, was his religious belief. The Bulgarian Christians needed support, Stead argued, for 'they represented the cause of progress, of humanity, of civilization in Eastern Europe…it is their "manifest destiny" to oust the Turk from their provinces.'[34] Because they were Christian, because that fact ensured future progress, Stead argued that Christian Britain had the responsibility and the opportunity to support and 'sympathise' with the Bulgarian Christians, for if they did not it would endanger the liberties of the British at home.[35]

In the Jamaican case the big split between the religious and legal elements of the agitation was most evident in their perspective on the suffering of Jamaicans and its impact on the rights of the British in Britain. What is clear from Stead's reporting and his articles is that he viewed Bulgaria in the same way, but from a religious perspective. Tellingly, after the Bulgarian agitation Stead became known

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[30] Moyn, *Last Utopia*, 26.

[31] Wilson & Brown eds, *Humanitarianism and suffering*, (2008).

[32] Wilson & Brown, 'Introduction', in Wilson & Brown eds, *Humanitarianism and Suffering,* (2008): 11-12.

[33] Thomas W. Lacqueur, "Mourning, pity and the work of narrative in the making of 'humanity'," in Wilson & Brown, eds., *Humanitarianism and Suffering*, (2008): 31-57.

[34] England and the Eastern Insurgents', *Northern Echo*, 13 July 1876, 2.

[35] Ibid.

for his campaigning work for the welfare of prostitutes in Britain.[36] For Stead, at least part of the Bulgarian agitation was about drawing a religious parallel between the excesses of a barbaric government on its God-fearing people and the way that the British government decreased the religiosity and spirituality of those in Britain.

In August Januarius MacGahan sent his initial report to Frank Hill of the *Dailly News* in London. MacGahan was an experienced war correspondent who had been sent on a fact-finding mission to Bulgaria by Hill. He was also accompanied by Eugene Schuyler, the representative of the United States Ambassador to the Porte. MacGahan's mission to Bulgaria was so noteworthy that it constituted a direct impetus for Disraeli to order Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, to send Walter Baring, a secretary at the embassy, to Bulgaria to compile his own report for the government.

MacGahan's big news, when published on 7 August, was his account of the aftermath of the violence in Batak. On the same day that MacGahan's reports were published Robert Bourke, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, read Baring's initial report in the House of Commons. The combination of the news from Bulgaria caused an increase in public agitation, not least from Stead. Stead wrote that 'there was no escaping from that fact that "we had been bottle-holders of the Bashi-Bazouk."'[37] 'The integrity of Sodom,' Stead continued, 'the independence of Hell, in the name of God and Humanity, let us end that alliance once for all!'[38] On the agitation that was developing in Britain against the atrocities, Stead wrote that

> it was one of those leaps of heart whereby a nation rises in a sublime moment to the heights which tower above the mists of prejudice and the confusing barriers of conflicting interests…It was a great moral outburst, rendered all the more momentous because of the cynicism with which Lord Beaconsfield had exalted British interests above all other considerations.[39]

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[36] William Stead, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon*, 1885 in *Pall Mall Gazette* on 6 July 1885, 7 July 1885, 8 July 1885, and 10 July 1885.

[37] W. T. Stead, *The M. P. for Russia*, (New York, Putnam, 1909), 252.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*

Although written after the fact in his recollections, these statements from Stead demonstrate the central thrust of his arguments at the time. His view was that political interests had been the dominating force in British politics, especially under the premiership of Disraeli. For Stead, and others discussed below, the dominating force of British politics should have been its moral obligations, obligations that were heaven-sent. According to Stead, the nation was to act in accordance with the will of God and the tenets of humanity and compassion and the refusal to do so directly contributed to the burgeoning public backlash, not only against the Ottoman Empire, but the policies of Disraeli. In the *Echo* Stead wrote that

> The cause for this rapid concentration of popular indignation upon the head of the Premier is very simple. He has betrayed the cause of humanity to pursue the glittering bubble of ambition…For, disguise it as we may, the fact remains that Mr Disraeli is largely responsible for these massacres.[40]

Humanity in this case, as used by Stead, was connected to his religious experience. He saw himself on a mission from God to influence British policy. In January 1877 Stead wrote in his journal that he believed

> that in God's hands I have been instrumental in doing much to prevent a great national crime, a war with Russia on the side of the Turks…I felt the clear call of God's voice, "Arouse the nation or be damned." If I did not do all I could, I would deserve damnation.[41]

It was this feeling that he was called to serve God that framed each one of Stead's statements and calls for justice. In his life he referred to God as his 'Senior Partner.'[42] To Stead's mind God provided him 'signposts' that directed him where he needed to go and it was up to him to go and do what he was required to do.[43] The Bulgarian agitation, to Stead, was this movement that demanded success for it

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[40] "Editorial," *Northern Echo*, 9 August 1876, 3

[41] J. W. Robertson Scott, *The Life and Death of a Newspaper*, (London: Methuen, 1952), 104

[42] Edith Harper, *Stead: The Man, Personal Reminiscences*, (London: William Rider & Son, 1918), 8.

[43] *Ibid.*

was the will of God. In the Bulgarian matter, justice and humanity meant to Stead the treatment of people, in this case, Christians, in a Christian manner.

Stead was not the only provincial editor, especially after MacGahan and Baring's reports, to report and agitate on the Bulgarian matter. He was however, as noted, becoming nationally recognised as a leader in the agitation. As Owen Mulpetre has argued, 'Stead's irrepressible journalism, sense of Nonconformist duty and, most importantly, his refusal to fudge on grounds of good taste and delicacy, particularly suited the campaign.'[44] Stead ensured that he did not spare his readers by including 'horrific revelations of massacres, summary executions and rapes, all elements that would one day form the meat and drink of New Journalism,' while other papers attempted to screen their readers from the distasteful elements.[45] Stead provided a coherent narrative of the agitation in which he posited a good side (Bulgarian Christians, British agitators) and an evil side (Turks and Disraeli's government). This Manichean dichotomy between good and evil, resonated particularly with a religious readership, especially when couched in the evangelical style of Stead's writings. Writing to many nonconformists, who were 'used to the notion that they had to continue to be true to their consciences even when this brought personal disadvantage,'[46] Stead's narrative demanded action. Speaking as an evangelical nonconformist, 'Stead invoked the evangelical passions of his readership to move to action in otherwise indirectly relevant issues as grand tests of their faith in God and duty to country.'[47]

What is of particular interest here, is that this milieu was unlike the Baptist element of the Jamaican movement, which also drew very heavily on the pre-existing anti-slavery movement. Stead may have framed the Bulgarian matter within the broader 'Slavonian' movement, but his focus on British foreign policy to support non-British Christians was discernibly nonconformist. This policy focus, as mentioned, also confirms Moyn's idea that human rights of the period were expressed as a

[44] Owen Mulpetre, "W. T. Stead and the New Journalism," MPhil diss., (University of Teesside, 2010), 87.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Simon Goldsworthy, "English Nonconformity and the Pioneering of the Modern Newspaper Campaign," *Journalism Studies,* 7, no. 3, (2006), 394.

[47] Whitehead, "The Bulgarian Horrors," 133.

commitment to liberal nationalism.[48] This is also combined with the humanitarian focus explored by Rodogno and Bass,[49] which advocated for political and/or military intervention in a foreign sovereign state to force political change with the aim to alleviate suffering. The religious element with Jamaica focused specifically on the brotherhood and common cause of the anti-slavery movement and the religious responsibilities of those in power. In particular, the Jamaican agitators focused on the 'sameness' of the Afro-Jamaicans, in religion especially. For Bulgaria, and Stead, the differences were illuminated, but the religious responsibilities, translated into political expediency, were the primary responsibility.

At the same time as Stead was increasing his calls for action in response to government policy Edward Freeman, a historian that was actively involved in the Jamaican agitation, was also active in agitating against government policy and Ottoman rule. While Stead was a journalist, Freeman was a thinker and writer. The two contrasted religiously as well. Stead was a nonconformist evangelical, while Freeman was a high Church evangelical. Freeman, when reflecting on the Bulgarian matter, saw his role as being responsible for 'preaching a crusade'.[50] For him this crusade had begun in 1875, within the Slavonian movement, but he shifted his language slightly to fit the terms of the Bulgarian matter.[51] Combined with his crusading mentality in the cause of 'justice and humanity',[52] Freeman had a penchant for aggressive rhetorical attacks and a racist streak in his ideas.[53]

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Professor Edward Augustus Freeman, 1892.[54]

[48] Moyn, *The Last Utopia.*

[49] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; Bass, *Freedom's Battle.*

[50] Freeman to Miss Yonge, 2 October 1876, in William Stephens, *The Life and Letters of Edward A. Freeman, D.C.L., Ll. D,* vol. II, (London: Macmillan & co., 1895), 138.

[51] See for example similar arguments against Turks in the *Fortnightly Review* December 1875 and *Pall Mall Gazette* on 8 June 1876.

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] See for example C. J. W. Parker, "The Failure of Liberal racialism: The Racial Ideas of E. A. Freeman," *The Historical Journal*, 24, no. 4, (1981): 825-846.

[54] British Museum, " The Late Professor E. A. Freeman, D.C.L, L.L.D.," (London: R. Taylor & co., 1892), https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1896-1230-860, accessed 1 January 2022.

Prior to July 1876 Freeman had spent most of his time working with philanthropists to help Serbian refugees as part of the Anti-Turk league, but after the *Daily News* reports of 23 June and 11 July Freeman turned his attention to Bulgaria. For Freeman, though his rhetoric was definitively religious humanitarianism, the animus behind this was clearly an anti-Ottoman mindset.

Following a debate in the House of Commons on 10 July on the Bulgarian massacres, Freeman wrote to the *Daily News*. He started by stating that 'the thanks of every lover of right and freedom are due to Mr. Forster and the other members of both Houses of Parliament' who confronted Disraeli and Derby over Bulgaria.[55] Racially castigating Disraeli,[56] Freeman accused the government of deliberately attempting to hide and delay any news out of Turkey. 'There can,' Freeman continued, 'I believe, be no doubt that we, as a nation represented by our Government, have been giving a moral, or immoral, support to the foul despotism with whose deeds of unutterable wrong heaven and earth are ringing.'[57] Referring to the guilt of the perpetrators and the Ottoman soldiers, Freeman also laid guilt at the feet of the government and 'England herself.'[58] Freeman also placed himself and the other early agitators in the picture; 'but the hearts of the men who are now fighting for all that is just and holy against the powers of darkness have been turned to steel, their blood turned to flame…'[59] Freeman ended his letter by calling for activity 'outside the walls of Parliament.'[60] He called for protests, meetings, to demonstrate that 'there still are those who have not learned to call evil good and good evil.'[61]

Freeman's first involvement in the Bulgarian agitation, framed by his Anglican upbringing, showed his position in the battle that was coming, within England, between forces of righteousness and forces of evil over the suffering of innocent people. For Freeman the morality of the matter was a

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[55] "The debate on Bulgaria," *Daily News*, 13 July 1876, 6.

[56] Freeman held, and expressed, extreme racial prejudices towards Turks, Jews, Chinese, African Americans, and Indigenous-Americans. Parker, "The Failure of Liberal racialism"

[57] *Daily News,* 13 July 1876, 6.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *Ibid.*

matter of religion, righteous actions against evil behaviour. The crusading imagery here is striking in similarity to the imagery privately expressed by Stead. Both men would combine into a broader agitation movement, and both were heavily evangelical in style. However, Stead was distinctly nonconformist, and Freeman was resolutely Anglican. For both Stead and Freeman, the evangelical passion and belief in a righteous superiority informed their view of the evil of the events in Bulgaria and the perpetrators, which expressed itself in a discourse of humanitarianism.

On 20 July Freeman wrote to the *Daily News* and attacked Derby's ability to do his job as Foreign Secretary.[62] Freeman also criticised Muslim governance and Derby's capacity to understand the difficulties of non-Muslims living under Muslim governance and criticised Derby's response to a deputation when he said atrocities were committed on both sides.[63] Due to the nature of the Muslim oppressor and the Christian oppressed, Freeman argued that 'brutalities' committed by the oppressor are 'far blacker' than the same deeds 'done in the wild justice' of fighting against tyrants.[64] Freeman concluded by suggesting that Derby erroneously perceived the matters of 'justice and humanity as very minor and can have nothing to say on its behalf.'[65]

Freeman also delivered a lecture at Bath, where he spoke on the 'tyranny of Turkey' and the corruption of the Porte and praised 'Englishmen helping the struggling champions of freedom and Christendom'.[66] A resolution regarding the recall of the fleet from Besika Bay was passed in the meeting.[67] At the 27 July meeting in the Willis rooms, which contained many of the leading figures of the early agitation,[68] Freeman spoke and recited the 'notorious abuses of Turkish rule.'[69] Freeman repeated his by now established line of the degradation of Ottoman rule and repeated the stereotypes

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[62] "Lord Derby and the Eastern Christians," *Daily News*, 20 July 1876, 5-6

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] "Court Circular," *The Times*, 24 July 1876, 9.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] Such as Earl of Shaftesbury, James Lewis Farley, Evelyn Ashley, A. J. Mundella, Henry Fawcett, Auberon Herbert, John Morley, Henry Havelock, and others.

[69] "British Policy in the East," *The Times*, 28 July 1876, 10.

of the 'quiet, industrious, hard-working' Bulgarians.[70] Freeman's resolution was that there should be a call for the removal of Ottoman rule over their European empire. Like many of the other agitators, including Gladstone who would come into the movement somewhat later, part of the entire purpose of the agitation was to remove Ottoman rule from Christian, European lands.

Whilst presenting his political views in terms of national liberation, it is clear from Freeman's writings, both publicly and privately, that his hatred of the Ottomans and his support for Bulgarian Christians was driven by his religious beliefs. In an article in the *Fortnightly Review* in December 1875, just prior to the Bulgarian massacres and in relation to the Serbian movement, Freeman made it clear that he saw Britain's support for the Ottoman Empire an evil act.[71] In his article Freeman argued that whilst there was a clear humanitarian focus to the support of the national movements in Eastern Europe, it was incumbent on English Anglicans to support the Christians in the Ottoman Empire as they had historically been hated by Western Europe as belonging to the Eastern Church. Freeman wrote that supporting a Muslim Ottoman at the expense of Christian Europeans was a 'national shame.'[72] For Freeman the cry of the ensuing Bulgarian movement was 'Justice to Eastern Christendom' after decades of British support for its Muslim, 'barbarian', despots.[73]

Freeman's comments relating to Ottoman rule are instructive in relation to this strain of religious humanitarian rhetoric. Muslim rule was inherently incompatible with Christian morality and living, according to Freeman and those like him, such as Evelyn Ashley, Auberon Herbert, A. J. Mundella and Stead. Freeman may have taken the rhetoric to the extreme, however the crux of his leitmotifs - 'justice', 'morality' and 'humanity' - was a definitively Christian one, in that Christians in the East, while not necessarily comparable to Protestant England, were still to be supported against Muslim invaders. For Freeman, the responsibility of 'Englishmen' and by extension their government, was one of upholding Christian justice and morality, within Britain and throughout the world, which in this case

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[70] *Ibid.,*

[71] *Fortnightly Review*, December 1875, 748.

[72] *Fortnightly Review*, December 1875, 752.

[73] *Contemporary Review,* February 1877, 500.

necessitated the removal of Ottoman rule in the predominantly Christian European provinces. On 7 September, referencing Gladstone's pamphlet Freeman used definitive religious language to reiterate his point. He said, 'Let it be made plain not only that we will not again go forth to fight for Sodom and Gomorrah, but that we will not allow the yoke of Sodom and Gomorrah to be again pressed upon our Christian brethren.'[74] This is as clear a statement of belief as any that Freeman uttered regarding Bulgaria. The Ottoman Empire was comparable to Sodom and Gomorrah, the symbol for the greatest depredation and evil the world had ever known. It was not a surprise to Freeman that the Porte would behave in such a way, as, in his opinion, it was their nature as Muslims and non-Europeans.[75] Therefore, it was the responsibility of all Christians and especially Christian Englishmen to fight the evil of the Ottoman Empire. The humanity of the Bulgarians, for Freeman, was a tool in the broader fight between Christianity and Islam, or the moral right and the immoral wrong.

This religious battle expanded into the geopolitical sphere and the geopolitics, and the religiosity cross-pollinated each other. There were perceptions of what it meant to be European and what it meant to be Asian – Europeans were Christian, and the Ottoman Empire was not.[76] Both Edward Said and Maria Todorova have argued in depth that the way that European elites, especially in Britain, viewed the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria was framed around an othering of the 'Orient' and the 'Balkans' respectively.[77] This othering was framed in religious terms, but it most certainly juxtaposed an ostensibly barbarous, Muslim group, against a Christian, but not fully civilised, element of Europe.

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[74] *South Wales Daily News*, 8 September 1876, 5.

[75] 'To them [the defenders of the Ottoman Empire] no phrase is more offensive than to be told that the Turks are an Asiatic horde encamped in Europe. No phrase is more offensive, because no phrase is more true.' Edward Freeman, *Fortnightly Review*, December 1875, 757.

[76] Gladstone stated that 'In the olden time, all Western Europe Christendom sympathised with the resistance to the common enemy [Ottomans]; and even during the struggles of the Reformation, there were prayers…offered up in the English churches for the success of the Emperor, the head of the Roman Catholic power and influence, in his struggles with the Turk.' William Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, (London: Lovell, Adam Wesson, & Co., 1876), 10.

[77] Said, *Orientalism*;; Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*.

This rhetoric confirms Abigail Green's notion that it is through 'the specific social and political milieux that supported these early 'humanitarian' campaigns' such as the integration of religion, human rights discourse and liberal nationalism, 'that we can begin to appreciate how discourses of humanity and of the rights of man cross-fertilised in practical, political ways.'[78] Freeman and Stead, and those like them, placed themselves at the forefront of a campaign that advocated for the humanity of Bulgarians and crossed over at times with the ideas around the rights of man, because of their inherent religious beliefs. This was not always the case, as shall be demonstrated subsequently, but at the beginning of the Bulgarian agitation, prior to political involvement, the religious element propelled parts of the campaign.

Stead and Freeman, while both representing a distinctly religious impetus in their initial agitation came to the agitation from different perspectives. Despite his exaggerated rhetoric it does appear that Stead had a concern for a broader idea of humanity. Stead was an Evangelical nonconformist and as such came from a Christian concept of activist justice and liberty, but he expanded this, in his rhetoric at least, to include all sufferers of violence. Of course, in the process of doing this he disregarded the reports of Christian on Muslim violence in both Bulgaria and Serbia, which all reports indicated was at least present before most of the violence. Freeman on the other hand has been referred to as supporting co-religionists, in the words of Trim.[79] Freeman made a broad leap, for him, by conflating the Christians of the Balkans with the Christians in the rest of Europe, but the religious impulse to defend Christian Europe from the Muslim Ottomans was principal.

Growing agitation

From the beginning of the agitation Disraeli had isolated himself and his government from many of the religious (and liberal) moralists, with his focused Russophobia and flippant disregard of suffering. While attempting to backtrack publicly from his 'coffee-house babble' comment and joke regarding

[78] Green, "Humanitarianism," p. 1163.

[79] Trim, "'If a prince use tyrannie towards his people': interventions on behalf of foreign populations in early modern Europe," in Simms & Trim eds, *Humanitarian Intervention: A History*, 38.

Ottoman torture habits in parliament, Disraeli in no way appeared to understand the depth of the religious misgivings of an important element of British society. Peter Marsh has suggested that Disraeli viewed the agitators as those 'who abandoned themselves to humanitarian sentimentalism, the lesser ranks he disparaged as misguided, the leaders he denounced for giving comfort to the enemy.'[80] Within Disraeli's own Cabinet there was disagreement over the value of the religious argument for Ottoman reform and the protection of Christians. Even Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, the Marquess of Salisbury, the Indian Secretary at the time, expressed hope that 'humanitarian and religious desires of the country would be found to coincide with the national interest.'[81] What held Salisbury back from expressing support for the agitation, apart from his presence inside cabinet, was his stated opinion that national interest took priority over moral issues.[82] Salisbury saw foreign policy as the distinct purview of educated individuals, preferably from the aristocratic class.

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Benjamin Disraeli, The Adam Smith Institute[83]

The religious concern was widespread enough through Britain that in September 1876 Salisbury wrote to both Derby and Disraeli calling on them to implement policy that would protect Ottoman Christians from the Porte.[84] Salisbury's statement at the Lord Mayor's Banquet at the Mansion House on 2 August 1876 also demonstrated his sensitivity to those motivated by religious morality, even as one of the more public exponents of the primacy of government over emotion. Expressing the belief that the Porte would do something to stop the massacres, if not from their own will, but in response to the 'voice that is rising from every part of Europe', Salisbury mentioned the role of those in

[80] Marsh, "Lord Salisbury," 64.

[81] *Ibid.,* 66.

[82] Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury, *Lord Salisbury on politics: a selection from his articles in the Quarterly Review, 1860-1883,* Paul Smith, (Ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 53-54.

[83] Madison Prie, "Benjamin Disraeli, A Strange Prime Minister," *The Adam Smith Institute*, https://www.adamsmith.org/blog/benjamin-disraeli-a-strange-prime-minister, accessed 10 July 2021.

[84] Marsh, "Lord Salisbury," *67.*

Government.[85] Salisbury said that 'those who are in office have their feelings like other men', but are responsible for taking care of the country, beyond their own personal feelings.[86] Salisbury expressed his belief that eventually the sentiments of the people would not 'be found at variance with the duties which policy imposes upon us.'[87] Salisbury concluded by saying that

> We believe that if we uphold the rights and interests of England, and adhere to the treaties by which England is bound, and look upon that course as the first and chiefest of those duties prescribed to us, we shall thereby be doing the utmost that in us lies to maintain the real interests of peace, humanity and civilization.[88]

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury.[89]

Later, after the Constantinople conference, at which he represented the government, and the during the Russo-Ottoman war, Salisbury, in Cabinet, reaffirmed what he saw as the religious view of the matter, in his own aristocratic style. Disraeli had compared the two policies of the Imperial policy of England and the policy of crusade and stated that these were in conflict. Salisbury responded, initially by stating that there was no crusader in the Cabinet, but also that 'the religious sentiments of bodies of our countrymen could not be disregarded, nor could our own convictions be set aside', though Salisbury would follow the decision of Cabinet.[90] What is demonstrated in the remarks of Salisbury is the range of religious sentimentalism that was present. For those advocating a change in British and Ottoman policy, Salisbury was immensely preferable to Derby as the plenipotentiary to the Constantinople Conference because he had signalled his sympathy with the religious feelings present

[85] "Turkey," *The Times,* 3 August 1876, 6.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] Bloy Marjie, "Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury," *Victorian Web*, https://victorianweb.org/history/pms/salisbur.html, accessed 30 September 2020.

[90] Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria, Royal Archives, 23 March 1877.

within Britain. This was known well enough that Freeman would write in characteristically anti-Semitic tones that 'Lord Salisbury is surely taking his orders from us rather than from the Jew.'[91] Stead, Freeman and others were loudly declaring their humanitarian thoughts from the perspective of their religion, which resulted in their political attacks on the Disraeli government. Salisbury presented a line of sympathy for the religious sentiments while (somewhat disingenuously) maintaining that these had no part of policy making.

One of the biggest early town meetings was held at Manchester on 9 August. A response to MacGahan's news from Bulgaria it was presided over by the Mayor of Manchester, Alderman Curtis, to 'express indignation at the atrocities…and make known the opinion of the people of Manchester as to the duty of England with regarded to these barbarities.[92] The meeting began with a note from Bishop James Fraser, the Bishop of Manchester, who was not in attendance. Fraser's letter, which was read aloud, stated that what was expected of the Government was not non-interference, 'which, however, looks very much like interference on the wrong side…but a policy of intervention in concert with the other great Christian powers on the side of order, justice and humanity.'[93] Once again the argument for humanitarian intervention was put forward as a religious moral necessity in order to protect fellow Christians, especially as non-intervention was in fact just intervention on the other side. As would become standard, the resolutions moved at the meeting declared a 'deep abhorrence of the cruelties committed' and a call to the government to protect Christians in Turkey.[94] Although lawyer, R. H. Howorth, spoke after James' letter and two Anglican priests and cautioned that 'it would be well to separate the humanitarian part of the question from the political,'[95] the meeting concluded with another minister, Reverend Knox Little, who made it clear that the purpose of the meeting was that 'they should do something practical.'[96] Little professed that he

[91] Freeman to Bonney, 30 December 1876, in Stephens, *Life and Letters,* 145.

[92] "Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria," *The Manchester Guardian,* 10 August 1876, 6.

[93] Ibid.

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] *Ibid.*

was certain that this great city would tell the Government and Lord Derby plainly, and with one voice, that these atrocities must be put a stop to, that the people would have no complicity with them, and that they would be on the side, not of degradation, corruption and perversion, but on the side of justice, liberty, and truth.[97]

This type of language, in public meetings, became a part of the overarching language of the agitation. This was because many of the meetings were dominated by ministers of all denominations and their perception and definition of justice and humanity. In the case of Manchester, Fraser had made it clear that he perceived the issue as the great moral Christian right against the depraved moral Ottoman wrong. He called upon the government of Britain to join in intervention with the other Christian power, as it was impossible for the Ottoman Empire to improve itself and that trying to support it would fail as 'the moral forces working in the opposite direction will be too strong for us.'[98] Even though there was a call to separate the religious from the political, it is clear, that their political aims were a by-product of their religious impulses.

Canon Henry Liddon, a prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral and the Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Oxford, followed up Bishop Fraser's comments in Manchester with a sermon of his own in London at St Paul's Cathedral on 13 August. Liddon wished to encourage the agitators in London to hold a meeting like that held in Manchester but could not gain any traction with the Anglican clergy.[99] Not being able to organise a religiously supported mass meeting, Liddon took the opportunity to agitate from the pulpit in his weekly sermon. *The Guardian* reported on Liddon's 'startling sermon', noting the unsettling fact of the inclusion of political factors into the sermon.[100] Referencing the disbelief of the Conservatives regarding the reports from Bulgaria, Liddon suggested that the massacres in Bulgaria were different from others, that they would be remembered and that they were examples of 'the most refined cruelties and the harshest indignations.'[101] As it was a sermon and

[97] *Ibid.*

[98] Ibid.

[99] Liddon to Fraser, 11 August 1876, Liddon Papers, Oxford University: Keble College Archives.

[100] *Manchester Guardian*, 14 August 1876, 5.

[101] *Ibid.*

Liddon a preacher, the tone turned to Christian morality and Liddon proceeded by 'disclaiming any desire to stimulate mere sentimental feeling' and 'said it was a question of elementary morality whether the 6th and 7th Commandments should thus be violated on a gigantic scale.'[102] Referring to England as 'free' and 'humane' Liddon called for the Government to reflect this.[103] Liddon concluded that

> It was for the English people to say whether the race which had always been the same should be allowed to fight the bonds on millions who, with all their imperfections, had as much right as English Christians to liberty and freedom; and the Canon solemnly warned the English nation against sacrificing the principles of elementary morality to a supposed political and commercial necessity.[104]

Liddon's sermon was an important continuation of a language of morality and sentiment that would become widespread throughout September. Equally important was its connection to a specific Church context. Both Fraser and Liddon framed their responses within a Christian morality, a morality that was drawn from the Bible, but used in an agitating tradition developed by evangelical Christianity during the anti-slavery years.[105] The zeal of Fraser and Liddon and their reinforcement of Christian England's moral responsibilities framed the matter, within the Christian, and importantly evangelical Anglican, tradition. Freeman and Stead used their religious impulses to frame their work as a crusade, but Fraser and Liddon attempted to institutionalise their religious humanitarianism and use the weight of the institutional Church to change the political direction of British foreign policy. Liddon did not just preach a sermon, he called for particular social and political action to address the moral concerns he raised.

Fraser and Liddon were unsuccessful in encouraging the rest of the High Church establishment along the path of outright hostility toward the Government direction.[106] By the beginning of September

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[102] *Ibid.*

[103] *Ibid.*

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] Brown, *Moral capital.*

[106] A Liddon letter to Freeman, where he decried the Bishops in the House of Lords – 'Why not the Bishops? Why are they in the House of Lords, except to represent the cause of humanity and justice, when "statesmanship" and red-tapism are silent or hostile?' (Liddon to Freeman, 30 August 1876, Liddon Papers)

Liddon went on a tour of Serbia with Malcolm MacColl and the agitation was left to local politicians and nonconformist pastors. MacColl was a Scottish Episcopalian minister who had previously been the domestic chaplain of Lord Napier in St. Petersburg, Russia. He had strong links with Liddon and Gladstone and had made a career of publicly upsetting Church hierarchy. Liddon also had a history of strong, vehement opposition towards Disraeli, which at times reached into personal antagonism. Liddon wrote to *The Guardian* from Constantinople explaining that he did not feel that the British people truly understood the nature of Ottoman rule, that they 'think that the Bulgarian horrors are rare and isolated outbreaks of Turkish fanaticism.'[107] Liddon continued by writing that the events in Bulgaria were a pattern of behaviour by the Ottoman government; 'the property, the honour, and the life of every Christian in the Ottoman Empire are daily exposed to the lusts and passions of the Turks.'[108] MacColl and Liddon, in their trip through the Ottoman provinces and letters back to Gladstone and the newspapers gave a specifically organisational religious support for the burgeoning agitation back in Britain, through their focus on the conflict between Ottoman Muslims and Bulgarian Christians, even without the rest of the High Church leadership following along.

Atrocity meetings

As has been mentioned, many of the public meetings that were held, the 'atrocity meetings', were attended and encouraged by local ministers and religious leaders. These ministers came from the many denominations represented in local areas in Britain and included a wide range of views regarding the Bulgarian matter. Many of these ministers expressed Christian, moral outrage over the events in Bulgaria and demanded the Government adjust policy to address the issue and protect Ottoman Christians (often only focused on Turkey-in-Europe) in terms similar to Stead,[109] Freeman and the

[107] Liddon to Gladstone, 25 September 1876, in *Malcolm MacColl: memoirs and Correspondence*, ed. George W. E. Russell, (New York: E. P. Dutton and co., 1914), 51.

[108] *Ibid.*

[109] In this agitation the focus for the majority of the agitators narrowed to what they referred to as Turkey-in-Europe. There were separate agitations at times for the Druse and the Maronites in Lebanon, but the agitation in 1876 was very much focused in on Bulgaria, and to a lesser extent Serbia and Montenegro. See for a discussion of the other agitations Rodogno, *Against Massacre.*

Bishops. Apart from the Manchester meeting and Liddon's sermon, the first major, popular meeting that occurred was held in Darlington on 25 August, with Stead acting as a central figure behind it. This appears to be the first generalised follow up to a town meeting after Manchester, though much wilder, in keeping with the base of Stead's agitation. The Manchester meeting was very much dominated and supported by the established ministers and politicians. Stead's meeting was in his town of Darlington, where he, and his supporters, saw themselves as the animating impulse of the nation-wide agitation.[110]

As Stead had written, there was a distinct feeling of the role of the 'North' in the agitation. Stead noted that the meeting was 'crowded, indignant, and unanimous.'[111] The meeting was presided over by the mayor and two of the MPs who represented Darlington expressed their regret for not being able to attend. Reverend T. E. Hodgson, the Anglican vicar of Darlington, spoke and whilst supporting the previously addressed resolution of expressing to the Government that the meeting provided no 'moral support to the Turks', stated that 'he considered that this was not a political question', for if it had been he would not have participated.[112] Hodgson, expressing the general horror at the 'most inhuman atrocities', spoke on the nature of Islam and that there was a belief among the Ottoman Muslims that 'the more infidels they killed the greater their chances of Paradise.'[113] As such, Hodgson argued, there could never be certainty that the events in Bulgaria would never be repeated. Hodgson's remarks were clearly informed by (and expressed in) his role as a minister of religion. Despite his protestations, he clearly spoke to obtain a political end, namely in order to 'strengthen the hands of the Government and to let them know the feelings of the English people'.[114]

In the same meeting at Darlington, the Reverend H. Gilmore did not avoid the political element of the question. His remarks were informed by his religious beliefs but were expressed in a distinctly humanitarian manner. After criticising the Disraeli government and what he saw as an unbalanced neutrality, Gilmore expressed his belief that the Ottoman Empire would soon collapse and

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[110] "The North Country and the Atrocities," *Northern Echo*, 26 August 1876, 3.

[111] Stead, *M. P. for Russia*, 253.

[112] "The North Country and the Atrocities" *Northern Echo*, 26 August 1876, 3.

[113] *Ibid.*

[114] *Ibid., 4.*

that British support 'could not go against the hand of Time – they could not defy the hand of Providence'.[115] Gilmore criticised Disraeli for not realising that it was not Britain's duty to support the Ottoman Empire 'in defiance of righteousness and truth.'[116]

For his part, Reverend C. H. Gough introduced a resolution to form a committee to raise money for the sick and wounded in Bulgaria. Gough, again, pledged to avoid the political side of the question, but his remarks are instructive. Gough stated that the atrocities in Bulgaria 'shocked the most sacred feelings of humanity.'[117] The implicit suggestion here is that, because humanity itself is sacred, it was the responsibility of Britain to be 'on the side of freedom' and to 'stand up in the defence of those who were oppressed.'[118] Other perspectives were shared during this meeting, but it is instructive to examine the statements of the three religious men who spoke. Despite the claims by Gough and Hodgson that they were avoiding a political approach to the issue, their comments were inherently political in nature, in that they sought a specific political outcome. In expressing their moral outrage, they used abstract terms such as 'justice' and 'humanity' to express a fundamentally religious sensibility. This was the practice of many religious agitators, whose protestations were that they were not politically motivated, but whose arguments were indeed political. The motivations behind the agitation of these religious figures were not, in fact, political cosmopolitanism as suggested by Lacquer,[119] or 'liberal nationalism' as suggested by Moyn,[120] but were in practice and intent motivated by religious feeling. This religious feeling was, nonetheless, expressed in a political manner, because, as Abigail Green has argued, the agitation was

[115] 'The North Country and the Atrocities', *Northern Echo*, 26 August 1876, 3.

[116] *Ibid.*

[117] *Ibid.*

[118] *Ibid.*

[119] Thomas Laqueur, "Mourning, pity and the work of narrative in the making of 'humanity'," in *Humanitarianism and Suffering,* Wilson & Brown eds, 31-57.

[120] Moyn, *Last Utopia,* 29.

> a meeting point between traditions of political radicalism and the more religious motivation culture of moral reform, undercutting the opposition between religious and secular political orientations that has been the focus of so much scholarship.[121]

After Darlington many local meetings began to spring up. On 31 August, the Baptist Union of Wales at their annual meeting, representing 'upwards of 600 churches or congregations, and about 70,000 communicants or members in the principality'[122] resolved, and sent as a petition to the Foreign Office, that stated:

> That this Union regards with horror and indignation the shocking barbarities perpetrated by the Turkish troops in Bulgaria, and emphatically condemns the indifference shown by her Majesty's government in reference to these outrages, and sincerely trusts that it will promptly adapt such measures as will prevent the repetition of such atrocities.[123]

It is important to stress what this petition advocates and what it misses out. There could be no organisation that expressed more religious zeal than the Baptist congregations, however the petition was framed in an expressly political manner, addressing the response of the government, while using the key moral terms of 'horror', 'indignation', 'barbarities' and 'outrages.' Crucially, the Baptist Union was not at the forefront of the agitation as the Baptist missionary societies were in Jamaica. This is a result of the difference in pre-existing religious networks that were present in Jamaica and Bulgaria.

In the Jamaican case there were many in the missionary societies who had spent time in Jamaica and had intimate contact with missionaries and congregations inside Jamaica. These networks were not present in Bulgaria. While there had been connections with the Serbian movement, there was no connection with congregations of Christians inside Bulgaria. This gave the Bulgarian agitation more of a focus on the agitators than the victims, whereas the connections in Jamaica allowed the agitators to place themselves as representative of the victims. In the Bulgarian case the victims of massacre were recognised as the 'other'; there was no love lost historically between Christians in Britain and the

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[121] Green, "Humanitarianism," 1174.

[122] Petition to Lord Derby, FO 78/2551, c. 20-21.

[123] *Ibid.*

Eastern Orthodox Christians. However, the linguistic agitation from the religious perspective worked hard to place the victims of massacre within a religious frame of mind – both as co-religionists, but also the focus was placed on the role of British Christians to advocate for 'humanity' and 'justice'. In the Jamaican campaign, however, the agitators pushed heavily for the victims to be positioned in their 'sameness' to the British public, through their religious similarity and the specific connections between the communities.

After the first week of meetings, Stead wrote in the *Northern Echo* of 'the great wave of enthusiasm which is sweeping over the land' and commented on the lessons that could be learned from this.[124] Linking the broader movements to the crusades, and himself to Peter the Hermit (the leader and spiritual heart of the First Crusade), Stead wrote that 'we begin to realise the naturalness of what has hitherto appeared most unnatural'.[125] In a religiously fractured world there could still take place 'a feeling of indignation before which the Cabinet is trembling.'[126] Once again, Stead linked the feeling and movement to the horror of the massacre at Cawnpore during the Indian mutiny and called the meetings an expression of 'the great choking sob, the inarticulate moan', which 'attested the intensity of an unutterable emotion.'[127]

The meetings themselves were clearly emotional, religious, as well as political. It was this combination of emotional indignation that was most clearly depicted in the political remedies suggested for the situation in Bulgaria. It is this emotional aspect to the agitation that problematises Moyn's argument that the expression of a rights of man discourse in the nineteenth century was in liberal nationalism.[128] This liberal nationalism was present, but as the example of Stead made clear, it was not the driving force behind the initial agitation in the Bulgarian cases. As Emma Hutchinson's work demonstrates, emotions played a key role in responses to suffering within the history of humanitarianism and it is in Stead's reminiscences that this can be observed most clearly. Stead's

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[124] "The intensity of the National Indignation," *Northern Echo*, 4 September 1876, 2.

[125] *Ibid*

[126] *Ibid.*

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History,* 26.

rhetoric is an important example of Hutchinson's argument that media narratives and political speeches had a way of representing atrocities in a way that generated shared, embedded emotional meanings which enabled distant witnesses to share the injury.[129] Her idea of collectivising emotional trauma is valuable in this case. What Stead and the other religiously motivated agitators did, effectively given Stead's platform, was to collectivise not only the trauma and emotion of the atrocities, but also the blame for them. When the emotion was embedded within a religious perspective, this became even more powerful; becoming Stead's 'great choking sob.'

Gladstone

As the meetings progressed through the Autumn, and with Gladstone's involvement in the agitation from September, much of the rhetoric shifted away from its initial religious impetus, towards a more normative ethical stance, effectively following Gladstone's lead and responding to the political events. As will be demonstrated in the following sections Gladstone's participation in the agitation can be considered from an internationalist and a liberal perspective. However, Gladstone's religiosity is important to recognise. Richard Shannon argued that despite Gladstone's late engagement with the political agitation, it is difficult to see Gladstone as indifferent on a matter that

> Ignited the moral passion of the great section of the British public on an issue which engaged every element of his politico-religious existence – his Catholic Christianity, his European sense, his Liberalism, his democratic sympathies.[130]

Interestingly, these aspects of Gladstone's passions are reflected in the three sections of this thesis, and his European sense will be examined in terms of international rights, and his liberalism in terms of a liberal morality.

Gladstone's religious identity was inseparable from his political identity. In his early years Gladstone was forced to give up his insistence that the church dominate the state, but the conception

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[129] Emma Hutchinson, *Affective Communities in World Politics: Collective Emotions After Trauma*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[130] Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, 89.

of a moral purpose in politics remained.[131] As has been argued by a variety of scholars,[132] Gladstone, while in office was often pragmatic and conservative in nature. However, after resigning from the leadership of the Liberal party in 1874, Gladstone had the freedom to act as an individual in his comments. Both Shannon and Saab detail Gladstone's reluctance to lead the agitation and his reluctance to return to the party and lead in that manner.[133] However, despite this reluctance Gladstone wrote to Granville on 29 August stating that:

> Good ends can rarely be obtained in politics without passion, and there is now, for the first time for a good many years, a virtuous passion. I am much struck with the indications of feeling that the post (as well as the newspapers) brings me daily.[134]

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William Ewart Gladstone.[135]

Up until this point, Gladstone had been spending his retirement in the work of ecclesiastical studies and writing.[136] Gladstone's friend, Ambrose Phillips de Lisle, a Catholic convert, had been encouraging Gladstone to speak on the Bulgarian matter. In the earlier part of 1876 Gladstone had given de Lisle a copy of Robert Fleming's *The Rise of Rome Papal*, which foresaw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and de Lisle's own book in 1855 which labelled Mohammad the Antichrist.[137] The

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131 Saab, *Reluctant Icon,* 64; H.C.G. Matthew, *Gladstone*, vol. II, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 3.

132 See in particular: Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "'Ideal and Ornamental Endeavours': The Armenian Reforms and Germany's Response to Britain's Imperial Humanitarianism in the Ottoman Empire, 1878-83," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40, no. 2, (2012): 183 – 206; Keith A. P. Sandiford, "W. E. Gladstone and Liberal-Nationalist Movements" *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 13, no. 1, (1981): 27 – 42; W. N. Medlicott, "The Gladstone Government and the Cyprus Convention, 1880-85," *The Journal of Modern History,* 12, no. 2, (1940): 186-208.

