The Invention of International Crime
The Invention of International Crime
A Global Issue in the Making, 1881–1914

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Introduction

We live in the age of international crime. No longer is crime an issue for large cities or even national governments. Identity theft, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, terrorist attacks, human trafficking and financial fraud range across continents and hemispheres. News analysts, politicians and professors encourage us to grasp an internationalist view, to understand why crime belongs on the list of the world’s problems. Owing to modern technologies of communication and transportation, it seems clear that political instability, social divisions, pockets of poverty and ethno-religious conflicts anywhere jeopardise the security of people everywhere. Like climate change, turbulence in financial markets and public health threats, crime cannot be tackled by one government alone because our world has become so interconnected. But, perhaps we overestimate the novelty of our situation. Without a sense of history, it is difficult to see things in perspective. When did awareness of international crime begin? Where do we look to find the beginning?

More than 50 years ago, ‘[c]rime had clearly emerged within UN rhetoric as a social issue’. The United Nations’ interest began in 1947 when the Economic and Social Council placed crime on its agenda of social issues to be addressed. The council requested a report from the Social Commission on the prevention and treatment of offenders along with suggestions for ‘international action’. Three years later, the General Assembly passed a resolution for convening every five years a world congress on the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders. The first congress, in 1955, took place in Geneva with 521 delegates from 62 countries. UN measures concerning crime unfolded within the broader framework of ‘social defence’ which stressed the threat of crime to economic and social development. Crime was considered an impediment to world trade and as such ‘a social danger with international
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consequences’. Yet crime was an international issue even before this. UN interest in crime after the Second World War followed efforts during the interwar period taken by the League of Nations.¹

The League of Nations, which existed from 1919 until 1938, had several technical organisations which had to do with aspects of crime. These included permanent advisory committees on opium and other dangerous drugs, distribution of obscene literature and the white slave trade. The means by which young women entered into the international sex trade attracted the League’s attention from 1921 when it called the first international meeting on ‘white slavery’. Following this meeting, the League Council created an advisory committee to become known as the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children. White slavery was one of the leading social issues of the 1920s as evidenced by widespread interest in the League’s activities. The League’s 1927 Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children became an international bestseller (for a policy document) when its original print run of 5000 sold out within weeks. About this same time, Evelyn Waugh published his first novel, Decline and Fall, a comic satire about the white slave trade. Waugh could evoke humour out of such a grim subject matter because his readers were so familiar, perhaps even weary, of the anti-trafficking campaign.²

About the same time, police forces in Europe placed crime on the international agenda. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the wake of the Great War worried police in Vienna. The intermingling of peoples from the former Habsburg territories and social dislocation resulting from the conflict encouraged the ‘migration of criminals’ and the ‘development of transfrontier crime’. Police in the United States also worried about the international situation. In their attempt to enforce laws related to Prohibition, they contended with an unprecedented increase in organised crime involving operatives who made use of European connections.³ Mathieu Deflem shows how the threat of international crime supplied the police with a rationale for transnational cooperation. To justify the need for collaboration across national borders, the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) insisted that a new class of criminals had appeared in the wake of rapid social change and technological progress following the Great War. International police cooperation, enabled by the latest technologies for communication and transportation, presented an essential defence against this new generation of criminals: swindlers and forgers, hotel and railway thieves, white slave traders and drug traffickers. At the ICPC’s Vienna congress of 1923, participants advocated measures to
expedite extradition procedures and pursued communication through telegraph and radio. Crime was, then, already an international issue by the 1920s.

There are some good reasons for situating the internationalisation of crime from a moment in the nineteenth century. Inklings of globalisation can be seen in mid-century, when the ‘revolutionary change’ introduced by railways brought about a radical shift in behaviour and mentality. Susanne Karstedt describes how the construction of railway networks in Germany beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century brought about a ‘traffic revolution’ and radical changes in the time–space dimension of life. In Württemberg, industrialisation and urbanisation occurred more slowly than other German states, with Stuttgart the only major city. Nevertheless, railway construction began in 1845 and reached its maximum density within 30 years: the entire population had direct access by 1875. It brought increasing numbers of people together as strangers in termini and carriages but who also formed relationships. It was the first technology to have an immediate and equal impact on the lives of the population. Increased mobility and anonymity altered the patterns of interaction in society and social landscape in which violent crimes had been embedded.

In England, crime-fighting was one of the first uses for the electrical telegraph other than for management of the railway network. Before the telegraph, there was no means of sending a message faster than the fastest train, and the railway provided a sure ‘get away’ for evil-doers. But the installation of telegraph wires along the Paddington–Slough line allowed police forces to despatch information about suspects ahead of the train’s arrival. On 3 January 1845, John Tawell was apprehended by means of the new telegraphic communication. He had murdered his mistress in Slough, disguised himself in a brown great coat, and boarded a train to London. The authorities forwarded instructions to arrest a man ‘dressed like a Quaker’ to Paddington station where London police met the fugitive at the platform. Tawell’s arrest had been made possible by ‘the Victorian internet’ which established a globe-encircling network for communication. From the beginning, the telegraph was used for commercial purposes and news distribution; stock speculators and newspapers were the biggest customers. Virtually all of the scepticism, bewilderment and wonder associated with the internet—concerns about new forms of crime, adjustments in social mores, redefinition of business practises—had been experienced in the age of telegraphy.

It is also true that trains and telegraphs were not the only internationalising forces in this period. The formation of medical knowledge
provided for a shared understanding of criminal behaviour. Medicine as a means of enquiry yielded ‘state medicine’ in Germany, ‘legal medicine’ in France and Italy and ‘medical jurisprudence’ in Britain. Specialists in this field shared research findings with one another and produced books read by colleagues in other countries which led to wide diffusion of forensic science. Johann Ludwig Casper, professor of state medicine at the University of Berlin, produced a handbook in the mid-nineteenth century that was translated into French, Italian, Dutch and English. In Malta, Stefano Zerafa became in 1829 the first chair of forensic medicine at the University of Malta, and in 1869, the criminal court heard from three forensic experts—two professors from the university and the police physician in Valletta—concerning blood stains on the trousers of the accused. To support their testimony, the panel drew on their own microscopic analysis and cited English, German and French medico-legal texts.

The formation of medical knowledge also led to the emergence in the 1830s of a ‘global network’ concerned with prisoner reform and prison management. A transnational body of experts, typically trained in medicine, formed a professional discipline known as ‘prison science’. In the 1830s, the French government sent Gustave de Beaumont and Alexis de Tocqueville, and the British government sent William Crawford, to the United States to survey prisons. The German, Nikolaus Julius, who toured British prisons in the 1820s, also went to the United States on a prison tour in the 1830s. The reports they brought back supported a debate about prison management in Europe during the 1840s. International conferences took place in Frankfurt am Main in 1846 and Brussels in the following year. A modified form of the prison at Philadelphia, built in the north of London at Pentonville, became a model for prisons in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. This international network produced by the mid-nineteenth century a body of knowledge regarded as valid the world over.

But there are, I think, better reasons for regarding the late nineteenth century as the time when crime first became an international issue. On completion of *The Age of Empire 1875–1914*, Eric Hobsbawm felt compelled to comment on the similarity between the end of the nineteenth century and the end of the twentieth century. ‘In fact’, Hobsbawm wrote (in 1987), ‘the link between past and present concerns is nowhere more evident than in the history of the Age of Empire’. It was during this period, the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, that leading and significant voices engaged in a widespread conversation about a set of crime problems that confront us now. Government officials, social
critics and opinion-leaders worried about the social effects of ‘world-shrinking’ technologies and associated cultural, economic and social changes on criminal behaviour. They identified alarming changes in ordinary crimes and the appearance of new crimes in the form of anarchist outrages, white slavery and alien criminality. A category of experts, who referred to themselves as ‘criminologists’, organised a planetary view of criminality using the language of science. The late nineteenth century saw a profusion of international gatherings, from commercial to academic and political to philanthropic. Most of these resulted from private sponsorship, although governments did arrange some of them, including peace conferences at The Hague in 1899 and 1907 (that led to formation of the League of Nations, which led in turn to the United Nations).

There are several historical analyses of crime in this period although the strategy has been to focus on one country. There are studies of crime, criminal justice practices, and criminology for Great Britain, including work by Clive Emsley, Martin Weiner, David Garland and others, and for the United States, such as the work of Nicole Rafter. There is work dealing with countries on the continent (and written in English). Richard Wetzel and Eric Johnson have written about crime and criminology in Germany, Robert Nye and others for France and John Davis and Mary Gibson for Italy. Despite the national focus, these works deal with wider social and political issues, such as urbanisation, state formation and social divisions. They provide a basis for comparative analysis and discussion of common issues and themes. There is also a collection, edited by Peter Becker and Richard Wetzell, which brings a number of studies along these lines into a single volume. Becker and Wetzell examine cross-currents in the ‘science of crime’ for France, Britain, Germany, Italy, the United States, Australia, Argentina and Japan. One of the chapters, particularly helpful in understanding internationalism, is that of Michael Berkowitz who explores the links between perceptions of criminality and Jewishness.

