

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Cometh the Hour, Cometh the Nation: Local-Level Opinion and Defence
Preparations Prior to the Second World War, November 1937 – September
1939

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A thesis submitted to the Department of International History of the London
School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2016

Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis presents a three-area local case study of expressions of public opinion and the 'public mood' regarding British policy towards Germany and defence preparations. The period covered is November 1937 to September 1939. By using local case studies, which existing scholarship has largely ignored, the thesis adds to the national synthesis of events during this period, thereby allowing a more complete history to emerge. The inclusion of local case studies confirms much of the existing narrative but challenges some of the traditional assumptions on issues such as the level of opposition to appeasement and the changes that had already taken place prior to March 1939, when elite opinion shifted. That shift therefore marked the culmination of a process that had begun over a year earlier. This process had been the result of a series of international crises, which provided the psychological changes required in the mind of the British public to enable the nation to prepare for war, despite the continuing desire to avoid a conflict. By combining an analysis of expressions of opinion towards foreign policy with actions taken as part of defence preparations, the thesis identifies the Munich crisis as the major turning point, but it would require a further crisis before the change could be incorporated into mainstream opinion.

Acknowledgements

I would like to record my thanks to the librarians and archivists who have permitted me to use their collections for research. My thanks especially go to the staff of the Bolton Local History Centre, who responded to my numerous requests during short, intensive research trips. My work colleagues at the LSE Library have had to endure my work on this thesis for the last seven years and have been supportive. Without some chance conversations with them, I would not have known about the papers of Dame Edith Summerskill, which have contributed to this thesis.

Writing a thesis has been a lonely experience due to working full-time and studying part-time and not one that I would have got through with the support of friends and family. I would especially like to thank my wife, Rachael, for putting up with the many hours that I have spent on this thesis since we first met in January 2011, which has often meant being away from home. Thanks also go to Kathleen Mosselmans, whose own departure for university in 2009 prompted the decision to undertake this thesis. Since then she has been a source of support and acted as proof-reader.

During the writing of this thesis, TADS Theatre Group has played an increasing part in my life. It has been a source of distraction and allowed me to pursue my interest in lighting design. Their production of William Shakespeare's *Henry V*, directed by Dr Sue Sachon, stands out for me, as through collaboration with her the play included elements of my own research.

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor David Stevenson, for his guidance and advice over the last six years.

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Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
BA	Bedfordshire Archives
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BIPO	British Institute of Public Opinion
BLHC	Bolton Local History Centre
BOD	Board of Deputies
BUF	British Union of Fascists
CAC	Churchill Archives Centre
CE	Church of England
CO	Conscientious Objector
DR	Directive Respondent
DS	Day Survey
DNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
FR	File Report
GMCRO	Greater Manchester County Record Office
HFA	Hammersmith and Fulham Archives
HDSL	Hodsoll Papers
JPC	Jewish People's Council
LCC	London County Council
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LNU	League of Nations Union
LSE	London School of Economics
MBJSC	Metropolitan Boroughs Joint Standing Committee
M-O	Mass Observation
MP	Member of Parliament

MRC	Modern Record Centre
SxMOA	Sussex Mass Observation Archive
TA	Territorial Army
TC	Topic Collection
TLS	Times Literary Supplement
TNA	The National Archives
UOB	University of Birmingham
WAC	Written Archives Centre
WVS	Women's Voluntary Service

Introduction

‘Millions of mothers will be blessing your name tonight for having saved their sons from the horrors of war. Oceans of ink will flow hereafter in criticism of your actions.’¹

The prophetic words of Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador to Germany, are part of what Daniel Hucker describes as the ‘unending debate’.² The vast appeasement literature requires researchers wanting to add to it to find a niche within established topics or research an underexplored area. The latter includes race, gender, public opinion and localities. Julie Gottlieb has been at the forefront of developing the gender strand in recent years and her book, *‘Guilty Women’, Foreign Policy and Appeasement in Interwar Britain*, is an important scholarly contribution as it applies a gender analysis to the Munich crisis for the first time at a variety of different opinion levels.³ This study will touch on the subject of gender but focusses principally on public opinion at a local level, thereby supplementing existing national studies and contributing to a broader national synthesis of events in a similar way to Daniel Soloff’s study of unemployment in Lancashire within the context of the Great Depression. Therefore, it will begin to fill one of the gaps in the literature identified by Zara Steiner, namely public opinion in the 1930s.⁴

Prior to Gottlieb’s contribution, Hucker was the last significant contributor to the public opinion topic. His book, *Public Opinion and the End of Appeasement in Britain and France*,⁵ uses the sociological theory of representations to assess elite perceptions of public opinion from various source types, as well as the concepts of reactive and residual opinion. Hucker’s focus on the national elites leaves a gap in the literature for a study of public opinion and the public mood at a local level. References to these terms occur in this thesis but within a different context. Within the thesis, reactive refers to short-term reactions to events, whilst residual means the longer-term

¹ N. Henderson, *Failure of a Mission: Berlin, 1937-1939* (London, 1940): 168.

² D. Hucker, ‘The Unending Debate: Appeasement, Chamberlain and the Origins of the Second World War’, *Intelligence & National Security*, 23, 4 (2008): 536-51.

³ J. V. Gottlieb, ‘We Were Done the Moment We Gave Women the Vote: The Female Franchise Factor and the Munich by-Elections 1938-1939,’ in *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain, 1918-1945*, ed. J. V. Gottlieb and R. Toye (Basingstoke, 2013): 159-80; J. V. Gottlieb, ‘The Women’s Movement Took the Wrong Turning: British Feminists, Pacifism and the Politics of Appeasement’, *Womens History Review*, 23, 3 (2014): 441-62; J. V. Gottlieb, *‘Guilty Women’, Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* (Basingstoke, 2015).

⁴ D. Soloff, ‘Unemployment and the Working Class: Bolton, Lancashire in the 1930’s’ (Ph.D, University of Illinois, 1994): 12; A. Adamthwaite, ‘Historians at War,’ in *The Origins of the Second World War: An International Perspective*, ed. F. McDonough (London, 2011): 521.

⁵ D. Hucker, *Public Opinion and the End of Appeasement in Britain and France* (Farnham, 2011).

trend. This is different to Hucker, who uses it to describe the perceptions of the decision-making elites. Recently, Dan Todman, in a general history of the 1937-1941 period has reaffirmed that there was a shift in public opinion by early 1939, though opinion polls had little influence upon government policy. Todman also notes the rise of a self-protective apathy due to events such as the Munich crisis.⁶ However, as this is not an in-depth study of public opinion, the gap described above remains. Considering the development of historical writing about the Great War, this gap is unsurprising. J-J Becker produced the first major work on local-level opinion using Prefects' reports to examine French public opinion during the war.⁷ Jeffrey Verhey for Germany and Catriona Pennell for Britain have added to this literature with studies of the outbreak of war.⁸ Both authors used an extensive range of sources from local newspapers to organizational records, a methodology repeated for this thesis. Usage of a wide range of sources allows comparison between different geographical areas and the national historiography. It is also the only way of finding a range of opinion levels during the 1930s and is therefore the proverbial search for a needle in a haystack. The study is therefore a mixture of local and national history but is not the type of comparative history advocated by Marc Bloch.⁹

The local history case studies cover a range of geographical areas: Bedfordshire, the London boroughs of Fulham and Hammersmith, and Bolton. The three areas represent the Home Counties, London, and the north of England. Figures 1-5 provide a brief map of each area. All three areas were predominantly working-class, though in Bedfordshire there was a large rural population. However, the emphasis is on the urban areas of Bedford and Luton. Additionally, Fulham and Bolton have a rich stream of archival material resulting from work carried out by Mass Observation (M-O). By combining this with other local sources, a relatively broad picture of local opinion is established. Much of the M-O material for the period of this study is available in digital format, thereby enabling easier access to archival material for the case studies areas.

Bedfordshire is located approximately thirty-five miles north of London. The interwar period witnessed an expansion of the county's population, over half of which occurred in Luton, the

⁶ D. Todman, *Britain's War: Into Battle, 1937-1941* (London, 2016).

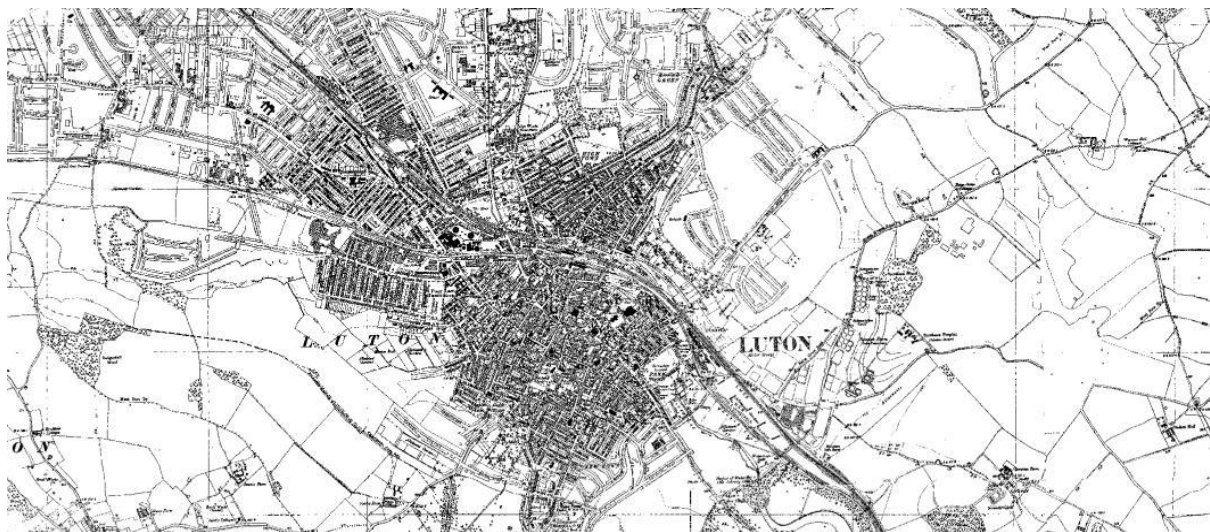
⁷ J. J. Becker, *1914: Comment Les FrançAis Sont Entrés Dans La Guerre Contribution à L'étude De L'opinion Publique, Printemps-Été, 1914* (Paris, 1977).

⁸ J. Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge, 2000); C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2012).

⁹ M. Bloch, 'Towards a Comparative History of European Societies,' in *Enterprise and Secular Change: Readings in Economic History*, ed. F. C. Lane (London, 1952): 494-521.

primary focus of this case study. The female to male ratio was 52% to 48%.¹⁰ Prior to the Great War, Luton depended economically on the hat trade but following the conflict, the council proactively attempted to attract new industries to the town. Major arrivals in the engineering sector included: Laporte (chemicals), Vauxhall Motors (automotive), Electrolux (electronics), and Skefco (ball bearings). These firms were attracted to the town due to its proximity to London and the lack of a unionised workforce, which began to change in the late 1930s as economic migrants from the depressed areas, arrived looking for work.¹¹ The lack of strong trade unions partly accounts for the weakness of the Labour Party in Luton during this period. The Liberals dominated politically with support from the Conservatives. E. D. Smithies noted that Luton's councillors were concerned with keeping expenditure down and preventing encroachment by Bedfordshire County Council.¹² In addition, Luton's MP, Leslie Burgin was a National Liberal. He served in Chamberlain's Cabinet, firstly as Minister for Transport (1937-1939) and then as Minister of Supply (1939-1940). Joining Burgin at Westminster were two Conservatives, Alan Lennox-Boyd (Mid-Bedfordshire) and Sir Richard Wells (Bedford), thereby ensuring that National Government supporters dominated the county's national political representation.

Figure 1: Luton in the 1930s¹³



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¹⁰ *Census of England and Wales, 1931: County of Bedford (Part 1)* (London, 1932).

¹¹ F. Grundy and R. M. Titmuss, *Report on Luton* (Luton, 1945): 19; E. D. Smithies, 'The Contrast between North and South in England, 1918-1939: A Study of Economic, Social and Political Problems, with Particular Reference to the Experience of Burnley, Halifax, Ipswich and Luton' (Ph.D., University of Leeds, 1974): 41 and 104.

¹² Smithies, 'The Contrast between North and South in England':41.

¹³ Landmark Information Group, 'Luton in the 1930s', (1938), <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>. [16 June 2015].

Figure 2: Bedford in the 1930s¹⁴



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¹⁴ Landmark Information Group, 'Bedford in the 1930s', (1938), <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>. [16 June 2015].

London is an obvious case study choice for several reasons: the seat of government, population density, and the threat of aerial bombardment. The adjoining Labour controlled boroughs chosen for study are Fulham and Hammersmith. By 1936, they had an estimated combined population of 268,000 and the same gender ratio as Bedfordshire.¹⁵ Fulham features in the existing historiography of the 1930s due to the alleged influence of the 1933 East Fulham by-election on the decision to delay rearmament. Martin Ceadel's analysis highlighted several reasons for the Conservative defeat including poor organisation and the decision of the Conservative candidate and former mayor of the borough, John Waldron, to cut council wages. Tom Stannage and Richard Heller concurred with Ceadel, that local politics had a greater influence on the result than international affairs.¹⁶ Thanks to the work of Mass Observation (M-O), Fulham place in the historiography is furthered by M-O's analysis of expressions of opinion in the borough during the Munich crisis in September 1938.¹⁷ Politically, Fulham was a Labour stronghold at a local level as the party dominated the council, whilst Labour gained a majority in Hammersmith for the first time in the November 1937 local elections. Additionally, the Trades Council represented 4,366 members, nearly 500 more than Bolton's representation.¹⁸ However, despite a strong Labour presence, Fulham had two Conservative MPs. William Astor had regained East Fulham for the Conservatives at the 1935 election with 51.45% of the vote on a turnout of 72%. Joining him was Cyril Cobb, who represented West Fulham until his death in February 1938, thereby triggering a by-election, which would be purported to be of national significance.¹⁹ Hammersmith had a mixture of MPs. Representing Hammersmith North was the Labour MP, Denis Pritt. He received 52.79% of the vote on a turnout of 65.73%, whilst the MP for Hammersmith South was the Conservative, J. D. Cooke, who received 62.29% of the vote on a turnout of 60.06%.²⁰

¹⁵ London County Council, *London Statistics 1936-8*, vol. 41 (London, 1938): 29-32.

¹⁶ R. Heller, 'East Fulham Revisited', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 6, 3 (1971): 172-96; C. T. Stannage, 'The East Fulham by-Election, 25 October 1933', *Historical Journal*, 14, 1 (1971): 165-200; M. Ceadel, 'Interpreting East Fulham,' in *By-Elections in British Politics*, ed. C. Cook and J. Ramsden (London, 1973): 118-38.

¹⁷ T. Harrison, C. Madge, and Mass-Observation., *Britain by Mass-Observation* (London, 1986).

¹⁸ Sussuex Mass-Observation Archive (SxMOA): 1/2/66/7/A, Fulham Trades Council, 14 October 1938.

¹⁹ 'UK General Election Results November 1935: Flint-Gravesend', <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge35/i08.htm>. [17 March 2014].

²⁰ 'UK General Election Results November 1935: Great Yarmouth to Holderness', <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge35/i09.htm>. [21 June 2015].

Figure 3: Hammersmith in the 1930s²¹



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Figure 4: Fulham in the 1930s²²



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Bolton is the final geographical case study. The town was subject to a three-year investigation by M-O, which David Hall chronicles in *Worktown: The Astonishing Story of the Project that Launched Mass Observation*.²³ This work provides a detailed account of the people involved and the different areas

²¹ Landmark Information Group, 'Hammersmith in the 1930s', (1938), <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>. [16 June 2015].

²² Landmark Information Group, 'Fulham in the 1930s', (1938), <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>. [16 June 2015].

²³ D. Hall, *Worktown: The Astonishing Story of the Project That Launched Mass Observation* (London, 2015).

of research undertaken by different members of the organisation. The work of Brian Barefoot, one of the early researchers, highlights several key factors in the town prior to the period covered by this thesis that are relevant; namely that speakers in the town barely mentioned foreign affairs and that the young were not interested in politics. The members of the Left Book Club and the Peace Pledge Union (PPU) were the exception. Barefoot described them as being youthful and having enthusiasm.²⁴ The project produced a rich range of archival data, as Bob Snape describes in his overview of the collection. Material ranges from pub conversations to comments on international affairs.²⁵ However, unlike Fulham, Bolton does not feature extensively in the historiography of the 1930s, though two existing works examine public opinion and the approach of war. G. J. Bryant found that a sombre mood existed upon the declaration of war.²⁶ David Wilson's less detailed examination found that there were divisions in the town regarding foreign policy.²⁷ This thesis will go beyond both articles in terms of depth, whilst using similar sources. Politically, the town was a Conservative stronghold, as the party held a majority on the council and the two MPs, Cyril Entwistle and John Haslam, were Conservatives. The Liberals, who had been the dominant party prior to the Great War, supported the Conservatives. After the war, many Liberals had moved away from the town, which had affected its development due to the paternalistic attitude that they had previously displayed towards it and their workers. Thus, the council consisted of professional and shop-keeping classes who did not always think about the long-term interests of the town. The town's working-class conservatism helped the Conservatives and reduced the impact of Labour, though the ruling elites had adopted the local leaders of the labour movement into their circles.²⁸ Economically, Bolton depended upon cotton and associated industries such as bleaching. The cotton industry was in decline due to the failure to innovate technically.²⁹ The reliance on the cotton had an impact on its political life. The trade unions in the cotton industry were weaker and more interested in industrial matters than political ones, when compared to the mining industry, which dominated in

²⁴ SxMOA: 32/7/1, Foreign Politics and Foreigners, 1937; SxMOA: 32/7/1, Education and Youth, 1937.

²⁵ B. Snape, 'The Worktown Collection', Mass Observation Online, <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk/FurtherResources/Essays/Worktown> [1 January 2016].

²⁶ G. J. Bryant, 'How War Came to Bolton, 1938-40', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire & Cheshire*, 146 (1997): 107-32.

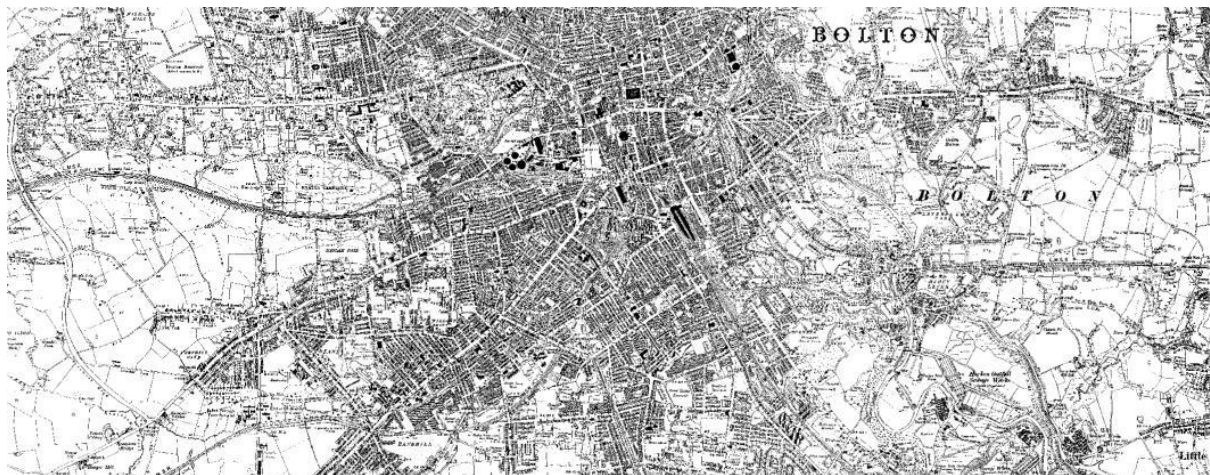
²⁷ D. H. Wilson, *A Study of Public Opinion in the Town of Bolton on Selected Events Leading up to the Second World War* (Bolton, 1970).

²⁸ P. A. Harris, 'Social Leadership and Social Attitudes in Bolton 1919-1939' (Ph.D., Lancaster University, 1973); J. K. Walton, *Lancashire: A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987): 347-8; B. Morley and S. Davies, *County Borough Elections in England and Wales 1919-1938: A Comparative Analysis*, 3 vols. (London, 1999-2006): 466; S. Davies and B. Morley, 'The Politics of Place: A Comparative Analysis of Electoral Politics in Four Lancashire Cotton Textile Towns, 1919-39', *Manchester Region History Review*, 14 (2000): 63-78.

²⁹ Walton, *Lancashire*: 330.

the rest of Lancashire.³⁰ This further reduced the impact of the Left. Despite the limited influence of the Left, the Spanish Civil War was a point of debate in Bolton due to the presence of Basque children in the town and several residents having joined the international brigades. References to the conflict are available in the Mass Observation Worktown project records and in letters to the *Bolton Evening News* during the early part of 1939. However, detailed discussion of Spain falls outside of the scope of this thesis, though enough evidence exists for a potential article.

Figure 5: Bolton in the 1930s³¹



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References to two of the geographical areas in existing writing form a very small part of the historiography of appeasement, a full review of which would now require a multi-volume work. Thankfully, two extensive works already exist. Robert Caputi's, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement*, charts the development of the historiography and specific themes through the decades until the end of the 1990s.³² Joining Caputi's work is David Dutton's examination of the historical reputation of Neville Chamberlain.³³ Together, they form a good introduction to the historiography of Chamberlain's appeasement policy, which divides into three distinct schools of thought: orthodox, revisionist, and post-revisionist.

³⁰ A. Flinn, 'Labour's Family: Local Labour Parties, Trade Unions and Trade Councils in Cotton Lancashire 1931-39,' in *Labour's Grass Roots: Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Parties and Members, 1918-45*, ed. M. Worley (Chippenham, 2005): 106-8.

³¹ Landmark Information Group, 'Bolton in the 1930s', (1931), <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>. [16 June 2015].

³² R. J. Caputi, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement* (London, 2000).

³³ D. J. Dutton, *Neville Chamberlain* (London, 2001).

The orthodox school criticising Chamberlain's policy appeared in contemporary works before the declaration of war. Much of this came from the Left and included works such as *They Betrayed Czechoslovakia*, which examined the Munich crisis from the Czech viewpoint.³⁴ Joining this was *Britain by Mass Observation*, which included comments by ordinary people in the fictional London borough of 'Metrop' (Fulham) during the crisis.³⁵ This condemned Chamberlain's policy. Further attacks appeared in 1939, including *But Who Has Won*, which referred to public opinion being against Chamberlain in some letters to the editor.³⁶ A good source of contemporary articles about public opinion and the public mood was the journal, *Nineteenth Century and After*. Articles published in this journal indicated a calm acceptance by the British people that war was coming and that it did not come as a surprise in September 1939.³⁷ These works were the lull before the storm, which was unleashed with the polemical *Guilty Men*. Written following Dunkirk, *Guilty Men* blamed Britain's leaders for failing to prepare for war, whilst ignoring many of the decisions that proved to be decisive in deciding the outcome of the Battle of Britain. However, its authors would not have known this at the time of writing.³⁸ Attacks continued during the war,³⁹ which set the stage for the entry into the debate of Britain's wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Published in 1948, *The Gathering Storm*⁴⁰ consolidated the development of the orthodox school because of the author's reputation and role during the conflict.⁴¹ However, caution is required with memoirs as they normally aim to portray the author in a favourable light.⁴² Despite the dominance of the orthodox school, attempts were made by the likes of Viscount Templewood (Samuel Hoare) to defend Chamberlain by arguing that he was right to try appeasement but as time went by it became clear that firmness would be required.⁴³ Prior to the development of a revisionist school of thought, public opinion received few mentions. The *Munich Conspiracy* by Andrew Rothstein is worth noting as he described the opposition to the government's policy at the time on Munich. Whilst this was in

³⁴ G. J. George, *They Betrayed Czechoslovakia* (Harmondsworth, 1938).

³⁵ Harrison et al., *Britain by Mass-Observation*.

³⁶ J. Scanlon, *But Who Has Won?* (London, 1939).

³⁷ E. Dashwood, 'What People Are Saying', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 75, 746 (1939): 482-7; J. Shand, 'What People Are Saying - 2', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 75, 747 (1939): 625-7; H. Nicolson, 'Is War Inevitable?', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 76, 749 (1939): 1-13; J. Lepper, 'What People Are Saying', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 76, 751 (1939): 366-9.

³⁸ 'Cato', *Guilty Men* (London, 1940).

³⁹ G. L. M. Mander, *We Were Not All Wrong* (London, 1941).

⁴⁰ W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War Vol.1: The Gathering Storm* (London, 1948).

⁴¹ D. Reynolds, 'Churchill's Writing of History: Appeasement, Autobiography and the Gathering Storm', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 11 (2001): 221-47; D. Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill's Fighting and Writing of the Second World War* (London, 2004).

⁴² For the dangers of using this type of source see D. C. Watt, 'Some Post-War British Memoirs and Pre-War Foreign Policy', *International Relations*, 1, 3 (1955): 103-13.

⁴³ Viscount Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years* (London, 1954).

keeping with the orthodox school, he advised that local sources needed studying to verify the claim, which to date has received little attention, hence the need for this thesis.⁴⁴

A challenge to the orthodox school emerged in 1961 with A. J. P. Taylor's book, *The Origins of the Second World War*. Taylor defied conventional wisdom by arguing that the war had resulted from diplomatic mistakes on all sides.⁴⁵ This argument was not original, as A. L. Kennedy had used it in 1948.⁴⁶ Taylor's work began what D. C. Watt described as 'the rise of the revisionist school', in an article that noted the lack of studies about public opinion.⁴⁷ Within this context, and prior to the reduction of the archival closure period to thirty years in 1967, Milorad Vuckovic's study of Parliamentary opinion provided a good indication of the climate of opinion that Chamberlain had to work in, namely one where political representatives wanted to avoid war. Many of those returned at the 1935 election had served in First World War and wanted to avoid another, thereby explaining their pacifist outlook.⁴⁸ This background acts as the starting point for the revisionist school, which, with the opening of the archives in 1967 sought to provide a rational explanation for the decisions taken, work that continues to this day. The new subject areas included economics;⁴⁹ defence and strategy;⁵⁰ international relations theory;⁵¹ and government-media relations, which is discussed in more detail due to its interaction with public opinion. Some of the revisionist works refer to public opinion. For example, Uri Bialer's examination of British fears about aerial attack argued that the view taken by the political elite meant that British policy was in line with public opinion. However, Bialer failed to explain how the elite knew what 'public opinion' or the 'public mood' was.⁵² Following Bialer's study, Patrick Kyba examined British defence policy and public opinion in the first half of the 1930s. Kyba's study is important as it made use of regional newspapers in addition to

⁴⁴ A. Rothstein, *The Munich Conspiracy* (London, 1958).

⁴⁵ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London, 1961).

⁴⁶ A. L. Kennedy, 'Munich: The Disintegration of British Statesmanship', *Quarterly Review*, 286 (1948): 425-44.

⁴⁷ D. C. Watt, 'Appeasement: The Rise of a Revisionist School', *Political Quarterly*, 36, 2 (1965): 191-213.

⁴⁸ M. N. Vuckovic, 'Parliamentary Opinion and British Foreign Policy, 1936-1938 with Special Reference to Germany' (Ph.D., McGill University (Canada), 1966): 51.

⁴⁹ See G. C. Peden, 'Sir Warren Fisher and British Rearmament against Germany', *English Historical Review*, 94, 370 (1979): 29-47; T. C. Imlay, *Facing the Second World War: Strategy, Politics, and Economics in Britain and France, 1938-1940* (Oxford, 2003); J. P. Levy, *Appeasement and Rearmament: Britain, 1936-1939* (Lanham MD, 2006).

⁵⁰ See W. Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-39: The Path to Ruin* (Princeton, 1984); W. K. Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy, British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (New York, 1985); J. Ferris, "'Now That the Milk Is Spilt': Appeasement and the Archive on Intelligence", *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 19, 3 (2008): 527-65.

⁵¹ See N. M. Ripsman and J. S. Levy, 'Wishful Thinking or Buying Time? The Logic of British Appeasement in the 1930s', *International Security*, 33, 2 (2008): 148-81; S. E. Lobell, 'Bringing Balancing Back In: Britain's Targeted Balancing, 1936-1939', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35, 6 (2012): 283-304; P. Trubowitz and P. Harris, 'When States Appease: British Appeasement in the 1930s', *Review of International Studies*, 41, 2 (2015): 289-311.

⁵² U. Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber: The Fear of Air Attack and British Politics, 1932-1939* (London, 1980).

national ones, thereby adding a local element that Rothstein had been keen to encourage. Kyba demonstrated that the government was conscious of the potential reaction of the public but by the time the study ended in 1935, policy had moved ahead of public opinion.⁵³ This hindered the government's ability to comment in public about rearmament. Both works sit within the revisionist school as they sought to provide a rational explanation for government policy. Works of a similar nature have continued to appear with Sally Greene, Sara Wilkinson, David Gillard and Daniel Hucker all contributing works arguing that government policy operated within the limits that they believed public opinion would allow.⁵⁴

Challenging the revisionist school is a post-revisionist one, which sought to return the debate to examining the key decision-makers and their beliefs. Chamberlain has been a target for this led by R. A. C. Parker's book, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*.⁵⁵ Parker portrays Chamberlain as a man following a rational policy given the circumstances, namely to maintain peace whilst preparing for war if necessary but is still very critical of him. Churchill shared this objective, albeit via a different method.⁵⁶ Parker's 1993 book provided the first discussion of alternative policies, a topic that Andrew Stedman has covered in more depth. The options included isolation, economic and colonial appeasement, and the League of Nations.⁵⁷ Straddling the revisionist and post-revisionist schools is Hucker's work, as it focuses on the decision-making process and perceptions of those involved, while seeking to provide a rational explanation for policy.⁵⁸

This historiographical overview briefly mentions a few works relating to public opinion.

Government-media relations are associated with this topic. This relationship is explored in Bernard Hagerty's thesis on the changing nature of public opinion in Britain from 1935-45. Hagerty argues that in 1935 'public opinion' and interest in public affairs was limited to elites, but interest had broadened by the end of the Second World War due to reconstruction plans, though public apathy

⁵³ P. Kyba, *Covenants without the Sword: Public Opinion and British Defence Policy, 1931-1935* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1983).

⁵⁴ S. Greene, 'Peace in Whose Time? Neville Chamberlain's Other Mistake', *Anglican & Episcopal History*, 64, 2 (1995): 138-47; S. Wilkinson, 'Perceptions of Public Opinion: British Foreign Policy Decisions About Nazi Germany, 1933-1938' (D.Phil, Oxford, 2000); D. Gillard, *Appeasement in Crisis: From Munich to Prague, October 1938-March 1939* (Basingstoke, 2007); Hucker, *Public Opinion and the End of Appeasement in Britain and France*.

⁵⁵ R. A. C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War* (Basingstoke, 1993).

⁵⁶ R. A. C. Parker, *Churchill and Appeasement* (Basingstoke, 2000).

⁵⁷ A. D. Stedman, *Alternatives to Appeasement: Neville Chamberlain and Hitler's Germany* (London, 2011).

⁵⁸ Hucker, *Public Opinion and the End of Appeasement in Britain and France*.

remained.⁵⁹ However, Hagerty's argument is flawed as it fails to account properly for public feeling during the Abdication Crisis and the setting up of M-O. Frank Mort in a 2014 article demonstrates that ordinary people were interested in the abdication and wrote directly to the monarch.⁶⁰ The public's reaction to the Abdication spurred on Tom Harrisson and Charles Madge to create M-O, which would allow the ordinary people to 'speak for themselves'.⁶¹ This raises further questions for scholars studying public opinion in this period, given the diverse types of sources and range of opinions contained within the M-O archives.

The works referred to in the previous paragraph lead to the trickiest question, how to define public opinion. Henry Durant, a research student at the London School of Economics (LSE) and founder of the British Institute of Public Opinion (BIPO), described it as 'awkward to describe, elusive to define, and difficult to measure'.⁶² This problem is emphasised in a 1940 M-O report entitled '*What is Public Opinion?*' The report discusses what MPs think it to be; the differences between public and private opinions; and the sources that people rely on, which do not always provide a lead.⁶³ Tom Harrisson added to the arguments made in this report in an article published in *Political Quarterly*, stating that actual public opinion is those private opinions that a person would express to a stranger.⁶⁴ These opinions often come to the fore when they receive societal sanction. Noelle-Neumann describes this as the 'spiral of silence', an argument that Harrisson made thirty-four years earlier.⁶⁵ Harrisson and Noelle-Neumann refer to two of the layers of opinion. Lazarsfeld, Kyba, and Bell,⁶⁶ refer to others, which only adds to the problem of producing a definition. The search of a suitable definition for this thesis begins in 1909 with New Zealand politician, John Findlay. He defined public opinion as 'an opinion on a public question entertained or shared by the majority of the adult population'. He believed that the pressure of events influenced opinion.⁶⁷ Findlay's definition partly supports E. H.

⁵⁹ B. G. Hagerty, 'War and Rumors of War: Crisis, Democracy and Public Opinion in Britain, 1935-1945' (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh, 2001).

⁶⁰ F. Mort, 'Love in a Cold Climate: Letters, Public Opinion and Monarchy in the 1936 Abdication Crisis', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25, 1 (2014): 30-62.

⁶¹ Mass-Observation Archive (M-O A): File Report (FR) A26, 'They Speak for Themselves', 1939.

⁶² H. Durant, 'Public Opinion, Polls and Foreign Policy', *British Journal of Sociology*, 6, 2 (1955): 152.

⁶³ M-O A: Topic Collection (TC)43/1/B, 'What Is Public Opinion?', 19 August 1940.

⁶⁴ T. Harrisson, 'What Is Public Opinion?', *Political Quarterly*, 11, 4 (1940): 368-83.

⁶⁵ E. Noelle-Neumann, 'The Spiral of Silence: A Theory of Public Opinion', *Journal of Communication*, 24, 2 (1974): 43-51.

⁶⁶ P. Lazarsfeld, 'Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21, 1 (1957): 41-53; Kyba, *Covenants without the Sword*: 7; P. M. H. Bell, 'British Government Views on the Importance of Public Opinion During the Second World War', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 108, 1 (1996): 33-8.

⁶⁷ J. G. Findlay and *The Evening Star, Our Man in the Street: The Origin, Operation and Character of Public Opinion* (Dunedin, 1909).

Carr's description of opinion formation. Carr argued that the 'man in the street' based his opinion on the emotional and ethical dimensions of a question.⁶⁸ These approaches run counter to two of the leading American thinkers on public opinion during the interwar period, Walter Lippmann and Thomas Dewey. Lippmann argued that only experts should make decisions about foreign affairs, due to the emotional way people reacted: the direct opposite of Carr's description of opinion formation. Dewey shared Lippmann's concern but argued for active public engagement to create an informed opinion. Both writers were justified in their stances given the events of the 1930s, as well as by Harold Nicolson's observation that it took years for the public to build up the required level of knowledge.⁶⁹ The late 1930s also confirmed Carr's theory about opinion formation. Nicolson's viewpoint about public opinion received further reinforcement in John Shorrocks's comparative study of Nicolson, the National Labour MP for Leicester West, and Duff Cooper, the Conservative MP for Westminster St George's. Shorrocks highlights Nicolson's abhorrence of the ill-informed nature of public opinion, arguing that it was the job of politicians to educate.⁷⁰ The points highlighted by contemporary writers during the period covered by this thesis, as well as its subject matter, means that a broad definition is required. For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of public opinion is:

'An expression, sentiment or action of an individual or collective body at any level, outside of the Cabinet, whether published or not, on matters relating to British foreign and defence policy, regarding Germany and the civil defence preparations that were being made'

The one exclusion to the above definition in relation to the Cabinet is Leslie Burgin, as the MP for Luton.

The definition of public opinion refers to sentiment, or as Carr described it, the emotional element in opinion formation that is used by the 'man in the street'. Within the context of this thesis, this is referred to as the 'public mood' but how does one go about constructing this? This can be done from the implicit tones of voice present in diaries, letters, reports and street comments, a feature of M-O records and by using sources that are underused. The M-O records represent a strong source as they provide access to what Harrison termed 'private opinion' and therefore, an alternative public opinion to the visible 'elite' opinion or one put forward by local activists. Often, 'private opinions' were gut reactions to events when there was a lack of official information, such as during

⁶⁸ E. H. Carr, 'Public Opinion as a Safeguard of Peace', *International Affairs*, 15, 6 (1936): 846-62.

⁶⁹ H. Nicolson, 'British Public Opinion and Foreign Policy', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1, 1 (1937): 55.

⁷⁰ J. B. Shorrocks, 'Harold Nicolson and Alfred Duff Cooper: The Historian as Politician in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-1939' (Ph.D., West Virginia University, 1975): 26-7.

the Munich crisis as detailed in *Britain by Mass-Observation*.⁷¹ M-O's type of opinion research is the subject of a 2015 article entitled *The Road Not Taken in Opinion Research*.⁷² This praises M-O's qualitative approach as it revealed what motivated people and allowed them to explain their views. As such, they were what Harrison described as 'not quantifiable'.⁷³ The M-O records also reveal a degree of indifference towards events outside of people's immediate interests such as the home. This indifference, as James Hinton suggests in his review of *England Arise!: the Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain*,⁷⁴ does not mean that people were totally ignorant of the facts.⁷⁵ The 'public mood' can therefore be explained on the following basis: that it is qualitative; comes from sources that have been underused, represents groups that have been traditionally voiceless; or is an emotional reaction to an event, often where respondents lacked sufficient information to make an informed decision.

The sources used for studying public opinion vary. The main source for guiding opinion during the 1930s was newspapers, a fact confirmed by M-O's work following Anthony Eden's resignation.⁷⁶ Tom Harrison regarded newspapers as published opinion.⁷⁷ However, newspapers were subject to a form of government censorship, a subject explored in Richard Cockett's, *Twilight of Truth*.⁷⁸ Cockett argued that editors came under pressure to print stories favourable to the government's foreign policy, a verdict challenged by Michael Meznar. Meznar emphasises content rather than personal relationships.⁷⁹ Content is the emphasis for the three major studies of national newspapers and appeasement. Franklin Gannon examined the national dailies and found that they were largely in favour of appeasement until the Munich crisis.⁸⁰ A similar finding emerges from Barbara Kehoe's study. Kehoe highlighted that readers of the high circulation, popular newspapers did not receive the same extensive, in-depth coverage of foreign affairs that readers of *The Times* received.⁸¹ The

⁷¹ Harrison et al., *Britain by Mass-Observation*.

⁷² J. M. Hogan, 'The Road Not Taken in Opinion Research: Mass-Observation in Great Britain, 1937-1940', *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 18, 3 (2015): 409-40.

⁷³ Hogan, 'The Road Not Taken in Opinion Research': 415.

⁷⁴ S. Fielding, P. Thompson, and N. Tiratsoo, *England Arise!: The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain* (Manchester, 1995).

⁷⁵ J. Hinton, '1945 and the Apathy School', *History Workshop Journal*, 43, Spring (1997): 266-73.

⁷⁶ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/A, Eden Resigns, England Reacts, 1938.

⁷⁷ Harrison, 'What Is Public Opinion?': 375.

⁷⁸ R. B. Cockett, *Twilight of Truth: Chamberlain, Appeasement and the Manipulation of the Press* (London, 1989).

⁷⁹ M. Meznar, 'The British Government, the Newspapers and the German Problem, 1937-1939' (Ph.D., University of Durham, 2005).

⁸⁰ F. R. Gannon, *The British Press and Germany, 1936-1939* (Oxford, 1971).

⁸¹ B. B. Kehoe, 'The British Press and Nazi Germany' (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1980).

third study, by Benny Morris, examined the major weekly papers, such as *The Economist*. He drew a similar conclusion to the two previous studies but with two notable exceptions, *The Economist*, and *Time and Tide*.⁸² The studies of newspaper content need to be set alongside the personalities behind the newspapers. Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of *The Times*, and his deputy, Robert Barrington-Ward, favoured appeasement, a policy that Dawson promoted through sympathetic leaders. However, Dawson's views, unlike those of his deputy, failed to take account of the ethnic problems in Central Europe.⁸³ James Garvin, the editor of *The Observer*, was another who favoured appeasement but moved towards resistance during the winter months of 1938-9.⁸⁴ Editors were not alone in influencing the content of newspapers. Owners like Lord Beaverbrook, who owned the largest selling national daily, the *Daily Express*, used his papers to promote the view that there would be no war, whilst also campaigning for conscription.⁸⁵ Consideration of the paper's editorial stance is required when using them for public opinion research, as this often dictated the type of letters published.

Newspapers had the greatest influence but film had the greatest reach, as by 1939 cinema audiences had reached a weekly average of 21 million. Many attending the cinema came from groups that politicians found difficult to reach: women, under-40s and people on low-incomes.⁸⁶ Newsreels were a popular part of the cinema programme in areas such as Lancashire.⁸⁷ They featured news that was several days old. However, they still allowed the audience to see how people behaved, and to receive messages, such as the need to volunteer for Air Raid Precautions (ARP) work. Sport received the most coverage with war not far behind. War coverage included stories of aerial bombardment from the Spanish Civil War and Sino-Japanese conflict, thereby exposing the British public to the horrors of modern warfare. Nazi Germany was another popular topic during 1938-9.⁸⁸ The majority of stories were favourable to Germany, which reflected the

⁸² B. Morris, *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s* (London, 1991).

⁸³ R. J. Mokken, 'The Times and Munich', *International Communication Gazette*, 4, 2 (1958): 149-51; O. Woods and J. Bishop, *The Story of the Times* (London, 1983): 292; B. T. Riggs, 'Geoffrey Dawson, Editor of "The Times" (London), and His Contribution to the Appeasement Movement' (Ph.D., University of North Texas, 1993).

⁸⁴ M. B. Klobas, 'A Man Twice Crucified: James Louis Garvin and the Appeasement Debates of the 1930s' (Ph.D., Texas A&M University, 2003).

⁸⁵ A. Foster, 'The Beaverbrook Press and Appeasement: The Second Phase', *European History Quarterly*, 21, 1 (1991): 5-38.

⁸⁶ N. Pronay, 'British Newsreels in the 1930s. Part 1: Audience and Producers', *History*, 56, 188 (1971): 413.

⁸⁷ A. J. Taylor, 'Speaking to Democracy: The Conservative Party and Mass Opinion from the 1920s to the 1950s,' in *Mass Conservatism: The Conservatives and the Public since the 1880s*, ed. S. Ball and I. Holliday (London, 2002): 83.

⁸⁸ A. Aldgate, *Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War* (London, 1979): 76.

cautious editorial approach of the newsreel companies. However, slip-ups did occur. During the Munich crisis, a Paramount newsreel contained comments opposing government policy. The Foreign Office quickly applied pressure to the American parent company to ensure withdrawal from circulation.⁸⁹ Interventions such as this reflected the potential power of film to influence and educate opinion in the minds of politicians.

Radio was another source of news provision and by 1939, 73% of households owned a set.⁹⁰ The educational potential of this medium was quickly recognised. During a 1933 roundtable, Mr Robson – identified in the list of speakers as Professor Robson from the LSE - spoke about listener groups, which listened to a programme and then discussed it, thereby establishing a link with adult education.⁹¹ The League of Nations Union (LNU) for example, actively encouraged listener groups. In early 1938, the BBC broadcast a series called the *Way of Peace*, which was listened to and discussed by 51 LNU youth groups and 17 branches.⁹² The series aimed to help people to understand various aspects of international affairs including organisations and potential policies. They provided a clear message that most people only saw the local horizon and that to solve world problems the education of the people was required.⁹³ Education was part of the ethos of radio in Britain: hence the suggestion by the Cabinet Secretary, Maurice Hankey, that it should be used to educate people about the need for ARP.⁹⁴ However, whilst recognising the educational value of radio, the government undertook some censorship of the BBC's output. In September 1938, the Foreign Office prevented the journalist, Vernon Bartlett from broadcasting on *Children's Hour* about Central Europe.⁹⁵ This intervention came at a time when the government was beginning to use radio for propaganda purposes, to communicate its point of view to the German people. This activity continued after the crisis with the establishment of the BBC German Service, though the Foreign Office undertook content vetting to prevent any disturbance in international relations.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ N. Pronay, 'British Newsreels in the 1930's. Part 2: Their Policies and Impact', *History*, 57, 189 (1972): 63-72.

⁹⁰ Hagerty, 'War and Rumors of War':105.

⁹¹ Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation, *The Formation of Public Opinion in World Politics* (Chicago, 1933): 350.

⁹² London School of Economics (LSE): LNU 5/28, Minutes of a Meeting of the Education Committee, 14 February 1938.

⁹³ A. Zimmern, 'The Problem of World Order', *The Listener*, 19, 482 (1938): 736-8.

⁹⁴ A. Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom. Vol.2, the Golden Age of Wireless* (London, 1965): 625.

⁹⁵ A. Adamthwaite, 'The British Government and the Media, 1937-1938', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 2 (1983): 287.

⁹⁶ N. Pronay and P. M. Taylor, "'An Improper Use of Broadcasting": The British Government and Clandestine Radio Propaganda Operations against Germany During the Munich Crisis and After', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 19, 3 (1984): 357-84; S. Seul, 'Journalists in the Service of British Foreign Policy: The BBC German

The news and broadcast media were susceptible to government interference. This was not the case with books. The war genre for most of the interwar period either portrayed a 'never again' message or highlighted the threat from the air. The former trend reached its zenith between 1928 and 1932 with the publication of a series of bestsellers describing the 1914-1918 carnage. The biggest seller was Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which highlighted the gap between those who had served and the world around them.⁹⁷ This legacy, and the desire to avoid another war, were a feature of two books by the former war correspondent, Philip Gibbs. He recorded his discussions with a wide range of people. The discussions revealed an awareness of international affairs but also that greater education of the public was required.⁹⁸ Victor Gollancz attempted to provide this with the formation of the Left Book Club, which published books aimed at educating the public about Hitler and the fascist threat. The books had a left-wing viewpoint, with several authors having Communist sympathies, though Gollancz denied any formal links with the Communist Party.⁹⁹ The Club itself attracted a wide range of people, often in their 20s and 30s, who were disillusioned with mainstream politics. Members' interest in the topics led to the formation of discussion groups and the holding of protest meetings against government policy.¹⁰⁰ Along with a series of Penguin specials, these books filled a vacuum in terms of information provision. One gap that neither filled was the provision of a full English language translation of *Mein Kampf*.¹⁰¹ An abridged version, minus the most threatening passages, was available and left the reader with the impression of an overt offer of friendship. Doug Phinney found that Adolf Hitler tightly controlled the translation rights, hence the lack of a full translation.¹⁰² However, this did not prevent others from publishing books such as *What Hitler Wants*,¹⁰³ which described the contents of *Mein Kampf*. This book

Service and Chamberlain's Appeasement Policy, 1938-1939,' in *Journalists as Political Actors: Transfers and Interactions between Britain and Germany since the Late 19th Century*, ed. F. Bosch and D. Geppert (Augsburg, 2008): 94-7; S. Seul, "'Plain, Unvarnished News'?", *Media History*, 21, 4 (2015): 378-96.

⁹⁷ E. M. Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (London, 1929); M. Eksteins, 'All Quiet on the Western Front and the Fate of a War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 15, 2 (1980): 345-66.

⁹⁸ P. Gibbs, *England Speaks* (London, 1935); P. Gibbs, *Ordeal in England: (England Speaks Again)* (London, 1939).

⁹⁹ In April 1938, Gollancz threatened to sue a letter writer to the *Bolton Evening News* for making this accusation. Modern Records Centre (MRC): MSS.157/3/LB/3/26, Victor Gollancz to Harold Rubenstein, 28 April 1938; MRC: MSS.157/3/LB/3/28, Harold Rubenstein to the Editor of the *Bolton Evening News* (Draft), n.d.; MRC: MSS.157/3/LB/3/29, Victor Gollancz to Harold Rubenstein, 6 May 1938.

¹⁰⁰ G. B. Neavill, 'Victor Gollancz and the Left Book Club', *The Library Quarterly*, 41, 3 (1971): 197-215; L. M. Church, 'The Left Book Club: The Development of an Expressive Political Movement' (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1975).

¹⁰¹ A. Hitler and R. Mannheim, *Mein Kampf* (London, 1992).

¹⁰² D. Phinney, "'My Struggle': Hitler's Olive Branch to England and the Foundation for British Appeasement' (M. A., Florida Atlantic University, 2007).

¹⁰³ E. O. Lorimer, *What Hitler Wants* (Harmondsworth, 1939).

received praise from the *Bolton Evening News* for providing a clear warning.¹⁰⁴ Works of this nature and Hitler's activities made the British public more aware of the threat that they faced.

Apart from books, most information sources were subject to potential government interference. This hampered the development of an effective opposition to government policy. However, within the information sources it is possible to detect the underlying attitudes that were prevailing within society. The anti-war pressure groups that emerged during the interwar period demonstrate such attitudes. Ceadel has divided these into pacifist and pacificist: the former is unconditionally against war, whereas the latter will accept it under certain circumstances.¹⁰⁵ The largest group, the LNU, straddled the divide for much of the period. In 1934, it organised the Peace Ballot,¹⁰⁶ which aimed to demonstrate Britain's commitment to the ideals of the League. The result was overwhelmingly in favour of the League, including the use of military force, and encouraged the LNU to campaign for the government to adopt a League-based foreign policy during the 1935 general election campaign. This election occurred during the Italy-Abyssinia conflict, an event however, that witnessed a move towards the policy of appeasement. This outcome confirmed Daniel Waley's conclusion that the LNU was only able to influence government pronouncements rather than policy.¹⁰⁷ It also allowed the Opposition parties to accuse the government of abandoning the League. The Abyssinia crisis and the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936 divided the peace movement. The LNU, after realising that resistance to German demands was required, moved closer to the pacificist groups. Ceadel's work, when combined with that of Cecilia Lynch, Wilkinson and Waley,¹⁰⁸ reinforces the conclusion that the peace movement's influence on policy was limited, but it did contribute to the operational limits of British policy.

The attitudes of the 1930s gave rise to other events that set the limits of British policy. In 1933, the Oxford Union staged the 'King and Country' debate. This debate centred on the motion 'that this House will in no circumstances fight for King and Country'. Ceadel's re-examination of the motion

¹⁰⁴ D. Stone, 'The "Mein Kampf Ramp": Emily Overend Lorimer and Hitler Translations in Britain', *German History*, 26, 4 (2008): 510.

¹⁰⁵ M. Ceadel, 'The Peace Movement between the Wars: Problems of Definition,' in *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century*, ed. R. Taylor and N. Young (Manchester, 1987): 77.

¹⁰⁶ For further discussion see National Declaration Committee (Great Britain), A. L. Livingstone, M. S. Johnston, W. Ashley, E. A. R. G.-C. Cecil, and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Peace Ballot: The Official History* (London, 1935); M. Ceadel, 'The First British Referendum: The Peace Ballot, 1934-35', *English Historical Review*, 95, 377 (1980): 810-39; J. A. Thompson, 'The "Peace Ballot" and the "Rainbow" Controversy', *Journal of British Studies*, 20, 2 (1981): 150-70.

¹⁰⁷ D. P. Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War, 1935-6* (London, 1975): 138.

¹⁰⁸ Waley, *British Public Opinion*; Wilkinson, 'Perceptions of Public Opinion'; C. Lynch, *Beyond Appeasement: Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics* (Ithaca, 2007).

highlights some of the interpretations at the time and concludes that it did much to define what absolute pacifism was.¹⁰⁹ Vera Brittain and Ronald McCallum argued that the early interpretations did not account for divisions within the peace movement.¹¹⁰ However, the motion did not have any measurable impact on patriotism, as most men were still willing to serve their country in 1939. Therefore, the debate only slowed the development of opposition to Hitler

Prior to the development of opinion polls, by-elections were one of the main barometers of public opinion, and they have been emphasised as a way of judging support for government policy in the weeks following the Munich agreement. Roger Eatwell's highly cited article argues that Bridgwater was the most important of these, due to the candidature of the anti-appeasement journalist, Vernon Bartlett, which meant that there was a greater concentration on foreign affairs. His other major finding was that whilst the Opposition gained votes, the swing was lower in places where the government candidate was not a Conservative.¹¹¹ This suggests that the public perceived appeasement to be a Conservative policy, though local issues may also have been involved. Swings to the Opposition are part of the normal electoral cycle so this finding is unsurprising.

Unfortunately, an enhanced level of detail for this and the Oxford by-election is not available from M-O as the material collected is missing from the archive, as revealed by Eatwell's correspondence with Tom Harrison.¹¹² Bridgwater was not the only post-Munich by-election to focus on foreign affairs. The Kinross and West Perth by-election occurred when the Duchess of Atholl resigned her seat following a clash with the local Conservative Association about her opinions on the Munich agreement, though she was out of the country at the time of the Parliamentary debate on Munich. She stood as an independent and lost.¹¹³ Her experience at the hands of her local association was not unique, as several Conservative MPs had disagreements with their associations who remained loyal to Chamberlain.¹¹⁴ John Sparks has called into question the use of the post-Munich by-elections as a way of judging public opinion on Chamberlain's policy. He argued that increased Conservative polling was not a vote in favour of Chamberlain but rather a habitual defence of the

¹⁰⁹ M. Ceadel, 'The King and Country Debate, 1933: Student Politics, Pacifism and the Dictators', *Historical Journal*, 22, 2 (1979): 397-422.

¹¹⁰ V. Brittain, 'Will Young England Fight?', *Atlantic Monthly*, 162, 5 (1938): 626-8; R. B. McCallum, *Public Opinion and the Last Peace* (London, 1944): 179.

¹¹¹ R. Eatwell, 'Munich, Public Opinion and the Popular Front', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 6, 4 (1971): 122-39.

¹¹² SxMOA: 29/5/1/8, Tom Harrison to Roger Eatwell, 7 June 1972.

¹¹³ S. Ball, 'The Politics of Appeasement: The Fall of the Duchess of Atholl and the Kinross and West Perth by-Election, December 1938', *Scottish Historical Review*, 69 (1990): 49-83.

¹¹⁴ N. J. Crowson, 'Conservative Parliamentary Dissent over Foreign Policy During the Premiership of Neville Chamberlain: Myth or Reality?', *Parliamentary History*, 14, 3 (1995): 315-36.

Conservative candidate in the face of a strong challenger.¹¹⁵ However, the by-election literature is lacking a study of the 1939 by-elections and the role of foreign affairs, which would enable further discussion.

The use of opinion polls in Britain began in 1937 with the creation of BIPO. The political parties did not take the results seriously until after the Second World War.¹¹⁶ Publication of the results was initially in *Cavalcade* before transferring to the *News Chronicle* in October 1938, which resulted in the loss of some data from the early polls. The transfer affected BIPO's independence as the *News Chronicle* owner, Laurence Cadbury, often wanted questions asked on specific subjects. Despite this, BIPO's work was reasonably accurate, as it predicted that Labour would win the April 1938 West Fulham by-election with 51% of the vote. The actual result was 52.2%.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, opinion polls normally receive just a passing mention in the existing literature due to their contradictory nature. Philip Towle cites the example of an October 1938 poll where 75% were in favour of increased defence spending, while a similar number opposed conscription.¹¹⁸ M-O evidence explains some of these anomalies by providing descriptions of the impact of events upon the individual.

Media sources, by-elections, and opinion polls form part of the source material used in this thesis, which examines the questions below:

- What was local-level opinion?
- Was there a delay between national and local discussion of events?
- What regional variations were there?
- What role did local newspapers play?
- How did crises affect public opinion?
- Were there any turning points?

The answers to the above questions will help to provide a wider picture of public opinion and the public mood in the years immediately preceding the Second World War. The local case study aspect of this thesis means that a broad range of sources are used, hence the extensive list in the

¹¹⁵ J. C. Sparks, 'British by-Elections: What Do They Prove?', *American Political Science Review*, 34, 1 (1940): 98.

¹¹⁶ L. Beers, 'Whose Opinion?: Changing Attitudes Towards Opinion Polling in British Politics, 1937-1964', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17, 2 (2006): 177-8.

¹¹⁷ M. Roodhouse, "'Fish-and-Chip Intelligence': Henry Durant and the British Institute of Public Opinion, 1936-63', *Twentieth Century British History*, 24, 2 (2013): 224-48.

¹¹⁸ P. Towle, *Going to War: British Debates from Wilberforce to Blair* (Basingstoke, 2009): 135-6.

bibliography. It is very much a case of looking for a needle in a haystack as mention of foreign affairs is often just a passing reference.

Newspapers are the main source used for public opinion studies during the 1930s, due to their influence, reach, and the ability to allow some form of interaction, principally letters to the editor. These came predominantly from engaged readers, though a degree of caution is required due to a paper's editorial policy as the editor normally selected the letters for publication. The two national newspapers used for this study are *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. The former is the paper of record and regarded as reflecting government opinion. By contrast, the *Manchester Guardian*, with its liberal background, published a wider range of views in its letters column than *The Times*. Neither of these papers had the mass circulation of the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, or the *Daily Mirror*, which are excluded from this study due to their more limited coverage of foreign affairs. The exclusion also allows a concentration on the local case studies. Local newspapers present an additional challenge, as it is difficult to find out further details about letter writers. As such, the letters appearing in local newspapers are considered genuine on the basis that local newspapers served a wide range of views. Jane Secker argues that local newspapers are valuable for studying international events as they allow an enhanced level of understanding, thereby complementing Soloff's argument about moving towards an enhanced national synthesis. Secker highlighted another strength of local newspapers, namely that council meeting reports were more detailed than the official minutes.¹¹⁹ Such detailed reporting allowed for what J. B. Chaney described in 1898 as 'a current history of the people in their respective localities, a history more complete than can be found in any other form'.¹²⁰ Newspapers reflected this in the breadth of topics and opinions reported, even if they did conflict with editorial opinion. This breadth occurred in local newspapers in the geographical case studies and this representation further underlines the importance of this study, as a similar breadth was not always available in the national newspapers. The local newspapers in Bedfordshire included an evening daily newspaper, the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, which printed a range of local, national and international news but did not offer a letters column. A column was offered by the weekly newspapers: *Luton News and Bedfordshire Advertiser* (*Luton News*), *Bedfordshire Times and Independent* (*Bedfordshire Times*), and the *Bedfordshire Standard*. Prior to their merger in July 1939, the *Times* and *Standard* represented the liberal and

¹¹⁹ J. Secker, 'Newspapers and Historical Research: A Study of Historians and Custodians in Wales' (Ph.D., University of Wales, 1999): 178-85.

¹²⁰ J. B. Chaney, 'The Historical Value of Newspapers', *Minnesota Historical Society Collections*, 8 (1898): 111.

conservative viewpoints.¹²¹ The *Bedfordshire Times* was the largest of five newspapers in the county owned by Westminster Press Provincial Newspapers, and covered over 100 villages. Therefore, the paper placed a strong emphasis on agriculture in its reporting. The average weekly sales were just over 19,000.¹²² Bolton had a similar mix to Bedfordshire: the *Bolton Evening News*, the *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, and the *Bolton Standard*. The liberal-orientated Tillotson family owned the *Bolton Evening News* and used the editorial column to promote what they believed to be in the best interests of the town and country. The paper had an active letters column with contributions from across the social and political spectrum. The other two were weekly newspapers and reported more of the social activities in the town.¹²³ Some use is made of additional newspapers from the surrounding area to enhance the case study. In contrast to the other two geographical areas, Fulham and Hammersmith did not have a dedicated local evening daily paper. However, there were several weeklies: the *West London Observer*, the *Fulham Chronicle*, and the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*. Use is also made of other papers including the monthly newspaper of the local Labour Party.

Local newspapers form the main evidence source used in this thesis. Supporting them are records from a range of organisations including councils and churches. The records used will demonstrate how local defensive preparations for war developed, the impact of crises, and public's reactions to them. Unfortunately, trade union records for all three case studies are lacking in detail about foreign affairs discussions. However, the Bolton and Fulham case studies benefit from the records of M-O, which studies everyday life in both locations, as well as asking a national panel for responses on specific subjects, thereby helping to bridge the gap between the public's knowledge and what the government referred to as public opinion.¹²⁴ It helped to provide in Tom Harrison's words, 'an anthropology and mass documentation of a vast sector of life, which did not at the time seem to be adequately covered by the media, the arts, the social sciences, and political leaders'. Harrison went on to explain in the introduction to *Living through the Blitz* that the relationship between the observers and the organisation was one of assured anonymity, thereby allowing them to be completely honest¹²⁵ and 'tell M-O things that they were not prepared to tell their closest friends'.¹²⁶

¹²¹ H. R. P. Boorman, *Your Family Newspaper: Golden Jubilee of the Home and Southern Counties Newspaper Proprietors' Federation* (London, 1968): 24.

¹²² A. P. Duncum and Westminster Press Provincial Newspapers, *The Westminster Press Provincial Newspapers* (London, 1952): 19-20, 76.

¹²³ Harris, 'Social Leadership and Social Attitudes in Bolton 1919-1939':355.

¹²⁴ Todman, *Britain's War*: 17.

¹²⁵ T. Harrison, *Living through the Blitz* (London, 1976): 11-14.

¹²⁶ J. Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives Mass-Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, 2010): 6.

This relationship is one of the strengths of using M-O for this type of study, as well as the range of people who wrote for the organisation. The breadth of opinion, whilst not representative of the population, substantially expands the evidence base available for studies of public opinion during the 1937-1939 period. However, the data collection methods used by M-O came in for criticism by the anthropologist, Raymond Firth, who was a Reader in Anthropology at the LSE. He criticised M-O for failing to meet the standards of scientific research,¹²⁷ a criticism reinforced by N. S. Stanley, who provided an in-depth critical analysis of the organisation's methodology in the 1937-1940 period. He found that M-O lacked a coherent research methodology and had no quality control.¹²⁸ The result, as Lucy Noakes argues, is that it is not representative of public opinion.¹²⁹ Another point of concern regarding M-O is the relationship between the organisation and the Labour Party, as the former worked closely with the latter, especially during by-elections. Academic disciplines such as sociology and history continue to debate the value of M-O as a source. For historians, M-O continues to have value as it enabled ordinary people to articulate their views and provides them with a source of information that they would not otherwise be able to access. Recent examples of studies using M-O records include Julie Gottlieb's gendered examination of appeasement¹³⁰ and Carla Pass's examination of a steady growth in opposition to Chamberlain following the declaration of war, which came to the fore just before he resigned in May 1940.¹³¹ For sociologists, M-O continues to be a problematic source, just as it was for Raymond Firth, due to the 'legitimacy' of the data assembled. Hence, as Rachel Hurdley notes, M-O is both a source and a subject for academic research.¹³² From the point of view of this thesis, the value to historians of M-O applies, as it allows researchers (in the words of Jonathan Croall) to 'find out what effect the actions of the rich and famous had on the lower social strata'.¹³³ When combined with other national-level sources, such as letters to *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, Cabinet Papers, Foreign Office records, Hansard, cinema newsreels, private papers and opinion poll data, M-O provides the national context for the local evidence. M-O evidence is also local and can be used in combination with the local sources already mentioned to allow a triangulation of the evidence. This approach for producing case studies is applicable for other areas of the country, thereby adding to the national synthesis of events.

¹²⁷ R. Firth, 'An Anthropologist's View of Mass-Observation', *Sociological Review*, 31, 2 (1939): 170.

¹²⁸ N. S. Stanley, "'The Extra Dimension": A Study and Assessment of the Methods Employed by Mass-Observation in Its First Period, 1937-40' (Ph.D., City of Birmingham Polytechnic, 1981).

¹²⁹ L. Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory and National Identity, 1939-1991* (London, 1998): 80.

¹³⁰ Gottlieb, 'Guilty Women', *Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*.

¹³¹ C. Pass, 'The Lasting Legacy of Munich: British Public Perceptions of Neville Chamberlain During the Phoney War' (MA, Dalhousie University 2014).

¹³² R. Hurdley, 'Synthetic Sociology and the Long Workshop: How Mass Observation Ruined Meta-Methodology', *Sociological Research Online*, 19, 3 (2014).

¹³³ J. Croall, *Don't You Know There's a War On?: The People's Voice 1939-45* (London, 1988): 3.

Using the sources outlined above, the thesis will contain seven chapters. The first four follow the chronological order of events from November 1937 until September 1939. The remaining three are thematic ones, concerned with various aspects of defence preparations, primarily civil defence.

Chapter one examines November 1937 to April 1938 focussing on five specific events. The 1937 Armistice Day ceremonies witnessed an increased attendance compared to previous years despite calls for their abolition. The increased observance had a link to the perceived deterioration in the international situation, which remained in the background until Eden's resignation in February 1938. This occurred after the Farnworth by-election campaign, which had demonstrated a general apathy towards foreign affairs. Eden's resignation began the process of raising awareness, a process that continued a few weeks later when the Anschluss occurred. Three weeks after this came the West Fulham by-election. The national perception of this by-election was that it was a chance to vote on the government's foreign policy. The portrayal reflects the East Fulham by-election five years earlier, but local issues again decided the outcome of the campaign.

Chapter two examines the development of British attitudes towards the Sudeten crisis from the Anschluss until November 1938. The chapter argues that until Chamberlain's first flight, 'mass' opinion was not interested in the subject. The involvement of Chamberlain heightened the tension and made people realise that its outcome would impact upon their daily lives. Chamberlain's flight triggered a period of rapid changes in the 'public mood' rather than in public opinion as restrictions on the information available prevented people being able to form an 'informed' opinion. By the time the crisis was over, the British public had a greater awareness of the state of the national defences and the public mood was determined to prevent a recurrence as the overlapping thematic chapters will demonstrate. The Munich crisis was a major turning point on the road to war.

Chapter three covers the period from Kristallnacht in November 1938 until just after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. The chapter examines the British reaction to Kristallnacht as part of a wider discussion about national attitudes towards the Jews for the whole period covered by the thesis. When combined with the reactions to Munich, a further hardening of opinion towards Germany occurred. The winter months saw rumours circulating about Germany's next move, a question resolved in March 1939 when German troops entered the remainder of Czechoslovakia. This breach of the Munich agreement hastened the hardening of opinion and led to a reorientation

of British foreign policy towards resistance, beginning with the issuing of the guarantee to Poland. Within the period covered by the chapter, there was increased discussion of the role of the Soviet Union and the need to consider it as a potential ally.

Chapter four begins with a discussion of British attitudes towards the Soviet Union, as the government attempted to make an alliance to make the British guarantees effective. This demand came from across the political spectrum, though there was strong resistance from conservative elites, and the failure to achieve it only added to the mistrust of the government, as the adjournment debate at the start of August demonstrated. The focus on this issue represents a move away from the central focus of the thesis but is necessary to account for the change in British policy. Discussions about an alliance continued until the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which sent shockwaves around the world. However, rather than deterring Britain, it only made the country more determined to resist even if opinion remained bewildered by events in the days leading up to the declaration of war.

Chapter five is the first of the thematic chapters. It charts the development of ARP in the three geographical areas and the impact that each crisis had. The Munich crisis was the turning point as it created the public will necessary to accelerate preparations, especially in London, which was woefully behind the rest of the country. Enhanced information is available for London thanks to the work of M-O, which undertook a survey to find out what people thought of ARP in Fulham and why they had volunteered. Related to ARP is the subject of shelters, which forms a specific case study within the chapter. As with preparations generally, the Munich crisis accelerated the development of a shelter policy, though not one that would provide protection for all.

Chapter six discusses the safety of children, a specific subset of civil defence work. This included evacuation, which received little attention prior to the Munich crisis except from the London County Council (LCC). The LCC, without permission from the Home Office, had started to prepare an evacuation scheme in early 1938, which formed the nucleus of the plans implemented during the Munich crisis and received extensive attention during 1939. The public attitude and response to evacuation varied depending upon the designation of each area.

The last chapter considers the idea of national service, with an emphasis on the debate surrounding conscription from March to September 1939. The introduction of peacetime conscription was a measure designed to ensure that Britain had enough trained soldiers and could demonstrate the will

to resist. Debates about conscription were encouraged by local newspapers and from the letters columns various views emerged. However, despite some opposition from the Left, acceptance of the decision occurred in an equivalent way to that of the declaration of war.

Over the course of the seven chapters, it will be demonstrated that public opinion and the 'public mood' changed substantially to one that accepted the possible need to fight Germany, whilst at the same time continuing to hope that a conflict could be avoided.

Chapter 1: A long expected union – November 1937 to April 1938

November 1937 witnessed several crucial events on the road to war. On 5 November, the German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, met his senior military commanders to outline his plans, which included the Anschluss and the takeover of Czechoslovakia. His aide, Colonel Hossbach, recorded the details of the meeting. The Allies at the Nuremberg trials used the Hossbach memorandum – as this document is known – as evidence of Germany's future intentions. Soon afterwards, Hitler met the Lord Chancellor, Lord Halifax, who, prior to his visit had sought the advice of the Foreign Office. Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, wanted Halifax to warn Hitler off Czechoslovakia. Instead, Halifax indicated that Britain would not be averse to peaceful change in Europe.¹³⁴ One way of achieving this would be via an international conference, which the United States President, Franklin Roosevelt, proposed in January 1938. Chamberlain, much to the annoyance of Eden who was on holiday in France, rebuffed the offer. This incident added to an increasingly strained working relationship. Eden reached breaking point in February over a proposal to open negotiations with Italy. He was against this but the Cabinet supported Chamberlain, resulting in Eden's resignation. Halifax replaced him as Foreign Secretary. Soon afterwards the Anschluss occurred, an event that Britain responded to by only making a formal protest. It was against this backdrop that the West Fulham by-election campaign would be undertaken. These events form the context to this chapter, which begins by examining attitudes to Armistice Day in November 1937 before moving on to the Farnworth by-election in January 1938. References to foreign affairs during the campaign revealed the divide between the political parties, a divide that intensified following Eden's resignation. This caused a brief flicker of public interest, revealing a confused state of opinion. The confusion remained during the Anschluss. The combination of these two events and an appeal for ARP volunteers led to an increased emphasis on foreign affairs during the West Fulham by-election campaign. Using the above case studies, the chapter argues that ordinary people displayed a limited interest in foreign affairs, though events were beginning to increase awareness.

Armistice Day was a time to remember the indelible mark that the Great War left on British society. The idea of the 'lost generation' was one of those marks. As time went by, commemoration also occurred on Remembrance Sunday, the Sunday closest to Armistice Day. Adrian Gregory examines the history and development of Armistice ceremonies in *The Silence of Memory*. Gregory argues that prior to the mid-1920s the day was a mixture of remembrance and celebration. This changed

¹³⁴L. G. Schworer, 'Lord Halifax's Visit to Germany, November 1937', *The Historian*, 32, 3 (1970): 362.

after 1926 when a sense of seriousness overtook the celebratory element.¹³⁵ This coincided with the introduction of the Festival of Remembrance to emphasise what Britain owed to those who had lost their lives.¹³⁶ This change occurred just prior to the publication of several works portraying a more personalised and disenchanting side of the conflict than the one that people had come to accept. Gregory goes on to argue that people's reactions to Armistice Day provided an indication of public attitudes to war. He supported this by using M-O data collected in November 1937, an examination of which forms part of this chapter. Gregory's work is part of a wider debate about the meaning of remembrance. Debra Marshall discusses this, referring to Dominik Dendooven's interpretation of the Last Post ceremony held each evening at Ypres in Belgium. To some it is militaristic, whilst others believe that it is a warning about the nature of war.¹³⁷ Ross Wilson would agree with the latter as he refers to the conflict as 'an historical trauma – a lesson in human suffering',¹³⁸ a message prevalent in the 1930s.

The themes highlighted by Gregory, Marshall and Wilson all find some outlet in the Armistice Day observations collected by M-O in November 1937. M-O asked observers to record events between 10.30am and 11.30am. From the data collected, several themes emerge such as the size of crowds (also a feature of local newspapers), poppies, how people felt towards the act of remembrance and an incident at the Cenotaph. Observers based in London reported large crowds, as did the British Gaumont newsreel on 15 November.¹³⁹ Most in the crowds wore the traditional red poppy, though some white poppies representing peace were also present and a source of interest to some in the crowd.¹⁴⁰ Other comments from observers reveal hints about how people felt about the act of remembrance, some of which correlate with the evidence at a local level:¹⁴¹

- Kent housewife, 34 – somehow the utter futility of wars seems to strike me more forcibly than ever just now. What good can it do except take toll of useful lives and create a false standard of security of the future.
- Female Kent boarding house owner – I offer a silent prayer for not only those killed in the wars but for the ones who are about to face another, and those who are at war.

¹³⁵ A. Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford, 1994): 78-9.

¹³⁶ T. A. Ackels, 'Lest We Forget: Exploring Collective Memory in Interwar Britain' (Ph.D., Southern Methodist University, 2009): 3.

¹³⁷ D. Marshall, 'Making Sense of Remembrance', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 5, 1 (2004): 38.

¹³⁸ R. Wilson, 'Framing the Great War in Britain: Modern Mediated Memories,' in *Remembering the First World War*, ed. B. Ziino (London, 2015): 59.

¹³⁹ 'Armistice Day', Newsreel (15 November 1937) Gaumont.

¹⁴⁰ M-O A: DS6, Day Survey, 11 November 1937.

¹⁴¹ M-O A: DS9, Day Survey, 11 November 1937; M-O A: DS66, Day Survey, 11 November 1937; M-O A: DS284, Day Survey, 11 November 1937.

- 24-year-old male engineering machinist from County Durham – I feel very strong about this armistice service. To my mind, it is a first-rate example of British hypocrisy – a government which treats the living heroes of the last war with callous indifference and which subjects its people to the means test is represented here piously paying lip service to those who died for King and country. Felt that this would be the last remembrance service.