133 Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*; Saab, *Reluctant Icon.*

134 "Gladstone to Granville," 29 August 1876, Granville Papers, Add MS 89317, British Library, London. ,.

135 UK Government, https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/william-ewart-gladstone, accessed 1 May 2020.

136 Matthew, *Gladstone*, Vol. II, 8

137 Ambrose Lisle Phillips, *Mahometism in its relation to Prophecy; or an Inquiry into the prophecies concerning Anti-Christ, with some reference to their bearing on the events of the present day*, (London: Charles Dolman, 1855).

religious influences on Gladstone's mind are undeniable – Matthew wrote that Gladstone's 'approach [to the Bulgarian question] reflected the theological preoccupations of the previous eighteen months of retirement: it was High Church in conception, Evangelical in conviction, and Broad Church in presentation.'[138]

More focus on Gladstone's support of the Concert of Europe will be given in section 2, but it is important to note that part of Gladstone's connection to the role of the Concert in dealing with the Ottoman issues was based in his religiosity. Robert Phillmore, Gladstone's High-Church friend wrote that 'the necessity of mutual intercourse is laid in the nature of States, as it is of Individuals, by God, who willed the State and created the Individual.'[139] While Matthews' interpretation of Gladstone's 'religious nationalism' may draw on the 'myth of Gladstone' as explored by Sandiford,[140] it is interesting to see how Gladstone viewed himself, as one who argued for international cooperation from a religious perspective.

Gladstone's inherent evangelicalism, and its accompanying enthusiasm, led him to see his role in the agitation in similar manner to Stead. At the end of 1878 Gladstone reflected on his role in the agitation in his diary. He wrote that his 'retroactive motion' appeared to 'carry the marks of the will of God. For when have I seen so strongly the relation between my public duties and the primary purposes for which God made and Christ redeemed the world?'[141] Reflecting on his ability to maintain his strength to speak and write Gladstone saw that he had been 'upheld in an unusual manner…was not all this for a purpose?'[142] Gladstone continued and wrote that he did not wish to be at the forefront of politics and the agitation, but rather wished to rest after his retirement. Finishing off his reflection Gladstone wrote that 'God sometimes sees fit to employ as his instruments for particular purposes of good those with whom notwithstanding He has yet a sore account to settle.'[143]

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[138] Matthew, *Gladstone,* vol. II, 19.

[139] Robert Phillmore, *Commentaries upon International Law*, (Philadelphia: T. & J. W. Johnson, 1854), iv.

[140] Sandiford, "W. E. Gladstone and Liberal-Nationalist Movements," 27 – 42.

[141] W. E. Gladstone, 28 December 1878, *The Gladstone diaries*, vol. IX, H. C. G. Matthew, M. R. D. Foot, eds, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid

As Matthew has noted 'Gladstone saw any situation in religious terms',[144] however it appeared that Gladstone saw his role in the agitation as one of a different degree of evangelical responsibility. As will be argued in the next two sections much of Gladstone's rhetoric, especially when speaking of humanity and moral duty, rather than specifically of political directions, can be viewed in terms of internationalism and rights, and a liberal morality. However, it is clear from his own reminiscences that Gladstone saw his participation in the agitation as an element of his religious duty, and further a specific calling from God that was to force him back into politics as the central figure of the campaign.

The Eastern Question Association

In planning for the National Convention on the Eastern Question the watching committee, which had mainly consisted of Liberal politicians, drew on the pre-existing Christian anti-slavery activists for material support. Auberon Herbert made contact with A. J. Mundella and Robert Leader late in October in order to move the national convention forward.[145] A committee was set up for the conference, which was driven by Mundella, Herbert, Leader and Frederick Chesson and included influential politicians and professional agitators, such as Freeman, James Bryce and Thomas Fowell Buxton.[146] Many of the same individuals that had organised the broader campaign against Governor Eyre in the Jamaican case, were again present organising the broader, official campaign against the Government's policy in Bulgaria. These were professional agitators; although they had not been the impetus of social agitation, they were well placed to be able capitalise and organise. After the St. James's conference in December, the committee had come together to form the Eastern Question Association (EQA) which developed into a pressure group linked by their interest in the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Question. Up to this point the movement around the Bulgarian agitation had not drawn upon pre-existing groups as the Jamaican movement had done. People from these groups, such as Freeman,

[144] Matthew, *Gladstone,* vol. II, 34

[145] Mundella to R. Leader, 20 October 1876, Mundella Papers, MS 2, 66, University of Sheffield Library.

[146] Chesson to Liddon, 20 November 1876, Liddon Papers, NRA 21029, Oxford University: Keble College Archives

Herbert, and Leader agitated, but the organisations themselves declined to participate at a level seen in Jamaica and prior.

The role of the EQA after the St. James's conference was mainly as a publisher of pamphlets and a disseminator of information regarding the Ottoman Empire and the British and European response to this. In 1877 the EQA published a book entitled *Religious Aspects of the Eastern Question.* The author of the book was John Llewelyn Davies, an Anglican vicar at Christ Church, Marylebone, one of Victoria's honorary chaplains, and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Llewelyn Davies framed the Eastern Question as a conflict between the 'Cross' and the 'Crescent' and asked the initial question, 'are we to take for granted that is our duty, because we are Christians, to sympathise with out struggling fellow-Christians, and to help them throw off the yoke of an alien race and religion?'[147] Llewelyn Davies suggested that it was natural that Christians in England would express solidarity with Christians in the east, even though 'they bear the common name, profess Christianity of a very different type from our own.'[148] Reflecting upon the response to the Bulgarian atrocities Llewelyn Davies suggested that, though Christianity in England was divided, they now stood together. This, he argued, was because:

> our common humanity feels itself outraged; and the religious mind amongst us is still, thank God, profoundly humane. We are believers in the Son of Man, and in proportion to the strength of our faith we make it a matter of conscience to care for the sacred human interests.[149]

Llewelyn Davies expanded from the incident of the Bulgarian massacres to a reflection on the nature of Ottoman rule within the Christian provinces. The Porte's promises of reform demonstrated the proof of misgovernment. As a result of this misgovernment 'its Christian subjects, struggling against hopeless misgovernment, cry out for sympathy and assistance. If man is ever to help his brother man in trouble, why should we turn a deaf ear to these suffering millions?'[150]

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[147] John Llewelyn Davies, *Religious Aspects of the Eastern Question*, (London: Cassell Petter & Galpin, 1877).

[148] *Ibid.*

[149] *Ibid.*

[150] *Ibid.*

As Llewelyn Davies compressed the history of the agitation into an upsurge of religious awareness, it is interesting to consider the nature of this religiosity. Llewelyn Davies and by association the EQA positioned their movement alongside the liberal moralism expressed by Gladstone and others, though from a religious perspective. The desired outcome was the same; a morally driven foreign policy, which reflected the importance, primacy and moral superiority of Britain on the international sphere. For the EQA, Stead, Freeman, Gladstone, MacColl, and many others, the events in Bulgaria once again demonstrated the unfitness of the Muslim Porte to rule in general, and specifically to rule over Christian populations in Europe. The moral concern for 'people like us' was not as universal as those who have suggested a clear historicity of universal humanitarianism suggest,[151] but there was a clear strain of political rhetoric throughout the atrocity campaign.

Conclusion

The movement that came into existence to protest Ottoman atrocities against the Bulgarians began as a mix of pre-existing interest groups, who were concerned about the Balkan independence movements and Christian activists who advocated a moral foreign policy. Although the agitation incorporated political elements and proponents of international law (as discussed in section 2), the first few threads of the agitation had a distinctly religious tone, a tone that was evangelical in manner and contained a mix of nonconformists and Anglicans.

As such, the agitation was not purely a political movement, organised by radical Liberals which dragged Gladstone along as a spokesman, as argued by Shannon.[152] It was also not necessarily an episode of group psychological impulses, as suggested by Saab.[153] Neither was it purely an expression of a liberal nationalism in terms of a discourse of human rights, as Moyn has suggested.[154] Rather, the religious elements explored above demonstrate that within nineteenth century Britain religious impulses

[151] Bass, *Freedom's Battle.*

[152] Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation.*

[153] Saab, *Reluctant Icon.*

[154] Moyn, *The Last Utopia*

clearly dictated how humanitarian campaigns were expressed. These expressions, though religiously motivated, were often followed by political prescriptions; what exactly the British government should do to address the perceived problem. The victims of massacre were seen in their sameness; they were people, or innocent women and children, or fellow-Christians, and as such were deserving of sympathy and compassion, particularly when viewed in terms of a religious worldview. The religious elements of the Bulgarian agitation verify Abigail Green's conclusion that there was a fusion between humanitarianism and liberal ideas in Britain, which, given the 'central role of religious and moral imperatives in shaping nineteenth century political practices' resulted in a widespread agitation and a shift in British foreign policy.[155]

What is noticeable in the Bulgarian case is the Evangelical enthusiasm in the initial agitation. Part of this must be attributed to the specific attributes that Stead brought to the agitation, but the initial agitation meetings were evangelical in tone, if not always in theology. Combined with a political nonconformism, though allied to the Liberal Party, there developed a distinct tone to the agitation. As Jamaica developed a tone based on Exeter Hall and the anti-slavery activists, so the tone of the Bulgarian agitation was formed by the nonconformist, evangelical religious drive of the North.

This is one of the changes that had developed in Britain between 1865 and 1876, a change that was further highlighted by the spatial differences of issues within the British empire and without. As Rodogno has pointed out, the response within Britain to the Bulgarian massacres was embedded and followed on from the response to the Cretan massacres in 1868.[156] However, the form of the Bulgarian atrocities was in its form something different to Crete and something different to Jamaica. Over the preceding decade the reform bill had been passed in Britain, the radical nature of British politics had been more fully embedded into the Liberal Party and at the beginning of the Bulgarian atrocities Disraeli's Conservative party were in power, without the presence of Gladstone in the opposition leadership.

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[155] Green, "Humanitarianism," 1165.

[156] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 178.

This is to say that the domestic political and social situation within Britain by 1876 had a distinct influence on the type of agitation, in conjunction with the differences in internal imperial and foreign imperial concerns. Humanitarianism as a concept, as Michael Barnett has argued, 'has no fixed meaning, are social constructions, [and] are historically situated.'[157] What the comparison of the religious response to Jamaica and Bulgaria shows is that the humanitarianism expressed was a result of the pre-existing religious networks that shifted and changed over time. It is also clear that the type of atrocity, internal imperial or foreign imperial, resonated with different domestic religious communities in a way that influenced a humanitarian response.

Unlike the Jamaican case there were very few pre-existing relationships between British religious groups and those in Bulgaria. There was an existing interest, but rather than personal contacts that deepened the feeling in Britain, the evangelical zeal of those like Stead, Fraser, Maccoll, Freeman, and Gladstone, drew on pre-existing religious and philosophical attitudes to express their support for the victims of the massacre. While the Jamaican religionists focused heavily on connecting with the humanity and likeness of the victims of massacre (Baptists like us), the agitators in the Bulgarian case, very often supported the Bulgarian Christians from a negative animus, because the Ottomans were evil, depraved and not Christian, it was incumbent on British Christians to support the Eastern Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

Further from the links between religion and humanitarian rhetoric, it will be demonstrated that conceptions of human rights and a more rigid, intellectual, legalism, was also used as a basis for some arguments around a just and humanitarian approach to both imperial and foreign politics.

[157] Michael Barnett, 'Introduction', in Michael Barnett (ed), *Humanitarianism and Human Rights: A World of Differences*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 5.

Section 2 – Legalistic Humanitarianism in the Jamaican and Bulgarian Agitations

Chapter 3 - Legalistic Humanitarianism and the Morant Bay Massacre

Introduction

At a conference at Exeter Hall on 12 December 1865, Goldwin Smith, the esteemed historian, and Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, spoke to around 4000 people on the matter of Governor Eyre's unreasonable response to the uprising in Morant Bay. Smith deliberately linked the suppression of revolt in the Jamaican colony to the rights of all subjects of the queen. The Jamaican question, Smith argued, required that Englishmen

> once more…uphold the rights of Englishmen assailed by arbitrary power—safely assailed, as the wielders of that power suppose, in a place removed from the eye of the English public, at a time of confusion, and in the person of a black man. Our forefathers who won the Great Charter and the Petition of Right, have left us an ample heritage of liberty, but upon condition that, like them, we shall guard it well.[1]

Smith viewed the Morant Bay uprising and its accompanying suppression in terms of constitutional rights. This world view and this legalism framed the humanitarian concern that they expressed for the victims of this suppression.

Through an examination of the British response to the Morant Bay uprising, as well as the scholarship on British imperial legalism this chapter explores the elements of legalism within British humanitarian thought. The chapter demonstrates that there was an element of the agitation against Eyre and the Morant Bay massacre that advocated for a particularly legal framework that extended to Afro-Jamaicans the same rights as British subjects in Britain. That this legislation overlaps with the concept of human rights is to be expected, given Abigail Green has argued the boundaries between human rights and humanitarianism are blurred in significant ways.[2] Specifically, this chapter argues that there was no separation of legal arguments from a general humanitarian concern. Rather some elements of British society saw the world through a legal prism and so saw subjects of Britain, although of a

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[1] *Anti-Slavery Reporter,* 15 January 1866, 3.

[2] Green, "Humanitarianism," 1160.

different skin colour and in a different location, as a subsection of British subjects and expressed this through policy proscriptions and through legal avenues.

The recent focus on the legal discussions of some of the British agitators against the massacre has at times obscured the humanitarian element in the Jamaican case. Rande Kostal, for example, has argued that the humanitarian sentiment of the agitators has been exaggerated in the historiography and the Eyre controversy was primarily based on a push towards the rule of law.[3] For Kostal, morality had a place in the agitation, but at the core of the agitation was the reality that Eyre had broken the law, that each British subject (even in the colonies) was protected by inviolable laws, and the disagreement surrounding the nature of martial law, how long it is to last, its limits, and its responsibility under law were the proper terrain for agitation.[4] Kostal argued that the Morant Bay movement was a result of a preoccupation with legal rules and constitutionalism, or legalism, and this preoccupation defined the public debate rather than any specific humanitarian concern. Kostal's purpose was to 'show how legal ways of seeing and doing were central features of English political discourse and conflict.'[5]

This argument is valid, as far as it goes, as there is a clearly identifiable cluster of legal concerns present throughout the agitation. It does not, however, expand upon the interaction between legalism and humanitarian thought. A great many of the opponents of Eyre were focused on the breach of law in Jamaica, a focus which eventually led to two court cases where a murder charge was brought against Eyre. Upon the arrival of Eyre's despatches, Edward Cardwell was, as will be shown, particularly concerned with the legality of declaring martial law, extending it, and the actions that occurred during martial law. The communication between Cardwell and the Government's law officers, such as the Attorney-General, is instructive in this regard.[6] However, focusing only on the legalism inherent within this episode ignores the other half of the matter. Cardwell was concerned about the breach of law because it impacted on British subjects. John Bright and John Stuart Mill, who were at the forefront of

[3] Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power*.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 2.

[6] CO 137/409 contains "letters from offices on matters relating to Jamaica"; in particular, multiple letters from Roundell Palmer (Attorney General) to Cardwell.

the effort to prosecute Eyre, drew constant references between the breach of law in the colonies and the possibility of the same being done in England. Human rights theory and humanitarian thought have always been steeped in ideas of rule of law, ideas of rights, justice, and legalism.[7]

Kostal's argument that the Morant Bay agitation was purely legalistic can be contrasted with other recent studies into this legalistic concern existing among other areas of the British Empire. In particular, Catherine Hall argued that there was a particular concern in the imperial metropole to create legal subjects, bound by laws, in the colonies, which had an impact on the legalistic concern for the victims at Morant Bay. [8] Alan Lester and Fae Dussart have demonstrated how British imperial subjects were legally protected, albeit through class distinctions, in a way that legitimised colonised spaces and their emerging social structures.[9] Amanda Nettlebeck too has expanded on Lester and Dussart's argument and argued, particularly in the case of indigenous populations in settler societies, that there was a deliberate attempt at 'tying humanitarian obligations to the regulatory power of the law.'[10] Central here is a discussion around the concept of human rights in mid-nineteenth century Britain. Whereas Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown demonstrated the convergence between a humanitarian based religious movement, which as detailed in the previous section focused on human rights in for the immediate alleviation of suffering, the broader human rights movement sought to 'establish new legal and political arrangements for whole classes of people.'[11] For their part Lisa Ford and Lauren Benton have looked at ways that the British imperial complex layered settler colonies with a particular legal framework, not only to protect indigenous inhabitants, but also to codify British imperial law in the colonies.[12]

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[7] See historiography in introduction for an in-depth discussion; also Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*.

[8] Hall, *Civilising Subjects*.

[9] Alan Lester & Fae Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[10] Nettlebeck, *Indigenous Rights*.

[11] Wilson & Brown, 'Introduction', in *Humanitarianism and Suffering* Wilson and Brown, eds., , , 11.

[12] Lauren Benton & Lisa Ford, *Rage for Order: The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800 – 1850*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2016).

With these differing positions in mind, this chapter will address the Morant Bay agitation and its response in terms of how an attitude towards legalism linked to a more general humanitarian concern for the victims of the massacre. It will be demonstrated that legalism, in the form of human rights discourse, was an essential element of the British humanitarian response to the massacre in one of their colonies, initiated by their own military.

Colonial Office

Following the Morant Bay incident, Eyre sent his first reports to Cardwell regarding the uprising in late October 1865 which arrived at the Colonial Office on 16 November.[13] Eyre had only been Governor for some months after being Lieutenant-Governor of Antigua and acting Governor of the Leeward Islands. Cardwell, who had been Secretary of State for the Colonies since 7 April 1864, was a lawyer, a former Peelite, and according to Morrell 'the ablest administrator among the Colonial Secretaries of the period.'[14] Goldwin Smith, a close friend of Cardwell, described him as 'like Peel, very dry, and like Peel, somewhat stiff and formal, but he was kind-hearted and magnanimous; a true comrade and a fast friend.'[15] Eyre informed Cardwell of the events that occurred and the tone in the despatches made it clear that Eyre anticipated no questioning of his actions and warm support for his efforts. Cardwell responded, praising Eyre for putting down a rebellion, but questioned the 'measures of severity' which 'when dictated by necessity and justice, are in reality measures of mercy', because it was not self-evident they were necessary.[16] Cardwell requested 'additional information which may enable me to justify it [the suppression of the rebellion, in particular the declaration and continuation of martial law].'[17] What Cardwell appeared most uncertain of throughout his despatch (which is understandable given his legal background) was Eyre's removal of George Gordon from Kingston to Morant Bay so that he would be

[13] Eyre to Cardwell, CO 137/393/36-46.

[14] W. P. Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the Mid-Victorian Age: South Africa, New Zealand, The West Indies, (*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 23.

[15] Smith, quoted in Morrell, 24.

[16] Cardwell to Eyre, 16 November 1865, CO 137/393/40

[17] Ibid.

under martial law when he was executed. Nonetheless, Cardwell's response appears to have been a diplomatic one as it was the policy of British governments to not significantly interfere with the actions of colonial governors. Cardwell's uncertainty regarding the event is clear, however, especially in regard the legality of what occurred.

Eyre, in his response to Cardwell, made clear that he was upset that he was being required to justify his actions.[18] However, on 23 November, after he had time to digest the details of the first packet of despatches, Cardwell wrote to Eyre, in a markedly less approving manner, demanding further information on the uprising, the particulars of suppression, copies of the proceedings of the courts martial and their evidence and a full explanation of the details of the punishments 'in which, without such explanation, the severity inflicted would not appear to have been justifiable.'[19] Noting the burgeoning public agitation Cardwell added in a post-script that the Government 'would wait patiently for the justification which you will send of the points which now appear to require justification.'[20] By 23 November Cardwell had made it clear to Eyre, to his Government, to Parliament, and to the country, that he was not going to unquestionably support Eyre's behaviour. Cardwell made it plain that actions such as had been taken in Jamaica required specific justification, under law, even though they had been taken by (maybe especially because they had been taken by) a colonial governor. Cardwell made it clear that Eyre reported to him and was required to give an account of the legal basis for his actions.

In the last week of November Cardwell received further information from George Frederick Samuel Robinson, Earl de Grey, the Secretary of State for War. De Grey sent Cardwell copies of the despatches sent to the War Office by Brigadier General Luke Smythe O'Connor, Commanding Officer of the Jamaica Forces.[21] The reports were troubling to Cardwell in that they recounted with blithe disregard the blatant misbehaviour of British troops. One letter, from General Nelson, the

[18] Eyre's growing defensiveness in his dispatches from CO 137/394 draw this out.

[19] Cardwell to Eyre, 23 November 1865, CO 138/77.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Lord de Grey to Cardwell, 23 November 1865, CO 137/397.

Commanding Officer in the field, recounted the execution of Gordon, the refusal of Gordon's request to see a Minister, and the disregard for justice in the execution.[22] Further letters recounted British troops burning houses they passed, the shooting of fleeing, unarmed Afro-Jamaicans, and the summary flogging of every Afro-Jamaican the troops could find.[23]

Only three days after the War Office despatches arrived at the Colonial Office, on 29 November, Cardwell received further troubling information from Eyre. Dated on 2 November, the reports were merely follow-ups from Eyre, rather than any response to Cardwell's queries, though, because they were written after the rebellion had been suppressed, Eyre had more information. Writing of the military movements around the island Eyre stated that reports from across Jamaica continued to 'cause me much anxiety.' Eyre continued that 'no actual outbreak has taken place and I hope none will, but it is manifest that the seeds of sedition and rebellion have been sown broadcast through the land' and that 'in every parish' there were many willing and ready to act as those in Morant Bay.[24] In a following despatch, however, Eyre seemed to contradict himself. He wrote that,

> undoubtedly there has been and is a widespread feeling of disaffection and a tendency to sedition and rebellion – but there is no organised combined action and consequently the location of a small body of troops at a great many different points has the immediate effect of keeping the country contiguous to each of those points free from any actual outbreak.[25]

Eyre continued to collect all the information he could and send it in the post, however he freely admitted that he had not read or reviewed all the correspondence before forwarding it.[26] Armed with Eyre's own reports, as well as the reports that he was receiving from other quarters, such as the War Office, Cardwell sent a strongly worded response to Eyre on 1 December. He demanded specific details regarding the number of persons tried and sentenced by court martial, identifying any changes in sentence, 'whether or not the sentence was executed, and under whose authority,' and any minutes of

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Eyre to Cardwell, 2 November 1865, CO 137/394/2.

[25] Eyre to Cardwell, 4 November 1865, CO 137/394/5, underlined statement found in minutes by Frederic Rogers.

[26] Eyre to Cardwell, 7 November 1865, CO 137/394/11.

the evidence collected in each case.[27] Further, he requested the places and times of each sentence, as well as what the offences were and the specific details of the offender. Cardwell also specified that he wished to know whether each arrest occurred where martial law had been proclaimed and whether legal advice had been gathered from the Jamaican Attorney General, Alexander Heslop. Cardwell also requested details of any people who had been punished without trial, their 'name, sex, color [sic] and quality of the person punished, the nature and date of the offence, and the grounds on which it was assumed to have been committed.'[28] Details were also requested of those killed in the field by the military, as well as the details of oral and written instructions sent to army officers on how they were to identify hostility in fleeing people. Cardwell was also concerned with the range of actions by the Maroons and the British oversight provided to them.[29] He concluded by referring to Eyre's speech to the Jamaican assembly regarding the widespread nature of the rebellion and the existence of a

> wide spread [sic] and diabolical conspiracy to murder the white and mixed races, and amongst those races themselves this opinion would appear to be almost universal. Proofs of this conspiracy were adverted to as existing, but they are not to be found in the papers you sent home. I request that you will furnish me with them as fully and completely as you can without delay. In making these enquiries I beg to be understood as directing your attention to the principal points on which I desire to be informed and not as prejudging any person concerned in any proceeding.[30]

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[27] Cardwell to Eyre, 1 December 1865, CO 137/394/15.

[28] Ibid.

[29] The Maroons were a group of previously escaped slaves that had set up free societies and lived for generations in the mountains and jungles of Jamaica. Two wars had occurred between the Maroons and British settlers, one in 1731 – 1739 and the second in 1795-6. The result of these wars was that an agreement was made that the Maroons would enjoy limited political and economic freedom but would be required to provide military support as required and return escaped slaves. By 1865 the Maroon community was still semi-independent and had become a mix of the historical Maroons, escaped slaves and freed men who wanted to live in the Maroon communities. The Maroon militias were well known for severity in military action. (Sylvia W. DeGroot, 'A Comparison between the History of Maroon Communities in Surinam and Jamaica', in *Out of the House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance and Marroonage in Africa and the New World*, ed. Gad Hueman, (London/New Jersey: Frank Cass & Co., 1986).).

[30]Cardwell to Eyre, 8 November 1865, CO 137/394/15

Cardwell's request followed up from his 24 November dispatch, in that it specifically linked his ideas regarding the legal requirements of governing with the events that occurred in Jamaica. Cardwell made it clear to Eyre that if British subjects were going to be flogged, shot or hung, it was absolutely necessary that it was done according to the laws in place and that written evidence be made available for verification.

Cardwell had made it clear by the beginning of December 1865 that he was legally uncomfortable with the decisions that Eyre had made. He clearly hoped Eyre could alleviate his discomfort by providing him with detailed information, and in his despatches, Cardwell impressed upon Eyre that if no further information was presented, he had no choice but to condemn the actions that took place. Even before Eyre had a chance to respond to the latest despatches, Cardwell had relayed his view of Eyre's actions to Henry Storks, the Governor of Malta on 4 December, informing him of the insurrection in a letter and telling him that in all likelihood the government would ask him to go to Jamaica, relieve Eyre, and head up a commission of inquiry.[31] In the Cabinet meeting on 6 December, the Government made the request official.[32]

Cardwell's legal solution to the problem, sending a Commission of Enquiry, seemed to him to conclude the matter. After further despatches from Eyre on 30 December, where Eyre strove to justify his actions, Cardwell replied, on 1 January 1866, that the appointment of the Royal Commission 'renders it unnecessary for me to do more than acknowledge the receipt of these despatches.'[33]

Throughout the early period following the uprising, the principal government official responsible for the colony of Jamaica had clarified that he was politically, legally and personally uncomfortable with the military and political response overseen by Eyre. Cardwell was no bleeding-heart humanitarian but was rather a traditional Whig in the mould of Peel; however, his legalistic worldview led him to see the events in Jamaica as unacceptable. Though formal and detached in his responses to Eyre, it can be seen from the official record that rather early in November Cardwell had

[31] Cardwell to Storks, 4 December 1865, PRO 30/48/43

[32] Ibid.

[33] Cardwell to Eyre, 1 January 1866, CO 137/396/14

recognised not only the legal problems with the application of martial law, but also with apparent breaches of the rights of British subjects, even those in the colonies.

It is important to understand the legal and historical view of martial law, especially in terms of Britain in 1865. As J. V. Capua argued in 1977, from 1300 to 1628 there was an understanding of martial law as an extraordinary use of military power that should be circumscribed in only the most serious and out of the ordinary circumstances.[34] Capua demonstrated that throughout the growing absolutist tendencies of the English monarchs there were instances where this use of martial law was abused, but by the Glorious Revolution the ability of the monarch to summarily kill and punish was severely limited by the introduction of the petition of right and *Habeus Corpus*. More abstractly, Giorgio Agamben has explored the concepts of martial law and how sovereign power can and is used on the individual persons subject to that power.[35] Drawing on Carl Schmitt's notion that sovereignty resides with those who can decide on when the state of exception exists,[36] Agamben argues that martial law is a state of exception, in which *homo sacer*, or the excepted subject, is excluded from the community and all political life.[37] It is precisely this capacity to exclude from law that was at stake when Eyre's decisions regarding the use of martial law were subject to the scrutiny of the Royal Commission.

Jamaica was not the first case of martial law used by British governors in the colonies. Amanda Nettlebeck has shown how martial law was used as a tool of governance over Indigenous groups in Australia, while Cameron Moore has demonstrated how a tradition of martial law contributed to the Myall Creek massacres in New South Wales in 1838.[38] With regard to Morant Bay, however, the use of martial law proved controversial. In 1866 William Finlason, a Roman Catholic lawyer, argued that

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[34] J. V. Capua, "The Early History of Martial Law in England from the Fourteenth Century to the Petition of Right," *The Cambridge Law Journal*, 36, no. 1, (1977): 152-173.

[35] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception, (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[36] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 5.

[37] Agamben, *State of Exception*, 183.

[38] Nettlebeck, *Indigenous Rights*; Cameron Moore, "The Myall Creek Massacre as Part of a Broader War: War and the Common Law of the Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of Regional, Rural and Remote Law and Policy,* 9, no. 1, (2021).

Eyre's state of exception had been absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the empire.[39] For Finlason the only reason the Morant Bay case was so exceptional was due to the fact that after the English Civil War there had been no instance, in England, where the civil rulers had lost control of the populace.

Prior to Finlason, Henry Hallam, a British constitutional scholar, had argued that at times it was necessary to 'sacrifice…the legal rights of a few' in order to protect society and the government.[40] Finlason used this position to support his defence of Eyre, but left out Hallam's balancing statement, that in initiating martial law it was

> Of high importance to watch with extreme jealousy the disposition towards which most governments are prone, to introduce too soon, to extend too far, to retain too long, so perilous a remedy.[41]

All this is to say that at the time of the Morant Bay controversy, British society and legal scholars were familiar with and argued over the purpose of martial law. The philosophical concepts were not in dispute; rather the necessity and reasonableness of suspending *habeus corpus*, and creating a state of exception, in which the governor could decide which individuals or groups could be considered *homines sacri.*

The royal commission headed to Jamaica in January of 1866 and had completed the majority of its investigation by the beginning of April. The Commission was headed by Storks, who was also the acting-Governor, and consisted of two prominent lawyers from England. There was no issue sending Storks, as a career colonial administrator he went where he was told, but finding two prominent lawyers willing to go to Jamaica proved difficult. Eventually two prominent barristers were persuaded to join the commission; Russell Gurney, MP, and John Blosset Maule Q.C. Gurney was the sitting Conservative member for Southampton and a successful and experienced barrister and criminal law

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[39] W. F. Finlason, *A Treatise on Martial Law: As Allowed by the Law of England, in Time of Rebellion*, (Lincoln's Inn: Steven & Sons, 1866).

[40] Henry Hallam, *The constitutional history of England, from the accession of Henry VII to the death of George II : with addendum, the essay of Lord Macaulay on Hallam's Constitutional history of England*, (London, Lock Ward, 1842), 235.

[41] Ibid.

judge. Maule was a senior barrister in Leeds and was, like Gurney, an experienced criminal lawyer, however, unlike Gurney, was not affiliated with any political party. The Commission's report arrived in London on 30 April. However, the Colonial Office worked with it for about a month, waiting for the appendices to be sent from Jamaica. After extensive minuting in the Colonial Office by Taylor, Rogers, and Forster, Cardwell took it to the Cabinet meeting on 16 June. After this meeting he released the Commission report to the press, which was reported on 20 June.

The report criticised the decisions Eyre made, whilst not going too far into criticising his motivations. An official acknowledgement of Eyre's necessity to act, and act quickly, was made.[42] This was a necessity, for the British Government could not have a situation in which a rebellion in a colony was left unchecked, especially in Jamaica with the spectre of the Haitian insurrection hovering.[43] However, it was the managing of the suppression of the rebellion that drew criticism. Criticising the manner of the suppression, rather than its existence, the report placed blame on Eyre regarding the calibre of his decisions rather than his character. The report supported Cardwell's initial hesitance as much as any findings could; not casting the governor out as being personally deficient but laying official blame on his handling of a sensitive matter.

Cardwell had been exposed to all sides of the issue within his own office; Henry Taylor (the head of the West India section in the Colonial Office) supported Eyre's decisions almost totally, while Frederic Rogers (the Permanent Under-Secretary) was slightly more critical of Eyre but was understanding of the difficulties he faced. William Forster (the Parliamentary Under-Secretary) was overtly critical of Eyre. Cardwell refused to be drawn into an either/or situation and settled on condemning the nature of the suppression, but refusing to cast aspersions on the character of his governor.[44] Writing to Storks in May, Cardwell stated that he was not going to comment on the nature of the report or listen to speculation.[45] After consulting with Sir Roundell Palmer, the Attorney

[42] Proceedings of the Royal commission found in PRO 30/48/44.

[43] See in particular for the connections between Haiti and Jamaica: Mimi Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).

[44] Can be seen in the various minutes and comments in PRO 30/48/44.

[45] Cardwell to Storks, 1 May 1866, PRO 30/48/44

General, on the nature of the indemnity act—which was passed by the Jamaica legislature and provided indemnity to all Government officials involved in the suppression of the uprising—Cardwell sent to Gladstone (who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer at this point and a close friend of Cardwell's) his draft dispatch.[46] Gladstone, while recognising the desire to support 'all the considerations that tell on Eyre's behalf', counselled Cardwell to toughen some of 'the adverse expressions' he had included. Gladstone wrote that 'the truth is, it is a most great & grievous offence, tho' with great & indeed extraordinary palliation. But the scale turns, & even the turn of the scale seems I think, to require a marked void.'[47]

In essence, Cardwell had demonstrated through his decisions his respect for the primacy of law and due process, with an awareness of his role within the Colonial Office. Gathering as much evidence as he could, along with professional advice, Cardwell refused to condemn Eyre, but also refused to support his decisions. Thus, Cardwell demonstrated that he cared deeply about the way that Britain governed in the Colonies, how colonial subjects were treated and the about the importance of acting within the law.

It is also important to understand what Cardwell inherited when he took over the Colonial Office. Cardwell was not a career colonial administrator. He had been in Parliament since 1842, initially as a Conservative, then a Peelite, then a Liberal. However, the Colonial Office had only become a separate office from the Office of War and Colonies in 1854. There had been much concern at the beginning of the nineteenth century, within the colonial office, regarding the frontier violence and treatment of indigenous populations in the growing settler colonies. There had been, for example, the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlement) which released a report advocating humane treatment of indigenous populations in 1837. As Benton and Ford have argued, the development of this committee and its subsequent influence on colonial policy not only reflected a humanitarian concern, but also a desire to improve colonial governance and especially intra-colonial

[46] C. O. to Law Officers, 15 May 1866, CO 137/410

[47] Gladstone to Cardwell, Gladstone Papers, Add MS 44536, fo. 60, British Library, London.

coherence (that is, having different colonies operate the same).[48] Nettlebeck has argued that this focus, especially in the Colonial Office, had two desired outcomes; the first was 'improving the indigenous "condition"' and the second was 'improving colonial legal order.'[49]

The Jamaican case was different to that of Australia due to its past as a slave colony. Nonetheless, there were some similarities in its governance. Jamaica, prior to the Morant Bay rebellion was a self-governing colony, in that it had an elected representative assembly and this assembly operated as the Jamaican legislature, with a Crown appointed governor responsible for the executive function of the colony. This meant that Jamaica was governed in a similar way to the Dominion colonies in that it had a form of responsible government that only reported back to London through the executive, in the person of the governor. These arrangements have resulted in Hall describing Jamaica as sitting somewhere in-between a colony (which were 'offshoots of the mother country') and a dependency (a conquered territory).[50]

The broad similarities between the different colonies allow useful comparisons to be made. During the early nineteenth century efforts were made to legally integrate indigenous populations into self-governing settler colonies.[51] This too had an echo in Jamaica, which as a self-governing colony, attempted to integrate its emancipated slaves into the Jamaican polity. By 1840, only six years after emancipation the Jamaican assembly adjusted the law to incorporate ex-slaves and people of mixed race into the voting qualifications. As in Britain and the other colonies, the enfranchisement of the population led to new political influences and tension between the ruling British class and the permanent ex-slave, or mixed-race underclass. These tensions within Jamaica and the broader colonial picture resulted in complex challenges for colonial administrators. By the time of the Morant Bay uprising, Cardwell was in charge of an office that for 25 years had been working with the Jamaican

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[48] Benton & Ford, *Rage for Order,* Chapter 2.

[49] Nettlebeck, *Indigenous Rights,* 4.

[50] Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 10.

[51] It is important to note that this legal integration resulted in the loss of a specific identity and sovereignty of indigenous societies. As Patrick Wolfe argues, it is a process of elimination, not necessarily genocide, but elimination of the entire structure, system and identity of the original people. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8, no. 4, (2006): 387-409.

assembly to manage racial and legal tensions in a society that relied on cheap labour to manage the sugar industry, and a rising economic underclass, politically enfranchised, looking for better conditions.

Cardwell, having reached his own conclusions regarding the report, approached the Cabinet meeting on 16 June with the Commission's recommendations. The Cabinet accepted these and Eyre was officially recalled and replaced by John P. Grant, the former Lieutenant -Governor of Bengal, who was tasked to deal with a problem 'Indian in character.'[52] The government agreed to consider creating general instructions that would support governors in the case of future disturbances (the beginnings of which would eventually lead to Lord Carnarvon's rules on martial law, which he circulated in 1867), however, during the discussions Cardwell was forceful in ensuring that the Government respected the Act of Indemnity that had been passed in Jamaica.[53] Cardwell insisted to Russell that:

> The case is one in which we ought ourselves to give formal & conclusive effect to the decision of the Cabinet in my published despatch, which is gone to the Colony, & ought not either to leave any responsibility to our successors, or to leave the subject open to future discussion.[54]

In so doing, Cardwell was attempting to finalise the matter. However, Cardwell refused to overlook individual instances of direct cruelty. He wrote to Storks directing him to investigate all allegations of cruelty against civilians and sent letters to the Admiralty and War Office asking them to do likewise with their own officers. In his despatch to Storks, Cardwell appears to have believed that the matter concerning Jamaica had come to an end. He wrote that the report and decision of the government, 'have settled the question here…[while] those who were most friendly to Mr. Eyre express themselves perfectly satisfied with the consideration manifested towards him.'[55] Once again Cardwell had made his position clear, regarding a respect for his position within the Colonial Office, but also his respect for the law and humanity. Though not necessarily a whitewash, the decision made by Cardwell and the

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[52] *Parliamentary Papers* 1866, LI, 139. A further reference among the Government to a belief in the conflation of the Jamaican problems with the previous decade's Indian problems. In particular, this phrase, though unexplained in the source, could refer explicitly to the racial problems that Carnarvon was to address immediately on taking office.

[53] Cardwell to Russell, 27 June 1866, PRO 30/22/16C/154

[54] Ibid.

[55] Cardwell to Storks, 30 June 1866, Cardwell Papers, PRO 30/48/43, fo. 105, National Archive UK, Kew.

Colonial Office was certainly politically sensitive. The outcome could be held up to those concerned about the treatment of the Afro-Jamaicans as evidence that the government took seriously the welfare of its subjects and moral governance. However, Eyre was relieved of all personal responsibility regarding the actions in Jamaica, except for his recall.

This was the last of Cardwell's dealings in the matter, but through the entirety of the situation his standpoint was clear. Cardwell, and by extension the government, would not stand by inactive whilst laws were flouted and there were specific instances of cruelty perpetrated by British officers against any British subject of whatever race or colour. Much of Cardwell's opinions were framed in a legalistic style, with a specific reference to his personal responsibility to Eyre and to the people of Jamaica. However, Cardwell's legalism was not at odds with his desire to see actions harming Afro-Jamaicans cease, and indeed this legalistic humanitarianism could be seen in a way that would be a theme through the rest of the agitation; for Cardwell's operative category was not race, but British subjecthood. Despite his personal views on the matter – and Cardwell was careful to ensure his official responsibilities were carried out impartially – Cardwell recognised that the Jamaican polity was made up not only of the white elite, the plantocracy, but also of an element of mixed-race people and ex-slaves. To the British government, and the Jamaican government, all these people were subjects of the British Crown and as such enjoyed specific legal rights within the British framework. In a way very different from the experience of indigenous populations in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, the Afro-Jamaicans were not just to be managed by the law but were legally British subjects. Cardwell appreciated this, as did many other politicians and commentators. It is important that this point be emphasised because this focus on rights is where the legalism of the matter intersects with the humanitarian ideas of others.

Public Agitation

The release of the Commission report was effectively the last official act that Cardwell undertook. Russell resigned his government on 18 June 1866, over disagreements regarding the franchise bill, and the Earl of Derby became Prime Minister, with Benjamin Disraeli his Chancellor of the Exchequer and

Henry Herbert, Earl Carnarvon, as the Colonial Secretary. Carnarvon was previously under-secretary at the Colonial Office under Derby and brought a lawyer's mind to the intricacies of the position. Carnarvon was not known as a philanthropist, and he had no particular concern for the working class; he would eventually resign from Government rather than support the extension of the franchise, along with his friend Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Lord Cranbourne, the future Prime Minister and the Marquess of Salisbury. Carnarvon, however, was considered a bright rising political star. Morrell referred to him as

> a man of high intellectual ability and warmly generous character. He was ambitious of distinction and less afraid of what the House of Commons would say or think of him than Cardwell, but also more difficult and inferior in judgement.[56]

Carnarvon spent the first month coming up to speed but made it clear to the Colonial Office that he supported Cardwell's direction and there was to be no deviation in the direction of the Colonial Office.