Emsley’s recent look at crime, police and prisons across Europe makes transnational developments a focus of concern. He provides many examples of the way English, German, Italian and French officials interacted with each other and their response to common events in European history. As a field of study, historical criminology had grown considerably during the past three decades or so. But, as he explains, many of these studies deal with practices in nation states, regions and even individual cities and towns when the ideas and models that guided them were not limited to national contexts. This is true of the United States
where historical research has tended to prioritise the first appearance of ideas and practices. While there is some interest in influences from abroad in accounting for these first appearances, developments across the country tend to be appraised for their national significance. So much of historical criminology concerns national contexts because the nation state remains an essential point of reference. To explore changing patterns of crime requires an awareness of law and legal process. Even where perspectives have shifted to wider social and economic influences, it is difficult to locate a distinctive pattern of perceptions in the system of treaties and agreements that comprise international policy, and particularly at a time when this ‘system’ was as inchoate as it was in the late nineteenth century.

This book, following the lead of earlier studies, also deals with one country. But the focus is less on crime vis-à-vis national developments than with the perceptions of, and the response to, international crime. Specifically, I aim to explore how crime came to be seen as an international issue in Britain; how internationalism became a way of understanding problems and a guide to action. To examine the British response in this period is to observe world developments from a place at, or very near, the centre. At the end of the nineteenth century, Britain had one of the largest industrial economies in the world. Its commercial power was unmatched, even by the growing industrialisation of Germany. Britain’s factories made it the single largest exporter of industrial goods, amounting to about a third of the world total between 1899 and 1913, and its merchant marine dominated world trade, carrying, in 1900, half by volume and value. Not only was London the largest city in the world, it was the capital of the worldwide market. The City of London served as the switchboard for the world's financial transactions, the site for commercial activities extending to every continent. Over a thousand of the world’s banks located there. Most of international financial transactions of the United States related to trade and investment passed through London’s banks. London was also the capital of the largest functioning empire in the world. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the British Empire expanded into Africa and Asia. Queen Victoria, proclaimed Empress of India in 1876, added to the Crown Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Burma, Malay and much else besides. By the time of Victoria’s death in 1901, Britain ruled about a fourth of the inhabitable surface of the earth.

The centrality of Britain can be seen in the adoption of universal time. Scientific and commercial interests worked steadily during the late nineteenth century towards establishment of an exact, global time.
Scientists gathered in Rome for the seventh international geodesic conference in 1883 observed that ‘the want of universal time is becoming a cause of embarrassment in the world of trade and in modern commerce, ever since the extension of communication by telegraphs and by railways brought together the countries and the continents which used completely different times’. The conferees insisted that the ‘initial meridian’ should be determined by ‘an observatory of the first order’ and designated the royal observatory at Greenwich, in England, as the obvious location. ‘The great British Empire...extends to all parts of the world’ they noted, and added, that the United States, Germany and other countries already relied on the Greenwich meridian for shipping navigation. The following year, President Chester Arthur welcomed 25 nations to a conference at Washington, DC, to organise a universal standard time system. The system, based on a proposal of the chief engineer of Canadian railways, divided the globe into 24 time zones 15 degrees of longitude in width and at one-hour differentials. The diplomats affirmed the scientists’ choice, and Greenwich Park, near London, became the prime meridian.24

During the course of the twentieth century, this centre shifted from the United Kingdom to the United States. But between 1881 and 1914, the United States had a more modest role in world affairs by comparison, and this is particularly true of the internationalisation of crime. Americans managed to miss, or turned up late, for nearly every international gathering concerning crime, from the first white slavery conference in 1899 to the conference on international police cooperation in 1914. France also had a prominent role in the late nineteenth century as did Germany. Delegates at international conferences and congresses tended to adopt French as the official language and, along with Germany, contributed more than their fair share of social critics and opinion leaders who worried about fin de siècle decadence. The United States, France and Germany will appear in nearly every chapter, then, except for the second chapter which deals specifically with the British Empire.

*The Invention of International Crime* describes the emergence of crime as an international issue in Great Britain between 1881 and 1914. Chapter 1 reviews developments in transportation, communication and commerce leading to an interconnected world. The aim here is to look at how the world was changing from the perspective of the late nineteenth century looking forward; what government officials, social critics and other observers thought was happening, or would happen, to crime given the normalisation of worldwide travel, conversation and trade. Police, journalists and others described the rise of ‘professional
criminals': cosmopolitan crooks who turned the technologies of the era against their victims. While the police likely exaggerated the threat, they also exaggerated their own effectiveness in responding, which suggests ordinary crime changed in some extraordinary ways. It reflected deeper anxieties about the pace and direction of technological change. Many of these were captured in the phrase fin de siècle. Literally, it referred to the end of the century, but commentators such as Max Nordau, who wrote one of the most widely discussed books of the 1890s, suggested that the end of the century portended the end of civilisation.

Internationalisation was not only about technology; it was about empire. Chapter 2 explores the ways in which the network of political authority that was the British Empire encouraged the internationalist view of crime. By the late nineteenth century, the empire was the land of perpetual sun. It engulfed peoples and cultures on every continent, from vast tracts of real estate in India and Australia to small islands in the Caribbean and Mediterranean. To make sense of what, from the British perspective, represented inscrutable peoples and societies, colonial administrators relied on ‘domestic-imperial analogies’. The search across colonial settings for familiarities and affinities with England engendered comparison of native and domestic criminal behaviour and perception of a ‘global criminal class’. This was tied to fear that problems unearthed in the periphery would find their way to the metropole. This chapter also explores the response to crime within what was, at least on paper, the largest criminal justice system the world had ever seen. I explore the circulation of expertise within colonial policing and efforts to universalise policies with reference to imprisonment of women.

The story is also about migration. In 1881, anarchists caught up with Tsar Alexander II and tore him to pieces with bombs. His son, Alexander III, established an absolutist police state that encouraged a series of pogroms against Jews within the pale of settlement along Russia’s western frontier. This surge of anti-Semitism pushed the largest migration of Jews in modern history. During the next few decades, millions moved from east to west; from eastern Europe to western Europe and the Americas. The great migration of Jews sets the stage for Chapter 3 and the emergence of ‘alien criminality’. In the short space between 1880 and 1914, London’s Jewish population rose from 40,000 to 200,000. Anti-Jewish agitators raised the spectre of foreign criminality and the fear of importing a criminal population from backward regions of the tsarist empire. The domestic problem of crime was said to have originated in a foreign country. This led to passage in 1905 of the Aliens Act, the first effort to establish immigration control at the point of entry,
and the basis for the international regulation of identity established by passports issued to citizens of nation states. Jewish immigration did not introduce fear of foreign criminality; British observers worried about ‘Irish criminality’ even before the wave of refugees from the potato famine at mid-century. But fear of ‘Jewish criminality’ was tied up not merely with the impoverished Jews who crowded in the East End, but the supposed worldwide conspiracy of ‘international Jewry’ that protected them from expulsion. The conception of ‘international Jewry’ provides significant insight into understanding how, and why, crime emerged as an international issue when it did.

Jews were believed to have a significant stake in ‘white slavery’, the traffic in women and girls for participation in the sex trade. Indeed, Jewish philanthropists invested significant resources of time and finances to the organisation in 1885 of (what became) the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women. This organisation inspired similar organisations in South America, southern Africa and elsewhere in the world. White slavery received tremendous attention not only from Jews but religious groups, social purity campaigners and feminist organisations. Chapter 4 explains how ‘white slavery’ claimed the world’s attention and initiated a coordinated response decided at a series of international conferences. In Britain, the issue emerged in 1880 with revelations about English girls being confined within brothels in Belgium. It provided the electricity that powered the ‘new journalism’ embodied by W.T. Stead. Before his death on the RMS Titanic, he made a fortune from this among other sensational issues and financed the National Vigilance Association. This organisation convened the first international gathering focused on the problem, which led to the first international agreement, signed in 1904, for suppression of the white slave trade. Campaigners saw immigration, enabled by steamships, as a major source of the problem, along with the worldwide trade in artistes for music halls and increased mobility of single women in modern life.

The assassination of the Tsar in 1881 also marked the beginning of another crime problem to emerge in this period: ‘anarchist outrage’. Beginning in the 1880s, anarchists (or persons acting in the name of anarchism) set off explosions in cities across Europe and North America and killed a half dozen heads of state, including the American president, William McKinley, in 1901. Chapter 5 explains how London became a centre for anarchist refugees from Europe and the tension surrounding their presence fuelled by various attempts and rumours of attempts to perpetrate outrages. The first outrage to occur on British soil took place in 1894 when a Frenchman with ties to anarchists killed himself while
trying to blow up the Greenwich observatory. The act had little signifi-
cance at the time but has symbolic importance because the Greenwich
observatory was, for reasons just referred to, the single most recognis-
able international symbol in the world. This chapter reviews discussion
at the International Defence Against Anarchism Conference convened
at Rome in 1898 and why the nations represented stepped back from
an agreement. It also reviews the discussion surrounding the dilemma
introduced by the availability of dynamite and the meaning of ‘politi-
cal crime’. Anarchist outrages revealed how crime could trigger wider
conflict. The government had dealt with Irish nationalists who perpe-
trated terrorist acts, but the anarchist threat presented a more disturbing
menace because the goals and sponsorship were far less clear.