In Bedfordshire, local newspapers reported high attendances at services on Remembrance Sunday. At the Priory Church in Dunstable, the neighbouring conurbation to Luton, people were described as ‘fighting to get in’, a scene not witnessed by others attending the service.¹⁴² Large attendances also occurred in Bedford, with the *Bedfordshire Standard* describing them as the largest ever seen.¹⁴³ Yet, alongside reports about large attendances, there was also some discussion about whether Armistice Day should continue. In a letter to the *Luton News*, H. S. Knowles, the chair of Dunstable Old Contemptibles, called upon the young to allow the old one day when they could grieve for their fallen comrades. Knowles went on to warn that the young might yet experience the horrors of war.¹⁴⁴ H. F. Outen, a resident of Mountfield Road in Luton, agreed, stating that there was ‘more apparent reverence and appreciation of the situation than there had been over recent years’. Outen equated this with the deterioration of the international situation.¹⁴⁵

M-O observers in Bolton and reports in the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* told a similar story regarding the numbers paying their respects.¹⁴⁶ Many of those gathered wore poppies, whilst at the Labour Exchange the observer described the scene, ‘when the lights went out all of the clerks stood up whilst the unemployed took off their hats. Silence appears to last about four minutes rather than two. Everything reverted to normal when the lights came back on’.¹⁴⁷ Given these displays, the *Bolton Evening News* speculated about the reason for it. The editorial believed that it was due to the deterioration of the international situation.¹⁴⁸ Some hints about the international situation were made during street conversations recorded by M-O. Working outside the Post Office one observer noted two conversations. The first involved two men, where one stated ‘there has never been a declaration of war whilst the Tories have been in office and there never will. This will stop war’. A

¹⁴² *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 8 November 1937; *Luton News*, 11 November 1937.

¹⁴³ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 12 November 1937.

¹⁴⁴ *Luton News*, 11 November 1937.

¹⁴⁵ *Luton News*, 18 November 1937.

¹⁴⁶ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 12 November 1937.

¹⁴⁷ M-O A: Worktown 27/A, Armistice Day at the Employment Exchange, 11 November 1937.

¹⁴⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 November 1937.

few minutes later, the observer spoke to an ex-serviceman who said, 'I was thinking about how soon we would be joining up again'.¹⁴⁹ These two comments provide a small shred of evidence that some people were aware of the changing nature of the international situation. However, the lack of further background information on those making the comments, prevents any conclusion about whether they were informed opinions.

The crowds witnessed in Bedfordshire and Bolton, also occurred in Fulham and Hammersmith. However, they received only a passing mention.¹⁵⁰ The generational divide was present in Fulham as Reverend Greaves of St John's Church in Walham Green asked the young not to resent those who wished to remember especially amongst the older generation.¹⁵¹ M-O collected statements from children about Armistice Day that demonstrated however, that they understood its meaning with some even praying during the silence for the continuation of peace.¹⁵²

Stanley Storey was one man who did not respect the silence. He broke the silence at the Cenotaph, by calling attention to the hypocrisy of praying for peace but preparing for war. *The Times* reported the incident as having caused anxiety, which M-O reports confirm. The observer reports speculated as to what it might have been: an assassination attempt on the King,¹⁵³ a protest about the military nature of the service,¹⁵⁴ or one against the hypocrisy of the silence.¹⁵⁵ The protest and observers' speculation reflected the purpose of Armistice Day, namely to remind people about the horrors of war and the need to prevent a repetition. The Cenotaph incident received little comment in the three areas.

Armistice Day 1937 witnessed a greater reverence and appreciation of the sacrifices made during the Great War, as witnessed by the crowds described around the country. Some of those attending stated that the international situation was deteriorating and it was necessary to remember the past to prevent a repetition. However, ordinary people would prove to be powerless to do anything about this.

¹⁴⁹ M-O A: Worktown 27/A, Armistice Day 1937, 11 November 1937.

¹⁵⁰ *West London and Fulham Gazette*, 12 November 1937; *West London Observer*, 12 November 1937.

¹⁵¹ *Fulham Chronicle*, 19 November 1937.

¹⁵² M-O A: TC 59/6/A, Why We Have Armistice Day, 16 November 1937.

¹⁵³ M-O A: DS52, Day Survey, 11 November 1937.

¹⁵⁴ M-O A: DS8, Day Survey, 11 November 1937.

¹⁵⁵ M-O A: DS456, Armistice Day, 11 November 1937.

One of the messages preached on Armistice Day was the need for justice to ensure peace. For Labour and Liberal politicians, this was only achievable through the League of Nations and the principle of 'collective security'. Examples include an address by the Liberal leader, Archibald Sinclair, at Bedford School on Armistice Day and another by Edith Summerskill, the prospective Labour candidate for West Fulham, at a packed meeting at Fulham Town Hall.¹⁵⁶ Speakers visiting Bolton included the Labour leader, Clement Attlee and his deputy, Arthur Greenwood. Greenwood attacked the government for basing its foreign policy solely on the national interest, an attack criticised by the *Bolton Evening News* for failing to offer viable alternatives.¹⁵⁷ However, some support existed for the government's position as the end of 1937 approached. Mrs Wells, the wife of Bedford MP Sir Richard Wells, addressed an audience of over 200 at a meeting of the Bedford Conservative Association. Her optimistic tone was the result of private assurances to her husband by Eden that peace was nearer than it had been for a long time. This message received criticism from the *Bedfordshire Times* editorial on 24 December, as it ignored the rise of conflict and that Britain was rearming rather than relying on the League to ensure peace.¹⁵⁸

The respective party positions on foreign affairs featured in the Farnworth by-election campaign in January 1938. Farnworth is located three miles from Bolton and was a predominantly working-class area with connections to the cotton and mining industries. The by-election was triggered by the death of the sitting Labour MP, Guy Rowson, who had been elected in 1935 with a majority of 5,201 and a 51.7% share of the vote on a turnout of 82%.¹⁵⁹ Newspaper coverage of the by-election began on 23 December 1937 when the *Bolton Evening News* profiled the likely candidates.¹⁶⁰ The Labour candidate, George Tomlinson, was active in local government and the trade unions, as well as being the former President of the Farnworth Labour Party. He undertook humanitarian work during the Great War in accordance with his Christian pacifist beliefs and was an ardent supporter of the League.¹⁶¹ His Conservative opponent, Herbert Ryan, a London barrister, was unknown in the local area but described as having excellent credentials.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 13 November 1937; *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 19 November 1937.

¹⁵⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 and 22 December 1937.

¹⁵⁸ *Bedfordshire Times*, 24 December 1937.

¹⁵⁹ 'UK General Election Results November 1935: East Grinstead - Finsbury', <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge35/i07.htm>. [12 December 2013].

¹⁶⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 23 December 1937.

¹⁶¹ F. Blackburn, *George Tomlinson* (London, 1954): 1-28.

¹⁶² *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 7 January 1938.

The campaign itself covered a mixture of local, national, and international issues. The latter featured in Labour's opening speech of the campaign, given by the LCC leader, Herbert Morrison. He accused the government of betraying peace and democracy, themes already established in the Bolton speeches of Attlee and Greenwood. Attlee spoke in Farnworth during January 1938 at a full capacity Empire cinema on the themes of peace and social justice, both of which were required at home and abroad. He accused the government of failing the democratic cause and allowing British prestige to suffer. In addition, Morrison, as well as Tomlinson, spoke on matters relating to unemployment.¹⁶³ The foreign affairs part of the speeches made at this meeting reinforced the party's election literature, which attacked the government and accused Ryan of paying lip service to the League.¹⁶⁴ Tomlinson's speeches on domestic affairs mainly regarded issues affecting the cotton and coal industries. In his first speech, he spoke about holidays with pay as well as international affairs. He accused the government of trying to side step the holidays with pay issue by appointing a committee of inquiry to examine it. He believed that this would be one of the issues in the by-election campaign, along with the level of unemployment.¹⁶⁵ On 18 January, he referred to rearmament, which overlapped the domestic and international spheres. Tomlinson believed that rearmament was necessary but that it diverted funds away from helping to prevent people starving. He also emphasised the League as the alternative to the government's foreign policy.¹⁶⁶ On 19 January, he followed this speech with one that focussed on social security, particularly pensions and savings. The speech also contained an attack on his opponent for his attitude towards the miners.¹⁶⁷ Tomlinson's focus on social issues continued until the end of the campaign, with unemployment one of the main focuses of his campaign meeting speeches on 25 January.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 January 1938; M-O A: Worktown 7B: Labour crusade meeting, Attlee Speech at Unspecified Meeting, n.d; M-O A: Worktown 12H: By-Election, Empire Cinema, Farnworth, 16 January 1938.

¹⁶⁴ M-O A: Worktown 12G: By-Election, Tomlinson's Election Special, January 1938; *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 14 January 1938.

¹⁶⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 January 1938.

¹⁶⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 18 January 1938.

¹⁶⁷ M-O A: Worktown 12H: By-Election, Gestures of Tomlinson, 19 January 1938.

¹⁶⁸ M-O A: Worktown 12H: By-Election, Meeting at Worsley Road Council School, 25 January 1938; M-O A: Worktown 12H: By-Election, Meeting at Harper Green Central School, 25 January 1938.

Figure 6: George Tomlinson speaking at the Empire Cinema¹⁶⁹



Figure 7: Canvassing the Flower Estate¹⁷⁰



¹⁶⁹ 'George Tomlinson Speaking at the Empire Cinema 16 January 1938', <http://boltonworktown.co.uk/photograph/george-tomlinson-4>. [28 April 2016].

¹⁷⁰ 'Canvassing the Flower Estate', <http://boltonworktown.co.uk/photograph/canvassing-the-flower-estate-3>. [28 April 2016].

Herbert Ryan's campaign placed a greater emphasis on foreign rather than domestic affairs. He outlined Chamberlain's policy as protecting British interests and settling disputes by negotiation, a major principle of the League. He viewed the government as having the only logical view on foreign affairs. Ryan attacked the Socialists for wanting to get Britain involved in Abyssinia and Spain, arguing that government policy had prevented this and therefore people should vote for him. Domestically, he believed that the government's record spoke for itself, with fewer people unemployed and rising prosperity.¹⁷¹ At a National Government meeting on 16 January, the speaker, Mr Ramsbottom, attacked Labour for leaving the country in a financial mess. He argued that through the work of the government, exports and savings had increased.¹⁷² Herbert Ryan picked up the theme of improvements at a meeting on 20 January. He spoke about the foundations for prosperity that the government had laid. In addition, he indicated his support for rearmament and the efforts made by the government to keep Britain from becoming involved in the civil war in Spain.¹⁷³ These themes occurred again during a campaign meeting on 25 January.¹⁷⁴

Figure 8: National Government campaign meeting at Co-op Hall, Farnworth¹⁷⁵



M-O's coverage of the by-election resulted in a range of material. This included election ephemera, meeting observations, and some analysis of the canvassing returns. M-O mainly worked for Labour and helped to cement a relationship that had already begun to grow. As part of their work, Tom

¹⁷¹ M-O A: Worktown 12G: By-Election, Election News, January 1938; *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 14 January 1938.

¹⁷² M-O A: Worktown 7D: Conservative Party, Tory Meeting, All Saints, 18 January 1938.

¹⁷³ M-O A: Worktown 12H: By-Election, Conservative Meeting Held in Kearsley Mount Methodist Church, 20 January 1938.

¹⁷⁴ M-O A: Worktown 12H: By-Election, Little Hulton Co-Op Hall Meeting, 25 January 1938.

¹⁷⁵ 'National Government Rally', <http://boltonworktown.co.uk/photograph/national-government-rally-5>. [28 April 2016].

Harrison wanted to study the election returns (presumably canvassing returns). M-O had access to the Labour ones and managed to obtain the Conservative ones by deception. M-O later sold them to the Labour Party, thereby revealing an underhand side to the organisation's work.¹⁷⁶

Figure 9: Conservative Election Poster, Farnworth By-Election January 1938¹⁷⁷



The Farnworth by-election resulted in a victory for Tomlinson, which increased Labour's share of the vote to 59.1% on a turnout of 77.8%, which was the highest of any by-election since 1935.¹⁷⁸ The *Bolton Evening News* did not analyse the precise reason for Tomlinson's victory, but one possible conclusion was the emphasis he placed on domestic affairs. The paper acknowledged Tomlinson's convictions, noting that there were certain subjects where they disagreed.¹⁷⁹ The by-election confirmed the political divide over foreign affairs that was present in the other two geographical areas. Broadly speaking, Conservatives backed the policy that Chamberlain was beginning to pursue, whilst the Opposition placed their faith in the League.

¹⁷⁶ J. Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949* (Oxford, 2013): 46.

¹⁷⁷ 'Conservative Election Poster, Farnworth By-Election January 1938', <http://boltonworktown.co.uk/photograph/election-poster>. [28 April 2016].

¹⁷⁸ *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 4 February 1938.

¹⁷⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 28 January 1938.

The political divisions intensified in February following the resignation of Eden over the question of opening negotiations with Italy. This led to a debate about the future course of British policy.¹⁸⁰ Chamberlain and Eden discussed the opening of talks at a meeting with Count Grandi, the Italian ambassador, who knew following a letter from Ciano, the Italian foreign minister, that 'this was the last moment for talks with England'.¹⁸¹ Chamberlain favoured the immediate opening of talks, whilst Eden argued that evidence of Italian good behaviour was required first, due to previous experience. These differences emerged in Grandi's presence before an adjournment to enable a Cabinet discussion to take place. Most of the Cabinet – including Leslie Burgin – agreed with Chamberlain, leading Eden to resign.¹⁸² This event marked the point that the government finally turned away from the League in favour of bilateral negotiations. Victor Rothwell argued in his biography of Eden that his decline mirrored that of government support for the League.¹⁸³ Eden's resignation triggered a House of Commons debate, which provided further evidence of the political divide. During the debate, twenty-five MPs voiced dissatisfaction, including six Conservatives. Associated with the debate, Labour tabled a motion of censure against the government, a division that the government won despite fifty MPs abstaining. This outcome allowed William Rock to conclude that the level of opposition to the government's policy went far deeper.¹⁸⁴

Debate about Eden's resignation took place in informed circles and the wider country. For example, the LNU wanted to use it to galvanise support for the League,¹⁸⁵ whilst All Souls concluded that it marked a shift in government policy.¹⁸⁶ The national impressions of the crisis can be seen in the BIPO poll for February and data collected by M-O. The BIPO poll found that 71% believed that Eden was right to resign and that 58% of respondents were against Chamberlain's foreign policy.¹⁸⁷ The results of the poll indicated that the public were against Chamberlain, a conclusion that the M-O records neither confirm nor deny as they are somewhat contradictory depending upon the access

¹⁸⁰ For a fuller account see N. Rose, 'The Resignation of Anthony Eden', *Historical Journal*, 25, 4 (1982): 911-31; W. C. Mills, 'The Chamberlain-Grandi Conversations of July-August 1937 and the Appeasement of Italy', *International History Review*, 19, 3 (1997): 594-619.

¹⁸¹ Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*: 144.

¹⁸² The National Archives (TNA): CAB 23/92 6 (38), Cabinet Conclusions, 19 February 1938.

¹⁸³ V. H. Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: A Political Biography, 1931-1957* (Manchester, 1992).

¹⁸⁴ 'British Industries Fair', Newsreel (25 February 1938) Gaumont; W. R. Rock, *Appeasement on Trial: British Foreign Policy and Its Critics, 1938-1939* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1966): 37.

¹⁸⁵ LSE: LNU 2/16, Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee, 22 February 1938.

¹⁸⁶ P. Williamson, 'Appeasement and All Souls: A Portrait with Documents, 1937-1939', *Journal of British Studies*, 45, 3 (2006): 701.

¹⁸⁷ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/A, Cavalcade, 5 March 1938; 'British Institute of Public Opinion', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 4, 1 (1940): 78.

route. The M-O report entitled *Eden Resigns, England Reacts* reported that many of those questioned favoured Eden, which contradicts the records available via Mass Observation Online, which suggest a more even split. The explanation for this is that a lot of early M-O material is missing from the archive.¹⁸⁸ Both the records and the report confirm that most people followed the crisis via newspapers and that interest quickly declined. The comments collected by M-O reflected the political divisions aroused by this event. An unnamed 58-year-old Scottish Conservative MP thought that while Chamberlain would never be loved, he would be respected for his efforts, whilst a working-class girl aged 25 thought that things would not improve until Chamberlain left office. Three further comments in the report stand out. Mrs Bertha Hammond, an Ipswich housewife commented that ‘nobody had spoken to her spontaneously about it and wondered if the international situation is more serious than ordinary folk imagine’. Meanwhile, Dennis Frone from Essex got into conversation with a member of the British Union of Fascists (BUF), who did not think the situation was dangerous and opposed the idea that there would be war within two years. The final comment of note provides an excellent summary of the crisis stating: ‘felt it was always the same with crisis – big outcry, protest meetings but after the first few days, people begin to think themselves quite safe as nothing else had happened’.¹⁸⁹ When taken together, the different elements of public opinion at a national level confirmed the divisions that existed within the country. Parliamentary opinion favoured Chamberlain for the moment despite the misgivings of a large minority of MPs. However, surveys of ordinary people demonstrated a clear support for Eden and the principles that he stood for. This still leaves the question of what was occurring at a local level.

The Parliamentary division on Labour’s motion of censure saw all three Bedfordshire MPs vote for the government. Lennox-Boyd had spoken in the debate, arguing that there was a need to be realistic when it came to diplomacy, a clear expression of opinion praised by the *Luton News*.¹⁹⁰ ‘Democrat’, a resident of Luton, who called on Leslie Burgin to hold a constituency meeting to allow people to express their opinions, did not share the views of the MPs. This appeal came after the letter writer had attended a meeting, which had passed a resolution calling for Chamberlain to resign.¹⁹¹ The requested meeting was not forthcoming. ‘Democrat’ was not alone in expressing opposition to the government. Norman Mickle, the prospective Labour candidate for Bedford called for a general election as the government had moved away from the League-based foreign policy that

¹⁸⁸ SxMOA: 29/5/1/8, Tom Harrisson to Roger Eatwell, 7 June 1972.

¹⁸⁹ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/A, *Eden Resigns, England Reacts*, 1938.

¹⁹⁰ P. Murphy, *Alan Lennox-Boyd: A Biography* (London, 1999): 51; *Luton News*, 24 February 1938.

¹⁹¹ *Luton News*, 3 March 1938.

it had promised at the 1935 general election.¹⁹² However, it is notable that the report of Mickle's speech contained no other reference to the League.

The divisions present in Bedfordshire also occurred in the two London boroughs. Here, William Astor, speaking to the Walham Ward branch of the Conservative Association, expressed his regret at Eden's resignation and emphasised Chamberlain's argument that it was not possible to pursue negotiations on a League basis with non-member countries.¹⁹³ Opposition parties overlooked this point, despite solving disputes by negotiation being one of the League's principles. Astor's opinion was the only one in favour of the government, with opposition being widely reported. Both prospective Labour candidates for the Fulham constituencies, Edith Summerskill and Michael Stewart, along with the women's section of the West Fulham Labour Party, believed that the government had broken its election pledge. The South Hammersmith Labour Party, Hammersmith Young Communists, the *North Hammersmith Citizen*, the *South Hammersmith Citizens*, and Fulham Trades Council joined them.¹⁹⁴ T. H. Gibb, the secretary of Fulham Trades Council, sent the resolution passed at a meeting to the *West London Observer*. It stated:¹⁹⁵

'The Fulham Trades Council, representing the organised workers in the Fulham district, views with alarm the resignation of Mr Anthony Eden from the post of Foreign Secretary. We consider he was jockeyed into this action by some members of the Cabinet who were obviously seeking to solve their problems at the expense of the democratic countries. Further, the government, having broken its election pledge should resign...'

The restrained tone of the resolution followed the standard arguments made on the Left, namely that the government had broken its election promise and should call a general election. Individual letter writers joined the organisations who expressed opposition to the government. One of these, 'Man with a Mop', applauded Eden's work and referred to protests by women in the West End carrying placards stating, 'Chamberlain must go'.¹⁹⁶ This was a rare contribution from outside 'informed' opinion in the two London boroughs.

¹⁹² *Bedfordshire Times*, 25 February 1938.

¹⁹³ *West London and Fulham Gazette*, 4 March 1938.

¹⁹⁴ *Fulham Chronicle*, 4 and 11 March 1938; *West London Observer*, 11 March 1938; *North Hammersmith Citizen*, March 1938; *South Hammersmith Citizen*, March 1938.

¹⁹⁵ *West London and Fulham Gazette*, 11 March 1938.

¹⁹⁶ LSE: Summerskill 4/1, West Fulham By-Election Echoes, 15 April 1938.

Evidence of Conservative support was more prominent in Bolton than the other two areas. Both MPs voted with the government on the motion of censure and refrained from saying that Eden's resignation was a good thing. The Reverend A. W. Fawcett condemned the two MPs, reminding them of the expectation to fulfil their election pledge, not to sustain their party in power. In reply. Entwistle argued that both MPs remained supporters of the League and that a Socialist government would be more dangerous.¹⁹⁷ The restraint shown by the Conservative MPs over Eden's resignation was missing at a Bolton branch meeting of the BUF. The 24 attendees heard the speaker forcefully criticise Eden, when he said 'Eden hates Mussolini and the Nazis. People say they don't trust the dictators yet Eden goes to Russia and shakes hands with Stalin, Litvinov and any other Jew he can find. He will accept their word but not that of Mussolini or Hitler'.¹⁹⁸ This part of the speaker's speech reiterated some of the core beliefs of the BUF. However, the low attendance indicated a lack of support for the BUF in Bolton. The Bolton Labour Party did not share the BUF's joy at Eden's resignation. Prior to their February meeting, they issued a resolution condemning the government's foreign policy. Soon afterwards, Herbert Morrison spoke at a meeting that attracted a large crowd. Some people were unable to get into the meeting, with one lady stating that 'it's not often they fill Spinners Hall, but I think they will because of this Eden business',¹⁹⁹ a comment that indicates an awareness of events. Morrison's speech referred to the confused state of public opinion and went on to declare that although he personally disliked dictatorships, the Soviet Union had always fulfilled its commitments to the League.²⁰⁰ This maintained Labour's advocacy for the League as an alternative to government policy. The League alternative did have some support amongst people who spoke to M-O observers or wrote letters to the *Bolton Evening News*. However, Chamberlain's policy received a similar amount of support. For example, 'T.W.D.' argued on 28 February, that Eden had dictated foreign policy until Chamberlain took office and that Chamberlain deserved the country's support.²⁰¹ These two letters are just some examples that demonstrate how divided opinion was in February 1938.

'Sharply divided', was the verdict of Lord Halifax at the end of August 1938, when reflecting on the state of public opinion during Eden's resignation.²⁰² This verdict was correct at national and local

¹⁹⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 March 1938; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 4 March 1938.

¹⁹⁸ M-O A: Worktown 8A: Fascist activities, Fascist Meeting at the Assembly Rooms, 23 February 1938.

¹⁹⁹ M-O A: Worktown 7B: Labour crusade meeting, Beehive, 22 February 1938.

²⁰⁰ M-O A: Worktown 7B: Labour crusade meeting, Morrison's Speech, 27 February 1938; *Bolton Evening News*, 28 February 1938.

²⁰¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 28 February 1938.

²⁰² TNA: FO800/314, Comments, 29 August 1938.

levels. In all three geographical areas, Conservative opinion supported Chamberlain's course and said very little against Eden. In fact, the only direct criticism of Eden came from the BUF in Bolton and people replying to the M-O directive. Political opponents of the government supported Eden as he stood for the principles of the League, a policy they favoured. This was the case on the Left in Fulham, Hammersmith and Bolton. The wider public, based on opinion polls, the work of M-O, and local newspapers, were confused about the specifics of the crisis but generally favoured the stance taken by Eden, whilst realising that Chamberlain's policy might succeed.²⁰³ The brief spike in public interest is quite striking given the general apathy of the public about politics especially foreign affairs. Part of the explanation for this spike may have been to do with Eden's popularity amongst the electorate.

Following Eden's resignation, Lord Halifax became Foreign Secretary, resulting in the Parliamentary Undersecretary, Rab Butler or Chamberlain answered foreign affairs questions in the Commons. Halifax had barely taken office when an international crisis occurred, the Anschluss. The German takeover of Austria was the culmination of a sequence of events that had been set in motion six weeks earlier after a meeting between the Austrian Chancellor, Kurt Von Schuschnigg and Hitler. During the meeting, Hitler demanded the inclusion of Austrian Nazis into the government, specifically Arthur Seyss-Inquart as Minister of the Interior. On the day after Eden's resignation, a statement in the Commons outlined the details. However, despite several attempts by Labour, they were unable to obtain a clear statement of the British position from Sir John Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.²⁰⁴ Following increasing disturbances caused by the Austrian Nazis, Schuschnigg called a plebiscite to decide Austria's future. This infuriated Hitler, who ordered his generals to prepare for an invasion of Austria if cancellation of the plebiscite did not occur. Schuschnigg refused Hitler's demands and resigned, leaving Seyss-Inquart able to ask Hitler to help restore order in Austria. German troops crossed the frontier on 12 March to a warm reception. Meanwhile, the German Foreign Minister and former ambassador to London, Joachim Von Ribbentrop, was attending his farewell luncheon. As news reached London, Chamberlain and Halifax expressed their concerns to him before making an ineffective formal protest, as there was nothing more **that** the government could do. However, the Cabinet did discuss what steps it could take in the future, including increased rearmament and stronger diplomatic language. Neither found favour with Chamberlain, as he wished to avoid giving the impression that the country was on the brink of

²⁰³ *Bolton Evening News*, 22 February 1938.

²⁰⁴ Hansard, HC Debs. Vol 332, Column 6-12 (21 February 1938).

war.²⁰⁵ Intermingled with international events during the weeks following Eden's resignation were two defence related announcements. On 2 March, the BBC news bulletin featured a report on the defence white paper, which outlined progress including a note that the supply of gas masks would be complete by the end of the year.²⁰⁶ A few days later, Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary, broadcast about ARP and the need to ensure that England was prepared.²⁰⁷ Both announcements were likely to have had an impact.

The Anschluss reignited the public interest, with M-O observers reporting that people who did not normally discuss politics were doing so. Two observers, Beryl Webb from Essex and C. R. Woodward from Middlesex, categorised the reactions of those around them. The elderly and middle-aged, particularly women, feared war, whilst younger members of the public did not seem alarmed at the prospect. For example, Beryl Webb overheard the discussion of some middle-aged women, the chief speaker of whom believed that 'war was too terrible to think about'.²⁰⁸ Such comments once again revealed awareness amongst people about where events could lead.

The Anschluss itself coincided with the end of Bedford Peace Week. The prospective Labour candidate for Hammersmith South, W. T. Adams, addressed the closing meeting. Adams urged the formation of a united front, a view that differed from Norman Mickle, who referred to the Anschluss as 'the first fruits of the government's decision to side with the dictators'.²⁰⁹ The report of the rally contained no indication of the crowd's reaction. Labour's criticism of the government continued in Luton, where the prospective candidate, Mr F. Kerran, viewed the Anschluss as a serious development and predicted that war would occur later in the year. W. S. Donson, a resident of Marsh Road in Luton, agreed with this prediction in a letter to the *Luton News*, given government policy.²¹⁰ By contrast, 'Had Some', a resident of Hemel Hempstead, was more concerned with the attitude of a previous correspondent, A. Shaw of Carisbrooke Road in Luton, who wanted a greater level of isolation and appeasement.²¹¹ Shaw's letter was not one that clearly supported Chamberlain's policy, and indications of support for the government are missing from the reported

²⁰⁵ TNA: CAB 23/92 13(38), Cabinet Conclusions, 14 March 1938.

²⁰⁶ BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC): BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 2 March 1938.

²⁰⁷ BBC WAC: R51/13/1, The Citizen and Air Raids, 5 March 1938.

²⁰⁸ M-O A: DS847, Report on Observations of Public Attitude to International Situation During the Week Following the German Occupation of Austria, March 1938; M-O A: DS572, Looking Back on the Annexation of Austria by Germany, March 1938.

²⁰⁹ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 15 March 1938.

²¹⁰ *Luton News*, 24 March 1938.

²¹¹ *Luton News*, 17 and 24 March 1938.

reactions in Bedfordshire. Instead, government supporters focussed on Czechoslovakia, a topic discussed in the next chapter.

Support for the government was more obvious in Fulham, with Astor reaffirming his backing and urging increased rearmament. The limited Conservative response differed from Labour's, which was strongly against Chamberlain, especially as expressed in the pages of the *North Hammersmith Citizen*. A selection of articles in the April edition blamed Chamberlain directly for Eden's resignation, called for an alliance with the Soviet Union, and demanded a firm stand in order to maintain peace.²¹² The call to work collectively with other countries received support from the North Hammersmith Labour Party, the Co-operative Party and 'Another Hammersmith Voter'.²¹³ In a letter to the *West London Observer*, 'Another Hammersmith Voter' called for Britain to work with France, Spain, the USA and the Soviet Union.²¹⁴ The last of these options would prove to be problematic for Britain, when she came to seek an alliance a year later. However, the main reaction to the Anschluss in Fulham and Hammersmith came during the West Fulham by-election.

The Anschluss revived public interest in foreign affairs in Bolton, where over 600 people attended the annual meeting of the Bolton Conservative Association. Addressing the meeting, Cyril Entwistle described the grim atmosphere in Parliament as resembling August 1914. Prior to his speech, the Association chair, Colonel Grierson, urged the young to support the government. He continued by saying that whilst war was not imminent, the country had to be prepared.²¹⁵ The government's response to the Anschluss received little support in the letters column of the *Bolton Evening News*. 'Scotty' was one letter writer who did support the government for maintaining a clear policy and attacked the socialists for their inconsistencies of wanting intervention, only then to attack the government as warmongers.²¹⁶ The Left in Bolton responded with further criticism of the government. 'Candidus', writing in the *Bolton Citizen* – the newspaper of the Bolton Labour Party – described the invasion as a 'triumph for gangster diplomacy'.²¹⁷ The *Bolton Evening News* editorial and letter writers adopted this tone. For example, J. B. O'Hara, one of the leaders of the local labour movement, criticised the government for having 'ideological objections to alliances with workers'²¹⁸

²¹² *North Hammersmith Citizen*, April 1938.

²¹³ *North Hammersmith Citizen*, March 1938.

²¹⁴ *West London Observer*, 18 March 1938.

²¹⁵ M-O A: Worktown 7D: Conservative Party, Derby Hall, Conservative Meeting, 24 March 1938.

²¹⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 25 March 1938.

²¹⁷ M-O A: Worktown 7C: Labour Party, *Bolton Citizen*, March 1938.

²¹⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 March 1938.

presumably a reference to the Soviet Union. However, the main attack was once again the failure of the government to adhere to its election pledge, as referred to by J. M. Grove.²¹⁹ This highlighted the question of what British policy should be. The letters published by the *Bolton Evening News* during this period demonstrate a lively interest in current affairs, which was noted as early as 14 March in the 'Town Topics' column.²²⁰

One M-O researcher, Brian Barefoot, produced summaries relating to conversations overheard around the town a couple of days after the Anschluss, as well as in response to a questionnaire. The references made demonstrated a range of opinions from the belief that Austria belonged to Germany to the likelihood that there would soon be war. The overheard conversations only numbered 12.²²¹ The second approach, asking specific questions, generated around 100 replies. The three questions asked people to state what they thought of the situation, how it affected Britain, and what could be done about it. Of the 76 replies to the first question, 51 stated that the situation looked bad, which included 11 references to Hitler. Question 2 received 100 replies, of which the majority indicated that events had made war either certain or possible. Several comments relating to this question were included in Barefoot's analysis, including a man of who stated that 'it will in the end. He'll go for Czechoslovakia next, then the Mediterranean. Then we'll get involved'. Another respondent, a man of 60, believed that war was about two years away, whilst a woman of 50 stated 'I imagine if Hitler does anything against Czechoslovakia that war will start'. Answers to the third question resulted in most people giving an impersonal response with several comments aimed firmly at Hitler. A woman of 40 stated 'shows Mr Chamberlain what Hitler and Mussolini really are...they're both robbers...ought to be shot', whilst a man of 50 said 'tell Hitler we've had enough...tell him any more of that and we'll bloody well show him what we can do'. The responses to the questions demonstrate that there was some understanding of the international situation, including the likelihood of Hitler's next target being Czechoslovakia. The comments directed at Hitler were part of the start of a process that would increase over time, whereby the public showed an increasing dislike for him.²²²

Emerging from the three geographical areas and the national discussion of Eden's resignation and

²¹⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 23 March 1938.

²²⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 March 1938.

²²¹ SxMOA: 32/7/1, Austria Day-Survey 2, 9 April 1938.

²²² SxMOA: 32/7/1, Analysis of the Austria Day-Surveys, 9 April 1938.

the Anschluss, was the question of which policy Britain should pursue. For the Conservatives and other government supporters the answer was placing faith in appeasement and rearmament. This was evident in the case of Lennox-Boyd, who used a speech at Sandy Conservative Club following Eden's resignation to praise the new policy direction, one endorsed by A. Shaw in the *Luton News*.²²³ However, John Haslam, one of Bolton's Conservative MPs, also hoped that Chamberlain would consider the merits of Churchill's idea of a 'Grand Alliance', which was loosely based upon the League's collective security principle.²²⁴ The League was the favoured policy of the government's opponents, particularly on the Left in Bolton, where it received support from Bolton Left Book Club and Councillor Knowles (Liberal).²²⁵ 'T.W.D.' criticised it as not being credible, due to the realities of the situation and the need for armament to make the collective ideal workable.²²⁶ Mentions of the League as an alternative policy had occurred in Bedfordshire but not to the same extent as in Bolton with only the odd reference in the aftermath of the Anschluss from the likes of L. C. Turner, the secretary of the local LNU branch.²²⁷

Discussion about alternative policies in Fulham occurred during the West Fulham by-election. This was triggered by the death of the sitting Conservative MP, Cyril Cobb, who had won the seat in 1935, with a majority of 3,483 on a turnout of 69.87%.²²⁸ The by-election attracted national attention as it was the first one after the Anschluss and therefore seen as a chance for the electorate to give their verdict on the government's foreign policy.²²⁹ The two candidates in the by-election were Dr Edith Summerskill (Labour) and John Busby (Conservative).

Penny Summerfield and Julie Gottlieb discuss Summerskill's candidature, highlighting her main concerns as women and children's health, both of which meant that she had the ear of female voters.²³⁰ This was important in Fulham due to the gender balance. However, she began her campaign with a 53-minute speech attacking the government's foreign policy, arguing that League collective security was the only way to maintain peace.²³¹ The initial emphasis on foreign affairs

²²³ *Luton News*, 17 March 1938.

²²⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 18 March 1938.

²²⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 18 March 1938; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 14 April 1938.

²²⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 28 February 1938.

²²⁷ *Luton News*, 7 April 1938.

²²⁸ 'UK General Election Results November 1935: Flint-Gravesend'.

²²⁹ S. Reeve, 'West Fulham Fights and Beats the Appeasers: The 1938 West Fulham By-Election', <http://www.labour-heritage.com/spring-2011.php>. [12 December 2013].

²³⁰ P. Summerfield, 'Our Amazonian Colleague: Edith Summerskill's Problematic Reputation,' in *Making Reputations: Power, Persuasion and the Individual in Modern British Politics*, ed. J. V. Gottlieb and R. Toye (London, 2005): 135; Gottlieb, 'We Were Done the Moment We Gave Women the Vote,' 162-3.

²³¹ M-O A: TC46/2/A, Report on Meeting in Fulham Baths, 24 March 1938.

continued. On 28 March, she attacked on her opponent's policy, which she considered suicidal. Linked to this was criticism that armaments spending prevented spending on improving social conditions, thereby ignoring the link between armaments and security.²³² Foreign affairs continued to remain an important theme at Labour meetings but they soon began to concentrate on domestic affairs. Work undertaken by M-O on Labour's behalf revealed that people were more interested in domestic affairs and that both sides had overestimated the importance of foreign affairs. Therefore, Tom Harrisson advised Labour to change its focus.²³³ The change in emphasis was seen in Summerskill's speeches on 29 and 31 March, with nearly half of the time being spent on domestic affairs compared with only a couple of minutes on 24 March.²³⁴ Segments of her speeches continued to be attacks on the government's foreign policy and advocacy for the League, which drew some shouts of 'hear hear' from her audiences.²³⁵ The importance of domestic affairs was clear to Summerskill by the time of her campaign meeting at Fulham Baths on 4 April, attended by over 700 people. Despite this, references to foreign affairs continued.²³⁶

Figure 10: Edith Summerskill campaigning in West Fulham, 1938²³⁷

²³² M-O A: TC46/2/A, Dr Summerskill, 29 March 1939.

²³³ Hinton, *The Mass Observers*: 94.

²³⁴ M-O A: TC46/1/B, Subject Matter of Speeches, 1938.

²³⁵ M-O A: TC46/1/B, Cripps Meeting - Reactions, 1 April 1938.

²³⁶ M-O A: TC46/2/1, Fulham Baths, 4 April 1938.

²³⁷ LSE: Summerskill 2/23, Edith Summerskill Campaigning in West Fulham, 1938.



Figure 11: Election poster, Fulham West²³⁸



The election ephemera reflected the perceived importance of foreign affairs to the campaign. M-O's analysis found that 4 out of 14 Labour leaflets were devoted entirely to foreign affairs and coverage

²³⁸ 'Election Posters, Fulham West', <http://boltonworktown.co.uk/photograph/election-posters-fulham-west>. [28 April 2016].

accounted for 228 out of 382 column inches of text during the campaign. The Conservatives produced only half the amount of column inches, though the same percentage was devoted to foreign affairs. A most detailed breakdown can be seen in Figure 12.²³⁹

Figure 12: Analysis of election literature

ANALYSIS OF ELECTION LITERATURE					
LABOUR.	Col.Ins.	Foreign.	Home.	Des.	Cons.
Ex.					
1.	9.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-
2.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
3.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	-	3	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
4.	8	8	-	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
5.	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
6.	120	134 $\frac{1}{2}$	71 $\frac{1}{2}$	67 $\frac{1}{2}$	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
7.	26 $\frac{3}{4}$	15	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
8.	120	120	-	28	54
9.	2	2	-	-	-
10.	14	14	-	-	-
11.	7	2	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	1.
12.	8	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	-	-	-
13.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-
14.	25	20	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
	<u>382$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>228$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>90$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>105$\frac{1}{2}$</u>
Conservative.					
CONSERVATIVE:					
15.	8	5	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	3
16.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	-	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1
17.	3	1	-	-	-
18.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	-	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	-
19.	151 $\frac{1}{2}$	94 $\frac{1}{2}$	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 $\frac{1}{2}$
20.	31 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
	<u>208</u>	<u>125$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>20$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>20</u>
Totals:	<u>590$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>354</u>	<u>97$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>153$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>125$\frac{1}{2}$</u>

BY-ELECTIONS 1936-1947, January 1936 - December 1947, © Mass Observation Archive. University of Sussex Special Collections. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Canvassers discovered on the day before polling day that electors had ignored them. Of those they spoke to, women acknowledged receipt of the leaflets and despite not having read them, indicated that there were likely to vote for Summerskill, with one admitting that she thought Eden had been correct.²⁴⁰ The *Daily Star* had picked up the indication that the female vote favoured Summerskill, noting that some women who normally voted Conservative had written to Summerskill to say that

²³⁹ M-O A: TC46/1/C, Election Propaganda, 1938.

²⁴⁰ M-O A: TC46/1/B, Cartayne Road, 5 April 1938; M-O A: TC46/1/B, Edenhurst Avenue, 5 April 1939.

they would be voting for her.²⁴¹ Unfortunately, none of the letters has survived in Summerskill's personal papers but the evidence does support Gottlieb's conclusion referred to earlier.

The Conservative candidate, John Busby, was the managing director of a coal merchants' in Fulham and stood against Attlee in the Limehouse constituency at the 1935 general election.²⁴² As the election ephemera suggests, he placed a strong emphasis on foreign affairs throughout his campaign. At his adoption meeting, he expounded the virtues of the government's foreign policy for 67 minutes as part of his 75-minute speech. This had halved by the time of his meetings on 29 and 31 March.²⁴³ The 29 March speech called for unity, increased defence preparations, and was critical of Labour's attitude.²⁴⁴ In a further speech at Cobb's Hall, he described England as 'the greatest country', to which a member of the audience retorted, 'we are a country of Mickey Mouses'.²⁴⁵ This gave an indication of how some viewed the government's foreign policy. The subject of foreign affairs continued to dominate at his campaign meeting on 4 April, attended by 250 people. The audience heard him once again praise the government's foreign policy, though nobody cheered when he sat down after having made a statement about the National Government keeping the country at peace.²⁴⁶

With both candidates placing a heavy emphasis on foreign affairs, they shared the platform at a meeting held under the auspices of the local LNU branch on how to safeguard peace. Both candidates stuck to their party lines, though Busby argued in his speech that the government had adhered to the principles of the League but felt that collective security was not a viable way to achieve peace. A letter published in the *West London and Fulham Gazette* from Chamberlain to Busby reinforced this message.²⁴⁷

The campaign provided M-O with the opportunity to collection information from the electors of Fulham, including comments on polling day. The comments provided as part of this indicated a sense that Summerskill was going to win, as the area was working class and she understood what

²⁴¹ LSE: Summerskill 4/1, Tory Eve of the Poll Qualms in Fulham.

²⁴² M-O A: TC46/1/C, National and Conservative Candidate: John Busby, 1938.

²⁴³ M-O A: TC46/1/B, Subject Matter of Speeches, 1938.

²⁴⁴ M-O A: TC46/1/B, Conservative Meeting, School Hall, 29 March 1938.

²⁴⁵ LSE: Summerskill 4/1, West Fulham By-Election.

²⁴⁶ M-O A: TC46/1/B, Busby Meeting at Parson's Green, 4 April 1938.

²⁴⁷ *West London and Fulham Gazette*, 1 April 1938; M-O A: TC46/1/C, West Fulham Election News, 1938.

was going on. Examples of this and comments about foreign affairs included:²⁴⁸

- Man aged 20-25 – I'd like to see her get in. It'll bugger up old Hitler and Mussolini.
- Two working-class plumbers aged 25-30 – comments about the Fascists winning in Spain and that Chamberlain backs them up. Thinks that Chamberlain ought to be got rid of.
- Conversation in a café with man 26, and the proprietor – man stated that 'felt it was an important election as would show if people were behind the Prime Minister or not'. The proprietor agreed with this statement.

The comments about foreign affairs are surprising given that most people questioned in the area during the by-election placed a greater emphasis on domestic affairs. M-O's research found that Conservative voters and older men displayed a greater interest in foreign affairs. Those who commented recognised the tense international situation and hoped that Chamberlain's policy would succeed, though there was a growing mistrust towards Hitler. One man commented that 'it is time to kick Hitler in his pants'.²⁴⁹ The comments M-O recorded placed international events within an individual's terms of reference.

The by-election resulted in a victory for Summerskill. She received 52.2% of the vote and a majority of 1,400. The Left-wing press portrayed this as a vote against the government, a view shared by 'Vox Populi', who claimed that the result reflected the will of the people of West Fulham. This letter writer indicated that there was evidence of the dislike of the government's foreign policy as the words 'Chamberlain must go', were written on the pavement.²⁵⁰ The *Evening Standard* challenged the conclusion of the Left-wing press, arguing that Busby suffered due to a lower turnout than at the general election.²⁵¹ The *Fulham Chronicle* and the *West London Observer* took the view that with so much emphasis on foreign affairs, it was difficult to judge the candidates on domestic affairs despite their importance to the electorate.²⁵² This judgment is a fair reflection of the information available from various evidence sources.

The words scrawled on the pavement were just one of the signs that by April 1938 public awareness

²⁴⁸ M-O A: TC46/2/B, Conversation, 6 April 1938; M-O A: TC46/2/B, Two Working Class Men, Plumbers 25-30, 6 April 1938; M-O A: TC46/2/B, Conversation in Snack Bar, Fulham Palace Road, 6 April 1938.

²⁴⁹ M-O A: FR A7, West Fulham By-Election, 1938.

²⁵⁰ LSE: Summerskill 4/1, West Fulham By-Election Echoes,

²⁵¹ LSE: Summerskill 4/1, Fulham Fallacies.

²⁵² LSE: Summerskill 4/1, Out and About; LSE: Summerskill 4/1, Gossip of the Week.

of foreign affairs was stirring, an awareness that can be loosely associated with the manifest reverence for the fallen, on Armistice Day in November 1937. The reverence of the crowds demonstrated an appreciation for the sacrifices made, which the *Bolton Evening News* linked to the deteriorating international situation. The comment made by one person in Bolton about joining up again, was a further reflection of this. However, these connections do not tell us much about the attitudes of people in the geographical areas towards war. Unlike Gregory's wider study, the local evidence does not have a broad enough base to draw any firm conclusions on this question.

The references made around Armistice Day to the international situation demonstrated that public interest in foreign affairs was limited at this point. This situation continued during the Farnworth by-election in January 1938, which Labour's George Tomlinson won. Whilst foreign affairs did feature as part of his campaign, he placed an emphasis on domestic affairs, particularly those with connections to local industries. The campaign itself revealed a clear division between the two main political parties with Conservatives favouring Chamberlain's emerging brand of appeasement and Labour supporting the League.

Public interest in foreign affairs increased dramatically in February, when Eden, who was popular with the electorate, resigned. This sudden increase fell away just as dramatically. However, the spike in interest was enough to reveal a confused and uninformed public that relied on newspapers to provide a lead in terms of opinion formation in times of crises. Published opinion during this period, in the form of articles and letters, reflected the divisions within the national state of opinion. Conservatives and National Liberals supported Chamberlain but did not attack Eden following his resignation. The Left shared this trait but opposed Chamberlain's policy. The opposition of the Left received the majority of the coverage in Fulham and Bolton. However, the Left in Bolton took a different view from the editorial column of the *Bolton Evening News*. The Left favoured a League based policy, whilst the paper did not believe that Chamberlain's policy was in the long-term interests of the country but did not clearly state an alternative to it. Opinion polls and M-O's findings added to the confused state of public opinion. These expressions of what Tom Harrison termed 'private opinion' indicated support for Eden and opposition to Chamberlain's brand of appeasement. However, the strength of the underlying opposition to Chamberlain's policy was not sufficient to become residual opinion and it therefore failed to attract the attention of elite opinion leaders.

The public's interest in foreign affairs reignited a few weeks later when the Anschluss occurred. The immediate reaction in Bedfordshire and Fulham was less than in Bolton, though the divisions

highlighted by Eden's resignation remained. Greater interest occurred in Bolton in the form of meetings and an acknowledgement in the *Bolton Evening News* that people were discussing the situation in the street. These discussions involved two policy options – appeasement and collective security – both of which contained elements of League principles. However, the Left did not recognise this factor within Chamberlain's version of appeasement.

The clearest evidence of the divisions within the country occurred during the West Fulham by-election. This, like the East Fulham one in 1933, was portrayed as a chance to give a verdict on the government's foreign policy. However, people were more interested in domestic affairs and these had a greater influence on the result as confirmed by data collected by M-O. Despite this, the candidates placed an emphasis on foreign affairs as witnessed in their election addresses, election ephemera, and newspaper coverage. The primacy of domestic affairs did not mean that people were not aware of foreign affairs, which tended to interest older men and Conservative voters more than women. Women were more interested in domestic affairs since they had a greater impact on their daily lives.

The findings summarised in the previous paragraphs confirm several points within the existing historiography. Crowson in his study of Conservative parliamentary dissent refers to Churchill's point about Eden's resignation meaning the loss of the only popular member of the government.²⁵³ Data from BIPO and M-O confirms that Eden was popular with the electorate and validate Dorothy Thompson's assessment in her 1939 book, *Let the Record Speak* that 'if the poll last week of the British Institute of Public Opinion is to be believed, the man in the street is much more on the side of Eden than Chamberlain'.²⁵⁴ Further confirmation of the existence of opposition to Chamberlain's policy comes from the words on the pavement described by 'Vox Populi'. These examples demonstrate why it is important to study national and local sources together to increase historical understanding of an event. Taken together they help to challenge existing writing on this period, which downplays the level of opposition to Chamberlain's policy.

In relation to the questions posed in the introduction to the thesis, this period was one where there was a very minor delay between national and local discussion of events, as Eden's resignation and the Anschluss occurred suddenly. However, there were some differences in opinion between the three geographical areas. Reports indicated that people took an interest in events in the days

²⁵³ Crowson, 'Conservative Parliamentary Dissent over Foreign Policy During the Premiership of Neville Chamberlain: ' 323.

²⁵⁴ D. Thompson, *Let the Record Speak* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939): 144.

following Eden's resignation and again during the Anschluss. This interest did not necessarily result in expressions of opinion about the government's foreign policy. 'Informed' and 'published' opinion undertook this role, revealing a clear divide between the political parties and in the case of Bolton, a clear indication of the local newspaper's opinion. These divisions were on display in the other two geographical areas. Thanks to the work of M-O during the West Fulham by-election, further confirmation of public awareness, though not necessarily expressions of opinion about foreign affairs, is available. The events of this period were not a turning point regarding public opinion but they did mark the start of a slow growth in public awareness of foreign affairs and the international situation. This interest was confused and divided but has a strong enough evidence base to add credence to Adamthwaite's argument that opposition did exist in early 1938. However, it would take a dramatic event that would have a direct impact on the lives of every citizen for this opposition to emerge vocally and harden to the point that British policy could become one of resistance. This event would be the Munich crisis.

Chapter 2: Escalation and Escape – March-November 1938

The strategic changes resulting from the Anschluss meant that Czechoslovakia became Germany's next target. The changes allowed Germany to circumvent Czechoslovakia's natural and border defences. The border areas contained the Sudetenland, which was home to a large ethnic German minority, who had suffered during the Great Depression. This added to the sense of grievance that the German minority had towards the government in Prague, which had failed to implement the nationalities legislation promised in 1919. Hitler used these grievances in his quest to take over Czechoslovakia following the Anschluss, resulting in a prolonged period of tension. This worsened in May following reports of German troop movements. In response, the Czech government called up one class of reservists, and Britain warned Germany that it should not rely on Britain remaining uninvolved. The crisis left Hitler feeling aggrieved, prompting him to order his generals to finalise plans for invading Czechoslovakia in the autumn. It also highlighted the danger faced by Britain and France due to France's alliance with Czechoslovakia. Accordingly, they both stepped up their pressure on Prague to reach a settlement. This included the dispatch of Lord Runciman, the former President of the Board of Trade, to investigate and propose a solution, but international events overtook Runciman's work. At the Nazi Party rally at Nuremberg in September, Hitler left the door open to the possibility of a negotiated settlement. This was enough to prompt Chamberlain to hold three meetings with him to discuss the orderly transfer of the Sudetenland to Germany. These efforts culminated in the Munich agreement following a period of dramatic mood swings in Britain between optimism and despair. The avoidance of war brought a huge sigh of relief but acted as a wake-up call, triggering the beginnings of a change in the national mood towards one of ensuring that the country was prepared for the future.

This chapter examines the period from late March until Armistice Day, focussing on reactions to the development of British policy relating to Czechoslovakia with an emphasis on the period surrounding the Munich agreement. Prior to this period, the public remained uninterested in the development of events. Public awareness of the severity of the situation began properly with the announcement of Chamberlain's first flight to Germany. From here onwards, the public mood fluctuated. The emphasis will be on mood rather than opinion because the lack of information prevented an informed public opinion from developing. The chapter will demonstrate that the mood swings and viewpoints expressed in the existing literature occurred in all three geographical areas before the onset of a period of sombre reflection.

Following the Anschluss, the British government realised that Czechoslovakia would be Germany's next target and began to consider British policy accordingly. In 1932, the British Minister in Prague, Joseph Addison, had warned that to achieve European peace, Czechoslovakia's frontiers would require alteration. In 1936, the government remained reluctant to become involved since this area was not a vital British interest.²⁵⁵ This, along with the desire to retain freedom of action, meant that policy remained vague and avoided definite commitments. Chamberlain reiterated this position on 24 March but did offer British assistance in finding a solution. The vagueness and nature of the British offer reflected an undecided public opinion on the subject. The BIPO poll for March 1938 found that only 33% favoured a British promise to assist, against 43% who did not support the idea and 24% who offered no opinion.²⁵⁶ This last statistic adds to the findings of the previous chapter that British opinion was confused.

The content of Chamberlain's speech on 24 March mirrored opinions expressed a few days earlier by Lennox-Boyd at the AGM of the Mid-Bedfordshire Women's Conservative Association. He argued that there should be no British guarantee of Czechoslovakia, because he did not believe in 'the strict maintenance of the frontiers fixed by the Treaty of Versailles, as a British interest'.²⁵⁷ His speech caused controversy following his recent appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour. Questions were forthcoming on this in Parliament, as German radio had reported it as a statement of government policy. Lennox-Boyd duly apologised to the House for these comments but was subject to intense scrutiny by the Opposition due to the international situation. Lennox-Boyd was not the only Bedfordshire MP to express views of this nature. Sir Richard Wells joined him. In a speech at the Kempston Constitutional Club, Wells argued that the fundamental aim of British policy was to keep the peace, though not at any price.²⁵⁸ This suggests that there was a limit to any possible changes. Opposing both MPs was Norman Mickle. During a whist drive held by the Harpur Ward committee of the Bedford Labour Party, he argued that the government should have made a bold statement aimed at deterring German actions. R. L. Poirier, a Frenchman living in Britain, and 'H.A.F.', a resident of the village of Harlington about five miles from Luton, added to this criticism in the *Luton News*. Both writers implied that the government's policy went against the principles of

²⁵⁵M. Cornwall, 'The Rise and Fall of a Special Relationship?: Britain and Czechoslovakia, 1930-48,' in *What Difference Did the War Make?*, ed. H. Jones and B. Brivati (Leicester, 1993): 132-5.

²⁵⁶'British Institute of Public Opinion', 75-82. This article does not have an author and all future references are just 'British Institute of Public Opinion'

²⁵⁷ Bedfordshire Archives (BA): Z987/1/1/17, Women's Annual General Meeting, 19 March 1938; *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 21 March 1938.

²⁵⁸ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 1 April 1938.

the League and would destroy collective security. They believed that obtaining a temporary peace would do more damage in the longer term.²⁵⁹

The political divisions highlighted in Bedfordshire were evident during the West Fulham by-election, as described in the previous chapter. Away from the campaign, Labour continued its criticism of the government's foreign policy. The *East Fulham Citizen*, Labour's constituency newspaper, criticised the government for a continuing lack of clarity and failing to draw a line in the sand.²⁶⁰ Councillor De Palma, the chair of the ARP committee, added to this by suggesting that voters in the constituency did not like their MP's support for government policy.²⁶¹ However, such criticisms were not forthcoming based upon the lack of letters to local newspapers.

Bolton's interest in foreign affairs remained high. The *Bolton Evening News* reiterated its concerns about Eden's resignation, arguing that Britain needed to be clear that it would not tolerate lawlessness. However, it failed to state a policy that would prevent this from occurring.²⁶² One way of helping to prevent lawlessness would be to achieve a degree of preparation and national unity, a message Mr Taylor, the retiring President of the Bolton Chamber of Commerce, urged at the AGM.²⁶³ Achieving unity was one of the aims of a protest meeting held by the Bolton branch of the Left Book Club to protest against the government's foreign policy, though members of the Bolton Conservative Association disrupted it by handing out leaflets arguing for the opposing point of view.²⁶⁴ The Left Book Club meeting was one of a number that discussed foreign affairs during April. Another was a meeting of the Bolton Women's Liberal Association, where the speaker, Gretton Ward from Northwich, spoke on foreign affairs. He argued that increased armaments did not lead to peace. At the end of their report on the meeting, the *Bolton Evening News* reported that those leaving the meeting commented that they felt they had learnt something.²⁶⁵ The underlying message of Gretton Ward's talk was the desire to maintain peace, a desire that an M-O observer overheard a woman express at the annual atlas exhibition, when she said 'the common people don't want war.

²⁵⁹ *Luton News*, 7 April and 12 May 1938.

²⁶⁰ *East Fulham Citizen*, April 1938.

²⁶¹ LSE: Summerskill 4/1, Bluffing Mr Astor, 6 May 1938.

²⁶² *Bolton Evening News*, 21 March 1938.

²⁶³ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 April 1938.

²⁶⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 8 April 1938; Bolton Local History Centre (BLHC): FDC/1/3/7, Bolton Women's Conservative Association Meeting, 26 April 1938.

²⁶⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 29 April 1938.

It's the politicians telling us that they are making it safe for democracy and all that'.²⁶⁶

The discussions about British foreign policy continued to indicate a divide between the political parties. Contributions from others were limited despite meetings taking place that enabled people to learn more about the international situation. The aim on all sides was to maintain peace but the question was how to achieve this. The League remained the favoured option of the Left, though their emphasis was on attacking the government's policy rather than promoting an alternative.

While the domestic debate continued, the Sudeten situation began to develop. On 24 April, Konrad Henlein, the leader of the Sudeten German Party, outlined his demands in a speech at Karlsbad. Foreign journalists did not attend this event, which prevented them from reporting the actual text of the speech.²⁶⁷ Three days later, British and French ministers met in London to discuss the situation. The French Prime Minister, Edouard Daladier, stated 'that the peace of Europe could only be maintained if Britain and France were clear about their intentions to protect the rights and liberties of people'.²⁶⁸ A demonstration of this occurred on 20 and 21 May when rumoured troop movements prompted the Czech government to call up one class of reservists and for Britain to warn Germany that Britain might become involved. The precise details of the crisis remain a mystery.²⁶⁹ The British press portrayed Britain's actions as standing firm, precisely the image that the government wished to avoid for fear of angering Germany. The government was right to be concerned as Hitler proceeded to ask his generals to formalise plans for Operation Green, the proposed invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The May crisis aroused little interest amongst the public, a situation confirmed by the small number of reports received by M-O about it. Comments included:²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ M-O A: Worktown 42/B, Conversation Overheard at the Annual Exhibition of the Atlas Club.

²⁶⁷ S. Morrell, *I Saw the Crucifixion* (London, 1939): 19.

²⁶⁸ K. Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion: The British Government and Germany, 1937-39* (Aldershot, 1991): 227.

²⁶⁹ For more on the May crisis see: G. L. Weinberg, 'The May Crisis, 1938', *Journal of Modern History*, 29, 3 (1957): 213-25; W. V. Wallace, 'The Making of the May Crisis of 1938', *Slavonic & East European Review*, 41, 3 (1963): 368-90; D. C. Watt, 'The May Crisis of 1938: A Rejoinder to Mr Wallace', *Slavonic & East European Review*, 44, 103 (1966): 475-80; D. N. Lammers, 'The May Crisis of 1938: The Soviet Version Considered', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 69 (1970): 480-503; T. Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace* (London, 1979): 390-92; I. Lukes, 'The Czechoslovak Partial Mobilization in May 1938: A Mystery (Almost) Solved', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 31, 4 (1996): 699-720; D. Faber, *Munich: The 1938 Appeasement Crisis* (London, 2008): 154-80.

²⁷⁰ M-O A: DS537, Weekend Crisis, May 1938; M-O A: DS793, Crises, May 1938.

- 30-year-old male from Cheshire - one of my colleagues bet that Hitler would march into Czech I said, I hope your [sic] wrong and changed the subject
- 33-year-old female clerk from Northampton - I was satisfied that they were quite aware of the news but I doubt if they considered it a crisis. On passing out, I spoke to a man who felt that it wasn't serious

The most detailed report came from Southampton based observer, G. Webb, whose report noted on several occasions the lack of interest:²⁷¹

- My friends and assistants are working-men. I have been looking out for signs from this of the crisis. I regret to say that they remain uninterested.
- I spoke to another man on the subject. He didn't appear to be concerned about immediate happenings.
- Went again to the pub and again there were no signs of it. If anybody was thinking of it, they didn't seem likely to mention it.

A similar position existed in Bedfordshire, where one of the few mentions was in a *Bedfordshire Times* article by J. A. Spender, the former editor of the *Westminster Gazette*. Spender argued that a solution to the underlying situation was required.²⁷² Two other articles published in the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* joined Spender's article. The first criticised the League for failing to stand up to the dictators, which the second contradicted by arguing that the actions taken were in accordance with the principles of the League.²⁷³ The references to the League in Bedfordshire did not occur in Fulham and Hammersmith, where reaction was limited. Bernard Jolivard, a regular letter writer to the *West London Observer*, wrote on 3 June to argue that recent events had made people more aware of the danger, including some unnamed youth organisations who held a protest rally.²⁷⁴ However, evidence from the rest of the country does not support Jolivard's claim.

Despite the limited reaction to the May crisis, it served as a warning of the dangerous nature of the situation. Correspondingly, the British government increased its efforts to find a peaceful settlement. The Cabinet decided to send Lord Runciman, to investigate and propose a solution.

²⁷¹ M-O A: DS554, Weekend Crisis, May 1938.

²⁷² *Bedfordshire Times*, 27 May 1938.

²⁷³ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 26 May and 2 June 1938.

²⁷⁴ *West London Observer*, 3 June 1938.

However, he was not an official representative of the British government. Whilst the primary aim of the mission was to find a solution, it was not the only one as Tony McCulloch has highlighted. He refers to Chamberlain's speech and the hope expressed that 'it will inform public opinion to the real facts of the case'.²⁷⁵ Developments in the Sudetenland were reported by the *Bolton Evening News* and the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* but comment, both here and in the weeklies, virtually disappeared for a couple of months. There were occasional references to hopes that Britain would stand firm and that a solution would depend upon Berlin.²⁷⁶ The subject began to re-emerge at the end of August. In a private letter to Lord Halifax, Arthur Mann, the editor of the *Yorkshire Post*, expressed the view that divisions existed in the country about the government's foreign policy.²⁷⁷ Halifax agreed but believed that they were less than at the time of Eden's resignation.²⁷⁸ This private exchange occurred prior to a meeting of ministers on 30 August, which Leslie Burgin did not attend, as he refused to alter his travel plans. The meeting allowed Chamberlain and Halifax to update their colleagues and discuss policy. Halifax considered public opinion to favour government policy but acknowledged that this could change if the chances of war increased.²⁷⁹ War, as an M-O directive found, was on people's minds. Keith Robbins notes that 35% of respondents believed that war was likely, compared with 40% who held the opposite view.²⁸⁰ Only 190 of the 1,100 replies to this directive survive in Mass Observation Online. Of these, 70% indicated that they considered war likely in the future. The comments made by respondents to the survey provide a general summary of the state of parts of the public mood and an indication of what they thought was going to happen. Examples include:²⁸¹

- 31-year-old female teacher from Northumberland - I found it exceedingly difficult to get anyone to give an opinion on the chances of war.
- Male from West Yorkshire - the immediate chance of war depends chiefly on the British handling of the Czech situation. It is probable that a peaceful settlement of this problem will grant a temporary peace.

²⁷⁵ T. McCulloch, 'Franklin Roosevelt and the Runciman Mission to Czechoslovakia, 1938: A New Perspective on Anglo-American Relations in the Era of Appeasement', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 1, 2 (2003): 152.

²⁷⁶ *West London Observer*, 1 July 1938; *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 4 August 1938.

²⁷⁷ TNA: FO800/314, Great Britain and the Dictators, 25 August 1938.

²⁷⁸ TNA: FO800/314, Comments, 29 August 1938.

²⁷⁹ TNA: CAB 23/94, Notes of a Meeting of Ministers, 30 August 1938.

²⁸⁰ K. Robbins, *Munich 1938* (London, 1968): 252; Harrison et al., *Britain by Mass-Observation*: 53.

²⁸¹ M-O A: DS810, August Directive; M-O A: DS728, Special Directive August 38, 3 September 1938.

Out of all the replies examined, one stands out for the excellent summary that it provides. This came from Dennis Argent, a 21-year-old reporter from Essex. The summarised points were:²⁸²

- Newspapers are mistrusted
- The general attitude to war is that most people do not want it and do not think about it
- Nobody is taking ARP serious except those of the CP and PPU who are busy denouncing it
- No amount of pacifism can stop our rearmament
- Must try and make public opinion see that any war will be a disaster, however well-armed we are

Taken together, the figures and comments reveal that respondents were consciously aware of events, even if they did not discuss them openly.

The Cabinet's concerns and the M-O respondents' desire to avoid war, were themes echoed in the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*. The editorial on 30 August stated that 'a crisis, which would disturb the peace of Europe more than any event since the Great War, was approaching.'²⁸³ The paper followed this on 5 September with an impromptu survey of female opinion leaders in Luton. The views expressed were overwhelmingly in favour of peace, with a realisation of the potential impact on the home front – thereby locating events within their primary area of concern. Mrs Marsden, the President of the Sereptimist Club stated:²⁸⁴

'If the women of the world could form an international union against war, peace would be assured. As a class, women are more whole heartedly against war than men. They realise more vividly the horrors that war would bring to the home. Men too often disregard the consequences in the heat of the moment.'

Some young people shared similar views as they gathered on 11 September for a peace service at Waller Street Methodist Church. The service was addressed by local pacifist minister, Reverend Leslie Brewer, and Dorothy Brooker, secretary of the local LNU youth section. Both stressed the need for a peaceful resolution. The emphasis on a peaceful solution did not feature in the other

²⁸² M-O A: DS584, August Directive.

²⁸³ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 30 August 1938.

²⁸⁴ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 5 September 1938.

geographical areas at this point.²⁸⁵

Coverage of the developing international situation took a different angle in Bolton. On 1 September, A. Booth, a member of the local fascists (as readers were informed a day later), asked what Britain's interests in Czechoslovakia were.²⁸⁶ This question would occur several times during September. Further information about events inside Czechoslovakia appeared when the *Bolton Evening News* interviewed a local man who had just returned from there and was only referred to as 'S'. He emphasised the clamour amongst the Sudeten Germans for union with Germany and added that the danger of communism was a major part of the ongoing propaganda war. He also overheard a train conversation between some Germans that indicated that they knew very little about the situation.²⁸⁷

With the situation in the Sudetenland deteriorating, *The Times* editorial on 7 September suggested the cession of the Sudetenland to Germany as a possible solution. R. J. Mokken described this as 'unwittingly revealing the true intentions of the British government.'²⁸⁸ However, the editorial was consistent with the stance that *The Times* had taken since June.²⁸⁹ The letters published over the next couple of days in *The Times* were favourable, with one describing it as 'the only feasible solution'.²⁹⁰ In contrast, letters published in the *Manchester Guardian* covered a broader opinion spectrum. William Goodchild, a resident of Glasgow, described the editorial as 'throwing international law and order to the wind'.²⁹¹ However, a letter from Helena Swanwick, former chair of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) praised *The Times* for bringing the matter to the attention of the British people.²⁹² Local newspaper comment on the editorial only appeared in the *Bolton Evening News* on 8 September, which criticised the timing rather than the content.²⁹³ *The Times* editorial appeared five days before Hitler was due to speak at the annual Nazi Party rally. The Cabinet met on the morning of 12 September, discussing *The Times* editorial and the options that Britain had. It agreed to avoid provoking Hitler, as a peaceful settlement depended on him. The Nuremberg speech resulted in an estimated 10,000 gathering in Whitehall to await news,

²⁸⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 12 September 1938.

²⁸⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 and September 1938.

²⁸⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 7 September 1938.

²⁸⁸ Mokken, 'The Times and Munich': 158.

²⁸⁹ Taylor, *Munich*: 671.

²⁹⁰ *The Times*, 8 September 1938.

²⁹¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 9 September 1938.

²⁹² *Manchester Guardian*, 8 September 1938.

²⁹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 8 September 1938.

²⁹⁴ whilst one couple went even further as detailed in the observer's crisis report entry for 12 September. It stated:²⁹⁵

'915: observer and his fiancée were making love when the radio news bulletin was switched on in the adjoining room. Fiancée said that she wanted to listen to Hitler's speech but the radio was turned down and became inaudible. By straining, we just heard what Hitler had said about the Czechs. We were both appreciative of his saying nothing when he knew the world was waiting.'

The various actions highlighted the level of interest amongst parts of the public. Hitler's speech proved to be inconclusive but indicated that a plebiscite might be acceptable. The only way to find out would be to ask him directly, which Chamberlain duly set out to do with the implementation of Plan Z. This involved him flying to Germany to direct talks with Hitler, thereby ushering in what David Reynolds describes as modern summitry.²⁹⁶ However, Robert Shepherd describes this move as controversial as Chamberlain still needed Cabinet approval and the King's permission to leave the country.²⁹⁷ The Cabinet supported the idea, as did the crowds in Whitehall who shouted 'good old Chamberlain' when the news broke.²⁹⁸ The national press, including the *Daily Herald*, were in favour, though this was on the assumption that Chamberlain would tell Hitler that Britain would stand firm.²⁹⁹

Whitehall was not the only place to experience crowds. On 13 September, the *Bolton Evening News* reported that people had gathered the previous night to await a special edition of the paper.³⁰⁰ The waiting crowds give an indication of the level of interest. The following day, the paper referred to discussions that had taken place in a barber's shop, which enabled the barber to get an hourly consensus of public views. For example, a young customer might request a good job, as he will not be here for a long time, whilst another swears that he will not go until called for. Comments of this

²⁹⁴ Faber, *Munich*: 266.

²⁹⁵ M-O A: DS346, Crisis Report, September 1938.

²⁹⁶ D. Reynolds, *Summits: Six Meetings That Shaped the Twentieth Century* (London, 2007): 37.

²⁹⁷ R. Shepherd, *A Class Divided: Appeasement and the Road to Munich, 1938* (London, 1988): 179.

²⁹⁸ TNA: CAB 23/94 38 (38), Cabinet Conclusions, 14 September 1938; *Bolton Evening News*, 15 September 1938; Taylor, *Munich*: 732.

²⁹⁹ Rock, *Appeasement on Trial*: 118.

³⁰⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 13 September 1938.

nature did not indicate a refusal to fight but rather an indication that people would do their duty when the time came.³⁰¹

The crowds in central London and Bolton did not occur in Fulham, where the streets were quiet and a newsstand announcing a special edition was the only indication of the crisis.³⁰² However, M-O undertook a survey in the borough with two questions: whether home or foreign affairs were more important, and if people thought there would be war. The 75 replies on 13 September rated home affairs as more important and war as unlikely. This was followed a day later by 15 replies about people's opinion of Chamberlain. Eleven were favourable. When combined with data published in *Britain by Mass Observation*, 'Metrop' opinion favoured Chamberlain at this point. The free text replies to the questions were a mixture of praise for Chamberlain and dislike of Hitler, the latter continuing a trend that had begun earlier in the year:³⁰³

- Man 34 – providing no catch then looks like all over bar the shouting. Praises Chamberlain as a clever man.
- Woman, 40 – I don't bother about it now. We were just talking about Chamberlain being brave to go and see that swine Hitler.
- Man, 50 – If we get over this business of Chamberlain going to Germany, there will be no war for a long time
- Woman, 38 – We think there will be war before the next two weeks is out. He's a dirty swine and liar is Hitler. I wouldn't trust him.

The eight days prior to Chamberlain's flight had seen three events that affected the development of the crisis and the public mood. *The Times* editorial and Hitler's speech were discussed by 'informed' opinion at the national level. However, it was the actual news of Chamberlain's forthcoming visit to Germany that had the most impact, as it underlined the seriousness of the situation and the potential it had to impact upon the individual. This event marked the start of a process that would take Europe to the edge of the abyss over the next two weeks and has been subject to in-depth discussion by many writers.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 14 September 1938.

³⁰² SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/C, Fulham, 14 September 1938.

³⁰³ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/C, Questions Asked in West Fulham, 14-15 September 1938.

³⁰⁴ Key works include: Robbins, *Munich 1938*; Taylor, *Munich*; Faber, *Munich*; Z. S. Steiner, *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History, 1933-1939* (Oxford, 2010).

Chamberlain's flight to Germany captured the imagination of the nation. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* editorial and political leaders in Bedfordshire shared this sentiment. Sir Thomas Keens, the Liberal leader of Bedfordshire County Council stated:³⁰⁵

'Living as we are in circumstances of the most extreme gravity, I feel it is incumbent on the part of every English man and woman, to say how proud we are of our Prime Minister, who is prepared to throw convention to the wind in making a last desperate effort to preserve the peace.'

Elite expressions of gratitude masked the apprehensiveness felt by local people. For example, the arrival of army trucks in Dunstable led to rumours of a declaration of war until more informed people stated that they were associated with planned army exercises.³⁰⁶

Fulham's reaction to news of Chamberlain's flight was favourable. The local newspaper editorials on 16 September echoed the sentiments of the M-O surveys. The *West London Observer* and the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* both hoped that the visit would mean the avoidance of war.³⁰⁷ This optimism masked concerns that British policy lacked clarity, thereby risking a repeat of 1914. The Fulham branch of the LNU duly expressed their hope that the British delegation would be clear to Germany that 'the country would not be able to remain neutral in the event of aggression against Czechoslovakia'. This implied that Britain would not tolerate aggression but would accept a peaceful solution.³⁰⁸

Editorial opinion in Bolton continued local newspaper praise for Chamberlain's visit, describing it as 'an outstanding move for peace'. However, the *Bolton Evening News* editorial continued its opposition to Chamberlain's attempts to buy peace through concessions.³⁰⁹ 'Politicus', a regular columnist for the paper, reinforced the editorial in his column by arguing that Britain would eventually have to make a stand against Germany.³¹⁰ Those writing for the paper were in favour of

³⁰⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 16 September 1938.

³⁰⁶ *Luton News*, 15 September 1938.

³⁰⁷ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 16 September 1938; *West London Observer*, 16 September 1938.

³⁰⁸ *Fulham Chronicle*, 16 September 1938.

³⁰⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 September 1938.

³¹⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 September 1938.

resisting German demands without recourse to war. Support for Chamberlain's efforts was also forthcoming from the synod of the Bolton and Rochdale Methodist Circuit, who wrote to him to assure him of their prayers for his efforts.³¹¹ It is difficult to judge further local reactions during these days since the *Bolton Evening News* letters column was notably quiet, with the only letter of note coming from the Liberal, Marjorie Hammersley. She argued that the current situation had arisen due to the refusal of previous German demands.³¹²

The general reaction to Chamberlain's first visit to Germany was one of relief and praise for the boldness of the move. Underlying this was the desire to find a peaceful solution without recourse to war and a hope that a firm stand would deter aggression. Upon his return to London, Chamberlain informed the Cabinet of the content of the discussions. He did this from memory, as he had not taken a note taker and the German Foreign Office refused to provide an official transcript.³¹³ The proposed solution was a mixture of direct territorial transfers and plebiscites in areas where there was not a clear German majority. The Cabinet supported the proposal subject to appropriate guarantees.³¹⁴ Having gained the assent of the Cabinet, Chamberlain and Halifax held discussions with Daladier and the French Foreign Minister, Georges Bonnet, on 18 September. After a lengthy discussion, they agreed to transmit the proposals to the Czech government with a request for a quick response. The Czechs initially declined the terms but further pressure finally forced a reluctant acceptance, thus allowing Chamberlain to set out for his second meeting with Hitler.