This was the course of action from the top. Cardwell had made political decisions based on his own understanding of the legality of martial law and the importance of impartiality in governance. An interesting point is that in order to implement action after the events Cardwell used the legal instrument of a Royal Commission, to collect evidence, examine evidence and treat Eyre in a legal and fair manner. However, around Cardwell, especially during the early flash of the agitation many campaigners drew on similar themes of legalism to criticise Eyre's behaviour. This would formalise and increase once, politically, Eyre had been dealt with and conditions in Jamaica substantially changed.

At one of the first Jamaica meetings, convened by the mayor of Manchester, on 27 November 1865, the two main speakers were Thomas Bayley Potter (a Cobdenite, anti-slavery activist and radical MP), and Jacob Bright (the younger brother of John Bright and a radical politician). As reported in *The Times* Potter demanded an impartial investigation into the incidents in Jamaica, 'especially into the legality and necessity of the severe measures adopted for its suppression.'[57] For Potter the issue at hand was the 'disgrace and honour to the English name…England could not afford to do any great wrong.'

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[56] Morrell, *British Colonial Policy*, 24.

[57] "The Outbreak in Jamaica," *The Times*, 28 November 1865, 7.

Drawing attention to the fate of Gordon and linking his hearers to the events in Jamaica, Potter continued by stating that

> it made [my] blood run cold to think that an Englishman – for though coloured men, these were Englishmen (cheers), our fellow subjects, whose rights were our rights, ours were theirs... [be handed] over to the tender mercies of a court-martial.

Potter then connected the events in Jamaica to the events in India, where there were reports of 'horrible intentions of the Blacks', which turned out to be entirely false, but were used to justify the massacring of British subjects and had resulted in the soldiers being 'worked up to a feeling almost of barbarity.'[58] Potter's concern for the 'English name' and the dishonour that breaching laws for personal gain was echoed significantly across cases and people. It became a significant theme in the Bulgarian agitation, as will be addressed in the following chapter, and Gladstone returned to the theme at Midlothian surrounding the Cyprus deal with the Ottoman Empire.[59]

This concern for the reputation of Britain in particular, and the empire in general, is a recurring theme through the strains of humanitarianism. As will be explored in more depth in the following section, there was significant concern for a moral, liberal empire that operated according to moral principles. When this did not occur, there was much consternation, in Britain, over the perceived loss of respect for Britain. This idea can be tracked in all three distinct strains, especially in terms of how the empire governed its colonies.

Following from Potter, Bright summarised what they knew of the events in Jamaica and advocated a deputation to the Prime Minister. Bright stated that

> Gordon was a man and a British subject, and a British Subject, no matter what his colour, his extraction, his position in society, merely because he was a British subject, had inalienable rights, the first of which was that he could never be punished for any crime for which he had not been legally tried and convicted…Though when martial law was proclaimed the civil law

[58] Ibid.

[59] W. E. Gladstone, *Political Speeches in Scotland, March and April 1880*, (London), 1880, 358.

was silent, yet human feelings should still be there, and human judgement should not be overthrown.[60]

For Bright, though much of what he said related to specifically legal requirements, the heart of the issue was that of the rights of man, though in this case those rights were reserved for British subjects. Potter and Bright drove home to a crowd of individuals within Britain, who did not all even have the right to vote for their local members of parliament, that there was a concept of citizenship rights that not only need to be extended to colonial subjects, but by extension, should be offered to the British working class. Additionally, through an effective turn of phrase and what appears to be an afterthought, Bright called on 'human feeling' to trump law and human judgement to reign supreme.

There has been an argument made by Catherine Hall and Ann Laura Stoler that race and gender were the operative categories that those in the metropole, or those in power in the colonies, viewed the colonised.[61] Hall placed the missionary work and colonising work in Jamaica in the frame of 'the making of colonising subjects, of racialized and gendered selves, both in Empire and at home.'[62] Hall argued that in the colonising mission, particularly seen in the case of Jamaica, the colonisers framed the colonised in terms of sexual identity, racial identity and a racialized class division.[63] For Hall, it was the 'constant discursive work of creating, bringing into being, or reworking these hieratic categories' that was the work of the coloniser.[64] The work of Stoler largely supports Hall's, however Stoler focused more in-depth on the differentiation required by the 'genealogies of the intimate'.[65] Stoler's argument revolved around the separation between coloniser and colonised in terms of race, gender and sexual identity, in particular in maintain racial and sexual purity.

While no doubt these attitudes existed, both in Britain and in the colonies, Potter's statements here seem to emphasise the similarities across race rather than the differences. Bright made this idea

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Catherine Hall, & Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 6.

[62] Hall, 13

[63] *Ibid., 17.*

[64] *Ibid. 19.*

[65] Ibid., 6.

explicit by stating that Gordon, though not of the same race as Bright's audience, was just as much an 'Englishman' as they were, which granted him inherent rights. The Gordon case was slightly different to the general point that Potter made, in that Gordon had a British father, however the point was clear to the audience, especially as it followed Potter's clear expression. In particular, the legalism expressed here recognised, as Cardwell did implicitly, that a British subject was a British subject despite race and as such had a right to protection under the law. In a different context, but in the same vein, Matthew P. Fitzpatrick and Bart Luttikhuis have argued that while Stoler's work in highlighting race as a category in imperial thinking is invaluable, there is nuance to be had.[66] As Fitzpatrick argued, while some colonial administrators and citizens of the metropole viewed race as the defining characteristic in empire, the reality on the ground (in his case in German Samoa, but translatable across cases) was that there were those, in the metropole and the colonies, who viewed race secondarily to other concerns as Bright and Potter did in the Jamaican case. What must be acknowledged, however, is the gendered language and the understanding within Britain that it was English*men* who were worthy of protection under the law, not necessarily women.

What did occur, by Potter and many other speakers, was a form of rhetorical paternalism. In this case the Jamaican victims of repression are stripped of their own individual identities and instead they are rhetorically placed to be placeholders for the British at home. This shows how difficult it is for any form of humanitarianism to avoid this form of paternalism, and also confirms the idea of empire as a mirror through which the metropole views themselves.[67]

On 1 December G. W. Gordon's last letter appeared in English newspapers, to further inflame the feeling of injustice surrounding events in Jamaica. Gordon had written his letter to his wife an hour before his execution. Lamenting the lack of justice and legal recourse he had received, Gordon encouraged his wife to enlist the help of Lord Henry Brougham (reformist politician, lawyer and

[66] Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "The Samoan Women's Revolt: Race, Intermarriage and Imperial Hierarchy in German Samoa," *German History*, 325, no. 2, (2017): 206-228; Bart Luttikhuis, "Beyond race: Constructions of 'Europeanness' in late-colonial legal practice in the Dutch East Indies," *European Review of History*, 20, no. 4, (2013): 539-558.

[67] Lorimer, *Colour, Class, and the Victorians,* 200.

connected to Gordon through the years) and Louis Chamerovzow, the chair of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.[68] The letter was sent to the press by Chamerovzow and *The Spectator* reported that Gordon refuted having any involvement in the insurrection, stating that he was innocent, and complaining of his treatment from the court martial officers. *The Spectator* wrote that Gordon's final statement that 'the Lord bless him [General Nelson], and all the soldiers, and sailors, and all men' sounded somewhat like 'artificial piety' but in the end 'we see no reason why it should not have been the heartfelt effort of a sincerely religious man to forgive his enemies before his death. A strict account will assuredly be demanded of his executioners.'[69] At the same time as Gordon's letter reached the press, Eyre's post-suppression speech in the Jamaican legislature in which he defended every action he had taken, and that all responsibility for the violence rested on the rebels was also published in the British press. In his speech, Eyre referred to the 'most diabolical conspiracy to murder the white and coloured inhabitants of this colony' and the 'most savage and cruel butchery, only to be paralleled by the atrocities of the Indian mutiny.'[70]

By this point there had been multiple references to the uprising in India of only eight years previous. This is understandable, especially, as Christopher Herbert has argued, because the British mind was so traumatised by the events in India that they shaped policy and the popular mind for a generation.[71] What is noteworthy here is that Eyre used the Indian uprising as support for his reaction, in other words, if he had not responded as quickly and aggressively as he did then the events in Jamaica would have become the new India. The Colonial Office, as previously detailed, had viewed the Jamaican situation as 'Indian in character' and Storks was encouraged to address it as such. Potter had taken the alternative view and indicated that just like India the reports of widespread organisation that intended to eradicate white settlers was exaggerated and unable to be proven. The connection throughout made to India, and Charles Buxton's later comments that made a deliberate connection in a

[68] The role that Chamerovzow played in the agitation is detailed in section 1.

[69] *The Spectator*, 2 December 1865, 1.

[70] *The Times*, 29 December 1865, 9.

[71] Herbert, *War of no Pity*.

similar manner to Potter, demonstrates the flow of ideas and experiences that could be applied from one colonial project to another, which also allowed space for critics of Eyre's governance to argue for a more legalistic and rights-based approach.[72]

This news spurred forward further meetings on the Jamaican uprising in Lambeth, Brighton, Liverpool and Bristol in the first two weeks of December. The *Daily News* reported that the Lambeth meeting was proposed to condemn the conduct of Governor Eyre as 'cruel, tyrannical and subversive of the rights of British subjects.'[73] The Lambeth meeting focused specifically on the concerns of the citizens about the militia firing into the crowd 'in order to discourage constitutional and lawful agitation for the redress of wrongs and grievances.'[74] The crowd hoped Russell would respond to their memorial, due to him having long sympathised with 'struggles for liberty and human rights.'[75] The meeting in Brighton was similar in almost every way (as these multiple agitation meetings tended to become) with William Coningham (a part of Exeter Hall and a radical liberal MP) stating of the Jamaica suppression that a 'more atrocious violation of every divine and human law had never been heard of, or a more open flagrant violation of the principles of the British constitutionalism.'[76] Though with a specific focus on British legalism, the statements from many of the initial Jamaica meetings bore the theme of a specific understanding of human rights (or at the least of British subject rights). As Potter and Bright had set the scene, across the country British individuals, particularly radical MPs, were outraged at the lack of legal recourse for British subjects, and the violent suppression of activities that should be

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[72] This type of flow between the colonies was intellectual as well as practical. Richard Price has argued that a perception of these flows was not only from the metropole out, but that the periphery acted on the metropole as well – Richard Price, "One Big Thing: Britain, Its Empire, and Their Imperial Culture," *Journal of British Studies*, 45, no. 3, (2006): 602-627; This also connects to Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back*. In practical terms, just the person of Edward Eyre demonstrates the cross-colony movement of people and ideas. Eyre started is colonial life in Australia, then New Zealand, then St Vincent and Antigua, before ending up in Jamaica. In her Introduction to her edited volume, Jane Lydon demonstrates how Eyre interacted with the Australian Indigenous populations in South Australia and the compassion he demonstrated to the victims of white massacres – Jane Lydon, "Introduction: Emotions and Empire," in, *Imperial Emotions: The Politics of Empathy across the British Empire*, Jane Lydon ed, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[73] *The Daily News*, 2 December 1865, 2.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

[76] *The Times,* 6 December 1865, 2.

accepted under British law. Clearly unspoken in the speeches above, but inherent in the subject matter, was the reference to the way British people were treated by their government in Britain. Most of these town meetings were run by radical MPs, and so had a specific focus in criticising the prevailing lack of legal protections available to British citizens at the time. At times, there was even critique of empire itself, in the vein of Cobden, but most of the speeches related specifically to the speakers' ideas of how governments should operate and the explicit belief that the British government, and its colonial governments, were bound by laws in how they treated their subjects.

On 11 December Charles Buxton sent a letter to the editor of *The Times* to rectify some misunderstandings regarding the burgeoning agitation. At this point in time Buxton was most active in his anti-slavery responsibilities and would soon chair the new Jamaica Committee. Buxton was most concerned about the defence of Eyre in the 'Tory Press.'[77] Buxton referenced Eyre's statement that within a week the rebellion had been crushed, however there were reports that three weeks after the rebellion many Jamaicans were still being flogged and hanged, in the presence of other untried rebels. Pointing to this deliberate action of forcing untried rebels to watch the punishments of others, Buxton wrote that those men were still untried, innocent under the law, and were 'brought out expressly in order that they might endure the exquisite torture of witnessing the agonies which they had too much reason (though still untried) to anticipate for themselves.'[78] Buxton continued by asking the reader to imagine hearing of '35 men being hanged in three days, three weeks after the suppression of a rising in Poland or in Hungary' and whether or not they 'should think it monstrous cruelty and injustice if a demand were made for the suspension of the governor of the district while an inquiry into his conduct was going on.'[79] Buxton referenced the fact that after the mob had been fired into at Morant Bay, only two white men were killed in the rioting that occurred, and no white woman was touched. With caustic sarcasm Buxton added:

[77] *The Times*, 11 December 1865, 12.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

> I heartily agree that we are bound, until the contrary is proved, to put absolute confidence in the justice and humanity of Mr Eyre's conduct. Whatever we may believe about the guilt of large batches of negroes tried by youngsters in the morning, and hung at sunset, we are bound to admit that Governor Eyre must perforce have had overwhelming evidence before him to prove that Mr Gordon was a conspirator, and in design an assassin of the darkest dye.[80]

Following his point about Gordon, Buxton made mention that Gordon was not arrested in a 'moment of panic and peril' but was executed 13 days from the beginning of the outbreak.[81] Buxton began a theme regarding Gordon that would continue for the following months. Buxton referenced Gordon as having the 'highest character', as 'almost white; the son of a Scottish gentleman; himself educated in Scotland; the husband of a white lady' and upon reading his letter to his wife just before his execution Gordon needed to either be viewed as 'a man of that sweet and noble character which all who knew him in England attribute to him; or a hypocrite of the basest kind.'[82] It is here that Hall and Stoler's arguments begin to apply to the burgeoning agitation. What can be said for Buxton is that it appears he was deliberately attempting to connect his readers to the murdered man, in effect Buxton was saying that if it could happen to an educated son of Scottish gentleman, with a white English wife, who was respected in society, even though he was mixed race, it could happen to any Englishman. The operative categories here were racial and gendered.

Continuing his attack against Eyre, Buxton referenced Gordon's political challenges against Eyre and wrote

> Eyre must, indeed, have been acting under an overwhelming sense of duty, for as a gentleman and as an Englishman, it must, indeed, have been a terrible compulsion which could force him to send his leading political opponent to the hangman.[83]

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[80] Ibid. This again is reinforced by Agamben's concept of *Homo Sacer*. What Buxton was getting at, without recourse to a philosophical layering, was the way that Eyre and through him, the state, classified an entire group of people, and this one in particular, as beyond the normal scope of laws and judicial oversight.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

Buxton took his critique here slightly beyond the normal concept of legal recourse available to British subjects. Almost explicitly, Buxton accused Eyre of having Gordon hanged, not because of his role in the agitation, or some belief that Gordon was a future threat to the safety of the colony, but because of Gordon's politics. Gordon, the son of a Scottish landowner and a slave, after he was freed by his father, became a magistrate, a member of the House of Assembly and a lay preacher in the Native Baptist Church.[84] Gordon had been a vocal proponent of local changes to Afro-Jamaican conditions, even before Eyre and had ended up on the wrong side of Ralph Darling, the governor before Eyre.[85] By 1862 Gordon had sent an open letter about the conditions in Morant Bay and Eyre dismissed Gordon from the magistracy. Through 1864 and 1865 Gordon was vocal in advocating for the poor in Jamaica, especially in Morant Bay. Gordon also made veiled swipes, in the House of Assembly, that if conditions did not improve then Eyre could expect a revolt.[86] By all reasonable accounts there is not much doubt that Gordon contributed to the general agitation in Jamaica against the policies of Eyre. There were even suggestions that he had partnered with a Haitian general to try and purchase a schooner with the intention of transporting arms from the United States of America to Jamaica.[87] However, the general understanding, in Britain, was that Gordon was a political agitator, who inspired, indirectly, the actions of the rioters. Buxton did not continue in this direction very much, but the later Jamaica Committee used the personal enmity as evidence in the murder trial of Eyre.

Buxton made an insightful connection between Jamaica and the Indian mutiny when he wrote that 'Ah! How unlike the lofty and noble temper displayed, in not unlike circumstances, by Lord Canning.'[88] Buxton here deliberately placed the character of Eyre in direct comparison to that of Canning. Once again, as became a common subtle theme, Buxton conflated the events in Jamaica with those in India in 1857. During the Indian mutiny, Buxton had defended Canning from the unfair

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[84] Howard Johnson, "From Pariah to Patriot: The Posthumous Career of George William Gordon," *New West Indian Guide*, 81, no. 3, (2007): 197-218.

[85] Peter Handford, "Edward John Eyre and the Conflict of Laws," *Melbourne University Law* Review, 32, no. 3, (2008): 831.

[86] Johnson, "From Pariah to Patriot," 198.

[87] Handford, 'Edward John Eyre and the conflict of Laws,' 841. Handford here draws on a report from *The Times* in 1866, which *The Times* itself says is not very credible.

[88] *The Times*, 11 December 1865, 12.

attacks for attempting to deescalate the violence between both sides of the Indian case. In comparison, Buxton was attempting to display that Eyre went the opposite way and escalated the violence with overwhelming force that was unnecessary, illegal, and immoral, exactly the criticisms Buxton had levelled at the retribution in India.

Buxton's attack here was part of a broader counterattack against the criticism that the agitators were facing, especially in the pages of *The Times*. Buxton was representative of Exeter Hall and would become the personification of the Jamaica Committee. His words were concerned with the injustice of the situation, with a clear subtext referencing the legalism of the matter. Though using legalistic language, Buxton nonetheless demonstrated his reticence to push to the logical conclusion of legalism. To Buxton Eyre was responsible; morally deficient and unacceptable as a future representative of Britain, however there was no discussion of prosecution. Demonstrating his strong liberal worldview, Buxton's letter straddled the line between his philanthropic leanings and the future political moralism he would advocate to the Committee and in Parliament that was expressed in humanitarian terms. [89] Thus, the religious, anti-slavery advocate, who expressed liberal political rhetoric, also combined a concern regarding the rights of British subjects with his humanitarian concern.

Goldwin Smith, in his letter to the 12 December Exeter Hall conference, also contributed to this broader discussion on the legality of the Gordon trial. Referring to Gordon as 'a British citizen, and a member of a British legislature, living under the protection of the same laws which guard the lives and liberties of us all.'[90] Smith highlighted the way in which Gordon was arrested by a representative of the Crown, due to his political positions and delivered to an area under martial law, where he was 'handed over to three youths, wholly incapable of conducting a judicial investigation, even if their passions had not been inflamed as they were, and, upon their sentence, put to a felon's death.'[91] In a novel twist to Agamben's concept of *Homo Sacer,*[92] Gordon was literally moved from one geographical

[89] Buxton will be referred to, in Section 3, in relation to his role in attempting to force the Jamaica Committee to maintain its moralism, rather than its legalism.

[90] *Anti-Slavery Reporter,* 15 January 1866, 3.

[91] *Ibid.*.

[92] Agamben, *Homo Sacer.*

space and transported to another to ensure that he had no rights under the law. Smith's point on these facts was that 'there is no Englishman worthy of the name who is not filled with indignation at this great outrage upon the fundamental laws and liberties of England.'[93] Smith took this further, as did the others, by linking Gordon's case to the laws of England. Smith referred to the 'dangerous consequences of putting a British citizen to death without the lawful judgement of his peers.'[94] For Smith, the Jamaican question required Englishmen to

> once more…uphold the rights of Englishmen assailed by arbitrary power—safely assailed, as the wielders of that power suppose, in a place removed from the eye of the English public, at a time of confusion, and in the person of a black man. Our forefathers who won the Great Charter and the Petition of Right, have left us an ample heritage of liberty, but upon condition that, like them, we shall guard it well.[95]

Smith made this point early in the course of the agitation. Buxton on 11 December and Smith on 12 December effectively provided the framework for the ongoing legal criticisms of Eyre and the necessity of framing these criticisms in the terms of justice, humanity, and the threat that the breach of citizen rights in Jamaica posed to citizen rights in Britain. David Cannadine has argued that whilst the British viewed the world in a racialized and gendered manner, they also viewed the world in a specifically hierarchical manner. This hierarchical worldview was 'based on notions of metropolitan-peripheral analogy and sameness.'[96] Cannadine argued that the British 'tended to compare these great towns [the new cities the industrial age created] at home with the "dark continents" overseas, and thus equate the workers in factories with coloured peoples abroad.'[97] Cannadine explored how this resulted in the British ruling class looking down on the British working class in the same way the colonised were seen as inferior, however the opposite is also true. Those who had a pre-existing interest in supporting the extended franchise (which was coming to a head again at the beginning of 1866) and were radical in

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[93] *Anti-Slavery Reporter,* 15 January 1866, 3.

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

[97] *Ibid.*

their politics, were pre-disposed to viewing the similarities between the working class and the colonised in terms of their protection under the law. However, as has been argued by Geoff Eley, it is important to understand that just as the British metropole viewed the empire in a class-conscious way, so too they viewed it in the terms of race and gender.[98] At times the agitators specifically drew reference to the working-class Britons and the Afro-Jamaicans as a way to drive home the point about government excess.

Much of the initial focus for the radical, non-religious advocates of the Jamaica Committee rested in drawing a connection between the fate of the Afro-Jamaicans and the fight for reform in Britain. The liberal, labour, secular press began to reflect this as further information from Jamaica arrived. Frederic Harrison, a labour activist and prominent agitator with Exeter Hall, wrote in the trade-unionist journal *Bee Hive*, that:

> This is a question far deeper than sect or colour. It does not concern Baptists, or black men, or merely the character of a public servant. I have no more liking for black men than for Baptists, and very little liking for Governor Eyre's past history…the question is, whether legality is to be co-extensive with the Queen's rule, or whether our vast foreign dominions are to be governed by the irresponsible will of able, absolute, and iron-willed satraps. It is on this ground that it so peculiarly concerns the working classes. They alone are as yet untainted by the reckless injustice with which our empire has been won and kept.'[99]

Harrison's argument is worth examining in light of Lauren Benton's work on legal regimes in colonial cultures. Benton argued that in order to maintain social order competing legal systems were implemented in both colonised and colonising societies and 'colonialism shaped a framework for the politics of legal pluralism'.[100] Harrison's comments also existed within the argument Benton and Lisa Ford put forward that the history of empire coincides with the history of law and legal reformers.

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[98] Geoff Eley, "Beneath the Skin. Or: How to Forget about the Empire without Really Trying," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 3, no. 1, (2002), doi:10.1353/cch.2002.0008.

[99] *Bee Hive,* 9 December 1865.

[100] Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400 – 1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

However, Benton and Ford argued that the efforts of those such as Harrison, to reorder the colonial legal systems, resulted in making 'colonial legal subjects very different from their metropolitan equivalents, laying the groundwork for the gross constitutional inequities of the late nineteenth-century British Empire.'[101] Despite the eventual effects this reordering would have on the Empire, at this point in time, at the end of 1865, an important section of British agitators approached the legal question of what it meant to be under the rule of the British monarch and argued that sameness, between metropole and periphery, overruled difference.

A further editorial in *Bee Hive* found it ironic and alarming that just when the American slaves had won their freedom, Jamaican working men 'have yet to be assured that their very lives are not at the capricious and absolute disposal of a man styling himself Governor, and actually bearing Queen Victoria's commission.'[102] In a letter to *Bee Hive*, the historian and Reform Club member, Professor E. S. Beesly, focused on what concerned him the most about the repression of the uprising. After outlining his racist view that the black men 'belong to a lower type of the human race than we do', a view that Catherine Hall argued framed the events in Jamaica,[103] Beesly wrote that 'there is no reason why the negro should work cheaper for us because he is ugly' and that 'when the upper classes see how…injustice to labour, even in a distant colony, is resented by the working men of England, they will be careful how they trifle with similar interests at home.'[104] As was typical in the *Bee Hive,* Beesly focussed on working class rights. What Jamaica became for the proponents of the working-class, like Beesly, was a way to view the world and show that the Tory government was still not the friend of the working class. Seen in the prism of mid-century radicalism, Chartism and the burgeoning labour movement within Britain, Jamaica became a metaphor and an allegory for the working-class labour movement.[105] Beesly's article was at the beginning of 1866, just as the movement for the next reform

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[101] Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, *The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800 – 1850*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2016), 6.

[102] *Bee Hive,* 10 February 1866.

[103] Hall, *Civilising Subjects.*

[104] *Bee Hive*, 10 February 1866.

[105] For an excellent overview of the British labour movement see Mary Davis, *Comrade or Brother? A History of the British Labour Movement 1789-1951*, (London: Pluto Press, 1993).

act was starting to move forward. While the connection was not made explicit, the events in Jamaica could be perceived by the labour movement as reminiscent of the Peterloo massacre, in which the British cavalry rode through working class protestors, killing 15.[106]

An article in *Spectator* noted that by defending Eyre, elements of 'the literary aristocracy of England' were undertaking 'one of the worst vices of aristocracies of all kinds' which was 'the entire loss of reverence for inferiors…those whose character as well as fate lies more or less in your own power, which is one of the deepest principles of Christianity.'[107] For these journals the concern was the treatment of working men, the labouring class, by the ruling class. For these agitators, the matter was not of race warfare, but of class warfare. If the workers in Jamaica were not protected from abuses of Government by laws, then what was to stop the British workers receiving the same fate, which refers, to an extent, to Cannadine's argument of the sameness in which the British viewed their colonies in terms of the metropole. In fact, for these agitators the argument had nothing to do with the rights or treatment of Jamaicans at all. The event was only instructive and useful insofar as it provided ammunition in the ongoing battle against the British ruling class *in* Britain, which allowed race to be avoided in the discussion, because it was not really about the Afro-Jamaica victims at all. However, the undercurrent of all of this is the legalistic attitude that rights mattered and that the population of Jamaica inherently, as subjects, retained some rights in line with their British counterparts.

Once again, in the discursive effort to place the Morant Bay incident in terms that mattered to their working-class population, these writers and thinkers removed the agency of the Afro-Jamaican victims in order to create a grand metaphor of class warfare. This fit the political need and was based in a legalistic, working-class framework, however, even though it was couched in a form of humanitarian

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[106] This was very much recognised at the time in the labour movement. Wilhelm Eichhoff wrote in 1869 a pamphlet on the history of the International Workingmen's Association with Marx's assistance. Comparing the massacres in Charleroi, Belgium to Jamaica, Eichhoff wrote that 'Here, as in Jamaica, the capitalists celebrated bloody orgies. Here, as in Jamaica, they hoped to break what was left of the workers' spirit of resistance and self-esteem by acts of extreme brutality.' Wilhelm Eichhoff, *The International Workingmen's Association: Its Establishment, Organisation, Political and Social Activity, and Growth*, in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Institute of Marxism-Leninism ed., vol 21, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936), 375.

[107] *Spectator*, 15 September 1866.

concern for the victims in Jamaica, the concern really had nothing to do with Jamaica, and everything to do with the domestic British government and the fight over the Reform Bill.

Further agitation

On 25 January 1866, the major papers published, almost verbatim, the record of Gordon's trial, which had been received by the Colonial Office on 30 December. *The Daily News* leader, on 30 January 1866, expressed that 'it is one of the compensations of the evils of this terrible Jamaica tragedy, that it is finding out some of the least expected weak points of our character at home.'[108] The weak points were most prominently displayed by the validation of prominent individuals (and the conservative press) of the 'utter subversion of the law [in the Gordon case].'[109] *The Solicitors' Journal* on 27 January stated that 'there is not an unprejudiced lawyer in this kingdom, who will not be ready to admit that Gordon's execution was a moral as well as a legal murder.'[110] By the end of January 1866, it was established in the court of British public opinion that the execution of Gordon was unwarranted by law, and thus immoral and unjust. From this point the feeling of moral indignation at the events in Jamaica were rekindled, strengthened, and submitted to further scrutiny. This was also the beginning of the shift of the centrality of power in the agitation from the anti-slavery and religious societies to those who advocated legal action to rectify a legal error. What is important to note here, as had been present in the previous agitation, was the oft-used partnership between legal and moral. For the legal agitators the illegality of Eyre's response had a direct impact on the morality of it and vice-versa.

In March, as bits and pieces of evidence being accumulated by the Commission filtered back to England, *The Times* stated that:

> There is no longer any reasonable doubt that the cruelties of which it is impossible to think without shuddering were perpetrated in the suppression of the Jamaica insurrection…An abuse of power, beyond all excuse or palliation either in nature or degree, will probably be brought

[108] *Daily News*, 30 January 1866, 4.

[109] Ibid.

[110] *Solicitors' Journal*, 27 January 1866.

> home to several British officers…It is a conclusion from which our readers will bear us witness that we long shrank, and which to have accepted hastily would have been almost as dishonourable as to shut our eyes to it now that it is forced upon us.[111]

The conclusion was that some of the acts in Jamaica were illegal, and needed to be accounted for, however the focus was primarily on the cruelties and the 'shuddering' that this caused, a very moralistic way of describing atrocities, almost the style of the liberal humanitarian, instead of the legalism behind it. However, the shuddering that is caused in this instance, was not necessarily about particular instances of violence and cruelty, but rather, that this violence and cruelty was a stain on British law and honour. This is where the legalism expressed during the Jamaican agitation intersected with the broader humanitarian thought surrounding it. Expressing outrage on behalf of Afro-Jamaicans because they were subject to illegal repression did not discount the humanitarianism behind the legalism. The Afro-Jamaicans, as British subjects, were protected under law, and the breach of that law became an issue of justice and humanity and so was required to be redressed. The fact that *The Times* had reached this point of view, after earlier dismissing the agitation as self-interested, demonstrates just how mainstream it had become by the end of January 1866.

As the press began its shift in opinion during the early months of 1866 the Jamaica Committee continued its work. Smith was advocating for preparations to start a criminal prosecution of Eyre and wrote to a friend on 4 January that 'the case of Mr. Gordon, which is an outrageous breach of the Petition of Right, will probably be carried before a court of law by the prosecution of Governor Eyre for the murder.'[112] Upon John Stuart Mill's return from France in early 1866 he began to take a dominating role among the Committee. Together with John and Jacob Bright they became the figureheads for the Jamaica Committee as a whole and its shift towards prosecution for Eyre. For Mill the agitation was not so much about the mistreatment of the Afro-Jamaicans as it was about how the

[111] *The Times*, 19 March 1866, 8.

[112] Smith to Waring, 4 January 1866, *Goldwin Smith Papers,* #14-13-134, (Ithaca: Cornell University).

episode would affect English domestic politics.[113] Mill was concerned about the defence of Eyre and the atrocities in Jamaica from reputable Englishmen, which demonstrated the way the British society was throwing away the idea of the primacy of the individual over the state. In his autobiography, Mill wrote that it was no coincidence that those who had executed Gordon were now 'defended and applauded by the same kind of people who had so long upheld negro slavery.'[114] Mill's moral political ideas influenced the Committee, which, combined with the Brights' concern for the British working class, resulted in an agitation regarding the rights of individuals, the violation of which in Jamaica and celebrated in England, could result in the same violation of rights in England.

When the Royal Commission report was made public the Jamaica Committee was required to act. A meeting of the Executive Committee was held on 20 June, where a serious divide arose.[115] Smith's assertion that Eyre needed to be tried for the murder of Gordon, whether by parliament or by a private suit brought by Mrs. Gordon, gained traction with most members, specifically due to the influence being wielded by Jacob Bright and Mill. Buxton considered this a significant error and argued strongly against both courses of action. In a subsequent meeting, on 26 June, the committee met and agreed to go ahead with undertaking the prosecution of Eyre. Buxton, in detail, stood against this decision and followed through on his threat to resign if passed. Mill and Bright were the strongest proponents for prosecution and on the resignation of Buxton Mill was elected the new chairman.[116]

At a meeting on 9 July, in which Mill was elected Chairman, Peter Taylor (Liberal MP for Leicester, vice-president of the reform league and member of the emancipation society), the treasurer who was chairing the meeting, argued that the Committee was not motivated by revenge, because Eyre as a person was nothing to the committee, 'he was simply the impersonation of wrong.'[117] Taylor began

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[113] Mill to David Urquhart, 4 October 1866, *Later Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1849 – 1873*, Francis E. Mineka & Dwight N. Lindley eds, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 1205.

[114] John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography and Literary Essays,* John M. Robson & Jack Stillinger eds, *(*Toronto: University of Toronto Press*,* 1981*),* 281

[115] Chesson Diary, 21 June 1866.

[116] Chesson Diary, 26 June 1866.

[117] *The Times*, 10 July 1866, 5

by stating that the people of England needed the Jamaica Committee to undertake the prosecution of Eyre and said that people

> knew that the Jamaica Committee had constituted themselves the advocates of the blacks (hear, hear), and it was due to public opinion that the man who was chiefly responsible for all these atrocities should be impeached and the evidence placed on the records of a court of justice.'[118]

John Bright argued for prosecution so that future colonial administrators would know they would be required to have a proper respect for human life.[119] It was at this point that the direction of the Committee was set clearly. Charles Buxton and his nephew Fowell Buxton dissented, but apart from those two a vote of the Committee resulted in a unanimous direction towards prosecution. Edmond Beales stated that

> if the committee did not prosecute, then English law was to all intents and purposes a mockery, and there would be a strong feeling throughout the country that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor.[120]

In closing the discussion John Gorrie, a Scottish lawyer and writer for *The Morning Star*, who had been sent by the committee with James Fitzjames Stephen to Jamaica to observe the Royal Commission, supported the legalistic view. Gorrie stated that after reviewing all the evidence that the Royal Commission had gathered, he did not doubt that Eyre 'was guilty of putting Mr. Gordon to death without sufficient cause, and in opposition to the law, after each had been the political opponent of the other for years.'[121] Referencing Buxton's views that Eyre was not guilty of murder, Gorrie continued that 'if it was not [murder]…[he] would be pleased to have his opinion of murder changed by the ruling of the Lord Chief Justice of England.'[122] Concluding with a specific example of an execution without a formal court martial, Gorrie stated that it was 'a course of procedure as much at variance with the

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

Articles of War as it was with the principles of justice and humanity.'[123] Gorrie placed into words the entire content of the legalistic view of the Jamaican matter. What was being referred to here was legal moralism. In other words, morals and values that were embedded inside the British legal code. For Gorrie and those like him, the law was the upholder of justice and humanity, without it, societies fell apart.

John Bright's statement about the link between colonial government and domestic politics is instructive. The legalistic conviction was that Eyre needed to be punished to demonstrate that colonial governors were also subject to the law, because it was these laws that ensured that they would have proper respect for life, and following from this, justice, and humanity. This links back to Benton's argument over legal contests in the colonies and the metropole that were attempting to frame the law into an effective framework.[124] As the framework existed and restrained immoral excesses then the cause of justice and humanity could be carried forward. It is interesting to note that many of these agitators: Mill, the Brights, and Gorrie, among others, were specifically concerned about this case because of its connections to domestic British legality and the rights of British subjects. They would not end up showing the same concern for the Bulgarians a decade later as this was not a question of upholding Britain's status as a *Rechtsstaat.*[125] This demonstrates that for many of the legalistic agitators, it was the legal nature of the case that informed their ideas of justice and humanity, rather than an idea drawn from religious conviction or some high-minded humanitarian ideal.

As the resolution was carried to change the direction of the Committee to pressuring Parliament to prosecute Eyre,m or failing this to provide material support to Mrs. Gordon in prosecuting, or to undertake a prosecution of Eyre themselves, Mill was unanimously elected the chairman of the Committee. Accepting this vote Mill said that the purposes of the Jamaica committee

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[123] ibid.

[124] Benton, *Law and Colonial* Cultures, 3.

[125] A Rechtsstaat in this case refers to the constitutional state, one that operates according to legal norms. In particular, the *Rechtsstaat* can be traced back to Immanuel Kant's ideas on moral governance by constitution and law. (Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Political Writings,* ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 117-118)

'are simply to ascertain whether there exist in this country any means for making a British functionary responsible for blood unlawfully shed (applause), and whether that be murder or not.'[126]

The base language of the committee shifted throughout the agitation from the religious humanitarianism of Exeter Hall to the anti-slavery humanitarianism of Buxton and Fowell Buxton, to finally giving way in this meeting to the legalistic humanitarianism of Bright and Mill. The Committee was not abandoning its roots, the intention was still to support 'the blacks of Jamaica' and present to Britain and the ruling class that there was a push for justice and an understanding that rulers could not breach law whenever they wanted. Mill explained that allowing Eyre to escape prosecution would give every colonial official a free hand to commit murder and would set a horrible precedent affecting the liberties of Englishmen.[127] The new Jamaica Committee was not for legalism at the expense of humanity, but implicitly, and at times explicitly, argued that through laws and the upholding of just laws, justice and humanity would be protected and prosper in the colonies as well as the metropole.

Mill had brought up the matter of Eyre's legal complicity in Parliament on 19 July. Disraeli, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Conservative Government in the House of Commons, responded and shrugged off Mill's questions, throwing half of it out as irrelevant and dismissing the rest as already dealt with.[128] Disraeli concluded, making it clear that the Derby Government not only approved the course undertaken by the Russell government, but were satisfied in allowing it to be the final word on the matter, through taking a similar line to the Commission and Cardwell: that errors of judgment and conduct did not equate to deficiencies in character and motivation. Kostal has suggested that Mill most likely did not expect any straight answer from Disraeli but was content to receive a line in the sand from the Government of where they stood on the matter, so the committee could proceed privately.[129] This may be true, but it also may be too kind to Mill, a novice parliamentarian who had come up against one of the shrewdest parliamentarians of the era. However, both sides had made their

[126] *The Times*, 10 July 1866, 5

[127] Chesson Diary, 26 June 1866.

[128] United Kingdom, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates,* House of Commons, 19 July 1866, vol. 184, col. 1069.

[129] Kostal, *Jurisprudence of Power*, 161.

position clear and rigid. Mill, as the chairman of the Jamaica Committee, had put it on record that they believed that the actions in Jamaica were illegal and that Eyre was culpable, whereas the government declared that it was done with the issue. What had happened, though, was that with Disraeli jumping at the chance to embarrass Mill, he had made the government's position inflexible.

Following Mill's Parliamentary skirmish, the Jamaica Committee sent a letter to *The Times* where they specifically outlined their new position in detail. Strongly beginning the letter only became harsher:

> When there is reason to believe that a British subject has been illegally put to death, or otherwise illegally punished by a person in authority, it is the duty of the Government to inquire into the case, and, if it appears that the offence has been committed, to vindicate the law by bringing the offender to public justice.[130]

Referencing the evidence given to the Royal Commission, the committee expressed their opinion that the behaviour was illegal, and that this fact was brought to the notice of the government by Mill in Parliament, where it was disregarded, leaving only individuals to act. Claiming that the committee was not motivated by vindictive feelings, the letter stated that their aim 'besides upholding the obligation of justice and humanity towards all races beneath the Queen's sway, is to vindicate, by an appeal to judicial authority, the great legal and constitutional principles which have been violated in the late proceedings and deserted by the Government.'[131] The committee made two claims; namely:

> to establish, by a judicial sentence, the principle that the illegal execution of a British subject by a person in authority is not merely an error which superiors in office may at their discretion visit with displeasure or condone, but a crime which will certainly be punished by the law…[and] the condition of a British subject will be altered if, for the offence of taking his life without law, a public functionary is to be responsible only to a Minister of the Crown.'[132]

The main point made in these two statements was that the lives and liberties of British subjects 'have not been, nor can they safely be allowed to be, under the guardianship of the Executive

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[130] *The Times*, 30 July 1866, 5.

[131] *I*bid.

[132] Ibid.

Government alone; they have been, and it is essential that they should remain, under the guardianship of the law.'[133] Secondly, the committee wanted to challenge, within the legal system, 'the jurisdiction of courts of martial law, which, as late events show may be made engines of indiscriminate butchery and torture.'[134] Further, the committee wanted to test whether it was legal for untrained military and naval officers, effected by the events they were directly participating in, to 'try and torture or put to death the subjects of Her Majesty for high treason and other civil offences without a jury or any adequate security for justice.'[135] This was a challenge to colonial law that Benton and Ford discussed in depth, although their focus was on the development of a global legal framework, rather than the connection between this framework and the concepts of justice and humanity and the humanitarian movements.[136]

The letter continued in a similar vein, criticising the government for providing no recourse to law and demonstrating the illegality of the events in Jamaica. Drawing attention to the matter of Gordon, the letter stated that if the execution of Gordon could be considered illegal, it was a murder, and if a murder one in which 'Eyre was not only constructive, but personally guilty; which was committed not only under his authority, but, to all intents and purposes, with his own hand.'[137] Further referencing the view that Eyre had no private malice toward Gordon, the committee stated that

> to lay it down that proof of private malice is indispensable in order to make an illegal execution a murder, would be to hold out impunity to the crime which is the most dangerous of all to the community – the crime of a public functionary who abuses the power intrusted to him to compass, under the forms of justice, the death of a citizen obnoxious to the Government.[138]

The letter stated that that the committee was attempting to 'defend public liberty against aggression from public motives, and by the means pointed out by law; and that they may justly claim the sympathy and support of all to whom public liberty is dear.'[139]

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

[135] ibid.