Finally, it was within this period that criminology organised itself as
an academic tradition. Chapter 6 explains how the criminal anthropol-
gists saw their work as an international project. There were between
1885 and 1911 seven international congresses of criminal anthropol-
yogy, and the participants at these conferences spread criminology in
countries across the globe. These gatherings took place around the
figure of Cesare Lombroso, who more than anyone else, personified ‘the
criminologist’ as an expert of criminal behaviour. The issue is not the
extent to which his atavistic criminal found acceptance; clearly, Lom-
broso was revered (by a few) and ridiculed (by many). The thing he
did that is of significance for understanding the internationalisation
of crime is to have initiated a conversation that travelled to officials
and academics in every continent, from Turin to Tokyo, Buenos Aires
to St Petersburg and Chicago to Johannesburg. Or as Raymond Grew
puts it: ‘Lombroso’s ideas seemed applicable everywhere, an impression
furthered by his own loose and contradictory writings’. This chap-
ter explains how criminal anthropology, using the scientific language
of degeneration, transformed criminal behaviour into a universal prob-
lem about which scientists, doctors, judges, professors, politicians and
anyone else engaged in social criticism had an opinion. In Britain, the
Home Office was so convinced Lombroso had nothing to say, it com-
misioned an 11-year study, involving some 3000 research subjects,
to prove it. It is too simple, and wrong, to say that criminology as
an international field of enquiry manufactured crime as an interna-
tional problem, but criminologists had a decisive role in encouraging
an internationalist view.

Concern about international crime did not amount to a global panic
or crime wave sensationalised by the press (as occurred in the after-
math of the Great War, for example). International crime, from the
beginning, presented a contested issue involving argument and counter-
argument. Police and prison officials, novelists, members of parliament,
reformers, governors of colonies, journalists and professors accessed the
idea of international crime as it suited their purposes. Many sought
precise legal definitions and incontrovertible statistics—they did not
acquire them. But the fact that international crime lacked a precise legal
definition and could not be analysed with reference to statistics does
not mean it was completely imaginary. The world had changed in sig-
nificant ways, and many of the people who worried about international
dimensions of crime were in the best position to know. The story I have
to tell is about how the international view of crime, as can be seen in
Britain between 1881 and 1914, contributed clarity and confusion to
contemporary understanding. The point of the story is that we are still
living in the age of international crime, and by looking back to how it
began, we will be better able to sort out the internationalist claims that
confront us now.
The people who lived in the decades between 1881 and 1914 were the first to experience the global society. Trans-continental railways, linked with steamship routes, enabled worldwide transportation. Newspapers achieved mass circulation, and books, letters and pamphlets circulated worldwide by means of the first international postal agreement. Undersea cables carried messages from continent to continent in minutes. Commercial interests made use of transportation and communication, leading to the emergence of multi-national corporations and planetary consumer culture. Newspapers brought news of radio waves, x-rays, radiation and other amazing discoveries. People got their first look at the inventions that would in the twentieth century define everyday life: wireless, cinematographs, phonographs, aeroplanes and motor cars.¹

These internationalising technologies contributed to the appearance of novel crime problems, including white slavery, alien criminality and anarchist outrages. In later chapters, each of these will be explored. This chapter deals with the impact of internationalising technologies on ‘ordinary crimes’. Specifically, the aim is to glimpse what the future held from the perspective of the late nineteenth century looking forward; what leaders thought was happening, what would happen or might happen to criminality given the scale and scope of technological change. Police and prison authorities, lawyers, professors and other specialists described an emerging class of ‘professional criminals’. These individuals took advantage of advances in transportation, communication and commerce to carry out theft, fraud and other property-related crimes. The concern about professional criminality reflected an awareness of unconventional developments in conventional crime: crime was becoming international.²
Amplification in mass circulation newspapers made it difficult to assess the reality of the new threat. Local and national crime stories became international crime stories in the late nineteenth century. Police and prison authorities spotlighted the threat of criminals who made use of new technology, but they also claimed to have secured the power of technology for law enforcement in the form of ‘scientific policing’. The police wanted the public to perceive the crime-fighting properties of the new technologies and that they were more than a match for the professional criminals. In reality, police did not achieve anything close to scientific policing or international cooperation. Problems related to extradition, persistent reliance on informers and reluctance to share information with other police forces meant that international criminality probably was a problem of some significance.

A kind of social revolution

Millions gathered at international exhibitions between 1876 and 1904 to celebrate scientific breakthroughs and technological marvels. Paris, Philadelphia, Antwerp, Vienna, Chicago and St Louis welcomed the world to spectacular venues featuring daring engineering feats of glass, iron and steel. Fair organisers built fabulous palaces of industry to showcase the latest technological wonders. The Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876 introduced the sewing machine, telephone and typewriter. Expositions at Paris in 1878 and 1899, and Antwerp in 1885, paraded electric lighting, the gasoline engine and the phonograph. The World’s Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893 displayed the handheld camera and radio; the Exposition Universelle at Paris in 1900 the moving sidewalk and panoramic moving pictures; and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St Louis in 1904 promised an aeronautical competition with an array of flying machines. These grand events celebrated the emergence of an international culture, tied together by unprecedented advances in transportation, communication and commerce. They also trumpeted scientific progress. To emphasise the advantages of modern civilisation, every international exposition from Amsterdam in 1883 included an anthropological exhibit with ‘savages’, taken from the host nation’s overseas colonies or indigenous peoples.3

By the end of the nineteenth century, railway lines and steamship routes criss-crossed the surface of the planet. Between 1870 and 1914, the number of European railways more than tripled. Russia had completed its transcontinental railway, and the Orient could be reached from European cities in about three weeks. Passengers could
travel to Peking, Shanghai or Yokohama from London, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and St Petersburg on the great trans-Siberian railway. In Africa, the Cape to Cairo railway joined with numerous eastward and westward branches, like the mid-rib of a leaf. A steel bridge went up over the Zambesi, to further the line to Victoria Falls, which builders expected would become a regular tourist attraction. Construction of the Bagdad railway in 1900 brought European engineers to Constantinople who perused recent editions of the London Times and Die Fliegende Blätter in their hotels. In South America, the Transandine railway was also underway, with termini at Buenos Aires and Valparaiso. In North America, transcontinental routes in Canada and the United States connected eastern cities with western cities. Meanwhile, in England, railway management attracted considerable criticism for adherence to antiquated carriages and locomotives. European and American critics labelled English railway management as ‘the poorest of any in the civilised world’.

The trans-continental railways linked to port cities and steamships that skated across oceans and seas. By the early twentieth century, steamships could cross the Atlantic nearly twice as quickly as in the mid-nineteenth century. Rivalry between the major lines, Cunard, Inman, Guion and White Star generated great public interest in ocean liners. Steamships raced for the honour of flying the Blue Riband, awarded to the ship with the fastest Atlantic crossing. Festive crowds cheered the launch of each new contender and wager pools formed in New York restaurants frequented by commercial glitterati. The Guion fleet produced the first vessel to make the crossing in a week, before the Inman Company made the voyage in less than six days. The chairman of the Guion Line predicted in 1886 that the day was not far away when the Atlantic would be crossed in four days. He reassured the sceptics, who wondered about the ‘almost insane desire for speed in locomotion by land and sea’, that such speed could be sustained without risk to the safety of passengers. Through watertight compartments and powerful pumps, each vessel became its lifeboat. Travelling aboard a well-appointed steamship, he contended, was safer than aboard a railway train.

In the 1890s, two great German shipping companies, North German Lloyd and Hamburg-American, joined the competition on the Atlantic route. The North German Lloyd had five distinct services between Europe and America, and the Hamburg-American covered the whole of the American routes from Hamburg and Southampton to New York, Mexico and Brazil. After the Atlantic, the most crowded routes led to
the East. The Penninsular and Oriental line ran regular routes between London, India, the Far East and Australia, and the Japan Mail Steamship Company crossed between Antwerp, London and the East via Suez, and from Yokohama to Seattle. These steamship routes connected the mammoth railways of Canada and the United States with the Orient. The Canadian Pacific Railroad owned vessels with the Empress line which operated regular routes from Vancouver to China and Japan and the Northern Pacific and Union Pacific Lines passed through Utah to San Francisco where travellers had a choice of steamship lines to Asia. By 1900, the world’s steamship services were so numerous that there was hardly a port or coastal town at which the great ocean-liners, or their tributaries, did not call. It was possible to sail around the world in just a little more than 80 days.6

The Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, launched in 1897, became one of the first passenger ships to be fitted with wireless. Marconi first experimented with Herztian waves in 1895, and by 1897, he had formed the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company for the construction of coastal stations. Ships fitted with wireless could correspond with other ships en route, as well as with lighthouses and ports. By 1903, the first ‘official’ wireless message crossed the Atlantic: President Roosevelt congratulated King Edward VII on the ‘wonderful triumph of scientific research and ingenuity’. Within three years, a specialist in the field had seen enough to declare that ‘a severance of communication with any part of the earth… will henceforth be impossible’.7 J.A. Fleming, professor of electrical engineering at University College London, explained that wireless technology had been enabled by modern scientific understanding of the physical universe. The interaction of three elements—matter, energy and ether—explained all physical events in the universe. Archaeologists spoke of the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age in the history of the world, and the twentieth century, he felt confident to say, ‘would surely claim the title to be called the Ether Age’.8