The period between Chamberlain's return and his departure for Bad Godesberg witnessed a change in the 'public mood'. The emphasis is on mood since the lack of information about the talks prevented an informed opinion from being established. The withholding of information may have been deliberate to prevent provocation of Germany. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* editorial appealed for people to avoid doing anything that might affect the negotiations.³¹⁵ Thomas Lodge, the Liberal candidate for Bedford, echoed this appeal during his acceptance speech by stating that 'it would be ungracious to comment or criticise at the moment as the government alone know the

³¹¹ University of Birmingham (UOB): NC13/11/302, Rev. J. Edward Eagles to Neville Chamberlain, 15 September 1938.

³¹² *Bolton Evening News*, 16 September 1938.

³¹³ I. MacLeod, *Neville Chamberlain* (London, 1961): 237.

³¹⁴ TNA: CAB 23/95 39 (38), Cabinet Conclusions, 17 September 1938; TNA: CAB 23/95 40(38), Cabinet Conclusions, 19 September 1938.

³¹⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 19 and 20 September 1938.

basis of their actions'.³¹⁶ The pleas for restraint did not prevent the publication of articles. One article described a talk by Captain G Pitt Rivers, whom Richard Griffiths describes as a fellow traveller.³¹⁷ Speaking at a meeting in Luton following a recent tour of Central Europe, Pitt Rivers argued that the press had hidden the suffering of the Sudeten Germans from the British public and that Britain should not defend Czechoslovakia. Reverend Morgan of All Saints Church, whilst thanking Pitt Rivers for the talk, expressed the opinion that 'if he could see inside the minds of the members here, he would find almost total disagreement'.³¹⁸ A. Shaw was another supporter of the Sudeten Germans' cause. He wrote to the *Luton News* to highlight their suffering.³¹⁹ However, this was only one factor in the crisis. Another was the desire to avoid war, as a man who had recently returned from Germany had found following a series of conversations in quiet corners. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* column 'Along the Street' on 22 September referred to this story but did not name the man as he wished to remain anonymous.³²⁰ On the same day, the paper published an interview with an unnamed Luton woman in her early twenties. She spoke about how her generation had been subject to anti-war propaganda and that recent events had undermined the belief that war could never happen again.³²¹

The lack of an evening daily paper specific to Fulham and Hammersmith is a hindrance to an effective study of the crisis, as it restricts the ability to track daily changes in the public mood via the letters column. However, M-O surveys partly make up for this. In *Britain by Mass-Observation* several comments are made about the attitudes of people towards news reports relating to the crisis. Comments included:³²²

- Woman of 33 – I read all the papers on it. I don't understand the politics of it but they are all different. That's why people have less faith in the papers.
- Woman of 42 – it's a crisis everyday if you believe the papers.
- Woman of 35 – the papers, you read them and you are more in the dark still.
- Man of 38 – got that I don't believe the papers now.

³¹⁶ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 20 September 1938.

³¹⁷ R. Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany: 1933-39* (London, 1980): 323.

³¹⁸ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 15 September 1938.

³¹⁹ *Luton News*, 22 September 1938.

³²⁰ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 22 September 1938.

³²¹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 22 September 1938.

³²² Harrison et al., *Britain by Mass-Observation*: 30-1.

In addition to the published comments, there is a range available from the M-O survey undertaken on 21 September, which asked people what they thought about the Czech crisis. Female responses predominantly indicated either a lack of interest or that they were trying to avoid thinking about it:

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- Woman, 30 – I don't think about it.
- Woman, 38 – We don't bother much about it...not because we are not thinking about it. Life's too short to keep on with war, war, war.
- Woman 35, - We don't want to talk about it, of course we think. My mother is old and ill so we never mention it. It doesn't make pleasant reading...We ought to demand for peace.... It's hateful, there they are ready to start killing again, Hitler and Mussolini.
- Woman, 48 – Everybody's fearing it. They don't talk much now because it never seems to come to anything at all, just goes on being one crisis after another. I don't really know what it's all about, we don't get all the facts.

Male respondents were more forthcoming in their responses, acknowledging the complexities of the situation and blaming Hitler. However, even here a lack of interest is noticeable:³²⁴

- Male, 48 – It's too complicated for me. The newspapers all give conflicting reports. I feel sorry for the Czechs, but I had enough of war in the last one. And I don't want my son to be in one either. If they want Sudeten Germanland [sic], which they tell me belonged to Germany before, they can have it.
- Male, 18 – I don't want war for wars sake, but I'd go straight away without waiting for conscription. My parents want me to do my bit.
- Male, 20 – Don't take any notice, mate...what's the good...if they want yer they'll take yer...they don't ask your permission like....
- Male, 37 – It's these dictators, all greed and gain. It was when they went to Abyssinia that they should have been stopped. Somebody should bump Hitler off.
- Male, 40 – Hitler wants knocking off proper, there's enough trouble without making more now. It looks damned bad as it is. They'll want us all when it breaks out.
- Newspaper man – That bastard is only bluffing us, they know it, he'll never dare start it off, he'll be beaten. I think it might, if it does, come now or later if he gets away with this lot.

³²³ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/C, Czech Crisis, 21 September 1938.

³²⁴ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/C, Czech Crisis, 21 September 1938.

The comments made about Hitler reinforced the idea that the ‘public mood’ was hardening, although it is notable that criticism of British policy appeared to be lacking. The limited evidence available from the weekly newspapers reinforces the evidence collected by M-O that the mood was hardening. The editorial in the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* referred to a theme that had featured in Herbert Morrison’s speech at Hammersmith Town Hall, namely that world opinion was against the fascist dictators. This, along with the editorial in the *West London Observer*, agreed that a stand would soon be required to prevent Hitler from becoming master of Europe.³²⁵

The newspaper editorials in Bedfordshire, Fulham and Hammersmith all urged caution, a policy continued by the *Bolton Evening News* and approved of by ‘Briton’.³²⁶ However, the paper’s editorial worried that there might be a repeat of the Hoare-Laval Pact as people appeared ‘willing to accept a temporary peace at almost any price’. People would have to accept, though, that further demands would not be forthcoming.³²⁷ This line of thought continued with an editorial entitled ‘Stop the rot’.³²⁸ The editorials were part of the paper’s efforts to encourage the people of Bolton to see the fallacy of Chamberlain’s policy. The letters column reflected this effort. For instance, Robert Davies wrote to argue that Britain needed to stand firm to prevent war, whilst J. B. O’Hara stated that the trade unions questioned the wisdom of Chamberlain’s policy.³²⁹ However, given that the *Bolton Evening News* aimed to reflect the breadth of opinion of the community that it served, letters from ‘H.T.’ and W. Barnes, a resident of Hilden Street in Bolton were included. The latter warned that the lack of war-mindedness meant that concessions were the only realistic solution.³³⁰ This summed up Britain’s predicament, one that ‘Politicus’ stated had historical precedent, as the British repeatedly failed to recognise a crisis until it was nearly too late.³³¹

The week between the two meetings witnessed newspaper editorials urging readers to display caution when commenting on the international situation. Despite this, the *Bolton Evening News* and newspapers in Fulham and Hammersmith expressed reservations about Chamberlain’s policy, attempting to encourage public support for a degree of firmness towards Germany’s demands.

³²⁵ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 23 September 1938; *West London Observer*, 23 September 1938.

³²⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 September 1938.

³²⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 September 1938.

³²⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 September 1938.

³²⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 and 22 September 1938.

³³⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 and 22 September 1938.

³³¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 23 September 1938.

However, it is difficult to detect in Bedfordshire, where there was greater emphasis on the maintenance of peace. The evidence available indicates that the 'public mood' was hardening towards Germany but hope remained that a peaceful solution could be found. In addition, there were no local references to Winston Churchill, the Conservative MP for Epping, who supported resistance to German demands.

Upon Chamberlain's departure from Downing Street for Godesberg, protestors urged him not to abandon the Czechs. Despite this, there were no indications that the protestors were prepared to support war. The Whitehall crowds continued to be a presence during the meeting. Halifax, given the continuing presence of the crowd and communications of influential people and groups, informed the British delegation that opinion was hardening and required a contribution from Germany:³³²

'It may help you if we give you some indication of what seems predominant public opinion as expressed in press and elsewhere. While mistrustful of our plan but prepared perhaps to accept it with reluctance as alternative to war, great mass of public opinion seems to be hardening in sense of feeling that we have gone to limit of concession and that it is up to the Chancellor to make some contribution. We, of course, can imagine immense difficulties with which you are confronted but from point of view of your own position, that of Government, and of the country, it seems to your colleagues of vital importance that you should not leave without making it plain to Chancellor if possible by special interview that, after great concessions made by Czechoslovak Government, for him to reject opportunity of peaceful solution in favour of one that must involve war would be an unpardonable crime against humanity.'

The phrasing of the first two sentences of the telegram raise a couple of questions about what Halifax meant by 'and elsewhere', as well as 'the great mass of public opinion'. The first is presumably a reference to the individuals and groups from whom he received communications. However, the second phrase is harder to explain, as this phrase theoretically means the wider public. The question is how Halifax would have known about this. The contribution referred to in the telegram, Chamberlain found was unlikely to be forthcoming after the first of several meetings. After he had informed Hitler that the Czechs accepted the proposed terms, Hitler stated that this

³³² TNA: FO371 C10664/1941/18, Viscount Halifax to British Delegation (Godesberg), 23 September 1938.

was no longer sufficient and that he had to support the claims of Poland and Hungary. Chamberlain was shocked. To establish clarity, he asked for a written statement specifying the German demands. Upon reviewing this statement, Neville Henderson and Sir Ivone Fitzpatrick, a member of the British embassy in Berlin, described it as a 'diktat'. Whilst all of this was going on, Paramount released a newsreel featuring an interview with Henry Wickham Steed, the former editor of *The Times*. In the interview, he called upon people to make clear to the government that 'we repudiate its policy of surrendering our vital interests and besmirching our good name'.³³³ Only a small number of people saw it, as it was quickly withdrawn following pressure from the Foreign Office on the American parent company.³³⁴ This action and the British Gaumont newsreel on 26 September added to the lack of publicly available information. The newsreel showed pictures of Chamberlain but contained no details about the discussions that had taken place. Upon his return, Chamberlain received a lukewarm applause in Whitehall from crowds, who were not protesting against war, an indication, according to Paul Einzig, that people might be willing to fight.³³⁵ However, the mood was continuing to harden with the crowd providing comments such as 'Hitler's gone too bloody far this time. He needs teaching a lesson and I'm prepared to give it to him'.³³⁶ This was like some of the comments recorded by M-O the previous week.

On 24 September, Chamberlain made his report on the Godesberg meeting to the Cabinet. He concluded by asking the Cabinet to consider whether Britain would be better able to protect itself now or later, thereby indicating that war was an option. The discussions continued next day. In the interim, Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Undersecretary at the Foreign Office, had berated Halifax for failing to take a stronger line about the need to resist Hitler. After listening to Cadogan, Halifax had his 'Damascus Road' moment and indicated that he preferred a strong line – a move that disappointed Chamberlain.³³⁷ Other Cabinet members were now prepared to indicate that they agreed with Halifax, partly because they were worried about how Parliament and the Press would react.³³⁸ The Cabinet were right to be worried about 'informed' opinion. Letters to *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* indicated support for opposing the terms since this offered 'the only real hope for peace'.³³⁹ Yet not all letters favoured resistance. The opposing arguments also featured in

³³³ 'Henry Wickham Steed', (23 September 1938) Paramount.

³³⁴ Pronay, 'British Newsreels in the 1930's. Part 2': 68.

³³⁵ P. Einzig, *Appeasement Before, During and after the War* (London, 1941): 27.

³³⁶ L. Thompson, *The Greatest Treason: The Untold Story of Munich* (New York, 1968): 209.

³³⁷ P. Neville, 'Sir Alexander Cadogan and Lord Halifax's 'Damascus Road' Conversion over the Godesberg Terms 1938', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 11, 3 (2000): 81-90.

³³⁸ TNA: CAB 23/95 4(38), Cabinet Conclusions, 25 September 1938.

³³⁹ *The Times*, 24 September 1938; *Manchester Guardian*, 28 September 1938.

M-O reports. Yorkshire based observer W. J. Speers summarised this well: 'whilst most people wanted peace to be preserved, there was a feeling that Hitler should be told where to get off'.³⁴⁰

'Informed' opinion in Bedfordshire reflected the national situation. Speaking at the Bedford Conservative Association conference, Sir Richard Wells continued his support for Chamberlain by acknowledging that the last ten days had been ones of high tension that were beyond the comprehension of ordinary people.³⁴¹ Meanwhile, George Matthews, the Labour candidate for Mid-Bedfordshire at the 1945 general election, took a different view. Addressing a Labour rally at Biggleswade, Matthews argued that Lennox-Boyd was partly to blame because of his speech in March.³⁴² In contrast, Thomas Lodge chose his words more carefully but warned that Britain could not give away parts of other countries.³⁴³ The views of the three politicians provide a good indication of the respective party positions. One Labour supporter, E. A. Richards, expressed a similar view to George Matthews. He stated that Chamberlain could have been in no doubt about the mood of the British people when he left but he had ignored this, which left Richards wondering where the crisis would end.³⁴⁴ Within this letter, there are hints that confirm that view of Wells, that the public did not understand the complexities of the situation but had hardened their opinion nonetheless.

The *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* provided a potential answer to the question posed by Richards, though the paper would not have known about it. This was that Hitler would be master of Europe.³⁴⁵ This answer does not appear to have been one that concerned a Labour League of Youth rally associated with the crisis, which included a meeting at Hammersmith Town Hall. The unidentified speaker in the M-O records is most likely to have been Herbert Morrison, based on a local newspaper report. He stated that 'it was distressing to know that, owing to the workings of capitalism and the failings of European statesmanship, the youth of this and other countries must think about the possibilities of war'. He went on to suggest an exchange of populations.³⁴⁶ Joining Morrison's words were slogans like 'Chamberlain must go' and 'Chamberlain means war',³⁴⁷ thereby

³⁴⁰ M-O A: DS509, War Crisis Second Report, September 1938.

³⁴¹ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 23 September 1938.

³⁴² *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 27 September 1938.

³⁴³ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 23 September 1938.

³⁴⁴ *Bedfordshire Times*, 23 September 1938.

³⁴⁵ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 23 September 1938.

³⁴⁶ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 23 September 1938.

³⁴⁷ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/B, West Fulham, 23 September 1938.

providing a further indication of the level of opposition that existed to the government's foreign policy and an awareness of where events could lead. The Labour message was one of opposition to Chamberlain's policy but one that is open to differing interpretations. The most likely is that appeasement could go further to ensure a peaceful solution, though this would be contrary to the call for a firm stand.

The active opposition of the Left in Fulham and Hammersmith was also in evidence in Bolton, despite the *Bolton Standard* describing people as not being interested.³⁴⁸ The 'informed' elite certainly were. The *Bolton Evening News* continued to advocate a firm stand, a position supported by Labour MPs, Rhys Davies (Westhoughton) and George Tomlinson (Farnworth). Tomlinson argued that one man should not have the power to control the destiny of Europe and criticised the government for failing to make contact with the Soviet Union.³⁴⁹ Further support for contact with the Soviet Union came from 'D.T.' in a letter with a socialist slant, while Robert Davies, writing from an address identified as the local Communist bookshop, called for a firm stand against aggression.³⁵⁰ Austin Kavanagh condemned letter writers such as the above for stabbing Chamberlain in the back at the very moment that he needed the support of everyone during delicate negotiations.³⁵¹

Newspaper coverage in the days surrounding Godesberg focussed primarily on 'informed' opinion. This occurred in all three geographical areas. Those calling for a firm stand refrained from advocating war. Surprisingly, there continued to be no mention of Churchill in letters or editorials.

The final days of September witnessed a nation frantically preparing for war, which made the crisis very real for ordinary people. On 27 September, Chamberlain broadcast to the nation. He explained what had occurred and vowed to continue working for peace until the last moment. Parliament met the following day to hear more details, including about Chamberlain's meetings with Hitler. Approaching the end of his speech, Chamberlain received a note inviting him to a third meeting the following day in Munich. He announced this to the House, which erupted into cheers and wished him good luck. However, as Lennox-Boyd recalled, MPs such as Churchill remained in their seats.³⁵²

³⁴⁸ *Bolton Standard*, 23 September 1938.

³⁴⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 26 September 1938.

³⁵⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 and 26 September 1938.

³⁵¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 26 September 1938.

³⁵² Shepherd, *A Class Divided*: 217.

The Parliamentary reaction spread across the country as the mood changed to one of hope. Sir D. F. Howard, who worked at the Foreign Office, described it as 'brilliant news' in his diary,³⁵³ whilst a man in Yorkshire stated to an M-O observer that 'it's all over now. We can go to bed and sleep undisturbed'.³⁵⁴ The following day, Chamberlain met Hitler, Mussolini, and Daladier at Munich to agree the terms of the transfer of the Sudetenland to Germany, leaving an international commission to make decisions on other areas. The representatives had no choice but to accept the terms of the Munich agreement.

Chamberlain's address on 27 September occurred when prospects for a peaceful resolution were diminishing. Listening to the broadcast was a group of Luton women who were assembling gas masks in the basement of a disused hat factory. They murmured their agreement that Britain should not go to war unless her vital interests were threatened and applauded at the end of the speech. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* reported this on 28 September, commenting that the women hoped that what they were doing would prove unnecessary.³⁵⁵ Even if it did not, they, along with Luton Rotarians appreciated the efforts that Chamberlain was making to maintain peace.³⁵⁶

The day before Chamberlain's address, Hitler spoke to a crowd in Berlin. His speech included a fierce denunciation of the Czechs. The *Bolton Evening News* editorial commented on both speeches, describing Hitler's as displaying a lack of willingness to contribute towards a peaceful solution. People had once again been queuing at the gates for a special edition.³⁵⁷ Active discussion continued in the letters column but this time it was the turn of Chamberlain's supporters. Ronald Andrew, a resident of Heaton, and 'P.H.', criticised the advocates of a firm stance since many had continuously refused to support rearmament.³⁵⁸

M-O, whilst predominantly active in 'Metrop', also collected a range of opinions about the crisis in Bolton. The comments made indicated that there was a general hope to avoid war but that people

³⁵³ BA: X550/21/33, Diary of Sir D. F. Howard, 29 September 1938.

³⁵⁴ M-O A: DS509, War Crisis Second Report, September 1938.

³⁵⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 28 September 1938.

³⁵⁶ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 29 September 1938.

³⁵⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 27 September 1938.

³⁵⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 27 and 28 September 1938.

would be willing to fight for their country if needed in most cases. Once again, there is evidence of a dislike of Hitler within the comments. Examples of comments made include:³⁵⁹

- Male, 25 – I'll fight only if sent for but I'm not going to fight if they don't.
- Male, 30 – Hitler had gone too bloody far this time. He needs to be taught a lesson.
- Male, 32 – I'm fed up with war. It's war in a morning, war over the counter all day, war on the wireless, let's be getting at him and this time we must do a thorough job of it.

In addition to the opinions expressed, M-O also noted various street greetings as the people of Bolton went calmly about their business, in the knowledge that war might be close. These included 'have you got your gas mask', 'have you got your gun', and 'have you got your call-up papers'.³⁶⁰

The announcement of the conference marked the end of a period of swings in the public mood. These had initially been in Chamberlain's favour but soon switched to advocating a firm stand. Behind the swings in the public mood, there was a clear divide along political lines. This applied to both politicians and newspaper letter writers, since it was often possible to spot political affiliations. Even as preparations for war mounted, the people remained calm and hoped for the preservation of peace.

The signing of the agreement was the culmination of months of tension but the start of 'oceans of ink'³⁶¹ that surround Chamberlain's actions to this day. The relief that Neville Henderson expressed in his letter was widespread across the country. From Whitehall to Scotland, Wales to East Anglia, celebrations occurred. BBC News reports describing Chamberlain's return from Munich, noted that the crowds were singing a variety of songs and the scenes were reminiscent of the armistice in 1918.³⁶² Further evidence of the national relief manifested itself in letters to *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, although there was dismay at the price.³⁶³ A series of unconnected letters in the *Manchester Guardian* expanded on this. The letters raised a number of concerns: Britain's moral

³⁵⁹ M-O A: Worktown 50/E, War Talks, 28 September 1938; M-O A: Worktown 50/E, War Talks, 27 September 1938.

³⁶⁰ M-O A: Worktown 50/E, Common Greetings, September 1938.

³⁶¹ Henderson, *Failure of a Mission: Berlin, 1937-1939*: 168.

³⁶² BBC WAC: BBC Home News Bulletin, 30 September 1938.

³⁶³ *The Times*, 1 and 3 October 1938; *Manchester Guardian*, 1 and 3 October 1938.

obligations towards Czechoslovakia;³⁶⁴ going to the edge of war for inadequate reasons;³⁶⁵ and the negotiating method.³⁶⁶ The economic historian, R. H. Tawney expanded on this last point, arguing that the importance of the negotiations and a lack of time were not appropriate reasons for failing to consult Parliament.³⁶⁷ Tawney's unease was shared by one member of the public, who told an M-O observer that 'it is perfectly disgusting for one man to have done all Chamberlain did, without asking anyone else'.³⁶⁸

The national feeling of relief was evident in Bedfordshire on 30 September with the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* describing Chamberlain as 'the greatest statesman in history'.³⁶⁹ Reverend Keeble (vice-president of the Luton and District Free Church Council), Mr H W Pocock (chair of the Old Contemptibles) and the Bedford Women's Conservative Association, all of whom sent resolutions to Chamberlain, joined the editorial's praise.³⁷⁰ The county's two Conservative MPs joined them over the next fortnight, with Lennox-Boyd criticising those who attacked Chamberlain. However, a BUF speaker dared to do just that, as well as making derogatory remarks about the people of Luton, before an audience of 900 outside Luton Corn Exchange, where the crowd removed him from the platform. At the trial resulting from this disturbance, witnesses testified that the crowd had protested by saying that the speaker could not run Chamberlain down in front of them.³⁷¹

Readers of the *Bedfordshire Times* contributed to the debate on 7 October. The published letters contained relief and reflection. 'C.W.' praised Chamberlain for 'saving a defenceless island', while 'Realist', a resident of Bedford, criticised the continued lack of attention given to *Mein Kampf* and called for the introduction of national service as Britain's very existence was threatened.³⁷² Mr Kerran, in a speech at Luton Corn Exchange, added to the criticisms, warning his audience that German demands would only grow. This was obvious to anyone who was familiar with the literature circulating in Germany.³⁷³ In response to Kerran's criticism of the agreement, F. C. Bright, a resident of Richmond, raised the question of what Labour would have done. A. Turnball, a resident of Shirley

³⁶⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 3 October 1938.

³⁶⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 4 October 1938.

³⁶⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 5 October 1938.

³⁶⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 17 October 1938.

³⁶⁸ M-O A: TC14/1/A, Neville Chamberlain, *The Crisis*, 17 October 1938.

³⁶⁹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 30 September 1938.

³⁷⁰ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 1 October 1938; *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 1 October 1938.

³⁷¹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 3 and 12 October 1938.

³⁷² *Bedfordshire Times*, 7 October 1938.

³⁷³ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 3 October 1938; *Luton News*, 6 October 1938.

Road in Luton responded, stating that Labour would not have imposed the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles, that they would have supported the Weimar Republic, and used the League to settle international disputes. This statement did not convince Bright, who continued to believe that no other party could have done better.³⁷⁴

Jubilation and relief were the initial reactions in Fulham. A quick M-O poll found that 54% were in favour of Chamberlain, though 36% were sceptical about the agreement.³⁷⁵ William Astor, speaking at a well-attended central committee meeting of the East Fulham Conservative Association, praised Chamberlain's efforts. The Association, along with the West Fulham Association, sent a resolution to Chamberlain expressing their gratitude but did not comment on the actual contents of the agreement.³⁷⁶ This is in keeping with the finding of Crowson's study about the lack of 'public' comment from Conservative Associations.³⁷⁷ John Busby, the defeated candidate in the West Fulham by-election, claimed during a concert interval that there was not a woman in West Fulham who would not vote for Chamberlain, as he had saved them from war.³⁷⁸ This reinforced the gender stereotype that women favoured peace. Conservative politicians were not the only ones to praise Chamberlain. On 7 October, the *West London Observer* published letters from Albert Maple and Bernard Jolivard, praising his efforts.³⁷⁹ However, the editorial on 14 October drew attention to one of the lessons of the crisis: the need to be prepared.³⁸⁰ Letters praising Chamberlain did not just appear in newspapers. Some people wrote to him or his wife directly, as the ample collection of crisis letters in his personal papers demonstrates. One such writer was Mary Heinemann, a Fulham resident. On 16 September, she wrote to Mrs Chamberlain expressing her thanks for the efforts that Neville was making for peace. A further letter followed on 24 October expressing the wish that England had more like them and asking for an autograph. The Chamberlains ignored this request.³⁸¹

Opponents of Chamberlain in Fulham refrained from praising him but were thankful for the preservation of peace. Instead, Edith Summerskill – along with the Reverend Kenneth Oliver and

³⁷⁴ *Luton News*, 13, 20 and 27 October 1938.

³⁷⁵ Harrison et al., *Britain by Mass-Observation*: 100-1.

³⁷⁶ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 7 October and 4 November 1938; *West London Observer*, 7 October 1938.

³⁷⁷ N. J. Crowson, *Facing Fascism: The Conservative Party and the European Dictators, 1935-1940* (London, 1997).

³⁷⁸ *Fulham Chronicle*, 28 October 1938.

³⁷⁹ *West London Observer*, 7 October 1938.

³⁸⁰ *West London Observer*, 14 October 1938.

³⁸¹ UOB: NC13/12/324, Mary Heinemann to Mrs Chamberlain 16 September 1938; UOB: NC13/7/589, Mary Heinemann to Mrs Chamberlain 24 October 1938.

William Church, the mayor of Hammersmith – chose to focus on the humanitarian cost. This resulted in the setting up of a fund to collect money to provide relief.³⁸² The early focus on humanitarian relief soon changed to vocal criticism of the agreement in both boroughs. Labour’s Hammersmith constituency newspapers led the attack. Articles published in the October and November editions were strongly critical of the government, which included a ‘we told you so’ type article.³⁸³ The *South Hammersmith Citizen* raised the question of Britain’s relations with the Soviet Union, arguing that these needed improving prior to the signing of an alliance.³⁸⁴ The two Hammersmith Labour papers were not the only ones to voice criticisms of the agreement. Writing to the *West London Observer*, Harry Granger, a resident of Hammersmith, referred to a speech by William Eady, the undersecretary of the ARP department, which admitted that the country was unprepared.³⁸⁵ ‘Nightshirt’ expressed similar concerns.³⁸⁶ Granger wrote several letters to the paper during October and November highlighting Britain’s unpreparedness. It was therefore a surprise when at the end of November, a letter from him supporting Chamberlain’s actions appeared. This change resulted from the facts of the situation emerging.³⁸⁷

Defensive preparations were not a major concern for the people of Bolton when news of the Munich agreement came through. They joined the national sense of relief but with a foreboding for the future. The *Bolton Evening News* reported scenes of joy, with descriptions of people lighting bonfires and setting off fireworks. However, the editorial continued to oppose Chamberlain’s policy despite the efforts he had made. It warned that a period of reflection was approaching.³⁸⁸ Meanwhile, Chamberlain’s efforts did receive praise in the letters column, where Reverend Havelock Davidson, the vicar of the town’s main church, was amongst the letter writers. He argued that the choice made by Chamberlain was the only possible one.³⁸⁹ Eva Thornley (a resident of Hereford Road), ‘S.J.’ (a resident of Great Lever), ‘War Weary’ and Eileen Knowles (a resident of Egerton), all joined Davidson in praising the efforts of Chamberlain.³⁹⁰ Support was even forthcoming from the local labour movement, which appreciated the efforts made. Bolton Conservative Association, like the associations in the other two geographical areas, displayed

³⁸² LSE: Summerskill 4/2, Tribute of Sacrifice Made by Czechs; *Fulham Chronicle*, 7 October 1938; *West London Observer*, 14 October and 4 November 1938.

³⁸³ *North Hammersmith Citizen*, October 1938.

³⁸⁴ *South Hammersmith Citizen*, October and November 1938.

³⁸⁵ *West London Observer*, 4 November 1938.

³⁸⁶ *West London Observer*, 11 November 1938.

³⁸⁷ *West London Observer*, 25 November 1938.

³⁸⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 29 September and 1 October 1938.

³⁸⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 October 1938.

³⁹⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 October 1938.

support for Chamberlain, whilst calling for the continuation of rearmament.³⁹¹ However, unlike the other two areas, Bolton residents had to wait two months before they heard their MPs speak on the subject. When they finally spoke in December, over 600 people attended the meeting. Foreign affairs dominated the speeches but questions from the audience concentrated on domestic matters,³⁹² thereby reaffirming the latter's importance.

Further evidence of the relief experienced by the people of Bolton is available in the M-O records, as well as a degree of scepticism about the future:³⁹³

- Socialist – this Chamberlain success will put the Labour party back for 10 years.
- Housewife, 55 – thinks that Chamberlain has shown himself up. Her bosses felt that he should be ashamed. Does not like the country hobknobbing to Hitler.
- Man, 60 – if there is one thing that crabs me about this agreement, it is the leaving out of Russia. There you have a country, who wouldn't have listened to what Hitler dictating and would had have a smack at him straight away.

The degree of scepticism in the above, found further expression in the letters column of the *Bolton Evening News* during the first two weeks of October. They included the feeling that the lions share had gone to Hitler, whilst others wondered how long it would be before he asked for something else.³⁹⁴ This was certainly true of the passengers of one bus driver, who wrote to say that he had overheard passengers saying 'bet you two bob that he wants something else inside a year'.³⁹⁵ Interwoven with these general comments about Germany's future intentions was discussion of two other important matters: how to improve Britain's defences, and the effect of the pact on the Soviet Union. Regarding the former, L. M. Hagan, a resident of Park Road in Bolton, placed the blame on Labour because they had voted against rearmament – a view challenged by Reg Crowshaw of Mill Street in Bolton. Crowshaw argued that the real blame lay with Austen Chamberlain since he had argued that other countries would not disarm unless Britain did.³⁹⁶ These opposing viewpoints sought to play the blame game in a continuation of the attitudes displayed by the political parties towards foreign affairs during 1938. Other letters took a more practical stance by suggesting that

³⁹¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 October 1938.

³⁹² *Bolton Standard*, 16 December 1938; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 16 December 1938.

³⁹³ M-O A: Worktown 50/E, War Talks, 1 October 1938; M-O A: Worktown 50/E, War Talks, 2 October 1938.

³⁹⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 and 6 October 1938.

³⁹⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 3 October 1938.

³⁹⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 and 7 October 1938.

people use their leisure time for military training, including learning to shoot.³⁹⁷

Discussion about the Soviet Union occurred in the letters column of the *Bolton Evening News*, unlike in *The Times* or the *Manchester Guardian*, where only a few letters discussed it. One of those published warned that the Soviet Union might come to terms with Germany, whilst another criticised the lack of co-operation during the crisis.³⁹⁸ Even seasoned scholars like Michael Carley and Keith Neilson make very little reference to the Soviet role during the Munich crisis, mainly due to problems accessing the relevant material in the Russian archives.³⁹⁹ Geoffrey Roberts, in his discussion of the Soviet role during the Munich crisis, argues that the Soviets were angry at references to their involvement in the dismemberment and as a result, adopted a wait-and-see policy, whilst continuing to dislike Chamberlain's policy.⁴⁰⁰ Within Bolton, support for the Soviet Union came from J. B. O'Hara, who viewed the agreement as a four-power pact against that country, while 'Truth-seeker' praised it for supporting a fellow League member.⁴⁰¹ The most relevant contribution came from Thomas Utley, a future *Daily Telegraph* correspondent. His letter discussed the strategic changes that had taken place in Europe since 1935, arguing that the situation had swung in favour of Germany, thereby annulling the aims of the Franco-Soviet pact.⁴⁰² Not all letter writers favoured the Soviet position. R. R. Hoare, (the regional director of the Economic League), and Colonel Grierson, both pointed to the military weakness of the Soviet Union. Given the known political allegiances of some correspondents, a tentative conclusion would be that the divisions reflected the national divide.⁴⁰³

In the aftermath of the Munich agreement, all three geographical areas showed similar tendencies in terms of the opinions expressed. The general feelings to emerge were: relief at avoiding war, gratitude to Chamberlain for his efforts, unease about the future, and concern about the state of British defences. Conservatives were particularly keen to stress Chamberlain's efforts in the public

³⁹⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 3 and 13 October 1938.

³⁹⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 12 October 1938.

³⁹⁹ K. Neilson, *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, 2006); M. J. Carley, "'Only the USSR Has Clean Hands': The Soviet Perspective on the Failure of Collective Security and the Collapse of Czechoslovakia, 1934-1938 (Part 2)", *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 21, 3 (2010): 368-96.

⁴⁰⁰ G. Roberts, 'Soviet Foreign Policy, 1933-1941, with Special Reference to the Pact with Nazi Germany' (Ph.D., London School of Economics, 1992): 235-9.

⁴⁰¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 October 1938.

⁴⁰² *Bolton Evening News*, 18 and 21 October 1938. For a detailed discussion of the strategic and military balance, see Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power 1938-39*.

⁴⁰³ *Bolton Evening News*, 13 and 15 October 1938. For a further discussion of British perceptions of Soviet war potential see M. Kahn, 'British Intelligence on Soviet War Potential in 1939: A Revised Picture and Some Implications (a Contribution to the "Unending Debate")', *Intelligence & National Security*, 28, 5 (2013).

domain but largely avoided comment on the actual agreement. Meanwhile, Chamberlain's opponents acknowledged the efforts he had made but rightly expressed concerns about the future. In the two London boroughs, there was a brief concern for the humanitarian cost, coupled with discussion about the Soviet Union. This subject received greater attention in Bolton but not in Bedfordshire, because the Left was not as well established.

One overlooked feature of the crisis is its impact on the number of people attending church. Susan Goodman and Alan Wilkinson argue that attending church was a way of bringing the nation together.⁴⁰⁴ This process began prior to the Berchtesgaden meeting, when the Archbishop of Canterbury issued a call for people to attend a day of prayer that coming Sunday. The Free Churches repeated this call.⁴⁰⁵ However, the 'London Man's Diary' in the *Bolton Evening News* argued that people did not need an invitation, seeing that the churches in central London were already busier than normal at lunchtimes.⁴⁰⁶ The paper also published details of local services for peace that were taking place. This enabled the churches to undertake their moral responsibility for the welfare of the people, a responsibility that they themselves had recognised. The meeting records for Trinity Congregational and Methodist Church in Farnworth, and St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hammersmith, refer to discussions about opening the church during the crisis so that people could pray.⁴⁰⁷

To assess the claim about increased church attendances, an analysis of Anglican Church service registers in the geographical areas was undertaken. The registers record the number of communicants for each service, which is a good indication of the overall attendance. Table 1 is a sample of 16 churches out of 50 overall taken from across the geographical areas for the two Sundays either side of the Munich agreement. Overall, attendance was relatively steady, though there were dramatic swings on the Sunday immediately after the agreement. Part of the explanation for this increase lies in the fact that this Sunday was Harvest Festival, a service that traditionally attracted greater numbers. The sense of relief did the rest.

⁴⁰⁴ A. Wilkinson, 'Thanking God for Neville Chamberlain: Appeasement and the English Churches', *Modern History Review*, 1, 2 (1989): 26-7; S. Goodman, *Children of War* (London, 2005): 67.

⁴⁰⁵ *The Times*, 16 September 1938.

⁴⁰⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 September 1938.

⁴⁰⁷ London Metropolitan Archives (LMA): /4317/A/004, Monthly Meeting of Session, 27 September 1938; BLHC: NC/4/1/3, Quarterly Church Meeting, 27 September 1938.

Table 1: Church attendance during the Munich crisis⁴⁰⁸

Church	Location	18/9/38	25/9/38	2/10/38	9/10/38
St Andrew's	Luton	82	69	173	65
St Peter's	Luton	30	81	61	43
St Paul's	Luton	45	23	80	48
St Christopher's	Luton	74	77	127	49
Christchurch	Bedford	48	16	94	11
Holy Trinity	Bedford	53	36	169	
St Andrew's	Bedford	62	76	122	51
St Cuthbert's	Bedford	68	49	116	21
St Andrew's	Fulham	53	42	100	32
All Saints	Fulham	235	106	328	95
Christchurch	Fulham	35	69	163	31
St Dionis	Fulham	113	154	114	110
St Thomas's	Bolton	47	99	252	81
Bolton Parish	Bolton	41	28	197	19

⁴⁰⁸ BA: P150/0/7, Register of Services 1932-1939; BA: P136/1/7, Register of Services 1937-1941; BA: P155/0/4, Register of Services 1936-1946; BA: P161/0/2, Service Register 1 Jan 1933- 8 Apr 1942; BA: P121/0/4, Register of Services 1927-1941; BA: P133/0/8, Parish of Holy Trinity Register of Services, 1936-1941; BA: P131/0/8, Parish of St Andrew Register of Services, 1938-1941; BA: P131/0/7, Parish of St Andrew Register of Services, 1935-1938; BA: P121/0/4, Parish of St Cuthbert's Register of Services, 1927-1941; LMA: P77/AND/42, Church Services Register, 16 November 1936 to 15 October 1939; LMA: P77/ALL/48, Church Services Register, 18 October 1935 to 20 April 1940; LMA: P77/CTC/016, Church Services Register, 31 May 1936 to 13 October 1946; LMA: P77/DIO/B/01/008, Church Services Register, February 1936 to 16 February 1940; LMA: P77/DIO/B/01/008, Church Services Register, February 1936 to 16 February 1940; Greater Manchester County Record Office (GMCRO): L144/1/6/7, St Thomas Preachers' Book, 1933-1939; GMCRO: L243/1/10/7, Bolton Parish Church Preachers' Book, 1937-1950; GMCRO: L117/1/6/4, All Souls Church Preachers' Book, 1933-1940; GMCRO: L244/1/8/1, St George's Preachers' Book, 1932-1948.

All Souls	Bolton	42	45	37	56
St George's	Bolton	31	42	192	18

Newspapers in Bedfordshire reported this phenomenon widely. On 6 October, the *Luton News* reported that the main parish church, St Mary's (figures not available for 2 October), had closed its doors fifteen minutes prior to the start of the service, leading to another service to be held later in the day. The paper also reported increases for the churches listed in Table 1.⁴⁰⁹ Increases also took place in Bedford. A similar scene to the one in Luton occurred at the main parish church, St Paul's. The large congregation displayed a genuine thankfulness for peace, despite some murmurings about the price paid.⁴¹⁰ The other two geographical areas reported similar occurrences but in much less detail than in Bedfordshire. One exception to this was the *Horwich and Westhoughton Journal and Guardian*, which covered part of the area surrounding Bolton. On 7 October, three reports appeared about church services, two of which mentioned large congregations for the thanksgiving services.⁴¹¹ However, as J. W. Huxley-Williams – the Vicar of Christ Church in Fulham – noted 'the time when the nation came flocking back to the house of prayer' did not last, as the figures for 9 October demonstrate. The nation slipped back into its comfortable pre-crisis state.⁴¹²

The church services following the Munich agreement were one of the ways that the public demonstrated their relief at the maintenance of peace. Indirectly related to this is the impact of the Munich crisis on remembrance. Before the crisis occurred, the annual British Legion services in July – which only appeared to have occurred in Bedfordshire – took place. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* reported on 18 July that attendance had been the largest for several years. One of the joint organising secretaries, R. D. Wadlock, appreciated this in a letter to the *Luton News*, stating that 'it was gratifying to know that the memory of our comrades remains strong'.⁴¹³ July's crowds in Luton appeared again on Armistice Day, with reports and letters published in the *Luton News* attributing this to the recent crisis.⁴¹⁴ However, reports from other parts of the county were contradictory as both the *Bedfordshire Standard* and the *Bedford and District Daily Circular* reported

⁴⁰⁹ *Luton News*, 6 October 1938.

⁴¹⁰ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 4 October 1938.

⁴¹¹ *Horwich and Westhoughton Journal and Guardian*, 7 October 1938.

⁴¹² Hammersmith and Fulham Archives (HFA): Christ Church Parish Magazine, January 1939.

⁴¹³ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 18 July 1938; *Luton News*, 21 July 1938.

⁴¹⁴ *Luton News*, 10 and 17 November 1938.

a lack of interest in the day.⁴¹⁵ There was another perceived impact of the crisis on the crowds that gathered, namely that all ages stood shoulder to shoulder, leading the Dunstable School Magazine to suggest that the crisis had been a call to service for the youth of the nation.⁴¹⁶ This image was a contrast to a year earlier, when letters were appearing asking the young to tolerate the old who wished to remember. Events had since provided a sense of meaning to the young.

Honouring the dead so soon after the crisis was a theme touched on by Reverend Morris from Askew Road Wesleyan Chapel, as part of his address to the main Armistice Day gathering in Hammersmith.⁴¹⁷ Sentiments of this nature featured in reports in the *Fulham Chronicle*.⁴¹⁸ The reports noted the presence of organisations, particularly youth ones such as the Scouts and Guides. However, Mrs E. Batten did not share these sentiments. Addressing a PSA Brotherhood⁴¹⁹ meeting, she argued that children should receive instruction about living heroes rather than those who had sacrificed their lives. This was just one example of her anti-war stance, for in an earlier speech she had argued against the amount spent on rearmament as it diverted money away from improving social conditions,⁴²⁰ a point that George Tomlinson had made during the Farnworth by-election campaign discussed in the previous chapter.

Bolton greeted Armistice Day with a greater sense of poignancy following the Munich crisis, a view reinforced by the *Bolton Evening News* editorial on 11 November. It spoke of a large poppy-wearing crowd that fell silent when the time came to pay their respects.⁴²¹ Compared with the previous year, the evidence available for Bolton is not to the same level of depth since no records appear to exist for this day in the M-O records. Similar scenes occurred in Horwich, where Reverend Lynch had written in the parish magazine that Armistice Day would 'have a deeper significance due to recent events'.⁴²² The verdicts expressed by these opinion leaders was not shared by P. Hicks, a resident of Kearsley, and 'Woogle', as they wrote to protest against its continuation, an attitude condemned by 'One of the forgotten ex-servicemen'.⁴²³

⁴¹⁵ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 8 November 1938; *Bedfordshire Standard*, 11 November 1938.

⁴¹⁶ BA: Z416/3/6, Dunstable School Magazine, 27 November 1938.

⁴¹⁷ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 18 November 1938.

⁴¹⁸ *Fulham Chronicle*, 18 November 1938.

⁴¹⁹ PSA stands for Pleasant Sunday Afternoon.

⁴²⁰ *Fulham Chronicle*, 11 November 1938.

⁴²¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 November 1938.

⁴²² *Horwich and West Houghton Journal and Guardian*, 4 November 1938.

⁴²³ *Bolton Evening News*, 8 November 1938.

The increased poignancy on Armistice Day continued a trend that had emerged over the previous few years. This, as in other areas of the country such as the City and East End of London, stemmed partly from the crisis. There was reference to the increased attendance of the young amongst those who gathered to remember the fallen which, - based upon newspaper reports – was a marked step change compared to previous years. Despite the increased reverence, some people continued to advocate the abolition of Armistice Day, though their numbers were down on the previous year.

The months between the Anschluss and Armistice Day witnessed various shifts in the public mood: uninterested, under-informed, relieved, divided, and united. These themes emerge from the records at the time, M-O's particularly. The records provide scholars with the closest they can get to grassroots opinion.

Until the Munich crisis, the public were largely uninterested or indifferent towards foreign affairs, since they did not directly affect their daily lives. The limited discussion of the May crisis outside the national 'informed' elite is testament to this. However, it was Chamberlain's intervention in mid-September that provided a clear signal that the situation was dangerous. This led to a rise in public discussion and interest, even though most people lacked background information about the situation. The crowds that assembled in London and Bolton reflected this interest, and in Bolton they were hungry for news. There is no evidence of such a desire in the other two geographical areas.

The crowds' lack of information was partly their own fault. The *Bolton Evening News* and the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* had been publishing information about the situation on Czechoslovakia on an almost daily basis over the summer. Reading these reports would have provided readers with some background information. The information situation worsened due to the lack of official information, which became a feature of the crisis. Therefore, the two daily evening papers cautioned readers about what they said, but did not prevent the publication of letters about the situation. These letters were a way of informing people about the various viewpoints that existed in a divided Britain.

The divisions witnessed at the time of Eden's resignation and the Anschluss had continued at a national and local level. Conservative MPs, Associations and their supporters, along with National Liberals, were clear in their support for Chamberlain's policy. This was to seek a peaceful resolution to the situation in Czechoslovakia. Opponents agreed with this aim but disagreed about the methods. The Left remained critical about the move away from a League-based foreign policy and the principle of collective security. Such criticism was voiced in all three geographical areas but mainly in Fulham, Hammersmith and Bolton. The first two were Labour dominated, so it was to be expected. The Left did not have such a strong presence in Bolton, but the work of M-O and the breadth of opinion published in the *Bolton Evening News* provide evidence of this opposition.

Public interest began to stir at the end of August, when an M-O directive about war and peace found that many respondents hoped for the maintenance of peace, a hope shared by the leaders of female opinion in Luton. This hope was an underlying one that united the nation. Local level opinion began to emerge in mid-September. M-O surveys in Fulham indicated a hope for peace but revealed a growing dislike for Hitler. Meanwhile, M-O evidence from Bolton demonstrated some public appreciation of the seriousness of the situation. At this point, Chamberlain's visit to Germany captured the imagination of the nation and led to praise in all three geographical areas. People in Fulham expressed admiration. However, divisions quickly began to emerge, a situation not helped by the lack of official information. Letters, articles, and replies to M-O surveys showed a hardening of opinion in favour of standing by Czechoslovakia but hoping to avoid war even if this meant paying a high price.

Opinion continued to harden during the weekend following the Godesberg meeting. Labour were particularly active, organising meetings across the country, including Bedfordshire and Fulham, to promote the need to stand firm. There is no mention of such a rally in Bolton. Chamberlain still had his supporters, mainly Conservatives, who were quick to attack those who criticised him. Once again, hopes for a peaceful solution remained despite the increasing tensions. News of the Munich conference provided a hopeful signal to the nation that war would be averted.

The mood swings recorded in the geographic locations during the latter part of September confirm the existing historiography of public reaction to the crisis and that the assertion made by Halifax in his telegram to the Godesberg delegation is correct. The great mass of the 'public mood' was changing. Mood is a more relevant term than opinion as it was difficult to form an informed opinion due to the lack of information. Missing from these swings were references to Churchill, though his

absence from discussion in the three localities may not be representative of the whole country.

From a country divided about the most appropriate course of action, came a collective sigh of relief at the avoidance of war. Opinion leaders and ordinary people expressed their gratitude at the efforts that Chamberlain had made for peace. Conservative MPs and their associations particularly praised their leader, whilst avoiding public comment on the actual contents of the agreement. Further evidence of the national relief is available in the Anglican communicant figures on the Sunday following the agreement, despite it also being Harvest Festival. The difference between the geographical areas in this instance was the level of detail reported in the local newspapers. The 'united' feeling of relief accompanied continuing divisions. Opponents of the agreement in Fulham initially focussed on the humanitarian cost, a point of difference compared to the other two areas. With the passage of time, expressions of mistrust about future German intentions became the dominant theme, especially in Fulham and Bolton, thereby continuing a trend that was evident in the M-O information collected during the crisis. The October BIPO poll confirmed this, since 93% of respondents did not believe Hitler's claim about having no further territorial ambitions.⁴²⁴

Another division occurred over the Soviet Union and the need for Britain to have closer relations. Discussion of this topic principally occurred in the *Bolton Evening News*, with contributions from both sides of the argument. The Left were strongly in favour of closer relations, a characteristic shared with Fulham and Hammersmith, where the topic received a passing mention. No such discussion took place in Bedfordshire, which is not surprising given the lack of an established Left wing in the country. Most surprising is that there was not more discussion in the London boroughs, given their Labour domination.

The subject of gender is not one that features heavily in this chapter. The reference made to individuals or organisations highlight women's desire for peace, their involvement in defence preparations, and their support for Chamberlain's efforts. Julie Gottlieb's recently published work '*Guilty Women*', *Foreign Policy and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* takes a gendered analysis to a much greater depth. Whilst her findings agree with the main points, she enhances the debate by arguing that female expressions of opinion provided some of the psychological framework used by Chamberlain during the crisis, which many writers have ignored.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ 'British Institute of Public Opinion', 78.

⁴²⁵ Gottlieb, '*Guilty Women*', *Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*: 211.

Compared to November 1937, Armistice Day 1938 was perceived to show an increased sense of unity and reverence. Some of this is attributable to the crisis, as it awakened the younger generation to the potential dangers and horrors of war. As reports noted, young and older stood shoulder to shoulder in a way that based on evidence from the previous year, they had not done. This was noticeable in all three geographical case studies, thereby suggesting the growth of a sense of unity of purpose. However, this would require further areas case studies to confirm that this applied in a general sense to the whole nation.

Regarding the questions posed in the introduction to this thesis, chapter 2 does demonstrate some differences between national and local discussion of events. The May crisis is the best example of this as local level discussion was limited compared to national 'elite and informed' discussion. The same applies to the Sudeten crisis until the end of August. After this time, there was little differential between the timing of national and local discussion of events, since the crisis began to impact upon the lives of ordinary people. The impact on and views of local people is in greatest evidence where M-O was active. In the case of both Bolton and Fulham, there were clear tensions between support for Chamberlain's visit to Germany, the growing dislike of Hitler, and the desire to avoid war. A similar conclusion is possible from published opinion in these areas and Bedfordshire. The published opinion in local newspapers attempted to guide local opinion, as well as reflect it, a task that was not always possible. For example, the *Bolton Evening News* had been consistently critical of Chamberlain's policy, but recognised that local people did not want war. The crisis did have an impact on the public mood in terms of how the public viewed Hitler and defence preparations, as discussed in later chapters. Drawing this chapter and the findings of those chapters together is an essential part of understanding the impact of the crisis on reactive and residual opinion. Taken together, they provide evidence of how the crisis acted as a turning point in the mood of the British people.

In conclusion, the local evidence of the 'public mood' supports the existing historical writing on these months and does not include any references to the 'buying time for rearmament' argument that would emerge in 1939. The findings of this chapter are aptly summarised by the editorial in the *Bolton Evening News* on 5 October, which stated:⁴²⁶

'The PM's attachment to the cause of peace is shared by the nation and the other is that nobody feels comfortable with the Munich agreement.... the crisis caught the country unprepared and not just in a military sense'.

⁴²⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 October 1938.

Chapter 3: Broken Times, November 1938 – March 1939

'Broken times' is an accurate description of the period between November 1938 and March 1939. It began with Kristallnacht on 9/10 November following the murder of the German diplomat, Ernst von Rath, in Paris by a Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan. This provided the pretext for an orgy of violence against the Jews in Germany, with synagogues burnt, shops looted and people beaten or imprisoned. The result was widespread condemnation of Germany, highlighting the increasing need to aid the persecuted German Jewish community. Further mistrust of German intentions emerged in the early months of 1939, as rumours circulated about where Germany would strike next. Switzerland and Holland were two of the potential targets discussed by the Cabinet at the start of February. They agreed that an attack on either would be a *casus belli*.⁴²⁷ The answer to the question came on 15 March, when Germany invaded the remainder of Czechoslovakia, thereby breaking the Munich agreement. This resulted in the coming to the fore of a process that had begun privately prior to the Munich agreement, namely the hardening of public opinion towards Germany and a reorientation in British policy towards resistance, though the rhetoric used during this period had already signalled this.⁴²⁸

This chapter will argue that Kristallnacht acted as a major catalyst for the hardening of the 'public mood' towards Germany, due to the moral outrage it caused. However, this did not translate into a willingness to assist, as an examination of British attitudes towards the Jews from the Anschluss to the declaration of war will highlight. Kristallnacht was one of the ways that the public learned more about the German regime, a process assisted by information about new library books and talks. Germany was not the only subject under consideration – references to the Soviet Union also began to increase, though a fuller discussion would occur after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia. Here, Conservatives were wary, whilst the Left recognised the need to include the Soviet Union in any serious challenge to Germany. Although not directly mentioned in this chapter, the Arab revolt in Palestine that occurred between 1936 and 1939 must be borne in mind when considering British policy towards the Jews during this period. Details of the rebellion, especially the second phase are

⁴²⁷ TNA: CAB 23/97 3 (39), Cabinet Conclusions, 1 February 1939.

⁴²⁸ S. E. Goddard, 'The Rhetoric of Appeasement: Hitler's Legitimation and British Foreign Policy, 1938–39', *Security Studies*, 24, 1 (2015): 95-130.

well covered by Norris,⁴²⁹ whilst Cohen provides a detailed examination of the background negotiations that led to the White Paper on Palestine in May 1939.⁴³⁰ This process revealed that it would be very difficult to find a solution as the usual process of diplomatic compromise did not apply in the case of Palestine. British policy also tended to favour the Arab population due to the wider strategic situation, Britain needed the support of the neighbouring Arab states.

British attitudes towards the Jews in the 1930s partly stemmed from the Great War when xenophobia had been able to develop in Britain. Germans resident in Britain and Jews from Eastern Europe had been targets for this, with the latter regarded as not doing their bit for the war effort.⁴³¹ Following the cessation of hostilities, anti-Semitism did not find fertile ground in Britain, due in part to the efforts of Jewish leaders to encourage cultural assimilation. This assimilation continued into the 1930s, but masked divisions within the Jewish community: generation, place of birth, political and religious belief.⁴³²

Hitler's rise to power and the implementation of Nazi racial policies increased Jewish emigration from Germany. In the early days of the Nazi regime, reports appeared in a range of newspapers about concentration camps where political prisoners and 'enemies' of the regime were sent. At this point, the camps did not have the same meaning that they would acquire later. Andrew Sharf described the British response as one of sympathy and a desire to help, whilst preventing Britain from becoming the chosen place of refuge.⁴³³ Initially, the numbers coming to Britain were quite small, thereby allowing the British Jewish community to provide the guarantee of support required by the government.⁴³⁴ Aside from guaranteeing the new arrivals, divisions existed about how to respond to German actions. Giesela Lebzelter discusses the early resistance, which included a boycott of German goods. The Board of Deputies (BOD) did not adopt this measure until 1934, an inaction that led to the formation of the Jewish People's Council (JPC), which argued for an active resistance to fascism. The BOD, which asked *The Times* and the BBC not to report on the JPC's

⁴²⁹ J. Norris, 'Repression and Rebellion: Britain's Response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine 1936-39', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36, 1 (2008): 25-45.

⁴³⁰ M. J. Cohen, 'Appeasement in the Middle East: The British White Paper on Palestine, May 1939', *Historical Journal*, 16, 3 (1973): 571-96.

⁴³¹ C. Holmes, 'Public Opinion in England and the Jews, 1914-1918', *Michael: On the History of the Jews in the Diaspora*, 10 (1986): 97-115; S. Yarrow, 'The Impact of Hostility on Germans in Britain, 1914-1918', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 8, 1/2 (1989): 97-104.

⁴³² J. Bord, 'Voluntarism and Conservative Pluralism: Reconsidering Jewish Refugee Assistance on the British Home Front (1939-44)', *Contemporary British History*, 16, 4 (2002): 19.

⁴³³ A. Sharf, 'Nazi Racialism and British Opinion', *Race*, 5, 2 (1963): 16-19.

⁴³⁴ Bord, 'Voluntarism and Conservative Pluralism': 22.

activities, did not support its actions.⁴³⁵

British expressions of sympathy for the victims of Nazi persecution continued, particularly amongst Christian leaders. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang, and the future Archbishop, William Temple,⁴³⁶ were amongst those to draw attention to the plight of the Jews. However, British government policy remained unchanged. Louise London has argued that British policy was to contain the problem on the European continent and only admit 'desirable' refugees.⁴³⁷ The flow of refugees increased substantially after the Anschluss with one letter writer to the *Manchester Guardian*, describing the situation as meaning that 'it was no longer possible to be a Jew in Austria'.⁴³⁸ Jews were not the only Nazi targets, as Catholics and Social Democrats also suffered. The increasing numbers prompted a discussion about what to do. One suggestion was to find a place of refuge within the British Empire, such as Australia or Palestine. The major obstacle was the increased economic burden on the host country, which might intensify anti-Semitism. This concerned the relevant authorities. Prior to the Anschluss, most Jews seeking refuge came from the desirable professional classes. This was less true of Austrian Jews, as noted by J. A. Eagleton, a member of the Aliens branch of the Home Office. He believed that most of the Austrian Jews seeking refuge would be difficult to absorb as they came from the shopkeeper and small business class.⁴³⁹ Even the professional classes did not find it easy, as there were frequent objections from the medical profession.⁴⁴⁰ Restrictions on Austrian doctors were the subject of Parliamentary questions in July 1938 by Edith Summerskill and five other MPs.⁴⁴¹ On 14, 20, and 25 July, they asked the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, several questions on the matter. His answers stressed the need to balance the competing demands of providing refuge whilst avoiding flooding the labour

⁴³⁵ G. Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England, 1918-1939* (London, 1978): 137-44.

⁴³⁶ C. G. Lang, *The Voice of Britain on the Nazi Treatment of the Jews* (London, 1936): 3.

⁴³⁷ L. London, 'British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees, 1933-1939,' in *Second Chance*, ed. W. E. Mosse (Tubingen, 1991): 485-518; L. London, 'British Reactions to the Jewish Flight from Europe,' in *Britain and the Threat to Stability in Europe 1918-1945*, ed. P. Catterall and C. J. Morris (Leicester, 1993): 57-73; L. London, 'Refugee Agencies and Their Work, 1933-39', *Journal of Holocaust Education*, 4, 1 (1995): 3-17; L. London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees, and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 2000); L. London, 'Whitehall and the Refugees: The 1930s and the 1990s', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 34, 3 (2000): 17-26.

⁴³⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 21 March 1938.

⁴³⁹ T. Kushner, 'Finding Refugee Voices,' in *Political Exile and Exile Politics in Britain after 1933*, ed. A. Grenville and A. Reiter (Amsterdam, 2011): 125.

⁴⁴⁰ M. Berghahn, *German-Jewish Refugees in England: The Ambiguities of Assimilation* (London, 1984): 84; J. S. Zamet, 'Aliens or Colleagues? Refugees from Nazi Oppression - 1933-1945', *British Dental Journal*, 201, 6 (2006): 397-407; S. Cohen, 'Crossing Borders: Academic Refugee Women, Education and the British Federation of University Women During the Nazi Era', *History of Education*, 39, 2 (2010): 178.

⁴⁴¹ The other five MPs were: Benjamin Riley (Dewsbury), George Methers (Linlithgowshire), Geoffrey Mander (Wolverhampton East), Henry Morris-Jones (Denbigh) and Daniel Lipson (Cheltenham)

market.⁴⁴²

The plight of the Jews received little coverage in local sources with only snippets appearing before Kristallnacht. The only reference in Bedfordshire comes from the diary of D. H. Oliver, an employee of Laporte Chemicals. His notes for the interwar period refer to work colleagues disliking Jews, which they attributed to the Jews' panicked departure from the East End of London following air raids during the Great War. This reinforced the idea of them not 'doing their bit'.⁴⁴³

The lack of references in Bedfordshire was mirrored in Fulham and Hammersmith. The first references to the subject occurred on 22 May 1938 with a reference to 'enemy aliens flooding the labour market'.⁴⁴⁴ This reflected concerns about the economic impact of refugees. The next reference came on 22 July in an editorial criticising the British and German governments. The editorial urged the British government to be more welcoming and the German government to make it easier for Jews to depart.⁴⁴⁵

Bolton displayed a similar lack of interest. The mentions that did occur came in March 1938. The first two instances were reports of talks to church groups. M-O data collected about some of the men's social activities at St Simon and St Jude's on 10 March noted that the largest attendance (65) had been for a talk by a German refugee about church and state. The precise details of the talk did not appear in the report.⁴⁴⁶ Four days later, another church meeting took place at St Barnabas. The M-O observer in attendance described the vicar leading the meeting as 'a proper fascist and anti-Jew'.⁴⁴⁷ The hostility displayed by the vicar also existed amongst ordinary people. An M-O observer deliberately raised the question in conversation with two other people. From this, the observer concluded that there was a hidden anti-Semitism, often related to money.⁴⁴⁸

Prior to Kristallnacht, there was very little discussion at a local level, as none of the three geographical areas had a large Jewish population. The weeks following the Munich agreement marked the start of a new wave of migration, as countries on Germany's eastern border increased

⁴⁴² Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 338, Columns 1502-3 (14 July 1938); Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 338, Column 2213-4 (20th July 1938); Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 338, Column 2724-5 (25th July 1938)

⁴⁴³ BA: X941/1/28, Some Thoughts on Luton 1920-1940.

⁴⁴⁴ *West London Observer*, 13 May 1938.

⁴⁴⁵ *West London Observer*, 22 July 1938.

⁴⁴⁶ M-O A: Worktown 17/D, St Simon and St Jude's, 10 March 1938.

⁴⁴⁷ M-O A: Worktown 17/D, St Barnabas C.E.M.S., 14 March 1938.

⁴⁴⁸ M-O A: Worktown 42/C, Conversation on a Road, 30 March 1938.

their anti-Jewish activities. Germany signalled its intention of increasing the pressure on the Jewish community by deporting 20,000 Jews of Polish origin. Amongst the deportees were the family of Herschel Grynszpan, who responded by murdering Ernst von Rath. The murder provided a convenient excuse for the authorities in Germany to unleash an orgy of violence against the Jewish community. The Nazis mobilised quickly as they had gathered for their traditional 9 November meeting, which honoured their fallen comrades from the 1923 putsch. The violence that followed 'had powerful repercussions around the world'.⁴⁴⁹

The violence triggered an anti-German response in the British press. Letters to *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian* expressed their moral revulsion,⁴⁵⁰ as did letters from Christian churches to local synagogues. One example of this was the letter sent by All Saints Parish Church in Fulham.⁴⁵¹ Opinion poll findings support the content of the letters. The November BIPO poll revealed that 73% of respondents said that Germany's treatment of the Jews prevented good relations between the two countries.⁴⁵² This only added to the increasing mistrust of Germany. The question of what Britain could do to help followed the expressions of revulsion. Parliamentary discussion covered several areas: which countries were prepared to assist, delays in processing asylum applications, and how to prevent the refugees from becoming an economic burden to Britain.⁴⁵³ These themes reflected the discussions taking place in the geographical areas. Data collected by M-O as part of research on anti-Semitism revealed a highly secretive anti-Semitism amongst respondents, often through a fear of a threat to British jobs.⁴⁵⁴ However, some respondents did acknowledge that some immigration was economically beneficial to Britain.⁴⁵⁵ This reflected the balance that the authorities were trying to maintain.

The response to Kristallnacht in Luton generated a rare occurrence, somebody who did not condemn it. A. Shaw, in a letter to the *Luton News*, argued that Britain had no right to criticise Germany given

⁴⁴⁹ TNA: CAB 23/95 55 (38), Cabinet Conclusions, 16 November 1938.

⁴⁵⁰ *The Times*, 12 November 1938; *Manchester Guardian*, 17 November 1938.

⁴⁵¹ LMA: P77/ALL/216, Ordinary Meeting of the Council, 13 December 1938.

⁴⁵² J. Hinton, P. Thompson, and I. Liddell, *British Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup) Poll 1938-1946*, (Colchester: UK Data Archive, 1996).

⁴⁵³ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 341, Column 1734-5 (23rd November 1938); Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 342, Column 18-22 (28 November 1938)

⁴⁵⁴ M-O A: DR1217, Racial Research; M-O A: DR1246, Racial Research; M-O A: DR1268, Racial Research.

⁴⁵⁵ M-O A: DR1285, Racial Research.

Britain's record in Ireland.⁴⁵⁶ 'British Jew', a resident of Luton, challenged Shaw's minority opinion, highlighting that the persecution had been ongoing since 1933.⁴⁵⁷ This was the start of several letters between the pair published in the paper. A couple of letters condemned Kristallnacht. William Church, a resident of Tennyson Road in Luton, wrote to provide details of a resolution passed by the Dallow Road Adult School, which condemned the 'organised collective brutality; and call on people to unite to condemn the attack'. A. W. Merry, a resident of Luton, agreed with the resolution and added to it by calling for people to assist with the provision of humanitarian relief.⁴⁵⁸

Reactions in Fulham and Hammersmith mirrored Bedfordshire. The attack on the Jewish community was condemned. On 25 November, the *West London Observer* published a letter from T. Funston, a resident of West Kensington. Funston argued that the situation had received less attention than it had deserved and that the persecution was a deliberate attempt to distract the German people.⁴⁵⁹ Funston's letter joined several others published by the paper expressing revulsion at events.⁴⁶⁰ However, 'Another Peace-Lover' was unsympathetic, arguing that evidence from both sides was required before passing judgment.⁴⁶¹ This view was criticised by 'X.Y.Z.' and 'Peace-Lover', both of whom expressed the view that the German foreign ministry had inspired some recent letters.⁴⁶²

In Bolton, Kristallnacht was condemned across the political spectrum. The *Bolton Evening News* editorial on 15 November stated that all parties were deeply shocked and that it believed that the public was not in the mood for negotiations.⁴⁶³ Six days later, the editorial expressed the hope that these events would force Chamberlain to change course in foreign policy.⁴⁶⁴ These arguments continued the paper's opposition to Chamberlain's policy, which had begun following Eden's resignation in February. Political unity in condemning the attacks also occurred in the neighbouring Farnworth constituency. The Labour and Liberal commentators in the *Farnworth Weekly Journal* condemned the attack and questioned the motives behind it.⁴⁶⁵ These expressions of horror did not

⁴⁵⁶ *Luton News* 24 November 1938.

⁴⁵⁷ *Luton News*, 1 December 1938.

⁴⁵⁸ *Luton News*, 17 and 24 November 1938.

⁴⁵⁹ *West London Observer*, 25 November 1938.

⁴⁶⁰ *West London Observer*, 4, 11 and 25 November 1938.

⁴⁶¹ *West London Observer*, 2 December 1938.

⁴⁶² *West London Observer*, 9 December 1938.

⁴⁶³ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 November 1938.

⁴⁶⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 November 1938.

⁴⁶⁵ *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 18 November 1938.

go far enough for Left Book Club founder, Victor Gollancz. Speaking at a meeting in Bolton, he called for a large meeting to protest about Germany's actions.⁴⁶⁶

The published local reactions were condemnatory in all three geographic areas. Following on from this, people asked how they could assist in the provision of relief. Nationally, the Lord Baldwin fund was set up and began collecting in January 1939. There was also a change in emphasis after Kristallnacht, with priority given to the rescue of children. The Kindertransports and other rescue efforts produced some striking individual stories.

One such story was that of Heinrich Schwarz, a blind Polish Jew brought to Britain by Mr Kerran. The *Luton News* published Schwarz's story on 2 February 1939. The article described the horrors of Kristallnacht, and the rescuing of the family, who were now living safely in Luton and trying to learn English to become useful to their host community.⁴⁶⁷ Schwarz's son, Walter, provided a more detailed version of the story in an interview for the Imperial War Museum. Walter described what life in Germany was like for the Jews and how the family had decided to leave Germany following his father's arrest as part of Germany's expulsion of 20,000 Polish Jews in October 1938. Mr Barnett, a Quaker who later became a driver for a prospective Labour MP (presumably Kerran), assisted them in departing from Germany. They arrived in Britain on 31 December 1938. After initial stays in London and Radlett, they eventually came to Luton, where his father found work at a nearby Institute for the Blind making baskets. He soon became disillusioned as they kept moving him to the lowest paid jobs. Eventually, after much difficulty, his father found work in a plastics factory.⁴⁶⁸ Two more examples of relief provision in Bedfordshire occurred in April and May 1939. In April, the *Bedford and District Daily Circular* reported that a refugee council was in the process of being set up to assist new arrivals in Bedford. This announcement was part of a talk given by a Viennese doctor, who described conditions in Central Europe. The report, whilst stating that the talk was interesting, noted concerns about the potential impact upon British employment.⁴⁶⁹ Provision of economic assistance came in the form of training people prior to re-emigration. For example, the *Bedfordshire Times* reported on 5 May that a group of local business people had purchased Manor Farm in Tingrith, a village eight miles north of Luton, for providing agricultural training.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 December 1938.

⁴⁶⁷ *Luton News*, 2 February 1939.

⁴⁶⁸ W. D. Schwarz interviewed by C. Wood (Imperial War Museum, 21 January 1996).

⁴⁶⁹ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 22 April 1939.

⁴⁷⁰ *Bedfordshire Times*, 5 May 1939.

Although the above examples did not threaten British employment, fears about the impact on British jobs continued to appear. On 12 January 1939, A. Shaw – in a typical letter from him – cited a circular from the Jewish Board of Guardians offering incentives to firms to employ Jews.⁴⁷¹ Rabbi Livingstone’s talk to Luton Rotary Club challenged this, claiming that the refugee influx had created 15,000 jobs.⁴⁷² Reports of relief efforts in Bedfordshire were minimal, which may be an indication of a lack of public interest in the subject. The economic impact was the main discussion point within the mentions made.

Relief efforts received an earlier mention in Fulham and Hammersmith than in Bedfordshire. Within a few days of Kristallnacht, Mr Boroda, in a letter to the Board of Management at the Hammersmith and West Kensington Synagogue, reported that he had approached Miss Bishop, the headmistress of Latymer Girls School, with a view to finding accommodation.⁴⁷³ There is no record of how she responded. Another suggestion was to help the Jews establish a country of their own. Palestine was the obvious choice for this but the government were unwilling to consider it. However, this did not prevent Mr Pritt, the Labour MP for North Hammersmith, from supporting the Committee for Jewish Immigration to Palestine.⁴⁷⁴

The major concern in the two London boroughs was the impact on British employment. Letters from P. Mason and ‘X.Y.Z.’ highlighted that Jewish businesses were replacing non-Jewish workers with Jews,⁴⁷⁵ while others bemoaned the diverting of relief funds away from those who needed assistance in Britain.⁴⁷⁶ Hanns Cemach, a resident of Boscombe Road, and P. Brent, a resident of Acton, countered the concerns about employment by highlighting the benefits to the country such as the addition of essential skills, stating that refugees could only work if given permission to do so by the Home Office as part of their terms of entry.⁴⁷⁷ H. Chilton, a resident of Ruislip, and A. F. Johnson, appealed to both sides to allow refugees the chance to prove themselves before drawing any definite conclusions.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷¹ *Luton News*, 12 January 1939.

⁴⁷² *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 27 January 1939.

⁴⁷³ HFA: DD/1097/1, Hammersmith and West Kensington Synagogue Meeting of the Board of Management, 14 and 28 November 1938.

⁴⁷⁴ *West London Observer*, 9 December 1938.

⁴⁷⁵ *West London Observer*, 17 March and 9 June 1939.

⁴⁷⁶ *West London Observer*, 23 December 1938.

⁴⁷⁷ *West London Observer*, 3 February and 23 June 1939.

⁴⁷⁸ *West London Observer*, 3 February and 3 March 1939.

Similar points were evident in Bolton. Appeals for humanitarian assistance began a few days after Kristallnacht. J. Oliver Holdsworth, writing on behalf of the local branch of the Society of Friends, asked for offers of hospitality and donations.⁴⁷⁹ Appeals of this nature received a sympathetic reception in the Church. The meeting minutes of Park Street Wesleyan Circuit and Chorley Old Road Methodist Church both refer to offers of assistance.⁴⁸⁰ Appeals for support met with a mixed response. On 10 January 1939, A. Booth argued that there were non-Jewish people in Bolton who needed support first. E. Greenhalgh, a resident of Wigan Road in Bolton supported this view⁴⁸¹ 'Reader', who did not think that people would stay away from the cinema just because money collected on behalf of the Lord Baldwin Fund⁴⁸², went abroad, challenged both views.⁴⁸³ Following this brief spurt of discussion, very few mentions were made of this subject prior to the declaration of war. Those that did occur referred to meetings that raised awareness of Jewish suffering in Germany, the difficulties in gaining access to Britain⁴⁸⁴ and the potential impact on the British labour market. The last point generated mixed views, highlighting fears as well as the longer-term benefit to the country in terms of skills.⁴⁸⁵

The British public displayed a mixed attitude towards the suffering of the Jews during this period. At a national level, and in a more limited way at a local level, there was a desire amongst all opinion levels to provide some form of humanitarian relief and raise awareness about the suffering of the Jewish population in Germany. This occurred alongside concerns about the impact of immigration on the British labour market, except on Bedfordshire, where local newspapers published both sides of this debate. These concerns result from the perceived impact on the individual. The longer-term benefits, which countered these were also published as part of the press coverage.

⁴⁷⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 November 1938.

⁴⁸⁰ BLHC: NMWP/1/1/4, Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, 7 December 1938; BLHC: NMWP/3/2/1, Minutes of the Annual Society Meeting, 18 January 1939.

⁴⁸¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 10 and 11 January 1939.

⁴⁸² The Lord Baldwin fund was a charitable collection that had been set up in response to the events of Kristallnacht to raise money to help to provide humanitarian relief to Jews. This included helping to pay for transport and entry into Britain.

⁴⁸³ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 January 1939.

⁴⁸⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 May 1939.

⁴⁸⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 May and 6 July 1939.