[136] Benton & Ford, *Rage for Order*.

[137] *The Times*, 30 July 1866, 5.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

This letter is important as a manifesto of the aims of the Jamaica Committee, just before the most significant foray in Parliament and the initiation of legal proceedings against Eyre. It demonstrated a clear concern for the legal rights of British subjects, the protection under law from the tyranny of government and the right of sufferers to appeal to law to protect them against arbitrary punishment. What is noticeably absent in this manifesto is any talk of race or racial vindication. Eyre was to be punished as performing illegal acts against British subjects, whether black or white, as a point to prove that all British subjects (implicitly read, even black subjects) are protected under law from the tyranny of others, especially their government. It is reasonable that the focus would remain on the role of the executive government in relation to its subjects, as, apart from a small fraction of British society, sympathy for non-white subjects across the empire was low. As has been demonstrated, very rarely in the legal case, was race mentioned. This was a deliberate tactic allowing British audiences to draw the explicit links needed between the Jamaican victims and themselves.

Catherine Hall, after discussing the formation and change in direction of the Committee, stated that the 'rule of law must reach across the empire and ensure formal equality before its majesty.'[140] However, Hall also argued that it was important to note that 'subjects were [not] the same as citizens, [nor] that negroes or Indians should have the same political rights as Englishmen.'[141] Hall used Christine Bolt to support her argument, in that race was the primary identifier in the British Empire, despite elements of concern, at times, for slaves and those of different races.[142] Putting these concepts together it is clear to see how the legalistic agitators in the Jamaican case present elements reflected in Hall, Bolt, Cannadine, and Eley. The agitators, in the absence of a discussion of race, rather focused on the concept of subjecthood. They were not, however, attempting to conflate colonial subjects, especially non-white ones, with white British men. Rather they were using the Jamaican case as an allegory of government abuse and power over its subjects. This abuse was the defining feature of their

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[140] Hall, 'Jamaica', in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform*, Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall, eds, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 203.

[141] *Ibid.*

[142] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race,* (London: Routledge, 1971), 210.

agitation, not the specific victims necessarily. Most of the agitators, and all the later ones in the Jamaica Committee, were not advocating for equality of Afro-Jamaicans with Britons. Rather they were advocating a limit on executive power to protect all subjects, but particularly themselves, from these abuses. The committee made the appropriate references to justice and humanity, the basis for humanitarian thought, and made it clear that they believed that the best course to safeguard both was to demonstrate that even public figures were accountable to the law for their actions.

Carnarvon had become more involved in the work in the Colonial Office by July 1866. Taylor had sent for approval his draft of instructions for John Grant, upon arrival in Jamaica. Carnarvon minuted this in a way that demonstrated his respect for law in the Jamaican situation. by making it clear that there was 'paramount necessity of impressing all classes in the Island with the sense of an undeviating and rigid justice in the administration of the Law & of every department of civil govt.'[143] Acknowledging the racial divide that existed in Jamaica, Carnarvon recognised that class and race antagonism would continue to exist for 'some time to come.'[144] Advocating an 'absolute impartiality of language & conduct', Carnarvon stated that 'all races & parties…have to look for strict justice at the hands of the Queen's representative.'[145] In conclusion, Carnarvon wrote that while the governor would be supported by the government, the people he governs

> have also a right to expect in those to whose charge such great trusts are committed that in times of political emergency they will show themselves able to withstand the pressure of any one class or idea or interest & that they will maintain that calmness & impartiality of judgement which should belong to the Governor of an English Colony.[146]

Taylor was upset by this as he felt that this 'would be construed as a reflection upon Mr. Eyre…(who) has …already received more censure than he has deserved.'[147] Taylor was overruled, however, and the instructions were sent to Grant. Carnarvon had also sent a letter to the War Office in

[143] Minutes by Carnarvon, 23 July 1866, on draft dispatch to Grant, 1 August 1866, CO 137/407

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

reply to their letter to Cardwell stating they would initiate investigations into alleged misconduct in the Jamaican affair. Carnarvon requested that the War Office undertake a court martial of those officers that evidence had found had acted improperly and if possible that another officer other than Major-General O'Connor could undertake the court martial, due to his participation in the matter.[148]

This episode illuminates an individual within the Conservative Party, who made it clear to his staff and the colonial governors that the rule of law and trust in the imperial government were what protected British subjects and the Empire from criticism. It would be a stretch from this point to argue that Carnarvon, a thirty-five-year-old earl, was a humanitarian.[149] However, with his demand that colonial administrators respect the law at all costs, he placed himself in the intellectual tradition of Cardwell and the legalistic agitators, within the broader thought of human rights. This was not the revolutionary rights of man as expressed by the American and French revolutions or Mazzini in the 1820s and taken up by an idealistic British elite. Nor was it the human rights as expressed post-1945 in the declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. The legalistic concern expressed in the aftermath of the Morant Bay uprising was not a rights campaign that advocated universal claims, transcending states and nations.[150] Instead, British campaigners viewed subjects of the British crown who were massacred indiscriminately and had the law used against them in an illegal manner as representative of their own relationship to the British state. Race and gender were indeed operative throughout the campaign, however from Cardwell to Carnarvon and down to the Jamaica Committee, there was an immediate and rational concern that British laws had been breached and this was a serious issue. The seriousness of this breach in trust came from the social contract that bound the ruling class with those they ruled over, especially in the British case. Despite Hall's suggestion that there was a difference between a citizen and a subject in the case of Jamaica,[151] this distinction was not made by

[148] C. O. to W. O, 24 July 1866, CO 137/309.

[149] He had advocated in 1863 that British gaol conditions become *less* comfortable and stricter restrictions placed on diet and labour. (Sean McConville, *English Local Prisons, 1860-1900: Next only to Death*, (London: Routledge, 1995)).

[150] Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, chapter 1.

[151] Hall, 'Jamaica', 203.

those who were advocating legal, moral and humane treatment of British subjects, or if acknowledged at all it was argued that there should be no distinction.

In a speech made in Leeds in January 1867 William Forster, who was a particularly moralising politician, referred to an element of the agitation that combined the concern over the legal ramifications of the Morant Bay rebellion with the issue of colour, anti-slavery and citizens and subjects. Referencing the change in rule in Jamaica – from a representative assembly, to direct rule by the Colonial Office – Forster stated that though moving from representative assembly to direct rule appeared to be a backwards step, the representative nature of Jamaica prior to 1866 was in fact deeply unfair.[152] The representative government of Jamaica, according to Forster, 'represented only one portion of the community…and that portion divided from the others by marked differences of race, of colour, and of position.'[153] Forster suggested that the Afro-Jamaican element of the community was seen as incapable of participating effectively in the political process and the government therefore represented 'of the planting and employing interest.'[154] 'That in itself,' claimed Forster,

> was an evil. It always was an evil that the government of any community should be conducted by a caste or a class, and he did not know but what class government under representative institutions was about as bad as they could have. But when, in addition to that, they had that class government obtaining its power by force which was given to it from without, and, therefore, not being compelled to face the difficulties of its own legislation, they then had a government that was intrinsically bad.[155]

Following from this explanation of the nature of representative rule, Forster declared that for something like the response to the rebellion to never happen again, the British government should 'carefully look through its statute book and see that there are no statutes left that are the remnant of the

[152] *London Daily News*, Friday 11 January 1867, 3.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

old slave legislation; and especially he thought that attention ought to be directed to that act under which Governor Eyre had declared Martial Law.'[156]

Trial of Eyre

With the withdrawal of the others from the committee, it began to focus purely on a criminal conviction of Eyre, as well as Nelson and Brand in their roles presiding over the court martial of Gordon. The idea was that these three men were to be tried for the pre-meditated murder of Gordon, by the instruments of state power and martial law. On 6 February 1867, the Jamaica Committee attempted to prosecute Brand and Nelson for the deliberate murder of Gordon in front of the Chief Magistrate, Sir Thomas Henry.[157] This would take approximately two weeks and Henry decided that there was enough evidence for both to face a grand jury, which was quite a significant decision given that Brand and Nelson had acted upon orders within pre-existing law.[158]

For the Jamaica Committee, however, the important trial was that of Eyre. Whilst the Admiralty and the War Office had paid for Brand and Nelson's defence, Carnarvon refused for the Colonial Office to pay for Eyre's defence.[159] Eyre was arraigned in Market Drayton, Shropshire, on 27 March 1867, when due to missteps from the prosecution lawyer, James Fitzjames Stephen, and an impassioned defence, the panel of lay-magistrates found little cause to send to a grand jury and the case was dismissed.[160] The case for Eyre refuted the idea put forward by Stephen that while Eyre appeared to be an honest and brave man, he was so consumed by the idea of Gordon's guilt that he could not apply the law correctly.[161] The defence lawyer, Hardinge Stanley Giffard, argued that legally Stephen's argument made no sense, that there was a requirement for malice and intent in murder and the case was a political stunt.[162]

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[156] Ibid.

[157] *Report of the Proceedings at Bow Street, Jamaica Papers VII*, London, 1867.

[158] Kostal, *Jurisprudence of Power*, 293.

[159] Carnarvon Diary, Carnarvon papers, 20 February 1867, Add. MSS 69899.

[160] *Morning Star*, 1 April 1867, 4.

[161] Ibid., 28 March 1867, 10.

[162] *London Review*, 6 April 1867, 390.

The Jamaica Committee tried again to prosecute Eyre for murder. However, before this Brand and Nelson were to face the grand jury. Sir Alexander Cockburn, the chief judge of the Queen's Bench, chose to charge the jury in this case. He charged the jury, in the words of Kostal, in order to make an 'epical liberal statement.'[163] Cockburn intended to make a definitive statement on martial law, beyond the facts of the case against Brand and Nelson. Cockburn spoke for some hours on the legal factor of whether Eyre had the right as a colonial governor to declare martial law, linking it back to whether the crown had the right to declare martial law.[164] Cockburn's argument, while indeed embedded in the liberal tradition as critiqued by Kostal, demonstrate a clear humanitarian sentiment that ran through his legalistic attitude. When looking at humanitarianism in its connection with human rights and the focus these concepts gave towards a form of humanitarian governance, the focus that Cockburn made on the moral responsibility of instruments of government power is important.

Cockburn's point was that the Crown did not hold the ability to declare martial law over its own subjects, but rather that this remained the prerogative of Parliament. Though there were exigencies in the Jamaica situation, left by the 'curse' of slavery, these 'did not trump the fundamental legal protections of the British subject.'[165] Following from this point on the inviolability of legal protections of subjects, Cockburn stated that constraints on state power 'are considerations more important even than shortening the temporary duration of an insurrection.'[166] For Cockburn, in relation to the case in front of him, the Mutiny Act and role of martial law was relevant when defeating armed opponents in the field. However, the removal of a civilian from an area not under martial law, to one which was, to execute him, should be considered murder.[167]

Cockburn was less sure on the matter of Nelson and Brand's guilt, as even if martial law was erroneous and the removal of Gordon to Morant Bay was illegal, it needed to be established that Brand

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[163] Kostal, *Jurisprudence of Power, 325*.

[164] *Morning Star,* 11 April 1867, 5.

[165] Frederick Cockburn Ed., *Charge of the Lord Chief Justice of England to the Grand Jury at the Central Criminal Court, in the case of The Queen Against Nelson and Brand*, (London: William Ridgway, 1867), 62.

[166] Ibid, 108.

[167] Ibid

and Nelson knew this, and maliciously went ahead with the execution anyway. Cockburn had wanted to make a case on the legal issue of the use of martial law against British subjects. This is clear from his vehemence on the issue of martial law and the crown, combined with his hedging on the matter of Nelson and Brand's guilt. Given this, it is no surprise that the jury came back and found no bill against Nelson and Brand but stated that they 'strongly recommend that martial law should be more clearly defined by legislative enactment.'[168]

The focus in much of the liberal press after Cockburn's pronouncement focused on the role of the crown and protecting the subject from state abuses, which as has been seen, was a concern throughout the agitation. Following from this, and after some discussion in parliament, the concept of martial law was clarified somewhat by Carnarvon's changes to the instructions given to governors. Kostal has argued that Cockburn's deliberate decision was to make a definitive pronouncement on the concept of martial law.[169] Kostal stated that 'Cockburn went down to the Old Bailey to remind English people of their great (Whig) political and legal inheritance, to school them, as the *Daily News* put it, in the "alphabet of our liberty".'[170]

While the focus was on martial law, and Kostal's critique into a judge going beyond legal norms to go further than the law is valid, what Cockburn's charge demonstrated was a clear element within the British elite that focused the law into moral ends. Cockburn's argument and suggestion was that as a nation and empire of laws, the British could not afford to go beyond these boundaries. The humanitarian argument was that to protect the liberty and life of British subjects it was necessary for the instruments of government power to be controlled, bound by law, and held accountable for their actions. The rights element of this argument focused on the political nature of British subjects and the complicated relationship between subjects in the empire and citizens in Britain.

Cockburn's decision was not the end of the matter, or even a definitively compelling argument across Britain. William Finlason, a well-known legal writer, wrote a comprehensive criticism of

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[168] *Daily Telegraph*, 11 April 1867, 3.

[169] Kostal, *Jurisprudence of* Power, 364.

[170] Ibid.

Cockburn's charge.[171] Along with criticising Cockburn's vague and naïve comments in the charge, Finlason took an opposite view on the concept of martial law in the limited form that Cockburn argued for. For the Jamaica Committee the hope of using a private prosecution to force a general revision of martial law had failed again. They, especially Mill, would continue down this line, to a point in 1868 where they would attempt to sue Eyre in a civil court to reach a similar conclusion. However, the legal prosecutions, especially the comments by Cockburn, demonstrate the concerns around the legal responsibilities of the British state in Britain and in the empire and the role of the state to protect the rights and liberties of its subjects.

Conclusion

Though the battle to prosecute Eyre would proceed for almost a decade and many types of arguments made for and against this, the political moment moved quickly. The instructive points for an examination of humanitarian thought are the mingling of legal and humanitarian debates that took place. As has been demonstrated elsewhere, alongside this legalistic agitation was a religious and moral one that argued for a similar endpoint – the cessation of atrocity – but from a different perspective. In fact, many of the individuals crossed these discursive boundaries at times when their priorities shifted; in this case, Charles and Fowell Buxton being instructive. Despite the continuation of a campaign to prosecute Eyre, the further in time it was from the incident the less the movement was connected to the humanitarian ideal that had been presented at its beginning.

What was presented by the majority of the agitators who focused on legalism was a form of legal moralism. The legal structure of the British empire was understood to be that of a *Rechtsstaat*, a state that operated according to clearly defined rules, laws and morals. The legalist agitators in the Jamaican case saw that this moral structure had been breached and needed to be repaired and justice delivered to those who breached the laws. This is quite different to the motivations of the religious humanitarians, who based their humanitarian ideals on religious values and a concept of co-religiosity

[171] Finlason, *Treatise on martial Law*.

with the sufferers of the massacre. It is also different in form to the liberal moralism that was also displayed, where the focus was not on the legal structures of the empire, but rather the more philosophical ideas of liberalism.

The legal agitation demonstrated how often the British empire reflected back on itself its colonial experience. As Cannadine, Eley, and others have argued, the experience in the colonies affected many British individuals who were pre-disposed to engaging in politics. For many of the legalistic agitators the suffering of the Afro-Jamaicans came after the importance of the episode in terms of the government's relationship to citizens in Britain. At points the entire agency of the victims of the repression was removed and they were presented as a two-dimensional allegory for the relationship between the ruling class and the working class. However, the principles of legalism, were the defining prism through which these individuals looked to advocate for the rights of British citizens first, and also to protect the rights of British subjects in the empire.

While there was a clear legal theme running through the Morant Bay agitation, it would even be fitting to say that it was the dominant theme, it is clear from the language used and the inter-play between empire and liberalism, that much of this was expressed in terms of humanitarian rhetoric. Despite the victims being behind in importance the relationships between British citizens and their government, much of the language used still references the suffering and undesirability of such. This further demonstrates that while there are various strands of humanitarianism, they often exist in relationship and parallel to each other, where humanitarians coming from different backgrounds and motivations could use similar language to engage politically.

Despite the obvious differences in the legal situation and a very different response from British humanitarians, there are also elements of the legalistic approach to atrocities that was present within the Jamaican case in the agitation surrounding the Bulgarian massacres a decade later. Though involving different humanitarian agitators, there was a distinct movement for a legal framework to protect the rights of subject people that was expressed in terms of empire in the Jamaican case and would be expressed in terms of international responsibility and law in the Bulgarian case.

Chapter 4 – Internationalism, Humanitarianism, and the Bulgarian atrocities

Introduction

Amid the growing crisis surrounding the international response to the Ottoman Empire's violent suppression of a revolt in Bulgaria, the 'Great Powers' were struggling to frame the appropriate response. Alexander Gorchakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, said to Lord Loftus, the British Ambassador to Austria, that

> If the Powers want serious results they must agree that the independence and integrity of Turkey should be subordinated to the guarantees demanded by humanity, Christian Europe, and interests of peace.[1]

This type of discussion made the Disraeli government nervous. They were not in the business of subordinating the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire to anything but British imperial interests. However, the discussion was instructive and contributed to a broader trans-national conversation regarding the responsibilities and legalities of the international community surrounding the response to the Ottoman Empire. In Gorchakov's, and others', opinions the interests of humanity, peace and religion were more important than the guarantees of sovereignty.

The previous chapter addressed the legalistic response to the Morant Bay uprising in 1865, within a broader humanitarian movement. It was demonstrated that there was a segment of those against British behaviour in Jamaica who mobilised the tools of British law to argue for a set of rights for Afro-Jamaicans as subjects of the Queen. This legalistic development was situated within a broader movement, which advocated humanitarian ideas because of the way that these legalistic activists connected their agitation to the ideas of 'justice' and 'humanity', as well as a broader form of humanitarian, imperial governance. Nonetheless, they rested on a narrow conception of human rights; namely, the rights of the British subject. This chapter examines the response to the Bulgarian uprising in a similar manner. The British response will be explored in terms of those who were situated within the broader humanitarian movement but were expressly concerned with the legal issues of the matter.

[1] Lord Loftus to Earl of Derby, St Petersburg, 20 Nov. 1876, F0 418/131.

Because of the differences between the two agitations, it is not as accurate to refer to this element of the Bulgarian agitation as legalistic. Rather there was a section of the agitation that was not motivated primarily by religious or philosophically humanitarian impulses, but rather a burgeoning conception of international law and the international obligations and the responsibility of Britain and the Concert of Europe.

Whereas Morant Bay was a specifically British imperial issue (in terms of the metropole looking out towards the Empire), the Bulgarian agitation was an international, diplomatic, and imperial matter (although Ottoman officials insisted that it was a purely internal matter). As such, whilst the Jamaican agitation was specifically about subject rights and how the British were to treat their own imperial subjects (and the relationship this held to the rights of the British working class), within the Bulgarian matter individuals and groups advocated for specific policies based on their conception of international law and the role that Britain was to play in upholding justice and humanity through the implementation and enforcement of formal and informal international agreements. As such, this chapter addresses the understanding of international law and obligation that developed through the Concert of Europe throughout the nineteenth century after the Congress of Vienna, the complex 'Eastern Question' that preoccupied many of the nations through the latter-half of the century, and the burgeoning idea of human rights that was to be implemented across the nations (understood as Christian, enlightened nations), so as to demonstrate how these antecedents impacted upon the Bulgarian massacres.

International law at this time was enforced and dominated by the five powers of Britain, France, Austria, Germany, and Russia. As Martti Koskenniemi has argued, international law during the 1870s was a product of the non-liberal sentiments of the major continental powers, with the by-product of a general European peace since 1815.[2] When speaking of international law during the 1870s it was a general agreement agreed to by nations that considered themselves civilised. Andrew Fitzmaurice has argued that international law in the latter half of the nineteenth century 'was an

[2] Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11.

instrument of empire.'[3] Thus, when speaking of the international law in 1876 this was a law of agreements proposed and agreed between the Concert of Europe. This inherently left out the 'uncivilised' nations, who were often the subjects of the laws and agreements made. What was being spoke of and discussed during the Bulgarian agitation was an understanding of the role of Britain in the European system, the importance of the Concert in determining appropriate actions to maintain the peace of Europe, and a burgeoning understanding of a responsibility for 'enlightened' and 'civilised' nations to protect against the indiscriminate loss of life.

The argument of this chapter, that there was a distinct element of the response to the Bulgarian massacres that was driven by an international law and obligation focused humanitarianism, inevitably intersects with the argument put forward by Samuel Moyn in *The Last Utopia,* where he openly criticized the idealism and utopianism of historians of human rights, who saw human rights 'as an old ideal that finally came into its own as a response to the Holocaust'.[4] Moyn argued that a major difference existed between the universal rights expressed in the 1940s and the limited rights from earlier, especially those constructed around the ideas of citizenship.[5] Moyn specifically indicated that he was speaking of the modern conception of human rights, as understood post-World War II, and argued that these were substantially different from the limited rights, linked to national identity, of the earlier nineteenth century period. Moyn argued that

> in the nineteenth century the often heartfelt appeal to the rights of man always went along with the propagation of national sovereignty as indispensable means, entailed precondition, and enduring accompaniment.'[6]

The human rights surrounding the Bulgarian massacres were indeed connected to contemporary concepts of sovereignty and national identity, particularly with relation to the Bulgarians.

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[3] Andrew Fitzmaurice, 'Equality of non-European Nations in International Law,' Inge Van Hulle & Randall Lesaffer (eds), *International Law in the Long Nineteenth Century (1776—1914): From Public Law of Europe to Global International Law?* (Lieden/Boston: Brill Nihoff, 2019), 75.

[4] Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 6.

[5] Ibid., 13.

[6] Ibid., *The Last Utopia,* 29.

However, as the quote from Gorchakov above makes clear, in the case of the Ottoman Empire, at least, there was scope in the argument to suggest that justice, humanity, and the right to life, could trump national sovereignty, at least rhetorically, even within an imperial context.

Much of the legalistic and rights-focused language surrounding the Bulgarian uprising and suppression were couched in terms of the rights of the Bulgarian nationality, an argument for a Bulgarian state and the protection of the Bulgarians' Slavic ethnicity. Those proposing this, however, were advocating for the creation of a new state to provide these protections to its new citizens, along with the responsibility of the Concert of Europe to protect the victims until such independence could occur. There was a push in Russia for Pan-Slavism,[7] and there was a pre-existing movement in Britain for the self-determination of some of the European subjects of the Ottoman Empire – such as Serbia. As Maria Todorova has argued, in the European imagination at the time the Balkans were considered not quite European and not quite oriental. Therefore, there were significant movements that pushed for independence of sections of the Balkans in order to 'Europeanise' them (for lack of a better term) and free them from the shackles of an Orientalist Ottoman Empire.[8]

However, there was nothing in the advocacy of a new state to protect human rights and the suffering of subject populations that discounts an accompanying (or even foundational) humanitarian impulse or advocacy for human rights in the way that Moyn suggested. Moyn argued that 'these causes were almost never framed as rights issues', but rather, were a result of 'a more hierarchical (and frequently religious) language of humanitarianism', which justified intervention.[9] Testing this argument is one of the purposes of this chapter.

There is no argument that a humanitarian impulse which included a focus on international law and agreements was a precursor of modern human rights theory. However, it is not self-evident that

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[7] Asli Yigit Gulseven argued that at a cultural level there was evident pan-Slavism in Russia, especially focused on the Ottoman Balkans. Gulseven further argued that at a personal level with Ignatiev and cultural organisations, such as the Slavic Benevolent Committee, brought pan-Slavism from a cultural feeling, into a political asset. (Asli Yigit Gulseven, "Rethinking Russian pan-Slavism in the Ottoman Balkans: N.P. Ignatiev and the Slavic Benevolent Committee (1856-77)," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 53, no. 3, (2017): 332-38)

[8] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans.*

[9] Moyn, *The Last Utopia,* 33.

the nineteenth century humanitarianism was necessarily solely imperially driven for the purposes of those at home, or only a religiously motivated crusade. Rather, within the broader framework of humanitarian ideals expressed in the 1870s, within Britain, there was an element among the agitators who focused their attention on the rights of international subject populations, the international responsibilities of a 'moral' Britain, and the responsibilities of states under established international law and agreements. These agitators spoke of the rights of subservient populations, the responsibility of Imperial powers and the responsibility of the Great Powers to maintain and enforce an acceptable level of international behaviour according to pre-existing treaties. This was all contained within a framework based on international law and responsibility, which contributed significantly to the broader humanitarian movement within Britain in the 1870s.

It is important to note that for British international interests, the Bulgarian matter was initially insignificant. On reception of the news of the violent suppression of Bulgarian revolutionaries, Henry Elliot, the British ambassador in Constantinople, approached the Porte to urge restraint.[10] Despite any personal feelings on the matter, the Tory government and Queen Victoria herself were far more concerned about any Russian moves in the region than the violence in Bulgaria.[11] There was a real international crisis that developed out of the Bulgarian matter, but Britain was caught up in this, rather than causing it. When the British government refused to act against the Porte, the Russians declared themselves the protector of the Christians and would eventually invade the Ottoman Empire.[12] In response, and out of a continued Russophobia, Disraeli sent the British Mediterranean fleet to Besika Bay and eventually to Constantinople to prevent the Russian army marching on Constantinople and precipitating the fall of the Ottoman Empire. As part of this fear of Russian

[10] George Anderson, **'**TURKEY—THE REPORTED ATROCITIES IN BULGARIA. —OBSERVATIONS**',** *Hansard*, House of Commons, 7 August 1876, vol. 231, Col. 728.

[11] After visiting Victoria at Balmoral Lord Richmond wrote of this worry to Lord Cairns, Richmond to Cairns, 22 October 1876, Hugh McCalmont Cairns Papers, PRO 30/51/3, f. 113-114; Disraeli did not mention the massacres in his cabinet reports to Victoria until she asked about them after reading the newspaper, Disraeli to Lady Bradford, July 1876, in *Disraeli to Lady Chesterfield and Lady Bradford,* Marquis Zetland ed., Vol. II, (London: D. Appleton & Co., 1929), 69-70.

[12] Taki, 'Limits of Protection', 18; George Hoover Rupp, "The Reichstadt Agreement," *The American Historical Review,* 30, no. 3, (1925): 503-510.

expansion and the collapse of the Ottoman buffer in the Middle East, Disraeli also began searching for territory in the area that the British could occupy.[13]

Apart from the political crisis, which developed in 1877 and changed the direction of the domestic debate, the rhetoric within Britain in 1876 surrounding the Bulgarian atrocities was representative of the values and politics of the individuals making the claims. Despite its origins in Ottoman affairs, what was to become known as the Bulgarian atrocities campaign became an inherently domestic British affair, with the aim of influencing foreign policy, through influencing domestic politics.

The beginning of the Bulgarian agitation in Britain was of a distinctly religious character and W. T. Stead's evangelical zeal flavoured the beginning of the agitation significantly. Though the religious agitation continued through to December 1876, by August other elements of British society began to object to the massacre in different ways. Even though there was a strong evangelical presence throughout the agitation, there were clear points where the international obligations of Britain began to seep through the public utterances and reporting. While elements of this were distinctly political, in terms of how to maintain British primacy in the region, there was clear element in the agitation that spoke and wrote of obligations to protect subject populations.

It is important to understand the role that the Concert of Europe played in British debates during this time, especially before examining William Gladstone's contribution to the agitation. In 1971, Carsten Holbraad suggested that the Concert of Europe's major purpose since the Napoleonic wars was to reconcile 'the interests of the Great Power states, through congresses (occasionally), conferences (frequently), and coordinated pressure upon deviant members.'[14] As part of this mission to integrate the states of Europe, David Dudley Field, an American lawyer and co-founder of the Institute of International Law stated in 1876 that

[13] Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus.*

[14] Carsten Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe. A study in German and British international theory 1815—1914,* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971); in Matthew, Gladstone, 19.

> The history of international law since July 4, 1776, shows that…there has been a general tendency of the nations to approach each other more closely, to avoid war as much as possible, and to diminish its severity, when it occurs.[15]

After the Crimean War the effectiveness of the Concert was significantly diminished and whilst several important conferences were held and agreements met (a major one being the Berlin conference in 1878 after the Bulgarian crisis), the Concert was not as unified as it had been in the middle of the century.[16] However, Matthias Schulz has argued that after Italian and German unification and some adjustment in the Black Sea restrictions for Russia, by the middle of the 1870s the European Powers were far more stable.[17] For an event such as the Bulgarian massacres to convince the British to re-engage with the Concert was a big step, but Gladstone argued that the Ottoman Empire's behaviour was Britain's responsibility due to their special relationship after the Crimean War. As Schulz suggested, the end of the Crimean War with its attendant treaties began to formalize into a legal framework the European powers' 'humanitarian considerations.'[18]

This then placed the Ottoman Empire in the position of being tangential to, part of, but not a full participant in the Concert, resulting in the Ottoman Empire being acted upon, rather than being itself an agent. There was a suggestion that the Ottoman Empire could become a full part of the concert, if it fulfilled certain conditions required of it in terms of political and economic reform, which were delineated in the 1856 Treaty of Paris.[19] For Britain to engage with the Bulgarian matter in Europe, it was necessary for it to go through the concert, especially given Russian interest, Habsburg

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[15] Charles Van Doren *A History of Knowledge,* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 243.

[16] Kyle Lascurettes, "The Concert of Europe and Great-Power Governance Today: What Can the Order of 19th-Century Europe Teach Policymakers About International Order in the 21st Century?" *Perspectives*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. 2017), https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE226.html, 17.

[17] Matthias Schulz, "The guarantees of humanity: The Concert of Europe and the origins of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877," in *Humanitarian Intervention: A History,* Simms & Trim, eds, 186.

[18] Ibid.

[19] This is a commonly accepted view, discussed at length by Mustafa Serdar Palabiyik, who argued that whilst the Treaty of Paris was a key moment for the rest of the concert of Europe, the Ottoman Empire had been trying to integrate prior to this. (Mustafa Serdar Palabiyik, "The Emergence of the Idea of 'International Law' in the Ottoman Empire before the Treaty of Paris (1856)," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50, no. 2, (2014): 233-251.

concern around their borders, and German and French interest in the maintenance of Ottoman sovereignty as a counterbalance to Russian expansionism.

Political Debate

The first major debate on the Bulgarian matter came on 31 July 1876 in the House of Commons, during a debate on the previous Serbian independence movement and the Andrassy note.[20] Gladstone, who was sitting on the back bench at this time, argued that, while respecting all existing treaties, Britain and the Concert of Europe should to do its utmost to secure 'the common welfare and equal treatment of the various races and religions which are under the authority of the Sublime Porte,'[21] or in other words sidestepping the specific instances of the Bulgarian Christian suffering and instead focus on the ongoing project of broader Ottoman political reform. The debate then turned to a discussion on British foreign policy towards the Porte and focused heavily on treaty obligations and rectifying past mistakes.

Gladstone, who was personally attached to the post-Crimean environment given his role in government at the time of the Crimean War, argued that it was not enough for the Government to simply say that Britain must respect the decisions of the Ottoman Empire and drew upon his own authority as a key author of the post-Crimean War settlement.[22] Gladstone traced the end of the Crimean War and the position of the European Powers in comparison to the Ottoman Empire. He made the point that due to the military defeat the Russians faced they lost the ability, after the Crimean War, to provide protection to the Christian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. Rather than Russia's defeat leaving the Ottoman subjects in a worse position, it instead substituted 'a European conscience, expressed by collective guarantee and the concerted and general action of the European Powers for the

[20] In December of 1875, when unrest also broke out in Bosnia, Gyula Andrassy, the Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, sent a memorandum, after an agreement between Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Germany, which included a variety of reforms needed for the Ottoman Empire and significant European oversight. (For a response to the Andrassy note by the British government, see Caroline A. Reed, "Disraeli and the Eastern Question: Defending British Interests," *Tenor of Our Times*, 5, (2016): 17-38.

[21] Mr. Bruce, *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1876, vol. 231, c. 126.

[22] Gladstone, *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1876, vol. 231, c. 183-84.

sole and individual action of one of them.'[23] Mentioning that the Treaty of 1856 ended Russian monopoly over the Eastern Christians, Gladstone stated that 'there is an article [in the treaty] which recites that the new legislation on behalf of the Christians in the Turkish Empire is an act of grace and favour'.[24]

While the treaty renounced the ability of the European Powers to unilaterally interfere in the workings of the Ottoman Empire, it 'did not renounce the right of interference which upon general grounds and general principles might well be held to apply to the Powers of Europe.'[25] Coming to his point Gladstone argued that the Treaty of 1856 and Palmerston's subsequent policies created a 'moral right of interference', based on the

> General question whether the engagements which Turkey then solemnly took in the face of the world to redress the evils and abuses of her government and extend to all her subjects the blessings of civil and religious freedom have been fulfilled or whether they have not.[26]

Gladstone's point was that the treaty created a legal environment that bound Britain, as the primary defender of the Porte in 1856, and the other European Powers to ensure that the Porte followed a reform program that respected the rights of the Ottoman subjects. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire not following this improvement program implicitly and explicitly in the terms of the treaty gave Britain and the Concert the legal right to interfere to ensure the safety and security of those subjects who were at risk.[27]

After the Crimean War the Porte had in fact implemented a specific reform program – the Tanzimat reforms. These had been started by Sultan Abdulmecid I in 1839 and had gathered pace in 1856 with the reform edict. The Imperial reform edict in 1856 (Hatt-I Humayun), solidified the attempted changes brought about in 1839 (Hatt-I Sharif) and took a significant amount of its attributes

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., c. 184.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus*.

from European governments.[28] One of the key reforms of the Hatt-I Sharif was the removal of the Jizya, or head tax, on non-Muslim subjects of the Empire, as well as effective rhetorical equality upon all subjects of the empire in regards to education, worship, governance, and trade.[29] The Porte had adopted 'the Napoleonic Trade Laws in 1850, the French Penal Code in 1858, the Property Law also in 1858 and the Maritime Trade law in 1864.'[30]

Despite this, Hans-Lukas Kieser collated various historical arguments and has argued that the reforms resulted in the language of equality for Non-Muslims with Muslims but resulted in the primacy of Muslims in practice.[31] It was this that was referenced by Gladstone in Parliament. Despite notions of equality and reform, it appeared to the British (and many others) that the reforms were rhetorical only and did not actually translate into reality. Further, Evgeny Ginkel and Scott Gehlbach demonstrate that at the time of the Balkan uprisings the Porte was in the process of significant reforms.[32] Ginkel and Gehlbach's argument, by comparing the Tanzimat reforms to the Russian emancipation of serfs, and the Roman land reforms and French revolution, is that reforms which required local implementation were likely to cause rebellion.[33] To take the arguments together, according to Ginkel and Gehlbach, attempts at reform resulted in an increased chance of rebellion – seen in Serbia, Bosnia, and Bulgaria – and according to Kieser, the reforms were not actually translated into reality,[34] thus bringing attention to the Porte not meeting international obligations through increased rebellion.

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[28] For example, the 'Ottoman Penal code of 1858 was based on the Napoleonic penal code of 1810', with no reference to Islamic principles. (Ihsan Yilmaz, *Muslim Laws, Politics and Society in Modern Nation States,* (London: Ashgate, 2005), 90; M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[29] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History*, Chapter 3; Nora Lafi, "The Ottoman Municipal Reforms between Old Regime and Modernity: Towards a New Interpretative Paradigm," *First International Symposium on Eminönü*, Istanbul, Eminönü Belediyesi, (2007): 348-355.

[30] Hans-Lukas Kieser & Walter Stoffel, *Revolution of Islamic Law. Eighty Years of the Swiss Civil Code in Turkey,* (Berlin: Tagungsbericht University of Fribourg, 2006), 1; Hanioğlu, *A Brief History,* 73.

[31] Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 103.

[32] Evgeny Finkel & Scott Gehlbah, *Reform and Rebellion in Weak States,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[33] Gladstone, *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1876, c. 183-84.

[34] Kieser, *Talaat Pasha*, 105.

This was specifically referenced by Gladstone when he drew attention to the comments of the Foreign Minister, Lord Derby, on 13 June 1876 when he wrote that 'It is undeniable that the liberal and enlightened projects of reforms which have from time to time been promulgated at Constantinople have not been brought into practical operation in the Provinces.'[35] Gladstone's point was made, clearly, that if in 1856 the British had entered into an international agreement to protect the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire dependent on that empire's progress in protecting its citizens and a liberal development program, then failure to do so not only allowed, but required, intervention in some manner by the British government, ostensibly in order to enforce the protections of subjects and liberal development.[36]

Gladstone's involvement, though implicitly critical of the government's actions with the Porte, dealt with the role the Concert of Europe would have to play within Ottoman Europe. Gladstone made mention of the development of the 'conscience of Europe' in which the powers could work together for the benefit of all Europe. Richard Shannon mentioned that Gladstone 'looked back, not forward,'[37] and even the Duke of Argyll, a close friend of Gladstone, stated that very little blame was placed on the government during the 31 July debate and 'no adequate notice was taken of the partisan course which had been pursued by the Government against the insurgents throughout the whole of the earlier transactions.'[38] The most noticeable and noted moment of the 31 July debate was Disraeli's comments that the he would take no notice of the death toll reports, for they were comparable to 'coffee house babble.'[39] This was not the entirety of Disraeli's comments for even as he obfuscated the arguments against the government response, he refuted Gladstone's comments. Maintaining that the status quo of non-interference was the correct response, Disraeli argued that the government's response was in fact the result of the treaties after the Crimean War that were based on material struggles and moral

[35] Gladstone, *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1876, c. 186.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Shannon, Gladstone, 50.

[38] Duke of Argyll, *The Eastern Question: From the Treaty of Paris 1856 to the Treaty of Berlin 1878, and to the Second Afghan War*, vol. 2, (London: Strahan and Co., 1879), 255.

[39] Disraeli, *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1876, vol. 231, c. 203.

considerations.[40] Disraeli's whole argument was that the Concert of Europe favoured non-interference in the internal matters of the Porte,[41] therefore there was no obligation to act on behalf of the suffering population. The debate in parliament between Gladstone and Disraeli raises some important questions. There was a major disagreement over the government's position, which would continue for some time. Gladstone argued that the agreements after the Crimean War required British force (not necessarily military) to push the Ottoman Empire to reform along appropriate lines and begin to offer protection for the rights of its subjects. Disraeli argued that this was not accurate, and that status quo referred to a policy of non-interference by the Concert of Europe and resistance to Russian aggression against the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Many elements of British domestic and foreign policy came into consideration here, however, for the purposes of this study it is necessary to see that in his first comment on the Bulgarian matter Gladstone's primary position was that legal, international agreements had been made between the great European powers and between these powers and the Ottoman Empire. Sections of these agreements related to the protection of subject populations and a commitment for the Porte to improve their internal policies, particularly as they dealt with liberal laws and the rights of subject populations. The breach of this, in Gladstone's mind, required interference, possibly military intervention, in order to maintain international agreements, with a focus on preventing the suffering of others, through the concert itself.[42]

The argument between Disraeli and Gladstone demonstrated the clear divide between Liberal and Conservative policies. Whilst Gladstone embedded his comments in the role of Britain within the Concert of Europe, he couched it in terms of a liberal moralism. What is interesting here is that, as Koskienniemi has argued, any liberal sympathiser viewing the European settlement in the nineteenth century would view it as being the domain of authoritarian monarchies, which maintained rule and order predominantly to avoid liberal reform and the uprising of subject populations.[43] This was far

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[40] Ibid, c. 206.

[41] Harold Temperley, "The Treaty of Paris of 1856 and its execution: Part II," *The Journal of Modern History*, 4, no. 4, (1932): 523.

[42] Gladstone, *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1876, c. 200.

[43] Koskienniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, 12.

more the purview of the Disraeli government; peace, order, and a containment of Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire and Asia. The tension between a moral foreign policy and a Russophobic foreign policy animated the debate, as it really had little to do with the actual events in the Ottoman Empire, but rather the role and responsibility of Britain within Europe.

At this point the Conservative Party was particularly reflective of Disraeli's politics and attitude. The Russophobia of the Conservative Party was not confined to that side of politics; the lingering effects of the Crimean War also coloured the mainstream leaders of the Liberal Party and their views towards Russia.[44] However, as the counter-response to the Bulgarian agitation would show, there was a particular Jingoistic attitude among supporters of Disraeli and the Conservative Party that was Turkophile, Russophobic and aggressively imperial.[45] Hugh Cunningham has suggested that the Jingoistic impulse arose after the collapse of the liberal agreement surrounding the agitation in 1877,[46] however, the attitudes that would come to the fore in Parliament in 1876 were remnants of the Crimea War from two decades previous and Disraeli's view that the conduct of the war was lamentable and showed that Britain was no longer "imperial and eternal."[47]Connected to Gladstone's argument in Parliament are the comments made by the Duke of Argyll in his pamphlet in 1879. Summarising Gladstone's point effectively (one which he shared) Argyll described the initial agitation as morally and religiously based, however he turned his attention to the work of politics and the responsibilities of England. Argyll claimed that the Disraeli government had

> shown an inadequate sense of the duties and responsibilities devolving upon us, not only as one of the Great Powers, but as the one of all the Great Powers which, rightly or wrongly, did most

[44] For Hartington's views see, Patrick Jackson, *The Last of the Whigs: A Political Biography of Lord Hartington, Later Eighth Duke of Devonshire (1833-1908),* (London: Associated Presses, 1994), 76-77.