By the first decade of the twentieth century, travellers also looked forward to the day when they would fly across the ocean. Aviation pioneer Alberto Santos-Dumont described in 1905 the twentieth-century airship. The ‘aerial yacht’, a balloon fitted with a boiler and condenser, and a sleeping car with two cots, would be able to remain aloft for 30 days. His machine would be able to travel to Russia, by way of Vienna, then to Constantinople before returning to Paris. He predicted a new century filled with airships, made by hundreds of engineers and mechanics in factories devoted solely to their manufacture.9 The successful flights of Count Zeppelin’s machines stirred an interest in the
dirigible throughout Europe. In October of 1908, the LZ-4 flew over 240 miles in 12 hours and secured for the airship a bright future. But a rumour circulated that the secretive Wilbur Wright had flown some 24 miles in a heavier-than-air machine, and when Louis Blériot made his well-publicised aeroplane flight across the English Channel, it became clear the aeroplane would supplant the airship. At the 1909 aeronautical show in Reims, France, nearly two dozen aviators made more than 100 take-offs; seven flights covered 60 miles at top speeds of nearly 50 miles per hour. In *The Condition of England* (1909), C.F.G. Masterman recognised powered flight as the most obvious scientific advance visible on the horizon. ‘The invention of flying…’ he wrote, ‘may eliminate natural boundaries which have exercised a dominant influence upon human life since human life first was’.11

Motor cars contributed to this shrinking of the world. The motoring age in Britain began in 1896 with the Locomotives on Highways Act, which removed the last barriers to cars on roads. That said, few people had actually seen a car. When the mayor of Tunbridge Wells organised a ‘motor show’ in October 1895, more than 10,000 people turned out to see the curiosities on exhibition. The development of the motor-powered vehicle from the horseless carriage to modern motor car took place swiftly. The number of cars on roads doubled to 16,000 in 1906, doubled again in 1907 and by 1909 reached 48,000. ‘Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say the advent of the motor-car may create a kind of social revolution in this country’ remarked one observer in 1903. But from this point in time, it was difficult to imagine the pace of technological change and the extent of the social revolution that would unfold. It was not clear whether steam, electricity or the petrol motor would power cars in the future. ‘There are many who would hold that the petrol motor is only a transitional type, and that the future lies with the electric car … Others dream of a time when power will be supplied through the ether, on the principle of Mr Marconi’s wireless telegraphy’.12

Before cars appeared on British roads, the bicycle captured the imagination of residents in cities across Europe and America. Mass-produced bicycles with rubber tyres became available in the 1880s and set off a ‘bicycle craze’. In England, enthusiasts outdid themselves in setting records for speed and distance. *Gentleman’s Magazine* reported in 1889 that ‘Mr Marriott’ had pedalled a 100 miles in 20 hours, then 183 and later 214. Even ladies had covered impressive distances. ‘Mrs Allen’ made 153 miles in 24 hours.13 The following year, two university students from St Louis, William Sachtleben and Thomas Allen, arrived in Liverpool with their bicycles for the beginning of their ‘around the
Technology of Change

Three years later, they arrived back in the United States, having pedalled across Europe, Asia and America. At 15,044 miles, they had completed the longest continuous land journey on bicycle. But even they were not the first to circle the earth on two wheels. At least four other men had completed around-the-world bicycle tours in the 1880s.

The establishment of modern communication and transportation links transformed the world in other ways as well. Modern forms of transportation and communication changed production and distribution and enabled businesses to expand across national borders. Mass marketing and mass production, in turn, brought about unprecedented increase in the volume of production and the number of transactions. The United States, Germany and Great Britain were at the centre of this economic transformation; together, their economies accounted for three-fourths of the world’s industrial output before 1870. Before the First World War, American tyre, food and consumer-chemical companies moved into Europe, and European firms entered the American market. Nestlé, Stollwerck and Lever Brothers placed their products in American homes. Shell established itself in the United States, while the Texas Company and Standard Oil of New York established operations in Europe and Asia. Across Europe, the German chemical firm Henkel sold soap powder, and German dye companies marketed pharmaceuticals and film. By promoting a mass consumer culture, the trans-national industrial firm inserted itself into a large portion of everyday activity.

In the area of perishable foods, meat packers, brewers and fruit producers fashioned international networks, using refrigerated ships to distribute their products over thousands of miles from initial processing to tens of thousands of local butchers and grocers. The New Zealand Shipping Company fitted a sailing ship with refrigerators in 1882 and took a large quantity of fish and poultry from London to New Zealand, bringing back a cargo of frozen beef and mutton. The introduction of the frozen meat trade developed new business in butter, cheese and fruits, leading other ocean lines to set up refrigerating chambers on their vessels. By 1914, at least 41 American companies, clustered in machinery and food industries, had built two or more operating facilities abroad. While most of the factories were in Canada, half of these firms had factories in Britain or Germany. British multi-national firms developed in chemical and food industries where they sold low-priced, packaged products to rapidly growing urban markets. These included manufacturers of chocolates, biscuits and confectionary, jams and sauces, condiments, meat products, aerated drinks, soaps and pharmaceuticals. Nearly all were family partnerships.
well-established before new transportation and communication facilities opened national and overseas markets. Branded products became familiar in households across Britain and overseas. Cadbury, Rowntree, Colman, Yardley and Beecham went first into the Commonwealth nations of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, then into the American and continental markets.\(^{17}\)

Amongst British firms, none succeeded more in creating and operating in an international theatre than Lever Brothers. In the 1880s, William Lever began selling individual packages of ‘Sunlight’ soap in Lancashire. Before then, consumers bought groceries without packages and advertising. Brand names seldom appeared. Soap had been sold in bulk, and retailers sold slices to consumers in the way cheese and butter had been sold. Lever and Company targeted their advertising to appeal to the households of the industrial working class, using advertising copy aimed at women and district agents to arrange delivery to local merchants. From the north of England, the business spread to Europe, then to the United States. To assure supply of the vegetable oil needed to feed production at his factories, Lever began to look overseas for palm oil and palm kernels. In 1905, he purchased cocoanut plantations in the Solomon Islands in the Pacific and in 1911 obtained large concessions in the Belgian Congo. By the First World War, Lever Brothers not only had plants in Australia, Canada and the United States but also in Switzerland, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Norway and Japan. People began to smell the same, whether in Europe, North America or Asia.\(^{18}\)

Theft must be international

The pace and extent of technological change in the late nineteenth century entailed anxieties about novel means of perpetrating crimes and evading the police. Police officials, prison authorities, lawyers and law professors described a generation of criminals empowered by the very latest advances in science. Clever professionals took advantage of the opportunities for mobility and anonymity and a vast pool of potential victims with a limited grasp of the implications of the new technologies in daily life.

*The Thief* (1897), a French novel, described the *fin de siècle* criminal, the professional comfortable with technologies for travel and conversation. The central character, Georges Randal, had been born into a well-to-do bourgeois family, but when his parents die, he finds himself with nothing, having been cheated out of his inheritance by a guardian.
While at school, he turns to theft, and once an adult, he becomes a thief. But Randal is no ordinary thief: he is a thief with a philosophy of life and a professional technique. His criminality derives from his conclusion of the impossibility of living within the strictures of a society lacking any intellectual or moral foundation. ‘We live in a criminally stupid world, our society is antihuman and our civilisation is nothing but a lie’. He takes advantage of the anonymity and efficiency of public transportation to avoid capture. Randal and his partner engage a train, boat or a combination of the two, to put themselves miles away from the scene of the crime. He relies on rapid exchange of information, notification of telegrams, of opportunities for burglaries. Randal embodies the ultimate modern criminal, one whose criminality cannot be confined to a city, nor even to a country. His criminality is international: ‘One has to help oneself in diverse languages under different skies, to go from Belgium into Switzerland, from Germany into Holland and from England into France. Theft must be international or not at all’.19

The novel coincided with an awareness of international criminality amongst police authorities. The Police Code, published for provincial police forces in the United Kingdom, urged proper utilisation of the telegraph and telephone in the detection of crime. The code contained these instructions: To obtain arrest of an offender of whom a good and recognisable description is available, multiple telegrams should be sent to every adjacent force along the most likely escape route. Where serious burglaries occur in the provinces, the fact should be telegraphed to neighbouring towns, as criminals often sought refuge in nearby but unsuspected places. At the same time, a telegram should always be sent to the Metropolitan Police where officials were on hand to distribute information to all districts. It included an appendix showing the routes out of England for major railways into London and ports of embarkation. The chart showed the nearest police station where a telegram could be sent asking that train, which had already started from the provinces, to be met by London police constables (Figure 1.1).20 Once the criminal had made it out of the country, it was too late. Thomas Byrnes, Superintendent of the New York Police Department, conceded that escaped criminals arrived in the city. And once in New York, lost among two million people, it was possible to renew a criminal career. Not only would such a criminal escape notice of the authorities, the fugitive from Europe possessed the added advantage of knowing ‘foreign methods of crime’ with which American police were not familiar.21