Kristallnacht increased suspicion towards Germany, thereby reinforcing a trend that had been developing. The government's foreign policy was also under suspicion in letters written to the *Manchester Guardian*.⁴⁸⁶ One such letter called for the holding of a meeting to make the strength of opposition known.⁴⁸⁷ Letter writers such as F. H. Finch, a British citizen in Argentina, were the type that W. W. Paine, a letter writer to *The Times* from Reigate, criticised, as they did not make constructive suggestions.⁴⁸⁸

Opinion polls during this period contained several questions about foreign affairs. In November 73% of respondents believed that Kristallnacht had prevented better relations with Germany. Chamberlain's approval rating was 47%, which climbed to 52% in December, a month that saw 85%⁴⁸⁹ of respondents indicate that they would prefer to see the Soviet Union victorious in a war with Germany, though there was no mention of any allies. Evidence of support for the ideals of the Soviet Union continued in January 1939, when respondents indicated that they preferred communism to fascism, while in March 76% wanted an improvement in relations between Britain and the Soviet Union.⁴⁹⁰ Opinion poll data indicated increasing support for the Soviet Union, a development that the government were not keen to pursue. Amongst the questions asked by BIPO was a specific one regarding how people would best describe Chamberlain's policy. Of the respondents, 28% thought that appeasement would lead to an enduring peace, 46% that it was buying time to rearm, and 24% believed that it was bringing war closer due to its effect on the dictators.⁴⁹¹

The government continued to receive support from Bedfordshire Conservatives. At the annual meeting of the Bedford Conservative Association, Lord Melchett, the Association President, argued that Chamberlain's policy had bought the country extra time to prepare (an argument not used in October 1938). Sir Richard Wells joined Melchett, though both failed to comment on the actual terms of the Munich agreement and its implementation.⁴⁹² Labour shared the Conservative view that the nation needed to prepare. Sir Stafford Cripps, who was on the Left of the Labour Party, launched a campaign to establish a 'united front' that was not supported by the leadership. During

⁴⁸⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 16 and 31 December 1938.

⁴⁸⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 2 January 1939.

⁴⁸⁸ *The Times*, 26 January 1939.

⁴⁸⁹ The figures referred to in the article cited from Public Opinion Quarterly should be used with caution. The actual file from the UK Data Service puts the December figure at 61% and the March figure at 84%.

⁴⁹⁰ 'British Institute of Public Opinion'.

⁴⁹¹ 'British Institute of Public Opinion'.

⁴⁹² *Bedfordshire Times*, 24 February 1939.

his campaign, he spoke to an audience of more than 600 at Bedford. Forty-seven minutes of his speech attacked the government's foreign policy. Cripps's visit coincided with a series of letters in the *Bedfordshire Times* debating the merits of his ideas. G. H. Moore, an assistant secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, recognised that the labour movement would have to form the nucleus of a 'united front'. However, this did not mean an alliance between Labour and the Liberals.⁴⁹³ Ewan Martell, a member of Ampthill Liberals, suggested that they field a joint candidate at the next election.⁴⁹⁴ Electoral alliances of this nature had been used in the by-elections following Munich. References to foreign affairs continued into February as Liberal speakers, Thomas Lodge and Mr Martell criticised the government's foreign policy. A report on 3 February noted that Lodge believed that Chamberlain was beginning to doubt the wisdom of his own policy, whilst Martell argued that had Britain stood firm then there would have been no surrender at Munich.⁴⁹⁵

The winter months were similar in Fulham and Hammersmith. Following a lack of reports at the end of 1938, 1939 began with Conservative speakers defending Chamberlain. One of these defences came at the annual meeting of the Conservatives of St Matthew's ward. Councillor Raynor, the ward chair, spoke about the need for unity and continued faith in Chamberlain's policy.⁴⁹⁶ A few weeks later, John Busby and Dame Beatrice Lyall, a former Conservative councillor in Fulham, added to the defence. The latter was particularly angry with those who criticised Chamberlain.⁴⁹⁷ This criticism came largely from the Left. At the start of February, Summerskill accused Chamberlain of not representing the interests of the British people, a view that a Chamberlain-supporting letter writer to the *Hornsey Journal* felt that she had no right to express.⁴⁹⁸ The Liberals shared Labour's opposition. Addressing a meeting of Fulham Liberals, Miss Lakeman, argued that appeasement was wrong and that Britain must be prepared to resist. She deemed that the League was the best means of doing this.⁴⁹⁹

Campaign groups were active in Fulham during this period. At a half-full meeting of the Kensington and West Fulham PPU branch in January, Bouthrone Wilson, the chair, expressed his view that the time of the dictators was ending. It would have been interesting to know the speaker's rationale for this claim. At the same meeting, Preston Benson, stated that he was not prepared to have anything

⁴⁹³ *Bedfordshire Times*, 20 January 1939.

⁴⁹⁴ *Bedfordshire Times*, 20 January 1939.

⁴⁹⁵ *Bedfordshire Times*, 3 and 10 February 1939.

⁴⁹⁶ *West London Observer*, 20 January 1939.

⁴⁹⁷ *Fulham Chronicle*, 3 March 1939.

⁴⁹⁸ LSE: Summerskill 4/2, Dr Summerskill MP and the Premier.

⁴⁹⁹ *Fulham Chronicle*, 10 February 1939.

to do with the next war and that negotiations must provide the solution.⁵⁰⁰ The PPU were not the only group at work. The LNU held a meeting at Fulham Central Library in March, where the opposing sides expressed their views. Summerskill argued that the current 'peace' was the result of yielding to the dictators. By contrast, William Astor continued to defend the Munich agreement arguing that only justice and fair frontiers could form the basis of peace.⁵⁰¹

Bolton's discussion of foreign affairs ebbed and flowed over the winter months in the letters column of the *Bolton Evening News*. The editorials continued to mistrust the government. Therefore, 'Tory' and 'Anno' accused the editor of only presenting one side of the story.⁵⁰² In response, the editor argued that the editorial was the only part of the paper where political preferences came to the fore. Regular columnist 'Politicus' shared the editor's concerns and on 16 December attacked the overall policy of the government, but acknowledged that at the time of Munich Chamberlain had pursued the only feasible course. 'He knows me' and 'Salad' supported this qualified defence.⁵⁰³ Politicians in Farnworth shared the concerns expressed. The town's MP, George Tomlinson, argued for the need to find out what the government stood for, while the prospective Liberal candidate, William Ledsom, argued that some Conservatives supported the foreign policy advocated by the Liberals.⁵⁰⁴

This pattern of opinion continued into 1939, despite a shift in the letters column of the *Bolton Evening News* towards discussion of Spain. Editorial criticism of Chamberlain's policy continued but it did acknowledge that there was no realistic alternative at Munich. It also continued to urge the country to prepare, a process not helped by the loss of Czech arms production.⁵⁰⁵ Critical remarks also appeared in the *Farnworth Weekly Journal* on 13 January, when the Liberal columnist argued that a considerable body of opinion existed that demanded no more concessions.⁵⁰⁶ The Labour columnist echoed this sentiment, urging the creation of a 'united front' to drive the government from office.⁵⁰⁷ The *Bolton Evening News* on 30 January criticised a Chamberlain speech that outlined Britain's desire for peace⁵⁰⁸ but two days later criticised the section of Hitler's Reichstag speech

⁵⁰⁰ *Fulham Chronicle*, 27 January 1939.

⁵⁰¹ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 3 March 1939.

⁵⁰² *Bolton Evening News*, 16 and 19 December 1938.

⁵⁰³ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 and 22 December 1938.

⁵⁰⁴ *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 2 and 16 December 1938.

⁵⁰⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 14 January 1939.

⁵⁰⁶ *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 13 January 1939.

⁵⁰⁷ *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 20 January 1939.

⁵⁰⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 30 January 1939.

about peace. The editorial asked why, if Germany desired peace, arms production was increasing.⁵⁰⁹ Britain's response to the same question would have been that it was making good any deficiencies. Rearmament was both a deterrent and an insurance policy. H. K. Holt (a resident of Atherton), Austin Kavanagh (of Moor Edge in Bolton) and 'Realist' challenged the editorial criticism of Chamberlain.⁵¹⁰ Kavanagh and 'Realist' argued that the editorial criticism of Chamberlain was unfair, with 'Realist' stating that the lack of arms was not Chamberlain's fault but that of his predecessors, a stance that ignored Chamberlain's time as Chancellor. The editor responded to these criticisms stating this very point and making clear that he was attacking Chamberlain's policy rather than the man himself. This exchange continued when Kavanagh asked the editor for an alternative policy. The response was a mixture of full rearmament and appeasement, though specific details were lacking.⁵¹¹ J. B. O'Hara did not welcome the paper's response to Kavanagh's question. He attacked the capitalist press and class for only being interested in stopping the spread of socialism rather than the national interest.⁵¹² This did not stop the editorials from continuing their criticism. On 16 February, an editorial argued that the government would only deserve the support of the people once it had demonstrated that 'it was putting the national house in order', though it again acknowledged that as more became known about British weaknesses, it became clear that the policy pursued at Munich was the only viable one.⁵¹³ However, the constant editorial criticism did not prevent the paper from publishing articles about support for Chamberlain. Apart from Kavanagh's letters, Conservatives continued to express their support. John Haslam was one of those supporting Chamberlain. Fred Howard, the chair of the Farnworth Conservative Association joined him, emphasising that under Chamberlain, Britain had stood for the removal of enmities between nations thereby enabling the pursuit of peaceful co-existence.⁵¹⁴

The long-running editorial criticism abated at the start of March for a few weeks. However, the left-wing criticism revived. Marion Jessop from Leeds, speaking at a meeting of the Bolton Communist Party, criticised Chamberlain's policy for preventing the diplomatic defeat of Hitler.⁵¹⁵ Criticism continued when Labour's A. V. Alexander spoke at Spinner's Hall, calling for the government's removal from office and the implementation of a constructive peace policy. However, as on previous occasions, no details were forthcoming about what this would entail.⁵¹⁶ The President of

⁵⁰⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 February 1939.

⁵¹⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 3, 7 and 8 February 1939.

⁵¹¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 10 February 1939.

⁵¹² *Bolton Evening News*, 10 February 1939.

⁵¹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 February 1939.

⁵¹⁴ *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 17 February 1939.

⁵¹⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 7 March 1939; *Horwich and Westhoughton Journal and Guardian*, 10 March 1939.

⁵¹⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 13 March 1939.

Bolton Women's Liberal Association, Miss M. Bromily, expressed a different view. She used her re-election address to stress that Chamberlain was doing his best to avoid war, an aim supported by the Liberals.⁵¹⁷ All three of these views appeared in the week leading up to the next crisis, the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, which would bring the change in the public mood to the fore.

The winter months were a time of continued criticism by the *Bolton Evening News* editorial of British foreign policy rather than of Chamberlain personally. Chamberlain continued to have supporters in the Bolton area for what he was trying to achieve. Likewise, the Liberals and Labour shared this goal albeit via different methods. Labour made its disapproval of government policy clear but did not provide any details about an alternative policy that would maintain peace. In summary, the divisions between the parties about how to achieve peace remained as firmly entrenched as in the first three months of 1938.

The previous chapter briefly discussed the Soviet Union. Discussion of its role continued during the winter months but not in much detail. In Bolton, two letters appeared in the *Bolton Evening News*, a few days before Christmas. 'J.E.R.' and 'Domini' were critical of the Munich agreement. The former urged Chamberlain to fly to Moscow to obtain allies, while the latter predicted that unless matters changed, an alliance between fascism and communism might occur.⁵¹⁸

A slightly higher level of coverage occurred in the *West London Observer* during the first two months of 1939. Albert Maple accused Stalin of being one of the terrible men, who could 'set the world ablaze with war's useless cruelty'.⁵¹⁹ In response, Frank Raymond, a Fulham resident, argued that the Soviet Union did not want to fight anyone and that the press never printed any positive articles about the country.⁵²⁰ Nonetheless, the stream of criticism continued. Douglas Cooke, the Conservative MP for Hammersmith South, argued that the main aim of communism was to take over other countries.⁵²¹ Albert Maple returned to the attack on 24 February, questioning the democratic credentials of the Soviet Union.⁵²² This attack produced a rebuke from Pat Sloan, the author of

⁵¹⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 17 February 1939.

⁵¹⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 and 23 December 1938.

⁵¹⁹ *West London Observer*, 6 January 1939.

⁵²⁰ *West London Observer*, 13 January 1939.

⁵²¹ *West London Observer*, 10 February 1939.

⁵²² *West London Observer*, 24 February 1939.

Soviet Democracy and *Russia Without Illusions*,⁵²³ who referred to the many positive aspects of the Soviet Union. 'W.M.', a local trade union member agreed.⁵²⁴ The main letters appearing in the paper were hostile to the Soviet Union, a surprise given the strength of the Left in the area.

References to the Soviet Union in Bedfordshire were limited, partly because the Left was weak within the county. The only mention in the local papers during this period came on 4 March. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* detailed a speech given by the Dean of Canterbury, the Very Reverend Hewlett Johnson, which praised the Soviet system. Significantly, the other speaker at the meeting was Victor Gollancz. He called for an alliance with the Soviet Union but recognised that this was unlikely given Chamberlain's hatred of socialism.⁵²⁵ News of Chamberlain's visit to the Soviet embassy would therefore have been a surprise for Gollancz. The *West London Observer* interpreted this as Britain finally making a bid for Soviet support.⁵²⁶

The Left in all geographical areas indicated support for an association with the Soviet Union to meet the challenge of fascism. This would be difficult to achieve whilst Chamberlain remained hostile to the Soviet Union, an attitude that is outlined in *The Chamberlain-Hitler Collusion*,⁵²⁷ and traces of which can be found in Chamberlain's letters to his sisters.⁵²⁸ This hostility prevented the formation of a united front by the political parties within Britain.

Newspaper articles, editorials and letters were one of the major sources of information for local people in relation to international affairs. This had been evident at the time of Munich. People also sought other sources of information including talks, radio news and reading books.

One example of a talk was held by Bedford Rotary Club and aimed at the under thirties following a series of newspaper articles in *The Spectator* suggesting that this age group were disillusioned. The Club's weekly newsletter reported that the unnamed speaker, identified by the *Bedfordshire Times* as Reverend Leonard Towers, spoke to an audience of more than 200 on a range of issues. Those attending were described as keen, patriotic, and knowledgeable, especially in relation to the questions that the audience asked. The specific details of the questions did not feature in the report

⁵²³ P. Sloan, *Soviet Democracy* (London, 1937); P. Sloan, *Russia Without Illusions* (London, 1938).

⁵²⁴ *West London Observer*, 10 March 1939.

⁵²⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 4 March 1939.

⁵²⁶ *West London Post*, 10 March 1939.

⁵²⁷ C. Leibovitz and A. Finkel, *The Chamberlain-Hitler Collusion* (Suffolk, 1997).

⁵²⁸ N. Chamberlain and R. C. Self, *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters* (Aldershot, 2000).

or in the newspaper report.⁵²⁹

Talks by prominent politicians were a regular event in Bolton, though predominantly from Labour leaders. However, in November 1938, Viscount Cecil, a Conservative and one of the founders of the LNU, spoke on about international law and order. He argued that those who had gathered for the 1919 peace conference had forgotten the principles for which they had fought. The result was that respect for the League had declined following the abandonment of international law and order. On collective security, Cecil believed that the preservation of this principle had been possible at the time of Munich but that there had been a lack of political will to do so. The *Bolton Evening News* report did not report the basis for this view.⁵³⁰ Cecil's talk occurred three days after one given by Mr Ridley to the Bolton branch of the Railway Clerks Association, where he argued that the Munich agreement was the result of a fear of communism.⁵³¹ In addition to these talks, people could attend or read reports of Oxford University extension lectures. These dealt with the current state of Europe. The first covered the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland, which given later events, was when Britain and France should have challenged Germany.⁵³² The second lecture examined the change in Hitler's attitude. Until this occurred, the 'official' mind had not objected to the return of colonies, even though BIPO polls indicated that a wider section of the British public did.⁵³³

Another way to become informed was by reading books. Library data from M-O and local authorities are of limited use here as the data focuses on the number of loans in various categories. However, the librarian's annual report is useful. In Luton, the annual report for 1938-9 commented that the demand for books on contemporary political history had increased during each crisis. *Mein Kampf* was particularly in demand during the Munich crisis, even though no official English translation existed.⁵³⁴ Bedford's librarian reported a similar occurrence.⁵³⁵ In addition to the annual report, Luton's deputy librarian drew attention to several books that people might be interested in

⁵²⁹ BA: X895/4/1, Rotary Club of Bedford Weekly Bulletin, 25 November 1938; *Bedfordshire Times*, 2 December 1938.

⁵³⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 November 1938.

⁵³¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 8 November 1938.

⁵³² *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 10 February 1939.

⁵³³ 75% had been against returning German colonies in November 1937, a figure that had risen to 78% by March 1939. 'British Institute of Public Opinion', 79.

⁵³⁴ BA: Bor.LM29, Librarian's Report, 31 March 1939.

⁵³⁵ BA: BorBBB2/22/39, Annual Report of the Librarian and Curator, 31 March 1939.

following the German invasion of Czechoslovakia.⁵³⁶ These were *Danubian Destiny*⁵³⁷ and *I saw the Crucifixion*.⁵³⁸

The demand for *Mein Kampf* was evident in Bolton, with several copies of an abridged translation borrowed within minutes of them becoming available on the shelves. New library book reports were a feature of local newspapers in the Bolton area. During the winter of 1938-9, the *Bolton Evening News* and the *Westhoughton Journal and Guardian* recommended some titles for people who wished to improve their knowledge about international affairs. Amongst the titles recommended, were *Inside Europe*,⁵³⁹ *I Knew Hitler*,⁵⁴⁰ *Britain Looks at Germany*,⁵⁴¹ and *The House that Hitler Built*.⁵⁴² These titles would have provided some understanding of the international situation and the dynamics of the Nazi regime. These recommendations were part of an effort to educate the British public about the challenges that they were facing. The lack of loan statistics for each title prevents any more detailed analysis about the impact of newspaper recommendations.

In this period, *Britain by Mass Observation* was published, which detailed the organisation's work in 1938. Large sections of the book were devoted to the changing mood in 'Metrop' (Fulham) and 'Worktown' (Bolton) during the Munich crisis. The *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) described the book as providing an indictment of the popular press and the BBC for not providing the full story or explaining it. The reviewer was also critical of the variety of data collection methods used by M-O.⁵⁴³

Books and talks appealed to a minority. Radio appealed to, and reached, a wider audience. Radio news bulletins were one way of keeping up to date. The BBC Home News at 9pm contained various

⁵³⁶ *Luton News*, 23 March 1939.

⁵³⁷ G. Hutton, *Danubian Destiny: A Survey after Munich* (London, 1939). This examined the strategic impact of the Munich agreement, which was bad for Britain and France.

⁵³⁸ Morrell, *I Saw the Crucifixion*. This tells the story of the author, who had spent time in Czechoslovakia leading up to the agreement. The book provided a favourable portrayal of the Czechs for avoiding provocation.

⁵³⁹ J. Gunther, *Inside Europe* (London, 1938). provides a general overview of the situation and a clear description of the driving forces behind Hitler.

⁵⁴⁰ K. G. W. Ludecke, *I Knew Hitler: The Story of a Nazi Who Escaped the Blood Purge* (London, 1938). This is an autobiographical account of the struggle to leave Germany.

⁵⁴¹ E. Grigg, *Britain Looks at Germany* (London, 1938). Grigg outlined the issues in the organisation of passive and active defence. The book is critical of the government for having no clear direction and argues that Britain has yet to understand the threat of air power.

⁵⁴² S. H. Roberts, *The House That Hitler Built* (London, 1939). The book argues that the personal nature of dictatorship causes problems on the diplomatic chessboard, as treaties are ignored if the country feels strong enough to do so.

⁵⁴³ *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 February 1939.

reports about international affairs during January and February, some of which were rumours. This led to letters to *The Times* on the subject. Listeners felt that when they went to bed that war was coming. However, it did act as a means of preventing the country from being surprised again.⁵⁴⁴ The letters provide an indication of how radio could affect public opinion but not necessarily the working class, as they were not the type of person to write to *The Times*.

One of the strategic implications of the Munich agreement was that it made Czechoslovakia militarily indefensible. Germany took advantage of this on 15 March and duly provided a clear demonstration to the public that Germany would break any agreement that it signed. This brought to the surface the 'public mood' that had been building over the past year. Chamberlain's reaction in Parliament was cautious, as he did not have all the details to hand. On 17 March, he spoke in Birmingham, where he condemned German aggression and called for resistance to further acts of aggression.⁵⁴⁵ One of the first steps was to obtain the opinion of other governments, including the Soviet Union. The Soviets suggested a conference, an idea that Britain rejected. Britain's first step on the road to resistance appeared at the end of March with the announcements of a doubling of the size of the Territorial Army (TA) and the guarantee to Poland.⁵⁴⁶ The guarantee was welcomed but left open the question of the precise definition of 'Polish independence'. Anna Cienciala took this to mean that an adjustment of the frontiers could occur, providing it did not impede the independence of thought and action by the Polish government.⁵⁴⁷ This was the first of several guarantees, as Romania, Greece and Turkey, also received them over the next couple of months. However, the government remained reluctant to pursue an alliance with the Soviet Union.

The existing historiography identifies March 1939 as the major turning point for British elite opinion. as David Astor (a one-time friend of the Rhodes Scholar, Adam von Trott), and Sir Geoffrey Cox (a former foreign correspondent with the *Daily Express*) argue, it made people fully aware of the danger.⁵⁴⁸ Responding to international developments, M-O issued a directive asking what they thought Hitler would do next. Out of 850 respondents, 313 (37%) can be classified as indicating that

⁵⁴⁴ *The Times*, 7 and 11 February 1939.

⁵⁴⁵ LSE: Fiche B50, BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 17 March 1939.

⁵⁴⁶ For full details of the discussions, see S. Newman, *March 1939, the British Guarantee to Poland: A Study in the Continuity of British Foreign Policy* (Oxford, 1976).

⁵⁴⁷ A. M. Cienciala, 'Poland in British and French Policy in 1939: Determination to Fight - or Avoid War?', *Polish Review*, 34, 3 (1989): 199-226.

⁵⁴⁸ LSE: Munich 1938 2/1/2, Transcript from an Interview with David Astor; LSE: Munich 1938 2/1/4, Transcript from an Interview with Sir Geoffrey Cox.

people thought that Hitler would attack a close neighbour, thereby revealing an understanding of Germany's aggressive nature. The next most popular answer was that he would do nothing for a couple of months. The textual comments accompanying the answers indicate a belief that the time had come to prevent Germany from making any more aggressive moves, though a desire to avoid war remained. The comments included 'we have to deal with Hitler sooner or later';⁵⁴⁹ 'I am convinced that Poland will fight for her territory';⁵⁵⁰ and 'impressed by Chamberlain speech and see no other way but war to deal with Germany'.⁵⁵¹

The national recognition of the need to meet the German challenge occurred at a local level. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* editorial on 15 March urged Britain to put its house in order, to meet this challenge.⁵⁵² Two days later the paper conducted a small survey of local opinion on Germany's actions. The survey represented a mixture of opinion levels. Councillor Roberts, chair of the Luton Labour Party, argued in favour of an alliance with other countries as the only way of preventing further aggression. Mr Pocock, chair of the Old Contemptibles, expressed a similar view, adding that Hitler would not stop at Czechoslovakia. Joining these informed opinions were several from the less well informed. One unemployed man believed that Britain had to stop Hitler but did not want war, whilst another expressed a similar view, calling for an alliance with the Soviet Union. However, not everyone believed in stopping Hitler by force. A British Legion member, who favoured Chamberlain, expressed the opinion that anything that led the country to war would be a disaster. Others, such as Alderman Hart, the secretary of Luton Conservative Association, and a bus conductor referred to the need to introduce conscription soon. Overall, a small number of people asked recognised the need for measures designed to deter Germany, thereby continuing the hardening of opinion that had been ongoing since before the Munich crisis.⁵⁵³

Distinct from the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, the *Bedfordshire Standard* thanked Hitler for 'arousing the moral indignation of most nations'.⁵⁵⁴ However, the editorial continued to express support for the Munich agreement, as did Lennox-Boyd. Speaking at the AGMs of the Mid Beds Conservation Association and its women's branch, he argued that Chamberlain had correctly interpreted the public mood at the time of Munich. He then added that although the future

⁵⁴⁹ M-O A: DR1068, Crisis Talks, March 1939.

⁵⁵⁰ M-O A: DR1103 Crisis, 23 March 1939.

⁵⁵¹ M-O A: DR1068, Crisis Talks, March 1939.

⁵⁵² *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 15 March 1939.

⁵⁵³ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 17 March 1939.

⁵⁵⁴ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 7 April 1939.

remained uncertain, rearmament meant that the country was in a stronger position.⁵⁵⁵ The newspaper reports do not express clearly that Lennox-Boyd was moving towards a policy of resistance, a point highlighted by his biographer, Philip Murphy.⁵⁵⁶ Prior to Lennox-Boyd's speech, the Association had unanimously passed a resolution stating 'that this Association congratulates the Prime Minister on his handling of the foreign situation and wishes him every success in the future'.⁵⁵⁷ This resolution further reinforces the existing evidence that Conservative Associations were behind the efforts of the leader. However, the resolution once again avoided comment on the details of the policy. Rearmament allowed the adoption of a firm attitude, one reinforced by Leslie Burgin in a speech to the Luton branch of the British Legion. He stated that Britain would not submit to force of any kind, an attitude that received a loud cheer from those present.⁵⁵⁸ G. F. Symonds joined Burgin and Lennox-Boyd in supporting this stance, arguing that the extra time gained at Munich was ensuring that the country was prepared.⁵⁵⁹ The extra time argument was not present in the county or the country at the time of Munich and according to Herman Morris, did not develop in the historiography of Munich until after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia.⁵⁶⁰ This adds to the evidence for this argument, though evidence from the BIPO poll in February suggests that it was beginning to develop.

The Liberals and Labour continued to express opposition to the government's policy. Thomas Lodge abandoned the caution that he had shown previously. In a speech to the Bedford Women's Liberal Association, he questioned Chamberlain's supposed reversal of policy towards one of 'collective security'. He expanded on this argument in a letter to the *Bedfordshire Times*, stating that it was impossible for Chamberlain to advocate a policy that he had previously rejected.⁵⁶¹ Lodge was not the only person to question the government's sincerity. Norman Mickle voiced a similar concern whilst speaking about the guarantee to Poland. He described the response as tardy and questioned whether they would maintain it.⁵⁶² E. A. Richards called on the local MPs to step down, to help unite the country.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁵ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 16 March 1939; *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 30 March 1939.

⁵⁵⁶ Murphy, *Alan Lennox-Boyd*: 61.

⁵⁵⁷ BA: Z987/1/1/2, Annual General Meeting, 25 March 1939.

⁵⁵⁸ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 20 March 1939.

⁵⁵⁹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 31 March 1939.

⁵⁶⁰ H. P. Morris, 'A History of the British Historiography of the Munich Crisis' (Ph.D., University of Oklahoma, 1967).

⁵⁶¹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 31 March 1939.

⁵⁶² *Bedfordshire Standard*, 7 April 1939.

⁵⁶³ *Bedfordshire Times*, 24 March 1939.

Initial condemnation of Germany's actions also occurred in Fulham and Hammersmith. The *West London Observer's* editorial on 17 March reported that 'public opinion was shocked by a further show of force from Germany'.⁵⁶⁴ The paper continued a week later, arguing that Britain needed to rely on her own strength. However, it defended the Munich agreement as the only possible solution at the time.⁵⁶⁵ This was not the only defence of Munich amongst 'informed' opinion. Leonard Caplan, the prospective Conservative candidate for North Hammersmith, defended the agreement by saying that it had served its purpose, namely preventing Britain from being blamed for not trying to keep the peace.⁵⁶⁶ However, William Astor did not defend the Munich agreement but referred to the indignation in Britain about German actions and the improvements in British defences. This continued the theme of rearmament. Labour, who adopted a 'we told you so' tone in the *East Fulham Citizen*, did not share the local Conservative support for the government's position.⁵⁶⁷ Joining Labour's criticism was A. F. Johnson, a resident of Shepherd's Bush. In a letter to the *West London Observer*, he accused Britain of breaking her word to defend Czechoslovakia and only being prepared to fight to defend its national interest.⁵⁶⁸ Following the initial reaction, discussion turned to consider the British response. Henry Meulen welcomed the adoption of a form of collective security, arguing that its earlier adoption might have led to a different outcome. He urged the people of Hammersmith to support the work of the LNU, who were advocating a policy of resistance.⁵⁶⁹ 'Peace Front' questioned the government's adoption of this policy given recent Nazi triumphs including the annexation of Czechoslovakia and the return of Memel. He, like others previously, urged an alliance with the Soviet Union.⁵⁷⁰

M-O returned to Fulham in March 1939 to undertake some further research, asking respondents three questions: whether they were for or against Chamberlain's foreign policy, whether home or foreign affairs were more important, and whether they thought war was likely. In response to the first question, people over 45 from both genders supported Chamberlain's policy more than did those under 45. However, 55% of respondents who offered no opinion on this question were women. This represented an overall increase of 15% on a year earlier and reinforced the continuing precedence in the public mind of home affairs over foreign affairs. The file report on this work indicated that whilst a small minority were taking a greater interest, most were employing

⁵⁶⁴ *West London Observer*, 17 March 1939.

⁵⁶⁵ *West London Observer*, 24 March 1939.

⁵⁶⁶ *West London Post*, 31 March 1939.

⁵⁶⁷ *East Fulham Citizen*, April 1939.

⁵⁶⁸ *West London Observer*, 31 March 1939.

⁵⁶⁹ *West London Observer*, 31 March 1939.

⁵⁷⁰ *West London Observer*, 31 March 1939.

psychological defences as a coping mechanism.⁵⁷¹ In response to the final question, men believed that war was likely, whilst women again tended to offer no opinion. Those that did answer believed that war was likely to occur.⁵⁷² The additional comments accompanying the answers were not as wide ranging as previously, though there was a general impression that 'there was a need to stop Hitler'.⁵⁷³ The previous September had seen similar comments but the numbers holding this view had increased to the point that it had become the dominant opinion. M-O offer no opinion within the file report as to why women did not or were not prepared to offer an opinion. However, based on evidence from around the time of the West Fulham by-election in March 1938, women tended to be more interested in domestic affairs as these had a more direct impact upon their daily lives.

The political attitudes displayed in Fulham and Hammersmith showed a continuing divide between the main political parties with the Conservatives developing the buying time argument. The shift in the government's policy towards one of resistance did not carry enough conviction for Labour and some letter writers to the *West London Observer*. To do so would require an alliance with the Soviet Union.

Prior to the crisis, the *Bolton Evening News* editorial commented upon Sir Samuel Hoare's speech about a five-power, five-year plan to restore confidence. It was critical, as this was unlikely given the attitude of two of the powers, but viewed it as significant that the Soviet Union was included. Even Churchill had been converted to this view.⁵⁷⁴ The editorial on 14 March referred to Churchill. The context was Chamberlain's rebuttal of Churchill's suggestion that the Czech state was unlikely to have a future. The editorial gleefully noted that Churchill had been correct,⁵⁷⁵ as it became reality the following day, thereby allowing the editorial to state that Churchill was justified in adopting an 'I told you so' attitude. The editorial called upon Chamberlain to take the public into his confidence, as they were not fools and called for the realities of the situation to be realised.⁵⁷⁶ On 16 March, an interview with John Tillotson (a member of the family that owned the *Bolton Evening News*) appeared in the paper and a day later in the *Bolton Journal and Guardian*. He described his impressions of a recent trip to Central Europe. He had spoken to a Czech man just prior to the invasion, who did not think it would happen. He had also formed the impression that the countries

⁵⁷¹ M-O A: FR A16, Home or Foreign?, 1939.

⁵⁷² SxMOA: 1/2/25/6/A, Chamberlain's Foreign Policy, March 1939.

⁵⁷³ SxMOA: 1/2/25/6/A, General Impressions, March 1939.

⁵⁷⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 March 1939.

⁵⁷⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 14 March 1939.

⁵⁷⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 and 16 March 1939.

surrounding Germany had developed a deep mistrust and hatred of Germany.⁵⁷⁷

Mr S Gordon shared the editorial's concerns in relation to future British policy, when he addressed a meeting of the Bolton Central Labour Guild. He recommended an alliance with the United States but made no mention of the Soviet Union.⁵⁷⁸ Walter Atkinson, a resident of Bolton, also suggested this course of action, urging that whatever action was required should be undertaken urgently.⁵⁷⁹

Developments over the weekend concerning Romania only added to this urgency. The editorial on 20 March concentrated on the need to persuade Poland to turn away from the Axis as a way of helping to preserve Romania. Britain had to either undertake this or accept German control of Eastern Europe.⁵⁸⁰

In common with their counterparts in the other two geographical areas, Bolton's Conservative MPs continued to support Chamberlain. Prior to his address, the *Bolton Evening News*⁵⁸¹ challenged Cyril Entwistle to provide answers to electors who were nervous about Chamberlain's policy. The editorial argued that a strong condemnation of Hitler would reflect badly on Entwistle's own judgement for supporting Chamberlain. In response, he reaffirmed his support and dismissed the argument that Chamberlain's policy had caused the situation. Entwistle expressed doubts about Russia and confessed that he had never trusted Hitler.⁵⁸² The editorial responded by questioning what Chamberlain had achieved at Munich and suggesting that it was unfair to cast doubts on the reliability of the Soviet Union.⁵⁸³ 'Realist', who hoped that people did not think that the Soviet Union was democratic, joined the debate. Like Mr Gordon, 'Realist' advocated an alliance of the democracies.⁵⁸⁴

M-O observers in Bolton recorded comments reacting to Chamberlain's speech in Birmingham on 17 March. The comments were once again a mixture of praise for Chamberlain and anger at Hitler, a theme that had grown in prominence over the year since the Anschluss:⁵⁸⁵

- Working class man, 50 – Chamberlain doesn't want bloodshed, I don't want bloodshed, but he (Hitler) is shiting on us and rubbing the shite in.

⁵⁷⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 March 1939; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 17 March 1939.

⁵⁷⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 17 March 1939.

⁵⁷⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 17 March 1939.

⁵⁸⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 March 1939.

⁵⁸¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 22 March 1939.

⁵⁸² *Bolton Evening News*, 24 March 1939.

⁵⁸³ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 March 1939.

⁵⁸⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 29 March 1939.

⁵⁸⁵ M-O A: Worktown 50/A, Chamberlain Speech, 18 March 1939.

- Town hall clerk, 30 – a good deal of discussion; people liked it.
- Hairdresser – everyone talking about Chamberlain’s speech. A real fighting speech, and very good. Doesn’t want war though.
- Girl, 25 – but why doesn’t some murderer, someone who has been convicted, go out and shoot Hitler. Though I suppose that would be as bad.
- Man, 50 – no, but I’ve read all the reports. It’s only what I expected all along. Hitler will never keep his word.
- Youth, 20 – no, but I’ve read the summary of it. He’s found out 6 months too late that Hitler can’t be trusted.

The response to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in all three areas was that the time had come to resist further aggression. In letters, and especially street comments, there was a definite mood for stopping Hitler, though reluctance for a potential conflict remained. However, comments recorded in Fulham confirmed that people accepted the idea that war was coming and that it would be against Germany.

The response to the March 1939 crisis was different from that to the Munich crisis in terms of church attendance, which was notably down. As the impact on the individual was less in March 1939, a comparison to the Sunday after the Anschluss is more appropriate. The outcome is a mixture. Attendance in Bedfordshire fluctuated, whilst in Fulham and Hammersmith, attendance remained similar or had increased. In Bolton, there was a general rise in terms of four churches in Table 2, though this is part of a wider sample. Overall, the Munich crisis had the most impact on attendance at church, mainly because of its potential impact on the individual having been greater.

Table 2: Church attendance following a crisis⁵⁸⁶

		13/03/1938	02/10/1938	19/03/1939
St Andrew's	Luton	80	173	67
St Peter's	Luton	53	61	52
St Christopher's	Luton	60	127	75
Christchurch	Luton	105	245	130
St Peter	Bedford	46	140	74
St Paul's	Bedford	174	224	142
St Martin	Bedford	81	133	55
St Mary's	Bedford	111	174	104
St Andrews	Fulham	49	100	47
All Saints	Fulham	135	328	198
Christchurch	Fulham	54	163	87
St Mary's	Fulham	n/a	187	95
St Mary's	Bolton	37	99	64
Bolton Parish Church	Bolton	40	197	45
St Barts	Bolton	29	150	173
St George's	Bolton	23	192	38

The period covered by this chapter witnessed an increasing mistrust of future German intentions, coupled with a growing feeling about the need to resist Hitler. This continued a trend that is traceable back to February 1938. Kristallnacht was a major catalyst in this process, as it produced a moral revulsion against, and indignation at the attack on the Jewish community in Germany but changed little in relation to British foreign policy. Moral revulsion was the dominant expression of those who commented at local level. However, it is notable that a handful of people were prepared to defend German actions, despite vilification from fellow letter writers. Associated with Kristallnacht is the wider attitude of the British people towards the Jews. Here, M-O found that there was a hidden level of anti-Semitic feeling, some of which is detectable in local newspapers. The recurring concern in all three geographical areas was the perceived impact on British jobs, though correspondents highlighted that immigrants had restrictions placed on them that limited

⁵⁸⁶ BA: P150/0/7, Register of Services 1932-1939, ; BA: P136/1/7, Register of Services 1937-1941, ; BA: P161/0/2, Service Register 1 Jan 1933- 8 Apr 1942, ; BA: P135/1/41, Register of Services; BA: P135/1/42, Register of Services; BA: P100/0/23, Register of Services; BA: P100/0/24, Register of Services; BA: P1/0/2, Register of Services; BA: P147/0/12, Register of Services; BA: P147/0/13, Register of Services; BA: P81/0/9, Register of Services; BA: P81/0/10, Register of Services; LMA: P77/AND/42, Church Services Register, 16 November 1936 to 15 October 1939; LMA: P77/ALL/48, Church Services Register, 18 October 1935 to 20 April 1940; LMA: P77/CTC/016, Church Services Register, 31 May 1936 to 13 October 1946; LMA: P77/MRY/18, Register of Services 1 January 1936 - 3 April 1953; GMCRO: L85/1/9/3, Register of Services; GMCRO: L243/1/10/7, Bolton Parish Church Preachers' Book, 1937-1950; GMCRO: L103/3/1/3, St Bart's Register of Services; GMCRO: L244/1/8/1, St George's Preachers' Book, 1932-1948.

their ability to work. This did not prevent A. Shaw in Bedfordshire from highlighting the supposed practice of laying off British workers to take on Jews. The 'threat' to jobs was only one side of the argument, as Rabbi Livingstone reminded his audience. Jews were also creating jobs for British workers. A defence of this nature appeared in Fulham and Hammersmith but not in Bolton. Concerns about employment did not prevent people desiring to assist, with stories in all three areas about relief efforts. Much of the relief work was collecting money, which drew complaints in Fulham and Bolton about the diverting of funds away from those who needed relief in Britain. The conflicting attitudes, as in the case of the Munich crisis, are traceable to the potential impact upon the individual. The lack of a substantial Jewish population in any of the three areas prevents a more detailed investigation.

The attack on the Jewish community added substantially to the sense of mistrust towards Germany. Actual evidence of this during the winter months is lacking at a local level with the debate focussing on British foreign policy. Here, Conservatives continued to defend Chamberlain, arguing that his actions had preserved peace and allowed time for rearmament, an argument that only began to come to the fore in March 1939. This confirms the findings of Morris.⁵⁸⁷ Labour and the Liberals remained critical, with similar arguments used in all three areas, and references made to collective security following events in March 1939. Both parties cautiously welcomed the apparent change in government policy but neither trusted the government, especially Chamberlain to keep his word. However, political parties were not the main local critics of the government. This task fell to the *Bolton Evening News*, whose editorials during the winter months constantly questioned government policy and advocated the need for resistance. Therefore, all of them felt justified in March 1939 when it became a case of 'we told you so'.

Disagreements between the political parties also occurred over the Soviet Union. The Left generally supported an alliance, though this call was virtually non-existent in Bedfordshire compared to the other two areas. Conservatives questioned the Left's support for an alliance, as they did not consider the Soviet Union to be a reliable ally. Letter writers to local newspapers aired similar concerns, suggesting that an alternative course would be an alliance between the democracies. This was evident in Fulham and Bolton. The question of the Soviet Union would receive increased attention between April and August 1939.

One interesting argument that emerged during the chapter, especially in relation to Bolton and the

⁵⁸⁷ Morris, 'A History of the British Historiography of the Munich Crisis '.

Bolton Evening News, is that the policy pursued at Munich was the only viable one. Given the paper's constant criticism of Chamberlain's policy, this is a revealing admission. There was further evidence of critics changing their mind in Bedfordshire, as evidence emerged about the state of the nation's defences. This conclusion was in keeping with the views of politicians such as Robert Page-Croft, who recognised that Britain's inability to prevent a military invasion meant that it had no choice. He added to this view by arguing that Chamberlain's actions had been a victory as they helped to change people's attitudes and weaken the psychology of defeat.⁵⁸⁸ Croft's point of view is open to interpretation but the argument does have its merits, as British attitudes did become more resolute about confronting Hitler and, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, helped to encourage participation in defence preparations. However, a direct link is difficult to establish, given the reaction to the events of Kristallnacht.

The attitudes displayed in the three geographical areas in the months following the Munich agreement were remarkably similar with little divergence. Any divergence tended to be in terms of coverage of a subject by local newspapers. The example of the *Bolton Evening News* and criticism of Chamberlain's policy is a case in point. The presence of M-O also had an impact on the level of detail in the coverage. The organisation recorded comments made in the streets of Bolton and Fulham that are not available from other sources. These combined with survey data confirm that attitudes in these two areas were hardening and there were increasing demands for Hitler to be stopped. However, a desire to avoid war remained.

In conclusion, the winter of 1939 was not a turning point but there was an increasing uniformity of opinion in the three geographical areas about the need to resist Hitler. This found increased support due to Kristallnacht and the breaking of the Munich agreement. The German invasion of Prague did not mark a sea change in British opinion but rather the coming to the fore of forces that had been building for the better part of a year. This period and the months following it had shown an increasing interest in relations with the Soviet Union, and these would be a key aspect of the remaining months of peace before the war that many now agreed was likely finally arrived.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁸ N. C. Fleming, 'Diehard Conservatives and the Appeasement of Nazi Germany, 1935-1940', *History*, 100, 341 (2015): 431-3.

⁵⁸⁹ Z. Steiner, 'British Decisions for Peace and War. 1938-1939: The Rise and Fall of Realism,' in *History and Neorealism*, ed. Z. Steiner, E. R. May, and R. N. Rosecrance (Cambridge, 2010): 149.

Chapter 4: Let Battle Commence, April – September 1939

The British guarantee to Poland and the doubling of the TA were the first steps towards a policy of active resistance to Germany. Further guarantees to and alliances with Romania, Greece and Turkey added to this. However, to make these effective, Britain needed to seek an alliance with the Soviet Union, a step that many within the leadership of the Conservative Party were reluctant to pursue with any meaningful intent. This was part of a long-standing mistrust of the Soviet Union, as Soviet ideology went against the principles of the ruling elites in Britain.⁵⁹⁰ This meant that interwar relations were lukewarm, partly resulting from the policy of each country being at odds with the other. British policy aimed to prevent the spread of communism. This attitude had several manifestations including the refusal to join any pact of mutual assistance that the Soviet Union was part of, a stance that contributed to the failure of the League's collective security ideal.⁵⁹¹ Adding to this was Chamberlain's belief that communism posed the longer-term threat to Europe.⁵⁹² This has led Clement Leibovitz and Alvin Finkel to argue that Chamberlain deliberately tried to turn Hitler eastwards,⁵⁹³ an argument that has a degree of plausibility given similar comments by Sally Marks and Andrew Rothstein.⁵⁹⁴ The arguments of Leibovitz and Finkel gain further credence when evidence used by Geoffrey Roberts is included. Roberts refers to a letter on 4 April from Litvinov, the then Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London. In the letter, Litvinov feared that Chamberlain was directing Hitler towards the Soviet Union, thereby leading to the Soviet-German clash he wanted.⁵⁹⁵ The British leadership also had doubts about the military value of the Soviet Union. In a 2013 article, Martin Kahn provides a good summary of existing work on this topic indicating that British leaders portrayed the Soviet Union as being militarily worthless without revealing the precise basis for this conclusion. Part of this was down to Chamberlain.⁵⁹⁶ With this attitude, the fear that countries bordering the Soviet Union had of it, and despite public support, it is no surprise that Britain only made a half-hearted effort to obtain an alliance. The British government did eventually open talks with the Soviet Union but in addition the Soviet Union began secret talks with Germany. To Britain's amazement, this resulted in the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which Germany had hoped would weaken British resolve to resist but had the opposite

⁵⁹⁰ R. Manne, 'The Foreign Office and the Failure of Anglo-Soviet Rapprochement', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 16, 4 (1981): 726.

⁵⁹¹ B. Moore and Communist Party History Group, *Appeasement* (London, 1985): 19.

⁵⁹² G. Macklin, *Chamberlain* (London, 2006): 82.

⁵⁹³ Leibovitz et al., *The Chamberlain-Hitler Collusion*.

⁵⁹⁴ Rothstein, *The Munich Conspiracy*; S. Marks, S. Aster, R. Hanks, A. Kocho-Williams, G. B. Strang, and K. Neilson, 'Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order,' *H-Diplo Roundtable Review* 11, no. 13 (2010), <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/ropundtables/PDF/Roundtable-X1-13.pdf>. 2 February 2010

⁵⁹⁵ Roberts, 'Soviet Foreign Policy 1933-1941':267.

⁵⁹⁶ Kahn, 'British Intelligence on Soviet War Potential in 1939': 717-47.

effect. It marked the beginning of the final chain of events that would lead to the British declaration of war on Sunday 3 September.

This chapter moves away from the emphasis thus far, which has been on British attitudes to Germany. This step is necessary to take into consideration the wider context of British foreign policy during 1939. The chapter examines the level of 'public' support for an alliance with the Soviet Union, using a range of sources and highlights some of the concerns of those who did not wish to rush blindly into an alliance. These people normally had some connection with the Conservative Party, thus reinforcing much of the existing historiography, which highlights the party leadership's reluctance to pursue alliance negotiations with any meaningful intent. In addition to considering the call for a Soviet alliance, the chapter will highlight the continuation of two themes that have already established themselves in the previous chapters: the growing dislike of Hitler amongst the British public and the continuing desire to avoid war coupled with a growing acceptance that it might be necessary. The culmination of these two forces would be a reluctant declaration of war combined with a determination to see the conflict through to a conclusion.

Britain's reluctance to engage with the Soviet Union continued for a few days after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, when it rejected a Soviet suggestion of a meeting to establish a 'peace front'. Britain believed that the suggestion was premature, but it would not be long before Britain increased its efforts to obtain an alliance, as the Soviet Union was important in terms of manpower, raw materials, and potential assistance with an economic blockade of Germany. The government's reluctance was clear in its responses to Parliamentary questions between mid-March and the end of May. Rather than commit to a definite course of action, the government preferred to say that the situation was under review, though Ministers stressed that they were not prepared to consider using the League.

During this time, the government, Chamberlain particularly, came under pressure from a range of quarters to open negotiations, including from within the Cabinet.⁵⁹⁷ Opinion polls, which had little influence on Chamberlain, indicated that the majority of respondents favoured an alliance with the

⁵⁹⁷ C. Hill, *Cabinet Decisions on Foreign Policy: The British Experience, October 1938-June 1941* (Cambridge, 1991): 39 and 64. Hoare and Burgin were amongst those who supported the negotiations.

Soviet Union. Responses to questions in March, April and June indicated over 80% in favour.⁵⁹⁸ Eventually, Chamberlain bowed to pressure and agreed to the opening of negotiations, though the government continued to remain tight lipped in Parliament, despite several Parliamentary questions, as it did not want to jeopardise the negotiations.⁵⁹⁹ This represented a continuation of the attitude displayed during the Munich crisis, with a further reason provided in a letter from Chamberlain to his sister, Ida, on 21 May. He wrote:

‘I have had a very tiresome week over the Russians, whose method of conducting negotiations includes the publication in the press of all their dispatches and continuous close communication with the Opposition and Winston. They may just be simple, straightforward people but I cannot rid myself of the suspicion that they are chiefly concerned with seeing the capitalist powers tear each other to pieces while they stay out themselves’.⁶⁰⁰

Chamberlain was not alone in expressing concerns, as mistrust of the Soviet Union was widespread amongst conservative elites. Leaders of the Christian churches wrote to Halifax urging him to use his influence to stop the negotiations. James Walsh, editor of the *Catholic Times*, wrote of his concern about being forced to choose between ‘duty to God and fighting for the advocate of the anti-God’.⁶⁰¹ Political leaders from the Dominions joined church leaders in Britain, as Canada and South Africa objected to the opening of talks, though Australia and New Zealand cautiously welcomed them.⁶⁰² The government attempted to allay some of the Dominions’ fears by suggesting to the Soviet Union that any agreement should be compatible with the League Covenant. Molotov, the new Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, rejected this, as he was worried that it would prevent any agreement. To speed up the negotiations, the Foreign Office official William Strang went to Moscow. The move, whilst welcomed, led to criticism that Halifax himself should have gone as the negotiations continued to drag on. Around this time, rumours began to circulate about talks between Germany and the Soviet Union, though Chamberlain still did not believe that ‘a real alliance between Germany and Russia was possible’.⁶⁰³

Given the government’s initial reluctance to open negotiations and a continued Parliamentary silence when negotiations did commence, some MPs, notably Philip Noel-Baker (Labour MP for

⁵⁹⁸ Hinton et al., *British Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup) Poll 1938-1946*.

⁵⁹⁹ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 348, Column 1282 (Wednesday 14th June 1939).

⁶⁰⁰ ‘Neville Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain 21 May,’ in *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters*, ed. R. C. Self (Aldershot, 1939): 417.

⁶⁰¹ TNA: FO800/322 H/33/9, James Walsh to Lord Halifax, 20 April 1939.

⁶⁰² TNA: CAB 24/287 123 (39), Negotiations with Russia, 22 May 1939.

⁶⁰³ TNA: CAB 23/100 38 (39), Cabinet Conclusions, 19 July 1939.

Derby), Hugh Dalton (Labour's spokesman on foreign affairs) and Geoffrey Mander (Liberal MP for Wolverhampton East), became increasingly concerned about the lack of progress. Noel-Baker referred to the public anxiety about the lack of an agreement and requested publication of the details so that Parliament and the public could make up their own minds about where the blame lay. Chamberlain responded that this step would impede the negotiations.⁶⁰⁴ MPs were not alone in questioning the government's commitment. Following events in March, Otto Berkelbach published an article in the May issue of the journal *Nineteenth Century and After*, which ended with the question 'what about the Russians?'. He argued that by ignoring them, Britain was likely to suffer.⁶⁰⁵

Within the correspondence columns of the two national newspapers used for this study, there was active discussion. This occurred principally over two subjects: the Soviet Union and the need to broaden the government. Coverage by *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* of the Soviet Union followed a similar pattern to their coverage of the Moscow show trials, a subject examined by Peter Deli. He found that *The Times* was not interested in the trials whereas letters in the *Manchester Guardian* covered both sides of the debate.⁶⁰⁶ In the letters column of *The Times*, in contrast, coverage focussed on Germany. Here, writers such as Duff Cooper and Viscount Cranborne objected to any further appeasement of Germany, which reflected the change in *The Times's* editorial position.⁶⁰⁷ The silence on the Soviet Union was occasionally broken, however. Edwyn Bevan, a member of the Athenaeum Club on Pall Mall, and the Conservative MP for Hitchin, Sir Arnold Wilson, noted the mistrust of countries bordering the Soviet Union towards it and that any alliance would be at the expense of the goodwill of these states.⁶⁰⁸ By contrast, the *Manchester Guardian* columns were much more active. The letters published between March and May favoured an alliance but recognised that this would be difficult to achieve. Amongst the letters was one from A. L. Rowse, the Oxford historian and Labour candidate for Penryn and Falmouth, who warned that it would be difficult to blame the Russians, as previous appeasing acts gave the impression that the government was anti-Russian.⁶⁰⁹ Part of this stemmed from the belief that each country would act in its own national interest.

The second major theme in both papers was the need to broaden the government to include

⁶⁰⁴ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 349, Columns 891-2 (Monday 3rd July 1939); Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 349, Columns 2212-3 (Wednesday 12th July 1939)

⁶⁰⁵ O. Berkelbach, 'What People Are Saying', *Nineteenth Century and After*, May (1939): 623.

⁶⁰⁶ P. Deli, 'The Quality Press and the Soviet Union: A Case Study of the Reactions of the *Manchester Guardian*, *the New Statesman* and *the Times* to Stalin's Great Purges, 1936-38', *Media History*, 5, 2 (1999): 159-80.

⁶⁰⁷ *The Times*, 4 and 6 May 1939.

⁶⁰⁸ *The Times*, 13 and 15 June 1939.

⁶⁰⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 29 April 1939.

Churchill and Eden. In *The Times*, J. A. Spender and Harold MacMillan were amongst the supporters of this idea,⁶¹⁰ whilst in the *Manchester Guardian* letters appeared from M. F. Matthews, a resident of Silverdale, and Phullis Bottome, a resident of Lexham Gardens in London.⁶¹¹ The rationale behind such a move was that it would improve the government's trustworthiness and send a clear signal of British intentions. Letter writers were not the only supporters of the idea of including Churchill. The BIPO opinion poll for May indicated that 56% of those questioned supported the idea,⁶¹² leading William Rock to conclude that the public backed the Soviet alliance negotiations.⁶¹³

At the local level, newspaper coverage in Bedfordshire highlighted various parties support for the need to conclude a Soviet alliance quickly. Councillor Roberts, chair of the Luton Labour Party, and Hugh Cumberland, ruling councillor of the Luton Habitation of the Primrose League,⁶¹⁴ were just two of the supporters of this view. The latter declared that such an agreement would 'make the dictators think twice'.⁶¹⁵ Declarations of support continued in May and alongside these declarations came criticisms of government policy. George Matthews, the prospective Labour candidate for Mid-Bedfordshire, attacked Lennox-Boyd for being anti-Communist,⁶¹⁶ and Councillor Skelton, a Labour councillor in Luton, advocated an alliance with the Soviet Union and blamed the government for the situation during a talk to the Luton Youth Group of the LNU.⁶¹⁷ Similarly, in June, Thomas Lodge criticised Chamberlain for the lack of an arrangement with the Soviet Union despite the Liberals having no love for that country. Lodge supported an alliance as the Soviet Union stood for peace.⁶¹⁸ Lodge also accused Lennox-Boyd of continually changing his attitude towards collective security. This had gone from being favourable in 1935 to against in 1938 and favourable again in 1939 as he moved to supporting resistance to Hitler.⁶¹⁹ However, by 1939 League collective security was no longer a policy opinion. In contrast, the county's two Conservative MPs continued to support Chamberlain's policy. Sir Richard Wells acknowledged that people desired an alliance with the

⁶¹⁰ *The Times*, 13 and 15 July 1939.

⁶¹¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 9 May and 24 July 1939.

⁶¹² Hinton et al., *British Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup) Poll 1938-1946*.

⁶¹³ W. R. Rock, 'Grand Alliance or Daisy Chain: British Opinion and Policy Towards Russia April-August 1939,' in *Power, Public Opinion and Diplomacy*, ed. L. P. Wallace and W. Askew (Durham, 1959): 324.

⁶¹⁴ The Primrose League was a Conservative organisation hence the phrasing of the opening sentence of the paragraph

⁶¹⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 17 March and 20 April 1939.

⁶¹⁶ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 28 April 1939.

⁶¹⁷ *Luton News*, 18 May 1939.

⁶¹⁸ *Bedfordshire Times*, 9 June 1939.

⁶¹⁹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 14 July 1939; *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 21 July 1939.

Soviet Union but felt that it was too soon.⁶²⁰ He argued that Chamberlain was not prepared to force the strength of the Soviets on to others.⁶²¹ The two Conservative MPs accepted the need for allies, but doubted the value and reliability of the Soviet Union.

In July, the annual British Legion services took place within the county. Reports on these services noted that the crowds were larger than in previous years, with several thousand gathering in Luton.⁶²² The theme chosen by speakers giving the address was national unity, an aim that ‘the spread of a quiet determination to resist further acts of aggression’ was achieving.⁶²³ ‘Ex-servicemen’ hoped this would prevent a conflict.⁶²⁴ The theme of national unity also featured when the Liberal leader, Sir Archibald Sinclair, and Leslie Burgin spoke at events in the county, the latter stressing that the point of ‘this far and no further’ had been reached.⁶²⁵ Yet mistrust of Chamberlain and the government hampered such appeals. George Matthews echoed the concerns voiced in the national press about the Parliamentary recess. On 11 August, the *Bedfordshire Times* reported his suspicion that Chamberlain did not want the House to remain in session as he was intending to do a super-Munich type deal. W. M. Howell, President of Luton Trades Council, shared this concern in his annual report for 1939.⁶²⁶ It was in this atmosphere that the final developments on the road to war occurred.

By the time of George Matthews’s speech on 11 August, the Free City of Danzig had become the focus of attention. Coverage of this story had been ongoing throughout July and August with regular references to it in the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* editorials. At the start of July, the editorial viewed Germany’s designs on Danzig as sinister but felt that the option to negotiate a peaceful resolution remained.⁶²⁷ The emphasis on finding a peaceful resolution was a feature of editorial coverage during these last two months but with a clear emphasis that a settlement depended upon Hitler,⁶²⁸ for as the editorial on 22 July stated, ‘he started the European tension and only he can end it’.⁶²⁹ Given the reports and editorials that appeared in the paper following this comment, it was clear that a major crisis was coming. Germany blamed Britain, arguing that Germany would have

⁶²⁰ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 18 May 1939.

⁶²¹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 7 July 1939.

⁶²² *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 3 and 17 July 1939.

⁶²³ *Luton News*, 6 July 1939.

⁶²⁴ *Luton News*, 13 July 1939.

⁶²⁵ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 7 July 1939; *Luton News*, 27 July 1939.

⁶²⁶ MRC: 292/79L/41 TC77, Luton and District Trades Council Annual Report, 1940.

⁶²⁷ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 1 July 1939.

⁶²⁸ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 11 July and 21 August 1939.

⁶²⁹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 22 July 1939.

settled matters had it not been for Britain and France's support for Poland.⁶³⁰ However, given previous experience, Britain stood firm. The dynamics of the situation changed with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which came as a surprise to many and created a situation 'that many deemed impossible'. Nonetheless, the paper continued to urge that the option of a negotiated settlement remained.⁶³¹ This hope continued for the next few days, during which time the editorial moved to stressing that in its opinion, Britain had united behind the government and that the country would continue to support Poland. Reinforcing this point were the words used to finish the editorial, 'while we hope for the best, as a united nation, we face the future calmly and determinedly prepared for any eventuality of duty in the cause of world liberty and freedom'.⁶³² The paper's editorials in the months leading up to the German invasion of Poland on 1 September had provided a clear message to readers, that whilst Britain hoped for a peaceful resolution, the country would do its duty and resist the threat posed by Nazi Germany.

Danzig and the Nazi-Soviet Pact also received coverage in the paper's news columns. Following the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Thomas Lodge argued that Hitler was likely to reject any deal over Danzig.⁶³³ However, the front page of the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* on 26 August referred to the pacifist and former Labour leader, George Lansbury. He hoped that the government would examine Hitler's proposals with an open mind and considered that to preserve peace Britain would need to make sacrifices on the scale that she had compelled Czechoslovakia to accept the previous year. Lansbury's appeal came at a garden party held by the Luton Labour Party.⁶³⁴

In summary, for the first time in Bedfordshire, the government's opponents led the way, as previously government supporters had had the largest say in the local newspapers. Labour and the Liberals both supported an alliance with the Soviet Union. Opponents of the government welcomed the adoption of a collective-security policy but expressed concerns about whether the government would stick to it, due to its general hostility towards the Soviet Union. The county's National Government MPs were clear supporters of Chamberlain and the policy that he was pursuing, though they recognised the potential value of the Soviet Union. However, they were not keen supporters of an alliance.

The campaign in Bedfordshire for an alliance with the Soviet Union had come from the Left, a

⁶³⁰ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 11 and 14 August 1939.

⁶³¹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 23 August 1939.

⁶³² *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 28 August 1939.

⁶³³ *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 25 August 1939.

⁶³⁴ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 26 August 1939; *Luton News*, 31 August 1939.

situation replicated in Fulham and Hammersmith. Thus, the *West London Post* appealed for the ignoring of ideological differences so that Britain could obtain access to the strength of the Soviet Union.⁶³⁵ S. A. Cook, a resident of Silchester Road, agreed with this and argued that by doing so it would make itself stronger but the Cabinet's class bias prevented this from happening.⁶³⁶ Edith Summerskill agreed, arguing that Chamberlain was doing his utmost to avoid an alliance.⁶³⁷ Similarly, Denis Pritt warned at several meetings that building an alliance with the Soviet Union would be difficult due to the government's hostility, and that the Soviet Union would act in its own interests. In contrast, Pritt argued that the nature of the Soviet regime was not a problem for the Labour Party, as for the party the most important thing was that the Soviet Union desired peace.⁶³⁸

Chamberlain's critics did not have it all their own way. J. Douglas Cooke, in an address to the South Hammersmith Conservative Associations AGM, defended the Prime Minister, and the meeting sent a resolution to Chamberlain, thanking him for his continuing efforts for peace while making no mention of a potential alliance with the Soviet Union.⁶³⁹ Criticism of those who favoured an alliance came from Richard Rice, a resident of Chiswick, who argued that the Soviets were worse than the Germans and that their chief aim was to destroy the British Empire.⁶⁴⁰ Conservatives in Fulham likewise maintained a silence on the question of a Soviet alliance, as neither Colonel Van Den Bergh, the President of the East Fulham Conservative Association, nor William Astor mentioned it in speeches to the Association in April.⁶⁴¹

The Left and the supporters of a Soviet alliance continued their campaign into June, when J. Boam, a resident of Wallingford Avenue, wrote to the *West London Observer* pondering why the ruling classes were refusing to make a pact. Given past behaviour, he believed that the Soviets had every right to be suspicious of Britain.⁶⁴² A week later at a meeting of the Fulham Left Book Club, Victor Gollancz argued that an alliance was essential to counterbalance the Axis powers,⁶⁴³ a challenge that Michael Stewart, the prospective Labour candidate for East Fulham, believed to be the most important facing the country.⁶⁴⁴ Similarly, in August, 'Hammersmith Worker' alleged that

⁶³⁵ *West London Post*, 7 April 1939.

⁶³⁶ *West London Observer*, 26 May 1939.

⁶³⁷ *Fulham Chronicle*, 28 April 1939.

⁶³⁸ *West London Observer*, 12 May 1939.

⁶³⁹ *West London Observer*, 21 April 1939.

⁶⁴⁰ *West London Observer*, 7 April 1939.

⁶⁴¹ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 7 April 1939.

⁶⁴² *West London Observer*, 9 June 1939.

⁶⁴³ *West London Observer*, 16 June 1939.

⁶⁴⁴ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 16 June 1939.

Chamberlain had more in common with Hitler than Stalin did.⁶⁴⁵

By contrast, Conservatives continued to show their support for the government. Deputising for their son, William Astor, who was away on national service, Lord and Lady Astor spoke at a large meeting at Fulham Town Hall. Lord Astor outlined the main differences between Munich and now, arguing that Britain was in a better state defensively. This lends credence to Herman Morris's argument that the 'buying time' defence of Munich only developed after March 1939.⁶⁴⁶ Lord Astor's reference to the Soviet negotiations however, provoked cries of 'shame' from the audience, but Lady Astor attacked Chamberlain's opponents for criticising him as it gave the impression of divisions within Britain (and given the disagreements about a Soviet alliance, there probably were).⁶⁴⁷

The two subjects largely missing from local coverage were Churchill and Danzig, as in Bedfordshire. Regular letter writer Bernard Jolivard, raised the question of Danzig at the end of July, arguing for its return to Germany as it had a majority German population unlike Czechoslovakia and that such a move would not threaten Britain.⁶⁴⁸ On the same day, a letter from 'X.Y.Z.' voiced suspicions that Germany was preparing for peace on Germany's terms and that Hitler had to have been convinced that Britain was determined to prevent him or 'he would have undoubtedly marched into Danzig by now'. This letter suggested that things were coming to a head but that the German people also desired peace.⁶⁴⁹ The discussion in the *West London Observer* then subsided until 18 August, when Jolivard maintained that 'Danzig and the Corridor are as German as Manchester is English' and that Germany should have them. However, P. Brent challenged Jolivard's earlier claims about the population of Danzig and the Polish Corridor, acknowledging the Danzig figure but insisting that the residents of the Corridor were 95% Polish.⁶⁵⁰

The alignment of opinion in the London boroughs had similarities to that in Bedfordshire, with a divide between the political parties. The Left and a selection of letter writers supported an alliance with the Soviet Union, primarily because it would increase the military strength available to Britain with which to contain Germany. The other attraction of the Soviet Union to the Left, especially Labour, was that it wanted peace, through collective action if necessary. The collective security approach had been a central plinth of Labour's alternative policy, though mention of it had

⁶⁴⁵ *West London Observer*, 14 July 1939; *West London Post*, 14 July 1939.

⁶⁴⁶ Morris, 'A History of the British Historiography of the Munich Crisis'.

⁶⁴⁷ *West London Observer*, 21 July 1939.

⁶⁴⁸ *West London Observer*, 28 July 1939.

⁶⁴⁹ *West London Observer*, 28 July 1939.

⁶⁵⁰ *West London Observer*, 18 August 1939.

diminished during 1939. The Left also displayed realism by acknowledging that an alliance would be difficult to achieve due to the government's attitude towards the Soviet Union. Based on the evidence from Fulham and Hammersmith, such lack of trust in the government was justified. Conservative speakers made very few references to the Soviet Union. Instead, they framed their defence of Chamberlain in terms of rearmament and the time bought at Munich, meaning that Britain was in a better position to fight. On the question of Churchill, both sides remained silent.

Discussion in Bolton of the question of a Soviet alliance began following the announcement of the guarantee to Poland. The lack of Soviet participation in the guarantee concerned the *Bolton Evening News* editorial on 5 April, as without it there was a lack of military and strategic strength.⁶⁵¹ The announcement of further guarantees to Greece and Romania brought further disappointment for the editorial as again no mention was made of the Soviet Union, thereby creating the impression of hostility towards it.⁶⁵² A letter from C. N. Green, a resident of Tonge Moor, reinforced the suspicions of hostility towards the Soviet Union voiced by the paper. Green's letter quoted a selection of statistics about pig iron exports, which were required for rearmament. The statistics showed that Britain's exports to Germany had risen from 2,332 tonnes between March and August 1938 to 39,203 tonnes in the six months between September 1938 and February 1939. Belgium and France had also increased their exports to Germany, a shocking revelation now that Britain was resisting further German aggression.⁶⁵³

The *Bolton Evening News* editorials were not the only ones to voice criticisms of the government. The local Labour and Liberal parties also made criticisms. Alderman J. P. Taylor, speaking at the Bolton Liberal Association AGM, asserted that other nations did not believe that Britain's word could be trusted.⁶⁵⁴ The political column in the *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, written from the Liberal perspective, argued that there was now a chance to make collective security a reality and criticised the government for having previously rejected a policy based on the League.⁶⁵⁵ However, these two Liberal comments did not refer directly to the Soviet Union and neither did Labour. In a 5 May resolution, Labour merely protested about the introduction of conscription and called upon the government to seek agreements with others to meet the fascist challenge.⁶⁵⁶ The lack of advocacy

⁶⁵¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 April 1939.

⁶⁵² *Bolton Evening News*, 14 April 1939.

⁶⁵³ *Bolton Evening News*, 12 April 1939.

⁶⁵⁴ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 6 April 1939.

⁶⁵⁵ *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 6 April 1939.

⁶⁵⁶ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 5 May 1939.

from the local Labour Party is surprising, although direct references to the Soviet Union came from letter writers to the *Bolton Evening News*. There, Robert Davies, a local Communist supporter, argued that the Soviet Union desired peace and was crucial to resolving the situation.⁶⁵⁷ 'H.T.' joined Davies in supporting an alliance that bridged the ideological divide, as this was required to prevent war.⁶⁵⁸ In contrast, 'T.W.D.' urged those favouring an alliance to show caution and carefully consider the Soviet Union as an ally. 'T.W.D.' believed that any victory would result in Eastern Europe coming under communist rule.⁶⁵⁹ His letter resulted in a request from 'H.T.' to suggest an alternative means of obtaining collective security that included the Soviet Union.⁶⁶⁰ This exchange contrasted with the previous situation in which Chamberlain's supporters had challenged opponents for an alternative policy. Yet, 'T.W.D.' was not alone in questioning the need for an alliance. Alf Gillett, responding to Robert Davies, stated that 'if Chamberlain's pro-fascist policy avoids war then it is good'.⁶⁶¹ In general, clear statements in favour of, or against an alliance with the Soviet Union were lacking in Bolton, though there was support for a broader collective security arrangement with other countries including the Soviet Union.

Discussion about the Soviet Union continued in the *Bolton Evening News* for the remaining months of peace. On 1 June, 'A London Man's Diary' noted that the Soviet Union was struggling to believe Britain's resolve to resist. This reinforced the warning given in April that Britain would struggle due to its previous attitude. However, another article on the same day placed the blame on Molotov, though it did note that Britain was not able to dictate terms, due to its greater need for an alliance.⁶⁶² The articles indicated a hint of mistrust of the government and suggested that Britain was not being sincere in its dealings with the Soviet Union. One way to overcome these doubts would be for Chamberlain to visit Moscow.⁶⁶³ Similarly, an editorial on 23 June voiced suspicions about the British attitude and Chamberlain's particularly. It feared that he hoped not to conclude a deal with the Soviet Union, either that or Stalin was hoodwinking Chamberlain.⁶⁶⁴ T. Hoban, who opposed an agreement, shared such suspicions about Stalin's motives.⁶⁶⁵

Mistrust of the government, particularly Chamberlain, was a common theme across the three

⁶⁵⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 April 1939.

⁶⁵⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 April 1939.

⁶⁵⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 19 April 1939.

⁶⁶⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 April 1939.

⁶⁶¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 April 1939.

⁶⁶² *Bolton Evening News*, 1 June 1939.

⁶⁶³ *Bolton Evening News*, 8 June 1939.

⁶⁶⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 23 May 1939.

⁶⁶⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 June 1939.

geographical areas as the negotiations dragged on. Chamberlain was criticised in *The Times* by J. A. Spender, which 'Domini' referred to in a letter to the *Bolton Evening News*. 'Domini' argued that it appeared that criticism of Chamberlain had become a crime and asked that if, as Chamberlain said, members of other parties agreed with him, why not broaden the government to include Eden and Churchill? 'Domini' believed that their inclusion would allay some of the Left's suspicions.⁶⁶⁶ 'Mons Wallah' furthered this argument on 24 July by referring to a report from Moscow that detailed the ideal British Cabinet in Soviet eyes. This included Churchill as Prime Minister, Eden as Foreign Secretary, and Duff Cooper at the Admiralty. This line-up would provide reassurance to the Soviet Union of Britain's determination.⁶⁶⁷ The suggestion to include Churchill in the Cabinet was part of a wider national campaign. The *Bolton Evening News* editorial on 4 July supported this, as events had vindicated Churchill's attitude and it would be a signal of Britain's determination, thereby providing reassurance to those who doubted Britain's word.⁶⁶⁸ However, 'Think Twice' rejected the idea of including Churchill, arguing that Hitler would react badly to this move, whilst 'T.H.' believed that Churchill's inclusion would not strengthen the country but bring about Chamberlain's downfall.⁶⁶⁹ These two letters received responses from 'Think again', 'W.S.' and William Schober, a resident of Salford.⁶⁷⁰ The latter was particularly critical of Chamberlain. He believed that Britain had been close to war and supported the Soviet Union, as unlike Germany, it had not tried to take over Europe.

Mistrust of the government and Chamberlain came to the fore during the debate about the Parliamentary recess. The *Bolton Evening News* editorial on 3 August stated that Chamberlain had taken this as a personal attack, though it believed that the opposition represented the views of the public.⁶⁷¹ Chamberlain's fellow Conservatives continued to be angered by attacks on him, as the political column in the *Farnworth Weekly Journal* noted on 11 August (the column was rarely written by a Conservative). The writer went on to argue the usual Opposition points about the move away from the League, which had been a prevalent reason for Labour and Liberal opposition to Chamberlain's policy.⁶⁷²

The subject of Danzig was largely missing from discussion in Bolton during July and August 1939. As in Bedfordshire, most of the comment came in the form of editorials. On 11 July, the *Bolton Evening*

⁶⁶⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 17 July 1939.

⁶⁶⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 July 1939.

⁶⁶⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 July 1939.

⁶⁶⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 13 and 18 July 1939.

⁶⁷⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 17, 19 and 20 July 1939.

⁶⁷¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 3 August 1939.

⁶⁷² *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 11 August 1939.

News editorial reiterated Chamberlain's message that Britain was determined to protect Polish independence.⁶⁷³ Discussion then went quiet for about a month before the paper published a letter from R. R. Stokes, the Labour MP for Ipswich, which called for a five-power conference. 'W.B.' rejected this suggestion on the basis that it was not possible to negotiate with the totalitarian states, as the fate of the Munich agreement had demonstrated.⁶⁷⁴ The lack of discussion in the letters column of the paper is surprising given the previous levels of discussion during times of international crises. There is no obvious reason for this differential.

The months prior to the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact saw much discussion about the British attitude towards the Soviet Union. Opinion in all three geographical areas showed divisions along political lines about the merits of an alliance with the Soviet Union. The Left broadly supported an alliance. Conservatives were much more cautious, urging caution about such a step. This caution was prevalent amongst senior party leaders, and given the attitude of Chamberlain, added to the sense of unease about the sincerity of Britain's intentions. The appeals for caution were less obvious in Fulham and Hammersmith, mainly due to the absence of William Astor, who was away with the Fleet Reserve on national service. Some impatience with Chamberlain amongst Conservatives was detectable, however. Those in favour of concluding an alliance wanted to do so quickly to send a clear message to Germany regarding Britain's resolve. Another way of achieving this would have been to bring Churchill into the Cabinet. National newspapers and the *Bolton Evening News*, alone out of the local newspapers used in this study, advocated this step. This was another method used by the paper to further its opposition to Chamberlain's policy and represented the main difference between the geographical areas prior to mid-August. Overall, opinion was moving towards a sense of unity about the need to resist further German aggression but divisions remained about how to achieve this.

The signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact came as a shock, despite rumours and warnings that had been circulating since January. The pact ended British alliance efforts and secretly carved out spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. Prior to the signing of the pact, tension had been building over Danzig and there were warnings in the British press that there would be war in August because Germany

⁶⁷³ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 July 1939.