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[46] Hugh Cunningham, 'Jingoism in 1877-78,' *Victorian Studies*, 14, no. 4 (1971): 429-453.

[47] *Press,* 31 December 1853; For evidence the article was written by Disraeli, see: Benjamin Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli, Letters: 1852-1856,* vol. vi, M. G. Wiebe, Mary S. Millar, & Ann P. Robson (eds), (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 2609, 306, n.3.

> materially contribute to the pre-existing arrangement in the East of Europe. We could not shake off that responsibility…[48]

The point that Argyll was making is that due to the British actions in the Crimean War and their continued support of the Ottoman Empire, it was incumbent on them, from a place of political responsibility, to address the issues that had arisen out of that support. Argyll did not, at this point, draw on principles of religion or morality, but of political responsibility and international accountability to advocate the opinion of those who wanted intervention. The key here was that Britain had entered a treaty arrangement with the other European Powers and the Ottoman Empire to assist and hold the Ottoman Empire accountable for its reforms. Not only was Britain politically responsible, due to propping up the Ottoman state for decades, but also legally responsible due to the treaties and arrangements made. The end point of that argument for Argyll was his statement that 'I hold that it was the duty of England to join the other Powers in acting upon the moral obligations they had incurred in the Treaty of 1856.'[49] Despite the reference to morality in this statement, the morality that Argyll was calling upon was a political and legalistic morality, in that the British state had an international responsibility to prevent suffering in the Ottoman provinces.

Argyll was, generally, a serious proponent of foreign policy. Despite couching his rhetoric in terms of British responsibility, both political and moral, there was always, just under the surface, a fear that if the British did not act in the matter, then the Russians would. Despite the differences between Liberal foreign policy and Conservative foreign policy, neither (except for the radical wing like John Bright) wished to lose British influence in the region to Russian influence. This relates to the inherent tension within humanitarian sentiments, at the time and since. There appeared to be genuine concern from Argyll and Gladstone, as well as those who agitated with them, for the suffering of the victims of massacre. However, the focus here from Argyll, and the more general focus of Gladstone, was on the stability of the post-Crimean war system. The victims of massacre should be protected and supported, they argued, but not at the cost of British interests, or of the system itself.

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[48] Argyll, *The Eastern Question*, 256.

[49] Ibid.

The arguments that flowed from these imperial and foreign policy concerns reflect what Michael Barnett referred to as the different types of humanitarian action. Barnett referred to what he called emergency humanitarianism and alchemical humanitarianism. Emergency humanitarianism focuses on the immediate symptoms of suffering, whereas alchemical humanitarianism focuses on removing the conditions that result in suffering.[50] In this debate, though not explicitly acknowledged, the arguments around the conditions of British involvement in Europe, the Russian influence in the Ottoman empire, and the moral responsibility to act when the Ottoman Empire was unwilling or unable all fall within a form of alchemical humanitarian rhetoric. There was absolutely a focus on maintaining the stability of the international system and Britain's dominance within that, however, this was combined with an understanding that through the international system and Britain's moral engagement inside of it, individuals and groups could be protected and suffering cease.Connected to the debate in the House of Commons on 5 August, *Punch* produced a cartoon entitled 'Neutrality under Difficulties.' By 1875, under the editorship of Tom Taylor, *Punch* was drifting away from two decades of alignment with *The Times* and Conservative politics. [51] This cartoon was drawn by Joseph Swain and depicted Disraeli sitting in a chair, reading a book, while Britannia, representing Britain, leaned over him gesturing behind her. In the background there are pictures of stereotypical Ottomans, with fezzes and beards, brandishing weapons, killing people, one holding an infant in the air, skulls on pikes and smoke billowing. Britannia is trying to gain Disraeli's attention, but he is studiously ignoring her. The text of the cartoon states 'NEUTRALITY UNDER DIFFICULTIES: Dizzy. "Bulgarian Atrocities! I can't find them in the 'Official Reports'!!!"[52]

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Neutrality under Difficulties, *Punch*, 6 August 1876.[53]

[50] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 10.

[51] M. H. Spielmann, *The History of "Punch"*, (London: Cassell and Company, 1895), 107.

[52] "Neutrality under Difficulties," *Punch*, 5 August 1876,

[53] Ibid.

This cartoon was lampooning Disraeli's speech on 31 July in the House of Commons, where he discounted the reports in the newspapers because he had not been informed of them through the Foreign Office. It was clear to most, that though the exact particulars may not have been absolutely correct, the nature of the atrocities in Bulgaria were already known. Further, the cartoon's mention of British neutrality was a direct reference to the argument progressing, within Britain, regarding the responsibility Britain had, under their international obligations, to intervene on behalf of the Bulgarians.

On 7 August the *Daily News* published their special correspondent's, Januarius MacGahan, letters and telegraphs that had been received up to that point, including the trip he and the US representative, Eugene Schuyler, had taken to Batak and the massacre and destruction that took place there.[54] The *Manchester Guardian* reported on the MacGahan dispatches under the heading 'The Bulgarian Cawnpore' on 8 August.[55] Initially, it is interesting that the *Guardian* would use the memory of Cawnpore for the Bulgarian case. Whilst there were similarities in the brutality of the violence that took place, the Cawnpore massacre was committed by subjects of empire upon the armies of empire, whereas Batak was the work of the imperial power massacring the subjects of empire. Christopher Herbert has argued that the Indian mutiny caused so much emotional trauma to the British psyche that it changed the way the British public perceived the world.[56] As such, just as the agitators used India as a frame for imperial violence in the Jamaican case, so too acts of violence were referred back to the national moment of violence in India. Guatam Chakravarty has also argued that in the decades following the Indian mutiny novels and imaginative works were influenced by the narrative that was developed out of the mutiny.[57] Therefore, the comparison to Cawnpore here was effectively as serious and horrendous as the *Guardian* could make the atrocity of Batak sound.

The editorial stated that MacGahan's report 'confirmed the worst and that even those who 'resented the levity with which Mr. Disraeli treated' the reports did not think 'that they represented the

[54] "The War in the East" *Daily News*, 7 August 1876, 5.

[55] "The Bulgarian Cawnpore," *Manchester Guardian,* 8 August 1876, 5

[56] Herbert, *War of No Pity*.

[57] Guatam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*.

literal truth.'[58] After asking 'what are the conclusions?' the editorial concluded with policy suggestions for the Conservative government. Referencing Disraeli's argument that only the status quo in the Ottoman Empire is acceptable the editorial argued that 'it is precisely the *status quo* which will not do, and if Mr. Disraeli does not see this he must be made to see it.'[59] Arguing for the freedom of subject populations in European Turkey, the editorial stated that 'they [Bulgarians] have a claim which in mere humanity cannot be resisted for protection against a Government which cannot or will not protect them. They have a right to so much of independence as will give them security.'[60]

This argument, about the protection of those whose government will not or cannot protect them, is exactly the type of political basis for humanitarian intervention explored by Davide Rodogno and Samuel Moyn.[61] In particular, Rodogno argued that by the end of the nineteenth century there came into existence, not an international law, but an international permissibility for states to intervene, militarily if necessary, to protect a population from death or destruction.[62] Rodogno traced the history of British and French intervention from Greece in 1821 through to Macedonia in 1903, describing an intricate system of semi-legal justification for military intervention and the way this was used by the British and French public and governments to achieve their goals, whether or not these were primarily humanitarian in the strict sense of the word. Rodogno admits, explicitly, that at times these interventions were undertaken primarily for geopolitical reasons, however, they needed to retain a form of humanitarian impulse to maintain support and justification.[63]

The *Guardian* article above confirms Rodogno's argument insofar that there was a perception within the liberal and religious British public that intervention was needed to protect a subset of the Ottoman population against their own government. Here, again, the *Guardian*, under the editorship of

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[58] *Ibid.*

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; Moyn, *The Last Utopia*.

[62] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 1-18.

[63] Ibid.

Charles Prestwich Scott, connected the moral sentiment of humanity and moralism to a specific political response, in this case in favour of intervention.

In Parliament on 7 August George Anderson, a Liberal MP, questioned the government regarding the further reports that had been received from Elliot in Constantinople. Referencing Disraeli's 'great levity' in dealing with the matter on 10 July, Anderson related what information had been received by Baring and others from Bulgaria. Fellow Liberal MP, Anthony Mundella, supported Anderson and referenced communications from the Ottoman Empire regarding the atrocities, but would

> not claim a monopoly of humanity for his side of the House. He believed that every Englishman who read the accounts which had been quoted would feel…that it was horrible that such crimes should be perpetrated in Europe by a Government with whom we were in alliance…[64]

Deliberately refusing to criticize the government along party lines, Mundella, who was clearly influenced by a variety of strains of humanitarianism, used specific language to make his point. The political aim here was to place a wedge between Disraeli and everybody else. Mundella was suggesting that everybody, on both sides of house, agreed on the humanitarian concern, except for Disraeli. Mundella was not drawing on the principles of Christianity to demonstrate his distaste for the Ottoman actions, but rather the principles of justice in terms of international commitment. The talk of crimes and perpetration were inherently legal terms, especially in terms such as this that did not reference back to religion.

Peter Taylor, the member for Leicester and well-known radical and reform leaguer, stated that he 'would not say [the atrocities] were never equalled in the history of the world, but which neither in modern, nor ancient times were ever surpassed.'[65] Referencing Disraeli's comments, on 10 July,[66] comparing Bulgaria to Jamaica, Taylor stated that he

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[64] *Hansard,* House of Commons, 7 August 1876, vol. 231, cc. 729-30.

[65] *Ibid.,* c. 732.

[66] *Ibid.*, cc. 1181-1182.

> had never been disposed to say less of the atrocities in Jamaica than they deserved, for he, with others, did his best to bring Governor Eyre to justice for the murders done there; but it was a libel on Governor Eyre to compare what was done in Jamaica with the savage and obscene atrocities of the Turks in Europe.[67]

This connection to the Jamaican case is instructive, especially given Taylor's connection to it. Taylor had been a prominent advocate of charging Governor Eyre with murder over his actions in Jamaica. Consequently, the direct link he drew between the actions of the Ottoman irregulars and soldiers in Bulgaria and Eyre carried considerable political weight. Taylor drew upon his moral authority to demonstrate that he would be consistent in the application of his principles. By stating that, while he believed Eyre guilty of murder, he saw the action of the Porte as being several levels of seriousness and outrage beyond Eyre's actions, Taylor rhetorically heightened the urgency of a British response. Driven by moral indignation, his conclusions were nonetheless tied to ideas about the correct actions of states and the outrage caused when states did not act according to acceptable principles, in particular in relation to their responsibilities to protect the vulnerable.

Jacob Bright, the Liberal MP for Manchester and prominent agitator against Eyre, also supported Mundella, Anderson, and Taylor on the 'horrible atrocities' and laid blame on the government who, through either 'ignorance or apathy' tried to lessen the impact of the news, rather than 'check these crimes'.[68] Bright called for the British fleet at Besika Bay to 'lend some influence to the representations of our Government in favour of the cause of humanity in Europe.'[69]

Robert Bourke, the under-secretary of State for Foreign Affairs who was left to respond by Disraeli, responded aggressively to this attack by the radical wing of the Liberal party by attacking the motives of the opposition and the accuracy of the newspaper reports. Hartington finished the debate with a rebuke of Bourke's insinuations and a simple declaration that from Bourke's statement and the papers received 'it is becoming apparent that after all there has been very little exaggeration of these

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[67] *Ibid.,* 733.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.,* 734.

atrocities.'[70] Hartington also defended the reporting by the *Daily News* and criticised Elliot for not knowing what the newspapers knew. It was after this session that Disraeli realised that he may have lost control of the situation and professed his thanks that the parliamentary session was ending, telling Derby that 'It is a very awkward business, and, I fear, a great exposure of our diplomatic system abroad and at home.'[71]

The Times reported on this speech by stating that 'what passed last night in the House of Commons shows the astonishment and horror which these deeds have aroused.'[72] As the agitation expanded outside Parliament and meetings were beginning to be organised, the pressure from the radicals in parliament increased at the same time. Many of these radical Liberal MPs framed their attacks on the government in terms of the international responsibility that Britain had. There was also a nascent legalism emerging. Particularly evident was an assumption of how civilised and enlightened states should behave and the role that Britain, who had an international treaty and friendship with the Porte, had to play in ensuring that their treaty obligations did not breach their responsibility towards justice and humanity.

On 29 August, Eugene Schuyler, who had been sent by the US embassy in Constantinople to investigate the reports from Bulgaria, had his letter to Horace Maynard, the US Minister in Constantinople, forwarded to the *Daily News*. Schuyler's report effectively supported MacGahan's reports. Schuyler's major contribution to the growing agitation was in verifying authoritatively that there was no evidence of a general uprising of Bulgarians, and there was no evidence of atrocities committed against Muslims, causing Edib Effendi's report in which he claimed those things to be 'characterised as a tissue of falsehoods.'[73] This recognition was important among those that viewed the actions within an international political and legal framework. Where there might have been some understanding in Britain for an imperial power which suppressed a dangerous and threatening uprising

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[70] *Ibid.,* 743.

[71] William Moneypenny & George Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield*, *Vol. 2, 1860-1881,* (London: John Murray, 1929), 918.

[72] *The Times*, 8 August 1876, 6.

[73] "Editorial," *Daily News*, 29 August 1876, 4.

in one of its outlying territories, the recognition that there was no general uprising confirmed that the violence and repression in the district were unacceptable.

Once this fact was known it strengthened the argument for action over Bulgaria. Argyll's pamphlet on the Eastern Question and the agitation referenced this idea explicitly. After explaining his interpretation of the Treaty of Paris in 1856 Argyll discussed the difference between the Ottoman Empire and the European States. According to the treaty agreed upon by the Concert of Europe, the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire would be respected by the European nations. The actions of the Porte, and consequently Russia, threatened this and thus if the Ottoman Empire continued to behave in the way they had this threatened the international agreements with war.[74] Argyll made it clear that the treaty was not intended to "bring the Porte civilisationally on par with the European powers", but rather as a tool to constrain Russia. He asserted brusquely that 'no such equality of civilization exists', and that the European Powers 'neither could nor would treat Turkey as an equal.'[75]

Of interest in Argyll's pamphlet is his blunt honesty in the reasoning behind the agitation. While Argyll was looking at the broader issues arising from the Bulgarian uprising, through the beginning of the Russo-Turkish war, he outlined why those who were focused on international obligations were so focused. Via humanitarian language, which framed the issue, the motivations for many of the agitators, especially the politically and internationally minded, was to constrain Russia and maintain British influence in the region. However, as has been argued by Rodogno and others, a specific political justification for intervention does not necessarily negate the humanitarian impulse behind it,[76] however, the confluence of politics and humanitarian often gives cause for these movements to thrive. There was a constant tension between the desire to see Christian subjects of the Porte be protected from indiscriminate massacre and the desire to rebuff Russian advances into the region. The focus on the treaty requirements for not only the Ottoman Empire, but also the European states, allowed both to be focused on. The humanitarian concern for the welfare of subject Christians,

[74] Argyll, *The Eastern question*9.

[75] Ibid.,

[76] Rodogno, *Against Massacre.*

which was a key part of the treaty agreements, and the political and international concern over the stability of the system were complementary in this argument.

Crucially, Argyll referenced the 'law of nations' and that the most 'universally recognised' principle among this law was that 'within its own territory every Government has supreme jurisdiction over all persons.'[77] Noting that it was commonly recognized that if people chose to live in another state than their own they would be required to submit to the laws of that state, Argyll mentioned that this had not been the case with the Ottoman Empire. The European States all refused to recognize Ottoman sovereignty over those of their own citizens that were living in Ottoman territory. Therefore,

> any attempt on the part of Turkey to assert on her own behalf the principle which undoubtedly obtains in all civilised States – the principle namely, of complete sovereignty of all persons residing within its territory – would have been resisted and resented by every one of the Powers.'[78]

This is important because, as Argyll's quote of Lord Russell in 1862 demonstrates, the idea was commonly accepted across Europe 'that Turkish rule and Turkish justice are so barbarous that exceptional privileges are required.'[79] According to this view, the Turks were not fit to rule at all, let alone rule over Europeans. Therefore, the European nations could reasonably look at the way the Porte ruled subject populations, especially Russia who advocated Pan-Slavism, and argue that the same legal principles which voided Ottoman authority over foreigners (through the principle of extraterritoriality), should also void Ottoman sovereignty over subject populations.

Argyll's comments suggest there was already some thinking in 1876, about the limitations of sovereignty when populations and subjects are abused. Even Alexander Gorchakov, the Russian foreign minister, said to Lord Loftus, the British Ambassador to the Russian Empire, that

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[77] Argyll, *The Eastern Question*.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

> If the Powers want serious results they must agree that the independence and integrity of Turkey should be subordinated to the guarantees demanded by humanity, Christian Europe, and interests of peace.[80]

Of course, Russia's interest in the Ottoman Empire had always been tied to the imperatives of empire. It is interesting, however, that Gorchakov, who was one of the most powerful men in Russia, would parrot this humanitarian idea back to the representative of Britain in a way that supported the Russian calls for interference.

Most British politicians at the time, and indeed historians since, have seen comments such as Gorchakov's and similar from Nikolai Ignatiev, Russian ambassador to the Porte, as facades for Russian interference in the Ottoman Empire, however the language is instructive. Even if only used tactically for geostrategic ends, the argument used by Gorchakov and Ignatiev must have promised potential traction with some element of European thought beyond Britain.[81] There was a strain of thought in Europe that argued for putting the rights of subjects in front of sovereignty; though, of course, this only applied to an ostensibly marginally civilized state like the Ottoman Empire. It could never be tolerated within the putatively 'civilised' nations themselves, such as Russia's atrocities in Poland and British atrocities in Jamaica.

There are also connections here to Schuyler's report and tangentially to the Jamaican uprising. The point that Argyll was making alluded to the idea that there were standards of behaviour and action that governments needed to meet to be considered civilised. According to him, the British could respond to one of their own imperial massacres with an investigation, consequences, and political change because it was a member of the community of civilized nations, a *Rechtsstaat,* and generally upheld principles of civilization, justice, and humanity among its own subjects. For Argyll, the Porte did not exhibit the same and had a habit of massacring their own population and, despite attempts by Britain and the rest of Europe to bring the Ottoman Empire into that civilized community of nations,

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[80] Lord Loftus to Earl of Derby, St Petersburg, 20 Nov. 1876.

[81] For a discussion on this in terms of the entire concert of Europe, in particular Bismarck and Gladstone, see Mathew P. Fitzpatrick, "Ideal and Ornamental Endeavours," 183-206.

it had refused to change its behaviour and laws to respect those civilizational norms. A consequence of Argyll's argument was the idea that, as the Porte was not fully civilized, it required external interference to regulate its laws, economy, and the treatment of subjects.

Argyll had made it clear that to his mind the policy of returning to the *status quo* would not work. Writing of the impending war, the editorial in *The Daily News* claimed, 'For generations it has been acknowledged that the highest interests of civilization interdict all extension of Moslem rule in Europe.'[82] The editorial concluded:

> To the English Government, which has given many proofs of friendship for Turkey, it belongs in an especial manner to make some effort to satisfy the demands of common justice and humanity, which are no less requirement of European safety.[83]

This comment reflects the conflation of justice and humanity with European safety, and Christianity. Here, again implicitly, the responsibility of Britain was mentioned in terms of the international relationship between Britain and the Ottoman Empire. There was no legal responsibility for Britain to involve itself, but there was a growing concern for Britain to take itself to the forefront of protecting the lives and rights of subjects of a state it had developed close and beneficial ties with. Despite this being used as the justification, even the British Liberal establishment, such as Gladstone, Argyll, Hartington, and Granville, were concerned for the interests of Britain in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire. There was serious concern that the Russians, with support from Austria, would use the crisis as an excuse to dismantle the Ottoman Empire, and then it became a question of what would be the replacement – Russia or Britain's 'moral' authority.[84]

On 6 September 1876 Gladstone, after months of pressure from friends and agitators alike, published his pamphlet *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*. As the title suggested, the pamphlet was not just a moral or Christian tirade, but also a treatise on the correct political response to atrocities

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[82] "Editorial," *Daily News*, 29 August 1876, 4.

[83] Ibid.

[84] This would gain momentum after Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1877 but was present from the beginning. See, Alexis Heraclides & Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 169-196.

committed by another state. Much of the pamphlet was an attack on the way that the Government had responded to the events in Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Granville had asked that no outright attack be made on Disraeli, which Gladstone followed,[85] however there was a definite attack on Conservative policy. The first two pages of the pamphlet outlined the failures of the House of Commons to provide information on the Bulgarian matter.[86] This introductory segment positioned Gladstone's audience to read the pamphlet politically. Gladstone's purpose was to change British foreign policy in a manner, which to him, was more moral and considerate of the welfare of Eastern Christians. In relation to this purpose, Cameron Whitehead has argued that the position that Gladstone took was one informed more by his *lack* of reading on Western Turkey, than an in-depth understanding of the issues.[87]

Gladstone wrote that after its delay the government finally gave enough information to realise that the Porte, to whom the British Government had been giving moral and material support had perpetrated

> crimes and outrages, so vast in scale as to exceed all modern example, and so unutterably vile as well as fierce in character, that it passes the power of heart to conceive, and of tongue and pen adequately to describe them. These are the Bulgarian horrors…[88]

Gladstone's rhetoric here reflected his moral indignation, however there was also an undercurrent of international legalism. Prior to the pamphlet being produced, Shannon suggested that Gladstone's behaviour was one of 'simple nonchalance', rather than a calculating strategy.[89] The common assumption since Gladstone's time was to view him as the great crusader of moral issues. However, Saab's suggestion was that Gladstone was a canny political operator, and even though he had a definite commitment to morality, he 'was a realist who had had a long and at times painful schooling in the art

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[85] Gladstone to Granville, 6 December 1876, Granville Papers, PRO 30/29/29.

[86] *Bulgarian Horrors*, 7-8

[87] Cameron Whitehead, "Reading Beside the Lines: Marginalia, W. E. Gladstone, and the International History of the Bulgarian Horrors," *The International History Review*, 37, no. 4, (2015): 865.

[88] Gladstone*, Bulgarian Horrors*, 9.

[89] Shannon, *Gladstone,* 90.

of playing the political game.'[90] Being a realist meant that Gladstone would use his moral authority and his style of evangelism to further a political goal; in this case the eradication of Turkey-in-Europe and punishing the Porte for breaching the treaties and moral contract put in place after the Crimean War, which Gladstone played a major part in. Taking the idea further, Matthew P Fitzpatrick has argued that Gladstone used morality as a political tool, rather than an inbuilt driving force.[91]

Irrespective of the contestable nature of Gladstone's motivations, and despite Gladstone's at least apparent moral force, it is clear from his pamphlet that he also cared deeply about the Concert of Europe, the responsibility that the Ottoman Empire had to maintain its place within this community of nations and the responsibility that the 'enlightened' and 'civilised' nations of Europe (read the Concert) had to punish and regulate the misdeeds of the Porte. He placed this responsibility of the Concert within a legal framework through the focus on the rights, responsibilities, and requirements of the treaty. Gladstone's pamphlet was undergirded by the idea that there were appropriate and necessary political behaviours that needed to be undertaken by states, and that states could be regulated by the international community as necessary when these norms were breached.

Referring to 'wholesale massacres' Gladstone condemned the British government for not acting on information coming from free journalists who do many services 'to humanity, to freedom, and to justice.'[92] Despite the stalling of the government, Gladstone argued, information had come through that made it seem certain that there were 'wholesale massacres' that reflected an 'elaborate and refined cruelty' with 'utter disregard of sex and age' and hand betrayed an 'entire and violent lawlessness.'[93] The massacres were framed in terms of murder and lawlessness. Whilst Gladstone's fundamental motivation may have been his morality and religious convictions, the language that he used at points in the pamphlet were clearly designed to elicit the language of crime and law.

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[90] Saab, *Reluctant Icon,* 64

[91] Fitzpatrick, "Ideal and Ornamental Endeavours", 183-206.

[92] Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors*, 1.

[93] Ibid*,* 18.

Gladstone's argument, made clearly, despite large rhetorical flourishes, was that the Ottoman Empire had forfeited its right to rule over its European territories. It was Ottoman executive power that was forfeited in Europe due to their crimes against their European populations. There is clearly an element of co-religiosity in this sentiment, as has been explored, however the deciding factor for Gladstone was that due to their behaviour towards their subjects, the neglect of the civilizing mission the British had been working on with the Ottoman Empire for 30 years since the Crimean War, and the breaching of international agreements made with the Concert of Europe, the Ottoman Empire forfeited the right to rule in Europe itself and must be returned to Asia, where it belonged.

It is this concept that Gladstone emphasised throughout his pamphlet. What was done against the Bulgarians by the Turks was wrong and he did indeed connect this to the Christian and moral conceptions of wrongness. However, for Gladstone the fact that the British Government supported the Porte and did not respond to these breaches of morality was even more unjustifiable, not just morally, not just religiously, but also according to the international responsibilities that Britain, and the rest of Europe, had to protect the subjects of 'evil' rulers and maintain a civilised Europe.

In this context it is worth exploring the concepts of political rule that Gladstone espoused in the late 1870s. At this point Gladstone was not advocating Bulgarian national identity or even independence, but rather suzerainty, or self-rule within the Ottoman Empire.[94] He was wary of the Concert of Europe by this point, which is where the focus on British responsibility towards the Porte came into it, but he acknowledged the role that the Concert could play in maintaining order across Europe.[95] H. C. G. Matthew suggested that Gladstone focused on the 'moral right of interference' of the 'European Concert', especially in terms of enforcing 'the very practical object of good government.'[96] Whilst Matthew acknowledges the religious nationalism expressed by Gladstone as different to the more secular concept of citizenship in a nation-state, he made it clear that within

[94] Matthew, *Gladstone*, 27.

[95] Ibid., 15.

[96] Ibid.

Gladstone's own mind there was a conflation of religion, morality and international responsibilities.[97] The phrase 'moral right of interference' is instructive here and will be discussed below. The idea of this concept, as explained by Gladstone in his pamphlet and at other times, is that after the treaty of 1856, Britain and the other European powers, individually and together, held the right to intervene in less civilized states. Though framed through moral duty, there was also a clear international element to this imperative, based on treaties and the nature of the international system. Of course, within Britain, this was often translated into the idea that Britain or the Powers of which Britain was a part had the right to interfere, but if Britain did not play a role any such action was illegitimate; a concept brought to the fore in the ensuing Russo-Ottoman war of 1877.

The concept of the status quo is important to clarify as it began to be used as shorthand, by both politicians and the media. As briefly mentioned above, the concept of the status quo went back to the aftermath of the Crimean War and the Treaty of Paris in 1856. The status quo as understood was based on Article Seven of the Treaty of Paris, which stated,

> Their Majesties engage, each on his part, to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire; guaranteed in common the strict observance of that engagement and will, in consequence, consider any act tending to its violation as a question of general interest.[98]

The treaty further guaranteed this on the understanding that the Ottoman Empire would undertake reform. This has been discussed above in terms of the Tanzimat decrees, but Article Nine of the treaty stated that because the Sultan was initiating a series of reforms, that

> it is clearly understood that it cannot, in any case, give to the said Powers the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of His Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the Internal Administration of his Empire.[99]

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[97] Ibid., Chapter 1.

[98] Earl de la Warr, House of Lords, *Hansard*, 15 June 1876, vol. 229 & Augustus Oakes & R. B. Mowatt, *The Great European Treaties of the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1930), 158.

[99] Ibid. 178.

It was this status quo to which Disraeli referred, and this status quo that the movement against the Ottoman Empire was trying to problematise. Despite the focus on international law and legal obligations, when it was preferred, the argument was made that the existing international obligation governing Britain's involvement with the Ottoman Empire was seen as subordinate to the international obligation to protect the victims of massacre. The language was structured in a way that foregrounded international legal obligations, but the very act and tone of intervention and removing the Ottoman Empire from Europe was clearly a direct violation of twenty-year-old international obligations.

Decrying the lack of action against the Ottoman Empire as implicit approval of its actions, Gladstone referred to the lack of action as 'an example of the fiendish misuse of the powers established by God "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the encouragement of them that do well."'[100] Gladstone continued,

> If it be allowable that the executive power of Turkey should renew at this great crisis, by permission or authority of Europe, the charter of its existence in Bulgaria, then there is not on record, since the beginnings of political society, a protest that man has lodged against intolerable misgovernment, or a stroke he has dealt at loathsome tyranny, that ought not henceforward to be branded as a crime.[101]

Though Gladstone prefaced it with an appeal to the God-given power to rule, at its core this was a political and legal argument about the status and rights of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. Once again referencing the executive power of the Ottoman Empire, Gladstone reinforced his point that the Porte had forfeited its right to rule directly over their Bulgarian subjects. Drawing on conceptions of misgovernment, tyranny and crimes, Gladstone conveyed to his readers the idea of a tyrannical and cruel government that had no respect for its population. This misgovernment and tyranny became a crime, not just in the eyes of God, but for the rest of the political system, requiring a response. Writing to a population that had fought for a broadening of the electorate, the idea of tyranny and misgovernment would have resonated clearly in the public mind.

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[100] Gladstone*, Bulgarian Horrors, 32.*

[101] *Ibid.*

On 9 September *Punch* produced a cartoon titled 'The Status Quo'.[102] The title deliberately recalled the interaction between Gladstone and Disraeli in the Parliamentary session of 31 July where Disraeli stated that Gladstone was calling for the re-establishment of the status quo, to which Gladstone replied, 'not *status quo*, but territorial integrity.' Disraeli's response was that territorial integrity would mean a return to the status quo.[103] The cartoon in *Punch* was drawn by John Tenniel, of *Alice in Wonderland* fame, who would most often draw according to editorial direction, but many of his cartoons demonstrated a significantly liberal lean.[104] Tenniel's cartoon depicted Britannia, representing Britain, standing in regal Roman dress, with her plumed helmet, looking disapprovingly at a caricatured image of a Turk, representing the Ottoman Empire, complete with fez, long beard, and scimitar hanging from his wrist. In the background of the image are destroyed and burning villages, dead bodies, including an infant prominently displayed in the centre between the two characters and skulls on pikes. The Turkish character has his hands open in the act of pleading and Britannia is clearly pulling away and refusing to offer her hand. The caption of the cartoon has the Turk, as Turkey, asking 'Will you still not befriend me?' and Britannia responding, 'Befriend you? – Not with your hands of *that* colour.'[105]

The concept that Tenniel and the *Punch* editors were presenting was that Britain could not in good conscience maintain the status quo if that meant supporting or looking past the literal blood on their hands. *Punch* did not regularly weigh in on the agitation, but Tenniel's contribution at the time of Gladstone's pamphlet is illustrative of the tone, mood and tendency in Britain to address the morality of the matter and focus indignation on the atrocities.

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The Status Quo, Punch, 9 September 1876.[106]

[102] 'Status Quo', *Punch*, 9 September 1876, 105.

[103] Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors*, 28.

[104] Roger Simpson, *Sir John Tenniel: Aspects of His Work*, (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1994), 59.

[105] "Status Quo," *Punch*, 9 September 1876, 105.

[106] Ibid.

The international implications of the status quo, in particular Britain's responsibilities under international agreements to protect other populations from the misrule of their own governments, was marked by several tensions. Britain felt a responsibility to the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire, but the only way to secure their safety and rights was to create an autonomous zone or state out of the existing Ottoman Empire. This, however, went directly against the international obligations that Britain had entered after the Crimean war. However, it was understood that part of the non-interference clause in the Treaty of Paris was that the Sultan would fulfill his responsibilities to treat his subject populations properly. As Oaks and Mowatt argued in their summary of this treaty, 'It was understood, of course, that while thus recognized and guaranteed as a European State, Turkey must behave as such.'[107] The agreement to non-interference, as argued by Stephanie Provost, was based 'on the understanding that … the Sultan would indeed respect his promises.'[108] Therefore, the legal argument began to be developed that argued because the Sultan had breached his agreements under the treaty, Britain was not only able, but obligated to respond.

Moyn, as discussed above, argued that historically rights were attached to states rather than recognized as pre-existing among humanity.[109] In other words, according to Moyn, rights in the nineteenth century were bestowed by the government of a particular state, rather than existing outside of the legislative process. However, there was an element here, in British thinking at least, that the status quo, of leaving the rule of Bulgaria to the Porte while monitoring further abuses, was unacceptable as the Porte had voided their right to rule over the Bulgarian province due to incorrect administration and excessive abuses. This, while a moral argument, is inherently a legal one. Using the phrase status quo, which became, as seen by *Punch,* a popular term, brings a legalistic impression to the moral argument. The crime of mismanagement by the Porte could only be corrected by altering the status quo and under the force of the Concert of Europe creating a new state - or at the very least

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[107] Oaks & Mowatt, *European Treaties*, 169.

[108] Stephanie Prévost, "New Perspectives on the Eastern Question(s) in Late Victorian Britain, or How 'the Eastern Question' Affected British Politics (1881-1901)," in, *Representations: Naming, Labelling, and Addressing*, Catherine Delmas & Isabelle Gadoin eds, (Grenoble: Grenoble University Press, 2015), 91.

[109] Moyn, *Last* Utopia, 7.

autonomous province - that could provide the protections to their citizens that the Ottoman Empire did not.

Public Agitation

Surprisingly, for a matter as internationally complex as the Bulgarian atrocities, the major battle in the agitation took place, not in parliament, but outside in the public square. Many of the politicians, especially the Radical ones, took their cause to mass popular meetings where they emphasised the arguments they had referenced in Parliament. Hartington and Granville were most reticent to take the matter to public opinion and had felt, especially due to the complexities of the Eastern Question and, primarily, the growing concern of a Russian led invasion, that the matter was best resolved through diplomacy.

What is of note throughout the above forays in parliament is the underlying assumptions regarding how civilised states behave. Jeff Roquen has recently argued that 'Although 'humanity' and 'human rights' applied universally in the British (and other 'civilised' European nations) mind, the realm of international law only extended to 'civilized' states.'[110] Referencing the Italian Jurist Pasquale Fiore's work in the nineteenth century on international law, Roquen stated that

> The degree to which international law and the 'principles of justice' could be maintained, according to Fiore, pivoted on the level of solidarity achieved between states. From the late nineteenth century onwards, jurists and statesmen would increasingly construct narratives of international law and launch diplomatic initiatives around the idea and ideal of solidarity.[111]

The relevance here is in the way that the parliamentarians discussed the matter of the Ottoman aggression and the British responsibility. There was an assumption that there had developed a solidarity of interests between Britain and the Porte, due to the Crimean War, the mentoring taking place (at least

[110] Jeff Roquen, "International law and 'humanity' in the making and unmaking of European solidarity, 1830-1915," *European Review of History*, 24, no. 6, (2017): 892.

[111] Ibid, 893.

in the British mind to 'civilise' the Ottoman Empire), and the threat of Russia.[112] Because of this solidarity it was assumed by many politicians that the Ottoman Empire would have joined the 'civilised' nations and would respect the 'principles of justice', in Roquen's phrasing.

On 19 September, an atrocity meeting was held in Glasgow, presided over by James Bain, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, with its key speakers the Duke of Argyll and the Earl of Shaftesbury. The meeting was held due to a 'numerously signed requisition, and was attended by a crowded and excited audience.'[113] Present with Argyll on the stand was Shaftesbury and a variety of local politicians, including Conservative politicians, and ministers 'representing all denominations.'[114] Argyll spoke first and mentioned that he was to be political, but not partisan, for there was no party that had the right to make political capital out of the 'Turkish horrors.'[115] Criticising the Liberal Party's lack of effective response at the end of the Parliamentary session, Argyll claimed, that like Shaftesbury, he rendered service to 'no party and no class, but to humanity itself,'[116] an intriguing statement for the previous Secretary of State for India. Criticising those who condemned the public meetings, Argyll claimed that they too were motivated by sentiment, 'a selfish sentiment', whereas the 'great public meetings' were motivated by 'a generous and just sentiment.'[117] Argyll entered into a specific and detailed denunciation of both Ottoman rule and British Government ineptitude with particular venom for Derby. To Argyll the 'Turkish Government is so bad, so execrably bad, that any and every rebellion against it on the part of its Christian subjects is presumably just and righteous.'[118] Shaftesbury spoke after Argyll and stated that he was

> emboldened to give my voice to theirs [his fellow-citizens] in denouncing the acts by which the Government of Turkey has wound up a long series of offences against the human race, which

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[112] See David Steele, "Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50, no. 1, (2014): 43-60; Reed, "Disraeli and the Eastern Question," 17-38.

[113] "The atrocities in Bulgaria," *The Times*, 20 September 1876, 7.

[114] *Ibid.*

[115] *Ibid.*

[116] *Ibid.*

[117] *Ibid.*

[118] *Ibid.*

> are not only terrible to that more refined humanity and higher civilization of our own day, but are in themselves as fearful and revolting as if all the powers of darkness itself had been let loose to ravage mankind.[119]

In a call for the self-government of the provinces of European Turkey Shaftesbury referred to the necessity for security 'against the repetition of these intolerable outrages, and for some respect to the laws of God and the rights of man.[120]

Though there was an element of religiosity present in both Argyll and Shaftesbury's statements a key message running through their comments was the political responsibility of Britain, through its elected government, to enforce a standard of behaviour upon a sovereign nation. Argyll and Shaftesbury were both speaking the language of the rights of man. Drawing slightly on religious elements, as has been discussed, but pointing out the legal case, both Argyll and Shaftesbury drew out elements of an international order that they saw was an important tool for the protection of the vulnerable Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire. Argyll referred to offences committed against humanity, but he also mentioned civilization, reiterating a core idea explored in his pamphlet, of the responsibilities of civilised nations as they belong to the community of nations, especially in Europe. For his part, Shaftesbury advocated self-government for the subject provinces and his justification referred not only to the laws of God, but also the rights of man. It is here that Moyn's dichotomy of a modern human rights theory as opposed to a religiously based human rights is insufficient.[121]

While both Moyn and Arendt have pointed to the idea that human rights in the nineteenth century were not universal, but instead couched in terms of national citizenship,[122] Shaftesbury clearly argued for national self-government to protect the pre-existing rights of the Bulgarian population to be free from what he referred to as 'intolerable outrages.'[123] This demonstrates that there existed

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[119] *Ibid.*

[120] *Ibid.*

[121] Moyn, *last Utopia,* 33.

[122] Ibid, 12; Arendt, *Totalitarianism.*

[123] 'The atrocities in Bulgaria', *The Times*, 20 September 1876, 7.

individuals who expressed concern for the welfare of the Bulgarian subjects of the Ottoman Empire in legalistic and international frameworks. In this case both Argyll and Shaftesbury clearly argued for a political solution to a humanitarian problem; Argyll from the perspective of British responsibility and the humanity of civilised nations and Shaftesbury in terms of national self-government and the inherent protection of human rights this gave.

It is of interest that in all the discussion surrounding the requirements of the Ottoman Empire to protect its population from violence, the focus was on the Treaty of Paris, rather than on the recent push for constitutionalism within the Ottoman Empire itself. While the official Ottoman constitution had not come into effect until December of 1876, there had been clear movements of ideas from western Europe to the Ottoman Empire, especially in the person of Midhat Pasha for the previous decade.[124] As Roderic H. Davison demonstrated, during September and October of 1876 Henry Elliot was the only European diplomat in Constantinople that took the movement for a constitution seriously.[125] On December 17 1876 the constitution was proclaimed and advocated for the equality of all Ottoman subjects, no matter their religion, individual liberty, free press, and protection of personal property, among others.[126] While the publication of the constitution came really too late for the core of the agitation, it is still of interest that there was not much push among the British agitators for a constitutional agreement. Instead, the legal argument mainly focused on the Treaty of Paris.

The national convention held at St James's Hall on 8 December 1876 demonstrated a point where the thrust of the agitation had taken a turn from the evangelism of the Christian element and the morality of the liberal element to the political core of the issue. This was the purpose of the convention, in that it was a deliberate attempt to influence Salisbury's behaviour at the conference in Constantinople the next week and cut 'him adrift' from Disraeli's foreign policy.[127] There were two sessions of the conference, one presided over by the Duke of Westminster and the other by the Earl of

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[124] Roderic H. Davison explored the development of the constitution of 1876 from the Tanzimat reforms after the Crimean War. Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963).

[125] Ibid., 360.

[126] Unknown Author, "The Ottoman Constitution," *The American Journal of International Law*, 2, no. 24, (1908): 367-387.

[127] "St. James's Hall Conference," *The Times,* 9 December 1876, 6.

Shaftesbury. The inclusion of two of the most well-known Peers in Westminster and Shaftesbury, with Westminster a (overall politically disinterested) Liberal and Shaftesbury a Tory (though a philanthropic one who advocated a variety of social causes) demonstrated an attempt at a cross-party appeal to focus on political questions, rather than party questions.