Police and prison officials spoke of the emerging threat of ‘professional criminals’. Robert Anderson, who had been in charge of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Railway</th>
<th>London Termini</th>
<th>Nearest Police Station</th>
<th>Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brighton and South Coast</td>
<td>London Bridge, Victoria</td>
<td>Borough High St, Southwark; Gerald Rd, Chelsea</td>
<td>France via Newhaven and Dieppe, and via Littlehampton and Honfleur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern and Chatham</td>
<td>London Bridge, Cannon St, Holborn Viaduct, Charing Cross, Victoria</td>
<td>Borough High St, Southwark; Seething Lane (City); Snow Hill (City); Bow Street or New Scotland Yard</td>
<td>France and Belgium, via Dover and Calais, or Ostend; to Dover for Calais and Ostend, and to Boulogne and Paris via Folkstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western</td>
<td>Euston, Willesden Junction</td>
<td>Albany St, Regent's Park; Harlesden</td>
<td>Scotland and Ireland via Holyhead, and America, via Liverpool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Eastern</td>
<td>Liverpool St, Bishopgate</td>
<td>Bishopgate (City); Commercial St, Shoreditch;</td>
<td>Rotterdam and Antwerp via Harwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Western</td>
<td>Waterloo, Vauhall, Clapham Junction</td>
<td>Kennington Rd, Clapham, Lavender Hill, Somers Town</td>
<td>Havre, Channel Islands and America, via Southampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Northern</td>
<td>King's Cross</td>
<td>Somers Town</td>
<td>Scotland and Ireland and America, via Glasgow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>St Pancras, Derby</td>
<td>Somers Town</td>
<td>Ireland and America, via Liverpool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Western</td>
<td>Paddington, Westbourne Park</td>
<td>Paddington, Harrow Rd</td>
<td>Ireland, via Holyhead, Bristol, or Milford, and France, via Weymouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Central</td>
<td>Marylebone</td>
<td>John St</td>
<td>Ireland and America, via Liverpool, and the Continent, via Grimsby and Hull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilbury and Southend</td>
<td>Fenchurch St</td>
<td>Minories (City)</td>
<td>The continent, colonies and most countries</td>
</tr>
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*Figure 1.1* Routes out of England *via* London, 1912

Criminal Investigation Division at Scotland Yard, stressed that while crime overall was decreasing, crime committed by a new class of prolific and specialised criminals was increasing. The criminals Anderson had in mind were not to be confused with ‘habitual criminals’; these were hopelessly wicked individuals, too weak to resist social forces compelling them into criminality. Professional criminals pursued a life of crime as a matter of calculation and daring; they approached the risks of crime as a matter of sport and adventure. They carried out elaborate frauds, great forgeries, jewellery thefts and bank robberies. The elite among this group visited Brighton regularly and wintered in Monte Carlo as a matter of course. The aggregate crime rate could be decreased considerably, Anderson insisted, if the government built a single prison for professional criminals and consigned them to it for life. Similarly, Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, chairman of the Prison Commission, saw an emerging class of acquisitive criminals. Like Anderson, he distinguished this category of ‘dangerous malefactors’ from the ‘petty vagrants’ that comprised habitual offenders. He too believed that while crime had decreased generally, the number of professional criminals had increased significantly. The present stage of world history entailed a category of men and women that made criminality a profession and chose to make a living from stealing, embezzling and defrauding. He urged the delegates at the international penitentiary congresses at Paris (1895) and Brussels (1900) to support indeterminate sentencing schemes as a defence against the professionals.

Blackwood’s Magazine welcomed this awareness of professional criminality. The magazine offered tales of modern highwaymen who achieved their ‘success’ by being scientific as well as intrepid. One of these, Henry J. Raymond (née Adam Worth), had been given the moniker, ‘the Napoleon of Crime’, by Anderson for managing to steal £90,000 worth of diamonds. He profited from the knowledge of how diamonds left the mines of South Africa for Europe. Diamonds were sent from Kimberley to the coast just in time to catch the steamer for Europe. When the steamer was delayed, the gems were locked in the post office until the next steamer left the harbour. Raymond befriended the postmaster, studied his daily habits, and managed to make a wax impression of his keys. He returned to Europe, leaving behind memories of pleasant conversations. A few months later he returned to South Africa, disguised, where he made his way up country where the diamonds had to be ferried to the coast. He loosened the chain of the ferry, sending the boat downstream and guaranteeing the convoy of diamonds would miss the mail packet. All that remained was for him to unlock the safe
in the post office, and travel to London, where he had the cheek to sell his treasure back to its rightful owners. In the fiction of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Raymond became Professor James Moriarty, the nemesis of Sherlock Holmes.

The idea that a generation of criminals took advantage of modern means of transportation and communication to further their exploitation of society received support from police specialists abroad. S.J. Banarji, a regular contributor to the International Police Service Magazine, outlined a number of schemes and frauds perpetrated with the use of railways and telegraph lines. Railway thieves appeared on platforms as smartly dressed persons, seemingly awaiting a friend or the next train. Other crooks took advantage of the anonymity of telegraph communication, often pretending to be persons of high social status. Telegram forgers contacted housekeepers of affluent persons known to be away. The telegram instructed the housekeeper to receive a dear friend of their employer with specific details about name and time of arrival. The ‘friend’ arrived, but remained long enough to identify and make off with valuables. Card swindlers took advantage of travellers on board ships, in hotels and at race courses. Working with accomplices, they relied on ‘gentle manners’ to snare their victims into high-stakes games. ‘These rogues have made the Atlantic boats their favourite resorts’ he explained.

Inspector John Bonfield of the Chicago Police told a local newspaper in 1888 about criminals who used the telephone to deceive and defraud businessmen. ‘It is a well-known fact that no other section of the population avail themselves more readily and speedily of the latest triumphs of science than the criminal class. The educated criminal skims the cream from every new invention, if he can make use of it’. (And, coincidentally, the first telephone swindle in France took place that same year). Following the announcement that Chicago had won the opportunity to host the World’s Columbian Exposition, Bonfield became chief of the secret service in charge of security. Immediately, he recognised that the ‘temporary influx of strangers from every quarter of the globe’ presented a ‘problem of international significance’. Experience policing previous exhibitions had demonstrated that such events ‘invariably attract an international gathering of the dangerous classes of society’. He invited police authorities across Europe to send a couple of men to serve with Chicago police during the exposition (travel expenses to be paid by the host, salaries maintained by home department). The departments responded positively. The fair offered a means of acquiring tactical knowledge of policing an international event and
provided an introduction to policing methods used across America and Europe. Bonfield boasted a multi-national force of 600 to outwit the thieves, pickpockets and con men who had made their own plans for marking Columbus’s discovery.29

American Raymond Fosdick called for an international bureau of criminal identification for identification and tracking of professional criminals. National systems of criminal record-keeping were not good enough. ‘The criminal world is today characterized by a remarkable solidarity’, he said; ‘The professional criminal is a cosmopolitan. He knows no national boundaries. He can counterfeit French money as easy as Austrian or English. He can work a commercial fraud in Germany as well as Italy’. Attempts at international cooperation had proved ineffective. While the police of cities within England and Germany had reached information-sharing agreements, broad cooperation among nations on a systematic basis had not yet occurred. Diplomatic agreements for formal communication between nations had complicated the task of apprehending the cosmopolitan criminal. Disagreements between nations about the preferred system of criminal identification made a coordinated response possible. ‘The problem of the criminal is thus no longer national but international…The struggle against crime and the criminal is the struggle of civilized society rather than of individual nations or states’.30

In Britain, official conceptions of professional criminality generated serious discussion amongst legal reformers and social observers. M. Laing Meason urged the government to employ detectives, following the French paradigm, to combat the new threat. Crime, like everything else, had become more scientific and clever in the way it worked, and to keep order it was necessary to adopt similar methods. He described a population of thieves and exporters of stolen goods from all parts of Europe in London. The size of ‘Foreign London’ increased every day and had a hand in nearly every robbery of magnitude. This class of criminal should not be allowed to become masters of the situation. ‘Crime is gradually, and by no means slowly, gaining the upper hand amongst us’, Meason contended, ‘The criminal classes march with the age; the cause of order has not done so’. He realised that the establishment of a detective force would meet with opposition in England as the English objected to anything private or secret but stressed the need for detectives who could operate effectively. ‘Neither crime nor criminals are the same as they were a quarter of a century ago. Both have kept pace with the age, and have brought to their assistance knowledge, science, and practical experience of men and things’.31
London was thought to be a magnet for ‘confederated thieves directed by superior intelligence’. Bands of thieves were certainly nothing new to the metropolis, but availability of international travel and communication made detection and capture that much more difficult. The accomplices profited directly or indirectly from theft by receiving stolen property and housing gangs. In London, houses had been adapted for the reception of thieves and their loot. They included adaptations such as a duplicate staircase or a bell-wire to an adjacent house, from which the managers received early notice of approaching police. In the state of New York, these houses were found in towns along railways and canals, and professional criminals knew as much about their whereabouts as professional businessmen knew of comfortable hotels. There was a pressing need for attacking the organisational base of logistical support behind property crime rather than confining attention to individual thieves. The police needed to go after the ‘capitalists of crime’ rather than ‘mere operatives’. Cosmopolitan criminals specialised in stealing watches and jewellery; they made their way past door locks without being noticed. They traded their illicit goods with regular receivers of stolen property who sent the goods into the countryside or to the continent (Holland or France). Thieves of this level of skill and knowledge proved difficult to catch because they were as quick-witted as the police and made tracks to foreign countries. Generally, they escaped to nearby countries without extradition treaties or took passage on steamers to English-speaking countries far away, either America or Australia.