⁶⁷⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 9 and 11 August 1939.

willed it.⁶⁷⁵ All of this occurred prior to, or during the Parliamentary recess, which had been highly controversial, as Arthur Greenwood for Labour argued that the country wanted 'the watchdogs to be on duty'.⁶⁷⁶ Before Parliament rose, MPs had agreed to a recall if the international situation deteriorated, and it duly met following the pact, in what Eden described as 'a sober mood of resolution'.⁶⁷⁷ The government signed a formal alliance with Poland on 25 August, just as Germany again began to increase the pressure. In the days that followed, attempts at a diplomatic solution and war preparations continued. With the likelihood of war increasing, the signal came for the commencement of Operation Pied Piper, the evacuation of children from major cities. Evacuation duly began on 1 September as Germany invaded Poland. The invasion should have triggered an automatic declaration of war. No declaration was forthcoming, a state of affairs that continued into the evening of 2 September when Parliament met and Leo Amery urged Arthur Greenwood to 'speak for England'.⁶⁷⁸ When no declaration was forthcoming, a Cabinet revolt led by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon and Leslie Burgin, occurred.⁶⁷⁹ This finally convinced Chamberlain that he would have to declare war. At 9am the next morning, Britain delivered to Germany an ultimatum stating that if Germany did not respond by 11am, a state of war would exist. No communication came and a reluctant Britain declared war.

The British public could keep up with developments to some extent via the cinema newsreels. The British Gaumont newsreel on 28 August provided an overview of British policy and a brief history of Danzig including information about the dispute. It also mentioned evacuation plans and the need for viewers to play a role in the civil defence forces.⁶⁸⁰ Three days later the message was that Britain was ready for war and the people had united behind its leaders.⁶⁸¹ The reiteration of Britain's determination continued following the declaration of war, with a 14 September newsreel showing the efforts made to ensure that the country was adequately prepared.⁶⁸² The newsreel message was one of resolution and determination, but how did people feel during the last few days of peace? In

⁶⁷⁵ TNA: CAB 23/100 39 (39), Cabinet Conclusions, 26 July 1939.

⁶⁷⁶ LSE: BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 24 and 27 July 1939.

⁶⁷⁷ N. Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers: Conservative Opposition to Appeasement in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1971): 219.

⁶⁷⁸ P. M. Kennedy, 'Idealists and Realists: British Views of Germany, 1864-1939', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 25 (1975): 156.

⁶⁷⁹ Hill, *Cabinet Decisions on Foreign Policy*: 92.

⁶⁸⁰ 'Lord Halifax Speaks to the Nation', Newsreel (28 August 1939) Gaumont.

⁶⁸¹ 'America Is Prepared', Newsreel (31 August 1939) Gaumont.

⁶⁸² 'These Days of Destiny', Newsreel (11 September 1939) Gaumont; 'Britain Carries On', Newsreel (14 September 1939) Gaumont.

response to the crisis, M-O had asked its panel to begin keeping a diary. Examination of the responses reveals several points:⁶⁸³

- People were busy with ARP preparations including obtaining material to meet the blackout requirements. Some found that little material was available in the shops. This included 38% of people surveyed in Bolton, who had not done anything due to cost.
- A sense that Chamberlain was keeping the people in the dark.
- People were uneasy but hopeful of avoiding war.
- International affairs were a feature of conversations. Although war was not wanted, people recognised the need to stop Hitler.
- The announcement of evacuation made people realise that the situation was serious.

The above provides a clear picture of a Britain preparing for a war that it still hoped to avoid. Crucially however, people were prepared to accept the need to fight, as events had demonstrated that Hitler needed stopping.

How to avoid war remained contentious. Just before the Nazi-Soviet Pact, R. R. Stokes had written to the *Bedfordshire Times* expressing the view that the government needed to take the lead in order to get out of the current situation.⁶⁸⁴ This presumably meant finding a peaceful solution, as the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* stressed on the day that the Nazi-Soviet Pact became public knowledge.⁶⁸⁵ The pact served as a way of strengthening British resolve as it was clear, according to Thomas Lodge, that whilst force remained the professed creed, there was a requirement for strength to meet it.⁶⁸⁶ Part of this strength came from being prepared. Local officials continued to reassure people that efforts to resolve the crisis were ongoing, whilst at the same time arranging to protect the public, many of whom had not taken any safety measures.⁶⁸⁷ Owen Hardisty, a worker at the Vauxhall factory in Luton, was one such person. He recorded in his diary at the end of August that he was still only planning to dig an air raid shelter in the garden.⁶⁸⁸ This is a classic case of what

⁶⁸³ M-O A: Diary 5205, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5217, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5231, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5240, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5395, 1939; M-O A: TC 5/1/K, War-Time Directive No.3, November 1939; M-O A: Diary 5010, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5278, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5086, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5156, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5224, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5039.9, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5141, 1939; M-O A: Diary 5333, 1939.

⁶⁸⁴ *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 18 August 1939.

⁶⁸⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 23 August 1939.

⁶⁸⁶ *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 25 August 1939.

⁶⁸⁷ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 28 August 1939.

⁶⁸⁸ O. Hardisty, *Blitzing Vauxhall: A Dogbody's War Diary* (Dunstable, 2005): 2-3.

one Mass Observer had said back in April 1938, namely that ‘the workers won’t move until it comes’,⁶⁸⁹ a point that Tom Harrison also made in *Living Through the Blitz*.⁶⁹⁰

Regarding the actual declaration of war, the local newspapers in Bedfordshire made little comment. The *Luton News* editorial on 7 September provided a succinct summary, saying that the reaction was different from 1914 and there was a determination to see the war through to a conclusion. As the paper put it, there was an underlying sense that ‘these devils must be destroyed’, a reference to the Nazis and not to the German people who followed them.⁶⁹¹ The calmness described in the *Luton News* is also evident in the book *Dunstable and District at War*. P. Underwood described an awareness of a shadow over the country during 1939 and heard the declaration with an acceptance that the public would just have to get on with it. However, others had the opposite reaction. Christina Scott’s father broke down saying ‘I can’t take this again, we only just got over 1914-18’. His reaction had similarities that to Joyce Smith’s mother, who fainted at the news.⁶⁹² The book contains several other examples like this, which differed from the reports in local newspapers.

The fortnight prior to the declaration of war witnessed few expressions of opinion in Bedfordshire. Historians know more about Fulham due to four M-O surveys carried out between 22 and 30 August. These revealed a rising level of bewilderment from 40% to 55% as the crisis progressed. The explanation provided by M-O for this rise was that the nearer an event such as war came, the less likely people were to admit that it was going to occur. These findings correlated with the Munich crisis. On 22 August, those questioned indicated that 41% believed that the pact had increased the chances of war, whilst 39% did not know. More men than women believed war was likely, whilst more women answered, ‘do not know’.⁶⁹³ Additionally, 59% of men questioned, as against 42% overall, stated that more could have been done to prevent the pact, thus implying that Britain was in some way to blame.⁶⁹⁴ The second survey produced comparable results.⁶⁹⁵ The surveys on 29 and 30 August included additional questions of news sources and ARP. By this time, 57% of men and 73% of women questioned did not believe that war would be shortly forthcoming. This indicated that hopes for peace remained and mirrored the Munich crisis when more people also believed that

⁶⁸⁹ M-O A: DS602, 'Crisis' (War).

⁶⁹⁰ Harrison, *Living through the Blitz*: 27.

⁶⁹¹ *Luton News*, 7 September 1939.

⁶⁹² J. Yates and S. King, *Dunstable and District at War: From Eyewitness Accounts* (Dunstable, 2006): 61, 99 and 130.

⁶⁹³ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/DF, Synopsis, 12 August 1939.

⁶⁹⁴ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/F, Russia Survey, 22 August 1939.

⁶⁹⁵ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/F, Russia Survey, 23 August 1939.

war would not come as the crisis came towards a conclusion.⁶⁹⁶ However, both genders were in favour of getting any war over with rather than delaying it, a feature of some of the comments made to M-O observers. The comments also show a continuing disdain for Hitler. Examples include:⁶⁹⁷

- Male, 60 – if he touches Poland, we will have to go to war.
- Male, 30 – the prestige of Britain has sunk since Munich and it will sink again.
- Male, 50 – if you give him Danzig he's not satisfied. He'll want the corridor. He'll do the same as he did with the Czechs, take some and then get the lot.
- Woman, 60 – I've just been talking about the subject. We can't give Germany all they want. We don't want war but if we let them have what they want, it'll be worse in the long run.
- Woman, 45 – have a smack at Hitler and bump him off. That's the best thing that could happen.

Surveys were only part of M-O's work during this period. It also noted street conversations. On 27 August, an observer noted down two conversations that indicate an awareness of the potentially dangerous nature of the international situation. The first occurred between two men aged around 35 who were watching an aeroplane passing overhead. One said 'it's all right mate, it's one of ours' to which the other laughed and responded, 'fucking good job too'. Another street conversation between two men took a very different line. The 40-year-old man commented 'you stay at home and look after the women'. The 50-year-old responded 'fuck the women, I've too much with one. I used to run after them but now I am fucking running away from home. I'd sooner fight the jerry'.⁶⁹⁸

M-O observers noted the reactions of people around Fulham to the declaration of war on 3 September. Two of the people spoken to were a barman at the Castle pub and the proprietor of the Roma cafe:⁶⁹⁹

- Barman, 30 – ay. It's started now. It's funny isn't it? He's a terrible man, isn't he? He should have been put out years ago. Yes, it is a terrible business. You don't know, once it's started, where it will stop.
- Café proprietor, a Jew of 55 – that man should have been crushed ages ago. The spirit of the country is not what it was in 1914. We were divided then. Some were anti-British, some

⁶⁹⁶ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/DF, Synopsis, 12 August 1939.

⁶⁹⁷ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/F, Russia Survey, 22-3 August 1939; SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/F, Russia Survey, 26 August 1939.

⁶⁹⁸ M-O A: TC23/1/B, Crisis, 27 August 1939.

⁶⁹⁹ M-O A: TC 23/1/B, War, 3 September 1939.

pro-British. But we are all united now. He's got to be crushed.

Alongside these comments was a description of reactions to the first air raid siren of the war. In a café, police advised people to take cover and they began to run frantically. This reaction contrasted to Holland Park where 'people move quickly to shelter but there is no panic. Most of the people not worried by the raid. Just take it in their stride'. The observer continued by noting that the wardens did not seem acquainted with the situation.⁷⁰⁰ The differing reactions are hard to explain, though there appear to have only been a limited number of ARP practices within the borough.

The local newspapers provided a different angle from the evidence collected by M-O. On 1 and 8 September, the *Fulham Chronicle* reported on the speeding up of ARP work around the borough. There were reports on line painting, ARP classes to provide basic training, and the work of wardens to enforce the blackout. Reports about the first air raid siren referred to the sense of calm amongst people and church services terminating as per the regulations.⁷⁰¹ The *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* echoed the sense of calm evident in these reports. Indeed, on 1 September the paper commented on the difference compared to the Munich crisis, when people had cheered and booed at the cinema newsreel. Now people watched in complete silence and there was no rush to stock up on goods at the shops.⁷⁰²

The *West London Observer* made similar points regarding ARP and evacuation but also contained comments about British policy. The editorial on 25 August took heart from the fact that the British people had backed the policy of the government and that on 1 September considered that the British people had made up their minds about which policy to pursue.⁷⁰³ Even so, the government's policy came in for criticism from Michael Stewart. He blamed the government for failing to conclude an agreement with the Soviet Union, though nonetheless he would be joining up. He stressed that this did not mean that he supported government policy.⁷⁰⁴ A letter from G. Athelstan Newell, a resident of Richmond, echoed the editorial and political comments on the complacent acceptance of war that had been apparent in the previous few days.⁷⁰⁵ Yet although some of the comments appearing in the paper went against the idea of a united nation, even those of Michael Stewart

⁷⁰⁰ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/D, Partial Manuscript Containing Extracts from Diaries, 1939.

⁷⁰¹ *Fulham Chronicle*, 1 and 8 September 1939.

⁷⁰² *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 1 and 8 September 1939.

⁷⁰³ *West London Observer*, 25 August and 1 September 1939.

⁷⁰⁴ *West London Observer*, 1 September 1939.

⁷⁰⁵ *West London Observer*, 1 September 1939.

showed the people were prepared to fight, an important change compared to a year earlier.

The reaction in Bolton to the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact was one of dismay, as it struck a blow against the hopes of forming a peace front against Germany. The *Bolton Evening News* questioned whether Britain had been the victim of Soviet duplicity and feared that the pact might have a sinister meaning for Poland.⁷⁰⁶ The paper welcomed the recall of Parliament and the passing of an emergency powers bill, saying that ‘the almost unanimous support of the House is a reflection of the people’. The paper believed that people now understood that they would not be fighting for some city but for the principle of liberty itself. This made it acceptable to them.⁷⁰⁷

The population in Bolton remained calm and optimistic about avoiding war during the last days of August. During this time, M-O surveyed 100 people on three separate days about whether they thought there would be war.

Table 3: ‘Will there be war?’ Response in Worktown, August 1939⁷⁰⁸

	War	No war	Don’t know
28 August 1939	24	37	39
29 August 1939	13	39	48
31 August 1939	18	34	48

Survey respondents in ‘Worktown’ were not as confident as in ‘Metrop’. Nonetheless, many indicated that Hitler had to be stopped otherwise he would want something else. The mood was well summarised by one comment, ‘think we should stop him this time but don’t think there will be war. Think Chamberlain has a bigger following than last year but nobody could stand another Munich’.⁷⁰⁹ This comment reflected the determination to stop Hitler and the need to prevent Chamberlain from carrying out another Munich, thereby confirming the mistrust of the Prime Minister that had been present in the preceding months.

The German invasion of Poland should have triggered an immediate declaration of war. To the

⁷⁰⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 22 August 1939.

⁷⁰⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 25 August 1939.

⁷⁰⁸ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/DF, Synopsis, 12 August 1939.

⁷⁰⁹ SxMOA: 1/2/25/5/DF, Synopsis, 12 August 1939.

Bolton Evening News, the course was now clear and Britain would enter the conflict a united nation determined to re-establish the rule of law. People continued to remain calm and placed the blame for the situation on Hitler. One woman told an M-O observer that she hoped that 'the hell was knocked out of him (Hitler)', whilst a group of builders believed that Hitler was the villain. Two other women were discussing how they would like to torture Hitler.⁷¹⁰ If nothing else, there was a unity of attitude towards the German leader. Calmness ensued on 2 September with people anxious to get away on their holidays despite the crisis. However, it had a knock-on effect as military call-ups resulted in a shortage of drivers.⁷¹¹

The declaration of war occurred at a time when people were in church or listening to the radio. Church attendance was certainly in evidence in Bolton and came at the end of a week when churches had been open to enable people to pray for peace.⁷¹² The *Bolton Evening News* described these services as well attended,⁷¹³ a claim that is difficult to verify using the parish registers as communion is unlikely to have taken place during these services. A further example of the calmness in Bolton comes from the testimony of Gerald Openshaw, who was working in the telephone exchange. He had purchased a radio so that he could listen to developments and heard the declaration of war from the top of a ladder. However, he and his colleagues continued their work.⁷¹⁴

The last six months of peace marked a change in the residual public mood to become one that was intent on resisting further German aggression. The catalyst for the emergence of this mood was the German invasion of the remainder of Czechoslovakia, which in all three geographical areas was condemned. The existing historiography is therefore correct in identifying March 1939 as a major turning point, but it needs acknowledging that this was the culmination of a process that had been developing since 1938 rather than the universal change that A. J. P. Taylor claimed it to be in *English History 1914-1945*.⁷¹⁵ The German invasion also increased demands, mainly from the Left, for an alliance with the Soviet Union, a step that the government was reluctant to take. This added to the existing public mistrust of the government, particularly Chamberlain. Bedfordshire and the two London boroughs displayed elements of this attitude but it was in Bolton that criticism of

⁷¹⁰ T. C. Charman, *The Day We Went to War* (London, 2010): 89-95.

⁷¹¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 2 September 1939.

⁷¹² U3A Bolton, *How We Used to Live: Recollections of the Twentieth Century: The War Years, 1939-45*, vol. 2 (Bolton, 1999); Bolton Information Network, *Bolton Remembers the War: A Collection of Bolton People's Memories of Life at Home During the Second World War* (Bolton, 2005).

⁷¹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 30 August 1939.

⁷¹⁴ G. Openshaw interviewed by C. Wood (Imperial War Museum, 20 November 1990).

⁷¹⁵ A. J. P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1965): 439.

Chamberlain was strongest, thanks to the *Bolton Evening News*. The paper's editorial column remained suspicious of Chamberlain's policy. Despite the continuing calls for an alliance, government supporters urged caution as they mistrusted the Soviet Union.

An alliance with the Soviet Union would have provided an indication of British resolve to meet the German challenge. A further indication would have been the inclusion of Churchill in the Cabinet, a step that Chamberlain resisted fiercely. Bolton was the only one of the geographical areas to feature discussion of this issue, thanks mainly to the letters column in the *Bolton Evening News*. The paper favoured including Churchill but opponents argued that such a move would antagonise Hitler. Chamberlain was keen to avoid this, thereby continuing his pursuit of some form of appeasement.

The question of Danzig in August 1939 was one discussed only briefly in each of the three geographical areas, mainly in the form of newspaper editorials such as those in the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*. The most active discussion came in the *West London Observer*, albeit among regular letter writers to the paper. Even here, only a handful of letters examined the dispute in detail, assessing the merits of the case. The lack of active discussion is surprising given the previous international crises that had occurred and that developments resulting from them had made war even more likely. One can only speculate as to the reasons why there was a lack of discussion. Firstly, the British public had come to accept that war was likely, possibly from a better understanding of the international situation and the preparations that had been ongoing for many months. The second possible explanation is that this crisis occurred in August, a month when people were on holiday and did not want to discuss international problems. The evidence from the summer of 1938, which saw a reduction in discussion of international affairs, supports this argument.

One of the continuing themes throughout this and previous chapters has been the active role played by the *Bolton Evening News* in guiding opinion in Bolton and acting as a vehicle for facilitating discussion of international affairs. The paper remained critical of the foreign policy pursued by Chamberlain for much of the period covered by this chapter but it did support the efforts made to resist German demands as it deemed this to be in the best interests of the people that it served. Despite coming in for criticism from some readers about its stance, the editorial column remained the only one used by the paper to express political views and it continued to publish letters from those presenting an alternative viewpoint, thereby reflecting opinion in the area that the paper served. The local newspapers in the other geographical locations played a similar but much less obvious role in facilitating discussion of international affairs.

The signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact came as a shock to Britain but did little to change the British determination to resist Germany, which by this time was the residual 'public mood'. This was despite the support that many in Britain had indicated for an alliance with the Soviet Union. The impact of the signing of the pact on the public mood is likely to have been limited due to the time lapse required to make a meaningful change in the public mood. The newspapers in all three geographical areas emphasised British resolve and the acceleration of ARP preparations as the country made its final preparations for war. Despite this, the public in Bolton and Fulham remained confused about the international situation and continued to hope for the avoidance of war. Throughout, the public reportedly showed a great calmness and acceptance that any conflict would be for the greater good, which might go some way to explaining the lack of impact on the public mood of the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. The acceptance of the need for war was a complete contrast to September 1938 when people had panicked as the air defences were in a poor state and people took to panic buying. By September 1939, improvements had occurred and the public were confident that the country would eventually prevail. Also by this time, Hitler had shown that he was not a man to be trusted, which featured strongly in the evidence collected from Fulham as part of M-O's work. Even the Chief of Staff, Sir Henry Pownall recorded in his diary that 'the Hitler regime must go. The nation is united as never before, not even in 1914'.⁷¹⁶ Whilst true of the aim, it was certainly not true of how to achieve that aim, as this and previous chapters have demonstrated.

⁷¹⁶ H. Pownall and B. Bond, *Chief of Staff: The Diaries of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall*, vol. 1 (London, 1972): 233.

Chapter 5: Air Raid Precautions, November 1937 – September 1939

The previous chapters have examined events chronologically in relation to foreign affairs. The emphasis now changes to British passive (civil) defence preparations, which helped the nation psychologically prepare for war. This chapter examines the largest part of these, ARP, the foundations of which grew out of the Great War. This destroyed the myth of Britain as an island fortress. Various parts of the country suffered from Zeppelin and Gotha raids, which highlighted the defencelessness of many towns and led to demands for adequate protection. The result was the introduction in 1917 of a system that would form the blueprint of defensive preparations in the 1930s. The raids themselves killed 1,239 and injured 2,886 civilians, over half of whom were women and children. This, and the books published during the interwar period gave people an indication of what could happen.⁷¹⁷ London was not the only one of the geographical areas to suffer from aerial bombardment during the Great War. Bolton suffered a Zeppelin raid. The Zeppelin appeared over the Haliwell side of the town and circled before bombing a depot owned by the council. It missed the major cotton factories but killed several people and caused damage. The extent of the damage caused by bomb splinters and debris surprised a *Bolton Evening News* reporter. Attendance at the funerals of the victims was high, with even the Mayor attending. The raid created a mood of defiance.⁷¹⁸

Bolton's experience provided only a glimpse of the potential devastation. The destructive nature of aerial attack was a feature of the war genre of the interwar period. Christopher Simer has summarised this well. He found that until the late 1930s, nightmare scenarios dominated, a conclusion reinforced by the work of Miles and Powers.⁷¹⁹ Powers refers to books that warned Britain about the need to prepare and the potential impact on the civilian population. H. G. Wells's 1908 novel, *The War in the Air* is a good example.⁷²⁰ A 1936 film version allowed cinema audiences to gain some insight into what to expect. By this time, the question of air defence was under consideration by the government.

Terence O'Brien examined the setting up of the ARP service in the official history of civil defence,

⁷¹⁷ S. R. Grayzel, 'A Promise of Terror to Come: Air Power and the Destruction of Cities in British Imagination and Experience, 1908-30,' in *Cities into Battlefields: Metropolitan Scenarios, Experiences and Commemorations of Total War*, ed. S. Goebel and D. Keene (Farnham, 2011): 51.

⁷¹⁸ P. J. C. Smith, *Zeppelins over Lancashire: The Story of Air Raids in the County of Lancashire in 1916 and 1918* (Manchester, 1991).

⁷¹⁹ B. D. Powers, *Strategy without Slide-Rule: British Air Strategy, 1914-1939* (London, 1976); C. J. Simer, 'Apocalyptic Visions: Fear of Aerial Attack in Britain, 1920-1938' (Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 1999).

⁷²⁰ H. G. Wells, *The War in the Air*, ed. P. Parrinder (London, 2005).

which emphasised the impact of the Munich crisis on the willingness of the public to take precautions.⁷²¹ Uri Bialer furthered this discussion, highlighting the conflicting arguments affecting government policy,⁷²² one of which was the lack of reliable intelligence on German air strengths.⁷²³ Bialer also refers to the contrasting public views of aerial defence, a subject that Brett Holman has added to considerably using newspapers to gauge reaction to the air panic of 1935 caused by German rearmament.⁷²⁴ His recent book, *The Next War in the Air*, confirms many of the findings of Simer's thesis regarding the idea of the knockout blow. The source material included newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, and M-O.⁷²⁵ Holman was not the first to tackle this subject as Eleanor Eddy conducted a brief study using letters in *The Times*. She concluded that there was very little interest in the subject until after the Munich crisis.⁷²⁶ A recent contribution to the literature comes from Michele Haapamaki, who examines the reactions of left-wing intellectuals. Their main evidence came from the Spanish Civil War, which they believed offered them a unique insight into the problem. They argued that the government had a moral duty to provide deep shelters, as they were the only adequate form of protection. This argument failed to convince the government, which adopted a policy that it believed was more in line with the private nature of the English character.⁷²⁷ No review would be complete without mentioning Robert Woolven's examination of the development of ARP in London. His thesis provides a good overview, highlighting the main points of concern: finance, public apathy, and shelter provision.⁷²⁸ The thesis confirms the contemporary finding of N. MacRoberts that London was continually behind the rest of the country. Some of the blame for this rested with individuals, but it was mainly due to the nature of local government in London.⁷²⁹

The chapter has three sections: planning, recruitment, and shelters. The first section summarises the general interwar history, including the early work undertaken in each of the geographical areas. After the first call for volunteers following the Anschluss, each new crisis brought a rise in

⁷²¹ T. H. O'Brien, *Civil Defence* (London, 1955).

⁷²² Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber*.

⁷²³ Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy*: 63-5.

⁷²⁴ B. Holman, 'The Air Panic of 1935: British Press Opinion between Disarmament and Rearmament', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46, 2 (2011): 288-307.

⁷²⁵ B. Holman, *The Next War in the Air: Civilian Fears of Aerial Bombardment in Britain, 1908-1941* (Farnham, 2014).

⁷²⁶ E. Eddy, 'Britain and the Fear of Aerial Bombardment, 1935-1939', *Aerospace Historian*, 13, 4 (1966): 177-84.

⁷²⁷ M. A. Haapamaki, 'Challenges from the Margins: Some British Left-Wing Intellectuals and Criticisms of Air Raid Precautions, 1918-1939' (Ph.D., McMaster University (Canada), 2009).

⁷²⁸ R. E. Woolven, 'Civil Defence in London, 1935-1945' (Ph.D., King's College London, 2002).

⁷²⁹ BA: W/ARP/AS44, N. MacRoberts, A.R.P. Lessons from Barcelona: Some Hints for Local Authorities and for the Private Citizen.

recruitment. This was especially the case with the Munich crisis, which proved to be the catalyst for the rapid development of ARP and associated measures. The final part examines the increasing demand for shelter provision following the Munich crisis. The use of different geographical case studies builds on existing writing about ARP, which has concentrated on the national level or case studies of specific cities. It draws on a range of council records and local newspapers to provide details of practices, the progress of recruitment, and the public reaction. Therefore, it will broaden the national synthesis within the existing historiography.

Planning

Government planning began in 1923 when a secret committee chaired by Sir John Anderson considered the subject. Their work remained secret until the 1935 announcement that an ARP department would become part of the Home Office. Shortly afterwards, the first circular was issued and an invitation made to local authorities to begin discussing precautions and educating the public. Work continued and in March 1937, the Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, received permission from the Cabinet to prepare a bill to place ARP work on a statutory basis. The bill came before Parliament in November 1937, despite the question of funding remaining unresolved. The general attitude of Labour local authorities was to accept the need for ARP but not the financing method.⁷³⁰ This is summarised in a statement from Fulham council:⁷³¹

‘It is obvious that compliance with the suggestion of the ARP department will necessitate considerable expenditure, the greater portion of which cannot be regarded as arising out of the statutory duties of local authorities. We urge the MBJSC to impress upon the Home Office, the necessity of ARP being borne by national funds’.

In addition to the question of funding, the government would also have to deal with public apathy. The BIPO poll for December 1937 found that 92.5% had not taken any precautions against air raids and believed that somehow, they would get protection from the authorities.⁷³²

The financing delay did not prevent work occurring. Bedfordshire’s ARP work began in 1935 with initial discussions covering the whole county. However, Bedford and Luton soon began to develop

⁷³⁰ Churchill Archives Centre (CAC): HDSL/4/43, Municipal Circular No.196, 17 July 1935.

⁷³¹ Woolven, 'Civil Defence in London, 1935-1945':113.

⁷³² *Cavalcade*, 25 December 1937.

their own schemes due to the strategic targets located within their vicinity. In November 1936, Luton's Chief Constable, George Scott, presented a draft plan to the council. This raised the question of recruitment. Suggestions included the British Legion, which was confirmed in March 1937.⁷³³ Recruitment problems continued to hamper the development of plans, leading to the public perception that no work was occurring.⁷³⁴ For example, in February 1938, Geo H. Hopkinson, a resident of Bedford, wrote to the *Bedfordshire Times* to criticise the lack of a 'public' plan for Bedford. H. B. Salmond, Bedford's ARP Officer, responded by reassuring Hopkinson, that work had been ongoing for three years and that plans were still being finalised prior to an announcement.⁷³⁵

Public indifference was the biggest challenge facing local authorities. Evidence of this emerged in Bedford and Harpenden but not Luton in November 1937, when the gas van visited all three locations. The visit to the Drill Hall in Luton attracted 145 people, forcing Major Atkinson to cancel her accompanying lecture due to the level of demand for people wanting to try the gas van.⁷³⁶ The visit to Bedford attracted 80 people, a reasonable attendance, though the *Bedfordshire Standard* considered it disappointing.⁷³⁷ By contrast, the visit to Harpenden, a small town about five miles from Luton, was a disaster as nobody turned up.⁷³⁸ Part of the public indifference was due to the lack of information available, a situation that Luton addressed with a series of public lectures during March and April 1938.⁷³⁹ These aimed to raise awareness and encourage recruitment. Bedford took a different approach, writing to all householders just prior to the Anschluss.⁷⁴⁰

Labour controlled Fulham did not match Bedfordshire's early work, resulting in a visit by Wing Commander Steele Perkins from the Home Office to discuss the lack of progress. The council's attitude was that ARP was 'futile and ineffective'.⁷⁴¹ Hammersmith's initial response was different as it quickly set up an ARP committee to begin drafting a scheme, a rate of progress that it did not maintain, as the Munich crisis revealed. A partial explanation for this may be due to the borough becoming Labour controlled in November 1937. Both boroughs agreed that the government should

⁷³³ BA: Bor.L/CA/1/2a, Local Air Raid Precautions Scheme, 23 November 1936; BA: Bor.L/CA/1/15, E. G. Breed to the Town Clerk, 21 March 1937.

⁷³⁴ BA: Bor.L/CA/1/2a, Chief Constable Scott to C. G. Welch, 21 August 1937.

⁷³⁵ *Bedfordshire Times*, 18 and 25 February 1938.

⁷³⁶ *Evening Telegraph*, 10 November 1937.

⁷³⁷ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 12 November 1937.

⁷³⁸ *Luton News*, 2 December 1937.

⁷³⁹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 4 March 1938.

⁷⁴⁰ BA: X854/4, If War Should Come, 15 March 1938.

⁷⁴¹ L. Hasker, *The Place Which Is Called Fulham: An Outline History of Fulham from Roman Times until the Start of the Second World War* (London, 1981): 192; Woolven, 'Civil Defence in London, 1935-1945':115.

bear the cost, a view not shared by William Astor, who voted against the Labour amendments to the ARP bill stipulating this.⁷⁴² The passing of the ARP Act forced both councils to reconvene their ARP committees. The reformation of the committee did not prevent criticism from appearing in the local paper. Mr Beale from the Empire Air League, in an address to a meeting of the Waltham Ward Women's Conservative Association, argued that any local authority that failed to take adequate measures was betraying the trust of the local people. Despite failing to specify, the speaker's implied target was Fulham council.⁷⁴³

Fulham's lack of progress continued into 1938. In February, the *West London and Fulham Gazette* highlighted a report in an unspecified evening newspaper about Fulham council's silence, stating that 'Fulham would be caught without any preparations that would mitigate the damage'.⁷⁴⁴ The paper urged everyone to learn about ARP. London's two-tier system of government influenced the lack of publicly available information, as it impeded the production of a united plan. A meeting at the Home Office on 24 February discussed this problem. Representatives agreed that the boroughs would be responsible for recruitment, training and the provision of advice, whereas the LCC would be responsible for fire and evacuation.⁷⁴⁵ The boroughs received notification of these decisions but Fulham failed to respond.⁷⁴⁶ The lack of official information did not prevent interested individuals from seeking it out. In January 1938, the West Fulham Conservative Association staged a screening of 'The Gap', which depicted a fictional air raid on London. The audience consisted of quite a few young people.⁷⁴⁷

The contrast between the Labour controlled London boroughs and Conservative controlled Bolton is striking. As in Bedfordshire, local discussions began on 1935 and by April 1937, the Mayor was able to issue an appeal for volunteers.⁷⁴⁸ November 1937 saw a further appeal, as the number of special constables needed to double due to ARP work.⁷⁴⁹ Soon afterwards, the Bolton Chamber of Trade announced its own scheme for those aged over 30 to form a section of the special constables.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴² HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 24 November 1937; *East Fulham Citizen*, November 1937 and February 1938.

⁷⁴³ *Fulham Chronicle*, 3 December 1937.

⁷⁴⁴ *West London and Fulham Gazette*, 18 February 1938.

⁷⁴⁵ LMA: LCC/CL/CD/01/152, Organisation of A.R.P in the County Area of London; R. E. Woolven, 'The London Experience of Regional Government, 1938-1945', *London Journal*, 25, 2 (2000): 61.

⁷⁴⁶ LMA: LCC/CL/CD/01/152, Honorary Clerk to Sir George Gater, 12 March 1938.

⁷⁴⁷ *West London and Fulham Gazette*, 14 January 1938.

⁷⁴⁸ BLHC: ABZ/46/3, Mayor's Appeal for Volunteers, 17 April 1937.

⁷⁴⁹ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 26 November 1937.

⁷⁵⁰ *Bolton Standard*, 3 December 1937.

Publication of the results of these appeals occurred when the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* published the end of year figures.

Table 4: Bolton ARP recruitment, 31 December 1937⁷⁵¹

Service	Number recruited	Target
Special constables	250	500
Wardens	350	650
Firemen	110	440
Total	710	1590

Following Bolton's initial success, the ARP committee recommended the appointment of the Chief Constable as the ARP Officer.⁷⁵² This provoked controversy, mainly due to the additional salary that the Chief Constable would receive. The Bolton Labour Party duly asked where the money was coming from.⁷⁵³ Further resentment was felt because of the level of unemployment and the council was appealing for unpaid volunteers.⁷⁵⁴ 'Candidus' a local Labourite columnist, argued that there were no precautions for the Chief Constable to take charge of.⁷⁵⁵ Letter writers to the *Bolton Evening News* added to this criticism. However, the editor allowed one final letter as 'Fair Play' wrote to support the decision and questioned whether critics had considered the potential alternatives.⁷⁵⁶

The early preparatory work varied. Bolton and Bedfordshire's early start meant that they were soon able to submit a scheme to the Home Office following the passing of the ARP Act. This work occurred away from the public realm leading some to question the rate of progress. This was the case with the two London boroughs. By contrast, the early work carried out in Bolton meant that it was in an acceptable position when the first international crisis occurred.

⁷⁵¹ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 31 December 1937.

⁷⁵² BLHC: ABZ/46/3, Air Raid Precautions: General Report on the Progress of the Council's Scheme, 17 February 1938.

⁷⁵³ M-O A: Worktown 7C: Labour Party, *Bolton Citizen*, March 1938.

⁷⁵⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 25 and February 1938 and 1 March 1938.

⁷⁵⁵ M-O A: Worktown 7C: Labour Party, *Bolton Citizen*, March 1938.

⁷⁵⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 March 1938.

Volunteers

Recruitment was a duty of local authorities under the ARP Act. However, confronting them was public indifference, an attitude that would last until after the declaration of war. The best solution was an international crisis and it is around these that this section of the chapter is organised: March to August 1938, September 1938 to March 1939, and March to September 1939.

March to August 1938

The Anschluss coincided with a broadcast by the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare for one million volunteers for ARP work. This broadcast had been several months in the planning and was one that the BBC was keen to undertake as a way of educating the public, whilst avoiding party political debate on the subject.⁷⁵⁷ In the broadcast, Hoare acknowledged that it was a terrible subject to speak about. He argued that England needed to be prepared and this meant that people would have to learn the basis of ARP in peacetime.⁷⁵⁸ Therefore, it was a timely broadcast.

Bedford began its appeal prior to Hoare's broadcast by writing to all households in the town. Only 200 had replied when the Anschluss occurred. This had risen to 847 when the ARP committee met on 23 March.⁷⁵⁹ The *Bedfordshire Times* published updates as well, reporting 447 replies on 18 March and over 1,000 a week later. However, the figures in Table 5, though the published figures, do not correspond with the claims in the report.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁷ BBC WAC: R51/13/1, William Eady to Sir John Reith, 26 January 1938; BBC WAC: R51/13/1, Air Raid Precautions, 26 January 1938.

⁷⁵⁸ BBC WAC: R51/13/1, The Citizen and Air Raids, 5 March 1938.

⁷⁵⁹ BA: BorBB30/2/6, Meeting of Air Raid Precautions Committee, 23 March 1938.

⁷⁶⁰ *Bedfordshire Times*, 18 March 1938; *Bedfordshire Times*, 25 March 1938.

Table 5: Bedford ARP recruits in March 1938

Service	18 March 1938	25 March 1938
Ambulance	22	73
Demolition	15	37
Decontamination	15	42
Fire Brigade	20	45
Messengers	58	42
First Aid	16	164
Wardens	206	362
Any type of work	18	21
Rescue		41
Unable to assist		153
Total	370	980

The postal campaign and international events stimulated Bedford's recruitment. The *Bedfordshire Times* assisted the council by offering to provide a certain amount of free space to promote ARP.⁷⁶¹ This followed a similar offer by the *Luton News* to Luton's committee, at a time when Luton was commencing a series of public lectures. Over 200 people attended the first lecture, with 1,200 attending over the series. This resulted in 693 volunteers, which the Chief Constable deemed a success and proposed another series in the autumn.⁷⁶² Discussions about ARP took place elsewhere as well, with a joint discussion between the Workers Education Association and Luton Youth Group. They agreed that it was common sense to take precautions,⁷⁶³ a view not supported by all groups as the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* had previously reported that an unnamed group had distributed leaflets opposing ARP. Based on a letter in *The Times*, this was likely to have been the

⁷⁶¹ BA: BorBB30/2/6, Meeting of Air Raid Precautions Committee, 29 April 1938.

⁷⁶² BA: Bor.L/CA/1/3, Borough of Luton Air Raid Precautions Scheme, 8 April 1938; *Luton News*, 5 May 1938.

⁷⁶³ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 7 May 1938.

PPU.⁷⁶⁴

Despite the relative success of the recruitment campaigns, the number of volunteers remained short of the target. By the end of May, Luton had only recruited 750 out of 2,750, a situation replicated in Bedford where recruitment rates had slowed since the initial rush in March.⁷⁶⁵ For example, the *Bedfordshire Standard* reported on 27 May that Bedford only had 28 out of the required 1,250 auxiliary fire fighters.⁷⁶⁶ A further report in the *Bedford and District Daily Circular* in July found that one ward still needed 120 wardens.⁷⁶⁷ Both papers duly reminded readers that the precautions benefited all. Despite these problems, a demonstration of the county's overall progress took place in May 1938 at Stewartby, which is located to the west of Bedford. The leader of Bedfordshire County Council, Sir Thomas Keens described the display as 'realistic' and included a commentary to ensure that people knew what was happening. At the end of the display, Keens said that he hoped that the demonstration had made people realise the necessity of ARP.⁷⁶⁸ Following the Stewartby demonstration, Luton staged two relatively successful blackouts. Some people did not comply, with wives leaving lights on whilst waiting for their husbands to come home.⁷⁶⁹ The trials, along with warning siren tests, acted as a way of reassuring the public about the progress of precautions.

Recruitment in Fulham and Hammersmith was slower than in Bedfordshire. The weeks following the broadcast coincided with the West Fulham by-election. The campaign featured only a few references to ARP, with the main criticisms coming from East Fulham MP, William Astor, following a visit to the town hall. Here, he witnessed several people ask questions about volunteering that staff were unable to answer.⁷⁷⁰ This left an impression of inaction by the council, an inaction not reflected by the council minutes, which stated that the ARP committee were working on a scheme.⁷⁷¹ The confusion was part of a slow response as only 125 had volunteered by 25 March,⁷⁷² a figure that had increased to 363 in early May when Astor wrote to his constituents to appeal for more volunteers. Later in the month, he referred to the continuing problems that people were

⁷⁶⁴ *The Times*, 11 April 1938.

⁷⁶⁵ *Luton News*, 26 May 1938.

⁷⁶⁶ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 27 May 1938.

⁷⁶⁷ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 9 July 1938.

⁷⁶⁸ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 23 May 1938; *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 24 May 1938; *Bedfordshire Standard*, 27 May 1938.

⁷⁶⁹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 8 August 1938.

⁷⁷⁰ *Fulham Chronicle*, 25 March 1938.

⁷⁷¹ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 16 March 1938.

⁷⁷² *Fulham Chronicle*, 25 March 1938.

experiencing with registering to volunteer.⁷⁷³ The continuing lack of volunteers concerned the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* editorial, which blamed the council for a lack of enthusiasm.⁷⁷⁴ Astor's and the paper's concerns were shared by the paper's readers, who wrote a week later to bemoan the inadequate state of preparations and an associated lack of information. By this time, the editorial believed that Fulham's recruitment was the lowest in London.⁷⁷⁵ With public concern mounting, May's recruitment figures would have brought some relief. These showed an increase of over 500 on the previous month. This slowed down again over the summer months, though the numbers attending lectures was encouraging.

Table 6: ARP recruitment in Fulham: April-September 1938⁷⁷⁶

Month	Number required	Number enrolled	Men	Women	% of required number	Lecture attendance
April 1938	2,500	363			14.5	
May 1938	3,150	903			28.7	
June 1938	3,564	1,056			29.6	
July 1938	3,564	1,151	908	243	32.3	1,377
September 1938	3,564	1,250	982	268	35.1	1,451

Fulham council's public engagement began to increase as its attitude towards ARP changed. In early July, the council organised a well-attended non-political meeting about ARP. However, this did not prevent Councillor De Palma and Edith Summerskill from criticising the government's foreign policy. Both blamed the 'situation' on the need for ARP. The Mayor avoided political references, stating that 'I feel, as various other members of the borough council feel, that it is our duty to give our

⁷⁷³ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 6 May 1938; *Fulham Chronicle*, 13 May 1938.

⁷⁷⁴ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 6 May 1938.

⁷⁷⁵ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 13 May 1938.

⁷⁷⁶ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 6 and 27 May 1938 and 12 August 1938; HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 27 July and 28 September 1938.

citizens every help in preparing for whatever may happen in the near future'.⁷⁷⁷ The local newspapers made little editorial comment on the meeting, though on 12 August an editorial advised the council to stay in contact with the local population.⁷⁷⁸

Hammersmith's scheme was also embryonic. Councillor Adams, the chair of the ARP sub-committee, described ARP as offering only a small degree of protection, an opinion that Councillor Glenister found disturbing. However, Councillor Bartlett believed that Glenister had misunderstood and that Adams was right to say it was inadequate.⁷⁷⁹ Like Fulham, Hammersmith struggled to attract volunteers. The council tried to do so by placing a large advert in the *West London Observer* and take a stand at the Ideal Home Exhibition.⁷⁸⁰ It was not exactly an awe-inspiring advertisement (Fig.13). Both measures had limited success. The first figures showed that 200 out of the 490 required had volunteered.⁷⁸¹ This figure was presumably for wardens, as the overall figure was 3,503. However, these numbers would grow in the coming months.

Table 7: ARP recruitment in Hammersmith: April-September 1938⁷⁸²

Month	Number required	Number enrolled	Men	Women	% of required number
April 1938	3,503	200			5.7
July 1938	3,503	503	307	196	14.4
September 1938	3,503	573	352	221	16.4

⁷⁷⁷ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 15 July 1938; LSE: Summerskill 4/1, Air Raid Precautions: Lively Town Hall Meeting.

⁷⁷⁸ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 12 August 1938.

⁷⁷⁹ *West London Observer*, 25 March 1938.

⁷⁸⁰ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 23 March 1938; *West London Observer*, 8 April 1938.

⁷⁸¹ *West London Observer*, 15 April 1938.

⁷⁸² HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 27 April, 20 July and 28 September 1938.

Figure 13: Hammersmith ARP Advertisement, *West London Observer* 8 April 1938

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH

NOTICE

URGENT AND IMPORTANT

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS ORGANISATION

The Hammersmith Metropolitan Borough Council are now organising the following Air Raid Precautions Services, for which Volunteers are urgently required.

- 1. AIR RAID WARDENS.**
Responsible and active men over 20, and women preferred, and responsible and active women, to act as leaders and helpers among neighbours in a small party, consisting of perhaps five to seven, and to form a link between them and the authorities. Warden will be responsible for the fitting and distribution of gas masks.
- 2. FIRST-AID PARTIES.**
Fit men over 20, to work in parties of four to go to the scene of casualties.
- 3. FIRST-AID POST STAFFS.**
Men over 20, including older men, and women, to staff first-aid posts in which first-aid committees would be formed.
- 4. RESCUE PARTIES.**
Fit men over 25 (including over 30), preferably experienced in demolition and building work, to work in parties of six to eight to extricate wounded persons trapped in buildings and assist in decontaminating streets and buildings.
- 5. DECONTAMINATION SQUADS.**
Fit men over 25 (including over 30), to work in squads of six men for decontaminating work and to assist rescue parties.
- 6. CYCLIST & MOTOR CYCLIST ORDERLIES (Male).**
With own vehicles.
- 7. MOTOR DRIVERS (Males over 45 and Females).**
With own vehicles.
- 8. MESSENGERS.**
Men over 30 and generally youths, to carry messages by motorcycle, pedal cycle, or on foot.
The Council currently have able bodied men and women who are willing to assist, to attend at times for any one of the above services. Further forms and information can be obtained at the AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS DEPT., YORKS HALL, HAMMERSMITH, W.6.

And at any of the PUBLIC LIBRARIES in the Borough.

In the interests of the Borough and of the Community, the Council urge for a spontaneous response to this Appeal.

HUGH ROYLE,
Town Clerk,
Hammersmith, W.6.
MAYOR'S CHAMBERS.

NOTE: Men who have any Reserve Obligations to the Navy, Army or Air Force, or in a Police Force or Fire Brigade, or who are employed as Special Constables should not apply for enrolment in the Air Raid Precautions Organisation.

A large number of volunteers are also required for the:

- AUXILIARY FIRE SERVICE.**
Fit men over 20 are eligible, to act as fire-pumps and perform such work, telephone messages, or other duties.
- FIRE BRIGADE RESERVE.**
Fit men over 25 with fire brigade experience, to join the fire brigades in emergency and perform the full duties of a fireman.
For which services applications should be made to the Chief Officers, London Fire Brigade Headquarters, Albert Embankment, S.W.1.

PADDINGTON COUNCIL, ETC.

The two London boroughs contrasted sharply with Bolton. Hoare's broadcast and the Anschluss quickly made the ARP department one of the council's busiest, prompting the town clerk to recommend relocating it to a central building.⁷⁸³ The volunteer influx led to a recruitment estimate of 500 wardens and 270 auxiliary fire fighters appearing in the *Bolton Evening News*.⁷⁸⁴ However, this did not prevent 'Anxious' writing to encourage people to volunteer.⁷⁸⁵ The paper published the official requirements on 7 April as 2,000 wardens, 2,000 for casualty services, 650 auxiliary fire

⁷⁸³ BLHC: AB/8/1 (12), Meeting of the General Purposes Committee, 4 April 1938.

⁷⁸⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 March 1938; *Bolton Standard*, 25 March 1938.

⁷⁸⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 18 March 1938.

fighters and 600 special constables. It acknowledged that some people would only become interested when war came.⁷⁸⁶ The recruitment effort received assistance from trade organisations. The Federation of Master Spinners, supported by the Co-Operative Cotton Spinners, produced a scheme for use by cotton mills. The latter stressed to its members that participation was voluntary.⁷⁸⁷ The Co-Operative Society undertook a similar effort with a film about ARP followed by a talk from Third Officer Davies of the Bolton Fire Service. Over 100 who attended the meeting volunteered. Talks about ARP also took place at other group meetings in Bolton.⁷⁸⁸ Both the Bolton Women's Conservative Association and their Liberal counterparts held meetings on the subject with good attendance but there was no direct link between these talks and recruitment.⁷⁸⁹

The efforts made in Bolton resulted in a relatively acceptable rate of recruitment. *The Manchester Evening News*, in an article entitled 'What's wrong with ARP?', praised the work of the Chief Constable and the co-operation between council departments. The article contained recruitment figures, some of which varied from the official requirements published in the *Bolton Evening News* on 7 April.

Table 8: ARP recruitment in Bolton, *Manchester Evening News*, 27 May 1938⁷⁹⁰

Service	Number required	Number recruited	% of total recruited
Wardens	2000	900	45
Casualty	2000	800 (300 trained and a further 500 expected)	40
Fire	300	250	84

Despite the above, Bolton continued to expand its recruitment efforts. This included the Chief Constable recommending reserving a stand at the borough's centenary celebration in September.⁷⁹¹ Prior to the exhibition, information provision continued via other means, including home visits to find out gas masks requirements and a BBC radio interview featuring Mr Barker, an ordinary ARP

⁷⁸⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 7 April 1938.

⁷⁸⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 19 and 23 April 1938.

⁷⁸⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 April 1938.

⁷⁸⁹ BLHC: FDC/1/3/7, Bolton Women's Conservative Association Meeting, 31 May 1938; *Bolton Evening News*, 3 June 1938.

⁷⁹⁰ BLHC: ABZ/85/1, What's Wrong with ARP?, 27 May 1938.

⁷⁹¹ BLHC: AB/8/1 (12), Meeting of the General Purposes Committee, 8 June 1938.

worker in the town. He spoke from the perspective of the ordinary person and one of the first people in Bolton to sign-up. The 'Town Topics' column in the *Bolton Evening News* recommended that people tuned in to find out more.⁷⁹² Accompanying the provision of information was an accidental activation on 8 June of the air raid siren. The *Bolton Evening News* in its report pointed out that it tested the siren's efficiency.⁷⁹³

To sum up, ARP recruitment increased slowly during this period. Nonetheless, it was a cause for concern, especially in the two London boroughs. In Fulham, the blame rested with the council, as it did not actively engage with the public until July and made it difficult for them to volunteer. By contrast, Bedfordshire and Bolton actively engaged their communities using different methods: public lectures, talks to interested parties, co-operation with trade organizations, and active support from the local newspapers. Co-operation with trade organizations only occurred in Bolton, and helped to advance the state of preparations. In numerical terms, comparison between the geographical areas is difficult due to the lack of standardised statistical reporting. However, on a percentage basis, Bolton far exceeded the two London boroughs.

September 1938 – March 1939

The second period was one of rapid recruitment, thanks largely to the Munich crisis. Wing Commander Hodsoll from the Home Office described the crisis as a 'godsend', as it produced an estimated 250,000 volunteers and the consensus that ARP was necessary.⁷⁹⁴ The crisis achieved a consensus as it exposed the poor state of defensive preparations, which G. G. Lee argues was the main reason why Britain signed the agreement.⁷⁹⁵ This argument appears contentious at first. However, taking account of Steven Lobell's strategic balancing argument, it is plausible.⁷⁹⁶ William Eady, undersecretary of the ARP department, highlighted Britain's defensive failings in a speech to the Royal United Services Institute. He admitted that the revelations did not surprise the Home Office. He went on to outline the duties of local authorities, thereby ensuring that his audience understood why the country was unprepared. These included providing advice and instructions,

⁷⁹² *Bolton Standard*, 17 June 1938; *Bolton Evening News*, 9 July 1938.

⁷⁹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 8 June 1938.

⁷⁹⁴ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 340, Columns 14-7 (1st November 1938); Woolven, 'Civil Defence in London, 1935-1945':7.

⁷⁹⁵ G. G. Lee, "'I See Dead People': Air-Raid Phobia and Britain's Behavior in the Munich Crisis', *Security Studies*, 13, 2 (2003): 230-72.

⁷⁹⁶ Lobell, 'Bringing Balancing Back In': 747-73. Lobell argues that Britain balanced against different parts of the threat posed by Germany, Italy and Japan. In the case of Germany, it was the threat from the air.

organization of the warden service, shelter provision, recruitment and training of volunteers, and the transfer of the civilian population. He argued that the local governing classes needed to become involved, as their non-participation was hindering progress.⁷⁹⁷ Eady's explanation was only one of the explanations as to why Britain was unprepared. J. B. S. Haldane's book *A.R.P.* provided another. Haldane argued that the government's piecemeal approach had prevented the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive scheme that included deep shelters.⁷⁹⁸ Haldane's argument has been criticised by Joseph Meisel for failing to place ARP within the wider context of the competition for scarce economic resources, which also reinforces part of the argument made by Lobell.⁷⁹⁹

Examples of unpreparedness occurred throughout the crisis. They included the lack of an official householder's handbook. M-O records from September 1938 reveal a mixed state of affairs.⁸⁰⁰

- 25-year-old male clerk from London - 29/9 spoke with air raid warden at lunch. He had visited and fitted all masks in his area at the end of June.....Agreed that public apathy had been extreme and that the country had been totally unprepared.
- Female clerk from Kent – have heard many people say they wish they had gone in for ARP training....Most people agree that ARP arrangements are a muddle.
- 72-year-old male from Midlothian - only by continued appeals in the newspapers has it been possible to rouse public interest in the distribution of gas masks.

The above are just a few of the examples of the indifference shown by the public for ARP, as well as flagging the lack of preparation undertaken by local authorities. Arthur Reynolds summarised this in a letter to *The Times*, urging:⁸⁰¹

'We must not only arm ourselves against attack but we must also be forearmed with protection for the non-combatant. In my opinion, permanent shelters and defences against attack from the air are as important as battleships.'

⁷⁹⁷ C. W. G. Eady, 'The Progress of Air Raid Precautions', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 84 (1939): 57-71.

⁷⁹⁸ J. B. S. Haldane, *A.R.P.* (London, 1938).

⁷⁹⁹ J. S. Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy and Its Critics in Britain before the Second World War', *Twentieth Century British History*, 5, 3 (1994): 300-19.

⁸⁰⁰ M-O A: DS588, International Situation; M-O A: DS13, Comments on the Crisis; M-O A: DS324, War Crisis, September 1938.

⁸⁰¹ *The Times*, 3 October 1938.

The aftermath of the crisis produced suggestions for improvements: classification of the country into danger zones, greater effort by local authorities, and the collection of information about people who would be of use.⁸⁰² The government undertook these steps during the winter months of 1938-9 and by February 1939 reported that the number of volunteers totalled 1.25m. Sir John Anderson referred to this figure and developments in a speech on 1 March that Herbert Morrison viewed as a sign of progress.⁸⁰³ However, despite the progress reported, public apathy and concern remained, as demonstrated by opinion polls during this period. A February 1939 poll found that only 21% of those questioned were satisfied with the government's ARP plans, while a further 70% supported deep shelters.⁸⁰⁴

The Scout motto 'Be Prepared' was the biggest lesson of the crisis. Wing Commander Hodsoll referred to this need in mid-September. He warned that 'people who had done nothing about ARP would find themselves in difficulties in the early stages'.⁸⁰⁵ This message was relevant to Luton, as only 800 people had volunteered for ARP work. Those who had received their training staged an early evening demonstration in the town centre. A. R. Hammond, a resident of Denbigh Road in Luton, blamed the council for the poor attendance at this demonstration, arguing that effective shelter provision was required before people would be more willing to volunteer.⁸⁰⁶ Similarly, Bedford's ARP meeting on 28 September revealed that many more volunteers were still required to become wardens or auxiliary fire fighters, as Bedford had less than 50% of its total complement.⁸⁰⁷ By the time Hodsoll's warning appeared on 12 September, the international situation was deteriorating. With the threat of war increasing, the Home Office issued instructions to begin the distribution of gas masks. This presented a challenge to Bedford and Luton, as volunteers were required to assemble them. In Luton, hat makers, housewives and volunteers from the surrounding villages came to assist. The *Luton News* described them as 'working in the atmosphere of a church bazaar'.⁸⁰⁸ Amongst the volunteers were the Scouts, whose 1938 annual report stated that good work had occurred despite local schemes being underdeveloped.⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰² *The Times*, 6, 7 and 15 October 1938.

⁸⁰³ LSE: Fiche B50, BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 1 March 1939.

⁸⁰⁴ 'British Institute of Public Opinion'.

⁸⁰⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 12 September 1938.

⁸⁰⁶ *Luton News*, 22 September 1938.

⁸⁰⁷ BA: BorBB2/22/37, Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Bedford, 28 September 1938; BA: BorBB2/22/37, Report of the Air Raid Precautions Committee, 19 October 1938.

⁸⁰⁸ *Luton News*, 29 September 1938.

⁸⁰⁹ BA: X619/27, Year Book and Annual Report 1938-9.

Local opinion leaders, whether assembling gas masks or digging trenches, appreciated the efforts of the volunteers. Sir Thomas Keens, in an unpublished letter of thanks to the *Luton News*, stated:⁸¹⁰

'It is difficult to conceive what would have happened with the limited number of volunteers at the disposal of the air raid precautions organisation in many districts had there not been such a spontaneous response. ARP is a great humanitarian service in which individuals can help their neighbours and towns or villages in which they live at times of emergency. The government is anxious to impress upon the country that there must be no slackening in air raid precautions'.

The paper refused to publish the letter for reasons explained on 6 October. The editor arguing that proprietors had explained to the government that:⁸¹¹

'a policy, which expected proprietors to allow their publications to be used without charge as vehicles for propaganda, that in the opinion of those newspaper proprietors ought to be paid for, is unlikely to command editorial sympathy from those proprietors but rather antagonise them'.

The paper viewed sections of Keens' letter as propaganda. Newspaper attitudes had changed following Treasury rejection of a scheme that included money for advertising, as 'they were certainly not going to pay for advertising in newspapers, when they could get all the publicity they wanted for free in the editorial column'.⁸¹² After these comments, proprietors adopted a policy of vigilance, thereby sending a clear message to the authorities that they should not rely on the goodwill of the press to campaign on their behalf.

The crisis substantially increased the number of volunteers. Luton reported an increase from 792 to 1,407,⁸¹³ while the report to the county council in November noted an increase from 2,591 to 5,292, which was close to the total number required.⁸¹⁴ However, despite welcoming the increase the county council was also critical, stating that 'their service would have been all the more valuable had

⁸¹⁰ BA: WW2/AR/C3/6, Thomas Keens to the Editor, 5 October 1938.

⁸¹¹ BA: WW2/AR/C3/6, Home Counties Newspapers to Sir Thomas Keens, 6 October 1938.

⁸¹² BA: WW2/AR/C3/6, Home Counties Newspapers to Sir Thomas Keens, 6 October 1938.

⁸¹³ BA: Bor.LM29, Report of the Air Raids Precautions Committee, 14 October 1938.

⁸¹⁴ BA: WW2/AR/C2/9, Report of the County Air Raid Precautions Officer, 28 September 1938; BA: WW2/AR/C2/11, Air Raid Precautions: Report of County Air Raid Precautions Officer, 19 November 1938.

they been fully trained'.⁸¹⁵ Percy Bone expressed similar sentiments in a letter to the *Luton News* on 6 October. He paid tribute to those trained prior to the crisis and hoped that recent events would encourage people to volunteer.⁸¹⁶ These criticisms may seem harsh but they followed previous public apathy in the county.

Critical comments about volunteers were not the only ones made. Following the crisis, Luton Trades Council wrote to request a place on the ARP committee to ensure that the council reached the very people that they were trying to protect.⁸¹⁷ Luton's committee decided to defer discussion of the request until November's meeting.⁸¹⁸ The records give no indication of the outcome. More worrying from the point of view of ordinary people was the lack of lectures and gas masks in some Bedfordshire villages.⁸¹⁹

At the end of 1938, it was clear that preparations were progressing in Bedfordshire. In January 1939, the government launched a voluntary national service campaign. The initial impact of the campaign on ARP volunteers is difficult to assess, as the only figures published were in the *Luton News*.

Table 9: Luton ARP recruitment, February 1939⁸²⁰

Date reported	Number required	Number enrolled	Men	Women	% of required number
2 February 1939	1,841	1,457	1,118	339	79.1
23 February 1939	1,841	1,549			84.1

Figures on 2 February revealed the number of women enrolled. Out of 339, only one was a warden, though Luton was required to have 210. The Chief Constable, George Scott was to blame for this, as

⁸¹⁵ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 25 November 1938.

⁸¹⁶ *Luton News*, 6 October 1938.

⁸¹⁷ BA: Bor.L/CA/1/2b, William J. Lane to Luton Town Council, 2 October 1938; BA: Bor.L/CA/1/2b, William J. Lane to W. H. Robinson, 11 October 1938.

⁸¹⁸ BA: Bor.LM29, Report of the Air Raids Precautions Committee, 14 October 1938.

⁸¹⁹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 4 November 1938.

⁸²⁰ *Luton News*, 2 and 23 February 1939.

from the outset he had taken the view that women were more suited to casualty services. This report featured an interview with the warden, Irene Joan Bentley, an 18-year-old resident of Holly Bush Lane in Luton, who urged more young people to become involved.⁸²¹ The slow increase in volunteers also occurred in the county's scheme with the actual requirements for the county published in the *Bedford and District Daily Circular* on 28 January 1939. There was also a requirement for a 25% or 50% reserve depending upon the category. The actual state of recruitment, including the reserve, was published a month later in the *Bedfordshire Times*.

Table 10: Required ARP recruitment for Bedfordshire, January 1939⁸²²

Service	Total required	Men	Women
Wardens	2,690	2,150	538
First Aid parties and posts	955	459	496
Drivers	487		487
Rescue	220	220	
Decontamination	140	140	
Report centres	211	82	129
Messengers	171	171	

⁸²¹ *Luton News*, 9 March 1939.

⁸²² *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 28 January 1939.

Table 11: Bedfordshire ARP recruitment, February 1939⁸²³

Service	Total required including reserve	Men Enrolled	Women enrolled	% recruited
Wardens	3,363	2,553	107	79
Casualty	1,915	1,241	1,759	156
Rescue	540	687		127
Other	487	526	366	183

With ever-increasing numbers, trained volunteers began practice drills, which newspapers reported on. One of these occurred in Bedford's Cauldwell ward during January. The *Bedfordshire Times* reported that the drill was not particularly successful. Despite this, the head warden, Mr S Wright, said 'I am convinced that the only way to understand practical work is for the wardens themselves to get some practical experience'.⁸²⁴ The drill was repeated a couple of weeks later, by which time, the wardens were viewed as becoming more proficient.⁸²⁵ Practice drills allowed for the identification of weaknesses. One Luton ARP warden, Mr Gilles, a member of the Luton Communist Party, revealed that Luton's scheme had several in a speech at the Luton Corn Exchange. His removal as a warden resulted in a parliamentary question about the resignation from William Gallacher, the Communist MP for West Fife,⁸²⁶ though Hansard provides no indication that a reply was given. The Chief Constable deemed Gilles's conduct to be unacceptable, as mechanisms existed that allowed wardens to raise concerns privately. He did not dispute that they had the right to do so. Luton's ARP committee discussed the matter in January 1939 after Luton Trades Council requested further information, following a resolution by 25 unions and Mr Gilles's resignation.⁸²⁷ The Chief Constable and Alderman Dillingham agreed that such criticisms represented a lack of confidence in the scheme, thereby making Gilles's position as a warden untenable. Councillor Roberts did not dissent

⁸²³ *Bedfordshire Times*, 24 February 1939.

⁸²⁴ *Bedfordshire Times*, 20 January 1939.

⁸²⁵ *Bedfordshire Times*, 3 February 1939.

⁸²⁶ *Luton News*, 3 November 1938.

⁸²⁷ BA: Bor.L/CA/1/15, J. C. Price to W. H. Robinson, 31 December 1938.

but expressed concern about the impact on freedom of expression.⁸²⁸ Gilles would not be the last warden to criticise schemes in Bedfordshire publicly.

The Munich period tested outline schemes in Bedfordshire, which proved to be reasonably successful given the shortage of trained volunteers. These problems began to resolve themselves following the crisis as the public accepted the necessity of ARP. The content of local criticisms did not cause controversy but as in the Gilles case, the method of criticism did.

Fulham and Hammersmith demonstrated similarities to and differences from Bedfordshire. In the weeks leading up to the Munich crisis, Fulham council prepared an ARP exhibition. Local newspapers provided details about the exhibition in early September, with the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* publishing full details the week before the exhibition opened. This included the Mayor, Michael Cox's, foreword to the exhibition programme, which stated:⁸²⁹

'If an emergency arises it will come like a freak storm in summer and if the storm finds Fulham in a state of unpreparedness, it will be due to the apathy of the community. If adequate steps are taken in time of peace there need be no cause for panic should an emergency arise. I believe it is the duty of all citizens to help with preparations'.

This message echoed sentiments in Bedfordshire and placed a strong emphasis on the need to volunteer, which public indifference hindered. However, the Mayor's statement ignored the delays created by the council, such as not holding public meetings until July 1938. The exhibition opened on Monday 26 September as the crisis intensified, prompting attendance by anxious people.⁸³⁰

The onset of crisis week triggered an avalanche of work including trench digging and gas mask assembly, which required volunteers. In Hammersmith, workers from local firms with appropriate skills undertook this task. The efforts of both boroughs resulted in 90% distribution of masks by 28 September, though people queued in the rain to obtain them.⁸³¹ The local Scouts were among the volunteers as they delivered ARP leaflets in Fulham. This aided the council and enabled Mr Colbert

⁸²⁸ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 1 February 1939; *Luton News*, 2 February 1939; BA: Air Raid Wardens, 7 February 1939.

⁸²⁹ LSE: Summerskill 4/2, A.R.P. Exhibition at Town Hall.

⁸³⁰ *Fulham Chronicle*, 30 September 1938.

⁸³¹ *Fulham Chronicle*, 30 September 1938; HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 26 October 1938; HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 26 October 1938.

to report the establishment of excellent relations at the next district meeting. Fulham Scouts were encouraged to prepare for a possible conflict by undertaking signals work.⁸³² This form of communication might prove useful during an air raid and was just one part of the national effort by the Scouting movement.

The crisis stimulated recruitment and public interest, thereby overcoming some of the public indifference.

Table 12: Fulham ARP recruitment, September to November 1938⁸³³

Reporting month	Number required	Number enrolled	Men	Women	% of required number	Lecture attendance
September 1938	3,564	1,250	982	268	35.1	1451
October 1938	3,564	2,185	1,542	643	63.1	1217
November 1938	3,564	2,286	1,560	726	64.1	3924

The recruitment figures masked some large underlying gaps, namely the lack of auxiliary fire fighters, with only 50 out of 500 recruited. This problem was London-wide, prompting Herbert Morrison to issue an appeal for 30,000 volunteers, of whom 1,180 were required in Fulham. This figure was higher than previously stated, as revisions to local schemes in the aftermath of the crisis raised the overall volunteer requirement to 4,489 by January 1939.⁸³⁴ The numbers attending lectures continued to increase. A further aid to recruitment was the starting of practical ARP demonstrations around the borough. The ARP Officer, Mr Whitely, described these as having 'great recruiting value' as they attracted a crowd that was interested in finding out more.⁸³⁵ Added to this

⁸³² HFA: DD/1050/98, Minutes of the 100th Meeting of the Scout Committee, 19 September 1938; HFA: DD/1050/57, 19th Annual General Meeting, 25 October 1938; HFA: DD/1050/149, Monthly Bulletin, December 1938.

⁸³³ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 28 September, 26 October and 30 November 1938.

⁸³⁴ *Fulham Chronicle*, 7 October 1938; HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 18 January 1939.

⁸³⁵ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 2 December 1938.

were wardens' house-to-house visits to check gas mask details. During these visits, they provided information and enrolment forms, efforts that the council hindered by their failure to train volunteers quickly, as illustrated in Table 13. The numbers in the brackets are the actual number of people trained, which are below the overall number of volunteers.

Table 13: Fulham ARP recruitment, December 1938 to March 1939⁸³⁶

Date reported	Number required	Number enrolled	Men	Women	% of required number	Lecture attendance
21 December 1938	3,564	2,350	1,591	759	66	627
18 January 1939	4,449	2,380	1,596 (1,009)	784 (634)	53	1,007
15 February 1939	4,449	2,484	1,665 (873)	819 (480)	56	1,008
15 March 1939	4,449	2,623	1,768 (940)	855 (514)	59	1,289

By comparison, Hammersmith had done very little in the lead up to the crisis, an impression reinforced by the lack of recruitment figures. The council minutes following the crisis noted that revisions to the scheme were taking place and that a recruitment campaign would begin upon completion. The council hoped that local preachers could be encouraged to refer to the campaign in their sermons.⁸³⁷ The revised scheme increased the number of volunteers required, leading the council to send out 40,000 letters to encourage recruitment. The response rate was disappointing, when compared with Bedford's campaign in 1938, with only 600 replies by the end of January 1939. However, the council deemed it to be successful⁸³⁸ but then proceeded to hinder itself by refusing to accept offers of assistance from voluntary organisations like the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS).

⁸³⁶ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 21 December 1938, 18 January, 15 February and 15 March 1939.

⁸³⁷ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 26 October and 23 November 1938.

⁸³⁸ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 27 January 1939.

The council refused their offer as it viewed the WVS as a political organisation, a move considered surprising by the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*. The paper urged the council to reconsider due to the state of preparations.⁸³⁹

The example cited above provides an indication of the political games that occurred in relation to ARP. Local MPs and councillors accused other political parties of failures instead of working with them to find resolutions. Astor and Busby both criticised Fulham council for failing to take precautions in time, a valid criticism given the words of the Mayor in the ARP exhibition programme, thereby indicating that not all criticisms involved political manoeuvring.⁸⁴⁰ They were not alone in criticising Fulham's preparations. W. B. Padger, a resident of Fulham, wrote to the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* to blame Councillor De Palma, the chair of the ARP committee, for this state of affairs.⁸⁴¹ De Palma did not respond to Padger, even though others in his position in the other two geographical areas had responded to letters to the local paper, but did to Astor by suggesting that he should have come to see him privately. In Hammersmith, the political games occurred when Councillor Glenister accused the ARP committee of playing politics over the appointment of a head warden for the Starch Green ward. Glenister believed that despite there being candidates with excellent credentials, no appointment occurred because none had the same political leanings as the committee. The committee chair denied this accusation.⁸⁴²

Both boroughs' lack of progress prior to the crisis proved to be expensive. During the crisis, Fulham spent £18,890 compared to Hammersmith's £48,000.⁸⁴³ According to the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, Hammersmith had previously spent only £150, thereby earning it the title of the most unprepared borough in London.⁸⁴⁴ Faced with these bills, both boroughs returned to the argument that the costs should be borne by central government, a view supported by the Fulham Ratepayers Association and Fulham Chamber of Commerce.⁸⁴⁵

The situation that both boroughs found themselves in was repeated in other Left-wing boroughs in London, such as West Ham and Stepney, both of which fell short of their targets.⁸⁴⁶ The main

⁸³⁹ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 30 December 1938.

⁸⁴⁰ *Fulham Chronicle*, 28 October 1938.

⁸⁴¹ *Fulham Chronicle*, 28 October 1938.

⁸⁴² *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 3 March 1939.

⁸⁴³ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 28 October 1938.

⁸⁴⁴ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 28 October 1938.

⁸⁴⁵ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 30 November 1938; *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 2 December 1938.

⁸⁴⁶ Woolven, 'Civil Defence in London, 1935-1945'.

problem was the lack of volunteers due to public indifference, though in Fulham a lack of active public engagement added to this. The Munich crisis partly solved the recruitment problem as volunteering continued at a steady rate during the winter months.

Bolton's ARP scheme was ahead of the other two geographical areas but still did not impress Tom Binks, as he felt that ARP was undemocratic, as 'the wardens were not elected and they are to be the leaders that people never wished for'.⁸⁴⁷ A. Booth joined Binks in opposing ARP on these grounds but Booth, unlike Binks, was not prepared to trust Hitler's word and accepted the necessity for precautions.⁸⁴⁸ The development of the crisis reinforced this. One of the first precautionary steps was the issuing of gas masks. The *Bolton Evening News* reported on 19 September about the plans to distribute the masks within 12 hours of receipt.⁸⁴⁹ Delivery of the masks occurred on 22-3 September, revealing a flaw in Bolton's plan, namely that there was a requirement for volunteers to assemble them. Appeals made via the *Bolton Evening News*, trade associations, and influential people in the town resulted in a public response that allowed for assembly and distribution to progress rapidly.⁸⁵⁰ Distribution occurred at locations used for voting, a process that was enhanced by the decision to close the town's schools. This allowed distribution to be staggered over three days.⁸⁵¹

The appeal for volunteers added 1,570 to the overall total. This included 940 wardens, 430 special constables and 200 auxiliary fire fighters, though the figures published by the *Bolton Standard* were lower. It is likely that people dropped out in the intervening months for unexplained reasons.⁸⁵² Those responding to the appeal included a woman who could not drive but indicated, when asked, that she was willing to learn, thereby providing further evidence that the nation was prepared to answer the call when it came.⁸⁵³ The *Bolton Evening News* published post-crisis volunteer figures on 18 October. The biggest difference between these and those cited earlier in the chapter concerned auxiliary fire service numbers.

⁸⁴⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 2 and 5 September 1938.

⁸⁴⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 6 September 1938.

⁸⁴⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 19 September 1938.

⁸⁵⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 27 September 1938.

⁸⁵¹ *Bolton Standard*, 30 September 1938.

⁸⁵² *Bolton Standard*, 16 September 1938.

⁸⁵³ *Bolton Evening News*, 28 September 1938.

Table 14: Bolton ARP recruitment, October 1938 ⁸⁵⁴

Service	Number required	Number recruited	% of total recruited
Wardens	1,860	1,400 (500)	75.3
Casualty	2,000	1,200 (900)	60
Fire	Unknown	300 (0)	Unknown
Special Constables	600	600 (200)	100
Rescue	100	100 (100)	100
Repair	200	200 (100)	100
Decontamination	150	150 (70)	100

Following the crisis 3,950 out of 5,210 volunteers had come forward.⁸⁵⁵ Local officials and the *Bolton Evening News* praised those who assisted during the crisis. A. Booth recognised the value of the local organisation and praised officials for how well people were treated. He continued by appealing for interested people to attend a meeting at Victoria Hall on 7 October with the aim of building on the momentum that the crisis had established.⁸⁵⁶ Bolton council were particularly keen for women to volunteer for services provided by the WVS, with an appeal made at the Women's Conservative Association meeting on 11 October. The appeal attracted enough interest to prompt a letter to Inspector Gledhill to suggest an education meeting. Meetings took place on 25 November and 5 December, attracting interest from 44 organisations. The discussions included the idea of holding a mass meeting to encourage women to volunteer and add to the 1,006 who had already done so.⁸⁵⁷ This process continued in 1939, when the Home Office informed the council that the required wartime strength was 6,300, of whom 1,744 were women.⁸⁵⁸ Thankfully, the meetings with women's organisations were bearing fruit and in February the number of female volunteers stood at 1,309 out of 2,182, a figure that included the war reserve. A further appeal for female volunteers on 10 February targeted women who could drive but had not yet volunteered for ambulance work.⁸⁵⁹ A

⁸⁵⁴ BLHC: ABZ/85/1, Evacuation Problem, 18 October 1938.