Westminster opened the session and expounded the purpose of the conference to bring together influential individuals and express the public will. Speaking of Russia going to war Westminster stated that 'we ought to cooperate with Russia in her endeavour to attain the justice which is due to the subject Provinces of Turkey.'[128] Westminster's focus here was generally unpopular with the Tory establishment. As discussed above, both Gorchakov and Ignatiev had mentioned the humanity of the situation in advocating interference. Westminster's suggestion was that this humanitarian intervention (though not a term used, this is what was being discussed) should be undertaken by the whole of the Concert, to avoid allowing the Russians to have free range in intervening in the Ottoman Empire.

Westminster referenced the first Cretan intervention in 1867 and argued that the model could be followed in European Turkey. Westminster reminded his audience that

> we must remember that the mighty stake at issue is the emancipation of suffering millions of the unhappy subjects of the Porte. Too long have we been propping up a tottering fabric full of horrors…I hope that we shall take this opportunity of effecting a better state of things; that we shall pull the fabric down, and lay the foundation broad and deep of a grander and a nobler edifice – namely, that of freedom and of better government.[129]

Westminster's comments connect to Rodogno's argument that during the nineteenth century there had been created, in Britain at least, a culture that advocated and approved of international military intervention for humanitarian reasons.[130] For Westminster, the purpose of such an intervention would be to install a system of better government and freedom for the Bulgarian population, a distinctly

[128] Ibid,, 7

[129] *Ibid.*

[130] Rodogno, *Against Massacre,* 2.

political endeavour. This is also linked to Gladstone's idea of a 'moral right of interference', where the moral basis is framed by international agreements and responsibility.

The breadth of participation was noticed; peers who usually remained distant from party movements, 'men of letters, men of science, professors, clergymen belonging both to the Church and to dissenting bodies' became involved.[131] *The Times* editorial referenced Canon Liddon, who held great influence across the Church of England, argued that the duty of England in relation to Turkey 'was one of those questions in which great and obvious considerations of morality override the strictly political parts of the problem.[132] What can be seen from an examination of the language is a traceable path from the working-class popular meetings in August and September to the far more restricted and governing class conference at St James's. While arguing that not much at all came from the convention, apart from the formation of the Eastern Question Association, which was just the re-badged committee,[133] Shannon suggested that the hope of peace in Europe and support for Salisbury 'was the theme most insistently stressed at St James's Hall.'[134]

By December the focus had shifted to a concern for what the concert of Europe would decide regarding Turkey, however the language used throughout the conference was the language of political morality, a responsibility to enact policy that considered humanity, sympathy, morals and an understanding that England itself was a central protagonist in the Bulgarian story. What St James's codified was, in the words of Thompson, 'a weighty expression of the national opinion, calculated to strengthen the hands of the Government in their new departure'.[135]

In his comments, Gladstone focused predominantly on policy items and was not drawn into attacks on the Government. He was indignant enough, however, that Stead felt compelled to write, 'Gladstone's attitude was that of a noble, great-hearted, patriotic statesman, whose devotion to his country and to the great interests of humanity was so intense as to have no thought for the interests of

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131 "St. James's Hall Conference," *The Times,* 9 December 1876, 6, 9.

132 *Ibid.*

133 Shannon, *Gladstone,* 261.

134 *Ibid,* 262.

135 George Thompson, *Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield: 1875-1880,* vol. 2, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1886), 134.

his party and his personal reputation.'[136] According to *The Times*, Gladstone was more focused on the difficulties of 'agitation that relates to the affairs of other nations. That is, he had to confess that the matter was in the hands of diplomacy.'[137] They quoted Gladstone as arguing that

> I am far from saying that we have taken out a commission of universal knight-errantry. This is not a case where we are thrown simply on the general principles of benevolence. This is a case where we have given a conditional support to the Turkish Power, and where the conditions have been forgotten and betrayed. It is a case, therefore, of positive obligation; and under the stringent pressure of that obligation I say that if long suffering and long oppressed humanity in these Provinces is at length lifting itself from the ground and beginning again to contemplate the heavens, it is our business to assist the work; it is our business to acknowledge our obligation, to take part in the burden; and it is our privilege to claim for our country a share in the honour and in the fame.[138]

Gladstone's argument here vacillated between a few points. Initially, Gladstone made it clear that not only was the matter one for humanity and benevolence, but it was not the case of Britain undertaking crusades across the world. For Gladstone, the Bulgarian matter was firmly tied to the Ottoman Empire's responsibility to rule appropriately and Britain's obligation to monitor and if necessary, alter the nature of this rule, given the support that had been given to the Porte by Britain and the conditions that had been in place. Given that these conditions had been breached, Gladstone made it clear that it was not only the moral duty of Britain to do something, but it was also Britain's positive legal, international obligation to intervene. While Article Nine of the Treaty of Paris had no conditional language, as discussed above it was a device used by Gladstone, and others, to advocate a violation of Ottoman sovereignty and intervention in the Balkans.

Gladstone referenced the 'positive obligation' that Britain had toward the subjects of the Porte. This positive obligation, he argued, demanded action and Gladstone suggested that the action required

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[136] Editorial, *Northern Echo*, 11 December 1876, 2

[137] Leader, *The Times*, 11 December 1876, 9

[138] "The St James's-Hall Conference," *The Times*, 9 December 1876, 8.

was to protect the subjects of the Porte from the violence their own government inflicted upon them. Gladstone's comments here, as well as in his pamphlet and utterances in the July debate were intended to change Government policy toward a focus on the suffering of Ottoman subjects as well as the focus on the Great Power jostling that was taking place. As such, Leslie Schumacher is only partially right in arguing that 'for the agitation, the plight of Ottoman Christians was the Eastern Question, and the protection of them from Turkish abuse and the support of their independence was the solution.'[139] Gladstone and the other proponents of British foreign obligations understood the nature of the Eastern Question. They understood the dangers of Russian interference in British spheres of influence and the desire of Austria to maintain influence in the Slavic states, however, the argument they made throughout the agitation and particularly at St James's was that *at that particular moment* the most important thing for Britain to do was acknowledge and act upon its international obligations to respond to the behaviour of the Porte and protect the subjects of the Ottoman Empire in some way.

The initial flash of the agitation had burnt out by the end of 1876, though there was continuing agitation throughout 1877. At the time of St. James's conference Salisbury was in Constantinople at the conference to address the issues within the Porte. Salisbury was not swayed by the agitation in Britain, though had some personal sympathy for its sentiments. As news of the atrocities arrived in Britain Salisbury had attempted to convince Derby and Disraeli to adopt policies that would protect the Christians in the Ottoman Empire from further atrocities.[140] In fact, while arguing that Britain should not breach its international obligations, Salisbury made it clear that he saw the Ottoman Empire as unfit to govern. In a letter to Carnarvon, his good friend, Salisbury stated that one of the things he saw as one of his most important achievements at the conference, was to make it clear that never again would Britain go to war for the Ottoman Empire.[141] However, Salisbury was not one to allow personal

[139] Leslie Schumacher, "A 'Lasting Solution': The Eastern Question and British Imperialism, 1875-1878," PhD diss., (University of Minnesota, 2012), 100.

[140] Salisbury to Derby, 21 Sept. 1876; Salisbury to Disraeli, 23 Sept. 1876, Salisbury Papers; in Peter Marsh, "Lord Salisbury," 67.

[141] Salisbury to Carnarvon, 11 January 1877, Salisbury papers, NRA 9226, Hatfield House Library.

or popular opinions to impact on foreign policy. Salisbury said in a speech at Mansion House, prior to him leaving for Constantinople, that

> We believe that if we uphold the rights and interests of England, and adhere to the treaties by which England is bound, and look upon that course as the first and chiefest of those duties prescribed to us, we shall thereby be doing the utmost that in us lies to maintain the real interests of peace, humanity, and civilisation.[142]

It appears that Salisbury really did want to stop Ottoman violence in Bulgaria, as well as Armenia later, however his priority was always what he perceived as British self-interest, which is why, at Constantinople, much of his work was spent in discussions with Ignatiev about maintaining British interests in Asia.[143] Implicitly rebutting the argument that Article Nine was conditional, Salisbury made it clear that he advocated a successful settlement, based on the cessation of violence, but one that must respect pre-existing international agreements.

The plan arrived at in Constantinople resulted in an agreement wherein the western half of Bulgaria would become autonomous, and provisions would be made for more Ottoman reforms. Despite urging from Gorchakov in Russia and Bismarck in Germany, Disraeli and Derby refused to consider the possibility of using the threat of combined force to pressure the Porte into accepting the deliberations of the conference.[144] Despite threats of Britain not supporting the Ottoman Empire if their advice was ignored, the Porte, with prompting from Andrassy and Austria-Hungary, rejected everything agreed at the conference. Disraeli and those who agreed with him saw in Russian insistence of military force a desire to go to war for influence among Ottoman lands, after which they would split

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[142] Frederic Pulling, *The Life and Speeches of the Marquis of Salisbury, vol. 1,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1885), 241-42.

[143] Salisbury to Sir Louis Mallet, 19 January 1877, Salisbury papers, NRA 9226, Hatfield House Library. A key part of Salisbury's plans was to occupy land in Asia if the Russians were to do so, which as Varnava argued resulted in the perceived need to occupy Cyprus in 1878 (Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus*, 2009).

[144] Schulz, "The Guarantees of Humanity199.

the spoils with Austria-Hungary. With Britain refusing to forcibly reform the Ottoman Empire, Russia attempted their own efforts, which eventually resulted in the Russo-Ottoman war in April 1877.[145]

Public opinion in Britain after the St. James's conference and after the Constantinople failure had begun to cool in relation to the atrocities. After Russia declared war in April 1877 there was a jingoistic backlash against the humanitarian impulses of 1876.[146] At the same time, those that had agitated for the cessation of atrocities in Bulgaria were in a difficult place, advocating for peace in the war, but unwilling to take Disraeli's view that a return to the status quo was necessary. The nature of discussion on international obligations and law changed significantly from 1877 onward, even as there was still an element of the population that continued to think, discuss and write on the Eastern Question and the atrocities campaign.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that an important element of the Bulgarian agitation was focused on international agreements and the role of the international community in responding to massacres within the Ottoman Empire. This was inherently different to the Jamaican agitation because the Bulgarian violence was different in kind from the ones in Jamaica; in that one was an international event that was taken up as a cause by Britons looking to place Britain in a morally acceptable position internationally, whereas the other was an atrocity perpetrated by representatives of the British government during imperial rule.

While comparisons were made between imperial governance by both religiously and morally motivated individuals, the legal nature of the two did not invite comparison. However, the Bulgarian atrocities were very quickly placed within a broader context of the Eastern Question and the problem of reform within the Ottoman Empire. It was argued that Britain had a responsibility not necessarily to

[145] Interestingly here, Schulz (Ibid) argues that the Russo-Ottoman war was the direct result of a form of Russian humanitarian impulse (though not fully a humanitarian intervention), re-enforced by pan-slavism, as well as a Russian imperial mentality.

[146] For a history of the jingoistic attitudes in 1877 and 1878 see, Hugh Cunningham, "Jingoism in 1877-78," *Victorian Studies*, 14, no. 4, (1971): 429-453.

the Ottoman Empire as a whole, but to the subjects of that empire, given the support given in 1856 to the Porte, and the British usurpation of the Russian role as defender of the Christian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. This was often argued around the pre-existing treaty that Britain had signed in 1856, which guaranteed Ottoman sovereignty and non-interference by the European powers, through attaching rhetorical conditions to Article Nine. Given the history, the previous interventions in the Ottoman Empire (such as Crete and Lebanon),[147] and given the attempts to reform the Porte, many within Britain argued that there were legal obligations placed upon Britain to intervene, politically and maybe militarily, to address the suffering of the Bulgarians. There were two legal arguments around Article Nine; one was that there was nothing explicitly written in the treaty to bind Britain to protect the Ottoman minorities. Legally, however, Gladstone and others argued that due to the British support of the Ottoman Empire, especially during the Crimean war, it was necessary that the Ottoman Empire undertake reforms to maintain British protection.

Viewing humanitarian thought in terms of a sympathy or consideration for the welfare and well-being of others (strangers in particular), arguments for Britain's international responsibility towards the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, while sometimes rhetorically framed within a religious or moral framework, nonetheless emphasised Britain's legal international responsibility. Threats to forfeit treaty given support to the Porte due to misgovernment was a distinct line of argument, separate from both a religious humanitarianism and moral sentimentality. Like Jamaica, the Bulgarian agitation saw elements of the British population advocate for policy shifts to address a particularly legalistic responsibility; in this case the international responsibility Britain had to address Ottoman misgovernment and protect the subject populations of the Ottoman Empire, in particular the Western Christians.

However, this was not the only legal argument presented. There was a clear strain that emphasised that it was the international responsibility of the Concert of Europe to maintain peace and

[147] Pinar Senisik, *The Transformation of Ottoman Crete: Revolts, Politics and Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2011); C. E. Farah, *Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830-1861*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000); Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalization of Communal Conflict*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

order within the Ottoman Empire. This was often tinged with clear anti-Russian sentiments and a desire to act in concert with the other powers to prevent the Russians acting unilaterally. As demonstrated consistently by Gladstone, Argyll, and others, the desire to maintain the international system was embedded with a desire to maintain British influence in Europe, the Ottoman Empire and Asia. However, as Barnett argued, there is a form of humanitarianism that addresses the root causes of suffering and goes beyond the immediate emergency support for reducing and alleviating suffering. This alchemical humanitarianism looked to use the international system as a tool to redress the suffering of the subject populations of the Ottoman Empire, whilst at the same time restraining Russian influence and increasing British influence in the region.

As Rodogno has argued, many of the interventions in the nineteenth century revolved around foreign policy aims of the intervening states, rather than necessarily the desire to bestow freedom or save strangers.[148] However, the core demonstration of the Bulgarian massacres is that there was a key component of British society who combined British interests and foreign policy with the idea that it should be used to enact moral ends. While there was no established international law in 1876, rather a series of agreements between the European powers that were mutually enforced, there was a key argument that previous agreements and treaties made within this framework bound Britain to either operate a moral foreign policy or intervene in the Ottoman Empire because of a moral culpability in the international system.

This was different in kind from the Jamaican case in terms of the role that law, and legal responsibility played. As well as the difference in internal imperial matters and foreign policy, the Jamaican matter had clear legal precedents for the operation of law within a British colony. There was some legal history around the use of martial law within the colonies, however, the Jamaican situation resulted in a clear argument surrounding the use of force, the state of exception, and the role of the crown in British affairs. In the Bulgarian case, however, the legal environment was far less structured. The international legal environment was burgeoning with the beginning of a community of nations and

[148] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 24.

legal responsibilities, however, these were the product of the post-Napoleon environment and a desire, especially by the three monarchies of continental Europe, to avoid another general European war.

In order to advocate for the protection of suffering populations in the Ottoman Empire, elements of the British political establishment focused on the responsibilities of Britain within the international system.

Until December 1876 there was no clear legal document, within the Porte, that necessarily declared what happened in Bulgaria illegal. Rather, the argument returned to treaty agreements, which were internationally binding, not least by dint of the force of the concert behind it, which the Porte often disregarded. The clear, underlying intent of the agitators was to protect the victims of the Ottoman massacres by presenting their plight through arguments that drew on a burgeoning sense of an international responsibility to protect the vulnerable.

Section 3 – Liberal Humanism and Moralism in the Jamaican and Bulgarian Agitations

Chapter 5 – Liberal Moralism and the Morant Bay Massacre

Introduction

In the previous two sections it has been established that there were clear elements of both the Jamaican and Bulgarian agitations that framed their humanitarian sentiment in a religious and a legal manner. In much of the historiography on the humanitarianism of the Victorian era, these two elements, especially the religious element have been emphasised. For the religious humanitarians it was the dictates of their religious belief that caused them to advocate initially on behalf of the suffering, then advocate for an adjustment in government policy. For the legalists, and internationalists, it was their view of British law and legal responsibility that animated their agitation against government action. Thus, James FitzJames Stephen could, within the space of 10 years, advocate for the prosecution of Eyre for his role in the violence in Jamaica and deride those who joined the Bulgarian agitation as sentimentalists.

This section will examine the element of British society who viewed acts of suffering not primarily through the prism of religion, or law, but rather in terms of moral sympathy. The actual terminology here is difficult and there is little agreement. To an extent, this section addresses what Adam Smith called moral sentiments – where sympathy for others begins to over-ride one's own self-interest.[1] Smith's examination is of some interest in that he explores how self-interest is not always the overriding consideration of a person's actions, but rather moral reasoning can also produce action springing from sympathy for others outside of the self.[2] While focusing on social interaction, Smith's description of moral sentimentality holds some value.

Following from Smith's thesis, a field of study referred to as moral sentimentalism has emerged – a field that explores the 'origin of our concepts or judgements about morality.'[3] As Elizabeth Radcliffe has argued, moral sentimentality is a term that refers to how people use not only reason to

[1] Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (North Carolina, Gutenberg Publishers, 2011).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Elizabeth S. Radcliffe, "Moral Sentimentalism and the reasonableness of Being Good," *International Review of Philosophy*, 263, no. 1, (2013): 9-27.

determine their moral distinctions, but also rely on their experiences of sentiment and feelings to frame their moral outlook.[4]

Although it intersects with the history of emotions,[5] the scope of this section is somewhat broader. Along with the moral sentimentality that was present, there were the beginnings of a formal political and radical liberalism informed by this moral sentimentality throughout nineteenth century Britain. The Whiggish alliance of the Peelites had already collapsed and the Liberal Party was a coalition of a broad range of Whigs (such as Lord Granville), radicals (such as Cobden and Bright) and a growing middle-class liberal element (such as Charles Buxton and William Forster). As Abigail Green has stated, the discourses of humanity and human rights began to overlap during this period.[6] Michael Barnett too has suggested that the 'first generation of human rights activists' drew from the distinctive liberal, humanist, tradition' of the mid-nineteenth century.[7] Nonetheless, as Samuel Moyn and Rebecca Gill have argued, this moral activism was still often framed within a nationalist and racialised tradition. Michael Barnett has also argued that whilst humanitarianism and human rights must be studied as separate and distinct phenomenon, in the latter half of the nineteenth century there were intersections between the two.[8] As Gill has argued, 'full participation in humanity depend[ed] on one's place in the scale of civilization, fostered and promoted by a suitable progressive polity, rather than [on] inalienable human rights.'[9] While within the Jamaican and more particularly the Bulgarian case the advocation for rights was largely limited to individuals seen as 'worthy' of receiving those rights and framed within a civilisationary framework, it is nevertheless still possible to recognise the strains of moral sentimentality

[4] Ibid.

[5] Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, Peter N. Stearns eds, *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020); K. Barclay & F. Soyer eds, *Routledge Sourcebook: Emotions in Europe, 1517-1914*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021); J. Lydon, *Imperial Emotions: The Politics of Empathy Across the British Empire,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[6] , "Humanitarianism," 1163.

[7] Ibid., 1173.

[8] Michael Barnett, 'Introduction,' Michael Barnett (ed), *Humanitarianism and Human Rights*, 2.

[9] Rebecca Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870-1914,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 6.

that informed the activists' agitation, as well as the political liberalism that animated the desire for 'civilised' states that protected its citizens' rights.

Naturally, there was some cross-over between the liberal sentimentalists and the religious agitators, as well as the legal advocates. However, the element of the agitations that will be focused on here are those who approached the issue from a secular, liberal tradition, focused mainly on the sentimentalist tradition of responding to emotion and promoting sympathy and eliciting empathy or the radical drive of politics. As well as those who expressed a secularized empathy, the radical and Liberal element of British politics will be examined to demonstrate how they advocated a government policy of moral imperialism and pushed for the formation of British governance that would uphold the good moral standing of Britain and avoid international disgrace and humiliation. As this is examined it is important to understand and recognize that many of these agitators came from within politics and that humanitarianism as a project began and remained a political project. Nonetheless, much of the criticism stemmed from strong, politically charged emotions, which then translated into a specific political program.

The Jamaican agitation existed at a time when there were already heightened political emotions surrounding the role of the British government, trade laws, post-slavery economics, and a drive from the radicals to advance free trade and abolish the Corn Laws. As A. J. P. Taylor has documented, the radical politicians and regional influential businessman often focused on a form of 'little England' and a reduction of territorial expansion, imperial governance, and diplomatic bullying.[10] Foremost among these radicals was Richard Cobden, along with many Benthamites, Corn Leaguers, Quakers, and Utilitarians, who were advocating an economic, moral, imperial and foreign policy, which intersected with the events in Jamaica. As the religious element had pre-existing interests in the Jamaican missionary and anti-slavery efforts, so the radicals had pre-existing economic interests in Jamaica as a key concern in British imperial, economic governance and the role of post-slavery economic production.

[10] Taylor, *Trouble Makers*.

Anthony Howe has demonstrated that the Cobden Club, a loose conglomeration of supporters of free trade and followers of Cobden, had an outsized influence among the significant dissenting events of the nineteenth century. The Jamaica Committee contained 31 members who were also members of the Cobden Club.[11] Howe's argument is that the pre-existing nexus between free trade doctrine and radical/dissenting liberal politics drew men from cause to cause as they felt it mattered. In the Jamaican case what will be made clear is that these dissenting radicals, often focused on economic free trade and a reduction in British involvement around the world, had a clear strain of humanitarian thought that they expressed in their political manner. This was further examined by Jennifer Pitts in her study on the turn to liberal imperialism in the latter half of the nineteenth century by the British radicals.[12] Pitts, in particular, focused on James and John Stuart Mill and traced their critiques of the British imperial response in Morant Bay in terms of appropriate imperial governance.

This chapter will examine the agitation around the Morant Bay massacre and the humanitarian response to this from the liberal/sentimentalist element of society. This section of the agitation was not as pronounced in the Jamaican agitation as it would be in the Bulgarian agitation, which can be traced back to the then recent foundation of the Liberal Party (only formed in 1859, less than 10 years before the Jamaican uprising), the lingering Whiggish (aristocratic) influence and the nature of the radical wing (focused on the Reform Act). However, it will be demonstrated that, while the beginning of the agitation around Jamaica was spurred by the Evangelical Christians and the legalists eventually wrested control of the coalition, beneath the surface of the agitation existed a group of individuals who used the concepts of honour and disgrace to express their own version of humanitarianism, advocate for the rights of the victims of violence, and push for a political program that purported to anchor Britain within a framework moral, liberal governance.

Liberals and the Agitation

[11] Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England*, 123.

[12] Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*.

As has been shown, many elements of Edward Cardwell's response to Eyre's actions in Jamaica stemmed from a nascent legal humanitarian impulse. Alongside this, however, it is also important to examine Cardwell's response from the influence of his liberal political persuasion. Cardwell had been a Peelite in his early years in Parliament and with the break with the Conservative party he followed Peel and Gladstone into the new Liberal Party. Cardwell was demonstrably not sentimental – his dispatches and record show a technocratic manager of problems and circumstances. Cardwell was also responsible to Russell's Cabinet, which included a variety of Liberal personalities. Accordingly, Cardwell also needs to be contextualised within the Liberal politics of the Cabinet in which he served.

On 1 December, the same day that Cardwell sent his strongly worded letter to Eyre regarding his doubts about Eyre's response to the uprising, a Cabinet meeting was held where Cardwell brought the despatches from Eyre and explained the details to his colleagues. Gladstone, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Liberal Government in the House of Commons, recorded the Cabinet meeting in his diary from 1 December 1865, under, 'on Jamaican Horrors'.[13] Having produced the report from Eyre and asked advice of his colleagues regarding his course of action, Cardwell also stated that he had granted Eyre leave from March as requested. Gladstone wrote that he insisted that because of Eyre's connection to the events in Jamaica 'it [was] impossible for him to be accepted by the Crown Government and people of this country as the impartial and dispassionate organ of communication for the colony.'[14] Gladstone further suggested that Eyre should be forced to take leave immediately and a 'full inquiry instituted into the events.'[15] After a short debate, where ministers expressed a variety of opinions, Cardwell's course was confirmed and approval for initiating an inquiry given.

After the meeting Gladstone wrote a letter to the Duke of Argyll, who was then Lord Privy Seal, who had been absent during the Cabinet discussions, that

> the intelligence from Jamaica is horrible and sickening to the last degree. One hopes against hope that some of it is falsehoods. But as it stands and Eyre supplies us with no evidence for or

[13] Gladstone Diary, 1 December 1865, Add MS 44754 f. 137, British Library, London.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

against, it far transcends as to atrocity and barbarity the doings, in our own time at least, of any civilised people within my knowledge.[16]

Gladstone, as religious as he was, saw human suffering in various ways. Interestingly, Gladstone had very little to do with the response to the events in Jamaica, he never spoke on it publicly, or even in Parliament, and though he provided advice to Cardwell and gave his opinion within the Cabinet when asked, he had no personal stake in it. However, in a subdued manner, Gladstone expressed the opinion that liberal humanitarians would take in this matter, one which he was to express a decade later regarding the Bulgarian case. For Gladstone, advanced and civilised nations did not commit atrocities like they had in Jamaica. Gladstone's sentiments in his letter to Argyll is representative of the man, but his opinion is relevant in this discussion as it is representative of the liberal moralistic view that eventually Gladstone would come to represent, that may have sprung from his deeply held religious values but was expressed in terms of a liberal moralistic idea of civilisational responsibilities and the civilisation/barbarian dichotomy, spurred by an emotional reaction to perceived 'horrors'.

Much of the initial agitation against Eyre's actions was driven by the religious, philanthropic, and legalistic groups, however the liberal press presented the issue in a liberal sentimental manner. It was argued in a variety of liberal papers that the worst part of the Jamaican issue was that Eyre had dishonoured England and undermined the idea of English morality. The *Daily News* contained an editorial that stated that 'from the Queen down to humblest subject, we are all dishonoured men and women.'[17] The dishonour as expressed here is an interesting reaction to an event in a small colony across an ocean. The *Daily News* as a liberal paper and ally of the Palmerston government was not commenting on the political situation within Britain, but rather reacting emotionally to a violent event. The dishonour felt was one in which the British people were complicit in a morally reprehensible act.

The *Fortnightly Review* and *Reynold's Newspaper* both claimed England had lost status with the Continental powers due to their bloodthirsty reaction, with *Reynold's* containing an editorial which read, in part, that the behaviour of the Jamaican authorities 'have exposed us even to the scorn and derision

[16] Ibid., f. 155.

[17] *Daily News,* 18 November 1865, 4d

of the blood-stained minions of the murderous despots of continental Europe.'[18] The point here from the editors is that many in Britain had condemned the actions of Russia and Austria when they repressed their subject populations, especially in Poland, however, the behaviour of the British colonial power in Jamaica was just as reprehensible and therefore not only were the British guilty of moral atrocities, but also guilty of being hypocrites. *The Spectator* included an article that argued that 'the Englishman is at bottom good-natured, is at home a law-abiding man, credits himself justly enough with an instinctive preference for fair play.' However, 'deep down in the Anglo-Saxon heart…lies the instinct of masterfulness,' and a lust for domination that Eyre allowed to get out of control.[19] There is a clear civilizational commentary here, in which a hierarchy of societies is assumed. However, the moral element of the argument lies in the responsibility of the British rulers to control their own desires to rule and maintain their moral nature in the colonial realm. This was a distinctly liberal idea, that went back to the principles of the proper treatment of individuals according to moral norms. However, it also connected strongly to liberal imperialism and a growing racialized assumption about the hierarchy of societies.

This takes the idea of liberal moralism and moral sentimentality back to the ideas of moral colonialism that had started to develop within Britain through the middle of the century. This framework of an 'honourable' Britain, as explored in all three publications, was deeply tied to the liberal project. This had its roots in both the anti-slavery project and the colonial project. Alan Lester and Fae Dussart have argued that after the eradication of the slave trade in 1807 and the slavery system itself in 1833, the anti-slavery activists and humanitarians turned their attention towards the colonies and ideas of moral empire and humanitarian governance.[20] As Elizabeth Elbourne has shown, in the immediate aftermath of the anti-slavery win, Thomas Fowell Buxton and the evangelical societies turned their

[18] *Reynold's Newspaper*, 26 November 1865, 1b; *Fortnightly Review*, 15 December, 362.

[19] *Spectator*, 24 March 1866, 321-2

[20] Lester and Dussart, *Colonizatio*n.

attention to the immoral acts perpetrated against indigenous populations in the settler colonies.[21] It is from this that the language of 'dishonour' expressed by the *Daily News* stemmed, with this moral colonialism project becoming formalized in the political language of the following 30 years. The *News* had provided a large amount of support for the evangelical drive of Stead and the others, but the idea of dishonouring Britain as a moral governing force operated as a powerful rebuke to Eyre's violence. Summarising this idea, Jennifer Pitts, in her examination of John Stuart Mill and his Utilitarian ideas, argued that Mill's focus in prosecuting Eyre and agitating against the massacres in Jamaica was based on a concept of civilisational responsibility and accountability.[22] Pitts argued that there was no thorough 'interrogation of the premises and systemic failures of British rule over populations that Mill, like most of his countrymen, considered civilizationally inferior.'[23] Even the most ardent critics of Eyre and the response to the uprising, save a few, were not advocating for a dismantling of the imperial system, but rather for moral, civilisational governance.

Returning to the nature of sentimentality it is important to note the emotional response that the Morant Bay uprising and its response caused in Britain. The soul-searching that took place in some of the Liberal press was a result of a political instinct to reflect on the liberal principles of the country. Reflection on how the nation would be viewed by others was a form of emotional response that focused on the loss of national honour, and the resulting international shame and humiliation. Ute Frevert has argued that the emotions of shame and guilt are key historical actors in political life.[24] The liberal press, generally, looked with disapproval on the behaviour of Eyre and the reasoning behind this, as given above, came from a reaction to the emotions of shame and an understanding of the liberal principles of the United Kingdom, its attributes and what happens when the moral core of the country was compromised. In particular, the liberal press focused on the breach in established ethical behaviour

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[21] Elizabeth Elbourne, "The Sins of the Settler: The 1835-36 Select Committee on Aborigines and debates over virtue and conquest in the early nineteenth-century British White settler empire," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History,* 4, no. 3, (2003): 1-39.

[22] Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 151.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History – Lost and Found*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013), 6. See also, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, *Shame and the Anti-Feminist Backlash: Britain, Ireland and Australia*, 1890-1920, (New York: Routledge, 2017).

as expressed by Eyre and his officers, rather than focusing on the broader political questions of the Russell government. This meant that much of the reflection and outpouring from the liberal, rather than the Christian, press was focused on a moral reckoning with Eyre's actions and its departure from established forms of ethical political behaviour.

Uday Singh Mehta provides a useful sense of the motivations of the Liberal press in general during the Jamaican case. Mehta argued that progress was at the heart of the conception of liberalism.[25] In particular, Mehta suggested that the core animating force of liberalism as a political and cultural energy was to progress beyond the 'backward' and therefore, 'the need and justification of a power to bring about such a progressive alignment.'[26] In Britain, this translated into the idea of British exceptionalism. Viewing their history since the 'glorious revolution' as a progress narrative that underwrote their liberal *bona fides,* the liberal press, and those that saw events the same way, viewed Britain as further along the civilisationary continuum than the 'murderous despots' of Europe and elsewhere. As such Britain, even in its colonies, should not behave in the manner Eyre had. It was this sensibility that elicited the pronouncements of the liberal press that declared Eyre's actions and the other actions in Jamaica to have been a breach of Britain's civilizational progress. For British liberals, ruling over Jamaica was permissible, however ruling in a cruel and violent manner was seen as contrary to the values of liberal progress.

At the 12 December meeting at Exeter Hall, Louis Chamerovzow, the secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, read a variety of letters from notable people who could not make the meeting, such as John Stuart Mill and Thomas Hughes. One letter of particular note was from Goldwin Smith who wrote of 'barbarities' that had taken place and the 'brutal levity' with which it had been discussed.[27] Smith 'supposed that the honourable and humane men' would not 'fail to render to the national honour, and to humanity, the satisfaction which is so manifestly due.'[28] Smith would later in

[25] Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire,* 78.

[26] Ibid.

[27] *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 15 January 1866, 3.

[28] Ibid.

the agitation become an outspoken advocate of prosecuting Eyre, but his comments in this letter reflect a particular element of the agitation that did not appeal to religious or legal sentiments, but rather to the sentiments of humanity, honour and liberalism. Smith argued that the appropriate response to the atrocities would be based on humanity and sympathy with those who had suffered, a reflection of his understanding of the moral position of Britain in the world. This was not an expression of rights, but rather an expression of moral outrage.

The focus on honour in the denunciation of Eyre continued through the entire agitation. A focus on the self-imagination of British imperial honour is somewhat understudied in recent historiography, however, there has emerged a clear understanding of what it meant to the Victorian man (usually he who went out into the empire), and this involved maintaining the national honour. In his research on Thomas Hughes' influential book, *Tom Brown Schooldays,* Joseph Bristow suggested that the public-school ethos in the book was 'connected with war, honour, and above all, doing well on the playing field.'[29] This concept of honour expanded beyond the self and was extended to the British empire; it was not only the role of the British empire to protect itself, make money, spread Christianity and civilise the 'lower' races, but to maintain the national honour in doing so. This national honour was imagined and differed with whoever was invoking it, so the liberal press and the liberal thinkers advocated the morally honourable path of not massacring one's own subjects, whereas Thomas Carlyle and the other defenders of Eyre advocated the honourable path of power and war. Conversely, a failure to do so would result in national disgrace and international humiliation.

Disraeli clearly viewed Britain primarily as an 'imperial country.'[30] This view had its moral dimension which reflected the value placed on personal and national honour. According to Disraeli, in a speech at Crystal Palace on 24 June 1872, Britain was

[29] Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, (Manchester: Manchester University press, 1991), 57.

[30] Moneypenny & Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, vol. V, John Murray, London, 1910, 192.

> a great country, an imperial country, a country where your sons, when they rise, rise to paramount positions and obtain not merely the esteem of their countrymen, but command the respect of the world.[31]

On the other side of the imperial scale too there was a focus on the necessity of a moral empire, from Gladstone in a more mainstream way, but also on the radical fringe. Robert Lowe, a Liberal MP and supporter of Gladstone, argued against Queen Victoria being referred to as Empress, for example, because emperors were more usually violent and immoral.[32]

Parliament

On 6 February 1866, in the first sitting of Parliament since the previous August, the first mention of the Jamaican issue was raised in the response to the Queen's opening speech. Lord Derby, the leader of the opposition in the House of Lords, used the opportunity to criticise the way the government had handled Eyre. Admitting that Eyre had used 'measures of severity – undoubtedly, of great severity',[33] Derby tried to have the issue both ways, by recognising the need for further information to be gathered and criticising Russell for doubting Eyre and undermining him with a commission of inquiry. Russell's response was one of level-headedness, with a layering of his liberal sympathy. Russell responded by confirming that the government was questioning the means Eyre used in the suppression. Russell clarified this by saying that,

> when it comes to a question of the lives of 500 of the Queen's subjects, I do not think it right for us to say, "We do not care whether 500 persons have been put to death without necessity, but we will support the Governor whether he was right or wrong, and we care nothing about those persons' lives because they happen to be black.[34]

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[31] Ibid., 196.

[32] Robert Lowe, *Hansard*, House of Commons., 17 February 1876, vol. 227, col. 413.

[33] *Hansard*, House of Lords, 6 February 1866, vol. 181, col. 91

[34] Ibid., col. 102

Russell's response, then, became the official view of the Government. For Russell, the matter at hand was the suffering of British subjects, rather than race. Russell's focus on subjecthood has been discussed previously. What is of interest here, however, is how Russell, while making a legal argument surrounding the subjecthood of those in Jamaica, also expressed a broader political morality. Russell's comment on caring for others, irrespective of race, is part of a tendency to mobilise empathy, where there is an attitude that 'the ability to empathise with distant others emerges…as a feature of the modern condition.'[35]

On the same day, the House of Commons also debated the repercussions of the Jamaica uprising. Lord Frederick Cavendish, a Liberal MP, led the reply to the Queen's speech. Reciting the words of the previous Jamaican Governor, Charles Darling in 1860, Cavendish referred to Jamaica as having previously been 'the strongest proof of the complete success of the great measure of emancipation, as relates to the capacity of the emancipated race for freedom'.[36] Referring to the actions of the government, Cavendish argued that the suspension of Eyre and institution of the Commission was the only course that could be pursued and quoted precedents to back himself up. This was similar in tone to the liberal press, but this time expressed by a liberal politician. This view of the West Indies as the great evidence of British humanitarianism and moral imperialism was a common theme throughout the agitation. The idea that the British had freed the Afro-Jamaicans from their bondage to a life of freedom was held up as a sign of liberal imperial progress. What was notably missing from this discussion, however, was the fact that the 'emancipated race' was emancipated from the very government that congratulated itself on their emancipation and that the process of emancipation had not only made many former slaveholders wealthy (with the money the government paid in compensation), but also politically powerful.[37]

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[35] Green, "Humanitarianism," 1169.

[36] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 6 February 1866, vol. 181, col. 109.

[37] Nigel Pleasants, "Moral argument is not enough: the persistence of slavery and the emergence of abolition," *Philosophical Topics*, 38, No. 1, (2010): 159-180; and Huzzey examines this response in *Freedom Burning*.

William Graham, a Liberal MP from Glasgow, backed these statements and claimed that news of the British actions in Morant Bay demonstrated 'a severity alien to the habits and traditions of our national policy, and which has been resented by the instincts of our people.'[38] Claiming that the Royal Commission would allow everyone a full understanding of what had happened and trusting the House of Commons to do the right thing, Graham concluded that

> remembering that evidence as to character is no sufficient answer to the evidence of facts, if it shall unhappily prove true that in a paroxysm of panic or of passion truth and right have been trampled underfoot, this House will never be their accomplices who have so abused the delegated authority of England, nor suffer her boasted humanity to become a by-word of the nations, by turning a deaf ear to the cry of innocent blood.[39]

Both Cavendish and Graham drew on the points of liberal morality, and the way in which Eyre had brought dishonour to the nation. They both drew their attention to the responsibility that Britain had for those over whom they ruled, confirming Michael Barnett's argument that present within this liberal, humanitarian impulse was an inherent paternalism and a belief that the humanitarians and the liberal government 'had a duty to civilize and improve the lives of the native [and subject] populations.'[40]

This paternalism and focus on moral rule demonstrated the liberal belief in the possibility, indeed necessity, of humanitarian imperialism. This same tone would be used by the Bulgarian agitation a decade later in outlining how the Ottoman rulers betrayed the moral responsibility they owed their subjects. As Mehta argued, the entire self-understanding of the project of liberalism within empire was to 'move societies along the ascending gradient of historical progress.'[41] In order to do this, there needed to be set moral norms that offered a framework to train these societies to reach the level of civilization required for self-government. This is an idea embedded not only into the critiques of

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[38] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 6 February 1866, vol. 181, col. 119

[39] Ibid., col. 120

[40] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity,* 75.

[41] Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire,* 82.

Cavendish and Graham, but also the entire liberal and sentimental response to the massacres; for an Empire that has as its core idea the civilizational progress, an inherently moral rule was required.

For Cavendish and Graham, the British public, as advocates of emancipation and opposed to severe violence, could not comprehend what had occurred in Jamaica and how it could have been committed by a liberal, moral Britain. The premise of these statements was that the British Empire and its people were lovers of freedom, humanity, and honour, and thus the response to Eyre's breach of these values necessitated condemnation. Much of this was of course disingenuous. Priya Satia has argued that, not only were the British deluded in seeing their empire as a grand civilizational project, but also that by advocating liberal imperialism as an amoral form of empire, British liberals 'preemptively insured against ethical doubt.'[42] Satia's argument was that the British used these ideas of freedom, humanity and honour, to prop up the entire imperial system and thus justify the continued repression of their colonial subjects; 'it was not through absence of *mind* so much as an absence, or management, of *conscience* that Britain acquired and held its empire.'[43] This goes back to Barnett's argument that humanitarianism is inherently paternalistic.[44] While, in the post-colonial era paternalism is viewed as a negative, it can be seen as an integral part of the imperial experience. Following from Satia's argument Kenneth Pomeranz has argued that the 'civilising' missions of the nineteenth century empires led to an understanding of colonies in terms of the metropole, which required 'lessons' and 'development' in the colonies.[45]

These ideas were part of the broader liberal thought that was coming out of the mid-nineteenth century, which was not founded in religion or law, but in the liberal ideas of natural justice, rights, and freedom. Satia's argument is clearly correct, nevertheless those operating within the racist and classist British Empire did (albeit erroneously) believe that their empire was a vehicle for civilisational

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[42] Priya Satia, *Time's Monsters: History, Conscience and Britain's Empire*, (London: Allen Lane, 2020), 3.

[43] Ibid. For the concept of Empire by absence of mind see Sir John Robert Seeley's apologist statement in 1883 that 'we seem, as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind.' John Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914), 10.

[44] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*.