Montague Crackanthorpe, barrister and journalist, did not discount the idea of professional criminality; there was a population of habitual offenders, some of whom knew what they were doing. But he did question the wisdom of singling them out for special sanctions: judges and juries would be reluctant to declare an individual a professional criminal. Professional criminals officially labelled as such would become social outcasts on release, resulting in more criminal behaviour, not less. A former prisoner, who, after release, took up writing scoffed at Anderson’s claims. Most of those in prison known to be professional criminals were so because no other profession was open to them. To contend that men became burglars, housebreakers, pickpockets and the like because they ‘hanker after pursuing these occupations’ was nonsense. Anderson’s reference to a round-table of burglars who directed thefts according to skill and ability did not contain a word of truth. But there was, none the less, an organisation of those who received stolen property. Thieves would be out of business if there were no one to accept their proceeds, and if the government targeted them, rather than thieves, the amount of property crime would drop by
two-thirds. The discussion registered anxieties about whether the current legal and political system could cope. The difficulty of prosecuting an offence of ‘receiving stolen goods’ absorbed a great deal of discussion at a number of international forums; it was taken up by the international penitentiary congresses at London (1872), Rome (1885), St Petersburg (1895), Brussels (1900) and Budapest (1905). The Budapest congress also devoted significant discussion to problems of defining, identifying and punishing ‘swindlers’. Delegates agreed that laws concerning fraud needed amendment to reflect changes in financial, commercial and industrial affairs.

As exaggerated as the threat of professional criminality may have been, the idea that some wrongdoers took advantage of the gap between technological advances and legal structures did present cause for concern. French social thinker Gabriel Tarde claimed criminals ‘used more intelligently than the police the resources of our civilisation’. German law professor Franz von Liszt made a similar claim. Criminals specialising in crimes for financial gain roamed the world in search of victims and the police response had to be international to stop them. Enrico Ferri said that scientific developments provided ‘fresh instruments of crime’, such as firearms, the press, photography, lithography, poisons, dynamite, electricity and hypnotism, although he believed science would, sooner or later, provide the solution. Even the champion of atavistic criminality, Cesare Lombroso, conceded the rise of professional criminality (Chapter 6). He began talking about a new form of criminality rooted in social evolution, rather than in biological evolution, and specifically, crimes enabled by ‘progress along technical, scientific and economic lines’. The telegraph, telephone, railway and automobile had become tools for twentieth-century crime. The individuals in a position to carry out crimes by means of modern transportation and communication were not the poor and unemployed but those in the professions and business management. He pointed to a series of murders perpetrated by a Chicago doctor as representative of the type of ‘criminals of the coming century’. The evil doctor had used the telephone, telegraph and newspaper advertising to lure victims to his grand house where he murdered them, took the identity of a family member and collected their life insurance policies.

Knowledge of evil

findesiecle concerns about crime coincided with worldwide circulation of news and information. Crime, that is, local crime, had been a regular feature of British newspapers. In London, and in the provincial cities,
items about murder, criminal trials and other aspects of the legal process had been staples of newspaper production since their inception. In the late eighteenth century, newspapers carried advertisements about crimes, usually about rewards, and in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they became the primary media for informing and shaping public opinion about crime. Journalists emerged as ‘criminal investigators’, alongside police detectives and private detectives, during the late nineteenth century. News reporters were mediocre professionals, unrecognised and unseen compared to more established professions. But the success of crime stories in the press catapulted individuals within the profession to the status of master reporters. Reporters triumphed over their rivals in constructing the meaning and significance of criminal events.

By 1900, newspapers had developed from low-cost, often subsidised sheets into powerful commercial organisations. Circulations which a generation earlier numbered in tens of thousands now numbered in hundreds of thousands, and the growth of advertising in the Edwardian period generated wealth of which Victorian newspaper proprietors had never dreamed. The *Daily Mail*, founded in 1896 by Lord Northcliffe, became the first newspaper to reach a sale of one million. Northcliffe pursued the idea of presenting news as a matter of entertainment, as well as information, and pursued the editorship of the paper with the idea of reaching the widest possible audience. The *Daily Mirror*, which Northcliffe started in 1903, was an illustrated newspaper without political pretensions.

Undersea cables enabled local crime stories to become international crime stories. By the end of the nineteenth century, telegraphy represented one of the most mundane and taken-for-granted means of communication. What had been hailed as an epoch-making achievement in the 1850s had become, by the 1890s, the ‘oldest’ of the century’s new media. Experiments with submarine cables had started at mid-century, but laying a telegraph line underwater was more difficult owing primarily to the lack of a suitable insulating material. The discovery of gutta-percha, the latex of a tree that grows in southeast Asia, allowed inventors to insulate copper wire with a water-proof material. During the 1860s, European firms established networks of submarine cables and land lines to the Persian Gulf and India, and British and American interests laid the first trans-Atlantic cables. In 1900, a German company opened a cable to the United States, fuelled in part by expanding trade and the large number of German-Americans. By 1904, there were some 13 cables across the North Atlantic, the most profitable area. The cable
companies attracted business from the press and news agencies, trading and shipping companies, governments and their militaries and the general public. The most important customers were the press and news agencies, followed by the shipping and trading companies.\textsuperscript{44}

The worldwide circulation of books, newspapers, letters, pamphlets and the like increased with a diplomatic, rather than technological, breakthrough. The railways and steamship companies had carried mail from their beginning in the nineteenth century, and in the case of Cunard, before the beginning, as Cunard had the won the contract for the mail packet when it operated a fleeting of sailing ships. But in the late nineteenth century, leading nations organised the International Postal Service. In 1874, the head of the Prussian Postal Service convened a congress in Berne, Switzerland, to reach an international agreement. Representatives from 22 states at the congress agreed to a convention (based on that of the German Postal Federation) that became in 1876 the Union Postale Universelle. The members agreed to make international borders disappear for the purpose of postal delivery; the postal service of one country had the right to the postal service of every other. Essentially, this amounted to a pooling of transport services throughout the world. The trans-Atlantic services maintained by the British Post Office carried post from every other country and the P & O Mail Service to India, Australia and the Far East carried post for every nation along the way. The trans-continental railway lines between the Atlantic and the Pacific maintained by the United States and Canada, as well as the trans-Siberian Railway, carried mail from the whole of Europe.\textsuperscript{45} In 1889, letters from New York reached London within a week of despatch, and by 1901, letters from Bombay made it to London within four days.\textsuperscript{46}

The \textit{Edinburgh Review} explained the situation to its readership this way: ‘It is one of the results of the quick transmission of news from place to place in this age that men concentrate their attention on events for a short time’. The writer explained that when a number of Italians were lynched at New Orleans in the spring of 1890 (following the murder of the city’s chief of police allegedly by Sicilians) ‘the attention of the civilised world fixed on this event’, and the administration of justice in the United States became a matter of speculation throughout the world.\textsuperscript{47} The murders in London’s Whitechapel district by ‘the ripper’ supplied one of the first international crime stories. The columns of \textit{The Times}, with its unrivalled foreign news service, did include crimes committed abroad, particularly murders, but interest in foreign murders peaked around this time. In 1887, the year prior to the ripper murders, \textit{The Times} mentioned twelve multiple murders; seven of the
cases were from abroad. In 1888, there were nine cases of multiple murders, five from abroad. In 1889, links with the ripper case developed: ten cases reported, five from abroad. Six murders of prostitutes in the United States were said to be identical to the Whitechapel atrocities of the previous year, and in 1889, *The Times* printed 24 reports of multiple murders, 14 from abroad. None of these crimes bore similarity to the ripper killings, but this did not seem to matter to editors aiming to attract readers. By 1895, the paper's interest in murder waned and few cases of foreign murders appeared. Foreign murders reported between 1895 and 1920 tended to be limited to the colonies, such as India and Australia, a feature, it would seem, related to the existence of cable networks.48

Crime-fighting was one of the first uses suggested for ‘telephotography’, invented by German scientist Alfred Korn. He began experiments with photographic transmission over land lines between Berlin and Paris beginning in 1902 and in 1907 built a machine for the *Daily Mirror* to send photographs through undersea cable. Photographs sent from the office of *L’Illustration* in Paris to London in November 1907 were the first to be sent by submarine cable. In Paris, photographic film was placed on a glass drum which turned. A powerful light was concentrated through a pin hole in front of the film, and electric current switched on. In London, a similar drum with film received the electrical signal, and the light piercing the hole varied according to the intensities of the sending film, and conveyed the light and shadow to the receiving film, re-producing the portrait. The *Daily Mirror* received a photograph of King Edward in twelve minutes. Paris then sent a photograph of the prime minister followed by one of the French president. The *Daily Mirror* acquired the sole rights to the use of Korn’s invention in Great Britain and the colonies and received permission from the British and French governments for the use of postal wires. Korn speculated that the invention would be of use to the illustrated press primarily, and plans for a wire-photo service between Germany, France and Great Britain were put into place.49

To demonstrate the usefulness of ‘telephotography’, the *Daily Mirror* printed a photograph of Countess Marcetti arrested at Boulogue on a charge of receiving false money. The photograph was despatched from Paris to London in twelve minutes using the Korn apparatus set up for the newspaper. The article included a note about a story appearing over the Reuter network that Russian police authorities in St Petersburg proposed developing telephotography with a view to tracking ‘hunted criminals’.50 This photograph later appeared in *Science and the Criminal* (1911), an introduction to the application of science to police work. The author predicted that the ability of the ‘telephotograph’ to
transmit handwriting, sketches, and photographs would prove a powerful weapon the armoury of the detective. In addition to Korn’s device, a simplified, lighter weight machine had also appeared. The photograph could be printed on a flexible plate with the backing of lead foil and attached to the transmission cylinder. This machine transferred thousands of minute points comprising the image by telephone wire or by wireless. When used in this connection, it would be possible for a ship at sea to send or receive portraits of individuals under suspicion.51