⁸⁵⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 and 6 October 1938.

⁸⁵⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 October 1938.

⁸⁵⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 26 November 1938; BLHC: ABZ/46/5, Women's Voluntary Services for A.R.P., 5 December 1938.

⁸⁵⁸ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 13 January 1939.

⁸⁵⁹ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 10 February 1939.

Bolton Standard article reinforced this by appealing for more volunteers for all areas of civil defence. The same article noted that the national newspapers had praised the state of ARP in Bolton, and therefore people could no longer question the appointment of the Chief Constable as ARP Officer.⁸⁶⁰ Nonetheless, Bolton remained short of its target.

The satisfactory state of ARP did not prevent dissension in the letters column of the *Bolton Evening News* following the crisis. Some writers were adamant that they were not prepared to offer their services to the local scheme. 'Ex-corporal' and 'Ex-lieutenant' were two former military personnel who were not prepared to undergo training from people with no experience of a war situation.⁸⁶¹ This attitude drew criticism from 'Another ex-lieutenant'. 'Head Warden No.61 Sector' and 'Young A.R.P.' who viewed this as a poor excuse and informed the public that several ex-service personnel involved. 'Young A.R.P.' viewed their attitude as particularly unhelpful as it forced the young to volunteer.⁸⁶² People's reluctance to volunteer harmed the scheme, as 'Civicus' highlighted in the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* on 23 September. He attacked the council over the general state of preparations in the town, specifically volunteer numbers, public apathy, gas mask distribution, and the lack of information about shelter provision.⁸⁶³ These criticisms went unchallenged by local officials and 'Civicus' made no apology as he felt that it was his duty to draw the public's attention to these matters, an attitude supported by the *Bolton Evening News*.⁸⁶⁴ Unlike 'Civicus', local labour activist J. B. O'Hara took a broader view, arguing that ARP preparations made people fearful of war thus making them susceptible to accepting the Munich surrender. O'Hara's comment about the psychological aspect of ARP echoed an earlier one made by Tom Binks,⁸⁶⁵ who returned to this theme on 2 October. He argued that ARP should be abolished to help build on the peace established at Munich.⁸⁶⁶

The subject of ARP returned to the streets of Bolton when M-O undertook a short piece of work in January 1939. The number of people questioned as part of this work was small but the comments made reflected a range of attitudes to the subject of ARP:⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶⁰ *Bolton Standard*, 10 February 1939.

⁸⁶¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 20 October 1938.

⁸⁶² *Bolton Evening News*, 21 and 22 October 1938.

⁸⁶³ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 23 September 1938.

⁸⁶⁴ BLHC: ABZ/85/1, Criticism Resented, 5 October 1938; *Bolton Evening News*, 6 October 1938.

⁸⁶⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 2 September and 4 October 1938.

⁸⁶⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 3 October 1938.

⁸⁶⁷ M-O A: TC23/1/A, Interviews, Casual, on ARP, 9 January 1939; M-O A: TC23/1/A, Interviews, Casual, on ARP, 9 January 1939; M-O A: TC23/1/A, ARP Collected by Harry Girling, 10 January 1939; M-O A: TC23/1/A, ARP, 11 January 1939.

- Working-class woman, 22 – I think it's just a waste of money. They could have found better thing to do with it.
- Working-class man, 45 – it's natural if it came to a do for other people to run to help those in trouble. I think that's a natural thing, and it will happen without any organisation. Look at Kirk Street during the war, they didn't have to ask there, everyone around turned out as a matter of course. Of course, it's useful to have one or two trained people around. IN any case its only to make people think something is being done and to prevent a panic. The only real solution is tunnels. Dug deep with forty feet of earth on top of them, they would probably be safe.
- Engineer aged 40 with two children – think that ARP is all right. They do now not very much besides training people. And what he has heard this training is all right. People learn what to do if gas comes and how to deal with incendiary bombs.

One of the aspects highlighted by the comments was training. Two training exercises took place in late January and early February. The January exercise was a trial blackout and first aid exercise. The *Bolton Journal and Guardian* urged people to observe the blackout and provided tips on how to do so. The trial was effective, though it was evident that drivers needed to improve their geographical knowledge of the town.⁸⁶⁸ The second exercise showed a marked improvement as drivers knew where they were going. A wardens' exercise also took place in the form of a treasure hunt to find all the fire hydrants in their areas. This revealed that many only had small signs that were difficult to find.⁸⁶⁹

The exercises provided some reassurance to the public. However, the provision of information lagged, as the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* reported that questions about gas masks were a regular occurrence when wardens called at houses.⁸⁷⁰ Gas masks were only one of the protective elements that people were trying to obtain information regarding. Shelters were another.⁸⁷¹ Lack of information was not the only flaw. Bolton, like other areas, was struggling to recruit for the auxiliary fire service. Those who had volunteered faced the task of having to build their own fire engine as detailed in a letter received by Bolton Trades Council from the Vehicle and Metal Workers Union.

⁸⁶⁸ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 3 February 1939.

⁸⁶⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 6 March 1939.

⁸⁷⁰ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 10 February 1939.

⁸⁷¹ *Bolton Standard*, 10 March 1939.

The union offer of assistance with this task provides another example of trade co-operation with ARP.⁸⁷²

The revelation of flaws was a natural part of the testing process. One development that caused complaint was a job advertisement for a typist for ARP work. This paid position was criticised in four letters to the *Bolton Evening News*, as others gave their time voluntarily. W. Taylor, an ex-corporal and resident of Valletts Lane in Bolton, argued that the unemployed and many ex-servicemen would be happy to do paid ARP work instead of volunteering.⁸⁷³ This incident echoed events a year earlier following the announcement that the Chief Constable would receive extra payment for being the ARP officer. The editor criticised this attitude, arguing that regular staff were required to ensure a highly organised and efficient department.

Wing Commander Hodson's observation that Munich was a pivotal turning point is correct in that it produced public acceptance of the need for ARP. This manifested itself in the form of increasing volunteers and reinforced the idea that the nation would be prepared to serve when the time came. The crisis revealed that even the best-prepared local schemes, in this case, Bolton and Bedfordshire, still had some way to go, largely due to the initial shortage of trained volunteers. This had been the result of public indifference, which the crisis helped to overcome. The sudden surge of volunteers, whilst welcomed by the authorities, was also criticised as the lack of volunteers prevented a more effective implementation of the plans. Such criticisms were prevalent in Bedfordshire, with little reference to them made in the other geographical areas. All three areas continued to struggle to recruit for the auxiliary fire service. Aside from the question of volunteers, however, the local authorities had an outline plan available for putting into action. This was an advance from the time of the Anschluss. Bolton's plan was the most effective as it included the distribution of masks from fixed locations. Fulham and Hammersmith remained woefully behind, a fact seen in the costs that each authority had to bear. Hammersmith further hampered preparations due to its attitudes towards organisations who wished to assist, as they viewed matters from a political rather than civic perspective. Public views on ARP schemes were limited in terms of specific criticisms. Writers acknowledged that the authorities had achieved satisfactory results within the constraints they faced and encouraged people to volunteer to prevent a repeat of the unpreparedness that the crisis revealed. These appeals would continue following the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939.

⁸⁷² LSE: Bolton Trades Council, Executive Committee Meeting, 9 March 1939.

⁸⁷³ *Bolton Evening News*, 8, 9 and 10 March 1939.

March – September 1939

The Munich crisis provided the catalyst for the development of ARP and preparations for war, which increased when Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. In March 1939, the Civil Defence Act became law, which introduced a series of ARP obligations for employers with more than 50 employees. The BBC heightened public awareness of ARP by making regular reports on the progress of the legislation and reminding listeners that 120,000 volunteers were still required for the auxiliary fire service.⁸⁷⁴ Even with the passing of the Civil Defence Act, questions continued in Parliament covering; opinion poll outcomes,⁸⁷⁵ shelters,⁸⁷⁶ and the education of the public. The opinion poll in question revealed that over half of adults did not know what to do in case of an air raid. The April opinion poll had asked questions on the subject, revealing that only 19% had undergone training, 20% knew what to do if an air raid occurred whilst at work and 28% at home. The May and June polls also asked question related to ARP, revealing that 53% disapproved of the decision not to provide deep shelters and that over 70% could not reach a shelter on foot within 7 minutes.⁸⁷⁷

Following the German march into Prague, M-O investigated the subjects of ARP and national service. The general response to both directives indicated that people were volunteering to make a useful contribution to the national efforts. Comments made included:⁸⁷⁸

- Girl, 24 from Liverpool – well I can drive a car, and I'd be doing something.
- Male air raid warden – wanted to do something for his country
- Man 26 – joined auxiliary fire brigade, for the sole reason that he hopes he will not be called to the colours should the emergency come, but can be allowed to stay at home, on the strength of his ARP training.

These actions were all part of the continuing recruitment drive. In Bedfordshire, the authorities attempted to direct people towards the most appropriate service for their skills. Luton's scheme had initially aimed to do this with women encouraged to become nurses rather than wardens. This gender stereotyping angered J. E. Cooper, a resident of Beech Road in Luton, who argued that

⁸⁷⁴ LSE: BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 4 April 1939.

⁸⁷⁵ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 347, Columns 1906-9 (22nd May 1939).

⁸⁷⁶ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 350, Columns 2613-6 (3rd August 1939); Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 350, Column 2842 (4th August 1939).

⁸⁷⁷ 'British Institute of Public Opinion'.

⁸⁷⁸ M-O A: DR 1040, Crisis (2), 1939; M-O A: DR1499 Crisis (2), April 1939.

people should be able to choose whilst gaps remained.⁸⁷⁹ The Chief Constable added to this at a meeting two weeks later, stating 'I see that we have at least one lady present so I shall have to be careful what I say'. These words left J. K. Rice, a resident of High Town Road in Luton, feeling like an interloper and she promptly resigned. However, she soon returned following a series of abusive letters that she had received from a Great War veteran.⁸⁸⁰ Bedford also continued to recruit. On 2 June, the *Bedfordshire Times* published a mixed report showing shortages for - wardens, fire, rescue, and repair - whereas first aid and decontamination had a surplus. The overall count was at the required number but maldistributed.⁸⁸¹ Further evidence of the shortages came on 9 June when the paper reported that the warden service still required 119 men and 85 women, whilst the fire service required 240 volunteers.⁸⁸² These differences were part of a wider pattern occurring across the country.

In the middle of April, Luton received a visit from Wing Commander Hodsoll, the ARP Inspector General. During his visit, he attended various meetings, including one at Vauxhall Motors. This included a demonstration from various parts of the firm's ARP organisation and co-operation with Luton auxiliary fire service. It provided further evidence of the co-operation between employers and local authorities. Hodsoll praised the training of the volunteers and the shelter provision made by Vauxhall. His note of the visit included a reference to other large employers such as Skefco being in a similar position.⁸⁸³

To encourage recruitment for all the defence services, national service weeks took place throughout the county. These had a dual purpose: to provide the public with a chance to see what was going on and to allow volunteers to put their training into practice. The Leighton Buzzard parade drew praise from local newspaper columnist 'Candidus', who described the importance of the parades as 'showing what is being done in the interests of civilians in war time'.⁸⁸⁴ The demonstrations were part of a series of practices that took place throughout the county in the summer of 1939. One of these was a blackout in August, which revealed a major flaw in Luton's plans, namely the need for communication between ARP officials and the aerodrome. 'A.R.P.' suggested that flights over the town should occur to determine how successful the blackout was.⁸⁸⁵ The *Bedfordshire Times and Standard* provided in-depth coverage of the August blackout in Bedford, with reporters present in

⁸⁷⁹ *Luton News*, 16 March 1939.

⁸⁸⁰ *Luton News*, 30 March and 6 April 1939.

⁸⁸¹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 2 June 1939.

⁸⁸² *Bedfordshire Times*, 9 June 1939.

⁸⁸³ CAC: HDSL/4/22, Vauxhall Motors Limited, 17 April 1939; CAC: HDSL/4/22, Luton Town, 17 April 1939.

⁸⁸⁴ *Luton News*, 1 June 1939.

⁸⁸⁵ *Luton News*, 17 August 1939.

the control room and out on the street. Householders responded positively with most not turning on lights during the 'raid'. However, there was some confusion as despite the cancellation of the national blackout, Bedford went ahead on its own, which resulted in criticism from the Queen's Park ward. Overall, the Bedford ARP chair was happy with the result.⁸⁸⁶ Further reports on 18 August revealed that many had not made the necessary preparations to help achieve a total blackout. The report regarded those who were careless as shouldering a heavy burden towards their fellow citizens, and encouraged everyone to take precautions.⁸⁸⁷

Some deficiencies were expected. Strong criticism of Bedford's scheme occurred in April when A. W. Sanders, the head warden of the De Parys ward, wrote to the *Bedfordshire Times* criticising the council for the slow rate of progress and failing to address concerns raised through official channels.⁸⁸⁸ Bedford council discussed these and took the same view as Luton, namely that the action was inappropriate and Sanders should resign. Sanders refused, as he had the support of wardens in his ward but under official pressure, acknowledged that his conduct had been inappropriate.⁸⁸⁹ H. A. Young supported Sanders and called for an official statement.⁸⁹⁰ The *Bedford and District Daily Circular* viewed the debate as healthy and urged the council not to ignore the criticisms as it had on other occasions.⁸⁹¹ Once again, this highlighted the issue as to whether wardens had the right to criticise in a public forum. It was understandable that local authorities disapproved as they did not want to cause panic, but as an editorial in the *Bedfordshire Standard* argued, the wardens were holding a public office and were therefore acting in the public interest.⁸⁹²

The trial scenarios became a reality when the international situation deteriorated in late August, forcing Luton's Chief Constable to interrupt his holiday to ensure that local matters were in hand. However, even by 1 September and despite significant efforts, some gaps remained in Luton's scheme. The situation report on 1 September noted that there was still a shortage of some respirator categories and of whole-time personnel. This situation was a significant improvement on a year earlier and allowed Mr Graham, the clerk to the county council, to deem that the county overall was ready. He said, 'the public can rest assured that the county is as ready for an emergency as any county in Britain'.⁸⁹³ Despite this and information that had appeared in local newspapers,

⁸⁸⁶ *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 11 August 1939.

⁸⁸⁷ *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 18 August 1939.

⁸⁸⁸ *Bedfordshire Times*, 14 April 1939.

⁸⁸⁹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 28 April 1939.

⁸⁹⁰ *Bedfordshire Times*, 28 April 1939.

⁸⁹¹ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 2 May 1939.

⁸⁹² *Bedfordshire Standard*, 28 April 1939.

⁸⁹³ *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 1 September 1939.

people were still asking the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* for information on 31 August, which they printed on the following day.⁸⁹⁴

Bedfordshire made steady progress with its preparations during the final six months of peace. Discussion of conscription dominated newspaper coverage for parts of this period, which reduced the amount of column space devoted to ARP preparations. The period continued to see the recruitment of volunteers and practice drills, coupled with some criticisms of the scheme in Bedford. However, by September, the county was ready for war.

Fulham's ARP preparations were the subject of an in-depth M-O study. M-O chose Fulham as by March 1939, it had one of the highest volunteer counts in London. Table 15 provides a percentage breakdown of volunteers by age and gender.

Table 15: ARP recruitment in Fulham by age and gender⁸⁹⁵

Age	Male	Female	Total % of volunteers
15-35	42	50	46
36-50	32	35	33
51 and over	26	15	21

Most volunteers came from the lower middle and working classes, though female volunteers were predominantly upper class. Upper class volunteers read either *The Times* or *Daily Telegraph*, whilst the lower classes favoured the *Daily Express*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Mirror*, and *Daily Worker*.⁸⁹⁶ Newspapers were only one source of information people used with others including word of mouth, radio and leaflets. The main reason for increased recruitment during the winter months was wardens providing information and enrolment forms as they delivered gas mask containers.⁸⁹⁷ The survey also found that most had volunteered out of the desire to do something.⁸⁹⁸

⁸⁹⁴ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 31 August 1939; *Luton News*, 31 August 1939

⁸⁹⁵ M-O A: FR A24, Report on A.R.P. In Fulham, 1939.

⁸⁹⁶ M-O A: FR A24, Report on A.R.P. In Fulham, 1939.

⁸⁹⁷ M-O A: FR4A, Propaganda and A.R.P. Recruiting, 1939.

⁸⁹⁸ M-O A: FR A24, Report on A.R.P. In Fulham, 1939.

- Lower working class man, 26 – Well, my guvnor really was the one. He said that he was going to join and he chatted to the other fellows and myself and we decided we would also join. But I think if the time came I'd sooner be in khaki.
- Upper class man, 35 – I don't know. That's rather difficult isn't it? Sort of civic spirit and that sort of thing. Public duty.
- Lower working class woman, 41 – to do my bit for the country as a British subject
- Upper class woman, 64 – because I'm a citizen and a Britisher. I want to help the country.

The above comments are in keeping with the findings of the M-O directive on national service. This also found that recruitment peaked during international crises.

The increases reported by M-O continued in the months following the German invasion of Czechoslovakia. This was good news for Fulham, though overall London remained 132,000 volunteers short. Fulham's major weakness was its inability to provide rapid training, as Table 16 indicates, only half of the volunteers (numbers in brackets) had received training by September 1939.⁸⁹⁹

The trained volunteers took part in a public demonstration in May 1939 attended by over 7,000 people. Summerskill was surprised at the efficiency displayed during the demonstration, prompting her to say that Fulham had one of the finest ARP units in the country and it proved that volunteers were worth more than conscripts were. Astor and De Palma, who shared Summerskill's view about the volunteers, joined her at the display.⁹⁰⁰

⁸⁹⁹ LSE: BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 19 July 1939.

⁹⁰⁰ LSE: Summerskill 4/3, 7,000 Watch A.R.P. Demonstration; *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 12 May 1939.

Table 16: Fulham ARP recruitment (April 1939 – September 1939) ⁹⁰¹

Date reported	Number required	Number enrolled	Men	Women	% of required number	Lecture attendance
5 April 1939	4,449	2,689	1,804 (964)	885 (536)	60.4	1,089
10 May 1939	4,449	2,975	1,981 (1,033)	994 (562)	66.9	2,035
21 June 1939	4,449	3,419	2,207 (1,211)	1,212 (770)	76.8	3,710
19 July 1939	4,449	3,787	2,390 (1,231)	1397 (940)	85.1	1,940

Part of M-O's investigation examined what people thought about local preparations. Many volunteers felt that the council had failed to provide sufficient training. An example of this related to incendiary bombs. A 62-year-old group warden told an investigator that 'I've got 18 wardens and not one of them has handled an incendiary bomb. It's all wrong because they are the ones who will have to put them out', thereby confirming the statistical evidence about training rates.⁹⁰² Examples like this reinforce Hinton's conclusion that 'the enthusiasm from volunteers was being stifled by incompetence and inefficiency'.⁹⁰³

By this time, Hammersmith's scheme was also showing progress. The number of volunteers was increasing at a rapid rate and by July they had achieved their target, a remarkable achievement given their previously slow progress.

⁹⁰¹ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 5 April, 10 May, 21 June and 19 July 1939.

⁹⁰² M-O A: FR A24, Report on A.R.P. In Fulham, 1939.

⁹⁰³ Hinton, *The Mass Observers*: 111.

Table 17: Hammersmith ARP recruitment, April-June 1939⁹⁰⁴

	April 1939	May 1939	June 1939
Wardens	704	751	905
First Aid	744	810	1,444
Light Rescue	157	172	208
Decontamination	72	75	90
Report	59	70	250
Messengers	153	169	211
Drivers	149	164	122
Miscellaneous	143	160	334
Total	2,181	2,371	3,554
Target	3,095	3,095	3,095

Hilda Mabillard, a Hammersmith resident during this period, provided additional details about ARP recruitment and training in Hammersmith. Training took place during the evenings and weekends, with the aim of raising awareness and preventing panic. Evening meetings took place in locations like Addison Gardens schools, where the public could come to receive guidance on what to do in the event of war.⁹⁰⁵

The progress of the two London boroughs in the year following Munich, allowed them to catch-up to some degree with the other geographical areas, though Hodsoll commented that Bolton's progress was already 'ahead of others'.⁹⁰⁶ The March crisis occurred as Bolton council were making plans for a second blackout. In preparation, a *Bolton Evening News* report asked people to co-operate and said that letters had gone out to over 100 employers asking them to forgo some production in order to assist.⁹⁰⁷ The result was an effective blackout without the need for compulsion, prompting one Home Office observer to comment that he came to Bolton and was unable to find it.⁹⁰⁸ However, not everybody obeyed, as the paper reported that several houses along the Chorley road were brightly lit, while the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* reported that traffic lights could be seen on the

⁹⁰⁴ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 26 April, 24 May, and 26 June 1939.

⁹⁰⁵ Imperial War Museum (IWM): 16865, Memories of the Wartime in Hammersmith, 2008.

⁹⁰⁶ BLHC: AB/34/1(1), Meeting of the Air Raid Precautions Committee, 25 May 1939.

⁹⁰⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 and 18 March 1939.

⁹⁰⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 21 March 1939.

hills a couple of miles away. Nonetheless, the paper praised the gas works for achieving a degree of lighting restriction that the authorities did not think was possible.⁹⁰⁹

Figure 14: Bolton's blackout, *Bolton Evening News* 21 March 1939



The blackout trials helped recruitment and to raise awareness. Bolton's recruitment had been largely successful but Councillor Talbot still appealed for help with rescue and demolition work. He suggested that the building trade might be able to assist, and a well-attended meeting took place. Nearly 400 attended and most agreed to enrol.⁹¹⁰ This added to the numbers but even with street conversations about ARP taking place⁹¹¹ the town remained 2,500 short of its target based on figures published by the *Bolton Evening News* on 26 April. The shortfall showed a reduction in May, the final set of detailed figures published prior to the declaration of war.

⁹⁰⁹ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 31 March 1939.

⁹¹⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 22 March 1939; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 24 March 1939.

⁹¹¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 and 26 April 1939.

Table 18: Bolton ARP recruitment, April-May 1939⁹¹²

	Required	April	May
Wardens	2,690	2,227	2,331
First Aid	495	495	495
Ambulance drivers	859	258	282
Rescue	576	576	576
Decontamination	220	164	168
Auxiliary fire service	1,550	859	656
Messengers	292	121	154
Special Constables	800	800	800
First aid parties	855	450	537
Total	8,337	5,680	5,999

The rising numbers hid a fall in fire service volunteers, a service that all three geographical areas had struggled to recruit. This remained the case after war had been declared, though more people were volunteering, confirming the *Bolton Evening News* prediction that many would only respond at the last minute.⁹¹³

The *Bolton Evening News's* coverage during this period concentrated on practices. The subject of drivers came to the fore again in April and May. April's practice found that drivers were happy to drive with white kerbs, though without their lights fully screened. May's test included ambulance drivers, three of whom complained, that others who had not passed their driving test, could practice. If this was going to be the case, they were not surprised that people were not prepared to enrol.⁹¹⁴ 'Minx' supported them and viewed the first practice as badly organised.⁹¹⁵ Complaints about practices continued to appear, as 'No More' complained that no work had occurred overnight due to industry's co-operation with the practice.⁹¹⁶ However, the authorities regarded the May

⁹¹² *Bolton Evening News*, 26 April and 24 May 1939.

⁹¹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 September 1939.

⁹¹⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 12 May 1939.

⁹¹⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 May 1939.

⁹¹⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 18 May 1939.

practice as a success, with 90% of the wardens turning out on a wet night, a point highlighted by Hodsoll in a letter to the town clerk.⁹¹⁷

The practices formed part of the volunteers' training. Other training included an experience in the gas van, showing people how to fit gas masks, and (in the case of the Scouts), signals work for training as messengers. July's practice was also wet, but 1,500 volunteers and all services took part in a practical ARP experience including incendiary bombs and putting out a blaze at ARP headquarters. The *Bolton Evening News* viewed this as the best form of training.⁹¹⁸ Even so, despite previous practices, people continued to disobey the blackout. On 15 July, the *Bolton Evening News* reported that two ARP wardens had gone to the house of a woman who still had her bedroom light on. In answering their knock at the door, she proceeded to turn on all the other lights in the house and then claimed she had not heard about the blackout.⁹¹⁹ However, incidents of this nature were isolated. August's practice brought a further complaint about non-participation. The Auxiliary Fire Service was unhappy about not getting the chance to take part in public demonstrations.⁹²⁰ This came after they had had to build their own engine, which gives the impression that the council neglected this service.

Sporadic complaints did not prevent the continuation of recruitment efforts at a wide range of places, including football matches. However, as the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* admitted, the best source of recruitment came from a source that nobody wanted, an international crisis.⁹²¹ One began to develop following the Nazi-Soviet Pact. ARP work sped up with light screening, kerb whitening, and householders purchasing material for blacking out windows. The latter led to a rush for appropriate material and a realisation amongst women about the seriousness of the international situation.⁹²² The rush continued into September, when the *Bolton Evening News* reported a woman complaining that, 'it's such a rush having to do everything at the last minute'. The editor found the rush surprising given the amount written in the preceding months. The rush did not prevent people being very good at blacking out windows, a process they were perfecting. This was the view of one warden after visiting thirty homes. He found that people were coping with the restrictions in a calm, sensible manner.⁹²³ The reported rush for material is not surprising based on the results of an M-O survey on 27 August, which surveyed 73 working-class households and found that 46 had not yet

⁹¹⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 May 1939.

⁹¹⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 11 and 14 July 1939.

⁹¹⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 July 1939.

⁹²⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 9 August 1939.

⁹²¹ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 18 August 1939.

⁹²² *Bolton Evening News*, 24 and 28 August 1939. *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 25 August 1939.

⁹²³ *Bolton Evening News*, 2 September 1939.

prepared, due to cost.⁹²⁴ Only 38% had reportedly prepared.⁹²⁵ Last minute purchases continued into 4 September as shops opened for this purpose. However, pubs were not amongst those making purchases, as a routine inspection tour by the emergency committee found that they had made little effort.⁹²⁶

The third period witnessed a change in emphasis away from recruitment towards the reporting of practices. Appeals for volunteers continued, particularly for the auxiliary fire service where recruitment remained problematic. All three areas were approaching war strength by the time of the declaration of war. The work undertaken by M-O in Fulham provides a detailed insight into people's motivations for volunteering and their opinions on the state of local preparations. M-O found a population willing to volunteer but a council that seemed unable to train volunteers quickly. Local newspapers reported on the practices taking place, though Bolton's were more regular. The practices identified weaknesses and provided a clear indication to the public about the work undertaken for their protection. The papers urged people to co-operate and cited examples of non-cooperation. This occurred in Bolton and Bedfordshire. It is harder to judge for the two London boroughs, as their practices were part of London-wide ones. A separate practice in Fulham provided surprise for Summerskill in terms of the efficiency of the local unit. The practices demonstrated that for the most part, people were prepared to help the nation prepare for an event that they hoped would never come. However, this did not prevent people in Bolton from leaving it to the last minute to prepare.

Shelters

The ARP Act included shelter provision, a subject ignored until after the Munich crisis when discussion began to occur. This discussion led to the conclusion that blast and splinter rather than deep shelters would be the most suitable, mainly due to time and cost constraints. Parliamentary discussion of shelter policy occurred during questions about ARP. In December 1938, Sir John Anderson made it clear that deep shelters, even in heavily congested areas, formed part of a longer-term strategy.⁹²⁷ In January 1939, a series of letters to *The Times* highlighted the lack of clarity surrounding the government's shelter policy and advocated the adoption of a mixed shelter policy

⁹²⁴ M-O A: TC 23/1/B, ARP, 27 August 1939

⁹²⁵ M-O A: TC 5/1/K, War-Time Directive No.3, November 1939.

⁹²⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 2 September 1939.

⁹²⁷ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 342, Columns 870-2 (5 December 1938)

including deep shelters. Oliver Simmons, the President of the Air Raid Precautions Institute, supported the latter, as did J. Johnston Abrahams, who wanted deep shelters to prevent the medical services from being overwhelmed.⁹²⁸ However, they accepted that blast and splint shelters were required in the short-term. Spurred on by a growing clamour for deep shelters, the government set up the Hailey Commission to examine the evidence, following an application by Finsbury to construct a deep shelter. Haapamaki described this action as a public relations exercise to justify government policy.⁹²⁹ Prior to the publication of the report, the government admitted that it contained some interesting material and that deep shelters were appropriate in certain areas.⁹³⁰ The government's decision not to implement a deep shelter policy went against opinion poll findings, which revealed that only 34% of respondents agreed with government policy.⁹³¹ Whilst the commission had been investigating, the distribution of Anderson blast-and-splinter shelters had begun. These were free to people who earned less than £250 per annum, prompting Mr Thorne, the Labour MP for West Ham Plaistow, to state that it was unfair if a man had children and earned over this amount.⁹³²

Local discussion of shelters did not begin in earnest until after Munich, despite acknowledgement that it was 'one of the government's most urgent problems'.⁹³³ Prior to the crisis, few references to shelters occurred in Bedfordshire. At the end of July, Councillor Roberts raised the subject with Luton council, who responded that a survey was taking place and would lead to a report in due course.⁹³⁴ Bedford was also considering shelters. Rumours had circulated that caverns existed underneath the town, though water was a potential danger. Retired Captain F. L. Powell argued that a competent engineer would be able to deal with it.⁹³⁵ The investigations were still ongoing when the crisis occurred.

The subject returned to the agenda at the end of December when Luton council considered the survey report. After due consideration, a delegation visited the Home Office to discuss the possibility of constructing tunnels in the town centre and surrounding hills.⁹³⁶ 'F. J. C.', a resident of Luton and former chief gas NCO to the 29th division during the Great War, and 'Another Wartime

⁹²⁸ *The Times*, 5 and 19 January 1939.

⁹²⁹ Haapamaki, 'Challenges from the Margins':248-53.

⁹³⁰ LSE: BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 19 and 20 April 1939.

⁹³¹ 'British Institute of Public Opinion'.

⁹³² Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 345, Columns 907-8 (20th March 1939)

⁹³³ BA: BorBB30/2/6, Meeting of Air Raid Precautions Committee, 31 May 1938.

⁹³⁴ *Luton News*, 28 July 1938.

⁹³⁵ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 25 August and 10 September 1938.

⁹³⁶ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 7 February 1939.

NCO' warned against constructing tunnels in the hills, as chalk residue indicating construction would be visible from the air.⁹³⁷ The Home Office approved the town centre tunnels and on 2 March came the announcement that construction would begin.⁹³⁸ The tunnels were not deep shelters and this topic received little attention in Luton. The only reference came in July 1939 at a joint meeting organised by the Luton Labour and Co-operative parties. Addressing the meeting, Councillor Roberts argued that adequate protection from high explosives was required.⁹³⁹ This, like similar meetings across the country, did not persuade the government to change its mind.

Deep shelters received greater attention in Bedford. Mr Francis, a Labour member of the ARP committee, urged the examination of this option. Francis believed that no work had been undertaken, but the council informed him that they were awaiting a reply from the Home Office. Captain Powell, 'Air-raid Warden', and the *Bedfordshire Standard* made similar calls.⁹⁴⁰ One street even managed to get a petition signed by 98% of the residents supporting better shelter provision.⁹⁴¹ The subject came before the ARP committee following a resolution from wardens in Group B for an investigation, which again received the response that the council were awaiting a reply from the Home Office.⁹⁴² Shelter provision was one of the points criticised by A. W. Sanders in a letter to the *Bedfordshire Times* on 14 April.⁹⁴³ The general theme of the letter was Bedford's slow ARP progress. However, the wardens must have had a valid point, as the council terminated the contract of the ARP officer for this reason. After this brief flurry of letters, little further discussion took place.

Meanwhile, discussion of shelter provision was more prevalent in London, where protecting the population was a major challenge. The first mention came in January 1938 when Mr C Fisher, a member of the LCC LNU staff branch, accused the government of doing nothing to provide bombproof shelters.⁹⁴⁴ Further discussion took place at a meeting of the London Trades Council, as it affected their members. To explain the topic, Professor Haldane spoke to the delegates meeting, who recommended the arrangement of a London-wide conference to hear him speak. The

⁹³⁷ *Luton News*, 26 January and 2 February 1939.

⁹³⁸ *Luton News*, 2 March 1939.

⁹³⁹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 3 July 1939.

⁹⁴⁰ *Bedfordshire Times*, 6 and 13 January 1939; *Bedfordshire Standard*, 13 January 1939.

⁹⁴¹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 17 February and 10 March 1939.

⁹⁴² BA: BorBB2/22/38, Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Bedford, 15 March 1939.

⁹⁴³ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 31 March 1939; *Bedfordshire Times*, 14 April 1939.

⁹⁴⁴ *West London Observer*, 21 January 1938.

executive committee agreed to this suggestion but the organisational records do not state if the meeting ever occurred.⁹⁴⁵

Shelter provision remained in the background for the remainder of 1938. Even after the Munich crisis, there was little mention of it in the local papers serving Fulham and Hammersmith. The only reference located is a letter from E. H. Fraser, a resident of Baron's Court Ward, who supported the view expressed by Councillor Nicol in a letter to electors that he 'stood for the immediate completion of all measure of air raid precautions necessary for your full protection in the event of any future emergency'. Fraser urged Astor to use his influence to ensure the construction of deep shelters in Fulham.⁹⁴⁶ Given the perceived vulnerability of London in the 'official' mind, the lack of public debate is surprising. This changed in January 1939 following discussions between the LCC, the Metropolitan Boroughs, the London Chamber of Commerce, and the Home Office. During these meetings, suggestions for air raid shelters included underground car parks.⁹⁴⁷ A similar suggestion occurred in the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, which suggested undertaking a survey to identify potential sites for underground shelters, as Anderson shelters were not suitable for all houses.⁹⁴⁸

The vulnerability of London meant that Fulham and Hammersmith were amongst the boroughs entitled to receive free Anderson shelters. The distribution of shelters began in February, accompanied by a reassurance from Astor that this did not mean that war was inevitable.⁹⁴⁹ Fulham's work in this area was vigorous and by the end of June 8,092 had been delivered, while in Hammersmith the figure was 3,751.⁹⁵⁰ As part of the Civil Defence Act, employers had a duty to provide shelter for their employees. The Hammersmith branch of the Postal Workers Union duly raised the matter with their employer, who informed them that the bike shed would be adapted to become a shelter, a decision that the union urged their employer to reconsider.⁹⁵¹ These two references to shelters did not mean that the campaign for deep shelters had subsided. The Hammersmith Communist Party submitted a scheme for consideration to the council, which

⁹⁴⁵ LSE: London Trades Council, Minutes of Delegate Meeting, 12 May and 9 June 1938; LSE: London Trades Council, Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, 26 May 1938.

⁹⁴⁶ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 28 October 1938.

⁹⁴⁷ LSE: Fiche B50, BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News 17 and 30 January 1939.

⁹⁴⁸ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 27 January and 17 February 1939.

⁹⁴⁹ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 17 February and 3 March 1939.

⁹⁵⁰ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 21 June 1939; HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 26 June 1939.

⁹⁵¹ HFA: DD/922/2, Minutes of the Half Yearly General Meeting, 30 July 1939.

commented that it had no observation to make, which does not tell us if the council supported the idea.⁹⁵²

The Left's desire for deep shelters did not reflect the broader public mood, as work by M-O on shelters discovered. Some of this related to Fulham. One man of 45 considered the trench provision adequate, though not if it received a direct hit.⁹⁵³ Another had received his shelter and was not going to take a chance in the event of war, whilst a woman of 55 reported that she did not have room for an Anderson shelter.⁹⁵⁴ The mixed views expressed at the end of August 1939 had altered by November. Alderman Lancaster during an interview with an M-O observer expressed the view that people had not wanted shelters before the war, an attitude that had now changed.⁹⁵⁵ His view is correct as evidence from the pre-war council minutes refer to applications for the removal of shelters.⁹⁵⁶ He continued by saying that Fulham was ahead of the rest of London regarding shelters, a stark contrast to its ARP preparations a year earlier. Nonetheless, the November 1939 evidence revealed defects in the borough's performance as some houses had two shelters for no apparent reason.⁹⁵⁷

Bolton's shelter experience was different from the other two geographical areas, as wider discussion occurred in 1938 not 1939. It began in March when members of the Junior Imperial League discussed the need to seek shelter underground.⁹⁵⁸ The Bolton Master Spinners' Association held a similar discussion but accepted that deep shelters were unlikely, noting that while other shelter forms did not protect against a direct hit, they did offer a degree of protection.⁹⁵⁹ The Munich crisis acted as the catalyst for discussion, which had been absent at council meetings. 'Civicus' duly attacked this and the lack of information about shelter provision. His letter asked for information about which basements were shelters and whether plans existed for the digging of trenches. The public had not been provided with this information.⁹⁶⁰ '1914' added to the points raised by 'Civicus', arguing that trenches dug during the crisis would not provide adequate protection against high

⁹⁵² HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith Council, 22 March 1939.

⁹⁵³ M-O A: TC23/1/J, Trenches, 28 August 1938.

⁹⁵⁴ M-O A: TC23/1/J, Shelters, 29 August 1939; M-O A: TC23/1/J, Crisis, 2 September 1939.

⁹⁵⁵ M-O A: TC23/1/J, Shelters Fulham, 7 November 1939.

⁹⁵⁶ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 5 April 1939.

⁹⁵⁷ M-O A: TC23/1/J, Shelters - Classes C and D, 7 November 1939.

⁹⁵⁸ M-O A: Worktown 7F: Junior Imperial League, Torchbearer, March 1938.

⁹⁵⁹ BLHC: FET/1/1/14, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 25 April 1938.

⁹⁶⁰ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 23 September 1938.

explosives and that heavy rain had resulted in them become waterlogged. '1914' went on to urge people to seek shelter underground,⁹⁶¹ a view supported by 'J.E.R.', who encouraged people to campaign deep shelters. However, both writers and others expressing a similar point of view, failed to take account of the cost.⁹⁶²

The criticism about the lack of information received a correction at the start of November in two *Bolton Evening News* articles detailing the development of ARP in the town. These stated that shelter provision had been a source of concern since July and that to make adequate provision people counts had taken place in the town centre at peak periods. These revealed a need for shelter accommodation for 8,000 people and subsequently an investigation of basements had begun.⁹⁶³ One aim of the articles had been to raise awareness of what was involved in the ARP scheme, in which the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* believed that shelters were the least understood item. Therefore, in line with findings from Barcelona, it recommended more numerous small shelters to reduce the risk of casualties.⁹⁶⁴

The start of 1939 mirrored 1938 with only a couple of references to shelters. Both occurred in February one referring to costs incurred while the other noted that Bolton would not be among the first towns to receive Anderson shelters. The lack of references continued until May when the 'Town Topics' column revealed that a shelter survey needed to be completed within seven days, resulting in officials working 15 hour days to complete the task. Householders hindered progress by asking officials to come back at a more convenient time. Nevertheless, progress was good.⁹⁶⁵ This mention in the *Bolton Evening News* was the penultimate one in the paper before the declaration of war, with other papers providing coverage instead. The precise nature of the shelters had not been determined when the survey occurred, though the 'In a Bolton Mirror' column in the *Bolton Standard* noted that a local aviator from the Great War supported Anderson shelters as they provided protection from shrapnel. This had been one of the biggest killers during the conflict.⁹⁶⁶

Following the completion of the survey, trench construction began in June on a scale unknown previously. The *Bolton Journal and Guardian* urged the public to become familiar with the layout as

⁹⁶¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 10 and 13 October 1938; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 14 October 1938.

⁹⁶² *Bolton Evening News*, 11 and 28 October 1938.

⁹⁶³ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 November 1938.

⁹⁶⁴ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 11 November 1938.

⁹⁶⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 1, 2 and 5 May 1939.

⁹⁶⁶ *Bolton Standard*, 12 May 1939.

part of their own ARP preparation.⁹⁶⁷ The shelter survey revealed that 87,000 people were entitled to free shelters but not everyone would be able to obtain one, as many lived in houses that had no space to erect one.⁹⁶⁸ The space problem was not one that the council alone faced. Mr Barnes, a member of the Bolton Master Spinners' Association executive committee, highlighted a similar problem, as most buildings in the town did not have room in the cellar for a shelter.⁹⁶⁹ The *Bolton Standard*, given the problem of where to locate shelters, wondered if the question of underground shelters should be re-examined to provide protection. It even suggested possible locations, but the council made no comment.⁹⁷⁰ This was the penultimate mention in the local papers. The final mention occurred in a *Bolton Evening News* report, which stated that the crisis was bringing out the community spirit in people, as people worked together to construct shelters in areas where there was no room for individual ones.⁹⁷¹ Once again, this demonstrated that the public would answer the call when it came.

Shelters form a subset of ARP due to their supposed importance within the national debate, particularly on the Left. Locally, the subject received little attention until after the Munich crisis. However, it is surprising that the predominant local discussion in 1938 occurred in Bolton, which was furthest from the danger zone. The main point here was the lack of information provided to the public about shelters specifically, as the wider ARP preparations received extensive coverage. This was also true of Bedfordshire but limited in the two London boroughs. The debate shifted in 1939 from north to south, with greater discussion in London than in Bolton, though the subject remained an active one. One feature in all three geographical areas was that debate tended to appear in reports and editorials rather than in the letters column. Occasionally a letter appeared from a concerned citizen or warden. Council officials viewed the latter as inappropriate, even if they did have some valid points to raise.

References to deep shelters occurred in all three areas with support from the Left in Fulham and Hammersmith. Despite indicating their preference for deep shelters, both London boroughs actively pursued shelter distribution. Here, Fulham led the way, which was in stark contrast to previous attitudes detectable in the borough, which by 1939 had come to accept the need to prepare even if it was not the preferred solution. Fulham and Hammersmith were not the only local authorities to

⁹⁶⁷ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 2 June 1939.

⁹⁶⁸ BLHC: AB/34/1(1), Meeting of the Air Raid Precautions Committee, 20 July 1939.

⁹⁶⁹ BLHC: FET/1/1/14, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 27 June 1939.

⁹⁷⁰ *Bolton Standard*, 4 August 1939.

⁹⁷¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 29 August 1939.

adopt a common-sense approach to shelter provision. Luton adopted a similar policy when it submitted a scheme that included tunnels in the town centre as part of a mixed shelter policy.

Existing historical writing has focussed on the national situation, which places an emphasis on public indifference and the Munich crisis as a turning point. The local evidence from all three cases studies confirms the main tenets of these conclusions but also highlights the different rates of progress, both in terms of recruitment and public co-operation with local practices, which existing work overlooks. Its inclusion furthers the argument that by the time war came, the public accepted the need to fight, even if there was no desire to do so, as highlighted in previous chapters.

The slow rate of discussions at a national level hindered progress and recruitment, which resulted in the ARP Act not becoming law until January 1938, though the local authorities had undertaken some preparatory work. Slow progress continued until an ARP broadcast and the Anschluss in March 1938 produced the first recruitment rush. This set the trend for increased recruitment during international crises. In Bolton, the ARP department quickly became the council's busiest and the crisis recruitment in Bedfordshire at a time where the local authorities were trying different methods of public engagement. Yet the response in the two London boroughs was pitiful, a situation made worse in Fulham by people not knowing how to register. This provided a further example of the council's opposition to ARP.

Following an initial surge, recruitment slowed until the Munich crisis took the country to the brink of war. This made people realise how far the international situation had deteriorated and in the week leading up to the agreement, people rushed to volunteer, prepared to do any job that would help to prepare Britain's defences. Ironically, in Luton, this occurred a few days after a poorly attended ARP demonstration, thereby indicating the prevalence of public apathy. The eagerness of people to assist meant that gas mask assembly and distribution proceeded quickly. The volunteers assembling the gas masks came from all backgrounds and worked in a good atmosphere, undertaking work for an event that they hoped would never occur.

The crisis provided the impetus that the country needed in terms of volunteers. The efforts of volunteers were widely praised, though some criticisms were made that more could have been achieved had people been fully trained. In terms of numbers, Bolton and Bedfordshire were better prepared than the two London boroughs, a finding in keeping with the conclusion that London was behind the rest of the country. Bedfordshire's scheme (excluding Bedford and Luton) came close to

achieving the required number of volunteers, despite rural areas often lacking masks. The schemes of the two London boroughs were woefully inadequate, a fact reflected in the large amount that they had to spend compared to the other two areas.

The lessons learned during the Munich crisis convinced the government to launch a voluntary national service campaign in January 1939, which encompassed broader civil defence preparations. Despite the campaign, overall numbers remained below their allotted targets, partly due to the government decision to increase the targets by 25% to create a war reserve. The German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 added to the numbers still further and maintained the link between recruitment and international crises.

The link between recruitment and crises is evident in the M-O study of ARP in Fulham (Figure 15). The M-O study of ARP in Fulham is important within the historiography of ARP as it provides an indication of people's motivation for volunteering and their opinion on local preparations. Respondents stated, in line with the directive in national service (discussed in chapter 7), had volunteered out of a desire to 'do their bit'. However, the local council hindered their enthusiasm by failing to provide information or practical work during training, and treating residents like children.

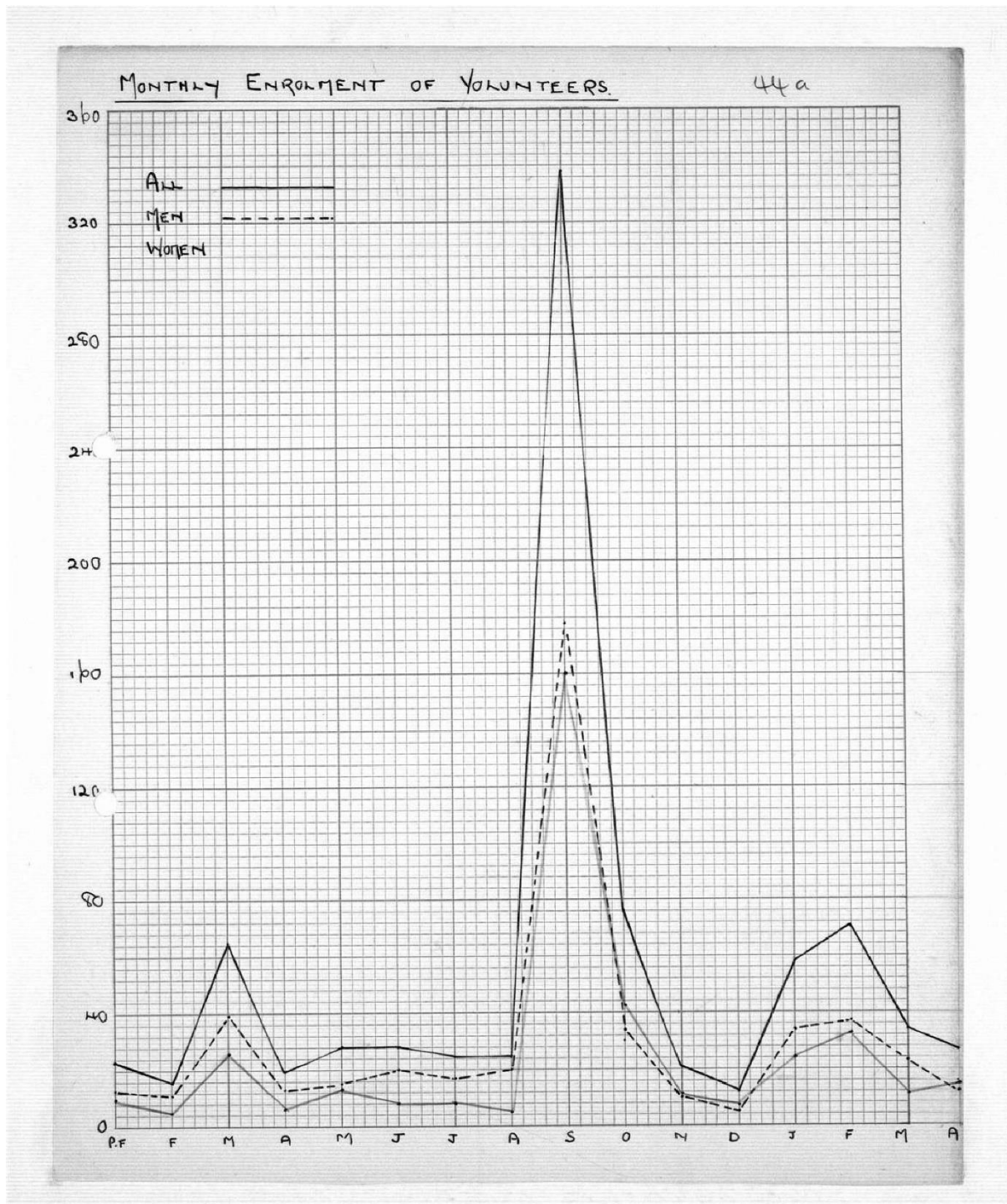
By March 1939, practice drills had begun in Bolton and Bedfordshire. The first practices in both areas highlighted problems, which improved over time and local schemes became more proficient. The biggest problem in both areas was people leaving lights on during blackout practices. The local papers reported several occurrences of this, often women who were waiting for their husbands to come home. With each practice, public co-operation increased. Bolton's practices produced a few complaints from those who were not given the opportunity to participate, but letters of this type did not appear in either of the other geographical areas. The rate of progress had increased dramatically in Fulham when it held a display in May, whose efficiency surprised Summerskill. The council was also very active in pursuing the distribution of Anderson shelters, even though it would have preferred deep shelters. This was part of an increasing acceptance on the part of Fulham about the need to prepare. By contrast, no information about ARP demonstrations in Hammersmith has been located.

A common factor throughout this chapter for all the geographical areas has been the role played by the local newspapers. They had many roles: providing information to the public, encouraging people to volunteer, and providing space for criticisms. In short, they all served their local areas and acted in what they deemed to be the best interests of the local population. This meant that they

supported ARP work. Of the newspapers, the Bolton newspapers were probably the most active in this regard.

The international crises that occurred during 1938 and 1939 produced an increasing willingness amongst the public to help to prepare the nation for war. The critical turning point in this process was the Munich crisis with the revelation of the true state of the nation's defences. The air defences at this point were insufficient and would have been ineffective against aerial bombardment. In the 11 months following Munich, a lot of preparation took place and the time gained meant that Britain would be able to withstand the initial onslaught though it would take the fall of France in 1940 to make the public fully aware of the danger.

Figure 15: Monthly enrolment in Fulham ⁹⁷²



⁹⁷² M-O A: FR A24, Report on A.R.P. in Fulham, 1939.

Chapter 6: The Safety of Children

Evacuation, Davies, Foster, and Steele argue, was one of the biggest social upheavals in twentieth century Britain and one that would contribute to the Beveridge report. They highlight that the contemporary or 'official' version portrays a well-organised process with city children having a wonderful time in the countryside. The official version was the one produced by newspapers at the time to maintain morale. However, this version hid another story, which as historical writing on the topic has expanded, has included the diversity of those who took part and the actual experience of the evacuees themselves.⁹⁷³ The 'official' history produced by the government requires the use of two volumes, *The History of Civil Defence*⁹⁷⁴ and *The Problems of Social Policy*.⁹⁷⁵ Taken together it is possible to piece together the full story. Of these two, the latter volume is of more use. Titmuss discusses the 1931 committee of investigation, which reported in 1934. However, the preparation for evacuation is traceable back to December 1924 when the need for evacuation was recognised.⁹⁷⁶ The 1934 report did not deny the need for evacuation, and considered the problem to be one of preventing panic. It recommended the evacuation of 3.5m people from London alone due to the estimated potential devastation from aerial bombardment. Reinforcing the 'official' fears was cinema newsreel coverage of, and literature about, the Spanish Civil War. This included the bombing of Guernica and the bombing of a school at Getafe in Madrid, which killed 70 people.⁹⁷⁷ Despite these concerns, little advanced work was undertaken. A further examination took place in 1938 under the auspices of Sir John Anderson. The committee's report was due for publication in July but did not appear until September, in the middle of the Munich crisis. Instead, the work of the LCC formed the basis of evacuation planning. The crisis revealed that the government had failed to undertake any substantial work on evacuation, a shortcoming that William Eady admitted.⁹⁷⁸ However, the crisis acted as the impetus for work to begin in earnest to refine the plans that had begun to take shape. This included finding evacuee billets, determining who would pay, and dividing the country into danger zones. Expressions of opinion about these tasks occurred in parliamentary

⁹⁷³ D. Foster, S. Davies, and H. Steele, 'The Evacuation of British Children During World War II: A Preliminary Investigation into the Long-Term Psychological Effects', *Aging and Mental Health*, 7, 5 (2003): 398.

⁹⁷⁴ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*.

⁹⁷⁵ Cabinet Office, *History of the Second World War : United Kingdom Civil Series : Problems of Social Policy*, ed. R. M. Titmuss (London, 1976).

⁹⁷⁶ B. Wicks, *No Time to Wave Goodbye* (London, 1988): 11.

⁹⁷⁷ J. Macnicol, 'The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention,' in *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, ed. H. L. Smith (Manchester, 1987): 11; M. Andrews, "'Nationalising Hundreds and Thousands of Women': A Domestic Response to a National Problem", *Women's History Review*, 24, 1 (2015): 2.

⁹⁷⁸ M. Brown, *Evacuees: Evacuation in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945* (Stroud, 2000): 7.

questions, newspaper articles, and letters to the editor. The concerns raised were valid, as evidence from September 1939 demonstrates.

The plans were refined in the eleven months following the Munich crisis and went into operation on 31 August with the announcement of Operation Pied Piper, the coded signal for evacuation to begin. The arrangements in the evacuating areas were indeed orderly, hence the claim in the 'official' version. Some of the credit must go to voluntary organisations such as the WVS and the Girl Guides. The WVS worked with local authorities and other organisations, but by July 1939 they were concerned about the lack of a lead from the government. Therefore, they began to make secret preparations with other organisations, such as the Guides to determine who would take charge where.⁹⁷⁹ The Guides assisted by looking after younger children and helping to prepare houses for evacuees. Their history of the war noted that no social matching took place during evacuation.⁹⁸⁰ The lack of social matching prior to evacuation and during the billeting process, triggered the social clash that is a feature of the alternative narrative. John Welshmen and A. D. K. Owen, the latter of whom acknowledged that the nation rose to the challenge, both refer to it.⁹⁸¹ This is partly attributable to the government's lack of interest in social research.⁹⁸² It was only a small part of the failure by the authorities to perfect and communicate the plans. A bigger failing in the reception areas, which the *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series* acknowledges, concerned the neglect of facilities in reception areas, as the emphasis was on evacuating people.⁹⁸³ The Anderson report had recommended additional facilities, which local authorities refused to spend money on until officially sanctioned by the government, which did not authorise the work until August 1939.⁹⁸⁴ This added to the concerns about 'dirty' urban children. Further evidence of the government's failure concerns Jewish children, particularly those who had arrived on the Kindertransports. Many could not communicate with their hosts properly, and the government failed to communicate the dietary requirements of Orthodox Jews. The result was that many local shops in the reception areas did not stock kosher food. These examples are only a few of those found in the alternative narrative that challenge the 'official' view of a smooth process.

⁹⁷⁹ C. Graves, *Women in Green: The Story of the W.V.S.* (London, 1948): 12-16.

⁹⁸⁰ J. Hampton, *How the Girl Guides Won the War* (London 2010): 38-9.

⁹⁸¹ A. D. K. Owen, 'The Great Evacuation', *Political Quarterly*, 11, 1 (1940): 30-44; J. Welshman, 'Evacuation and Social Policy During the Second World War: Myth and Reality', *Twentieth Century British History*, 9, 1 (1998): 31-2.

⁹⁸² Cabinet Office, *History of the Second World War* 88.

⁹⁸³ Cabinet Office, *History of the Second World War* 40.

⁹⁸⁴ R. Inglis, *The Children's War: Evacuation, 1939-1945* (London, 1989): 12; B. Holman, *The Evacuation: A Very British Revolution* (Oxford, 1995): 17.

This chapter examines the development of various plans for the safety of children. These plans and the reaction to them varied depending on the status of an area as either evacuation, neutral, or reception. Amar-Flood provides a brief description of these.⁹⁸⁵

- Evacuation – those designated for evacuation, which were often found in the large conurbations
- Neutral – occupied a position between conurbations and rural districts
- Reception – largely rural areas and considered to be in least danger of German attack

The chapter seeks to demonstrate that London was ahead of the rest of the country in evacuation planning, thanks to the work of the LCC. These benefits came to the fore during the Munich crisis, which provided the impetus for the development of a national plan as allowed for by the ARP Act. The LCC's planning continued following the crisis and its work allowed for a well-executed evacuation procedure when the time came. However, it failed to communicate properly with authorities in the reception areas, which, along with a lack of government foresight, meant that they were not fully prepared for evacuation. This exacerbated some of the fears displayed in reception areas such as Bedfordshire. The evidence presented will further the argument for a well-planned evacuation but at the same time reinforce the opposing emphases of the alternative narrative. These include the theme of dirty children and the failure to communicate with reception areas.

Evacuation and the general safety of children from air raids produced few mentions in the case study areas prior to the setting up of the Anderson committee in May 1938. The first came in January 1938, when the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* and the *Bolton Evening News* reported on a circular from the Board of Education. This advised that the wartime evacuation of children was desirable.⁹⁸⁶ Bolton's education committee responded by beginning to make plans for children's safety at school by agreeing that each school would have a member of staff trained in gas precautions, while caretakers would receive ARP and fire training.⁹⁸⁷ However, a lack of finance would prevent further progress until April 1939. George Doland, the chair of the House of Commons evacuation sub-committee, addressed the lack of overall progress in a letter to *The Times* in May 1938.⁹⁸⁸ He, like other letter writers agreed that evacuation was desirable. One of these writers was John Ryle, who suggested that counties and small towns adopt city boroughs where the children

⁹⁸⁵ C. Jackson, *Who Will Take Our Children?* (London, 1985): 1-2; S. Amar-Flood, 'How the Other Half Live: Evacuation, 1939-1945', *Qwerty*, 7 (1997): 225.

⁹⁸⁶ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 4 January 1938; *Bolton Evening News*, 4 January 1938.

⁹⁸⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 30 March 1938.

⁹⁸⁸ *The Times*, 10 May 1938.

could come from in wartime.⁹⁸⁹ These letters appeared a few weeks before the Anderson committee began to hear evidence.

Prior to the hearings commencing, the LCC had written to the Home Office advising that any scheme would require the involvement of the teaching profession. Mr Mander, the general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, reaffirmed this when giving evidence on 14 June.⁹⁹⁰ Abigail Bregman refers to the role of teachers in British preparations for war in her examination of teachers' attitudes to domestic and international problems. She identifies the Anschluss as the beginnings of a turning point, with the Munich crisis as the moment of actual confirmation about the necessity of ARP and evacuation. From the events of this period, teachers and the government would clearly need to work together as part of the process.⁹⁹¹ Another witness questioned by the committee was Colonel John Stevens, the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire, whom the committee asked about the number of evacuees that the county would be able to receive. Sir John Anderson suggested 230,000. Stevens rejected this figure on the basis that a lot of the available accommodation would be in Bedford and Luton, towns containing strategic targets. Stevens stressed that children would be easier to integrate than adults and that despite public indifference due to the lack of belief in the likelihood of war, local ARP work was progressing well.⁹⁹² Following the completion of the hearings, the committee wrote and submitted a report to the Home Secretary, Samuel Hoare, in late July. Hoare acknowledged receipt of the report in response to a question from Mr Simmonds, a Conservative MP, who hoped for the publication of the report within a few days due to the need to carry public opinion on this matter. Hoare stated his intention to publish the report in full, but said that it would take more than a few days.⁹⁹³

The publication of the report occurred in September, at a time when the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* was speculating that it would recommend undertaking an accommodation survey. The report did make this recommendation, but rejected the use of camps and failed to provide details about the arrangements that local authorities would need to make. Publication came after ad-hoc plans had been set in motion due to the international situation. An internal LCC memorandum

⁹⁸⁹ *The Times*, 9 May 1938.

⁹⁹⁰ LMA: LCC/CL/CD/01/088, Evacuation: Sir John Anderson's Committee, 26 May 1938; LMA: LCC/CL/CD/01/088, Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee on Evacuation, 14 June 1938.

⁹⁹¹ A. S. Bregman, 'The View from the Classroom: English School-Teachers' Responses to Domestic and International Problems of the Interwar Years 1919-1939' (McGill University (Canada), 1986).

⁹⁹² TNA: HO45/17634/703050/25, Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the Committee on Evacuation, 5 July 1938.

⁹⁹³ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 338, Columns 3276-7 (28 July 1938)

reported that the government had worked out an evacuation scheme for children but a lack of railway rolling stock meant that any evacuation would initially be to counties close to London.⁹⁹⁴ Local authority representatives received a briefing on 16 September, which included how many evacuees they would need to accommodate. Bedfordshire's figure was 49,950.

Table 19: Bedfordshire billeting capacity⁹⁹⁵

Authority	Number
Kempston Urban District	2,900
Bedford Rural District	10,600
Sandy Urban District	1,600
Biggleswade Urban District	2,300
Biggleswade Rural District	6,200
Dunstable	6,550
Amphill	900
Luton Rural District	7,100
Amphill Rural District	8,700
Leighton Urban District	3,100
Total	49,950

Following rapid recruitment, local officials set to work on a secret accommodation survey, in which E. J. Morgan participated. Morgan had to present a letter to householders asking for the information. It informed them that they must not divulge the nature of the work to others thereby preventing panic.⁹⁹⁶

Bedfordshire's hastily put together plans were in stark contrast to Bolton, where the only reference to evacuation was in a newspaper report about two meetings held at County Hall. The first was for town clerks from evacuation areas and the second for those from reception areas. They covered the evacuation of non-combatants from industrial areas.⁹⁹⁷

By contrast, London's planning outstripped the rest of the country. On 13 September, the LCC circulated an outline of its plans for school heads to comment on their feasibility, a process that

⁹⁹⁴ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/4, Short Range Emergency Scheme for the Evacuation of the Child Population of School Age Whose Parents Consent to Their Evacuation Separately in School Units, 13 September 1938.

⁹⁹⁵ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/4, Schedule of Evacuation, 26 September 1938.

⁹⁹⁶ BA: Z630/3/1, Clerk to E J Morgan, 27 September 1938.

⁹⁹⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 28 September 1938.

remained secret to prevent panic.⁹⁹⁸ A more detailed version became available on 23 September. The plan advised schools to explain to parents that devastation from bombing, as seen in China and Spain could occur. Therefore, parents were encouraged to entrust their children to teachers in the event of evacuation.⁹⁹⁹ So serious was the situation that authorities insisted that school staff should be available over the weekend of 24-5 September. On 26 September, schools such as Harwood Road Infant School in Fulham received emergency instructions, followed two days later by advice to stand by for evacuation.¹⁰⁰⁰ Further examples occurred in the logbooks of Burlington and St Paul's. Burlington had taken the LCC's advice and informed parents. The report of the headmistress praised the efforts of staff and the co-operation of the local authority for supplying gas masks.¹⁰⁰¹ As St Paul's was outside LCC control, they did not have this option and developed their own scheme.¹⁰⁰² The LCC's decision to develop a scheme highlighted the detailed planning required and that the co-operation of teachers was essential. Additionally, given the speed and secrecy required, the work that took place was a testament to the efforts of local officials and schools.

A *Times* leader, which said that the scheme was 'gigantic and will require exact organisation', criticised the secrecy surrounding evacuation planning and the lack of public information about it during the Munich crisis. The leader was criticised by Mr Robertson, chair of the LCC Education Committee, as it did not do justice to the achievements of those working on the scheme. The scheme had gone from nothing to a point where the railway times were scheduled and parents consulted.¹⁰⁰³ In a letter of 5 October, Hereward Wake from Courteenhall explained the challenges that rural areas would face, including a greater call on their health and sanitation facilities. The letter implied that these points had not been considered and would need to be in order to ensure careful implementation; a process that the formation of local committees to educate people as to why evacuation was necessary could assist with.¹⁰⁰⁴ This would allay some of the fears present in reception areas, especially as William Eady admitted that there were no plans for how to deal with evacuees in these areas.¹⁰⁰⁵

⁹⁹⁸ HFA: DD/991/313/2, Short Range Emergency Scheme for Evacuation of the Child Population, 13 September 1938.

⁹⁹⁹ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/4, Points for Speech at Parents Meeting, September 1938.

¹⁰⁰⁰ HFA: DD/1027/22, Harwood Road Infants School Log Book, 1931-1939; HFA: DD/1027/15, Harwood Road Junior Mixed and Infants School Log Book, 1933-1948.

¹⁰⁰¹ HFA: DD/991/313/1, Evacuation Scheme, September 1938; HFA: DD/991/25, Headmistress's Report Book September 1937 to March 1960, 14 October 1938.

¹⁰⁰² F. R. Salter, *St Paul's School, 1909-59* (London, 1959): 54.

¹⁰⁰³ *The Times*, 3 October 1938.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *The Times*, 5 October 1938.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Eady, 'The Progress of Air Raid Precautions': 12-3.

The fears alluded to at the national level were expressed in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. An unidentified audience member at a meeting of the Harpenden Women's Conservative Association highlighted the unreasonable demands made during the crisis. She said 'I was told I must accommodate eight children and a mistress', but did not specify what type of mistress.¹⁰⁰⁶ This article hinted at attitudes towards compulsory billeting, which F. G. Brownson had written about a few weeks earlier as being resented and undemocratic.¹⁰⁰⁷ One way of overcoming this objection would be to use volunteers, while another would be to provide information, a step viewed as essential by the Bolton Women's Association if the evacuation scheme was to be a success.¹⁰⁰⁸ Comments about evacuation outside London were scarce, and those made in the other geographical areas came from women.

London's own plans received comment from a variety of sources including school magazines. The autumn edition of the Central Fulham School magazine praised the efforts of staff and the attitude of parents, as did the Latymer School magazine.¹⁰⁰⁹ Comments in three other school logbooks reinforced this: Sherbrooke Road, St Paul's, and Burlington Girls.¹⁰¹⁰ During speeches at Burlington's prize day in November, Bea Lambert, chair of governors at the school, praised the staff who had worked long hours making the necessary preparation for the school's evacuation.¹⁰¹¹

Following the Munich crisis, a review of evacuation procedures began. Once Parliament reassembled on 1 November, questions ranged from the number of people requiring evacuation¹⁰¹² to the issuing of instructions to the reception areas.¹⁰¹³ The LCC requested information from schools including numbers attending, siblings at other schools (a point that worried Fulham council, as it did

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 10 November 1938.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Luton News*, 20 October 1938.

¹⁰⁰⁸ BLHC: ABZ/46/5, W. P. Melliush to Inspector Gledhill, 10 November 1938.

¹⁰⁰⁹ HFA: Fulham Central School Magazine, 1938; HFA: The Latymerian: The Magazine of the Latymer Upper School, December 1938.

¹⁰¹⁰ HFA: S.R.S. Magazine, December 1938; HFA: DD/991/25, Headmistress's Report Book September 1937 to March 1960, 14 October 1938; HFA: The Pauline, November 1938.

¹⁰¹¹ *West London Observer*, 11 November 1938.

¹⁰¹² Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 341, Columns 1364-5 (21 November 1938).

¹⁰¹³ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 341, Column 310 (10 November 1938).

not want the senior schools to be flooded with infant relations and affectionate parents)¹⁰¹⁴ and the number of staff willing to assist with evacuation. Mr Rich from the LCC interviewed the President of the London Teachers Association and former mayor of Fulham, Mr S Vanderhook. Vanderhook advocated the need for shelters, keeping schools together, and the commencement of evacuation before the outbreak of hostilities. His most crucial point was that the impact upon children should be minimal,¹⁰¹⁵ a view shared by Miss Callendar, the head of the county secondary school in Fulham.¹⁰¹⁶

At a national level, evacuation work was progressing at the Board of Education, where it was the subject of meetings in November and December. On 14 November, discussions included a house-to-house survey. Sir Maurice Holmes, a civil servant at the Board of Education, advised that it needed to be emphasised that teachers would supervise most children during the day.¹⁰¹⁷ A December meeting discussed area categorisation, the basis for which had been two factors, congestion and vulnerability. The discussion indicated that vulnerability should be emphasised.¹⁰¹⁸ In other meetings, evacuee numbers for each area were decided. Although Bedford and Luton's classification was neutral, the county would initially receive 34,000 evacuees.¹⁰¹⁹

By the end of 1938, the attention given to evacuation planning reflected the growing seriousness of the international situation. However, the plans nationally and in the reception areas were woefully behind those of the LCC. The Munich crisis demonstrated this, but even the LCC's plans lacked sufficient detail, in an equivalent way to the ARP plans. The lack of detail meant that reception areas such as Bedfordshire were prevented from preparing. Instead, there was fear and resentment at the prospect of billeting, resulting from a failure to provide relevant information. The crisis and its aftermath, however, meant that by January 1939 more detailed planning could begin.

The start of 1939 began with a series of letters to *The Times* proposing the use of camps for evacuation purposes, an option rejected by the Anderson report. George Doland viewed it as a good

¹⁰¹⁴ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/, Education Committee, 24-27 October 1938.

¹⁰¹⁵ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/5, Notes of Statement Made by the President of the London Teachers Association at an Interview with Mr Rich, 14 November 1938.

¹⁰¹⁶ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/5, Miss B Callender to Dr Hughes, 25 November 1938.

¹⁰¹⁷ TNA: ED/136/110, Conference in Sir George Chrystal's Room, Ministry of Health, 14 November 1938.

¹⁰¹⁸ TNA: ED/136/110, Note of Conference in Sir George Chrystal's Room, 20 December 1938.

¹⁰¹⁹ TNA: ED/136/110, East Anglia, 1938; TNA: ED136/116, Reception Areas, 1938.

long-term solution,¹⁰²⁰ while Alwyn Parker, a resident of Godalming, argued that making use of the unemployed would speed up camp construction.¹⁰²¹ The debate in *The Times* was only one of the discussion points. Parliamentary debate covered area designation, private evacuation,¹⁰²² and compensation arrangements.¹⁰²³ September 1938's accommodation survey had revealed the number of potential billets. A more detailed survey began in January 1939 with volunteers, including teachers and women's organisations, undertaking the work in Luton. The volunteers generally received a positive reception, with only 1 in 30 surveyed described as 'frosty'. Most of the objections occurred when the men of the household were at home, as they felt that 'an Englishman's home was his castle' and therefore it was up to him to decide what to do.¹⁰²⁴ Harpenden resident R. F. Halcomb raised some of these objections in a letter to the *Luton News*. Halcomb acknowledged the need for evacuation but argued that the health concerns associated with private billeting would sap the morale of the home front, which was vital in wartime. In a further letter, he indicated support for using camps, a sentiment expressed in private letters that he had received.¹⁰²⁵ However, 'A Harpenden mother' and J. Cauldwell, a local representative of the Transport and General Workers Union, rejected Halcomb's claims. Cauldwell stated that he would gladly build himself an army hut to live in so that evacuated children could use his house.¹⁰²⁶ The letters exchanged in the *Luton News* underlined the need to educate people, but even this would not provide a guaranteed method of removing any objections.

The start of 1939 also brought the revelation of Bedford and Luton's designation as neutral areas.¹⁰²⁷ Both councils, supported by Bedfordshire County Council, protested due to the presence of strategic industries within their vicinity. The government provided a partial explanation in a letter to Joseph Graham, the clerk of the county council. It explained that England's small size meant that safety anywhere was only relative.¹⁰²⁸ The government's response did not satisfy the councils and they continued to argue for reclassification on a strategic basis as Graham explained in a letter on 11 July. He stated that 'Luton was the first town of any magnitude north of London, with its numerous

¹⁰²⁰ *The Times*, 4 January 1939.

¹⁰²¹ *The Times*, 10 and 13 February 1939.

¹⁰²² Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 347, Columns 980-1 and 87-8 (15 May 1939)

¹⁰²³ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 349, Columns 611-2 (29 June 1939)

¹⁰²⁴ *Luton News*, 26 January 1939.

¹⁰²⁵ *Luton News*, 26 January and 2 February 1939.

¹⁰²⁶ *Luton News*, 2 February 1939.

¹⁰²⁷ *Luton News*, 2 February 1939; BA: WW2/AR/C2/14, J. B. Graham to the Secretary, Ministry of Health, 1 April 1939.

¹⁰²⁸ BA: WW2/AR/C2/12, J. Russell Smith to Clerk of the County Council, 9 February 1939; BA: Bor.L/CA/1/27A, J. Russell Smith to the Clerk of Bedfordshire County Council, 14 July 1939.

industrial undertakings; it would prove an easy target to any aeroplanes'.¹⁰²⁹ Prior to this letter there had been a partial success as the need to find military billets had reduced the number of evacuees by 2,000. Yet this still left the county potentially in receipt of over 80,000 evacuees, with over 47,000 in Bedford and Luton.¹⁰³⁰ These figures did not please the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* editorial, which summed up the local attitude by stating 'Luton wants to know not so much under what conditions they should be billeted but why they should be billeted at all, as the town is recognised as being vulnerable to air attack'.¹⁰³¹ However, Luton's position had not prevented over 2,000 people from volunteering to assist with the evacuation scheme, a number that had reached 8,000 by July. This occurred despite claims that the uncertainty was preventing women from volunteering to accept evacuees.¹⁰³²

The concerns raised by a small minority of the public and local officials concentrated on the county's status as a reception area and on health concerns. To be effective as a reception area, dispersal plans were required, part of which were revealed by the *Bedfordshire Standard* on 12 May. Bedford fairground would be the central clearing point and all local schools would close for an initial period to facilitate the reception process.¹⁰³³ However, this was only part of the plan. Only officials from the relevant councils knew the remainder. Part of the LCC's plans involved visiting the reception areas, and one such visit to Bedfordshire took place in April. Dr C. F. Strong's report on the visit noted a lack of plans for the continued education of the children.¹⁰³⁴ Moreover, there was a general lack of requests for information from the reception areas, which surprised LCC clerks.¹⁰³⁵ The LCC were not the only ones worried about the impact on education. Lennox-Boyd raised a related question with the Board of Education, asking if those transferred to central schools from village schools would have to return to free up places. The Board informed him that evacuated and local children would be educated together.¹⁰³⁶ The local council and the LCC hampered the planning by failing to share or request the relevant information.

¹⁰²⁹ BA: Bor.L/CA/1/27A, J. B. Graham to the Secretary,, 11 July 1939.

¹⁰³⁰ BA: Bor.L/CA/1/27A, J. B. Graham to the Secretary, 1 April 1939; BA: WW2/AR/C2/14, Russell Smith to Clerk of the Country Council, 17 April 1939; LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/198, London Reception Areas, 1939.