[45] Pomeranz, "Empire & 'Civilizing' Mission, Past & Present."

improvement. That this set of assumptions propped up an entire system that benefitted the metropole seems not to have been a case of cynical and deliberate hypocrisy, but rather the result of a chauvinistic arrogance that conflated self-interest with universal improvement and which was rarely penetrated.[46] What is important for the study of Victorian humanitarianism, however is how empire and its values were understood by British humanitarians and the fact that the liberal politicians viewed themselves as advocates of a superior imperial morality. As Ann Laura Stoler has argued,

> appeals to moral uplift, compassionate charity, appreciation of cultural diversity, and protection of "brown women and children" against "brown men" ...were woven into the very weft of empire– [they were] how control over and seizure of markets, land and labor were justified, worked through and worked out.[47]

John Stuart Mill personified this very idea of civilisational improvement and moral imperial governance. In a letter to Edwin Arnold of the *Daily Telegraph*, Mill wrote that 'not only every principle I have, but the honour and character of England for generations to come, are at stake in the condign punishment of the atrocities of which, by their own not confession, but boast, the Jamaica authorities have been guilty.'[48]

Prior to the Parliamentary session on 31 July, in which Charles Buxton had submitted notice of asking questions regarding Jamaica, Carnarvon had given specific instructions to Adderley, who would lead for the Government in the debate, that he (Adderley) would exhibit 'the grace of accepting so much of Buxton's resolutions as we could.'[49] Buxton submitted four resolutions for consideration: first, that parliament deplored the 'excessive punishments'; second, that while approving the dismissal of Eyre, parliament should still pursue investigations into individual cases of 'excesses of severity'; third, that parliament would authorise the government to award compensation to those who lost property to

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[46] Peter Cain, "Character, 'Ordered Liberty', and the Mission to Civilise: British Moral Justification of Empire," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40, no. 4, (2012): 557-578. For the few imperial dissenters see Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill, Bertrand Taithe eds, *Evil, Barbarism and Empire*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[47] Ann Lauran Stoler, "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty," *Public Culture,* 18, no. 1, (2006): 134.

[48] Mill to Arnold, January 31, 1866, John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works*, Robson and R. F. McRae (eds), Vol. 32, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 160-61.

[49] Carnarvon to Adderley, 1 August 1866, Carnarvon Papers, PRO 30/6/134, fos. 25-26.

British troops, or whose family were put to death illegally; and fourth, given the excessive severity of the repression all future punishment to be meted out in Jamaica 'ought to be remitted.'[50]

With his opening statement Buxton had established his viewpoint as a type of moral liberalism, rather than Christian or philanthropic. It is possible that with his separation from the Jamaica Committee Buxton was deliberately and publicly offering his support to those liberal moralists from whom he was trying to gain political support. Buxton hoped that with parliament approving the four resolutions it would demonstrate 'a decisive and emphatic condemnation of the excessive severity with which the disturbances had been punished after they had been suppressed and authority completely restored'.[51] To do otherwise, to Buxton, would be to express 'a deliberate approval on behalf of the British people of the excessive severity with which the disturbances had been punished.'[52]

There were parallels between Buxton's speech and that of Cavendish and Graham of some five months previous. They all spoke of the excessive severity with which the uprising was put down. The language here demonstrates a clear moral understanding that there were important limits on government and state violence. Lester and Dusart have argued that because of the emancipation effort in Britain and a growing effort to colonise humanely, the British ruling class 'could rest assured that theirs was an empire founded on benevolent principles.'[53] Viewing themselves as benevolent in intention meant that when the Morant Bay uprising and its violent suppression occurred a generation of liberal moralists could not help but criticize the severity of the suppression. Though there is a clear lineage here from the anti-slavery activists of the early nineteenth Century, among whom the Buxton family was most prominent, to Buxton's separation from the Jamaica Committee, it is the form of the appeals that were used that separates Buxton's statements from those of his more religiously overt friends. The language is important; Buxton did not criticize the response to the uprising in distinctly religious terms, nor did he speak in a legalistic manner. To Buxton the response was too severe and

[50] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1866, vol. 184, col. 1763

[51] Ibid., col. 1764

[52] Ibid.

[53] Lester & Dussart, *Colonization.*

thus was a breach of the civilisational mission of liberal governance that was advocated by the liberal element of British society, and as diminished the honour of the empire.

After detailing several outrages inflicted on the Jamaicans, Buxton dwelt on the irregularities, cruelty and unlawfulness of the courts martial. Buxton drew the conclusion that there was a complete lack of humanity in the response by Eyre and his officers. Buxton stated that

> I would a thousand times rather have followed a son of mine to the grave than have had him sit as a member of that court martial, and have shown himself so lost to every feeling not only of humanity, but of personal honour – so dead to every generous youthful impulse – as to have stooped to the utter degradation of being merely the executioner, the hangman, the base instrument used by the authorities for consigning those 400 trembling wretches to the whipping post and the gallows.[54]

Buxton was not condemning the courts martial for being unlawful in a legalistic manner – as many others had done, but rather that those on the courts martial were unfeeling and displayed no humanity or honour. Particularly telling was how Buxton focused on the feeling, or lack thereof, of those young officers who sat on the courts martial in Jamaica. Sympathy, he implied was better reserved for strangers than British officials who had shamed the nation. Such sentiments accord with what Adam Smith wrote in *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 'When we see one man oppressed or injured by another, the sympathy which we feel with the distress of the sufferer seems to serve only to animate our fellow-feeling with his resentment against the offender.'[55] The lack of this sentiment is precisely what Buxton criticized in those who sat on the courts martial and which he demonstrated towards those who suffered.

What Buxton wanted was for parliament, and through them the English people, 'to approve or condemn the deeds…described.'[56] Concluding his time Buxton asked some rhetorical questions to the House.

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[54] *Hansard*, House of Commons 31 July 1866, vol. 184, col. 1784.

[55] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments.*, 70.

[56] Ibid.

> Upon the Treasury Bench, also, and on the Benches above and beside it, sit men whose lives are ennobled by their zeal in every cause of humanity. I ask them whether they in their hearts believe that the course taken by the authorities of Jamaica was one breathing wisdom and sound policy, or wild rage and vengeance? Do they regard it as an example to be followed by authorities elsewhere, or one to be repudiated and abhorred? Do they think that it threw a ray of glory over the name of England, or has it covered us with shame? Was it worthy of the professed servants of him whose name was Mercy? I implore them – I cannot believe that I shall implore in vain – to trample under foot mere prejudice and party feeling, and to ask themselves solemnly, whether, as the Government and representatives of the British people, they dare, in the face of the world and in the face of Heaven, to stamp the seal of their deliberate approval on these ruthless deeds.'[57]

Buxton at the end spoke directly to Disraeli and his government, who had nothing to do with the direct response to Eyre's suppression of the outbreak, besides Disraeli progressing with the course of action determined by Russell. His speech tried to elicit from his audience a feeling of sympathy and pity with the victims of the British Empire. As Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown have suggested, 'faced with the sufferings of others, humanitarians maintain that their ethical response arises from emotions; compassion, sympathy…'[58] Buxton did not leave the issue to the sympathy of Disraeli's party, but also connected the event to the potent emotions of shame and national dishonour, as others before him had done, linking the emotional response to liberal imperialism.

Following the response from the government and a brief comment from Mill, focusing on his legal obsession, William Forster rose to comment. Forster stated:

> How was it that Governor Eyre, whom he [Forster] believed to be a humane and conscientious man, sanctioned proceeding of this kind, and how was it that British officers perpetrated atrocities from which they would have shrunk had the victims been white people? The reason

[57] *Hansard*, House of Commons., 31 July 1866, vol. 184, col. 1785.

[58] Richard Ashby Wilson & Richard D. Brown, "Introduction," in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, Wilson & Brown eds, 2.

> was that they were not free…from the race feeling – the feeling of contempt for what was regarded as an inferior race. This, however, only made it the more incumbent upon Parliament, able as it was to sit calmly in judgement upon these things, to affirm that there ought not to be one code of morality for one colour, and another code for another.[59]

Forster was slightly different than many of his liberal colleagues, more so than Buxton. The legalists claimed they did not see colour, only British subjects unlawfully oppressed. The religious and philanthropic humanitarians saw colour as an obstacle to overcome in the freedom of the Afro-Jamaicans. Forster, however, openly called the entire British imperial system racist and laid the blame of the uprising and the severe repression that followed upon this racism. This was an expression of a developing attitude within the liberal anti-slavery and humanitarian groups.

Forster's argument here pushes the ideas of Adam Smith and David Hume in identifying sympathy as the key component of moral ethics even further. He showed that one of the problems with the response to the Morant Bay uprising was a lack of sympathy for the non-white population in Jamaica. As a result of this lack of sympathy there emerged a different code of morality for different races. As Adam Smith reasoned, before men could be accountable to God, they needed to be accountable to other men.[60] Smith also argued that for sympathy to function there needs to be a connection made between the sufferer and those feeling the sympathy.[61] It is this sympathy that Forster was working to develop in the political realm. Rob Boddice has discussed the differences between the Smith/Hume sympathy and Darwinian sympathy, where when the sufferer is considered remote, unknown or their complaints feel disproportionate sympathy is withheld. Boddice suggested that for sympathy, in the Smith model, to be felt,

> the justness of the suffering of another had to accord with the potential sympathizer's own feelings…Likewise, when the suffering is distant, abstract, and happening to people we do not

[59] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1866, vol. 184, col. 1812.

[60] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

[61] Ibid.

know, we may lack the conventions to bring home this suffering to ourselves. Thus, though we acknowledge that suffering exists, we are not moved to do anything about it.[62]

Glen Doris has similarly examined Smith's sympathy in terms of the range of the 'circle of sympathy' and why Smith did not argue that sympathy might have ended slavery.[63] Doris argued that for Smith and others influenced by him the social distance between the slave and the moral agent in Britain was simply too great, with 'the circle of "sympathy" confined to those within the particular social order in which the agent resided.'[64] Indeed, Smith warned against what he termed 'universal benevolence' in 1790. Nevertheless, the views of Forster and other liberal moralists in 1866 demonstrate how the ideas of sympathy expounded by Smith and Hume had grown beyond the personal circle of sympathy and after the eradication of slavery, there was still a segment of the British political establishment capable of expressing sympathy with those clearly not of their social class or standing and willing to criticize the racist undertones of the British Imperial project. In this sense Forster and to an extent Cavendish, Graham and Buxton questioned the civilisational and racial boundaries of political morality by bringing the knowledge and scope of the atrocities in Jamaica to the fore. Crucially, however, the concepts as expressed by these politicians remained radical in the sense of being something that advocates complete change from the establishment. While there was indeed a history and line of thought based on empathy for others, the political reality in Britain did not prioritise this emotion when dealing with colonial subjects, particularly those descended from ex-slaves.

Illustrating this was Thomas Carlyle's pamphlet criticising the recently freed slaves in the British Empire which had been published in 1849. There had been a decrease in overt support in Britain for the anti-slavery cause as racial tensions built up.[65] William Howard Russell had written in *The Times* at the time of the Indian mutiny that 'We hate slavery; We hate slaves too,' and a Baptist minister had

[62] Rob Boddice, *The Science of Sympathy: Morality, Evolution and Victorian Civilization,* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 2016), 9.

[63] Glen Doris, "The Failure of Sympathy: Adam Smith's 'Moral sentiments' and Slavery," *Academia Letters,* Article 91, (2020): 2.

[64] Ibid.

[65] For a thorough examination of this debate see Hall, *Civilising Subjects,* Chapter 6.

written in *The Times* that 'the old spirit of negro-hating seems to reign in many hearts.'[66] By the time of the Morant Bay uprising there were significant racial tensions within the West Indies in particular, but also within British intellectual society that was being pushed back on by the anti-slavery societies and the religious groups. Buxton and Louis Chamerovzow had been part of the debates surrounding this rising racial antagonism towards recently freed slaves throughout the 1850s. By the time of Morant Bay, however, had shifted beyond mere liberal humanitarianism towards a demand that Parliament reinforce the moral expectations of the British Empire. In viewing the entire issue as part of a broader racial one, Forster was stepping beyond Buxton, Cavendish, and Graham from the earlier Parliamentary debates. For Forster, Britain could not become the bastion of civilisational progress and tolerance it was destined to be if it could not apply a universal morality.

Forster, however, was framing his ideas in a burgeoning attitude of civilisational progress. As already mentioned, Jennifer Pitts has demonstrated a turn towards empire in the 1860s as a tool and vehicle for civilisational progress. Brett Bowden has argued that civilisational ideas were and are inherent in any attempt at engaging with or making the international system in the best interests of any state.[67] However, Forster's point of difference was an inherent critique of the foundations that the British empire was founded on, not of a civilisational mission, but the racial undertones that existed alongside it.

Whilst this discussion had moved away from the religiously driven anti-slavery agitation at the beginning of the agitation, it is important to note that by the end of the agitation there were clear elements of the anti-slavery league who began to speak of the next stage in the movement in the same terms of liberal moralism as Forster, Buxton, and the others. In January 1867 Thomas Harvey, a well-known Quaker and abolitionist, spoke at a morning meeting on his visit to Jamaica in 1866 after the Morant Bay rebellion, along with William Forster. Harvey had worked alongside Joseph Sturge throughout his life and had visited Jamaica in 1836 on a fact-finding mission regarding apprenticeships following abolition. Though a Quaker and one of the founding members of the British and Foreign

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[66] Hall, *Civilising Subjects,* 361.

[67] Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilisation: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Anti-Slavery Society and the founder of the Negro Education Committee, Harvey's language at the morning meeting avoided religious zeal and relied instead on the tropes of liberal moralism that characterised Forster and those liberals who would follow in the humanitarian tradition. Harvey spoke about the history of slavery and the lingering effects that the institution maintained on the population of Jamaica. In summarizing Harvey's mission to Jamaica, the chairman of the meeting, Reverend Edward Jackson, spoke of the mission of Harvey and those who had gathered. Though no slavery existed in Jamaica and there was no more slave trade, 'they still had the same cause before them in another phase; they had to see that the coloured races in the dominions of Great Britain had unimpaired justice done to them.'[68] Jackson further stated that within the British empire there were two hundred million 'coloured people' and that it was an important question regarding how they (the activists) 'were discharging their duty to those committed to their care,' the 'dereliction' of which would eventually impact on those in Britain themselves.[69] Harvey's comments reinforced this conception of duty, honour and humanity in developing an egalitarian partnership with the Afro-Jamaicans towards improving their condition.

Forster, as the keynote speaker of the meeting, spoke from a variety of perspectives on the Jamaican situation. As previously mentioned, he spoke on the nature of representative government in Jamaica and how the legislative holdovers from slavery needed to be eradicated. Forster spoke on the precedent of Jamaica and how this related to the civilising 'mission' of the British Empire. While clearly disagreeing with the prosecution of Eyre (a statement that Eyre-supporting newspapers jumped on to the exclusion of all else Forster mentioned), Forster was concerned for the precedent set by the immoral acts of British governance.[70] Forster 'rejoiced' in, what he saw as, a newly awakened interest in England for the governance of the colonies and the treatment of the ex-slave population. Asking whether Jamaica provided any real meaning or precedent for England, Forster mentioned both Jamaica and India as examples of colonial rule and stated that 'No one could doubt the weight of obligation

[68] *Leeds Mercury*, 10 January 1867, 4.

[69] Ibid.

[70] *London Daily News,* 11 January 1867, 3.

lying upon the people of this country with regard to our colonial possessions.'[71] Forster continued by referencing the role of providing civilization toward the 'native races' and continued a strong theme within the time period of viewing the civilizational role of the British Empire in terms of improvement of 'inferior' races. However, Like Harvey, Forster's comments were expressed in terms of the paternalistic imperialism identified by Priya Satia and Kenneth Pomeranz.

Radicalism and Dissent

Along with the tradition of Smith's sympathy, there was a thread of political radicalism that was embedded in the agitation. This has been linked and suggested at points, however, it is necessary to examine the influence of the radicals and dissenters in terms of their liberal expressions. As demonstrated, Mill's utilitarianism and Cobden's influence were key in a large section of the Jamaica Committee – 31 of them were members of the Cobden Club at the time of their joining the Jamaica Committee. As P. J. Cain has demonstrated, Cobden was pro-free trade, but anti-interventionism and anti-empire.[72] While most of his supporters were not as anti-imperial as he was, Cobden's attitudes towards war, violence and the existence of the empire held sway over many of the radical individuals in Britain during the Jamaican agitation.

Smith argued that compassion and sympathy for suffering were motivating factors to politically agitate, whereas Cobden argued for a complete non-intervention and removal of imperial rule from the colonies. Stephen Meardon has demonstrated that the founding of the BFASS and the Anti-corn Law League, both in 1839, were not coincidental, but rather demonstrated the key ties between abolitionists, free-trade, and evangelism.[73] Miles Taylor has further demonstrated that despite the economic critique

[71] Ibid.

[72] Cain, 'Hobson', 567.

[73] Stephen Meardon, 'Richard Cobden's American Quandary: Negotiating Peace, Free Trade, and Anti-Slavery,' in *Rethinking Nineteenth-Century Liberalism: Richard Cobden Bicentennial Essays*, eds Anthony Howe & Simon Morgan, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 208-228.

inherent in Cobden's anti-imperialism, there was a distinct concern for the liberties of the British population at home and how imperial endeavours eroded these liberties.[74]

While Cobden and his followers argued for the rights and legal responsibilities of British subjects, especially in terms of the impact the empire had on the core, there was a strain of liberal, moral imperialism that was expressed throughout the agitation. This was held by John Stuart Mill himself, whilst actively focused on prosecuting Eyre in this case, had been active in thinking of the morality of interventionism for some years.

In 1859, a particularly important time right after the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, Mill had written some thoughts on non-intervention as a principle. Mill drew clear lines between civilised and barbarous populations and argued that there was no international principle that governed the behaviour between these states, rathe the only guiding principle was a moral one.[75] As has been seen, Mill was not afraid of criticising the nature of imperial rule, rather than its existence itself. His Benthamite and Utilitarian roots caused the idea, developed from Smith and Bentham, that morality had a role to play, but was blended with liberalism, empire, civilisational responsibilities and law.

The influence among the Jamaica Committee of Cobdenites and Mill would suggest a clear drive from the Manchester radicals of the time in the Jamiacan agitation. As demonstrated, there was a pre-existing relationship between the Cobden Club and the anti-slavery organisations. There was also pre-existing relationships between Mill and the Cobdenits and abolitionists. What is important to note is that the free-trade economics of the Cobdenites and he utilitarianism of Mill was initially subsumed in the more evangelical passion at the beginning of the agitation. As the emergency began to cool and the suffering finished, the pre-existing political elements were able to push through and become clear.

As such, Mill could take over the Committee and push for the prosecution of Eyre; a move that became acceptable to the Cobdenites in how it related to the rights of British citizens and the excesses of government. The involvement of the Manchester radicals, whilst a key element of the agitation,

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[74] Miles Taylor, 'Imperium et Libertas? Rethinking the Radical Critique of Imperialism During the Nineteenth Century,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 19, no. 1, (1991): 1-23.

[75] John Stuart Mill, 'A Few Words on Non-Intervention,' *Fraser's Magazine,* December 1859, 766-776.

suggests that their involvement was a part of the networks developed between these groups, as described by Meardon, rather than an agitation led and developed from the basis of Cobdenite free-trade and economic policy.

Conclusion

A morally driven liberal humanitarianism was not as pronounced in the Morant Bay agitation as religious and legalistic humanitarianism. Even the great liberal moralist William Forster, expressed a variety of legalistic arguments in his discussion of the role of the British Empire. However, there was clearly a strain of liberal moralism that ran through the agitation that had moved well beyond Adam Smith's reservations about the effects of 'universal benevolence'. Sympathy, as well as a concern for the moral tenor of empire and the way in which atrocities like Morant Bay could engender dishonour and disgrace had begun to connect to the burgeoning Liberal party which turned to political moralism and humanitarianism in response to the events in Jamaica in 1865. Further, the political networks developed between Cobdenites in the Cobden club, and the utilitarians and Benthamites, provided a strong radical flavour to the liberal ideas expressed.

Much of this liberal moralism was embedded inside a particular view of the British Empire that advocated a paternalistic attitude towards civilizing the 'inferior' races and a racist conception of the British Empire. There was also significant concern about the impact that an event such as the Morant Bay rebellion and its response would have on the international reputation of Britain and the regard in which it was held by other nations. It represented a stain on British national honour. Imagined conceptions shame and disgrace were mobilised to demonstrate a humane and moral rule, which was broken by the events in Jamaica and needed to be atoned for, not religiously, not legally, but in a theoretical, political, moral manner, such as reframing ideas from one of a stained national honour, to that of the grand, humane, fair empire.

As explored by Satia, Pomeranz, Cain, and others, the liberal moralist conception of empire was embedded with ideas of civilisational progress and a paternalistic attitude toward colonial subjects. These subjects, according to the in-built assumptions of liberal imperialism, had the potential to self-

govern and flourish, however, before they did they had lessons to learn and behaviour to change to become more like the metropole along civilisational progress.

Though connected by some of the same politicians, the liberal response to Jamaica was significantly different to the response to the Bulgarian massacres. At the heart of Jamaican agitation was the purpose and role of the British Empire and the role that emotions and sympathy played in the political response. In the Bulgarian case it was a greatly different response that was heavily influenced by theoretical liberal principles of treating all humanity fairly and morally.

Over the decade that followed the Morant Bay rebellion, the Liberal party continued to consolidate and had won strong domestic victories, such as the second reform act in 1867, and six years of governance under Gladstone. The alliance between the Whigs, the Peelites and the radicals, though fraught, remained together, so that by the time of the Bulgarian agitation there was a stronger liberal, secular and political element to the agitation than there was in the Jamaican case.

Chapter 6 - Bulgaria and Liberal Humanism

Introduction

The political environment in 1876 was quite different to a decade earlier during the Morant Bay revolt. During this decade, the concept of liberalism and its accompanying humanitarian impulse was strengthening. From one perspective, there was a greater understanding of humanitarianism, humanity, and the burgeoning idea of military intervention into sovereign states to, nominally, protect an element of that population.[1] According to this progressive version of history, the British population in 1876 were supposedly more progressive than in 1865. Through the strengthening force of the Liberal Party, under Gladstone who advocated for a variety of 'humanitarian' causes, the proponents of liberal ideas were not only more adept at entering the mainstream population, but also these ideas formed the basis for governance of the country for six years. Further, the alliances within the Liberal Party, that had been in place for twenty years, between the Peelites, Whigs and Radicals, increasingly shaped the political and ideological discourse. The growth of the Liberal Party and the influence of the Manchester Radical element, had changed the political landscape, especially in terms of how the Liberal Party and their supporters viewed the international order and British foreign responsibilities.

Abigail Green has argued that a distinct feature of British foreign policy in the early nineteenth century was its 'powerful combination of liberal politics and humanitarian sympathy.'[2] This faded somewhat in the mid-century years of Conservative governments and the restructuring of the Liberal Party. By the latter half of the century, however, these liberal ideas animated British politics once more. Contrary to Moyn's argument that the rights of man movement were reflected in nineteenth century liberal nationalism,[3] the focus on human suffering had shifted away from rights discourse towards humanitarian discourse.

All this is to indicate that by 1876, though there were strong humanitarian ideas based on a religious understanding of the world, or on a desire to see international law and treaty agreements

[1] This can be traced from Greece, through to Crete, to Egypt, Crete again and others. See Rodogno, *Against Massacre.*

[2] Green, "Humanitarianism," 1163.

[3] Moyn, *Last Utopia,* 29.

solidified, there was also a clear element of British society that looked toward and was motivated by a desire to enact a secular moral humanitarian approach to foreign policy. This sentiment led some people to sympathise with strangers in Bulgaria. Whether based on some imagined solidarity with Bulgarian Christians, or a more racist Ottoman animus based on a Eurocentric notion of Ottoman barbarism, or whether a broader concern for all humans, the events examined in this chapter focus specifically on this morally driven liberal movement that advocated for the victims of the Bulgarian massacres. The difference between the religiously motivated humanitarianism explored in section one and the moral thought expressed here is that the foundational principles on which the actors based their ideas differed in important ways, most importantly in its secular nature.

This is not to say that motivations were not multifaceted. Gladstone, whilst staunchly high church, would express certain humanitarian ideas not in terms of his religiosity, but in terms of distinctly liberal humanism and secular ideas of civilisation and progress. Whilst his convictions might have been developed from his Christian identity, the ideas of humanitarianism he expressed were, at times, of a different form. This contributed to a broader societal discourse in which humanitarianism came to be framed in terms of a concrete political ideology, namely liberalism.

It has been demonstrated to this point that the agitation surrounding the Bulgarian atrocities was in no way led from the front by politicians of any political leaning. Richard Shannon's entire text was to argue that Gladstone joined the agitation quite late and even then, had resigned from the party leadership and made trivial difference to the direction of the agitation, but merely added to it.[4] George Carslake Thompson, in 1886, wrote two volumes on public opinion during the Eastern crisis and Disraeli's ministry, and his point that public opinion reigned sovereign in Britain is important to keep in mind when discussing the role of politicians and parliamentary debates in expressing humanitarian sentiment.[5] It is this burgeoning agitation and expression of public opinion that allowed liberal politicians and intellectuals, such as Gladstone, to join the agitation with their own perspectives. While the concept of public opinion is ambiguous it can be seen in terms of the press, the growing

[4] Shannon, *Bulgarian Atrocities.*

[5] Thompson, *Public Opinion,* 4.

importance of stump oratory from politicians, popular meetings, and speeches from pulpits.[6] This would grow at specific times as seen by the number of depositions and letters from working class groups to politicians, calling for specific political actions.

Parliament

The first mention of the Bulgarian massacres was made in the House of Commons on 26 June 1876 by Edward Forster. Forster asked the government for any information to support the comments in the *Daily News* reports.[7] Disraeli's response suggested a war between Bulgarian revolutionaries and Bashi-Bazouks, who had a 'stake' in the land, but he offered no indication that the *Daily News* report was correct.[8] On the same day in the House of Lords, the Duke of Argyll similarly posed a question to Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary and Derby responded with a subtle attack on the reputation of the *Daily News* and that he had not received information but, would ask Elliot.[9]

Forster came back on 10 July and asked again regarding the reports of the 'Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria'[10] and if the accounts of massacre, girls sold as slaves and torture in prisons was correct and if Derby had received any further information. Disraeli responded by stating that he hoped, 'for the sake of human nature itself' that all the reports were false. He reinforced that Elliot, in Constantinople, was a 'stern assertor of humanity,' and had yet to send any supporting information.[11] The language here is instructive: Disraeli could not be said to hold humanitarian sentiment, but as Disraeli had done in the Jamaican incident, he endeavoured to say the right things in parliament so as to connect to and allay a broader public humanitarian consciousness. Disraeli compared the incidents in Bulgaria to the Jamaican

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[6] James Thompson, *British Political Culture and the Idea of 'Public Opinion', 1867-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. T. Burger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); H. C. G. Matthew, "Rhetoric and Politics in Britain, 1860-1950," in *Politics and Social Change in Modern Britain: Essays Presented to A. F. Thompson*, P. J. Waller ed., (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1987), 34-58.

[7] *Hansard.* House of Commons, 26 June 1876, vol. 230, cc. 454-426.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Hansard,* House of Lords, 26 June 1876, vol. 230, cc. 385-387.

[10] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 10 July 1876, vol. 230, c. 1180.

[11] *Ibid.*, c. 1181

insurrection, acknowledging that insurrections are 'always atrocious' and that he did not doubt that 'atrocities have been committed in Bulgaria.'[12] Unfortunately for Disraeli, he could not restrain himself and jested that he doubted Ottoman prisons were holding prisoners for torture, because the Turks were more likely to kill their prisoners than to torture them.[13]

As Forster pushed back on Disraeli's statements, wondering why the government was not using telegraph like the newspapers, Evelyn Ashley, Liberal MP for Poole, George Anderson, Liberal MP for Glasgow, and Anthony Mundella, Liberal MP for Sheffield, all asked Disraeli for information. Anderson resisted the levity and disbelieving tone, speaking of the duty to influence the Porte to wage war according to more 'civilized principles',[14] while Mundella, who was involved with Edward Freeman in the initial stages of the agitation, demanded further information on 'these matters, which are a disgrace to humanity, and which will form one of the bloodiest pages of history.'[15] Disraeli replied that he had been asked if there was any particular information received and this he had denied. However, the engagement of Forster, Mundella, Ashley and Anderson demonstrated to parliament and the country that the dissenting wing of the Liberal Party was becoming involved and clearly associating themselves with the humanitarian dimension of the matter and introducing the topic in parallel to the slowly increasing agitation outside of parliament. The issue was deliberately framed in terms of the opposition between barbarism and civilisation, especially in term of civilisational shame and honour. This accords with Fabian Klose's argument that the abolitionist movement developed a 'moral category of humanity' that resulted in 'individuals [being] mobilized by a sentimental and moral "humanitarian narrative" that motivated them to care for strangers.'[16]

The language used by these Liberal politicians is noteworthy. There was no appeal to religious concepts of religious war, or the inherent nature of human worth based on religious concepts, or the

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[12] *Ibid.*, cc. 1181-1182.

[13] *Ibid.* c. 1182.

[14] *Ibid.,* c. 1184.

[15] *Ibid.,* c. 1185.

[16] Fabian Klose, "'A war of justice and humanity': Abolition and Establishing Humanity as an international norm," in *Humanity: A History of European Concepts in Practice from the Sixteenth Century to the Present,* Fabian Klose & Mirjam Thulin eds, (Gottingen, Vadenhoek & Ruprecht, 2016), 172.

legalistic rights-based concepts of British obligations in the international realm. There was an undercurrent of religious racism here, in the sense that Islam, but even more so, Islamic rule, was viewed by liberals as inherently barbaric and uncivilised.

Forster, Mundella, Ashley, and Anderson spoke of the moral obligations placed upon the British government to act and respond to massacres in Bulgaria due to obligations resting on the concepts of justice and humanity. One of the common refrains that was uttered during the Jamaican incident and throughout the Bulgarian movement was that the acts in Bulgaria were a 'disgrace' to an undefined, but common 'humanity.' As indicated previously, on 7 August George Anderson questioned the Government and stated that he would

> not claim a monopoly of humanity for his side of the House. He believed that every Englishman who read the accounts which had been quoted would feel…that it was horrible that such crimes should be perpetrated in Europe by a Government with whom we were in alliance…[17]

Additionally, Peter Taylor, the member for Leicester and well-known radical and reform leaguer, stated that he 'would not say [the atrocities] were never equalled [sic] in the history of the world, but which neither in modern, nor ancient times were ever surpassed.'[18] Referencing Disraeli's comments comparing Bulgaria to Jamaica Taylor stated that he

> had never been disposed to say less of the atrocities in Jamaica than they deserved, for he, with others, did his best to bring Governor Eyre to justice for the murders done there; but it was a libel on Governor Eyre to compare what was done in Jamaica with the savage and obscene atrocities of the Turks in Europe.[19]

Anderson and Taylor drew on concepts of law and rights, but the core of their argument was that what had occurred was 'horrible,' 'savage,' and 'obscene.' The language here was framed in a way that draws on the idea of reacting emotionally to something considered horrible and beyond the pale.

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[17] *Hansard,* House of Commons, 7 August 1876, vol. 231, cc. 729-30.

[18] *Ibid.,* c. 732.

[19] *Ibid.,* 733.

This mobilised the concept of Oriental barbarism as opposed to Occidental civilisation and reiterated British assumptions of the nature of civilisational savagery. The massacres in Bulgaria were not significantly different in kind to massacres that the European powers had initiated themselves in their own empires (see Britain in Jamaica, Russia in Poland and Ukraine, the French in Algeria, the Portuguese and Spanish in South America),[20] however, the sensationalist responses of those like Anderson and Taylor, drew a connection between the Ottoman massacres and a kind of savagery and barbarism that was intrinsically anathema to European civilisation. In this sense, Kevin Rozario was right to argue that modern humanitarianism was a direct creation of 'sensationalistic mass culture.'[21] Despite the somewhat reductionist argument presented by Rozario the point he makes applies in the early times of broad humanitarian campaigns. It is important to note, however, that politicians at the time, especially the radical liberal wing, were using the same language as the sensationalist media. Whether this is, as Rozario argues, the subsummation of mass media sensation into politics, or a parallel development, the sensationalistic elements of 'horror,' 'savagery,' and the like were expressed by politicians and the media alike, with both reflecting Orientalist notions of Eastern barbarism that had much longer lineages.[22]

On August 11, the last week parliament was held before the recess for the rest of the year, the final debate on the Bulgarian crisis was held. Evelyn Ashley, the younger son of the Earl of Shaftesbury, spoke first. Ashley pointed out that Disraeli had 'maintained silence' during the last debate and claimed that it was incumbent upon the Government to explain the 'murders, mutilations, rapes and devastations, which the much-abused Huns and Vandals might have envied for their completeness,' and why the Government did not know of them.[23] Ashley 'held that we [the country]

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[20] Heuman, *The Killing Time*; Robert Frank Leslie, *Reform and Insurrection in Russian Poland, 1856-1865*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1969); William Gallois, "Genocide in nineteenth-century Algeria," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 15, no. 1, (2013): 69-88; Wolfgang Gabbert, "The long durée of Colonial Violence in Latin America," *Historical Social Research*, 37, no. 3, (2012), 254-275.

[21] Kevin Rozario, "'Delicious Horrors': Mass culture, the Red Cross, and the appeal of Modern American Humanitarianism," *American Quarterly,* 55, no. 3, (2003): 418.

[22] Said, *Orientalism.*

[23] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 11 August 1876, vol. 231, c. 1079.

were morally responsible for these acts.'[24] Speaking of the reports of rapes and selling women and children into slavery Ashley said that

> we also had atrocities, but these were confined to summary executions and wholesale destruction; but such as those to which he called attention never had been carried on by any civilized nation, and never should be.[25]

This was the moral and civilisational difference according to these liberal politicians. Though Britain was involved in atrocities in their own empire, it was the barbarism of selling women and children into slavery and the degradation of womanhood that separated the civilised states from the barbaric ones.

Ashley spent most of his address focused on the actions of the government and failure to explicitly communicate to the Porte that their actions in Bulgaria were unacceptable or to make clear the morality of the incident and the British responsibility for this. Ashley's focus on the specific atrocities, especially his focus on the women and child victims, mirrors a phenomenon present within Victorian society. In *War of No Pity*, about the shattering effects of the Indian mutiny on the British public consciousness, Christopher Herbert pointed out the fascination that the British public and media had with publishing lurid accounts of violence and rape of women and children. Herbert mentions that at points writers cross 'the line of unspeakability [sic] in order to traffic in these horrible obscenities.'[26] The intervening 20 years between the mutiny and the Bulgarian atrocities had not dampened the predilection for writing about violence against women and children. Stead and the other popular media outlets particularly trafficked in this kind of writing, but the fact that politicians in parliament also focused in on this aspect demonstrates its importance in codifying a discourse of acceptable moral behaviour and framing the outpouring of disgust and anger at the violence that had occurred.

William Forsyth, a Conservative MP from Marylebone, stated that the House could now express 'their horror at the outrages which had occurred in Bulgaria. They could now offer Bulgaria

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[24] *Ibid.,* c. 1080.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Herbert, *War of No Pity*, 154.

nothing but sympathy',[27] before moving on to speak of the war in Serbia and defending the government's actions. Forster supported Ashley's comments. Nominally speaking without reference to party, Forster continued the attack on the government delay. While recognising the 'feelings of horror in reference to these outrages, and…unprecedented acts of barbarity' Bourke argued that the government had to maintain a correct policy.[28]

William Harcourt, the Liberal MP for Oxford, referenced the 13 July dispatch from Elliot in which he had suggested an energetic commander be appointed by the Porte to put down the insurrection quickly, because the 'barbarities' being inflicted would create not just a denunciation by the British Government, but 'that the indignation awakened throughout Europe might become so great that the government would be driven by the force of public opinion to interfere and put a stop to them.'[29] The prescience here of Elliot is a further demonstration of the tendency of the British to respond strongly to atrocities and massacres in areas that they considered to be under their influence with anger and disgust. Harcourt accused the government of knowing 'there had been a deliberate plan to exterminate the Christians of Bulgaria' and that it was not possible for the English government to know nothing of it.

> He [Harcourt] could not think, without desiring to lay undue blame on particular individuals, that the story of the massacres in Bulgaria would always remain a dark blot in the history of Europe…They might have prevented, they ought to have prevented, and they had not prevented them.[30]

Lambasting not only the Porte, but the Turkish people more generally, Harcourt asked, 'Was it not the time at last to do justice and to work mercy? … It was time that the great interests of civilization and humanity should cease to be the base counters in a game of diplomatic chicane.'[31] Once again, the

[27] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 11 August 1876, vol. 231, c. 1091.

[28] *Ibid,* c. 1108.

[29] *Ibid.,* c. 1130.

[30] *Ibid.,* c. 1134.

[31] *Ibid.,* c. 1136.

focus here was not only on a civilisational discourse and the sympathy for the victims of barbarity but also the opposition between a moral and a cynically political reaction.

What becomes clear in reading the debates in Parliament during June, July and August is the use of morally freighted language, based on concepts of civilisation and barbarism. To be sure, many Liberal members criticised the government policy on policy terms (this was the official line of both Granville and Hartington), however the radical wing of the Liberal party used the language of humanity, justice, sympathy, civilisation, and concern to express dissatisfaction with government foreign policy and to elicit a sense of the shamefulness of Ottoman and British conduct. Often this was combined with political proposals, but Ashley, Forster, Anderson, Bright, Mundella, and Harcourt all argued primarily for a moral foreign policy and an expectation that the English government would act as a defender of freedom, humanity, and justice across the world. These politicians did not drive the agitation from within parliament, however they felt the moral imperative to express their solidarity with the agitation from within parliament in an attempt to adjust the government's policy.

With the proroguing of parliament Disraeli thought the matter settled. Lord George Hamilton, Disraeli's under-secretary of State for India, walked out of the session of 11 August with Disraeli and mentioned his thoughts that due to the 'manner and tone of the Liberals – and especially of Sir William Harcourt – that…we should have a violent autumn agitation on these atrocities.'[32] Disraeli replied, 'I think Burke's [sic] answer and mine covered the ground and we shall not have much further trouble on the subject.'[33] That concluded the agitation within parliament for 1876 and it was expected that the matter would be taken up again in the new year. However, in the words of Hamilton,

> The moment the session was over the storm burst, and every party agency which the Radicals could command, plus Political Nonconformity and a certain section of High Churchmen who had a liking for the Greek Church, did their best to associate the Government personally with these atrocities, the extent and perpetration of which were subsequently fully established.[34]

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[32] Lord George Hamilton, *Parliamentary Reminiscences and Reflections, 1868 to 1885*, (London: John Murray, 1917), 118.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Ibid.,* 118-19.

Gladstone

It is important to view the nature of the language that Gladstone used during the height of the agitation, especially as it at times straddled all strands of humanitarian thought. Gladstone, while not having as much influence over the public outpouring of sentiment as has been assumed, was certainly a leader to a group of people who recognised him as 'a firm advocate of moral commitment in politics', despite his ability to govern in a realist manner.[35] As such it is important in to assess the words, spoken and written, by Gladstone in order, not to evaluate his role within the agitation, but to examine the way a cultural leader used moral sentiment to influence policy and the ways that it reflected public opinion.

The agitation movement had been growing since the first reports had reached Britain at the end of May. Gladstone's first comment on the Bulgarian matter was on 31 July 1876 in the House of Commons. He spoke in response to a movement in parliament, while respecting all existing treaties, to do its utmost to secure 'the common welfare and equal treatment of the various races and religions which are under the authority of the Sublime Porte.'[36] This debate, however, turned to a broader discussion of British foreign policy towards the Porte and focused heavily on treaty obligations and rectifying past mistakes. Gladstone's involvement, though implicitly critical of the Government's actions with the Porte, dealt with the role the Concert of Europe would have to play within Ottoman Europe. Gladstone made some mention of the development of the 'conscience of Europe' in which the powers could work together for the benefit of all Europe.

During August Malcolm MacColl was on a fact-finding mission in Bulgaria with Henry Liddon. During this trip MacColl was in constant communication with Gladstone, criticising Disraeli heavily and mentioning the cause of humanity that they supported. On 1 September, MacColl wrote that he wished Gladstone would make a speech on the issue.

> The country is evidently thoroughly roused; but it wants guidance. Its aspirations are all in the right direction, and all it requires is to have its ideas and wishes put into shape and order. I

[35] *Ibid.,* 64

[36] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 31 July 1876, vol. 230, c 126.

> think immense capital might be made against Dizzy [Disraeli] just now, not only on account of the atrocities, but also on account of the extraordinary way in which he has played Russia's game, assuming that she is engaged in a bad game. He has done his best to throw the Christian populations of Turkey into the embraces of Russia, and he has at the same time gone far to educate our own country into the conviction that, if the alternative is forced upon us, it would, on the whole, be better to have Russia rather than the Turk at Constantinople.[37]

Maccoll's communication demonstrated that Gladstone was receiving information and advice about how to make political capital out of a moral disaster. Advocating that the Bulgarian situation was an opportunity for Gladstone to return to the fore of domestic politics to use Bulgaria as a wedge issue on Disraeli's pro-Russian policy.