The public learned about the significance of it for crime fighting in 1910 in the capture of Dr Crippen. Scotland Yard sought the arrest of Hawley Crippen, a London doctor, for the murder of his wife, Cora. Her body parts had been found in the cellar of the residence in which Crippen lived with his secretary-and-lover, Ethel Le Neve. Inspector Walter Dew issued bulletins in England, North America and Europe for the arrest of Crippen and Le Neve. But the pair, in Belgium, booked passage on the Montrose bound for Montreal. Crippen and Le Neve registered using aliases to make it appear as if they were father and son; Crippen grew a beard and Le Neve wore men’s clothing. But the ship’s captain, having seen their photographs in the news, realised their true identity and used the wireless to alert Scotland Yard. Scotland Yard’s Inspector Dew boarded a faster ship to intercept the Montrose and make the arrest before disembarkation in Canada. While en route he regularly wired information to eager journalists. The public learned not only how Crippen and Le Neve passed their time aboard ship but about wireless telegraphy. As the reporters explained, the ship transmitted a short-range signal that was picked up by another ship, and in this way, relayed back to London. Newspaper illustrations depicted the location of ships with concentric circles to show the range of their signals; lightning bolts appeared above the ships’ masts to indicate the power of radio waves.52

It would appear, from the exploits of Inspector Dew, that the police welcomed the press as an ally, but the reality was more complicated. More than one observer worried about the impact of the ever-wider coverage of criminal events. C.F.G. Masterman remarked in 1909 about English justice in the news. Seen through the medium of the Sunday press, in which seven of ten readers received their sole picture of the world outside their day-to-day experience, it ‘takes upon the appearance of violence and madness. Men and women knife each other in the dark. Children are foully butchered by unknown assailants. Suicides sprinkle every page.’53 Cyrus Edson, Chief Inspector of the New York Board of Health, worried about the impact of such news on mental health. Modern magazines and newspapers had the effect of a ‘mental spur’
that produced an inestimable stream of ‘anxious thought’ in the typical American reader. ‘Think of it a moment’ he implored, ‘every morning and every evening sheets—four pages, eight pages, sixteen pages—damp from the flying presses—come to him filled with new thoughts, new events, new matter for the mind to dwell on’. Recently, he had encountered a woman immobilised by the news. ‘If I find in the paper in the morning some horrible story of a crime or disaster, it interests me very much’ she confessed. But after reading such story, she felt so sorry for the sufferers, so overwhelmed by their pain, ‘I find I must lie down and rest before I can begin my work for the day’.54

In addition to newspapers, people began to acquire some portion of their understanding about crime from the new medium of films. Most of the scientific problems in showing cinematographic films were solved during this era. Even colour films, of a sort, were shown at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in 1906. There were in 1908 three companies with a capital of £100,000 engaged in film exhibition; in 1909, there were 103 companies with a capital of £1.4 million, and in 1912, 205 companies with about £3 million. By 1914, all the large towns in Britain had many picture theatres; Manchester had one cinema for every eight inhabitants.55 As crime figured so prominently in late Victorian and Edwardian news print, it is not surprising that it became a theme for early cinema. British film makers introduced crime reconstruction films in the early 1900s. One of these, Arrest of Goudie, was shown at the Prince of Wales Theatre in Liverpool in December 1901, three days after the actual arrest of Thomas Goudie had taken place. Goudie, a clerk at the Bank of Liverpool, was arrested and convicted for embezzlement of £170,000 from his employer. After a nationwide manhunt featuring surveillance at train stations and ports, the police concluded that he had either left the country or committed suicide. But just then, they received a tip and made the arrest: 500 yards from a police station. The film makers, Mitchell and Kenyon, recreated known events in actual locations. In aiming for ‘reconstructed actuality’ rather than ‘dramatic reconstruction’, they foreshadowed modern documentary cinematography.56

La police scientifique

Police and prison authorities believed, or wanted others to believe, that technological achievements in transportation and communication extended the reach of the criminal law. In A History of Police in England (1901), William Melville explained that the introduction of railways
in Britain had put the police at a disadvantage. The modern conve-
niences of travel gave criminals a few hours head start and the ability
to find a safe refuge before the police could catch up. There had always
been a ‘contest between the lawbreaker and the policeman, wherein
the fortunes of the day favour first one side than the other’. But he
was confident that the arrival of the twentieth century had shifted the
balance of power firmly and irrevocably to the police. ‘The telegraph
beats the steamship, and the international system of police which now
mutually provides for the surrender of fugitive offenders has restored
the balance’.57

Arthur Griffiths, an inspector of prisons, shared this view, but
C. Ainsworth Mitchell, author of Science and the Criminal
(1911), did not. For Griffiths: ‘The machinery, the organisation of modern life, favours
the pursuers. The world’s “shrinkage”, the facilities for travel, the nar-
rowing of neutral ground, the secure sanctuary for the fugitive, the
universal, almost immediate publicity that waits on startling crimes—all
those are against the criminal’. He went on to catalogue the technologies
arrayed against the lawbreaker.

Electricity is his worst and bitterest foe, and next to it rank the post
and the Press. Flight is checked by the wire, the first mail carries the
particulars everywhere, both to the general public and to a ubiquitous
international police brimful of camaraderie and willing to help each
other. It is not easy to disappear nowadays . . . .

Mitchell was much less optimistic. For all the modern facilities available
for crime detection, it was surprising how many remained undetected.
In cases of suspicious circumstances, it was impossible to decipher the
truth, despite the service of science. ‘The law-breaker’s primitive weapon
of natural cunning has thus often proved more than a match for all the
weapons at the disposal of his opponent [the law enforcer]’.58

Science afforded opportunities as yet unknown, and in the late
nineteenth century, it seemed possible that a scientific breakthrough
could enable civilisation to triumph over crime. Electricity appeared to
yield an inexhaustible array of services to humanity. The distinguished
scientist Sir William Crookes could not explain exactly what it was—
electricity might be a kind of matter, or energy or something different,
a form of bound ether. But whatever it was, it presented exciting possi-
bilities. Telegraphing messages without wires, posts, cables or any of the
present appliances was no longer a matter of philosophical speculation
but well within the realm of practical fulfilment. Indoor lighting could
be achieved by creating a powerful, rapidly alternating electrostatic field, in which a vacuum tube could be placed anywhere and lighted without being mechanically connected to anything. Electric currents might exercise a favourable influence on growing crops of grain or fruit; electricity might add vigour to plant life or arrest the activity of parasites. Electrified water afforded the possibility for destruction of disease germs, as was being discussed by public health officials in cities. And, as the human brain demonstrated the ability to transmit and receive electrical signals, yet-to-be discovered electrical rays ‘may be instrumental in transmitting thought from one brain to another’.\textsuperscript{59} Crookes helped set up the British Society for Psychical Research (while the more pragmatic American electrical pioneer Thomas Edison pioneered the electric chair).

The discovery of x-ray in 1895 caused an immediate sensation. William Röntgen was unprepared, when he published an x-ray photograph of his wife’s hand in German scientific journal, for the public interest in ‘the new photography’. The London \textit{Standard} carried a short article with the announcement and, given the incredulity of what had been described, assured its readers that ‘there was no joke’. The \textit{Edinburgh Review} referred to this discovery of ‘photography of the invisible’ but explained how x-ray imaging would be better described as ‘radiography’ rather than ‘photography’. Newspaper accounts aroused fears and excitement because of misconceptions about what x-rays could do. Many people imagined that x-ray photographs could be taken in the same way as photographs, and this opened the possibly for seeing through locked doors and under people’s clothing. The surgical uses of the ‘radiography’ occurred to medical professionals and led to the opening of the first radiology laboratory within a hospital. At the same moment, it occurred to observers to engage the power of x-rays for surveillance:

M. [Paul] Brouardel of Paris has induced it to display the contents of infernal machines; volumes innocent of aspect have in the same way been shown by M.M. Girard and Bordas to be crammed with explosives and projectiles; and thus, the peril of forcing open suspicious parcels can be evaded by merely exposing them to emissions from a vacuum-bulb.\textsuperscript{60}

In London, Dr Gilbert Scott proposed the idea of using x-rays to sterilise degenerate criminals. Exposure of ovaries or testicles of inmates within prisons and asylums, he told the Medico-Legal Society, would save the need for a surgical procedures.\textsuperscript{61}
X-rays were not the only applied science to be utilised in this way. The potential of technological breakthroughs in this period for enhanced identification and surveillance occurred to any number of people. In America, visitors to the Tribune building in New York in 1875 were the first to witness Edison’s ‘new talking machine’ on exhibition. The first phonograph remained a crude device and many concluded it amounted to nothing more than a toy. By 1889, the possibilities of recording music and theatrical performance, as well as business correspondence, became more apparent, and a commentator in the *Atlantic Monthly* thought of a further use: evidence in court. A little wax cylinder covered with microscopic dots would prove better able to confirm a person’s identity than a handwriting contained in a document, as sound recording captured the speaker’s voice, inflection and accent. How could there be any doubt, even about a dead man’s identity, when jurors could hear his voice? Novelist Henry James pointed to the potential of surveillance over telegraphic communication. In his story *Inside the Cage* (1898), a young woman works as a telegraphist (confined to her booth inside the post office at Cocker’s grocery). She takes an interest in the coded messages exchanged between two customers, Lady Bradeen and Captain Everard, and when the telegraphist suggests an amended text, Lady Bradeen realises her love affair has been discovered. The telegraph offered instantaneous communication, but would not replace the letter, because a sealed packet offered secrecy. Commercial and social business depended on the secrecy of communications.62