¹⁰³¹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 2 May 1939.

¹⁰³² BA: Bor.L CA/1/24, Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Borough of Luton National Service Committee, 24 May 1939; *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 11 July 1939; BA: Bor.L/CA/1/27A, Secretary to the Town Clerk, 26 July 1939.

¹⁰³³ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 12 May 1939.

¹⁰³⁴ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/6, Evacuation Scheme Confidential Bulletin No.10, April 1939.

¹⁰³⁵ N. Gartner, *Operation Pied Piper: The Wartime Evacuation of Schoolchildren from London and Berlin, 1938-46* (Charlotte, NC, 2012): 57.

¹⁰³⁶ TNA: ED136/117, M. D. Tenant to J. Reade, 5 May 1939.

Bedfordshire's concerns as a designated reception area echoed those of other areas, though much discussion took place away from public forums, which makes it harder to assess wider public opinion on the subject. Part of the problem was a lack of knowledge of the LCC's plans, which were dependent upon several factors. One of these was that evacuation was voluntary and would require parental consent. The Anderson committee recognised this and one of the LCC evacuation sub-committees confirmed it. The LCC sub-committee recommended holding meetings with parents like those held during the Munich crisis. For these meetings, head teachers required as much information as possible, some of which the LCC duly requested from schools, as information was key to the success of any evacuation scheme. However, the LCC clearly stated that it was not responsible for the arrangements in the reception areas.¹⁰³⁷ One of the pieces of information not provided to schools was their destination, a point flagged by the Education Officer in a memorandum dealing with transport arrangements. He hoped that pairing of evacuated schools with similar ones in reception areas would occur.¹⁰³⁸ The provision of this information to reception areas would have allowed more effective planning and could have alleviated other problems. The Jewish community were concerned about the practice of religious observance in some of the reception areas, a matter they raised with the LCC. However, the LCC refused to inform them of the precise destination of each school in advance.¹⁰³⁹ Another problem was the potential breaking up of families, a point discussed during evacuation rehearsals in July. The file for each reception area listed each householder's requirements and contained instructions to the teacher in charge of the party that families should remain together. If this was not possible, then their billets should be close to each other.¹⁰⁴⁰ Evacuation as families was one option, whilst doing so as schools was another, but the latter would not allow siblings at different schools to stay together, an option that Fulham council favoured.¹⁰⁴¹

Concerns about keeping families together provide a partial explanation for some of the newspaper reports in the two London boroughs. In late May, the *Fulham Chronicle* reported that mothers with under-fives were reluctant to register for evacuation. The paper concluded that people were not enthusiastic about official plans, a state of affairs that remained unchanged a month later when

¹⁰³⁷ HFA: DD/1026/26, Government Evacuation Scheme, 30 March 1939; HFA: DD/1027/15, Harwood Road Junior Mixed and Infants School Log Book, 1933-1948.

¹⁰³⁸ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/38, Memorandum by the Education Officer, L.C.C.: Transport Problems, 25 May 1939.

¹⁰³⁹ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/219, Evacuations Scheme Bulletin No.21, 1939.

¹⁰⁴⁰ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/24, Rehearsal of the Reception of Evacuated School Children, 28 July 1939.

¹⁰⁴¹ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/173, Evacuation and A.R.P., 1939.

fewer than 20% in Fulham had registered for this type of evacuation.¹⁰⁴² A letter to *The Times* suggested that strong family connections made mothers reluctant to go, which the Fulham figure seems to confirm.¹⁰⁴³

The health of evacuees was a primary concern for reception areas and featured in the *West London Observer* at the end of June when 'G.P.' wrote to the paper. He praised the work undertaken but raised concerns about education, the types of air raid shelters in the reception areas, and the failure to improve health and drainage facilities in these areas.¹⁰⁴⁴ The West London Teachers Association had similar concerns, which 'G.P.' highlighted in a further letter on 28 July. 'G.P.' reported their resolution calling for full information so that they could recommend the scheme to parents. The resolution stated that 'in the best interest of the policy of evacuation it is essential that the teachers of both the evacuation and reception areas should be in possession of the fullest possible information'. They, like 'G.P.'s original letter, called for adequate shelter provision,¹⁰⁴⁵ though this was not an area that the LCC had control over.

Official concerns differed from those raised in newspapers. Officials were concerned to ensure that they had the necessary information available, which they were reluctant to share due to the need to maintain secrecy, avoid panic, and prevent misrepresentation by the foreign press. Had more disclosure occurred then some of the problems encountered in September 1939 might have been preventable. As the months passed, the lack of information became a concern for the public, notably teachers. Accompanying this unease were concerns about the provision of air raid shelters and the degree of safety available, a concern displayed in Bedfordshire. However, as the government argued, the small size of England meant that safety was only relative.

Shelter provision was the primary area of concern in Bolton, an area classified as neutral. Councillor Ashmore, a member of the Independent Labour Party, was unhappy with this and urged the council to appeal to Whitehall for re-classification as a danger area. She, along with Alice Foley, a local trade union activist, asked questions about the provision of shelters in schools, questions that had gone

¹⁰⁴² *Fulham Chronicle*, 26 May 1939. LMA: LCC/CL/CD/01/089, Registration of Children under 5 with Their Mothers, 26 June 1939.

¹⁰⁴³ *The Times*, 2 June 1939.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *West London Observer*, 30 June 1939.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *West London Observer*, 28 July 1939.

unanswered.¹⁰⁴⁶ On 12 May 1939, the *Bolton Journal and Guardian* reported that the education committee were working on a scheme.¹⁰⁴⁷ Soon, the paper reported that teachers and caretakers would receive training and that shelters were essential to prevent children from returning home. Despite this progress, Mrs Ashmore questioned the scheme and referred it back, as protection for only 6,000 out of 23,000 children would be available. Part of the problem was that this area of work had been late commencing, as no money had been available prior to April 1939 despite discussions on the subject in January 1938.¹⁰⁴⁸

Bolton's focus on the provision of shelter for schools, contrasts with the other two geographical areas. References to work in this area are available in school logbooks, an overlooked source in the study of ARP and evacuation, though the details contained within them are minimal.¹⁰⁴⁹ The entries for Bolton schools indicate that many of the staff assisted with ARP during the Munich crisis.¹⁰⁵⁰

- 27/9/38 School closed for the remainder of the week. Being used for the fitting of gas masks
- 26/9/38 School closed as required as a distribution centre for gas masks. Staff attended to assist with clerical work
- 27/9/38 School closed for the distribution of gas masks. Teaching staff and caretaker attended daily until 10pm to carry out the ARP scheme

This is an example of the role played by schools in helping to protect the public, a role that continued into 1939. The All Saints logbook contains entries for March and May, noting the distribution of leaflets for children to take home to their parents that detailed arrangements for trial blackouts.¹⁰⁵¹ The logbooks of three schools, Great Lever CE,¹⁰⁵² St John's CE,¹⁰⁵³ and Smithills Church Road Council school,¹⁰⁵⁴ all refer to Bolton's scheme for protecting children at school. On 7 March, the head teacher of Great Lever CE spoke to the owner of land adjoining the school, who agreed to make it available for trenches in time of national emergency. This enabled the school to submit a plan on 9 May, as requested by the Bolton education committee in April. The other logbooks also referred to this request. Bolton's concerns and the school logbooks reinforce the

¹⁰⁴⁶ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 5 May 1939; LSE: Bolton Trades Council, Council Meeting, 17 May 1939.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 12 May 1939.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 2 and 9 June 1939.

¹⁰⁴⁹ The use of school logbooks is restricted due to the Data Protection Act. The various archives used have all applied different interpretations of the historical research clause contained within the act.

¹⁰⁵⁰ BLHC: SLB/11/3, Log Book 1936-1961; BLHC: SLB/1/1/5, Log Book 1938-1953; BLHC: SLB/51/3, Log Book: (Mixed) 1920-1949.

¹⁰⁵¹ BLHC: SLB/1/1/5, Log Book 1938-1953,

¹⁰⁵² BLHC: SLB/27/1/2, Managers Minute Book 1921-1951.

¹⁰⁵³ BLHC: SLB/58/4, Log Book: Mixed 1931 - 1962.

¹⁰⁵⁴ BLHC: SLB/72/3, Log Book: (Mixed) 1924-1950.

earlier evidence from London that teachers would have an essential role to play in the safety of children and that the provision of timely information was of paramount importance.

The concerns of the three geographical areas differed between January and mid-August 1939, based upon the status held by each. London was concerned with ensuring that it had sufficient information available to make the scheme workable, information that its councils were reluctant to share with reception areas. This had a knock-on effect, in that reception areas failed to plan provision for health and education. However, as 'G.P.' argued, this was largely due to lack of funding. The lack of funds was Bolton's reason for not having made adequate provision for air raid shelters in schools.

The preparation that had been taking place for almost a year swung into action on 31 August 1939, with the announcement that Operation Pied Piper would commence on 1 September. The Cabinet made this decision despite Chamberlain's objection that people would be more willing to accept the decision following a declaration of war.¹⁰⁵⁵ The increasing likelihood of war prompted M-O to ask observers to keep a daily diary, in addition to the usual directives. These diaries provide some insight into the evacuation process and give the general impression of a calm, subdued affair.¹⁰⁵⁶ However, individual entries sometimes told a different story. One diarist, S. F. Well, detailed the experience of a London teacher. The diary records a great deal of ARP activity and an annoyance amongst some school staff at the cutting short of their holiday. On evacuation day, the diarist assisted at the school, where police and special constables were on duty. The children were in a cheeky and cheerful mood. The 2 September entry described difficulties in the reception areas with many billet offers withdrawn.¹⁰⁵⁷ These two days alone provide an indication of the different versions of the evacuation story.

The annoyance recorded by Well came following the recall of London teachers by the LCC. In a letter on behalf of the education committee, E. O. Rich, the Education Officer, expressed regret at having to implement that decision but he was pleased with the response, describing it as 'in accordance with the highest traditions of the London education service'. Part of the recall included an evacuation rehearsal, which went well, to the point that government ministers expressed

¹⁰⁵⁵ TNA: CAB 23/100 46 (39), Cabinet Conclusions, 30 August 1939.

¹⁰⁵⁶ M-O A: Diary 5269, 1939.

¹⁰⁵⁷ M-O A: Diary 5229, 1939.

themselves as being highly satisfied.¹⁰⁵⁸ Reports of the recall and rehearsals appeared in the *Fulham Chronicle* and the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*. These indicated that the children were cheerful, including those at the King's Road and Latymer schools. The children were not the only ones taking it well. Parents were the same, often following liaison work done by teachers, thereby reinforcing the message that teachers had a vital role to play in the evacuation process.¹⁰⁵⁹ M-O confirmed the newspaper reports. Following the announcement of Pied Piper, observers in Fulham collected various notes on the subject:¹⁰⁶⁰

- 3.30 Cassidy Road, working class – 4 women talking at gate. One recognised obs and smiles. Obs asks about evacuation and if children are going. “No, mine aren’t goin. They didn’t want to. I wish they were.
- Hambleton Road – observer meets around 20 children, mostly boys. Boys are going the following morning at 10.30.
- Acknian Road School – notice saying the mothers with children under 5 must be there at 1145 on Sunday. Others are going tomorrow. Conversation of 2 walking away from the school – going to let lad go tomorrow – other replied that it is only for the kids.

In conclusion, the observer noted that people were taking the news calmly, a mood that existed on 1 September at railway stations across London as noted by other M-O observers.¹⁰⁶¹

The concentration on events around this period helps to provide an indication of the public mood at the coming of war and to provide examples of the workings of the evacuation process. Schools from the Fulham area were evacuated to locations to the west of London including High Wycombe, Windsor, Berkhamstead and Oxford.¹⁰⁶² The experience of some schools is traceable through published accounts or archival records. For example, Godolphin initially evacuated to Windsor before eventually moving to Newbury. Two reports by the headmistress and the school magazine refer to overbearing officials destroying the careful arrangements made by the school, but do not specify what they did. The situation deteriorated as residents withdrew billeting offers. Some of those who did take evacuees treated them like servants, as one teacher found when she checked up

¹⁰⁵⁸ LMA: LCC/EO/WAR/1/175, Evacuation Rehearsal, 30 August 1939.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Fulham Chronicle*, 1 September 1939; *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 1 September 1939.

¹⁰⁶⁰ M-O A: TC 5/1/C, Evacuation - Fulham, 31 August 1939.

¹⁰⁶¹ M-O A: TC 5/1/C, Victoria Station, 1 September 1939; M-O A: TC 5/1/C, Fulham, 1 September 1939; M-O A: TC 5/1/C, Victoria: Morning, 1 September 1939.

¹⁰⁶² C. Bayliss and J. Kimber, *Hammersmith and Fulham* (Stroud, 1999): 92-100.

on pupils taken by a former naval officer. The children ended up in five separate places but thanks to staff efforts, everyone was located eventually.¹⁰⁶³ By contrast, Burlington's evacuation ran smoothly. Prior to the announcement of evacuation, the school staged a drill to make sure its plans worked and to advise parents. When the evacuation order came, 300 out of 473 pupils evacuated to Oxford, which made the billeting process easier. Burlington's headmistress, Miss Burgess, received extensive help from local officials in Oxford and duly sent a letter of thanks to the *Oxford Mail and Times*.¹⁰⁶⁴ These are just two examples of the experiences that evacuees faced.

The school stories demonstrate a mixture of experiences, but what of the children? Many of those evacuated have recorded their experience in interviews for the Imperial War Museum, some of whom came from the Fulham area. One of those evacuated was Derek Watts, who was living in Fulham. After the declaration of war, he moved to join relatives in Oxford before going on to Addlestone to join the rest of his school. He eventually drifted back towards London.¹⁰⁶⁵ James Cadman also lived in Fulham and joined his school's evacuation. He remembered congregating at school and being bussed to a station, which he believed to be Waterloo. From there his school travelled to Woking, which given the distance, there did not seem much point evacuating to. Once in Woking, the school went to a large centre, where people selected those they wanted based on appearance and the numbers they wished to accommodate. He eventually ended up billeted in a large house where several families had to share the kitchen, which created tension.¹⁰⁶⁶ The second of these examples demonstrates both sides of the evacuation story, namely the organised departure from London and the chaotic scenes in a reception area.

The experience of the evacuees was part of a story that whilst known at the time, did not feature in local newspapers. Reports in the *Fulham Chronicle* and the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* took the 'official' line, namely that evacuation had gone well. This was in part thanks to the work of teachers and voluntary helpers. In addition, the *Fulham Chronicle* reported a sense of sadness amongst some children, whereas parents were facing the situation with resolve. The paper also reported that children had sent letters from villages in Surrey describing how they were enjoying their new surroundings.¹⁰⁶⁷ All this helped to support the morale of the nation.

¹⁰⁶³ HFA: DD/985 Box 4, Report of the Headmistress, 1939; HFA: DD/985 Box 1, Report by the Headmistress, 13 December 1939; S. Holloway, *A School of Dolphins: The History of the Godolphin and Latymer School* (Lewes, 1995): 73-5.

¹⁰⁶⁴ HFA: DD/991/313/31, Henry Gillett to Miss Burgess, 7 September 1939.

¹⁰⁶⁵ D. Watts interviewed by J. Atkinson (Imperial War Museum, 9 March 2011).

¹⁰⁶⁶ J. C. Cadman interviewed by C. Wood (Imperial War Museum, 2005).

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Fulham Chronicle*, 8 September 1939.

The experience of the schools and children referred to above suggested a degree of confusion in the reception areas. However, published sources in Bedfordshire indicated that local officials believed that evacuation had gone well despite an increase in the number of expectant mothers who arrived. This created a problem, as householders were less willing to billet them than they were unattended children. By the end of the first day in Luton, 4,887 children and 548 teachers had arrived, which was considerably fewer than expected. The children were reportedly in good spirits.

Moving away from official sources and newspapers it is possible to discover alternative stories within the county. A good example of this and the LCC's failure to supply information concerns a Jewish school evacuated to Shefford, a town on the eastern side of Bedfordshire. Upon departure from King's Cross the party leader received information that the school was bound for Biggleswade, where, upon arrival, pupils were put onto buses and dispersed to various parts of the county by local officials, who failed to communicate this to the party leaders. Shefford was one of the destinations. Upon arrival, the teachers discovered that buses had gone to other locations and thus began the process of tracking them down. When staff finally met up, they reported problems, as the Jewish children were refusing the food that had been prepared for them. Host families were not aware of Jewish dietary requirements. This caused resentment and the local vicar received complaints as people felt cheated out of doing their bit to help the country. Despite this bad start, however, the local community soon adopted the school as its own.¹⁰⁶⁸

Jewish children were not the only ones to experience problems relating to billeting. Betty Helliard, a London teacher, described her school's evacuation to Peter's Green, a village two miles outside Luton. Upon arrival in the village, the children went to their billets. At this point, she discovered that she did not have a billet, but was soon able to find one. There were a couple of cases where billets had to be changed. One elderly couple had asked for adults but received children, whilst a younger couple had asked for children and received nobody. In addition, there were reports of bedwetting and head lice, the latter of which caused indignation. The final problem confronting Betty was where to teach the children, as the village school was full. She ended up teaching in the church after spending a few weeks teaching in the open air due to a spell of pleasant weather.¹⁰⁶⁹

The above are just two examples of stories of confusion in reception areas, which differ from the traditional narrative of a well-ordered process. They also confirm some of the concerns raised by a

¹⁰⁶⁸ J. Grunfeld, *Shefford: The Story of a Jewish School Community in Evacuation, 1939-45* (London, 1980): 1-32.

¹⁰⁶⁹ IWM: 2220, Jack of All Trades.

small minority in the months before evacuation: the health of children, continuity of education, and the impact on local communities. However, the host communities were generally tolerant of evacuees.

London and Bedfordshire provide examples of the different evacuation experiences. By contrast, Operation Pied Piper had less impact on Bolton, where no evacuees were expected. This did not prevent discussion. In the M-O report on evacuation, an overheard pub conversation indicated that people were talking about a woman in Blackpool who refused to let five children sleep in her beds until they had a bath. They initially refused but eventually took one all together, which left quite a mess.¹⁰⁷⁰

The small towns and villages surrounding Bolton did receive evacuees. The *Bolton Evening News* reported on 1 September that those arriving in Turton were in good spirits, though fewer than predicted arrived.¹⁰⁷¹ M-O covered the arrival of evacuees in Turton, where prior to their arrival, a local group of about 20 people had been arranging accommodation, though many of those they spoke to refused to take children.¹⁰⁷² The arrivals process did not go as smoothly on 2 September. Most of those arriving were mothers, who, having sent the older children ahead, wanted to be close to them. The arrival of evacuees signalled to people that war was imminent.¹⁰⁷³ A few days later, an M-O observer spoke to people in Turton. One local shopkeeper believed that the process had gone relatively well, despite a few grumbles about the range of goods he stocked. Further evidence collected by M-O found that there had been difficulties and that some children were ill and bad-tempered.¹⁰⁷⁴

The declaration of war resulted in the pre-planned closure of all Bolton schools, partly due to a lack of air raid shelters. The school logbooks reflect the closure but staff attended to witness the work.¹⁰⁷⁵ The local paper reported that the scholars would not be able to attend until suitable shelter accommodation was available.¹⁰⁷⁶

¹⁰⁷⁰ M-O A: FR11, Evacuation Report, 1939.

¹⁰⁷¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 September 1939.

¹⁰⁷² M-O A: TC5/1/, Turton Receiving Area, 1 September 1939.

¹⁰⁷³ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 and 2 September 1939.

¹⁰⁷⁴ M-O A: TC5, Turton, 7 September 1939; M-O A: TC5, Turton, 7 September 1939; M-O A: TC5, Turton Park, 8 September 1939.

¹⁰⁷⁵ BLHC: SLB/11/3, Log Book 1936-1961, ; BLHC: SLB/22/1, Log Book 1907-1944.

¹⁰⁷⁶ BLHC: SLB/1/1/5, Log Book 1938-1953,

This chapter has demonstrated a mixture of continuity with and difference from the other chapters. In continuity terms, the Munich crisis was once again a turning point. Prior to the development of this crisis, the subject of evacuation had received little attention despite several investigations, which had all expressed its desirability, especially from London. It is therefore not surprising that the LCC led the way in terms of evacuation planning. They began to develop a scheme without permission from the Home Office as they realised the scale of the task. This advanced start paid dividends during the Munich crisis, when secret plans for evacuation were required. It was a testament to the efforts of officials, both nationally and locally, that by the end of the crisis a transport plan and arrangements for the first night's accommodation were complete. However, no plans existed beyond this. The crisis also revealed a major point of difference from the ARP picture, namely that London led the way. The lack of a plan beyond those put together during the Munich crisis explains why the chapter primarily examines 1939.

The work begun during the crisis continued in the subsequent months. By the start of 1939, the government had laid down a national framework and more detailed planning had begun. This included an accommodation survey undertaken by volunteers, who for the most part found that people were willing to take in evacuees, a further example of the public being willing to serve when the time came. The volunteers amongst women in Luton for the evacuation scheme are further evidence of this. However, not everyone welcomed the prospect of receiving evacuees, due to fears about the health of evacuees and the lack of additional facilities in reception areas to handle the increased numbers. The views on these points depended upon the status of the geographic area.

The actual test of all the planning came with the commencement of Operation Pied Piper. From the London perspective, the process ran smoothly with parties making their way to the designated departure points as planned. Witnesses described both children and parents as being in good spirits and accepting the need for evacuation, as evidenced by some of the statements recorded by M-O in Fulham. Descriptions of this nature support the 'official' and 'published' portrayals of evacuation in the press. However, the story in the reception areas had some variations. Here, the process was relatively smooth given the numbers involved and made easier as there were fewer evacuees than expected. Local officials in the reception areas also encountered billeting problems due to the sudden withdrawal of offers and their own interference with plans that schools had made. Some of the difficulties, particularly in the case of Jewish children, were avoidable but the failure of the LCC

to inform schools of their destination until the day of departure prevented remedial action. The LCC therefore contributed to both the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

The one geographical area that stands out as a point of difference in this chapter is Bolton, as it did not receive any evacuees. This did not mean that it was unconcerned about the safety of children. Its attention focussed on ensuring protection from air raids whilst pupils were still at school. This was another area of delay as initial discussion occurred at the start of 1938 but work did not begin until after April 1939 due to lack of money. The result was that schools remained closed in the weeks following the declaration of war whilst work was completed.

The differing attitude of officials in the three geographical areas is one of the main findings of this chapter. The prominence of 'official' opinion is also different from the preceding chapters, which show a greater element of 'public' discussion. Part of the explanation for this contrast stemmed from the secrecy that surrounded the evacuation plans, though the sharing of information between authorities would have made the planning more effective. The limited 'public' discussion that did take place in local newspapers reflected the concerns of officials, though this was dependent upon an area's designated status. The differences largely emerged following the Munich crisis, which once again played a pivotal role in the shaping of British preparations on the road to war.

To conclude, the nature of the subject and the secrecy surrounding it makes it difficult to get a true sense of what the public thought about it. However, it did form part of the psychological preparations for war and the failure to act would have had a detrimental effect on the morale of home front in the event of a declaration of war. As seen during the Munich crisis in the previous chapter, the majority appear to have silently accepted the scheme as a necessity. Hence the co-operation with the accommodation survey and the willingness to volunteer to assist with evacuation. This was all part of the public's psychological process of becoming increasingly willing to accept war.

Chapter 7: Serving the nation

'National service' is an idea associated with this and the two previous chapters. In this context, it means volunteering to undertake duties related to civil defence. However, it can also be interpreted to mean volunteering for service in the armed forces, including the Territorial Army (TA). Taken together they form part of the process of rearmament. The key word underpinning all of this is voluntary, as the phrase 'national service' is often associated with conscription. The military authorities - going back to the time of the Napoleon wars when the Duke of Wellington believed that one volunteer was worth five conscripted men – have historically favoured voluntary service. This continued to be the case down to 1914, when the military authorities moved to being marginally in favour of conscription once it became apparent in September 1914 that a large army would be required. The idea had found favour with some Conservatives but other political parties opposed conscription, believing that it went against progressive social measures and personal freedom.¹⁰⁷⁷

The prolongation of the Great War eventually forced the government to introduce conscription under the auspices of the Military Service Act 1916, following a census of available labour resources. This came despite opposition in Parliament and from the trade unions, who still feared the potential impact on the rights of the working-man when the subject arose again in the late 1930s.¹⁰⁷⁸ The 1916 Act was problematic due to the lack of civilian oversight when it came to dealing with matters of conscience.¹⁰⁷⁹ Following the end of the conflict, voluntary service in the forces resumed despite recruitment problems even during times of high unemployment. This meant that it took additional time to train conscripts put the required skills into place during a time of war.

Interwar sentiment about conscription was generally ambiguous, though a 1937 Gallup poll found that Britain was three to one against its introduction.¹⁰⁸⁰ This changed during 1938 and 1939 as the international situation deteriorated. However, this did not lead to increased recruitment for the armed forces, with people opting for other forms of 'national service'. The multiple usages of the term give it an ambiguity that Philip Wainwright discusses. To him, it was about training a reserve of men rather than creating a conscript army along continental lines. Wainwright also discussed other forms of 'national service' suggested by groups opposed to conscription. These included

¹⁰⁷⁷ T. M. La Goy, 'Soldiers of Conscience: Conscription and Conscientious Objection in the United States and Britain During World War I' (Ph.D., State University of New York at Albany, 2010): 76-8.

¹⁰⁷⁸ J. M. Rae, *Conscience and Politics: The British Government and the Conscientious Objector to Military Service, 1916-1919* (London, 1970).

¹⁰⁷⁹ T. C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience: A History of the No-Conscription Movement* (Fayetteville, 1981).

¹⁰⁸⁰ R. Broad, *Conscription in Britain, 1939-1963: The Militarization of a Generation* (London, 2006): 81-8.

humanitarian work or projects that provided social progress.¹⁰⁸¹

The deterioration of the international situation led to discussion about the need for a national register of manpower and the potential for conscription. In *Conscription Conflict*, Hayes demonstrated that Chamberlain was reluctant to introduce any compulsory training at the time of the Anschluss, as he regarded this as going against his pledge not to introduce compulsory training in peace time. Chamberlain's view remained unaltered during the Munich crisis and the months following it, despite increasing advocacy from both sides of the debate.¹⁰⁸² Hayes reiterated his point about Chamberlain's attitude in *Challenge of Conscience*. However, as catastrophe moved closer, it became a logical step.¹⁰⁸³ The government tried to avoid this step, despite increasing French support for a move towards conscription as Daniel Hucker details in his article on the subject, in which he also explores the impact of public opinion on the question of conscription. Hucker argues that France applied diplomatic pressure at a time when public opinion favoured such a move, therefore arguing that there was a fusion between domestic and international pressure.¹⁰⁸⁴

When conscription was introduced in April 1939, Chamberlain took the credit for it, especially in relation to its timing. However, as Peter Dennis argues, it was a *Decision by Default*. Dennis demonstrated that British policy developments during Chamberlain's administration meant it became more and more necessary to introduce conscription since not enough volunteers were coming forward. Chamberlain tried all feasible options before implementing this step, stating that:

¹⁰⁸⁵

'Compulsion is not in accordance with the democratic system under which we live or consistent with the freedom that we have always striven to maintain. We are confident that we shall get all the volunteers we want without resort to compulsion'.

¹⁰⁸¹ P. J. Wainwright, 'The National Service Debate: The Government, Conscription and the Peace Movement in Britain, 1936-1942' (Ph.D., Stanford University, 1994).

¹⁰⁸² D. Hayes, *Conscription Conflict: The Conflict of Ideas in the Struggle for and against Military Conscription in Britain between 1901 and 1939* (London, 1949).

¹⁰⁸³ D. Hayes and Central Board for Conscientious Objectors., *Challenge of Conscience: The Story of the Conscientious Objectors of 1939-1949* (London, 1949).

¹⁰⁸⁴ D. Hucker, 'Franco-British Relations and the Question of Conscription in Britain, 1938-1939', *Contemporary European History*, 17, 4 (2008).

¹⁰⁸⁵ P. Dennis, *Decision by Default: Peacetime Conscription and British Defence, 1919-1939* (London, 1972): 163.

Chamberlain feared the reaction of the trade unions. Despite some objections, this was not as strong as feared, as the bill was moderate and protected the rights of conscientious objectors (COs) better than during the Great War.¹⁰⁸⁶ Many COs commented that there was less hostility, and although people might disagree with their view, they respected their stance.¹⁰⁸⁷ This was one of the lessons learned from that conflict, with another being that it takes time to create a reasonably trained army, meaning that training had to occur in peacetime.¹⁰⁸⁸

The chapter begins with a brief examination of calls for a national register and national service during the crisis periods in 1938 before focussing on the national voluntary service campaign and the introduction of conscription in 1939. This will include a brief mention of military volunteering, primarily in relation to the TA at a national level, with some inclusion of local evidence as sources allow. It will be argued, in line with the two previous chapters, that people became more willing to serve as the threat increased. The addition of evidence from a local level highlights the range of arguments employed by both sides of the debate and enables the addition of new dimensions such as the role of religious ministers regarding COs. However, despite some opposition, the decision to introduce conscription received general acceptance.

Prior to the Anschluss, there was some discussion about military recruitment within the highest levels of government. Whilst acknowledging that rearmament was making steady progress, recruitment to the armed forces - such as the RAF needed to increase - despite Sir Maurice Hankey stating that recruitment had been good in a letter to Sir Alexander Cadogan.¹⁰⁸⁹ This was not the only acknowledgement about the increase in armed forces recruitment. On 3 March, an editorial in the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* praised the work of Leslie Hore-Belisha, the Secretary of State for War, whose reforms to the army were slowly helping to improve recruitment, a point reiterated in a report on 3 May.¹⁰⁹⁰ The slowness in recruiting for the armed forces can be taken as a reflection of a November 1937 opinion poll, which found that only 38% of men were prepared to volunteer.

At a local level, the idea of a national register appeared in the *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* on 10 January 1938. The report detailed a speech that argued that 'a citizen army, properly trained and

¹⁰⁸⁶ Hayes et al., *Challenge of Conscience*: 1-3.

¹⁰⁸⁷ T. Kelly, 'Citizenship, Cowardice, and Freedom of Conscience: British Pacifists in the Second World War', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 57, 3 (2015): 702.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Dashwood, 'What People Are Saying': 750.

¹⁰⁸⁹ TNA: FO 954/4A, Note on the Progress of Rearmament and Air Raid Precautions in the UK, 13 January 1938.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 3 March and 3 May 1938.

properly equipped, can be the equal of any force in the world'. The speaker, Sir Thomas Keens, praised Luton employers for allowing their employees time off to attend training.¹⁰⁹¹ A similar article praising the value of volunteers appeared in the *Bolton Evening News* on 17 February, following a parade by the local battalion, which had announced earlier in the month that there were vacancies for up to 60 people to join.¹⁰⁹² After the parade, Colonel Bennett stated that 'he believed the country to be the best in the world as it used volunteers rather than conscripts'. He continued nonetheless by arguing that Britain must be prepared, a feeling that as 'Politicus' argued, many could not accept even after the Anschluss.¹⁰⁹³ M-O had an observer at the parade, who noted that the mayor made a similar statement about volunteers and the need for recruits, some of whom recruitment officers hoped to obtain after some of the high proportion of young people had been home to ask their mothers.¹⁰⁹⁴ The key point, at both a national and local level, was on the need for and value of volunteers.

The Anschluss in March 1938 resulted in a national service discussion in the letters column of *The Times*. Ronald Tree, the Conservative MP for Harborough in Leicestershire, urged the broadening of the government and the introduction of a national register to organise manpower in the event of war.¹⁰⁹⁵ The former Director of National Service, A. C. Geddes, supported this.¹⁰⁹⁶ The question of a national register is one that the Minister of Labour, Ernest Brown, outlined in a paper to the Cabinet in April. He concluded that the type of register being envisaged, namely one where people could indicate their preference for a specific 'public' service, for which they might be unsuitable, would 'serve no practicable purpose'.¹⁰⁹⁷ The same paper also noted that the TA were keen to ensure that enrolment did not affect munitions production.

On the question of enrolment, the TA faced competition from the ARP recruitment campaign. These concerns were discussed at the highest levels of government between Leslie Hore-Belisha and Sir Samuel Hoare. In a letter to Hoare dated 13 May, Hore-Belisha outlined the situation as of 1 April, when the TA still required 966 officers and 33, 324 in all other ranks. This came amidst a series of

¹⁰⁹¹ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 10 January 1938.

¹⁰⁹² *Bolton Evening News*, 4 February 1938.

¹⁰⁹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 17 February and 18 March 1938.

¹⁰⁹⁴ M-O A: Worktown 42/G, Fifty Third Bolton Field Brigade.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *The Times*, 19 March 1938.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *The Times*, 24 March 1938.

¹⁰⁹⁷ TNA: CAB 24/276 91(38), National Register, 7 April 1938.

discussions about potentially lowering the age limits for ARP recruitment, since the rate of recruitment (particularly in London) was a cause for concern.¹⁰⁹⁸ These deficiencies were still in existence at the end of July and would grow worse later in the year when the government aimed to start raising new units.¹⁰⁹⁹ The shortages reported were despite improved recruitment for the TA in the preceding months and years, as detailed in Tables 20-22. The years covered by Tables 21 and 22 show peaks and troughs within the year, whilst following a broadly similar pattern. One can only speculate, given this pattern, as to just how much impact international events had on recruitment figures in 1936 and 1937. However, there is a clear jump in the figures for March 1938, a month that also saw a spike in ARP recruitment.

Table 20: Strengths of the Territorial Army, by arms, all ranks on 1 October 1938¹¹⁰⁰

Year	Yeomanry	Royal Artillery	Royal Engineers	Infantry	Royal Army Service Corps	Other	Total
1934	4752	27492	9474	81736	1505	8776	133735
1935	4831	27751	9442	79096	1555	8942	131617
1936	4964	30902	11863	81220	2521	9929	141339
1937	5610	38366	23256	75323	3399	10811	156765
1938	5650	45018	38862	81735	4652	12504	188241

¹⁰⁹⁸ TNA: WO32/4648, Leslie Hore-Belisha to Samuel Haore, 13 May 1938; TNA: WO32/4648, Meeting to Consider Certain Points of Disagreement between the War Office and Home Office, 27 May 1938; TNA: WO32/4649, Proposed Lowering to 18 of the Age Limit for Certain A.R.P. Recruitment in London, 24 June 1938.

¹⁰⁹⁹ TNA: WO32/4650, Director General of the Territorial Army to Permanent under Secretary, 29 July 1938.

¹¹⁰⁰ Dennis, *Decision by Default*: 262. Figures come from the *Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom*

Table 21: Territorial Army Recruitment 1 April 1936 – 31 March 1937¹¹⁰¹

	Cavalry	Yeomanry and Scouts	Royal Artillery	Royal Engineers	Royal Corps of Signals	Infantry	Royal Tank Corps	RASC	RAMC	RAOC	RAVC	Total
Apr-36		187	1015	519	176	3372	78	156	100	7		5610
May-36		166	1282	577	194	3585	43	202	82	11		6142
Jun-36		64	925	477	270	2379	35	170	64	9		4393
Jul-36		47	884	356	127	1533	5	130	62	8		3172
Aug-36		27	269	96	44	277	8	32	12			765
Sep-36		33	483	193	73	651	7	79	29	8		1556
Oct-36		55	519	347	52	763	16	76	34	11		1873
Nov-36		94	594	352	148	1395	59	73	30	12		2757
Dec-36		143	668	506	130	1264	15	75	30	15		2846
Jan-37		125	651	475	116	1437	41	91	52	5		2993
Feb-37		175	1228	893	160	2271	35	142	55	17		4976
Mar-37		132	1747	1185	218	2716	76	186	115	22		6397
		1248	10265	5976	1708	21663	418	1412	665	125		43480

¹¹⁰¹ TNA: WO287/38, Statistical Review of Officers and Other Ranks of the Regular Army, Regular Army Reserve, Supplementary Reserve, Territorial Army for Financial Year 1936/1937, 1937.

Table 22: Territorial Army Recruitment 1 April 1937 – 31 March 1938¹¹⁰²

	Cavalry	Yeomanry and Scouts	Royal Artillery	Royal Engineers	Royal Corps of Signals	Infantry	Royal Tank Corps	RASC	RAMC	RAOC	RAVC	Total
Apr-37	9	246	1751	1399	211	2906	51	193	57	24		6847
May-37		132	1250	922	145	1833	26	84	54	12		4458
Jun-37	10	63	1177	892	207	1990	33	119	59	19		4569
Jul-37	9	43	643	714	139	1066	15	106	29	8		2772
Aug-37	4	9	253	305	14	195		46	5	7		838
Sep-37	2	16	547	511	80	630	10	81	24	5		1906
Oct-37	15	57	590	936	92	763	7	80	32	2		2574
Nov-37	14	103	900	1159	154	1324	67	184	44	9		3958
Dec-37		104	765	806	119	1081	48	74	24	11		3032
Jan-38		128	677	745	65	1340	13	100	40	8		3116
Feb-38	12	192	1228	1476	214	2297	37	139	70	13		5678
Mar-38	9	215	1867	2183	240	3346	41	157	70	53		8181
	84	1308	11648	12048	1680	18771	348	1363	508	171		47929

¹¹⁰² TNA: WO287/79, Statistical Review of Officers and Other Ranks of the Regular Army, Regular Army Reserve, Supplementary Reserve, Territorial Army for Financial Year 1937/1938, 1938.

Locally, the discussion of 'national service' following the Anschluss was limited. In a letter to the *West London Observer*, L. Taddy-Friend from Chelsea referred to a recent speech by Edward Grigg, the Conservative MP for Altrincham, explaining that a national register was not conscription and that it would enable everyone to do his or her share in an emergency. Taddy-Friend supported the measure and used the example of Britain's experience at the start of the Great War as justification.¹¹⁰³ The reference by Taddy-Friend was the only one to appear in Fulham and Hammersmith following the Anschluss. In Bolton, a limited reaction also occurred. On 18 March, 'Politicus' argued in the *Bolton Evening News* that there had to be a moral basis to rearmament and national service, meaning that Britain had to put 'itself on the right side in the minds of her people'.¹¹⁰⁴ This letter contained a reference to 1914, a year referred to by an editorial supporting a national register on 24 March, with the aim of preventing the difficulties encountered in that year. A further reference to 1914 came a day later at a meeting of the Bolton Conservative Association. The chairman, Colonel Grierson, argued that the country had to face up to its responsibilities and that it would do if this were achieved voluntarily rather than via regimentation.¹¹⁰⁵

The reactions highlighted above during the Anschluss period reflect the continuing desire for any form of 'national service' to take place on a voluntary basis, whilst arguing that a register was required to prevent a repeat of 1914, when workers from vital industries had flocked to join the army. This rush to the colours had negatively impacted upon Britain's industrial production in vital war industries.

In the period between the Anschluss and the escalation of the Sudeten crisis in early September, there was some, mainly local, discussion about voluntary opportunities. At the end of May, a letter appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, highlighting the formation of the air cadets to help to introduce the young people of the country to aviation. It was hoped that this initiative would assist with building a reserve of men.¹¹⁰⁶ Another step in this direction featured in the *Luton News* during July and August, namely the formation of the Civil Aid Guard. The aim of this initiative was to provide instruction for those who wanted to learn to fly, which would help to strengthen Britain's air defences. Within Bedfordshire alone by 11 August, 300 applications had been received with women amongst the most enthusiastic.¹¹⁰⁷ Both of these steps helped towards the creation of a trained

¹¹⁰³ *West London Observer*, 8 April 1938.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 18 March 1938.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 25 March 1938.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 28 May 1938.

¹¹⁰⁷ *Luton News*, 28 July and 11 August 1938.

reserve, very much in keeping with Wainwright's interpretation of 'national service'. These were steps that would help the armed forces if required.

At the start of September, the Sudeten crisis began to develop and the threat of war increased. These developments were accompanied by a series of letters in *The Times* discussing the TA. O. Lewin, writing on 1 September, was impressed by the potential of the TA but felt that more needed to be done to ensure the best use of resources.¹¹⁰⁸ However, as a 'Territorial Company Commander' outlined the following day, training had to be kept simple and interesting, because many had used much of their mental energy in their day jobs, meaning that they could not be expected to have the efficiency of the regular army.¹¹⁰⁹ This meant that it was unlikely that they would undertake any additional reading on military subjects. Additionally, letters also highlighted the lack of equipment and training time. Lord Ogmores confirmed this state of affairs in 1965 when he wrote about his experiences during the crisis.¹¹¹⁰

The crisis work undertaken by M-O in Fulham primarily concentrated on people's opinions about it. Amongst the responses given were a couple of references to military service and conscription. Two of the responses indicated a willingness to serve, though there was no actual desire for war. The third comment came from a 25-year-old ex-miner from South Wales, who said 'They'll not get me, not for anything now, it's no game for anybody. I think they'll have one but they'll never get the workers like they did, not me anyway'.¹¹¹¹ The attitudes in evidence towards military service would come more to the fore during 1939 but provide a good indication of the general attitude, namely the willingness to serve if needed whilst wanting to avoid a conflict.

The crisis itself revealed the true state of Britain's defences, though the national level discussion focussed on the lack of ARP volunteers, leading Carson Roberts to call for some form of national service.¹¹¹² A. J. H. Stewart, a resident of Mincing Lane in London, supported this by claiming that 75% of people would be in favour, a point confirmed by October's BIPO poll in which 78% of respondents indicated that they were in favour of a national register.¹¹¹³ However, this did not mean respondents were in favour of conscription and as is often the case with opinion polls, the

¹¹⁰⁸ *The Times*, 1 September 1938.

¹¹⁰⁹ *The Times*, 2 September 1938.

¹¹¹⁰ L. Ogmores, 'A Week in September, 1938', *Contemporary Review*, 207, 1196 (1965): 145-52.

¹¹¹¹ SxMOA: 1/2/66/7/C, Czech Crisis, 21 September 1938.

¹¹¹² *The Times*, 30 September 1938.

¹¹¹³ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 October 1938; Hinton et al., *British Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup) Poll 1938-1946*.

December 1938 poll contained a direct contradiction, with only 29% of respondents indicating that they would volunteer for the national register.¹¹¹⁴ The figures cited are reinforced by the results of a ballot run by the *Daily Mail* in October 1938, which showed that support for conscription declined as international tensions eased.¹¹¹⁵

In the case of the TA, the crisis, as with ARP, acted as an impetus for recruitment. Table 23 details TA recruitment from April 1938, which had seen a high recruitment rate following the Anschluss until December 1938. In both cases, it was the months immediately following the crisis that had the highest recruitment rates, though this was in accordance with the peaks and troughs detailed previously. The TA were not the only ones to receive applications as the Civil Air Guard continued to attract volunteers with over 34,000 signing up nationwide.

The presence of the TA attracted more attention in Luton after the crisis led to a renewed sense of pride in the likes of the Territorials, who had previously paraded in Luton unnoticed. However, this did not necessarily mean that people were willing to join the TA. Bedford's mayor, Alderman Sowter, predicted the introduction of some form of conscription, a prospect that did not alarm the affected age groups, as the *Bedford and District Circular* column 'Round the Town' found out. The number of young people advocating conscription surprised the column's writer but as A. K. G. Brown, a member of an unnamed Oxford based movement stated a month later, they were waiting for a lead.¹¹¹⁶

Bedfordshire lacked extensive discussion on this topic following the Munich crisis but it was greater than in Fulham and Hammersmith. On 21 October, a *West London Observer* editorial supported Chamberlain's determination to press on with rearmament as referred to in a speech by Sir John Simon, which hinted that manpower planning was taking place but without compulsion. The editorial argued that compulsion went against the British tradition and that people needed to train in advance.¹¹¹⁷ Sir John Anderson confirmed the commitment to the voluntary principle on 9 December, when he argued against conscription.¹¹¹⁸ No further mentions appeared until early 1939

¹¹¹⁴ 'British Institute of Public Opinion'.

¹¹¹⁵ Hucker, *Public Opinion and the End of Appeasement in Britain and France*: 66.

¹¹¹⁶ *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 15 October and 19 November 1938.

¹¹¹⁷ *West London Observer*, 21 October 1938.

¹¹¹⁸ *West London Observer*, 9 December 1938.

Table 23: Territorial Army Recruitment 1 April 1938 – 31 December 1938¹¹¹⁹

	Cavalry	Yeomanry and Scouts	Royal Artillery	Royal Engineers	Royal Corps of Signals	Infantry	Royal Tank Corps	RASC	RAMC	RAOC	RAVC	Total
Apr-38	75	187	2398	3721	275	3250	97	233	129	60		10395
May-38	30	141	1996	2722	300	3902	53	259	107	62		9572
Jun-38	1	35	1146	2043	123	2391	45	196	120	30		6670
Jul-38	11	39	1099	1147	210	1306	15	198	51	22		4098
Aug-38	5	27	433	265	18	319	1	45	83	7		1205
Sep-38		44	548	725	72	926	4	174	92	25		2610
Oct-38	38	194	2047	3324	298	2485	85	309	308	41		9129
Nov-38	21	130	3727	2660	304	2207	77	272	137	71		9606
Dec-38	3	201	3571	1174	168	1277	237	159	61	31		6882

¹¹¹⁹ TNA: WO287/248, Statistical Review of Officers and Other Ranks of the Regular Army, Regular Army Reserve, Supplementary Reserve, Territorial Army for Financial Year 1938/1939, 1939.

Bolton's interest was greater, as discussion in the *Bolton Evening News* focussed on the need to improve the defences, especially the perennial problem of personnel. Ronald Andrew favoured conscription, as the voluntary system placed an unfair burden on those who were prepared to come forward. However, others argued that the public was unwilling to accept the necessity of measure, a theme present at the time of the Anschluss.¹¹²⁰ The idea of a national register found greater favour. Colonel Grierson advocated the creation of one at several Conservative meetings, which duly passed supporting resolutions.¹¹²¹ For instance, Bolton Conservative Association's resolution, which passed unanimously, stated its belief that the time had come for some form of national service. The national register did not have universal support.¹¹²² On 8 November, Reverend Dabi criticised the idea, arguing that 'it forced people to do the will of the state', which smacked of Nazism.¹¹²³ Nonetheless, the *Bolton Standard* accurately summarised opinion by stating that the current moment required a register but not conscription, which is a fair summary of the evidence.¹¹²⁴

The Munich crisis made a limited impact on opinion concerning a national register and conscription in Bedfordshire and Bolton. The former gained greater acceptance, despite acknowledgements that the latter might be required in the coming months. By the close of 1938, plans for the development of a register and a voluntary national service campaign were underway. The register would identify people whose skills would exempt them from military service. The plans were subject to Parliamentary questions in December in which MPs asked how they could assist, the need to prevent employers from putting pressure on employees, and when the campaign would begin.¹¹²⁵

The campaign began quietly prior to its official launch at the end of January, when Chamberlain broadcast to the nation. British Gaumont newsreels reinforced Chamberlain's message, emphasising that Britain needed to prepare and that people were free to choose how to serve.¹¹²⁶ However, some organisations were suspicious. George Lansbury, the former Labour leader, wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* stating that the trade unions would resist because it was the first step towards

¹¹²⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 12 October 1938.

¹¹²¹ BLHC: FDC/1/1/4, Emergency Meeting of the Council, 14 October 1938; *Bolton Evening News*, 7 November 1938.

¹¹²² BLHC: FDC/1/1/4, Emergency Meeting of the Council, 14 October 1938.

¹¹²³ *Bolton Evening News*, 8 November 1938.

¹¹²⁴ *Bolton Standard*, 28 October 1938.

¹¹²⁵ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 342, Columns 870-2 (5 December 1938); Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 342, Columns 1592-3 (12 December 1938); Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 342, Column 2180 (15 December 1938)

¹¹²⁶ 'Sir John Anderson Speaks on National Service', Newsreel (23 January 1939) Gaumont.

the conscription of labour.¹¹²⁷ The slow response to the campaign caused some concern. In Parliament, questions on 23 February concerned enrolment on the special register, liaison with the British Legion to stimulate recruitment, and the provision of air raid shelters for those who had volunteered.¹¹²⁸ M. P. Huthwaite, a resident of Newcastle, shared the findings of his limited investigation on the matter in a letter to *The Times* on 23 February. The letter suggested several reasons as to why people were not volunteering: the labouring classes were too shy, small tradesman saw it as bad for business, and there was a lack of confidence in the scheme. Huthwaite used these arguments as the basis of his support for compulsion. Germany provided a further boost to recruitment with the invasion of Czechoslovakia, with numbers doubling in some parts of London, thereby enabling the BBC to report that 650,000 people had volunteered since January.¹¹²⁹ Some of the volunteers offered to serve in the TA, as the recruitment numbers increased substantially in February and March when compared with the same period in 1937 and 1938 as shown in Table 24. By the end of March, recruitment was proceeding well nationally, but how were the geographical areas faring?

Bedfordshire's previous discussions on the subject indicated a level of support for a register and potentially conscription. Mrs Milner, secretary of the Luton Women's Conservative Association, believed that the campaign did not go far enough and urged that everybody needed to be involved for the country to mount an effective defence.¹¹³⁰ To encourage recruitment, the county formed a national service committee. The committee were keen to recruit volunteers for evacuation, the hospital auxiliary service and the auxiliary fire service.¹¹³¹ The committee soon received offers of assistance, 57 of which went directly to Luton's town clerk.¹¹³² Amongst the organisations offering their services was Bedfordshire Scout Association. At the Bedford and district AGM on 20 February, the District Commissioner, Lieutenant Colonel Craig, outlined details about what the Scouts might do in wartime. Introducing a national service badge would help this process but only those over 14 who had parental consent could take part. However, the County Commissioner expressed some reservation but agreed that it was vital for the Scouts to take part. The Scouts offer was unsurprising compared to the one from Home Counties Newspapers, which, following the Munich crisis, had

¹¹²⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 28 January 1939.

¹¹²⁸ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 344, Column 569 (23rd February 1939)

¹¹²⁹ LSE: Fiche B50, BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News, 29 March 1939.

¹¹³⁰ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 14 December 1938.

¹¹³¹ *Luton News*, 16 February 1939.

¹¹³² BA: Bor.L/CA/1/24, Various to the Town Clerk, Feb 1939.

Table 24: Territorial Army Recruitment 1 January 1939 – 31 March 1939¹¹³³

	Cavalry	Yeomanry and Scouts	Royal Artillery	Royal Engineers	Royal Corps of Signals	Infantry	Royal Tank Corps	RASC	RAMC	RAOC	RAVC	Total
Jan-39	5	187	2139	456	157	1215	100	128	89	16		4492
Feb-39	14	306	3229	1455	392	3281	204	525	379	135		9921
Mar-39	10	462	4447	2448	445	3497	488	823	500	215	1	13335
	213	1953	26752	22140	2762	26596	1406	3321	2056	715	1	87915

¹¹³³ TNA: WO287/248, Statistical Review of Officers and Other Ranks of the Regular Army, Regular Army Reserve, Supplementary Reserve, Territorial Army for Financial Year 1938/1939, 1939.

refused to provide space freely for appeals. An offer to space was made in a letter to Luton's Town Clerk on 8 February. The letter stated that the paper would appreciate payment but would not prevent the publication of vital information.¹¹³⁴ These two examples highlight several types of assistance and further reinforce the idea of the nation beginning to come together in the face of adversity.

Not everyone expressing an opinion in Bedfordshire supported the campaign. Fred Smith, the general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, spoke of his dislike of it at the Luton district annual dinner, whilst A. Kendall wrote to correct the impression that all members of the British Legion were willing to serve. Meanwhile, L. C. Turner, writing at the end of March, believed it would only appeal to those of a militaristic nature.¹¹³⁵ The local population seemed to share this lack of enthusiasm, as only 292 in Luton and 381 in Bedford had volunteered by the end of February.¹¹³⁶ The publication of these figures came after the county committee decided to hold a meeting at Bedford Corn Exchange. Before an audience of over 700, Sir Thomas Keens, Leslie Burgin, Sir Richard Wells, Norman Mickle, Mr Howell (Trade Unions) and Mrs Lawton (women) spoke about the various elements of national service. The speakers stressed the need to ensure that the country was prepared, though Mickle did criticise the government's foreign policy despite supporting the campaign.¹¹³⁷ The large numbers attending the meeting suggest that people were interested to learn more but there remained opposition government's foreign policy.

Bedfordshire's meeting was only one way of encouraging recruitment. In Fulham, Reverend J. W. Huxley-Williams, used several. In February 1939, the *Fulham Chronicle* reported that his monthly parish letter was entirely devoted to the subject,¹¹³⁸ whilst in March he attempted to address the crowd at Craven Cottage, home of Fulham FC. This proved disastrous, as the crowd increased its volume to prevent the speech from being audible. The paper reported this as demonstrating public apathy, a theme Huxley-Williams touched on in his March letter. Despite this, he believed that 'the man in the street intends to be there and will be there when the peril is upon us',¹¹³⁹ yet another example of the belief that the nation would fight when the time came. William Astor also tried to encourage recruitment in his March letter by arguing that one of the incentives for people to

¹¹³⁴ BA: Bor.L/CA/1/24, National Service and Defence Schemes, 8 February 1939.

¹¹³⁵ *Luton News*, 9 February and 30 March 1939

¹¹³⁶ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 3 March 1939; *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 4 March 1939.

¹¹³⁷ *Bedfordshire Times*, 3 March 1939.

¹¹³⁸ *Fulham Chronicle*, 10 February 1939.

¹¹³⁹ HFA: Christ Church Parish Magazine, February and March 1939.

volunteer was a desire to avoid conscription.¹¹⁴⁰

The Left were keen to avoid conscription and were suspicious of the campaign. The January edition of the *East Fulham Citizen* warned that national service talk might lead to conscription, a theme echoed by the *North Hammersmith Citizen*, which went further in maintaining that national service meant conscription.¹¹⁴¹ However, the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, whilst echoing these concerns, was prepared to recommend conscription if the required numbers did not come forward. Examples of opposition to, and public indifference towards the campaign continued to appear in newspapers serving the boroughs. On 17 February, the *West London Post* reported on a debate that had taken place amongst local youth organisations. Joe Lamler from the LNU indicated that youth were willing to serve provided they knew the reason for their service. Miss Ina Wilson from the Christian Auxiliary Youth Movement had a similar message. She was convinced that youth would serve, provided the government had a comprehensive peace plan.¹¹⁴² The youth debate further demonstrates that the public was cautious about the campaign, with a degree of suspicion towards the government. R. C. Belcher, a resident of Shepherd's Bush, reaffirmed this in a letter to the *West London Observer* on 24 February, which stated that youth 'refuses to help the National Government in its present policy'.¹¹⁴³

March brought further indication that people had a cautious but willing attitude. At a delegates' conference organised by the Hammersmith Labour Party and Hammersmith Trades Council, Denis Pritt, stated that the Socialists (presumably meaning Labour) would support a war against fascism and back the continuation of home defence preparation. However, he advocated that labour should use its position to prevent dilution¹¹⁴⁴ of skilled jobs and industrial conscription.¹¹⁴⁵ The meeting made clear that the Left supported the campaign but were guarding against conscription.

Further encouragement to volunteer came from the vicar of St James's Church in the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*. He blamed the government for public apathy while at the same time stating that national service did not mean war was inevitable.¹¹⁴⁶ The campaign was a precaution to ensure that the nation was prepared. The differing definitions of 'national service' came into the

¹¹⁴⁰ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 10 March 1939.

¹¹⁴¹ *East Fulham Citizen*, January 1939; *North Hammersmith Citizen*, January 1939.

¹¹⁴² *West London Post*, 17 February 1939.

¹¹⁴³ *West London Observer*, 24 February 1939.

¹¹⁴⁴ Dilution is the process of replacing skilled workers with unskilled or semi-skilled workers. The process was accepted by the unions as an emergency measure.

¹¹⁴⁵ *West London Post*, 3 March 1939.

¹¹⁴⁶ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 10 March 1939.

spotlight in a letter from W. G. Parish, a resident of Kier Hardy House in Fulham, to the *West London Observer*. He argued that working for peace was the highest form of national service and participation in the government campaign aided its war policy.¹¹⁴⁷

The London boroughs' reaction to the campaign was one of lukewarm support. In Bolton, the idea of a national register had featured in the weeks following the Munich agreement. By December, the *Bolton Evening News* supported a compulsory register to ensure that everyone was included,¹¹⁴⁸ a suggestion that Tom Binks objected because it would signal that the country was preparing for war.¹¹⁴⁹ However, the editor believed that it was necessary as more than liberty might be lost in the long term due to invasion.

The paper continued supporting national service with a long editorial on 23 January. The editorial highlighted the inherent contradiction in the campaign: rendering of service without persuasion and that it was the duty of all. The contradiction being that if it was the duty of all,¹¹⁵⁰ then it should be compulsory. The editorial agreed with wider opinion that the completion of a national register was necessary due to the gravity of the international situation, though public apathy remained an obstacle.¹¹⁵¹ The campaign's launch and accompanying editorial drew comment from letters. 'A.B.' indicated that he was one of the younger generation that was not prepared to serve, but 'Y.Z.' argued that if the register was not completed then compulsion would follow.¹¹⁵² Tom Binks added to the arguments by reiterating his previous point that such a step showed that the government was preparing for war.¹¹⁵³ The letters reinforced the contradictions highlighted by the editorial.

The public response was not spontaneous with only 75 applications made at the labour exchange by 30 January. They were joined by a further 78 applications for ARP.¹¹⁵⁴ The job of recruiting fell to the town's national service committee. To try to stimulate interest, the Conservative Association offered the use of Derby Hall for a meeting. The offer was unsurprising given the views of the Association's chair, Colonel Grierson, who served on the national service committee.¹¹⁵⁵ By 7 February, recruitment had increased to 445 but remained below expectations. The publicity sub-

¹¹⁴⁷ *West London Observer*, 10 March 1939.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 2 December 1938.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 6 December 1938.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 23 January 1939.

¹¹⁵¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 23 January 1939.

¹¹⁵² *Bolton Evening News*, 24 January 1939.

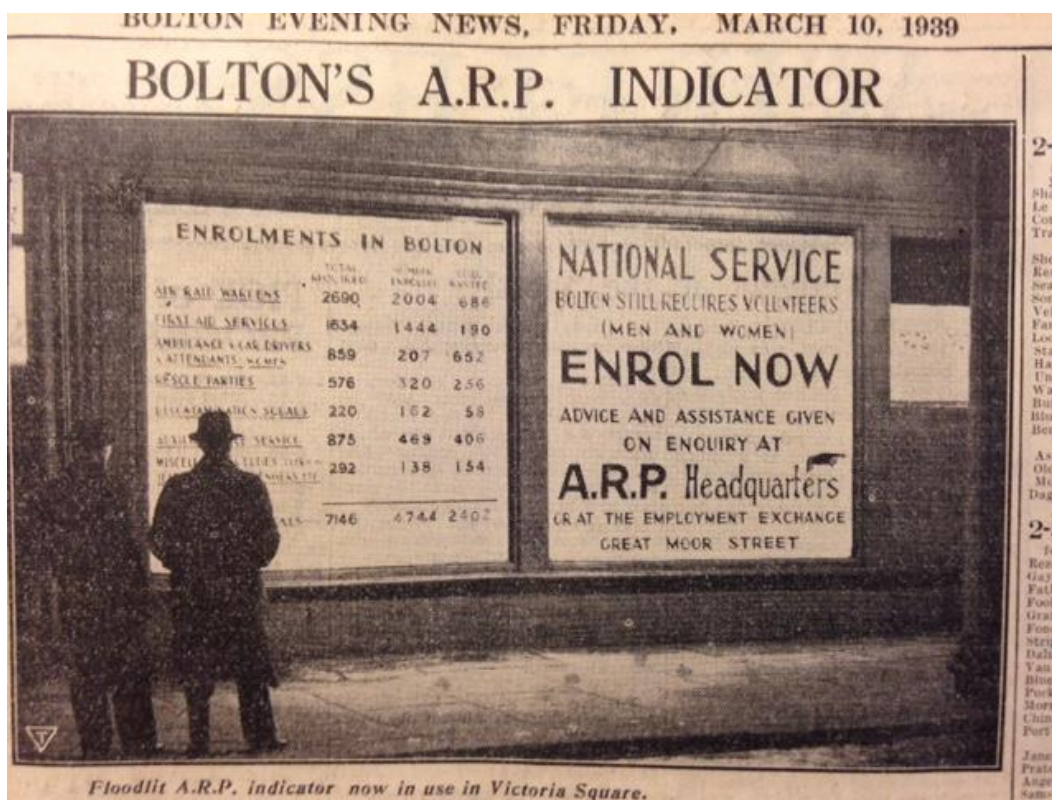
¹¹⁵³ *Bolton Evening News*, 24 January 1939.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 30 January 1939.

¹¹⁵⁵ Bolton: FDC/1/1/6, Meeting of the General Purposes Committee, 30 January 1939.

committee discussed ideas including a recruitment parade, circular letter and a recruitment barometer.¹¹⁵⁶ These were just some of the ideas discussed by the committee. Mr Dutton provided details of the views of working class people obtained through enquiries. Based on this he suggested the idea of holding works meetings and demonstrations. He used his own mill as an example, where Chief Inspector Gledhill had spoken on the subject. Many attended, with sensible questions asked, resulting in the number of applicants doubling. Mr Schofield from the Operative Spinners Association supported the idea, as smaller meetings were more productive and personal.¹¹⁵⁷ All of the ideas were in response to concerns about the rate of recruitment.

Figure 16: Bolton's recruitment indicator, *Bolton Evening News*, 10 March 1939



The campaign during the first ten weeks of 1939 witnessed local authorities and newspapers keen to encourage participation to prevent compulsion. This aim was clear to the Left in Fulham, with constant warnings about the need for labour to be on its guard. All three areas encountered the problem that they had experience with ARP volunteering, namely public indifference. Local authorities used different awareness-raising ideas, ranging from public meetings to speaking at

¹¹⁵⁶ *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 10 March 1939.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 28 February 1939.

football matches. These efforts occurred during a lull in the international situation, a time when people were less concerned or likely to volunteer.

The lull did not last much longer. On 15 March, Germany invaded the remainder of Czechoslovakia, thus providing an impetus for recruitment and renewed calls for the introduction of conscription. This suggestion came at the Cabinet meeting on 18 March, which Ernest Brown rejected, as he did not believe that the country was ready for conscription.¹¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, in Parliament on 22 March, Major Stourton, the Conservative MP for Salford South, asked for the full implementation of the national register. In reply, Hoare stated that doing so would not add to measures already in progress. The Communist MP for West Fife, William Gallacher, interrupted the end of this exchange by shouting that the country would need to get rid of Chamberlain before its introduction.¹¹⁵⁹ At the end of March came the announcement that doubled the TA, which many had been opting to join. However, as the BBC news bulletin on 29 March and the Cabinet minutes for 5 April noted, large numbers were still required for the Army and the RAF.¹¹⁶⁰ Chamberlain deemed this decision politically acceptable since the freedom to choose remained. He continued to oppose the introduction of conscription, but the Italian invasion of Albania and a need to show a determination to resist prompted him to re-evaluate his position. Reluctantly, he took the decision to introduce conscription. The announcement of the decision in Parliament created a rush from those aged 20-1 to join the TA, thereby avoiding compulsion. This resulted in many TA branches reporting that they were at war strength at the end of April. The Left opposed the introduction of conscription, particularly in Scotland. In response to a question on 15 May about military training, Chamberlain revealed that he had received 90 telegrams from Scottish organisations. Many came from the Labour Party or trade unions. However, no answer came to a follow-up question from Robert Boothby, the Conservative MP to East Aberdeenshire, about whether this meant that the Scots were less patriotic.¹¹⁶¹

Discussion about the options open to the government occurred in the letters column of *The Times*. These included the benefits of national service and conscription, the latter of which George Hamilton, a resident of Saxmundham, believed would be difficult to implement due to previous

¹¹⁵⁸ TNA: CAB 23/98 12 (39), Cabinet Conclusions, 18 March 1939.

¹¹⁵⁹ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 345, Column 1281 (22 March 1939).

¹¹⁶⁰ LSE: Fiche B50, BBC Home Service Nine P.M. News, 29 March 1939; TNA: CAB 23/98 18 (39), Cabinet Conclusions, 5 April 1939.

¹¹⁶¹ Hansard, HC Debs. Volume 347, Columns 980-1 and 87-8 (15 May 1939)

promises.¹¹⁶² Hamilton, along with Alfred Horsfall, a resident of Clarence Gate Gardens, supported a compulsory register, though the latter also supported compulsory national service, believing that everyone had an obligation.¹¹⁶³ Other writers contended that compulsion sent a clear message that the country was prepared to meet the challenges it faced. These included Martin Lindsay, a resident of Brig, who believed that conscription would not divide the nation, as the working-man realised that Hitler needed stopping.¹¹⁶⁴ The letters published indicate a clear support for conscription amongst its readers, though the considerable number published reflected its support of government policy.

By contrast, national service and conscription featured less in the *Manchester Guardian* in the weeks following the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, though there was a brief mention of the civil air guard and the air cadets.¹¹⁶⁵ Relevant letters began appearing from mid-April, with the introduction of conscription producing a spate of letters. James Norbury, a member of the Manchester PPU branch, registered a strong objection, as he believed that no man could be another man's keeper when it came to conscience. Correspondents with a religious background also used this argument. P. N. Milne, writing on behalf of the Methodist ministry training college at Richmond, and Winifred Garnett, chair of the Manchester Friends Peace Committee, objected on this basis. However, Richard Smith, a resident of Romily, reminded them that the church had a duty to support all citizens, not just COs.¹¹⁶⁶ Others joined the objectors. B. Eastland, P. C. Quinn and E. F. Reader, all from Banstead in Surrey, did not see why they should serve in the forces of the crown when they were ineligible to vote.¹¹⁶⁷ A. L. Rowse took a different line, warning the labour movement to be on its guard especially as no alliance with the Soviet Union existed.¹¹⁶⁸ Not all letters writers objected. Wilfrid Allott, a resident of Leeds, and Otto Rothbaum, a resident of Gidea Park in Essex, supported the decision, the latter arguing that it was the best method for fighting the Nazis.¹¹⁶⁹ Overall, the debate was broader than in *The Times*, a reflection of the paper's interest in the rights of the individual and freedom of expression.

¹¹⁶² *The Times*, 1 April 1939.

¹¹⁶³ *The Times*, 6 April 1939.

¹¹⁶⁴ *The Times*, 25 April 1939.

¹¹⁶⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 16 and 17 March 1939.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 2, 3 and 15 May 1939.

¹¹⁶⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 28 April 1939.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 29 April 1939.

¹¹⁶⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 27 April and 2 May 1939.

The letters to the national newspapers highlighted divisions within 'informed' opinion. M-O evidence provides a broader perspective on national attitudes. The March and April directives asked questions about national service and conscription. Additionally, fieldwork took place in London. The free text responses to the directives indicated a willingness to serve and 'do their bit', even if there was some reluctance amongst respondents. Comments included:¹¹⁷⁰

- Young man, 21 from London – no natural inclination for soldiering. He was keener on music but had joined the Territorials as his lass had decided to learn to drive an ambulance
- Man, 19 from London – emotionally disliked the whole thing but approved as it was the will of the people
- Man, 25 from Newport - people at work are undertaking service as think that they need to in order to keep their jobs safe

These examples provide insight into people's motivation for volunteering. The reference to the will of the people is interesting, as a 1940 M-O report referred to a BIPO poll taken the day before the conscription announcement. This showed 39% in favour, a figure that had risen to 58% a week later, thereby demonstrating how quickly the 'public mood' can change.¹¹⁷¹ The London M-O surveys used street interviews to collect information but did not cover Fulham and Hammersmith. The small numbers interviewed provide a snapshot of opinion, with responses revealing a similar divide to the nation newspapers, albeit with different arguments. Women generally opposed conscription, particularly those who had children affected by the call-up and feared the loss of household income. Some men shared this concern. The under 40s agreed that conscription was necessary as it signalled Britain's determination to resist. However, this did not mean the failure of the voluntary scheme. The surveys agreed with the *Manchester Guardian* letters, namely that people objected to the interference with their liberties despite understanding the rationale behind the decision.¹¹⁷² One of the key themes to emerge from the M-O data is the impact on the individual.

¹¹⁷⁰ M-O A: DR1075 Crises 2 - March 1939, April 1939; M-O A: DR1496, Special Report on Conscription, April 1939; M-O A: DR1122 Crisis, April 1939.

¹¹⁷¹ M-O A: TC43/1/B, 'What Is Public Opinion?', 19 August 1940. The M-O claim about the polls being only a few days apart is suspect. The BIPO data available from the UK Data Service provides this data for April and May, which would support the M-O claim.

¹¹⁷² M-O A: TC29/1/C, Miscellaneous, 27 April 1939.

The German invasion of Czechoslovakia increased calls in Luton for the introduction of conscription, Alderman Hart, a member of the Luton Conservative Association, advocated a scheme that would allow people to train. His opinion featured in a *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* survey. Other views included a bus driver who supported conscription and an unemployed man, who believed that conscription would trigger a revolution.¹¹⁷³ However, even if, as Alderman Hart suggested, a training scheme could be implemented, not everyone could participate due to working hours.¹¹⁷⁴

With indications of local support for conscription increasing, the authorities continued their recruitment efforts, often using speeches to encourage people. For example, V. E. Goodman, the chair of the Bedfordshire Territorial Association, made an appeal during a dance, stating:¹¹⁷⁵

‘I want some of the young fellows and girls beside you now to realise what a serious thing we are up against. I feel, as do many others that to have compulsion would be a nasty thing but it will not be necessary if there is a ready response to the call to join the Territorial Army. I appeal to young fellows with guts to come forward and help their country, and if tonight I get 20 of you to join the Territorials, I will be grateful. You believe in standing by your trade union, I am now asking you to stand by your country’.

Implicit in the speech’s undertone was the difficulty of encouraging the working-man to volunteer. The recruitment figures during the early part of the national service campaign reflected as detailed in Table 25.

¹¹⁷³ *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph*, 17 March 1939.

¹¹⁷⁴ *Luton News*, 27 April 1939.

¹¹⁷⁵ *Luton News*, 13 April 1939.

Table 25: Weekly national service campaign enrolments¹¹⁷⁶

Week ending	Men	Women	Total
28/1/39	14	2	16
4/2/39	155	21	176
11/2/39	91	8	99
18/2/39	61	13	74
25/2/39	51	9	60
4/3/39	29	3	32
11/3/39	27	9	36
18/3/39	95	2	97
25/3/39	98	39	137
1/4/39	98	19	117
8/4/39	110	5	115
15/4/39	72	18	90
22/4/39	140	69	209
29/4/39	259	102	361
6/5/39	469	237	706
13/5/39	300	87	387
Total	2069	643	2712

The recruitment campaign received two boosts at the end of April and the beginning of May. The announcement of conscription resulted in 40 applications to join local anti-aircraft units, whilst Luton National Service week boosted the figures, though as the table below details, recruitment for the TA was still below its target.

Table 26: Enrolment before and after national service week¹¹⁷⁷

	Required	29/4	6/5	Deficiency
ARP (men)	1613	1410	1592	21
ARP (women)	801	536	743	58
Auxiliary Fire Service	1200	375	470	730
RAF Volunteer Reserve	502	182	373	129
Territorial Army	1359	611	733	586

Shortages continued to exist and had only slightly improved by the time the committee met on 24 May. At the time of the meeting the numbers required were as detailed in Table 27.

¹¹⁷⁶ BA: BorL/CA/1/24, Review of the Work of the Borough of Luton National Service Committee During the Period 25 January to 6 May 1939.

¹¹⁷⁷ BA: BorL/CA/1/24, Review of the Work of the Borough of Luton National Service Committee During the Period 25 January to 6 May 1939,

Table 27: Deficiencies as at Midnight on 23 May 1939¹¹⁷⁸

	Men	Women
Auxiliary Fire Service	416	40
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve		
Pilots	33	
Observers	49	
Aircraft Crew	167	
Ground Section	61	
Territorial Army		
Royal Artillery	31	
Royal Engineers	73	
5 th Beds and Herts Regiment	54	
Royal Army Service Corps	203	

In the case of both tables 26 and 27 there was an ongoing struggle to recruit for the military volunteer forces. This situation continued to be the case at the end of July, when the committee received notification that their request to form a local anti-aircraft unit had been rejected as the TA units in the country were still below strength. The largest shortage was in infantry in Luton.¹¹⁷⁹

Bedford's national service week occurred a week later. It included a parade through the town, described as the pinnacle of the week by the *Bedfordshire Times*, whilst the *Bedfordshire Standard* believed that 'it could not fail to stir the imagination of the people'.¹¹⁸⁰ Other activities included meetings and a house-to-house leaflet drop, all of which aimed to raise awareness and increase recruitment.

¹¹⁷⁸ BA: BorL/CA/1/24, Deficiencies as at Midnight on 23 May 1939, 23 May 1939.

¹¹⁷⁹ BA: BorL/CA/1/24, Secretary to the Committee to the Town Clerk, 28 July 1939.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 12 May 1939.

Figure 17: Bedford's Citizen Army, *Bedfordshire Standard* 19 May 1939



Nonetheless, the labour movement in Bedfordshire opposed the introduction of conscription. A *Luton News* article, published during Luton's national service week, detailed a resolution passed by Luton Trades Council encouraging the working-class to resist:¹¹⁸¹

‘No increase in the number of men in uniform will help us if the present government’s policy is continued and the working people, who are the first to suffer in war, must demand that the wealth of Britain be conscripted to help defend the country’.

The Trades Council took part in further anti-conscription activities as the secretary’s annual report noted that there was a big meeting as the Corn Exchange following the decision.¹¹⁸² This may have been a meeting of the No -Conscription League. Over 100 people attended the meeting from a range of organisations including the PPU and the Luton Communist Party.¹¹⁸³ Dunstable Labour Party and George Matthews joined the opposition to conscription. Matthews stated that conscription was a double-edged sword for fighting both fascism and the trade unions.¹¹⁸⁴

Conscription generated a lively debate in the *Luton News* following the publication of a letter from a group of ministers offering to support and guide COs.¹¹⁸⁵ The following week, ‘Conscript’, H. W. Wynter, and W. A. G. Box, all residents of Luton, wrote to oppose the attitude adopted by the ministers. Box argued that it showed that they were out of touch with public opinion and explained

¹¹⁸¹ *Luton News*, 4 May 1939.