Gladstone was also worked on by many on the less radical left. This included Lord Odo Russell, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Evelyn Ashley, William Forster, William Stead, while Granville and Hartington, as leaders of the Whig faction tried to moderate his public impact throughout August. Combined with the pressure from colleagues, correspondents and friends, Gladstone also realised in August that the public agitation was growing across the country. He understood upon reading the *Daily News* that organised movements were growing and presented an opportunity. Grasping this, in the middle of August, he decided that he needed to involve himself in the burgeoning public agitation and took some time to work out what he would do. During this period MacColl maintained his communication and even sent, on 30 August, a copy of Eugene Schuyler's preliminary report on the atrocities. Stead too maintained contact and asked Gladstone for his support. Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, a previous protégé of Liddon, wrote to Gladstone asking him to lead the campaign against the government and the Porte. Bartlett wrote that the moment was not one of party, 'but if our government will not do what mere humanity demands,' he hoped that they 'may be compelled by any means available to act as the nation is now resolving they shall, and concluding that our old bad policy must be reversed.'[38] In strong language Bartlett implored Gladstone,

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[37] MacColl to Gladstone, Malcolm Maccoll Corr. W. E. Gladstone, 1 September 1876, Add MS 44242-5, 47

[38] Bartlett to Gladstone, 6 September 1876, Gladstone Papers, Add. MSS 44451, ff. 128-31

> I do not exaggerate the feelings of the country, but write from personal knowledge of what I have seen at many great meetings in the North & West, where I have made it my privilege to attempt to advance if possible this great & righteous cause. The enthusiasm & unanimity among all ranks and classes is most unparalleled. *Half* measures will not satisfy the people now…No wonder that the enthusiasm and indignation of the English nation is unbounded & unparalleled. It is for you Sire to formulate, to direct to lead this great wave of righteous indignation, to save a suffering & outraged people, & render an inestimable service to religion & humanity.[39]

Despite the clear hyperbole in Bartlett's request, the language that appealed so elementally to Gladstone was all there. Gladstone was being asked to take up the mantle and work for the downtrodden and oppressed. For whatever reason, an in-built moral code or political expediency, it was in this language that Gladstone could, and did, engage with the pre-existing agitation which expressed moral outrage and offered the terms for future political action.

There is no doubt that Gladstone's world view was framed by his inherent religiosity and at points this would come through in his rhetoric, especially in reference to the religion of the Ottoman subjects, whether it be Muslim, Christian, Jewish or any other. Matthew made it very clear throughout the volumes of Gladstone's diaries and Matthew's own biography of Gladstone, that religion was a heavily motivating source for Gladstone. Matthew wrote that 'what did last, all through his life, was his overwhelming interest in religion and his incessant preoccupation with religious doctrine.'[40] Matthew also demonstrated the preoccupation with religion that influenced Gladstone's opinions at the beginning of the Eastern Crisis and the Bulgarian movement.[41] However, as a political matter, much of Gladstone's rhetoric was steeped in the growing realm of liberal moralism. Saab has argued that

> At one level, the level most often seen by the public and harshly criticized by his enemies, Gladstone was a firm advocate of moral commitment in politics. Although he had given up his

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] Foot & Matthew eds, *The Gladstone Diaries*, 43. See also Matthew, *Gladstone.*

[41] H.C. G. Matthew, 'Gladstone, Vaticanism, and the question of the East, *Studies in Church History*, vol. 15, (1978): 417-442.

> early insistence that the church must dominate the state, he never wavered in his conviction that politics, and history as politics acted out over time, must be infused with moral purpose or lose all meaning.[42]

As Saab argued, by 1876 Gladstone had moved beyond mere religiosity, without casting it aside, towards viewing public affairs as needing to have a moral purpose, and it was the role of the British government, people, and Empire, to ensure that they remained the champions of this moral purpose. At times Gladstone used his religious upbringing, or his political statesmanship to frame the issues in Bulgaria, but at the heart of his response was a clear moral, political, sentimentality.

On 6 September 1876 Gladstone's pamphlet, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East,* went on sale. In *The Times* on 7 September the leader stated that the pamphlet would 'not only swell the tempest of indignation against Turkey, but will provide the popular meetings with a series of practical demands.'[43] For some, such as Shannon, the main importance and effect of the pamphlet lay with how 'it concentrated into a single utterance a profoundly excited public mood struggling for articulating.'[44] Up to September 1876 a general mood of indignation had indeed been rising, beginning in the North and spreading further throughout the country. Gladstone read the mood well and produced a pamphlet that employed the rhetoric of this pre-existing movement, effectively taking the evangelical mood of the radical, non-conformist religious agitation driven by Stead and transforming it into a morally indignant tone that struck a chord with a broader public. In 1896 Gladstone wrote that he had made the Eastern Question his major priority in 1876 until the election in 1880 and he 'acted under a strong sense of individual duty without a thought of leadership; nevertheless, it made me leader again whether I would or no.'[45] Whether this claim is true or not, it is incontestable that his rise to the leadership related tangibly to the language used throughout the pamphlet.

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[42] Saab, *Reluctant Icon,* 64.

[43] 'Mr Gladstone on the Bulgarian Atrocities', *The Times*, 7 September 1876, 6.

[44] Saab, *Reluctant Icon, 110*

[45] Gladstone papers, Add. MSS 44790, ff. 112-14

In the pamphlet, Gladstone wrote that agents of the Ottoman Empire had systematically perpetrated

> crimes and outrages, so vast in scale as to exceed all modern example, and so unutterably vile as well as fierce in character, that it passes the power of heart to conceive, and of tongue and pen adequately to describe them. These are the Bulgarian horrors…'[46]

Gladstone posed the question of 'What can and should be done, either to punish, or to brand, or to prevent?'[47] To ensure a 'full comprehension' of the issue Gladstone claimed that it was important to outline what the Turks were like. Falling into broad racial generalisations Gladstone blamed the events in Bulgaria on the 'government by force' embedded into the Turkish race, the 'broad line of blood mark[ing] the track behind them' and referred to the Turkish race as 'the one great anti-human specimen of humanity.'[48] As in parliament, Gladstone was engaging in a racialised civilisational discourse. In this he argued that the anti-civilisational instincts of the Ottomans was an inherent threat against the 'civilised' Europe.

Continuing, Gladstone wrote that among the Turks there grew 'a kind of tolerance in the midst of cruelty, tyranny and rapine' and that the Turks were 'monsters, so to speak of virtue or intelligence.'[49] Whitehead has discussed that this perception of the Turks was Gladstone 'codify[ing] wild rumours circulating in the media engendered by the lack of reliable information, helping create what became a self-fulfilling prophecy of Balkan national self-determination within the context of intensifying great power rivalries.'[50] It is this inherent codification of racial and civilisational differences that Edward Said explored when he coined the term 'Orientalism'.[51] This civilisational argument was one way in which the British were able to not only define the Ottoman Empire – as violent, uncivilised others – but also to define themselves as the opposite of this – civilised, moral and peace loving.[52]

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[46] Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors,* 9

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid., 10*

[50] Whitehead, "Reading Beside the Line," 866

[51] Said, *Orientalism.*

[52] Laycock, *Imagining Armenia;* Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans.*

Gladstone's rhetoric became a core element of the British humanitarian discourse into which he had entered as a latecomer. Karen Haltunnen has argued that already by the eighteenth century there was a developing spectatorial nature to sympathy.[53] Haltunnen argued that the visuals of pain- public executions, art, pictures of bodies in distress – was key to the developing sympathetic wave that occurred. For his part, Gladstone drew upon this spectatorial nature of sympathy with his language. Gladstone referred to 'wholesale massacres' and condemned the British government for not acting on information coming through from free journalists offering their services 'to humanity, to freedom, and to justice.'[54] Patrick Joyce has argued that the use of the word 'atrocity' had 'weight' and an 'awful reality' that 'demanded expression in the press, the new guardian of the real.'[55] Gladstone's language on the massacres in this criticism is reflective of his moral sentiments:

> wholesale massacres, "murder, most foul as in the best it is, but this most foul, strange and unnatural," the elaborate and refined cruelty…the utter disregard of sex and age –the abominable and bestial lust – and the entire and violent lawlessness which still stalks over the land.[56]

Gladstone also implored his audience to:

> let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying of themselves…one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned. This thorough riddance, this most blessed deliverance, is the only reparation we can make to the memory of those heaps on heaps of dead; to the violate purity alike of matron, of maiden, and of child; to the civilisation which has been affronted and shamed; to the laws of God or, if you like, of Allah; to the moral sense of mankind at large.[57]

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[53] Karen Haltunnen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," *American Historical Review,* 100, No. 2, (1995): 307.

[54] Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors, 1*

[55] Patrick Joyce, 'The Narrative Structure of Victorian Politics', in *Re-Reading the Constitution: New narratives in the political history of England's long nineteenth century*, James Vernon Ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 179.

[56] Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors,* 18

[57] *Ibid.*

It is this concept that Gladstone emphasised throughout his pamphlet. What was done against the Bulgarians by the Ottomans was morally wrong and it was therefore morally wrong and shameful that the British Government supported the Porte and did not respond to these breaches of morality. This moral indignation was very much framed in terms of the civilisational othering that was a key aspect of the agitation. This passage has been referenced to discuss the legalistic attitude within it, but Gladstone was also writing of the 'moral sense of mankind at large' and wrote that

> There is not a criminal in an European gaol, there is not a cannibal in the South Sea Islands, whose indignation would not rise and overboil at the recital of that which has been done, which has too late been examined, but which remains unavenged; which has left behind all the foul and all the fierce passions that produced it, and which may again spring up, in another murderous harvests, from the soil soaked and reeking with blood, and in the air tainted with every imaginable deed of crime and shame.[58]

Matthew has suggested that Gladstone felt an immense amount of 'Evangelical enthusiasm and atonement' in his obsession with the Bulgarian matter.[59] In his diaries Gladstone himself indicated that he felt his role to be a specific calling from God.[60] However, Gladstone was writing in a moral manner at times, rather than maintaining the non-conformist zeal of the Northern agitators. This moral outrage was defined by the view of the uncivilised nature of the Ottomans and the role of moral governance and foreign relations. Gladstone, whilst re-finding his Evangelical zeal around 1876, was also a statesman. He understood international and domestic politics.

The pamphlet struck a chord with the public movement that had already begun and that had been spurred on by Stead at the *Northern Echo*, Hill at the *Daily News* and even Delane at *The Times*, who had changed his position after Baring's report. According to Argyll, writing only two years later, the pamphlet

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[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Matthew, *Gladstone Vol. 2*, 32.

[60] Ibid, 34.

> was not required to rouse, but it did serve to deepen, the public horror. It spread abroad the generous indignation with which it was itself inspired, and it gave to the public feeling that sanction and direction which the great name and station of the author were required to give.[61]

The editorial of *The Times* on 7 September wrote that the most important 'practical value' of the pamphlet was the recognition 'that the intelligence of the Ministry is not darkened to be unable to receive new impressions of policy.'[62] The editorial of the *Manchester Guardian* stated on 8 September that

> Mr Gladstone comes forward naturally and almost inevitably to speak, not for the Liberal party, but for the better part of Englishmen…he still retains the hold upon the country which belongs to an unquestionable pre-eminence of power, and, in his turn, he is still stirred by every wave of popular emotion to utterance and action.[63]

While reflecting upon the moral nature of Englishmen in particular, the passage above acknowledges Gladstone's inherent populist nature. Gladstone observed the popular mood and the spirit of agitation and joined in, lending his political weight, and driving a populist emotional movement even further.

In Stead's excitement at Gladstone joining what he considered an 'agitation that was in a great measure my work',[64] he wrote an article for the *Northern Echo* on 7 September, entitled "Gladstone to the Front".[65] Praising Gladstone for engaging with the Bulgarian agitation, Stead wrote that Gladstone 'is more than the High Priest of Humanity, pronouncing Anathemas upon the wretches whose crimes have horrified the world.'[66] Using the utmost hyperbole Stead positioned Gladstone as 'the real ruler of the land', who had declared the real policy of the East and that Beaconsfield had no choice but to follow the agitation, or be forced out of office.[67] Linking his own role in the agitation to that point

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[61] Argyll, *Eastern Question*, 263.

[62] *The Times*, 7 September 1876, 6

[63] *Manchester Guardian*, 8 September 1876, 5

[64] Scott, *The Life and Death of a Newspaper*, 104.

[65] *The Northern Echo*, 7 September 1876, 2

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] *Ibid.*

Stead wrote that 'we have now the proud satisfaction of seeing the foremost of English statesmen appealing to the conscience of the whole Empire.'[68]

The publishing of the pamphlet brought Gladstone to the front of the movement, but not to the leadership of his party. Trying to maintain a respectful deference to Granville and Hartington, who had been forced into leadership on his retirement, yet feeling they were not pushing hard enough on the atrocities movement made life difficult for Gladstone.[69] Gladstone had parliamentary support with Argyll in the House of Lords and William Forster and Evelyn Ashley in the House of Commons. However, in the excitement after the publication of the pamphlet, Gladstone was drawn to attend an atrocity meeting at Blackheath on 9 September. He attempted to have Granville attend to give the feeling that he was not usurping the mantle of political leader, but Granville did not go.[70] Gladstone's speech at Blackheath, held on a Saturday afternoon, in a downpour, attracted no less than 20,000 people at the beginning of the speeches and 32,000 by the end, according to the *Manchester Guardian*.[71] Relaying to the crowd how the Porte rewarded the perpetrators of massacre 'the people were swayed as by a magic wand, now to cries of anger, now to roars of laughter, anon to shuddering sympathy.'[72] The force of the expression of assent against the continuing Ottoman actions in Serbia, were 'even exceeded in force by the resonance of the throng in the opinion that it is our duty, not to remonstrate against these atrocities, but to take the promptest means, at whatever cost for putting an end to them.'[73] The body of Gladstone's speech was not much different to his pamphlet; he clarified some things and made some more connections, but the opportunity to speak to such a large gathering, most of whom already knew what he was going to say continued the momentum of the pamphlet.

In his speech Gladstone deliberately used the framing of humanitarianism to indicate the 'horror' of the events. The *Times* editorial wrote that it appeared that Gladstone understood how the

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[68] *Ibid.*

[69] Granville to Gladstone, 15 September 1876, Gladstone Papers, Add. MSS 44170.

[70] Gladstone to Granville, 7 September 1876, Granville papers, PRO 30/29/29.

[71] "Mr Gladstone on the Eastern Question," 11 September 1876, 6

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] *Ibid.*

same sentiments that inspired him were shared by the nation.[74] Gladstone, according to *The Times*, stated that when he travelled to London the previous week he viewed the quiet houses as if they had been the houses of the dead and was then inspired by 'the elevating thought...that within those silent dwellings were "intelligent human-beings, my fellow-countrymen, who when they awoke would give many of their earliest thoughts, aye and some of their most energetic actions, to the horror of Bulgaria."'[75] For the *Times* the overstated nature of Gladstone's rhetoric assisted in encouraging 'his countrymen to share his own keen sympathy for the subject races of Turkey.'[76] It was this focus on the sympathy for the population and how to harness that emotion that took Gladstone from his evangelical roots, through the policy prescriptions around international law to the populace.

The Observer, under the editorship of Edward Dicey, stated in an article of 10 September that 'there is no reason to doubt that the assemblage at Blackheath represented fairly enough the ordinary feelings of the English people.[77] In *The Times'* review of the speech the editorial stated that it was then 'true that Englishmen are now of one mind in resenting the barbarities of the Turks in Bulgaria.'[78] Once again, the tone of the agitation surrounded the lack of civilisation and barbarism expressed in the Ottoman Empire, which was contrasted with the civilisation of Britain and its moral responsibility to act.

Stead, who had made the trip from Darlington to London on his own 'political pilgrimage' to the end of his life declared Blackheath as the most memorable scene he had ever experienced.[79] In the *Northern Echo* Stead began his editorial on 11 September in his standard style, 'Mr Gladstone's Pamphlet was a Manifesto to the Nation. Mr Gladstone's Speech is a Manifesto to the Nations.'[80] Stead wrote that Gladstone took 'his stand on the broad ground of our common Humanity' and appealed 'to those

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[74] *The Times*, 11 September 1876, 9.

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] *Ibid*

[77] *The Observer*, 10 September 1876, 4

[78] *The Times*, 11 September 1876, 6

[79] Estelle Stead, *My Father*, (London: William Heinemann, 1913), 68.

[80] *Northern Echo*, 11 September 1876, 2.

ideas of justice and of right which know no distinction of race, of creed, or of party.'[81] Though not necessarily explicitly in the words of Gladstone, Stead drew out the concept of universality in applying morality and humanitarian ideals. Stead, in recalling the speech, wrote that Gladstone, 'the high priest of humanity',[82] appealed 'to the elementary principles of justice and right' and he 'spoke with the consciousness that the nation was behind him'.[83] Gladstone's speech reinforced the prevailing opinion within England that the actions of the Porte were against all humanity and the British government was complicit in these actions. Gladstone, as the most prominent Liberal politician to come forward in public, reinforced the political solution to the moral conundrum. It was incumbent upon the British Government to do something about the Ottoman misrule because of the affront to justice and humanity that was seen.

Gladstone through his pamphlet, the Blackheath speech and his St James's speech had maintained a consistent line. The actions of the Ottomans in Bulgaria were immoral, wrong, and required redress. Due to the British government's support of the Porte, the British government and through it, the British people, were shamefully complicit in those immoral acts. The best thing in the interests of humanity and the best interests of the Ottoman Christians was for the policy of the British Government to change and for pressure to be exerted, through the concert of Europe, on the Porte to cease treating Ottoman Christians barbarously. What is of interest here, is that the deeply religious Gladstone had reached an agitation that was defined by its increasingly secular sense of moral outrage. The language that Gladstone used was specifically designed to engage and connect with this sense of outrage and moral sentiment. Gladstone rode the wave of public emotion and anger to the forefront of the agitation. The radical Christians in the north had begun the agitation in a distinctly evangelical style. Throughout the agitation there were individuals who focused specifically on the role of Britain in the European states system. There were also those who advocated a moral response to a civilisational outrage that required redress. Through his public utterances Gladstone vacillated between these points

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] Stead, *My Father*, 68

[83] *Ibid.*

of views, demonstrating a moral, humanitarian outlook, but one that was subject to the prevailing opinions of the populace.

Much of the popular agitation started to dissipate at the beginning of 1877, with the Russian rejection of the Andrassy note and the Russo-Ottoman war beginning in April. The attention in parliament shifted to Salisbury's ongoing efforts to restrain Russia and the popular movement faltered in the face of increased jingoism pushed by Russophobes and the Conservative base. Gladstone continued working with the Eastern Question Association and published his second pamphlet, Lessons *in Massacre or, the Conduct of the Turkish Government in and about Bulgaria since 1876,* in March 1877. The aim of the pamphlet was to reinforce the initial comments made in 1876, with time to process. Gladstone clearly stated that the

> purpose [of the Porte's actions since the atrocities] has been to cover up iniquity; to baffle inquiry; to reward prominence in crime; to punish or discourage humanity among its own agents; to prolong the reign of terror; to impress with a steady coherency upon the minds of its Mahometan subjects this but too intelligible lesson for the next similar occasion, *do it again.*[84]

Some of the key ideas in this passage relate back to the themes throughout the early days of the agitation in September 1876. Writing of the intent of the Porte in the response to the massacre, Gladstone suggested that the inherent message was clear; the Porte not only did not have the will to protect its own populations, but it was so barbarous as to prevent its own officials from displaying a type of humanity and that it encouraged its Muslim subjects to treat Christians the same way.

The pamphlet, while more anti-Ottoman than the original one, did not wield the same influence among the public, despite following the same theme. Though growing more politically active and maintaining a focus on the Eastern Question, from 1877 much of Gladstone's actions sent him on the trajectory that would take him to Midlothian and the premiership in 1880. While maintaining his principled stance, the indignant, virulent, and fearless critic of Ottoman action in Bulgaria transformed, once again, into the realist statesman he felt the Liberal Party required.

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[84] William Gladstone, *Lessons in Massacre or, the Conduct of the Turkish Government in and about Bulgaria since 1876*, (London: John Murray, 1877), 8.

The role of Gladstone in the agitation was important, especially when examining the nature of the rhetoric within the movement. Gladstone himself, as Shannon so clearly argued, did not drive the agitation and was not the foremost agitator. However, as has been demonstrated through Gladstone's own writing, he was genuinely concerned about the violence and suffering that occurred in Bulgarian and before that in Serbia. Partly this resonated with his deepest held Evangelical, Anglican religiosity, but also was a result of his liberal humanitarianism. Unlike Stead and many other non-conformist agitators in the North, Gladstone was a politician and a statesman. It is instructive that much of the rhetoric of Gladstone existed within the framework of liberal humanitarianism as this was a way to resonate with the section of the British public that he wished to engage politically. This rhetoric, due to his nature as a canny political operator who was keenly aware of the populist direction of the country, was used as a cynical political tool to drive a wedge in Disraeli's premiership and advocate for a more engaged foreign policy.

Though the morality of Gladstone indicates he would have viewed the suffering of Bulgarian Christians as immoral nonetheless, the comparison with his role in the Morant Bay agitation is important. As has been demonstrated above, Gladstone made comment of the depth of feeling he felt for the Afro-Jamaican victims of Eyre's repression, however, made no public comment or actions around this, despite leaving office before the prosecution of Eyre began. This would suggest that while Gladstone's personal views may have been consistent, his use of the Bulgarian issue as a political hammer to attack Disraeli, extended beyond his deeply held moral views. However, the language that Gladstone used was done in a way to connect with the prevailing feelings, especially of liberal supporters. While Gladstone himself would write that he had no ambition for the Liberal Party leadership at this stage, this is difficult to reconcile with the path he entered onto once he published his pamphlet. However, being able to understand the direction of the liberal supporters, demonstrated a prevailing liberal, moral attitude towards the Bulgarian matter at the time.

Conclusion

Nazan Cicek has argued that the multi-layered response to the Bulgarian atrocities in Britain confirms the Saidian concept of Orientalism.[85] He argued that the way the British elite viewed and discussed the Bulgarian case was a result of, and reinforced, the 'intimate othering' of not only the Ottoman Empire, but also the Balkans themselves.[86] Cicek's argument is instructive here because, despite the fact that the British intellectual and political liberal leaders used humanitarian language to elicit sympathy, they contributed to a broader perception of the 'otherness' of the Ottoman Empire.

Cicek's argument echoes Maria Todorova's argument. Cicek argued that the British elite orientalised the Ottoman Empire and Todorova argued that the British elite also orientalised the Balkans in general and Bulgaria in particular. In both cases the British elite contributed towards discourses that constructed a representation of both the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, which while only partially related to reality became the functioning reality within British politics and culture. In the same way that the British elite constructed the victims of Morant Bay as subjects who stood in proxy for the 'more British' subjects, so the liberal humanitarian discourse surrounding Bulgaria created a simple dichotomy between the Muslim, non-European Turks on one side, and the innocent, European, Bulgarians. What is striking about this is that in this discourse the Bulgarians and other victims hold no individual or collective agency, but, rather, become formless proxies onto which the outraged place their sympathies.

As the Jamaican agitation had paternalistically addressed the British colonies, so the othering present in the Bulgarian agitation, to an extent also framed the victims in Bulgaria and the perpetrators of the Ottoman Empire in a chauvinistic way. As portrayed by Gladstone, the perpetrators of the massacres were to be considered inhuman and a scourge upon Europe, though every empire in Europe had their own history of brutally violent repression. The victims were seen as innocent, but also as having very little of their own agency. This layering allowed the moral outrage, which was expressed on behalf of these victims. As needed, they were portrayed as Christian, white, women, European, or a

[85] Nazan Cicek, "'Bulgarian Horrors' Revisited: The Many-Layered Manifestations of the Orientalist Discourse in Victorian Political Construction of the External, Intimate and Internal Other," *Belleten*,81, No. 291, (2017): 525-568.
[86] Ibid, 526.

mixture. Just as the Jamaican victims were stripped of agency and paternalistically presented as needing the metropole to save them, so to were the Bulgarian victims portrayed, though it was up to the foreign, moral influence of Britain to save them.

For a segment of the British elite and population, personified by William Gladstone, but not initiated or driven by him, the Bulgarian atrocities were seen in terms of a moral sympathy for fellow European Christians. This humanitarianism had an important political dimension, providing politically useful criticisms of the Disraeli government for lack of action to protect the Christian, Bulgarian victims, and for its support for the Ottoman empire. Nevertheless, it came from a wellspring of secular liberal imperialism that foregrounded notions of honour, national pride, morality, and civilisation and which decried their opposites, dishonour, shame, immorality and barbarism. These values were, in themselves not neutral, but rather were the product of the othering of the Oriental Ottoman Empire.

Unlike the Morant Bay case the Bulgarian agitation was separated from the prevailing attitudes surrounding the British Empire. Whilst Jamaica resonated deeply inside the British psyche as a case of British government action against their own subjects, the Bulgarian case was a case study of an attempt at creating a moral foreign policy that emphasised humanitarianism from a distance. The response to the Bulgarian agitation, however, and the moral sympathy expressed by agitators must also be read in terms of the pre-existing relationships between Britain, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, and the Balkan states. In Britain there was a pre-existing animus towards the Ottoman Empire and its inability and unwillingness to protect its subject populations, which stemmed from a perception of civilisational lack and an inherent Oriental barbarism. The moral sympathy that was expressed in the Bulgarian case came from the perception that Britain held a responsibility for the subject population of the Ottoman Empire because the Ottoman Empire only existed as a power, especially in Europe, because of the support and military intervention of the British.

Conclusion

In 1876 during the height of the agitation in Britain concerning the massacres in Bulgaria, Peter Taylor compared the Ottoman repression of a limited uprising in their Bulgarian lands to the British response to a limited uprising in Jamaica eleven years previously. Taylor said that he

> had never been disposed to say less of the atrocities in Jamaica than they deserved, for he, with others, did his best to bring Governor Eyre to justice for the murders done there; but it was a libel on Governor Eyre to compare what was done in Jamaica with the savage and obscene atrocities of the Turks in Europe.[1]

Taylor was a liberal MP, a radical, a member of the Emancipation Society and a reform leaguer.[2] Taylor was representative of a group of men (while some women were engaged in charity work, much of the public outrage was directed by men) who straddled both agitations from Jamaica to Bulgaria.

The way that individuals from a range of backgrounds and interests came together to protest the actions of Governor Eyre in Jamaica and the Ottoman Empire in Bulgaria demonstrates a particular form of vocal humanitarianism that was present in the long decade between 1865 and 1877. These agitations were built on previous ones, such as the abolitionist campaign of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the various incidences that sparked attention in Britain throughout the nineteenth century, such as the Greek independence movement and the Cretan interventions. However, the long decade that included the Jamaican agitation and the Bulgarian agitation allow for an effective study into how the idea of humanitarianism was conceived of and verbalised in mid-Victorian Britain.

This thesis has established that within the broader framework of humanitarianism it is possible to identify and delineate various strands of thought that preceded and influenced these humanitarian ideas. Often these different strands could be present within one individual across time. In the Jamaican

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[1] *Hansard,* House of Commons, 7 August 1876, vol. 231, c. 733.

[2] James Ramsay Macdonald, 'Peter Alfred Taylor', *Dictionary of National Biography: 1885-1900,* Vol. 55, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

and the Bulgarian cases these strands were identified as religious humanitarianism, a legal humanitarianism in the Jamaican case, an internationally focused humanitarianism in the Bulgarian one, and a form of liberal humanism and sympathy that was present in both cases.

These strands have been presented as different elements of humanitarianism in a way that could be easily examined and differentiated. However, they did not stand alone. Rather, it is clear that the strands of humanitarianism fluctuated and faded with time, circumstance, and political necessity. For example, 31 members of the Jamaica Committee were also members of the Cobden Club. However, their involvement in the Jamaica Committee was not necessarily a result of an anti-imperialism or focus on the free-trade economics of the situation. Rather, individuals who were already nonconformist, politically radical, and liberal, were much more likely to move from that starting point to advocate for the humane and humanitarian treatment of others.

This has been done to demonstrate that early humanitarian sentiments were expressed differently, depending on the types of violence being responded to and the background of the humanitarians. The questions that were asked in this study looked at the way in which different elements of the British intellectual, legal, religious, political and media establishments contributed to a burgeoning discourse of humanitarianism. It was demonstrated, by examining the Morant Bay massacre and the Bulgarian massacres, that British society between 1865 and 1877 was initially quite sensitive to reports of massacres and large-scale imperial violence. Both events caused what was then known as 'agitations', in which elements of British society expressed their outrage, advocated for the material benefit of the victims, and demanded political change. Both events are similar enough to each other – instances of imperial violence against subject populations not considered equals with the metropole – and different enough – Morant Bay was an instance of British imperial violence and Bulgaria an instance of Ottoman imperial violence – to demonstrate the various strains of humanitarian ideas and rhetoric present. The three major strains of humanitarianism that were present in both cases (in different forms) were religious, legalism, and liberal humanist morality.

An important part of this thesis has been to clarify the historical terrain that undergirds the debate regarding the nature of humanitarianism that has been conducted between scholars such as

Gary Bass, Brendan Simms, D. J. B. Trimm, and Davide Rodogno.[3] It has also expanded the evidentiary basis for future discussions of British humanitarianism, and in so doing has also offered a means of testing the varying conclusions of Michael Barnett, Amanda Nettlebeck, William Mulligan, Alan Lester and Fae Dusart, who have all traced humanitarian ideas and thought throughout nineteenth century Britain.[4] It has found that these studies, in emphasising a sole strand of humanitarian thought in Victorian Britain, have often overlooked the degree to which it was multifaceted and indebted to a range of differing intellectual traditions.

Both events had deep ties to British society, economics, and politics. Jamaica had been an issue through the anti-slavery years and post abolition, regarding the place of British landowners and the impoverished and repressed freed Afro-Jamaicans. Britain had been a party to the treaties and agreements surrounding the Ottoman Empire and its governance of its subject populations. There were clear parallels in the way that both events were spoken of in Britain at the time. The cross-over of individuals who joined both agitations contributed to this. This overlap has enabled a comparative study that makes clear how the differing cases were spoken about and approached, and a basis for examining how the difference in locale and empire generated points of discursive difference in the responses to these atrocities in the British metropole.

Though there were thematic and intellectual commonalities across cases, the events in Jamaica and Bulgaria were different enough to demonstrate how activists and thinkers used their pre-existing intellectual frameworks to drive their agitation. In the Jamaican case, given the role religious organisations had played in the post-slavery society, it was not surprising that much of the initial agitation sprang forth from those religious bodies that had close ties to Afro-Jamaican communities. In particular, the Baptist missionary societies that had agitated so strongly for the end of slavery and built communities and churches within the Afro-Jamaican communities, approached the Morant Bay massacres as an extension of their righteous crusade against slavery.

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[3] Bass, *Freedom's Battle*; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; Simms & Trim eds, *Humanitarian Intervention*.

[4] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Nettlebeck, *Indigenous Rights and Colonial Subjecthood*; Lester & Dusart, Colonization; Mulligan, "British anti-slave trade and anti-slavery policy," in *Humanitarian intervention*, Simms and Trim eds, 262.

Similarly, in the Bulgarian case, there was a pre-existing element of British society, in particular the Anglican church, which saw the Ottoman rule over Christian populations as abhorrent. This was inherently embedded in a British distaste for Islam in general, and the Ottoman Empire in particular, but many churchmen and women had earlier agitated for Greece, Crete, Egypt, Lebanon, Serbia, prior to Bulgaria. There was a sense of common religiosity in opposition to the Muslim rule, which had a long history and deep scars within the European, Christian psyche. As Barnett has argued, from a Christian perspective, the agitation surrounding Bulgaria was one in which the humanitarianism expressed was that those 'like us' needed to be protected from those 'not like us.'[5] While in the Jamaican case it was easy for the Baptists and other nonconformists to argue that the victims of massacre were like them, indeed the Afro-Jamaicans were often members of Baptist congregations, it was more of a stretch for the British Christians in the Bulgarian case to argue that the eastern Christians—who were often just as despised as Muslims—were like them.[6] In this case, much of the rhetoric from the religious elements was that the Eastern Christians were 'more like us' than the Ottoman Muslims and so therefore deserved protection and guidance to become more properly Christian.

Legal principles were also a critical strand in humanitarian thinking. In the Jamaican case there was a core element of legalism that sprang up in the humanitarian agitation. Over the year of the agitation this legalism eventually overtook the humanitarian element and, as Kostal has made clear,[7] there were members of the agitation drawn to its legal dimension who would have been mortified and offended to be labelled as humanitarian. However, as this thesis has shown, especially regarding Bulgaria, the legalistic concerns of some agitators contributed to the humanitarian agitation and, even more importantly, fed into the burgeoning thought on human rights. Though human rights discourse and humanitarianism are distinct, they are connected, especially historically. Samuel Moyn may be right

[5] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*.

[6] See Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, for an overview of how the rest of Europe viewed the Balkans during this period.

[7] Kostal, *Jurisprudence of Power*.

that the modern conception of human rights did not exist until post-1945 and the Holocaust,[8] yet it is undeniable from the sources at the time that there was a component of British society that was concerned for the rights of British subjects; in this case the Afro-Jamaican victims of Eyre's orders. As Nettlebeck has argued, just because there was a broad desire to apply expanded rights to British colonial subjects, this does not mean that there was not also a negative aspect to the control that was exerted on these subjects.[9] However, from the perspective of humanitarian thought and its development, the early seeds of rights discourse, in this case the rights of British colonial subjects, was key.

Unlike Jamaica, the Bulgarian massacres had nothing to do with British law whatsoever. However, the massacres occurred during a period in which a variety of international treaties had been agreed and amid a growing discourse on international law. As this thesis has shown, Rodogno was correct when he argued that the Bulgarian agitation was a sort of soft intervention,[10] which continued a tradition of European powers exerting control over the Ottoman Empire for their own ends, rather than the benefit of the Ottoman subjects. While this is undeniably true, it is also the case that there were elements of the British population, during the agitation, that pointed to international obligations, treaty rights, subject rights, and the moral international responsibility of the British government, arguing that Britain was required to fix something that they had been complicit in breaking. While the imperial hubris of the British government and agitators is plain to see, if the Jamaican case contributed to early ideas of human rights for subject populations, the Bulgarian case contributed to early ideas of international treaty obligations, the key aspects of humanitarian intervention, and the international responsibility of strong powers to protect the rights and lives of other subject populations. For their part, Simms and Trimm argued that these changes were not new, and that the international law element of the Bulgarian agitation reflects a broader history of intervention that dates back as early as sixteenth

[8] Moyn, *Human Rights.*

[9] Nettlebeck, *Indigenous Rights and Colonial Subjecthood.*

[10] Rodogno, *Against Massacre.*

century Europe when rulers also intervened to protect subject populations who were receiving no protection in their own country.[11]

While there were clear elements of a liberal humanity in the late 18th century and early 19th century the Jamaican case demonstrated a version of a liberal humanity that coloured an element of the humanitarian agitation. Lynn Hunt successfully demonstrated that the late 18th century saw the development of a sympathy for those beyond one's immediate circle due to the expansion of literary imagination. Adam Smith was also a key thinker in developing ideas of sympathy for strangers. In the early nineteenth century, the Greek revolution demonstrated the romanticised ideas of some who advocated the saving of strangers from the Ottoman horrors. However, in the Jamaican case there were clear elements of a sympathetic humanitarianism that was expressed. Though, as a category, this type of thought was deeply embedded in reformational Christianity, the humanitarian thought itself was not expressed in a religious manner. Rather, there were politicians and public figures who argued for the ceasing of suffering because causing suffering was inherently wrong and they were experiencing sympathy for the victims.

The Bulgarian case expanded somewhat on the ideas from the Jamaican experience. The Bulgarian agitation demonstrated a more politically minded liberal humanism than the Jamaican. While the ideas of Adam Smith and Hume had been present for both agitations, the evolution of the Liberal Party and liberal politics in Britain had a distinct influence on a certain class of humanitarians. These were men who were generally religious but were more overtly political and liberal. Using their liberalism as a prism to view the world, these individuals expressed concern for the suffering of the Bulgarians, because to their minds a government causing suffering of any kind was objectively wrong, not just because of religious dictates, but wrong on a universal level. This was also expressed in terms of an obvious civilisational discourse. To the minds of these humanitarians the barbarous nature of the violence was proof, once again, that the Ottoman Empire did not belong among the community of European states. As well as the legalistic element that was explored, the liberal humanity that was

[11] Simms & Trim eds, *Humanitarian Intervention.*

expressed in the Bulgarian case contributed to the development of the ideas of human rights that were to politically come together in the middle of the twentieth century.

Bringing these strands of humanitarian discourse together through the comparison of the agitation regarding the Morant Bay massacre in 1865/1866 and the Bulgarian agitation in 1876/1877 clearly demonstrates the multiple origins of the burgeoning tendency towards humanitarian thought in Victorian Britain. Rather than being a homogenous humanitarian idea founded on an unchanging, crusading Christianity, humanitarian thought in Victorian Britain evolved, changed, and was moulded by its users to fit pre-existing political, religious, and philosophical ideas that reflected nineteenth century political and intellectual developments. In fact, often the type of humanitarian ideas expressed by individuals reveals more about the pre-existing intellectual framework of that individual than about the issue itself.

The Jamaican and Bulgarian cases were different in kind; one dealing with a British imperial act of violence and one addressing a foreign, imperial act of violence. There had been some political movement within Britain in the long decade from Morant Bay to Bulgaria. There had been the political shift of Gladstone retiring and a resurgent Disraeli pushing an aggressive foreign policy. Manchester radicalism and liberalism itself had changed over time. The importance and involvement of the abolition groups were decreasing. More discussion and debate over the role of a moral foreign and imperial policy had developed. Specifically to Bulgaria, by the end of 1876 there had been various involvements in the Ottoman Empire in order to protect Christian lives and prevent Russian involvement.

The differences and changes between the cases resulted in clear differences in the way that the agitations progressed and were approached by its supporters. However, the political and religious links between the individuals and the organisations allowed for development and growth between cases. Many of the key figures of the Jamaican agitation were also involved in the Bulgarian agitation. While moving beyond the scope of this thesis somewhat, it is also clear that the groups and individuals involved in the Jamaican agitation developed from the pre-existing abolitionist campaign. What this demonstrates is that within protest politics in general and humanitarian politics in particular, that even

though situations, politics, and timing may be varied, humanitarians build upon the movements that preceded them and learned from what worked, the structures put in place, and the pressure points on politics and society.

There is also a clear strain, throughout both cases, of the inherent paternalistic and chauvinistic nature of the British liberal empire. In the Jamaican case the paternalism demonstrated from the metropole outwards to a colony of subjects that required 'guidance' and 'civilisation' is clear to see. It is also reflected in the deep concern from many of the agitators in terms of how the British empire would be viewed by the rest of the world, and whether it upheld its own moral values in imperial governance. In terms of the Bulgarian case, the rhetoric around the Ottoman Empire and the Bulgarian victims demonstrates a clear othering process, an inherent chauvinism, and a paternalistic attitude.

While this finding is not unique, indeed many critiques of the British Empire focus specifically on these traits, it is important to recognise that they are inherent to the early foundation of humanitarianism. Indeed, when studying humanitarianism, this thesis demonstrates Barnett's findings that paternalism is at once embedded and interrelated to any form of humanitarianism.[12] The question left is whether the presence of this paternalism and chauvinism is an inherently hostile element of humanitarianism, or whether it can remain benign and still allow for humanitarian thought and action.

The importance of this study is in how it addressed and reorients the burgeoning literature of humanitarianism. While there are numerous studies that have traced the history of humanitarianism and humanitarian intervention to broad brush trends spanning centuries, including the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe and the ideas of human rights as they emerged through classical and romantic literature, or even the roles of Christian princes, this study has identified important overlapping but nonetheless discernibly separate strands of humanitarian thought and their uneasy co-existence within a single decade. Understanding the origin, nature and role of these different strands allows for the emergence of a more coherent and nuanced understanding of the multiple origins of humanitarian thought and the reasons for its multifaceted nature.

[12] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*.

Bringing this thesis into the twenty-first century, this thesis has demonstrated that no one ideological or religious tradition has a monopoly on humanitarian impulses or ideas. Given that in Britain during a time of imperial expansion, state religions, burgeoning legal thought, and a growing liberal movement, disparate groups could support humanitarian endeavours, it would be unnecessarily partisan to assign the humanitarian moniker to just one sub-section of a humanitarian movement that housed many contending and complementing traditions. Nevertheless, in an era of 'Responsibility to Protect', it is also important to understand that the claims of humanitarianism and human rights, often emanate from a variety of groups seeking to maximise and privilege their individual, group, or national priorities over those of the victims they claim to be assisting.

Future scholarship, therefore, must be aware of the multifaceted nature of humanitarian thought and the idea that it is impossible to separate ideology, religion, and political leanings from expressions of humanitarian concern. This does not mean all humanitarianism is automatically discarded, but rather that new avenues of research should be opened that allow for a deeper understanding of these varying expressions of humanitarianism.

As other scholars have noted, it is also important to historicise human rights and humanitarianism. Drawing on scholarship of earlier periods, this thesis has carefully examined a period in Britain where religion, politics, and empire were in flux. The rich history of humanitarianism, based on an even longer history of developing ideas of human rights, has been shown to reflect a broader set of political, legal, and religious convictions than has often been thought.

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