¹¹⁸² MRC: 292/79L/41 TC77, Luton and District Trades Council Annual Report, 1940.

¹¹⁸³ *Luton News*, 18 May 1939.

¹¹⁸⁴ *Bedfordshire Times*, 12 May 1939.

¹¹⁸⁵ *Luton News*, 11 May 1939.

why the churches were empty.¹¹⁸⁶ A. F. Webber countered this by arguing that the need for spiritual guidance applied to all, a point not mentioned in the original letter. Other writers like Reverend Keeble, who had signed the original letter, defended their stance by referring to scripture and the teachings of Jesus.¹¹⁸⁷ This line of defence also appeared in a letter from A. Nelson to the *Bedfordshire Times* on 2 June.¹¹⁸⁸ The usage of scripture strengthened the argument made by supporters of COs but did not prevent challenges from F. E. Hucklele, who wanted to know how divine intervention could prevent war, and 'Mons Star', who recognised the futility of war but stated that something needed to be done about Hitler and Mussolini.¹¹⁸⁹ The counter argument was therefore that supporters ignored the realities of the international situation.

The actual joining up process began in June. In Bedford, over 300 people enrolled, with just five COs. This announcement came at the Bedford PPU AGM, which noted that nineteen new members had joined since the introduction of conscription.¹¹⁹⁰ In addition to these five objectors, one had also come forward at Biggleswade.¹¹⁹¹ Following registration and the conclusion of the letters in the *Luton News* at the end of June, national service and conscription disappeared from the local debate. Instead, reporting switched to the experience of militiamen leaving for, and participating in, training camps.

In Bolton, following Chamberlain's speech on 17 March, two men volunteered for service. The reaction to this speech was positive, with comments attacking Hitler or referring to national service and ARP, which by this point was associated with the campaign. The comments included:¹¹⁹²

- Upper working class, 30 – heard speech. Should have been made last September. Discussed it with friends last night, and they agree with this. People cheered Chamberlain, but it wasn't a cheer of joy. Speech should help ARP.
- Elderly working class – had been slackening in ARP since October – this should gee it up a bit.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Luton News*, 18 May 1939.

¹¹⁸⁷ *Luton News*, 25 May 1939.

¹¹⁸⁸ *Bedfordshire Times*, 2 June 1939.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Luton News*, 1 June 1939.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Bedfordshire Standard*, 9 and 16 June 1939; *Bedford and District Daily Circular*, 15 June 1939.

¹¹⁹¹ *Bedfordshire Times*, 9 June 1939.

¹¹⁹² M-O A: Worktown 50/A, Chamberlain Speech, 18 March 1939.

- Man, 52 – when national service and ARP are really on a business footing might take some interest. It's just a sort of night school business at the moment, and when you've qualified for something there's no assurance that in time of war you would be used for this purpose.
- Man, 28 – Chamberlain's speech made me make up my mind to join the Terriers as soon as possible.

The mayor also urged people to join. His appeal was debated by Bolton Trades Council, which agreed by 37 votes to 24 to co-operate, though the matter was referred to a constituent meeting to obtain a mandate. The Trades Council noted that failure meant compulsion would follow, which they agreed to resist.¹¹⁹³ The mayor's appeal was only part of the recruitment effort. At the end of March, a public meeting took place, urging people to help Britain and thereby perform three services: making the country stronger, helping to ensure peace, and helping to convince other countries that Britain was prepared to fight. The *Bolton Evening News* report on the meeting noted that a feature of the speeches was an appeal for all-party unity, whilst a feature of the meeting was the lack of attendance by those under 30, even though they were more politically conscious than in 1914. However, this did not mean that they were not prepared to serve. As one young man stated, 'I shall not volunteer but if there is conscription and I know that everybody is roped in then I shall do what I am called do wholeheartedly and with all the more satisfaction'.¹¹⁹⁴ It is not possible to generalise the attitudes of the young from this quotation but might provide a partial explanation about this age group's lack of attendance at the public meeting.

With conscription potentially looming, the *Bolton Evening News* ran a four-day letter competition on the subject between 30 March and 4 April. 'B.A.C.' and Arthur Gregory, a resident of Hunger Hill, supported conscription because they realised that a certain level of training was required in order to ensure that Britain was prepared as well as to prevent defeat, thus avoiding the unpreparedness of the Great War.¹¹⁹⁵ This lesson was also drawn by N. C. Charnley, a resident of High Street in Bolton, and by Nora Longworth, who believed that it was a price worth paying if it increased the chances of avoiding war, especially as 'Hitler's treachery has unified British opinion'.¹¹⁹⁶ In amongst all of the

¹¹⁹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 16 March 1939; LSE: Bolton Trades Council, Trades Council and National Service, 13 April 1939.

¹¹⁹⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 28 March 1939; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 31 March 1939.

¹¹⁹⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 30 March 1939.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 3 April 1939.

letters favouring the introduction of conscription was one from J. Arnold that provided an excellent summary of why conscription was required:¹¹⁹⁷

“Sir, - I support compulsory national service for the following reasons: -

1. I believe in the preservation of peace, law, and order, even at the expense of a little liberty.
2. I disapprove of armed aggression, and am of the opinion that compulsory national service in England will prove a powerful deterrent.
3. It will be a warning to aggressors that the survival of the fittest will be grimly true.
4. It will convert leisure (and what are probably wasted) hours into hours of usefulness.
5. It will create a fundamental feeling of responsibility for, and a pride in, one's country.
6. It will create a state of preparedness, and will be a warning to law-breakers that we will vigorously defend our rights, our traditions, and our sense of justice.
7. It will curtail, and rightly so, I believe, the much vaunted liberty and freedom, we as British subjects 'enjoy'. Only by curtailing this liberty can we hope to retain it for our descendants.
8. It would have the effect of showing the people of this country that the government had the present situation in hand, and would instil confidence because of it.
9. Compulsory service would ensure that each able-bodied man and woman did his or her share towards avoiding violation of principles.
10. Every man should be ready to defend for himself that which had helped England to become so great – his home life. Compulsory service will ensure it.

Throughout the correspondence, opposition occurred. H. Crook, a resident of St-Helen's Road in Bolton, opposed conscription, as he believed that 'press gang methods would never be tolerated by the English people in peace time, and if war came I do not think they would be necessary'. John Merritt, a resident of Cellini Street in Bolton, joined Cook in objecting to the removal of his freedom to choose, writing that 'one of the proudest possessions of an Englishman is his freedom. Unlike the people of many other countries, he can do what he likes, when he likes, and how he likes. For that reason alone, I am strongly against any form of compulsory service'.¹¹⁹⁸ This point was in evidence in the letters on 31 March, the main publication day for letters opposing conscription. The objection to the removal of choice mirrored the letters that would be published a month later in the *Manchester Guardian*. Another objection was that conscription would nullify trade union rights.¹¹⁹⁹

¹¹⁹⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 April 1939.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 30 March 1939.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 31 March 1939.

On the final day, the paper informed readers that the postbag was the largest ever and it was clear that the question of national service was on the minds of people in Bolton. The letters favoured conscription, though the topics discussed reflected the wider national debate. However, 'J.W.D.'s letter challenged the conclusion that most were in favour by arguing that people in reserved occupations had not spoken up.¹²⁰⁰ The finding that the majority of letters published favoured conscription is not surprising given the previous attitude of the paper and the welcome given to conscription a few weeks later, in light of the new commitments that Britain had made.¹²⁰¹ Tom Binks claimed that the paper's position betrayed its liberal origins, a criticism refuted by the editor who argued that the decision was in the best interests of the country.¹²⁰²

Binks's objection was just one incidence of opposition. The *Bolton Evening News* reported other cases. For example, on 1 May, the Westhoughton Labour League of Youth held a protest meeting, supported by Westhoughton MP, Rhys Davies. The chair, Syd Daley, said that Chamberlain wanted to offer the young as sacrifices to the dictators.¹²⁰³ Further opposition came from Bolton Labour women. They organised a coming of age party, which one attendee, Councillor Kettle from Westhoughton, spoke to regarding how conscription affected those who could not vote. She said, 'they were not able to register their protest against the National Government through the ballot box, and fascism, she contended, was one step nearer by conscription'.¹²⁰⁴ The local labour movement joined the Labour Party's protests. On 2 May, the paper reported that the Plumbers Union branch secretary, J. Morris, objected to the conscription of the 20-21 age group as they learned more of their trade at this age than any other point.¹²⁰⁵ Two days later, Mr Bell, President of the Weavers Association added to union opposition by introducing an emergency resolution opposing conscription, as he believed that it would cause disunity and unrest.¹²⁰⁶ Further protest came from Bolton Trades Council, where the atmosphere 'showed stronger feelings than for many years'. At the meeting, J. B. O'Hara and Mr Fagan advocated withdrawal from the national service movement, an amendment that was defeated. O'Hara continued by urging the Labour Party to register a protest, though the problem here was that divisions of opinion existed within the Bolton Labour Party.¹²⁰⁷ The discussion was complicated since those who opposed conscription had been

¹²⁰⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 6 April 1939.

¹²⁰¹ *Bolton Evening News*, 26 April 1939.

¹²⁰² *Bolton Evening News*, 1 May 1939.

¹²⁰³ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 May 1939; *Horwich and Westhoughton Journal and Guardian*, 5 May 1939.

¹²⁰⁴ *Bolton Evening News*, 3 May 1939.

¹²⁰⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 1 May 1939.

¹²⁰⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 2 May 1939.

¹²⁰⁷ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 May 1939.

amongst the foremost advocates of the need to combat Nazism. This did not prevent them passing a resolution against conscription.¹²⁰⁸ O'Hara acknowledged this contradiction in a letter to the *Bolton Evening News* on 6 May but still opposed the measure, as he did not believe it was for the purposes stated.¹²⁰⁹

The church entered the conscription debate when the *Bolton Evening News* published a letter, pledging support for COs from church ministers on 5 May. The ministers hoped that the tribunals being set up would handle cases dispassionately.¹²¹⁰ Church involvement in the Bolton area was more concerned with spiritual welfare than in Bedfordshire. On 17 June at a meeting of the Bolton and District Congregational Sunday School Union, Mr Bithell asked about the support provided to those affected by conscription. Responding, Mr Clift stated that the local branch of the Fellowship of Reconciliation was providing some support but a final decision on the matter awaited a meeting of the Congregational Union.¹²¹¹ The emphasis, whilst focussing on COs, was much more on spiritual welfare than the rights and wrongs of conscription.

At the start of June, registration for military training began when around 1,100 people in Bolton were expected to register. An article on 5 June described the process, including how to register as a CO. In total, 801 people registered with only 9 objectors. At Farnworth Labour Exchange, 238 registered with one objector. The CO figures for Bolton and Farnworth were below the national average.¹²¹² After registration came the process of medical examination before departure for training in mid-July. Those departing were in good spirits, though some adopted a wait-and-see attitude.¹²¹³ After registration, public comment died away with little more said before the declaration of war, as was also true in Bedfordshire.

The call to service was sluggish in the two London boroughs. Colonel Van Den Bergh, President of the East Fulham Conservative Association, blamed the ongoing press discussion about compulsion. He disliked the idea of conscription, as 'it smelt of dictatorship' but he was out of step with William Astor, who supported its introduction if necessary.¹²¹⁴ Similarly, T. Funston, a resident of West

¹²⁰⁸ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 May 1939; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 5 May 1939.

¹²⁰⁹ *Bolton Evening News*, 6 May 1939.

¹²¹⁰ *Bolton Evening News*, 5 May 1939.

¹²¹¹ Bolton: NC/9/6, General Committee Meeting, 17 June 1939.

¹²¹² *Bolton Evening News*, 31 May and 5 June 1939; *Farnworth Weekly Journal*, 9 June 1939.

¹²¹³ *Bolton Evening News*, 15 July 1939; *Bolton Journal and Guardian*, 21 July 1939.

¹²¹⁴ *Fulham Chronicle*, 31 March and 6 April 1939; *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 7 April 1939.

Kensington, wrote to the *West London Observer*, arguing that such a move would make democracy safe and those opposed to conscription were the most likely to be shirking their duty.¹²¹⁵ To some, like Ted Morris of Arming Road, it was not about shirking his duty. He clearly expressed that he was prepared to fight for his country but opposed conscription whilst certain people controlled most of industry.¹²¹⁶

The real opposition began following the announcement of conscription. This came from the Left and the labour movement. The strength of 'official' opinion in Fulham came with the passing for a hostile resolution by the council:¹²¹⁷

'This meeting of the Fulham Borough Council expresses its appreciation for those who have voluntarily offered their services for the protection of others. While reaffirming its belief in the voluntary principle, it opposes the government's present policy of conscription as a danger to democracy, trade union principles and national unity. It believes that conscription should begin with wealth and not manpower. It further believes that peace can be best secured by the consummation of an effective alliance between Great Britain, France, the USA and the USSR to oppose resolutely all fascist aggression and to promote democracy and social prosperity throughout the world.'

The discussion occurred after the meeting suspended a standing order, despite objection from the Municipal Reform Party on the basis that the council did not discuss national affairs. Councillor Hutchinson spoke in favour of the resolution, as he did not believe in fighting fascism using its methods. Councillor Coated agreed, stating that the government did not have a mandate of the decision, whilst Councillor De Palma was concerned that it made local recruitment for national service more difficult.¹²¹⁸ The *Fulham Chronicle* confirmed this in a report stating that people were withdrawing because they opposed compulsion.¹²¹⁹

Fulham Associated Youth Council joined the council in opposing conscription. At a meeting of the youth council, objections from various organisations were heard. Jim Pike, speaking for Junior Labour, argued that conscription would deprive the workers of their rights, a message reinforced by

¹²¹⁵ *West London Observer*, 31 March 1939.

¹²¹⁶ *West London Observer*, 21 April 1939.

¹²¹⁷ HFA: Minutes of Proceedings of an Ordinary Meeting of Metropolitan Borough of Fulham Council, 10 May 1939.

¹²¹⁸ *Fulham Chronicle*, 12 May 1939; *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 12 May 1939.

¹²¹⁹ *Fulham Chronicle*, 26 May 1939.

Alex Gossip's argument that Chamberlain, like Hitler and Mussolini, was an enemy of the working class. Miss White, the LNU representative, did not repeat the class attack, choosing instead to attack the government for its abandonment of collective security. Only Frank Stafford of the Young Communists spoke in favour. The meeting decided to send protest letters to Astor and Summerskill.

¹²²⁰

Fulham council and the youth council were only a small part of the opposition. At a public meeting held under the auspices of the Labour Party, speakers spoke against conscription, whilst both Edith Summerskill and Michael Stewart appealed for an alliance with the Soviet Union, drawing applause from the crowd.¹²²¹ The size and make-up of the crowd did not feature in local newspaper reports. The *Fulham Chronicle* stated that there was a strong body of opinion against conscription,¹²²² whereas the *West London and Hammersmith Gazette* accused the Labour Party of 'flogging a dead horse'. The editorial emphatically supported conscription, as the language of force was the only one understood by the dictators.¹²²³ Further criticism followed a week later about the resolution passed, which would end up 'in the rubbish bins of Cabinet ministers'. The paper hoped that opposition would die out.¹²²⁴ Instead, Labour continued its campaign through its monthly newspapers. Michael Stewart, writing in the *East Fulham Citizen* maintained that Chamberlain had betrayed the country, whilst the *North Hammersmith Citizen* went a step further. It argued that the decision had cost the country the services of trained men and that it was a Conservative trick to control the working classes.¹²²⁵ The fear of interference with the rights of workers was common across the country.

Despite extensive coverage of the opposition to conscription in Fulham and Hammersmith, some people spoke in favour of it. William Astor, in a speech to the Lillie Ward women's section of the Conservative Association, defended the decision as one that he believed had public support. He believed that it was right for all citizens to take part in the defence of their country and duly undertook a period of service with the Fleet Reserve.¹²²⁶ He was therefore absent during July and August but, as he explained in a letter to his constituents, he hoped that they agreed that the reason for his absence was a good one. He went on to remind people to undertake some form of service.

¹²²⁷ Astor was not the only local supporter. Harold Smith wrote to the *West London Observer* on 5

¹²²⁰ *Fulham Chronicle*, 12 May 1939; LSE: Summerskill 4/3, Against Conscription.

¹²²¹ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 26 May 1939.

¹²²² *Fulham Chronicle*, 26 May 1939.

¹²²³ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 26 May 1939.

¹²²⁴ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 2 June 1939.

¹²²⁵ *North Hammersmith Citizen*, June 1939.

¹²²⁶ *West London and Hammersmith Gazette*, 19 May 1939; *West London Observer*, 19 May 1939.

¹²²⁷ *West London Observer*, 4 August 1939.

May to argued that the age range for compulsory service be extended for men and women to between 18 and 63, with any objectors being denied the privileges that Britain offered.¹²²⁸ His view on COs ignored the fact that freedom of speech was one of the privileges extended to citizens in Britain. Further expression of support appeared in the paper at the time of the anti-conscription meeting. On 26 May, Albert Maple argued that the international situation had forced Britain to introduce conscription.¹²²⁹ Bernard Jolivard supported Maple's argument and referred to the Harfluer speech in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which concludes 'cry God for Harry, England and St George'.¹²³⁰ The country needed to rally round to meet the challenge, as the situation had left it no choice.

Discussion then disappeared from the local papers in Fulham and Hammersmith until the international situation deteriorated in mid-August, when the focus was COs. Harry Granger urged tribunal judges to be lenient,¹²³¹ a view at odds with Bernard Jolivard, who showed his disdain for COs by describing them as 'traitors to their country'.¹²³² However, Charles Wilkin, who praised their courage for sticking to their convictions, defended objectors.¹²³³ Wilkin and his fellow defenders were criticised by 'Hot X Bun' for displaying communist leanings in their letters. He continued by arguing that to prove that they 'are the bravest class for having the pluck to state their minds', they should wear a white feather in their cap, like those given to people in the Great War believed to be shirking to see how the public responded to them.¹²³⁴

The two London boroughs displayed greater opposition than in Bedfordshire or Bolton. Labour controlled Fulham council and other bodies led the opposition, though the Young Communists welcomed conscription. It is unknown whether they retained this stance after the Nazi-Soviet Pact. As in the other geographical areas, there was concern over the threat to individual and civil liberties, whilst local news editorials led the support for conscription, arguing that it was vital to Britain's survival. However, compared with the other two areas, letter writers expressed less sympathy for COs and there is no evidence in the local newspapers that church ministers were prepared to support objectors. This is borne out by other sources consulted.

¹²²⁸ *West London Observer*, 5 May 1939.

¹²²⁹ *West London Observer*, 26 May 1939; Dennis, *Decision by Default*.

¹²³⁰ *West London Observer*, 2 June 1939.

¹²³¹ *West London Observer*, 18 August 1939.

¹²³² *West London Observer*, 1 September 1939.

¹²³³ *West London Observer*, 1 September 1939.

¹²³⁴ *West London Observer*, 1 September 1939; N. F. Gullace, 'White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War', *Journal of British Studies*, 36, 2 (1997): 178-206.

The 'national service' debate was sporadic until late 1938, as concentration had been on ARP recruitment. This changed after the Munich crisis revealed the actual state of Britain's defences. The crisis itself led to a huge rise in the number of volunteers offering their 'service' - primarily for ARP work - which itself became a subset of the voluntary national service campaign launched in January 1939. This had the backing of the major political parties due to the maintenance of the voluntary principle. However, a hint of compulsion remained present with the national and local debates prior to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939.

Voluntary service included volunteering to become part of the TA. As the various tables, have shown, recruitment for the TA followed a cyclical cycle, with peaks and troughs on an annual basis. The two months immediately following crises witnessed increased recruitment, though this was within the normal cycle. However, the numbers were higher. The exception to this came in February and March 1939 when recruitment was substantially higher in these months than during previous years. The voluntary national service campaign therefore did have some impact.

The German invasion marked a major turning point in attitudes to national service and conscription, a point of difference from the other two thematic chapters in which the Munich crisis had the greatest impact. The government continued the voluntary principle, even doubling the TA to try to provide a way for people to offer their service without the need to introduce compulsion. This continued the advocacy work undertaken by local committees in Bedfordshire and Bolton (no mention is made of a similar committee in Fulham and Hammersmith). Letters to the national press also differed. *The Times* published correspondence favouring conscription in March 1939, whilst the *Manchester Guardian* did not fully discuss the subject until late April following the introduction of conscription. The latter carried a wider range of views.

Bolton staged its own debate about national service and conscription, when the *Bolton Evening News* held a four-day letter competition at the end of March. The resulting postbag demonstrated that the matter was on the minds of people in the town. The letters published favoured conscription, which was in line with the editorial stance on the subject. Those against used arguments that would occur in other areas and at the national level, namely that conscription removed the freedom to choose how to serve, thereby infringing civil liberties. This debate continued following the announcement of conscription in April. Reports and letters detailing opposition to the decision mainly came from the Left and the labour movement. They feared the impact that it would have upon the trade union movement and that it would be the forerunner to

industrial conscription. However, there was an acceptance of the reasons behind the decision.

Evidence of the Labour Party attitude towards conscription emerges clear in Fulham and Hammersmith, where it was the constituency's newspapers' main topic in the two months following the decision. The local newspapers reported on the activities of Labour including a mass meeting but their editorial opinion was that the decision was in the best interests of the country. The reporting of opposition to conscription did not mean that there was no support for the measure, just that it was in less evidence. Part of the explanation for this was the two-month absence of William Astor, who supported the measure.

The newspaper editorials in Bedfordshire and Bolton resembled those in London that supported the introduction of conscription as a measure necessary to ensure British security. The selection of comments collected as part of a small *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* survey provides an indication of public feeling, but the size prevents it from being anything more than a brief snapshot. The comments and local opinion favoured the introduction of conscription. Opposition again came from the Left and labour movement but was less prevalent than in the other two geographical areas. The explanation for this lies in the political make-up of the county and the general weakness of the trade union movement within it.

One issue that surfaced at various points after April 1939 was the question of COs. Nationally, this question received greater attention in the *Manchester Guardian*. At a local level, this was a major debate for about eight weeks in the *Luton News*, following a letter from ministers of religion who were prepared to support COs, whilst seemingly ignoring the spiritual needs of those who joined up. The matter surfaced to a lesser extent in Bolton since there was greater emphasis on spiritual guidance. The question did not rise in the London boroughs, at least not in the local newspapers and other evidence sources consulted. Attitudes to COs differed when references to them occurred as the international situation deteriorated in August 1939. Two of the letter writers to the *West London Observer* displayed hostile attitudes to those who objected, though how reflective of opinion they were is difficult to assess due to a lack of data even from M-O surveys that were taking place in Fulham at the time.

Support for national service and the willingness to accept the necessity of compulsion increased as the international situation deteriorated. People accepted that Britain would eventually have to make a stand and needed to be prepared. Increased understanding of the international situation

was crucial to this acceptance despite objections to conscription on the grounds of infringement of personal and civil liberties. This was part of a wider transformation of British opinion, which had come to accept the need to resist Germany. It was not a war the people wanted to fight but one that they recognised the need to be prepared for.

Conclusion: Cometh the Hour, Cometh the Nation

The declaration of war on Sunday 3 September marked the end of a period that had seen the mood of the country change enough to accept a new conflict with Germany. This came about after the country had passed through several simultaneous phases: uninterested, under-informed, relieved, divided and united. These themes, used in chapter two, provide a sufficient framework for the conclusion, which revisits the questions posted in the introduction:

- What was local-level opinion?
- Was there a delay between national and local discussion of events?
- What regional variations were there?
- How did crises affect public opinion?
- Were there any turning points?

The change in public opinion and the 'public mood' was gradual, confirming Stanley Baldwin's assertion that a democracy lags two years behind a dictatorship when it comes to the public mood.¹²³⁵ Crises affected the pace of change, despite M-O data highlighting a mood of indifference towards foreign affairs. Of these, the Munich crisis marked the major turning point in the 'public mood'. Until this crisis developed fully in September 1938, the public paid little attention to foreign affairs despite brief flickers of interest following Eden's resignation and the Anschluss. These two events revealed a greater level of opposition to Chamberlain's policy than is normally acknowledged. Public meetings in Bolton during this period are a good example of the opposition. Further evidence of indifference comes from the Farnworth and West Fulham by-election campaigns, where, despite the candidates' focus on foreign affairs, the public were more interested in domestic affairs. Neither the Eden crisis nor the Anschluss brought the threat of war close to the ordinary people unlike the Munich crisis. This occurred after Chamberlain's first flight to Germany and the commencement of defence preparations, which roused people from their indifference towards ARP despite the efforts of local authorities and newspapers.

The flickers of interest referred to revealed a public that remained under-informed about foreign affairs and defence preparations. This is a natural occurrence given the lack of interest in the

¹²³⁵ R. Bassett, 'Telling the Truth to the People: The Myth of the Baldwin 'Confession'', *Cambridge Journal*, 11, 1 (1948): 86.

subject. However, this did not mean that opportunities were unavailable. The *Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph* and the *Bolton Evening News* both carried a daily page of news on international affairs. Local newspapers also recommended books on the subject and provided a letters column, which discussed a range of subjects. It is difficult to draw any precise conclusions on this point, as details about newspaper circulation and reading are unavailable. The lack of official information available during the Munich crisis added to this, leading some people interviewed by M-O to base their opinions upon gut reaction. This reaction, outside of the 'official' channels of public opinion is part of the 'public mood', or the 'popular mood' as Hinton refers to in his review of *England Arise!*¹²³⁶ This book stated that there was a relative indifference to the world outside of the domestic setting,¹²³⁷ a conclusion with which, based on the evidence presented, this thesis partly agrees with. The indifference to the outside world partly explains why local authorities struggled to recruit for ARP work. However, the attitudes of the local authorities towards this subject also had an impact.

The Munich crisis did not dispel indifference towards foreign affairs but made individuals more aware of the potential consequences of international events. The tension built up during the crisis released itself when the nation breathed a huge sigh of relief at the avoidance of war, a desire that was common throughout the period covered by this thesis. Expressions of relief manifested themselves in a variety of ways from cheering crowds to attendance at thanksgiving services on the Sunday following the Munich agreement. The latter was collected using communicant data found in Anglican service registers, thereby providing a different usage for this data. Relief collections to help Czech victims of the agreement, as reported in Fulham and Hammersmith, provided another method for expressing people's thanks at the avoidance of war.

Despite the sense of relief, the crisis made political divisions more acute. Conservatives supported Chamberlain and called for greater rearmament whilst avoiding public criticism of the Munich agreement. In contrast, Labour, whilst relieved at the avoidance of war, advocated a firm stance and a return to collective security. The political divisions extended to attitudes towards the Soviet Union. Conservatives, nationally and locally, urged caution whilst Labour and, in some cases, the Liberals advocated an alliance. The divisions on this issue became starker following the German invasion of Czechoslovakia and the British guarantee to Poland, when it became clear that Britain

¹²³⁶ Hinton, '1945 and the Apathy School': 266-73.

¹²³⁷ Fielding et al., *England Arise!* : 10.

required the co-operation of the Soviet Union to make this effective. In May, Chamberlain reluctantly approved the start of negotiations as his Cabinet began to turn against him. Despite this, Conservatives still urged caution and the need to avoid rushing into an alliance. The divisions surrounding the Soviet Union had links to another issue: the potential inclusion of Churchill and Eden in the Cabinet. This issue provided a clear distinction between the geographical areas, with debate only taking place in Bolton.

Rearmament and 'national service' divided the political parties but the deteriorating international situation provided an avenue for beginning to unite the country. Labour eventually accepted the need to rearm, though continued to campaign - as witnessed in the Farnworth and West Fulham by-elections - for the money to be spent on improving social conditions. However, 'national service', particularly the question of compulsory service and a national register, remained a point of division. The calls for its introduction following the Anschluss soon died off only to re-emerge after the Munich crisis had revealed the flaws in British defence preparations. Nationally, and to a lesser extent locally, Conservatives called for the introduction of a national register to assist with defence preparations. However, the government remained committed to the voluntary principle, a principle that Labour and most trade unions were willing to support when the national service campaign began in January 1939. Local authorities and newspapers also supported the campaign but remained fearful that compulsion might follow.

The divisions described above manifested themselves in relation to civil defence preparations (ARP, shelters and evacuation) and volunteering for service in the TA. The local authorities all approached civil defence preparations differently as the Munich crisis revealed. Part of this stemmed from differing interpretations behind the purpose of preparations, which letters to local newspapers also highlighted. Conservative (Bolton) and Liberal (Bedfordshire) authorities were far in advance of the two Labour authorities (Fulham and Hammersmith) at the time of the crisis. Political beliefs often had an impact on the attitudes displayed towards shelters. However, this tended to be at the national level. Despite their belief that deep shelters would provide better protection. Fulham and Hammersmith councils actively engaged with the deployment of Anderson shelters in 1939. This was in stark contrast to their earlier attitude towards ARP. By contrast, attitudes to evacuation depended upon each area's designation. This topic generated little in the way of public discussion in local newspapers and was of more concern to local officials.

The Munich crisis acted as a catalyst in helping the process of uniting the nation. Judging by the comments collected by M-O, it convinced the 'man in the street' that Hitler would have to be stopped. This was part of a trend noticeable in all three international crises, a process that was accelerated by Kristallnacht, though this did not make the public any more willing to accept Jewish refugees. However, opinions about the need to stop Hitler did not receive social sanction from elite opinion until March 1939 when the German invasion of Czechoslovakia provided definitive proof that Germany would not keep agreements. Existing work is therefore only partially correct in identifying March 1939 as a turning point, given that a noticeable underlying change began many months earlier and was visible at a local level.

The three major crises each created an increasing acceptance of the need for defence preparations. Once again, the Munich crisis had the greatest impact especially in the case of recruitment for civil defence. The state of ARP preparations was one of the great revelations of the crisis and with an increasing threat of war, local people came forward to volunteer their services. Both the Anschluss and Munich acted as a catalyst for some increase in recruitment for the TA but it was the launch of the national service campaign in January 1939 and the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 that led to a sharp increase in the number recruited nationally. However, in the case of the TA it is notable that Luton struggled to fill its vacancies, as demonstrated by the figures provided. The need to increase Britain's military forces eventually forced the government to introduce conscription, a decision that divided opinion but people understood the need for such a step to deter Germany. Taking all of this into account therefore, it can be argued that the Munich crisis helped to create the psychological framework required to unite the country into accepting that war might be a possibility, despite a lingering desire to avoid one. As Wing Commander Hodsoll told the Chief Constables Association in 1939:¹²³⁸

'I suppose the salient feature of the past year and the one which has had the most influence on the progress of air raid precautions was the September crisis. While progress was going along quite well before that crisis, afterwards it went ahead in a way, which nothing but a crisis could have produced. I think it brought home to all of us how real was the peril against which we were trying to defend ourselves and how suddenly that peril might materialise. It is always extremely difficult in this country to persuade the general public to do something

¹²³⁸ CAC: HDSL/4/44, Notes of an Address to the Chief Constables Association, 1939.

for its own protection unless it thinks that the peril is almost on its doorstep; then with one mind they will turn to and do anything in the world that they are asked.'

Hodsoll's words are only one example of how British attitudes changed. However, it provides a good summary of one of the conclusions of this thesis, namely that Britain accepted the need to prepare as the international situation deteriorated.

Of the questions posed at the start of the thesis and reiterated again in the conclusion, the evidence presented demonstrates that international events allowed public opinion and the 'public mood' to harmonise at national and local levels. Local expressions of opinion and related actions exhibited many of the features found at the national level, albeit with some variation regarding timing and content between the geographical case studies. Examples of differences include the role of church ministers in the conscription debate (Luton), whether Churchill should be included in the Cabinet (Bolton), and the initial opposition of the local authority to ARP (Fulham and Hammersmith). In terms of defence preparations, the Munich crisis spurred efforts in all the geographic case studies areas as it did nationally. The case studies demonstrate the interaction, despite public indifference, between foreign and domestic policy. This interaction allowed public opinion and the 'public mood' to re-orientate itself in reaction to international events.

The thesis adds value to the scholarly record by enhancing the national evidence base through the inclusion of local evidence. It has demonstrated that local authorities and, more importantly, local newspapers try to advocate what they believe to be best for local people. From the case studies, the best example of this is the *Bolton Evening News*, which strongly supported the need for Britain to prepare, encouraged participation in local defence preparations, and opposed Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. Therefore, local newspapers fulfilled one of their primary functions, namely reflecting the area that they served. The inclusion of local evidence suggests that further research of a similar nature is required, especially relating to the Munich crisis, for a truly national synthesis of this period to develop. M-O and local newspapers are essential for this research. Additionally, a study of the totality of the 1938 and 1939 by-elections is required to assess the importance of foreign affairs in the interface between political elite with the electorate. It would provide a further test of the M-O finding that domestic affairs were more important to voters than international ones. Again, this study would require extensive use of local newspapers thereby confirming Secker's

finding about the importance of local newspapers in the study of international affairs.¹²³⁹

In conclusion, the thesis highlights that Britain, despite entering the conflict reluctantly, eventually did so with a relative unity of purpose. The 'public mood' was one that put the greater good first. However, it would take the fall of Dunkirk and the intensification of the fighting, as it had done in the Great War, for the British people to accept the need for the preparations that they had hitherto been indifferent towards.

¹²³⁹ Secker, 'Newspapers and Historical Research':178-85.

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- Bolton United Patternmakers' Association
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Appendix 1: Prominent People

This is a brief guide to people mentioned in the text. It has been assembled using the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) and other sources. Those obtained from the DNB have a full citation in the appropriate section of the bibliography.

Joseph Addison (1879 – 1953). British minister to Prague from 1930-1936.

A. V. Alexander (1885-1965). Labour MP and supporter of collective security. Opponent of appeasement.

Sir John Anderson (1882-1958). Former Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office and Lord Privy Seal.

David Astor (1912-2001). Son of Lord Astor. Journalist, who was a writer for the *Observer*.

William Astor (1907-1966). MP for East Fulham, 1935-1945. Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sir Samuel Hoare.

Clement Attlee (1883-1967). Labour leader from 1935 to 1951. MP for Limehouse.

Robin Barrington-Ward (1891-1948). Deputy and later editor of *The Times*.

Vernon Bartlett (1894-1983). Journalist and independent MP for Bridgwater.

Lord Beaverbrook (1879-1964). Newspaper proprietor, owner of the *Daily Express* and *Evening Standard*.

Georges Bonnet (1889-1973). French foreign minister in 1938-1939.

Robert Boothby (1900-1986). Conservative MP for East Aberdeenshire and anti-Appeasement.

Ernest Brown (1881-1962). Minister for Labour and National Liberal MP for Leith.

Leslie Burgin (1887-1945). National Liberal MP for Luton. Minister of Transport 1937-1939 and Minister of Supply 1939-1940.

Richard Austen (Rab) Butler (1902-1982). Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from February 1938 to 1941. Conservative MP for Saffron Walden.

Laurence Cadbury (1889-1982). Chocolate manufacturer and owner of the *News Chronicle*.

Sir Alexander Cadogan (1884-1968.) Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office 1938-1945.

Robert Cecil (1893-1972). Politician and leader of the League of Nations Union.

Neville Chamberlain (1869 – 1940). Chancellor of the Exchequer (1931-1937) and British Prime Minister 1937 to 1940. Conservative MP for Birmingham Ladywood.

Count Ciano (1903-1944). Italian foreign minister from 1939-1943.

Sir Geoffrey Cox (1910-2008). Former foreign correspondent with the *Daily Express*.

Winston Churchill (1874-1965). British wartime Prime Minister and strong critic of Chamberlain. Conservative MP for Epping.

Cyril Cobb (1861-1938). Conservative MP for West Fulham.

J. D. Cooke (1879-1949). Conservative MP for Hammersmith South.

Alfred Duff Cooper (1890-1954). Conservative MP for St George's Westminster, who resigned over the Munich agreement.

Viscount Cranborne (1893-1972). Conservative peer who resigned in February 1938 at the same time as Anthony Eden.

Sir Stafford Cripps (1889-1952). Lawyer and Labour MP for Bristol East. Founder of the Socialist League.

Hugh Dalton (1887-1962). Labour MP for Bishop Auckland and opponent of Appeasement.

Rhys Davies (1877-1954). Labour MP for Westhoughton.

Geoffrey Dawson (1877-1944). Editor of *The Times*.

Edouard Daladier (1884-1970). Three times Prime Minister of France.

Henry Durant (1902-1982). Opinion pollster and founder of the British Institute for Public Opinion.

William Eady (n.d.). Under-secretary of the Air Raid Precautions department.

Anthony Eden (1897-1977). Foreign secretary 1935-8. Conservative MP for Leamington Spa.

Cyril Entwistle (1887-1974). Conservative MP for Bolton.

William Gallacher (1881-1965). Communist MP for West Fife.

James Garvin (1868-1947). Journalist and editor of *The Observer*.

Auckland Geddes (1879-1954). Minister for National Service during the First World War and later chairman of the mining company Rio Tinto.

Victor Gollancz (1893-1967). Founder of the Left Book Club.

Count Dino Grandi (1895-1988). Italian Ambassador to Britain 1932-9.

Arthur Greenwood (1880-1954). Deputy Labour leader during the 1930s. MP for Wakefield.

Edward Grigg (1879-1955). Conservative MP for Altrincham and opponent of appeasement.

Maurice Hankey (1877-1963). Civil servant and Cabinet Secretary.

Lord Halifax (1881-1959). Former viceroy of India and British Foreign Secretary, 1938-1940.

Tom Harrisson (1911-1976). Ornithologist and co-founder of Mass Observation.

John Haslam (1878-1940). Conservative MP for Bolton.

Konrad Henlein (1898-1945). Leader of the Sudeten German Party during the 1930s.

Sir Neville Henderson (1882-1942). British Ambassador to Germany 1937-9.

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). German Chancellor from 1933 to 1945.

Sir Samuel Hoare (1880-1959). Secretary of State for India 1931-5, Foreign Secretary 1935 and Home Secretary 1937-9. Conservative MP for Chelsea

Colonel Hossbach (1894-1980). Aide to Adolf Hitler.

Sir Thomas Keens (1870-1953). Liberal leader of Bedfordshire County Council.

Ivone Kirkpatrick (1897-1964). British diplomat based in Germany during 1930s. Upon his return to London in 1939, he recognised the need to resist the Nazis.

Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864-1945). Archbishop of Canterbury.

Alan Lennox-Boyd (1904-1983). Conservative MP for Mid Bedfordshire. Appointed as a junior minister to the Ministry of Labour in 1938.

Maxim Litvinov (1876-1951). Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs until May 1939.

Thomas Lodge (1905-1994). Prospective Liberal candidate for Bedford in the late 1930s and later Labour MP for Bedford.

Charles Madge (1912-1996). Sociologist and co-founder of Mass Observation.

Ivan Maisky (1884-1975). Soviet Ambassador to London.

Geoffrey Mander (1882-1962). Liberal MP for Wolverhampton East.

Arthur Mann (1876-1972). Editor of the *Yorkshire Post* and opponent of appeasement.

Vyacheslav Molotov (1890-1986). Became Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs in May 1939.

Herbert Morrison (1888-1965). Labour MP for Hackney South and leader of the London County Council.

Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) Italian head of government from 1922 to 1943.

Philip Noel-Baker (1889-1982). Labour MP for Derby (DNB).

Harold Nicolson (1886-1968). Diplomat and National Labour MP for Leicester West.

Henry Page-Croft (1881-1947). Conservative MP who opposed appeasement.

Henry Pownall (1887-1961). Chief of the General Staff.

Denis Pritt (1887-1972). Labour MP for Hammersmith North.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945). President of the United States, 1933 to 1945.

Guy Rowson (1883-1937). Labour MP for Farnworth.

Lord Runciman (1870-1949). Liberal politician and leader of the Runciman mission to Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Kurt Schuschnigg (1897-1977). Chancellor of Austria 1934 to 1938.

Arthur Seyss-Inquart (1892-1946). Austrian Nazi who played an influential role during the Anschluss.

Sir John Simon (1873-1954). Liberal politician. Foreign Secretary 1931-1935, Home Secretary 1935-1937 and Chancellor of the Exchequer 1937-1940. National Liberal MP for Spen Valley.

Sir Archibald Sinclair (1890-1970). Liberal MP for Caithness and Sutherland, and Liberal leader in the 1930s.

J. A. Spender (1862-1942). Journal editor and writer.

Joseph Stalin (1878-1953). Leader of the Soviet Union.

Michael Stewart (1906-1990). Prospective Labour candidate for East Fulham and later Foreign Secretary.

John Stourton (1899-1992). Conservative MP for Salford South.

Edith Summerskill (1901-1980). Medical practitioner and Labour MP for West Fulham.

Helena Swanwick (1864-1939). Suffragist and former chair of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

R H Tawney (1880-1962). Economic historian.

William Temple (1881-1944). Archbishop of York and later Archbishop of Canterbury.

George Tomlinson (1890-1952). Labour MP for Farnworth from 1938.

Ronald Tree (1897-1976). Conservative MP for Halborough and opponent of appeasement.

Joachim Von Ribbentrop (1893-1946) German Ambassador to Britain 1936 to 1938, and German Foreign Minister 1938-1945.

Adam Von Trott (1909-1944). Lawyer and opponent of the Nazi regime.

Sir Richard Wells (1879-1957). Conservative MP for Bedford 1922-45.

Henry Wickham Steed (1871-1956). Journalist and former editor of *The Times*.

Appendix 2: Letter writers to local newspapers

Bedford and District Daily Circular

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
A K G Brown	19/11/38	1	1
Norman Mickle	04/04/39	1	
F Powell	10/09/38	1	1
W Faulkner	31/05/38	1	

Bedfordshire Standard

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Norman Mickle	19/11/37, 7/4/39,	2	1
G. H. Keighly- Bell	05/05/39	1	
C. W.	7/10/38, 12/5/39	2	
Non-party'	09/09/38	1	

Bedfordshire Times

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
28'	19/05/39	1	
A Braggins	19/05/39	1	
A. A. K. Swannell	21/01/38	1	
A. Nelson	02/06/39	1	1
A. W. Sanders	11/11/38, 3/3/39, 14/4/39, 28/4/39	4	2
Air raid warden'	04/11/38	1	
air warden'	14/04/39	1	
Air-raid Warden'	06/01/39	1	1
Air-warden'	10/03/39	1	
An unemployed Bedfordian	24/02/39	1	
Anxious'	04/11/38	1	
Baronesse von der Goltz	11/03/38	1	
C. R. Yuille-Smith	6/1/39, 21/4/39	2	
C.W.'	18/2/38, 7/10/38	2	
Conscript'	16/06/39	1	
D. V. Wallace	07/07/39	1	
Dorothy Demarest	11/11/38	1	
E. A. Richards	23/9/38, 14/10/38, 13/1/39, 24/3/39, 31/3/39, 7/4/39	6	2
E. Dunstan	31/03/39	1	
E F Hall	06/01/39	1	
E H Strelley	07/10/38	1	
Facta non verba'	10/12/38	1	
H C Bishop	17/12/38	1	
Marquess of Tavistock	6/5/38, 3/12/38	2	
Edwin Griffiths	07/04/39	1	
Ernest A Cave	23/06/39	1	
Ewart K Martell	20/01/39	1	1
Ex-service'	15/04/38	1	
F Yuille-Smith	25/11/38, 9/12/38, 24/2/39	3	
F Powell	13/1/39, 14/4/39	2	1
Fifty-fifty	31/12/37	1	
Frank Summerford	16/9/38, 28/10/38	2	

Bedfordshire Times continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
G Dunstan	07/10/38	1	
G F Symonds	31/03/39	1	1
G H Moore	20/01/39	1	1
Geo H Hopkinson	18/02/38	1	1
H A B Salmond	25/02/38	1	1
H A Young	4/3/38, 28/4/39	2	1
H H Bennett	24/02/39	2	
Horace Fort	14/07/39	1	
Inquirer	26/05/39	1	
J B Scrivenor	02/12/38	1	
J E Goudge	30/09/38	1	
J Rangeley	10/03/39	1	
L Nelson	23/06/39	1	
Live and let live	04/11/38	1	
Materfamilias	26/05/39	1	
Mons	17/03/39	1	
M E Burroughs	17/02/39	1	
Norman Mickle	19/11/37, 10/12/38, 17/12/38, 6/1/39, 7/4/39	5	
Nothing doing	08/04/38	1	
One who has helped	07/10/38	1	
Peercy Craddock	17/03/39	1	
R A Walker	3/2/39, 17/2/39, 7/4/39	3	1
R Britton	14/1/38, 28/1/39	2	
Realist	7/10/38, 4/11/38, 2/6/39	3	
S R Wells	31/12/37	1	
T Lodge	21/10/38, 4/11/38, 2/12/38, 31/3/39, 14/7/39	5	3
W J Terry	17/12/38	1	
W Larman	7/1/38, 31/3/39	2	
W P Meldrum	28/04/39	1	
W T Hobkirk	19/05/39	1	
W Eastwood	09/06/39	1	
What about it	13/05/38	1	

Bedfordshire Times and Standard

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
A Nelson	25/08/39	1	
Another householder	18/08/39	1	
Political student	18/08/39	1	
R R Stokes	18/08/39	1	1
Still wondering	28/07/39	1	
T Lodge	21/7/39, 4/8/39, 25/8/39	3	2
T S Kenwick-Cox	18/08/39	1	1

Beds and Herts Evening Telegraph

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
A Shaw	21/03/39	1	
L C Turner	24/04/39	1	
F L Kerran	20/10/38	1	
Querish	22/11/38	1	
Unconvinced	18/10/38, 24/10/38	2	

Bolton Evening News

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
16 year old	03/04/39	1	
20 years old	08/05/39	1	
26 year old Boltonian	5/10/38, 12/10/38, 16/2/39	3	
1911	12/10/38, 14/10/38, 19/10/38	3	
1914	10/10/38, 13/10/38	2	2
11511	21/10/38	1	
A thankful housewife	05/10/38	1	
A true Briton	07/10/38	1	
A B Hilton	03/10/38	1	
A B	23/1/39, 24/1/39	2	
A Booth	1/9/38, 6/9/38, 9/9/38, 5/10/38, 10/1/39, 11/1/39	6	4
A Connell	30/03/39	1	
A Fawcett	25/2/38, 1/3/38, 23/3/38	3	
A Haggas Bryan	05/04/39	1	
A Hindley	05/10/38	1	
A M Rawcliffe	06/04/39	1	
A P Jonhson	03/04/39	1	
ARP'	18/06/38	1	
ARP warden's wife	02/02/39	1	
Air raid shelter construction company	09/01/39	1	
Alan Bird	30/3/39, 2/5/39	2	
Alan Booth	12/10/38	1	
Alan Ormond	14/3/38, 12/9/38, 17/5/39	3	
Alf Gillett	3/4/39, 21/4/39, 25/8/39	3	1
Alfred E Holt	04/03/38	1	
An Englishwoman	04/10/38	1	1
Anno	19/12/38	1	1
Another young un	25/01/39	1	
Another ARP volunteer	06/09/38	1	
Another critic	08/04/39	1	
Another Englishwoman	04/10/38	1	
Another Ex-lieutenant	21/10/38	1	1

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Another ratepayer	28/02/38	1	1
Anxious'	18/03/38	1	1
Anything doing	18/03/38	1	
Apprehensive	14/10/38	1	
Arther Freebairn	04/04/39	1	
Arthur Giddens	04/04/39	1	
Arthur Gregory	30/03/39	1	1
Arthur Holden	05/10/38	1	
Austin E Kavanagh	26/9/38, 7/2/39, 10/2/39	3	3
B Leackley	25/02/38	1	1
B A C	30/03/39	1	
Barnacle	16/05/39	1	
Beachcomber	01/03/38	1	
Betty Lane	30/09/38	1	
Bommerang	08/04/38	1	
Brittania	30/09/1938, 31/3/39	2	
Briton	20/09/38	1	1
Brittanica Qua	04/10/38	1	
Brown hat	30/03/39	1	
C B Abbatt	22/06/39	1	
C H Ashwell	18/02/38	1	
C Hepburn	15/04/39	1	1
C N Green	12/04/39	1	1
Candida	05/10/38	1	
Ceres	4/3/38, 31/3/38	2	
Chamberlain supporter	05/10/38	1	
Charles L White	26/01/38	1	
Cheerio	20/10/38, 24/10/38	2	
Consideration	05/10/38	1	
Cromwell	04/10/38	1	
Cyril Eaves	16/09/38	1	
Cyril Entwistle	01/03/38	1	1

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
D H	06/10/38	1	
D T	24/09/38	1	1
Democrat	24/3/38, 2/9/38	2	
Disheartened British	01/10/38	1	1
Domini	20/12/38, 23/12/38, 17/7/39	3	2
Duped	12/05/39	1	
Dwellers in Mesech	29/03/38	1	
E A Ashmore	19/05/39	1	
E C Deakin	02/02/39	1	
E Clarke	8/5/39, 12/5/39	2	
E G	03/11/38	1	
E Greenhalgh	11/01/39	1	1
E Jones	04/04/39	1	
E Makinson	15/12/38	1	
Economy	01/03/38	1	1
D V Wallace	06/01/38	1	
E S	11/01/38	1	
Pax	11/01/38	1	
Edmund Fletcher	31/03/39	1	
Edward Fox	05/05/39	1	
Edward Jackson	30/03/39	1	
Eileen Knowles	05/10/38	1	1
Elector	22/03/38	1	
Ernest A Cave	03/10/38	1	
Ernest Longton	3/5/39, 5/5/39	2	
Etc	22/03/38	1	
Eva Thornley	05/10/38	1	1
Ex post facto	25/02/38	1	1
Ex-ariman	30/03/39	1	
Ex-corporal	20/10/38	1	1
Ex-lieutenant	20/10/38	1	1
Ex-sereant	17/03/38	1	

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Ex-serviceman	25/03/38	1	
F King	31/03/39	1	
F Knott	03/05/39	1	
F A Boardman	05/10/38	1	
F G Boyle	22/02/38	1	
F P S Pritchard	15/03/39	1	
F Youn	04/04/39	1	
F M	27/09/38	1	
Fair play	4/3/38, 18/3/38, 1/5/39	3	1
Farnworthian	25/03/38	1	
Foresight	17/05/39	1	
Frank Parr	31/03/39	1	
Fred Ashton	30/03/39	1	
Fred Hilton	03/04/39	1	
Fred Smith	06/04/39	1	
Frederick Leech	14/10/38	1	
G	11/07/38	1	
G B J Athoe	10/03/39	1	
G H Higginson wife	03/02/39	1	
G R K	03/10/38	1	
G R Stanaway	06/05/39	1	
G Taylor	14/10/38	1	
Geo Holt	08/04/39	1	
George Johnson	31/03/39	1	
George Lansbury	14/07/39	1	
Getting tired	25/02/38	1	
Grateful	01/10/38	1	
Grocer	17/05/38	1	
H Crook	30/03/39	1	
H H	03/04/39	1	
H Higham	28/01/38	1	
H J Pollitt	29/03/38	1	

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
H K Holt	31/3/38, 7/10/38, 17/10/38, 3/2/39	4	1
H M Brook	06/02/39	1	
H Price	15/05/39	1	
HT	21/9/38, 21/12/38, 21/4/39	3	2
HE knows me but I don't know him	16/12/38	1	1
Head warden No.61 sector	21/10/38	1	1
Heatonian	5/5/39, 10/5/39, 15/5/39	3	
Henry Leavis	06/10/38	1	1
Herbert Price	02/05/39	1	
Honest policy	12/12/38	1	
House of commons	01/03/38	1	
Housewife	07/10/38	1	
Inquisitive	17/03/38	1	
Interested	22/02/38	1	
Iris	04/04/39	1	
J Wilcockson	26/01/38	1	
J A Howarth	30/03/39	1	
J A Oakes	09/05/39	1	
J Arnold	04/04/39	1	1
J B O'Hara	24/3/38, 21/9/38, 27/9/38, 4/10/38, 14/11/38, 10/2/39, 6/5/39,	7	6
J E R	11/10/38, 20/12/38	2	2
J G Bradshaw	31/03/39	1	
J H	03/04/39	1	
J L W	22/07/38	1	
J M Grove	23/03/38	1	1
J Maginnb	31/03/39	1	
J Morris	01/05/39	1	1
J Oliver Holdsworth	16/11/38	1	1
J S Whiteham	06/04/39	1	
J S Whitehead	04/10/38	1	
J Scanlon	04/03/38	1	
J Taylor	01/04/39	1	

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
J W D	11/10/38, 6/4/39	2	1
J W Knight	03/04/39	1	
J W	21/12/38	1	
J P H	22/03/38	1	
James C Bullock	25/05/39	1	
James Nicholson	03/04/39	1	
James P Leyland	22/10/38	1	
Jeff	13/03/39	1	
John Burke	24/3/38, 4/4/39	2	
John Harrison	24/03/38	1	
John Jones	08/05/39	1	
John Mather	30/03/39	1	
John Merritt	30/03/39	1	1
John S Whitehead	13/12/38	1	
John Taylor	03/04/39	1	
Jos Hughes	08/03/39	1	1
Joesph Jones	28/01/38	1	
L Bentley	27/06/39	1	
L M Hagan	05/10/38	1	1
L S Amery	07/03/39	1	
L W	19/10/38	1	
Lansburyite	07/10/38	1	
Latham Boardman	15/05/39	1	
League democrat	14/11/38	1	
League well wisher	01/04/38	1	
Leonard J Hilton	04/04/39	1	
Les	04/04/39	1	
Leslie Smith	04/04/39	1	
Let's think	20/07/39	1	
Lex Christiana	04/05/39	1	
Liberal	24/3/38, 31/3/38, 2/9/38, 15/9/38, 19/9/38	5	
Looking forward	10/10/38	1	

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
M Jones	31/03/39	1	1
Maisie Tompson	04/04/39	1	
Majorie Hammersley	7/6/38, 9/6/38, 13/9/38, 16/9/38	4	1
Man zero	24/09/38	1	
Mary Wood	31/03/39	1	
Mavis Tate	13/07/39	1	
Militiaman	03/07/39	1	
Minx	15/05/39	1	1
Mons Wallah	24/07/39	1	1
Mother of a 20 years old	01/05/39	1	
Mother	03/04/39	1	
N C Charnley	03/04/39	1	1
N Kempster	31/03/39	1	1
N R	01/04/38	1	
Naturalis	07/10/38	1	
No more	18/05/39	1	1
No pasaran	03/10/38	1	1
Nora A Longworth	3/4/39, 2/5/39	2	1
Norman M Jacobs	06/07/39	1	
Old Contemptible	24/02/38	1	
Olive Hawkst	26/01/38	1	
One in full work	16/03/38	1	
One of the forgotten ex-servicemen	08/11/38	1	1
P H	28/09/38	1	
P Hicks	08/11/38	1	1
P R Grove	06/04/39	1	
Pax	3/11/37, 20/6/38, 20/10/38	3	
Peace-lover	10/05/39	1	
Pip Esses	07/10/38	1	
Politicus	14/09/38	1	
Private	31/03/39	1	
Progress	07/10/38	1	

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Proletarian	10/10/38	1	
Quantum Sufficit	02/02/38	1	
R C	31/03/39	1	
R C Worsley	18/07/39	1	
R H Hodson	24/02/38	1	
R R Hoare	14/4/38, 13/10/38, 4/1/39	3	1
R R Stokes	09/08/39	1	1
Ratepayer	25/2/38, 9/3/39	2	2
Ratepayer volunteer air warden	25/02/38	1	
Rawdon Hoare	9/2/39, 3/5/39	2	
Reader	2/9/38, 11/1/39	2	2
Realist	3/3/38, 25/3/38, 29/3/38, 8/2/39, 10/2/39	5	2
Reg Crowshaw	07/10/38	1	1
Reginald Compton	04/04/39	1	
Rev A Fawcett	21/3/38, 25/3/38	2	
Rev M E Dabi	8/11/38, 5/5/39	2	1
Robert Davies	22/9/38, 26/9/38, 20/4/39	3	3
Robert Evans	03/10/38	1	
Roland G Andrew	21/3/38, 24/3/38, 13/10/38, 27/9/38, 17/10/38	5	2
S A	09/03/39	1	1
S Ashton	23/03/38	1	
S J	05/10/38	1	1
S Skelhorn	02/02/38	1	
S W R	10/10/38	1	
S W	31/03/39	1	
S Walsh	28/9/38, 5/10/38, 18/10/38, 10/11/38, 18/11/38, 18/10/38, 1/5/39	6	
Salad	22/12/38	1	1
Scotty	25/3/38, 31/3/38	2	1
Special 197	22/10/38	1	
Spinster	27/09/38	1	
Stanley Fisher	20/10/38	1	
Still out	13/10/38	1	

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
T Belshaw	20/09/38	1	
T Bithell	05/05/39	1	1
T C	24/02/38	1	
T H	6/10/38, 15/12/38, 27/3/39, 18/7/39	4	1
T Heyes	04/04/39	1	
T Hoban	24/06/39	1	1
T W Berry	31/03/39	1	
T W D	23/2/38, 28/2/38, 19/4/39	3	3
T Wrigley	31/03/39	1	
Thankful	01/10/38	1	
The ned justifies	20/10/38	1	
Think again	17/07/39	1	1
Think twice	13/07/39	1	1
Thomas Crook	31/03/39	1	1
Thomas Lever	22/3/39, 24/3/39, 27/3/39	3	
Thomas Scowcroft	31/03/39	1	
Thomas E Utley	18/10/38	1	1
Three women ambulance drivers	12/05/39	1	1
Tom Binks	2/9/38, 5/9/38, 8/9/38, 13/9/38, 3/10/38, , 6/12/38, 9/12/38, 24/1/39, 1/5/39	9	7
Too old at fifty	01/03/38	1	1
Tory	10/3/38, 9/11/38, 16/12/38	3	1
Trevor	05/10/38	1	
Truth-seeker	04/10/38	1	1
Under 25	31/03/39	1	
Under thirty	03/04/39	1	
United we stand	13/10/38, 27/1/39	2	
V Greenwood	22/11/37	1	
Vae Victus	8/5/39, 10/5/39	2	
Voluntary	04/04/39	1	
Volunteer, Great War	05/10/38	1	
W B	11/08/39	1	1
W Barnes	22/09/38	1	1

Bolton Evening News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
W E A Harris	27/01/38	1	
W E Molyneux	3/4/39, 6/4/39	2	
W F Narroway	31/03/39	1	
W Faulkner	21/10/38	1	1
W eere	7/3/38, 21/10/38	2	
W H Church	12/10/38	1	1
W J Havelock-Davidson	16/9/38, 4/10/38, 11/11/38, 6/4/39, 24/4/39	5	
W R H	07/10/38	1	
W R	24/03/38	1	
W S	7/10/38, 21/12/38, 19/7/39, 25/7/39	4	1
W Taylor	10/03/39	1	1
Wait and see	01/03/38	1	
Walter Atkinson	17/03/39	1	1
Walter Longshaw	04/04/39	1	
War weary	05/10/38	1	1
War-baby	26/9/38, 30/9/38	2	
Which shall it be	06/10/38	1	
William Gledhill	03/04/39	1	
William S Hulton	04/04/39	1	
William Schober	20/07/39	1	1
William R Booth	31/03/38	1	
Wm R J Higett	26/01/38	1	
Woman reader	05/10/38	1	
Woogle	08/11/38	1	1
Y Z	24/01/39	1	1
Young ARP	22/10/38	1	1

Bolton Journal and Guardian

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Air raid shelter construction company	13/01/39	1	
H Higginson	10/02/39	1	
W J Havelock-Davidson	7/10/38, 28/04/39	2	1
T S	21/04/39	1	
P B Gibson	14/04/39	1	
C Hepburn	21/04/39	1	
A Booth	07/10/38	1	
1914	14/10/38	1	1
Ex-serviceman	01/04/38	1	
Thos Halstead	18/03/38	1	
Rev A Fawcett	04/03/38	1	
John Haslam	04/03/38	1	1
J P H	25/03/38	1	
Inquisitive	18/03/38	1	
Fair Play	11/03/38	1	
One who did his bit	12/11/37	1	
J A Russell	05/11/37	1	

Fulham Chronicle

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Clare Jerwood	11/11/38	1	
E W Whitely	21/04/39	1	
Herbert Morrison	07/10/38	1	
T M Cox	11/11/38	1	

Horwich and Westhoughton Journal and Guardian

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Weshoughtonian	24/2/39, 24/3/39	2	
W Goom	17/03/39	1	
J Unsworth	17/03/39	1	

Luton News

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
A German Jew	15/12/38	1	
A Harpenden mother	02/02/39	1	1
A Kendall	09/02/39	1	1
A settler volunteer	31/03/39	1	
A Shaw	17/3/38, 19/5/38, 22/9/38, 24/11/38, 8/12/38, 22/12/38, 12/1/39	7	5
A Turnball	20/10/38	1	1
A C B	01/12/38	1	
A F Webber	25/05/39	1	
A J Flynn	20/04/39	1	
A R Hammond	22/09/38	1	1
A W Merry	24/11/38	1	1
ARP'	17/08/39	1	1
A R W 22	04/05/39	1	
Alice Cain	01/06/39	1	
Alive	15/06/39	1	
Another wartime NCO	02/02/39	1	1
Arundel Road	25/05/39	1	
Assistant	27/04/39	1	1
B J Baker	25/05/39	1	
B V Woolcock	25/05/39	1	1
Bertha Weber	15/12/38	1	
Bombproof	19/01/39	1	
British Jew	29/12/37, 1/12/38, 15/12/38, 29/12/38, 26/1/39	5	1
C R Low	01/12/38	1	
Calm reason	22/12/38, 2/2/39	2	
Candid correspondent	13/01/38	1	
Candidus	01/06/39	1	1
Charles Hart	09/02/39	1	
Conscript'	18/5/39, 1/6/39,	2	1
D Cross	29/09/38	1	
D M K Marendaz	31/08/39	1	
Democrat	03/03/38	1	

Luton News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Derek Seebohm	06/10/38	1	
Discouraged	24/03/38	1	
Dorothy Barrett	27/10/38	1	
Doulas E Smith	01/12/38	1	
E E Goldsworthy	25/05/39	1	
E m Walters	24/03/38	1	
Edgar Keeble	25/5/39, 8/6/39	2	1
Edgar A Shaw	13/07/39	1	
Ella Bradley	25/5/39, 8/6/39	2	
English Artan	19/12/38, 22/12/38	2	
Ex-service	24/3/38, 12/5/38, 18/5/39	3	
Ex-service woman	15/12/38	1	
Ex-serviceman	13/07/39	1	1
Ex-soldier	08/06/39	1	
F C Bright	13/10/38, 27/10/38	2	2
F E Heathfield	01/09/38	1	
F E Huckle	01/06/39	1	1
F E J	19/01/39	1	
F G Brownson	20/10/38, 3/11/38	2	1
F G Smith	04/05/39	1	
F H C	16/03/39	1	
F H Fraser	01/09/38	1	
F J C	26/01/39	1	1
F L Kerran	31/3/38, 27/10/38	2	
F m French	08/06/39	1	
F O Brownson	26/01/39	1	
Fair Play	02/02/39	1	
Fifty-two	04/05/39	1	
First-nighter	19/01/39	1	
Frances L Welch	24/2/38, 3/3/38	2	
Frank Hunt	20/10/38	1	
Frank Rudd	13/10/38, 11/5/39, 25/5/39	3	

Luton News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
G Hyde	16/02/39	1	
G H Gee	25/05/39	1	
Guy Furnivall	11/05/39	1	1
H A F	12/05/38	1	1
H F outen	18/11/37	1	1
H S Knowles	10/11/38	1	1
H W Inglis	24/08/39	1	
H W S Wynter	20/10/38, 18/5/39, 1/6/39, 15/6/39	4	1
Had Some	24/03/38	1	1
Harold Knowles	11/11/37, 4/8/38	2	1
Hopeful	01/06/39	1	
I Watkin	02/12/37	1	
J Cauldwell	02/02/39	1	1
J Dandy	11/11/37	1	1
J E Cooper	16/03/39	1	1
J K Rice	23/3/39, 30/3/39, 6/4/39	3	2
J M Standing	27/07/39	1	
J R Cockburn	22/6/39, 6/7/39,	2	
J Sarna	01/12/38	1	
J W Hunt	22/06/39	1	
Jack Askwith	25/05/39	1	
John Aston	09/02/39	1	
John Burgoyne	05/01/39	1	
John W Allin	01/12/38	1	
Juggurtha	27/10/38, 23/2/39, 20/4/39, 25/5/39, 1/6/39, 8/6/39, 15/6/39, 22/6/39, 29/6/39, 13/7/39, 20/7/39	11	
Just quizzy	19/01/39	1	
K M Cherry	11/11/37	1	
Kathleen Hogg	06/10/38	1	
LA French	13/10/38	1	
L C Turner	24/2/38, 3/3/38, 7/4/38, 20/10/38, 9/3/39, 30/3/39, 29/6/39,	7	2
LD King	02/02/39	1	
L Hammersley	5/5/38, 19/5/38	2	

Luton News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Leonard A Smith	8/6/39, 13/7/39,	2	
Leonard A Payn	01/06/39	1	
Leslie C Brewer	06/04/39	1	
Leslie R Aldous	12/05/38	1	
Looking ahead	06/07/39	1	
Luton Parent	22/06/39	1	
Luton Reservist	27/07/39	1	
Margaret Sweby	21/04/38	1	
Mons star and bar	01/06/39	1	1
Nineteen	25/05/39	1	
Non-objector	01/06/39	1	
Norman Hill	25/05/39	1	
Not yet faded away	15/09/38	1	
Observant	06/10/38	1	
Observe	13/10/38	1	
P E T	25/05/39	1	
Pension	26/1/39, 2/2/39	2	
Percy S Bone	6/10/38, 30/3/39	2	1
Pro British	26/01/39	1	
Querish	24/11/38	1	
R D Wadlock	21/07/38	1	1
R F Halcomb	26/1/39, 2/2/39	2	2
R I Poirier	07/04/38	1	1
Rate payer	24/08/39	1	
Sanity	13/07/39	1	
Stewart Mills	9/2/39, 24/8/39	2	
Stumped	24/03/38	1	
Supposition	09/02/39	1	
T A Norwood	25/05/39	1	
T V Holmes	02/02/39	1	
Thomas Oakley	7/4/38, 14/7/38, 20/4/39	3	
Tom Smart	13/04/39	1	

Luton News continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Town proud	22/06/39	1	
Two sides to everything	08/06/39	1	
Unfit	05/05/38	1	
Veracity	29/12/38	1	
Video	01/06/39	1	
Virttuti non amrs fido	25/05/39	1	1
W H Howell	29/09/38	1	
W A G Box	18/05/39	1	1
W Lewis	11/05/39	1	
W Skinner	18/05/39	1	
W Hugo Hodgson	25/05/39	1	
W J Workman	10/3/38, 24/3/38, 12/5/38, 27/4/39, 8/6/39	5	
W S Donson	24/03/38	1	1
William H Thorne	02/02/39	1	
Wm Church	17/11/38	1	
WMJ Scott	04/05/39	1	
Y F	02/02/39	1	

West London and Fulham Gazette

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
T H Gibbs	11/03/38	1	1

West London and Hammersmith Gazette

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
E H Fraser	28/10/38	1	
E W Whitely	21/04/39	1	
C R Johns	28/10/38	1	
G F Davies	28/10/38	1	
W B Padger	21/10/38	1	
Ethel A Waite	24/06/38	1	
Herbert Morrison	20/01/39	1	
J Jacobs	31/03/39	1	

West London Observer

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
A man with a mop	04/03/38	1	
A real pal	28/10/38	1	
A E Culverhouse	10/03/39	1	
A E March	17/12/37	1	
A E Nowell	17/03/39	1	
A F Johnson	03/03/39	1	1
A P Jonhson	31/03/39	1	1
A R Harvey	18/11/38	1	
Air raid warden	07/07/39	1	
Albert Maple	7/10/38, 6/1/39, 13/1/39, 20/1/39, 24/2/39, 26/5/39,	6	4
Alfred J Hitchcock	25/08/39	1	
An ordinary citizen	10/02/39	1	
Another Hammersmith voter	18/03/38	1	1
Another peace-lover	02/12/38	1	1
Arthur Gee	26/5/39, 9/6/39	1	
Bernard Jolivard	18/3/38, 3/6/38, 29/7/38, 7/10/38, 6/1/39, 5/5/39, 19/5/39, 2/6/39, 28/7/39, 19/8/39, 1/9/39	12	7
C. M. Finn	26/06/38	1	
Chalres A Wilkin	2/6/39, 25/8/39	2	
Clara Frances Watts	18/11/38	1	
Collective Justice	22/07/38	1	
Co-operative	10/02/39	1	
Cyril Bacon	23/9/38, 30/9/38	2	
D C Corrie	19/05/39	1	
D V Wallace	10/06/38	1	
David H E Hurst-Hill	25/08/39	1	
Debunker	25/08/39	1	
Democrat	18/03/38	1	1
Diet et mon droit	12/11/37	1	
E Harvey Whittleton	03/03/39	1	
E I Daniel	18/11/38	1	
E J Harrison	23/9/38, 7/10/38	2	
E L Daniel	24/2/39, 9/6/39, 23/6/39, 25/8/39	4	

West London Observer continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
E Whittleton	31/03/39	1	
Elziabeth Chesson	25/03/38	1	
Elroy W Whiteley	20/01/39	1	
Ernest Heimann	23/09/38	1	
Ex-sergeant	03/03/39	1	
F E Marsh	11/11/38	1	
F J Ryan	26/08/38	1	
Francis Jackman	18/11/38	1	1
Frank Carter	25/03/38	1	
Frank E Raymond	13/1/39, 3/2/39	2	1
G athelstan Newall	01/09/39	1	
G D Best	17/02/39	1	1
G E Lee	27/05/38	1	
G Emanuel	04/11/38	1	
G F Green	13/5/38, 3/6/38	2	1
G Murray	19/05/39	1	
G N Marshall	26/05/39	1	
GP	30/6/39, 28/7/39	2	2
Geo W Metcalfe	22/04/38	1	
H Blackham	18/11/38	1	
H C Couxens	14/10/38	1	
H C	01/07/38	1	
H Chilton	03/02/39	1	1
H M	04/11/38	1	
Hammersmith Voter	4/3/38, 11/3/38,	2	
Hammersmith Worker	30/9/38, 7/10/38, 14/7/39, 21/7/39	4	1
Hammersmith Worm	21/04/39	1	
Hanns P Cemach	03/02/39	1	1
Harold W B Smith	05/05/39	1	
Harry E Granger	7/10/38, 4/11/38, 18/11/38, 25/11/38, 17/2/39, 3/3/39, 18/8/39	7	3
Henry Meulen	14/10/38, 18/11/38, 31/3/39	3	1
Hot X Bun	14/4/39, 1/9/39	2	1

West London Observer continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
J A Da Palma	28/04/39	1	
J Boam	24/3/39, 9/6/39	2	1
J G Pamment	23/09/38	1	
J Henry Twyford	22/7/38, 30/9/38, 4/11/38, 30/12/38	4	
J Stapledon Cohen	30/09/38	1	
Jessie Hunt	14/07/39	1	
John Hughes	23/09/38	1	
John Priest	14/10/38	1	
Josiah Oldfield	03/06/38	1	
Katherine N Watson	24/06/38	1	
Kathleen W Turner	12/08/38	1	
Kathlyn Oliver	25/08/39	1	
L Boy	19/10/38	1	
L Taddy Friend	8/4/38, 28/10/38	2	1
Leo Ginson	05/05/39	1	
Lest we foret	04/11/38	1	
Libertas	17/03/39	1	
Light Blue	23/12/38	1	1
Lionel J Hirst	27/1/39, 10/2/39	2	
M E L	11/11/38	1	
M E St George	04/03/38	1	
M S Pyke	01/07/38	1	1
Martin Matthew Walker	18/08/39	1	
Miles Carpenter	11/3/38, 3/6/38	2	1
Nightshirt	1/4/38, 15/7/38, 29/7/38, 11/11/38,	4	1
Not a peace at any price fanatic	17/12/37	1	
Old Age Pensioner	23/12/38	1	
P Brent	18/8/39, 23/6/39	2	2
P Mason	17/03/39	1	1
Pat Sloan	10/03/39	1	1
Peace Front	31/03/39	1	1
Peace-lover	25/11/38, 9/12/38	2	2

West London Observer continued

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Peter Garnett	24/12/37	1	
Puzzled	30/6/39, 14/7/39	2	
R Bennett	03/03/39	1	
R C belcher	24/02/39	1	1
R N Brousson	14/07/39	1	
R R Pallet	23/06/39	1	
Richard R Rice	07/04/39	1	1
Robert S Field	03/02/39	1	
Rose Gascoigne	12/05/39	1	
S A Cook	26/05/39	1	1
S P	07/04/39	1	
Sarah Kenton	13/01/39	1	
Sceptic	16/12/38	1	
Spiritus Asper	07/10/38	1	
T Funston	14/10/38, 21/10/38, 4/11/38, 18/11/38, 25/11/38, 30/12/38, 24/2/39, 31/3/39, 26/5/39	10	2
T H Graves-Lacey	24/03/39	1	
T J Parsons	14/10/38	1	
T Punston	03/02/39	1	
Ted Morris	30/9/38, 17/2/39, 31/3/39, 21/4/39	4	1
W Davis	21/10/38, 28/10/38	2	
W Parish	10/03/39	1	1
W H Church	04/11/38	1	
W Hali	14/10/38	1	
W M Leavold	27/5/38, 24/2/39, 24/3/39, 28/4/39, 18/8/39	5	
W M	10/03/39	1	1
W W astor	04/08/39	1	1
Walter Barsby	16/06/39	1	
William Leavold	2/12/38, 26/5/39, 16/6/39	3	
Wynne G Ashdown	25/02/38	1	
XYZ	18/3/38, 22/4/38, 9/12/3, 21/4/39, 9/6/39, 28/7/39, 25/8/39,	7	1

West London Post

Name	Date	Researched	Cited
Bob Pulling	06/01/39	1	
C Dobbs	10/02/39	1	
Harold W B Smith	10/02/39	1	1
J A Sparks	27/1/39, 10/2/39,	1	
John Hughes	02/06/39	1	
Sacrifice	03/02/39	1	
W H Church	03/03/39	1	