During the 1880s, police departments in Europe and the Americas turned to the French model of ‘scientific police’. In 1883, Alphonse Bertillon announced an exact method for determining the identity of an individual based on a system of body measurements. *Anthropometric signalment* gave the police a means of establishing the identity of professional criminals who had tried to escape across international borders. Bertillon founded his bureau of identification within the Prefecture de Police in Paris, and within a few years, the technique spread to police forces across the planet. Chicago and Buenos Aires established an anthropometric-based identification system in 1890, London in 1893 and New York in 1895. Bertillon pointed out that non-universal use of the metric system presented no obstacle to internationalism. The important point was to adhere to the same protocol of measurements, the figures obtained could be readily converted from metric to imperial lengths. To guarantee the system for this purpose, he asked the authorities responsible for identification bureaus in other countries not to introduce modifications as this would destroy the uniformity of the
system. All countries needed to agree on the choice of measurements to lay a proper and useful foundation for an international system.\textsuperscript{63}

Frederic J. Mouat, who had been inspector-general of jails in India, shared Bertillon’s faith in the importance of the system for defeating international criminals. Extension of the anthropometric method, as developed in France, to other countries, would aid in the detection and punishment of men of different nationalities. ‘In these days of rapid and cheap locomotion’, such men ‘change their venue, and seek new fields in which they are unknown’. The introduction of the French method of criminal identification in England had reduced the number of criminals. He had met men in prison in India who told him they had been to prison in England before. They had left England for India to continue their crimes in a country where their antecedents remained hidden to the authorities. Crime had become concentrated in the hands of professionals who knew how to take advantage of the ‘progress of our civilization’ to avoid detection.\textsuperscript{64} Mouat quoted the French minister in charge of prisons, Louis Herbette. In an address given to the International Penitentiary Congress at Rome in 1885, Herbette declared: ‘crime is becoming in a certain way professional in the hands of certain individuals who know how to take advantage of the progress of our civilisation… it is natural that society should use all the discoveries of science to thwart their devices’. He offered the recent case of an offender arrested at Lyons under the name Buisson, who, owing to a description sent to Paris by telegram, was found to be the fugitive Bosconi. Police needed to make use of communication and other technology to thwart international criminals who freely change their identities and national residence.\textsuperscript{65}

The dream of science triumphing over professional criminality met with a very different reality. Despite the popularity of the French model, police were slow to institutionalise technological marvels within their bureaucratic repertoire, and diplomatic hurdles proved a significant barrier to international police cooperation. Recovery of international fugitives required an advance in extradition law. It was one thing to identify criminals and another to deal with them once apprehended. The principles of extradition had been spelt out in the Extradition Act (1870) and separate treaties with foreign states. Inconsistency in the provisions of these agreements allowed the educated classes committing serious commercial crimes—forgers, embezzlers, fraudulent bankruptcy—to escape from the reach of British law. In 1886, for example, thieves attacked the international mail from London. A gang, mostly composed of British subjects, watched as registered letters from the United States to Russia
were loaded into a van at Ostend. The gang removed the letters on the journey from Ostend to Brussels, took the stolen letters to a railway station in Brussels, and returned to England. The theft had been planned with the knowledge that no British court could recognise a crime committed in Belgian territory. Many inconsistencies in the various treaties allowed crimes to remain unpunished owing to technical difficulties encountered in international relations. There was a call for a central, universal system of extradition. It could be established along the lines of an International Union in which all the parties agreed to mutually surrender fugitive criminals under conditions expressed in an International Convention enabling the Union. Extradition would follow the practice established by the International Postal Union.66

The formation of such a union did not take place, although there was a union of sorts within the British Empire. The Fugitive Offenders Act (1881) provided for the surrender of fugitives between the British Colonies and the United Kingdom. This act applied to all offences punishable by imprisonment at hard labour for a year or more and could be activated with documents (warrant, depositions) sent to the Home Office. It also allowed for an empire-wide search on the part of third countries, such as the United States, which had in 1842 concluded the first modern extradition agreement with Britain. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the American search for escaping criminals extended as far as the Mediterranean Sea. In 1907, police on the island of Malta were asked to look for J. Edward Boeck, wanted by the New York City Police on a charge of grand larceny. The circular contained a verbal description of age, height, hair colour, and so on. The description of Ross W. Douglass, formerly a clerk with the US Signal Corps in the Philippine Islands, was distributed in 1908. The announcement included information that ‘[a] photograph of Douglass with a more detailed description of him and a photograph and description of the woman with whom he practiced are with the Inspector On Duty, Main Station, Valletta’.67

At the same time, police forces around the world lacked the organisational capacity to share information. Police departments worked as separate organisations and there were few, if any, exchanges of criminal records between them. Underworld figures, making links along ethnic lines, pursued criminal activities in Brussels, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, London, Paris, New York City and Rio de Janeiro, and they could be fairly sure police in one city would not have exchanged case files with any other. International criminals, exploiting advances in communication and transport, had more information about underworld adversaries and allies than did city police forces. The police may have championed
the use of science on occasion, but they relied on a loose, informal network of professional spies, opportunistic informers and private detectives. These individuals tended to be selected for their ethnic identities and skills at blending unnoticed into underworld circles. It was a shady, secretive world of mistakes and betrayal, but police forces and governments preferred it to surrendering authority in the form of an international organisation or legal agreements. Scotland Yard’s Robert Anderson put it this way: ‘In certain cases police work is done a la Sherlock Holmes. But the best preventive work, of which the public knows nothing, is accomplished by the methods that enabled the Philistines to solve Samson’s riddle’. Sherlock Holmes’s creator, Conan Doyle, was among those who believed the law enforcement system of Great Britain to be so imperfect it was incapable of discerning the basic distinction between guilt and innocence. Science never fails to provide the correct result only when practiced by the private detective, not the public police.

Finally, the police were reluctant to rely on new technology because they did not trust it. Alexander Innes Shand, a Scottish lawyer, explained in 1886 that telegraph cables stretched across the oceans, enabling messages to be sent ahead of fugitives. Where there was some certainty the thief had headed in a particular direction, the authorities could send a description to colonial or foreign police at the destination, and surprise the absconder on arrival. But even where the police knew the specific steamship on which the criminal was travelling, they seldom used the cable in this way. Awkward mistakes led to actions for false imprisonment, heavy damages and embarrassment. Rather than take a chance on electric communication, there was less room for mistake with the old strategy of securing a warrant and sending a detective in pursuit. ‘The detective following at his [the fugitive’s] heels has a far better time of it’. Edward Henry, Assistant Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police, explained the problem of apprehending suspects by means of a description from foreign police. ‘We had a wireless message giving very specific details and description of a person’ he told the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration in 1903, ‘and of his luggage, saying that his luggage contained valuable bonds that he carried away. We searched his luggage and he proved to be an official of very high rank, and I had to go and make the most abject apology to him’. From Henry’s perspective, it was too easy for the police to be manipulated by political forces in this way.Supplying information for action by foreign authorities was easily abused.

The grim reality of law enforcement in the late nineteenth century can be seen in the career of Joseph Lis, who operated in the Atlantic
underworld of the late nineteenth century. He was an arsonist, thief, brothel-keeper, gangster, smuggler, white-slave trafficker, as well as a special agent and police informer. Born in an area along the border of Poland and Russia, he emigrated to London in the 1880s. Later travels took him to America, Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, Chile, France, West Germany, South Africa and Norway. While in New York and Pittsburgh, he acquired an American accent and American citizenship that allowed him to assume the identity of Joseph Silver, one of a number of aliases. In New York during the 1880s, he operated as a burglar-detective in concert with a corrupt police department. In Johannesburg during the 1890s, he presided over a trade union of 50 white-slave traffickers. He communicated using coded telegraphic and postal communication with counterparts in Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Great Britain, France, Poland, Russia and the United States. Police departments in New York, Johannesburg, London and elsewhere not only failed to recognise him but they hired him. He worked as a police special agent, informer and spy, earning money from the police payroll in addition to commercial vice.

Crime and civilisation

Concerns about professional criminality and dreams of scientific policing reflected deeper anxieties about technological change. People greeted the inventions of the age with amazement and admiration but also a certain amount of anxiety. Many of those who gazed at scientific demonstrations and technological exhibitions found them incomprehensible, and they worried about the uses to which such power would be put. Public understanding celebrated scientific and technological achievement, while it simultaneously registered anxiety about where it would lead. The end of the nineteenth century had brought devices for improving the lives of many but also inventions that could endanger and destroy on a widespread and sinister scale.

Social commentators expressed profound doubt that technological progress inevitably led to greater civility. Leo Tolstoy worried in 1909 that modern life had reduced humanity to a state of animal existence. Without a uniting spiritual principle, people catered to ‘animal instinct which divides’. The nations of the Christian world had already reached the point at which those of the ancient world reached before their downfall. This could be seen in the fact that applications of science had failed to promote the common welfare but increased the misery of humanity. Guided by personal interests and struggles with one another,
Europeans chose to live more like primitive species. But while animals retained the same claws, fangs and the like through the centuries, people had moved from roads to railways, horses to steam, sailing boats to steamers. ‘One might invent some new submarine, underground, aerial or super-aerial appliances for carrying people with greater rapidity from place to place; new devices for diffusing human speech and thought’, Tolstoy sighed, ‘but as the people carried from place to place do not wish and are unable to do anything but evil, so the world’s words and thoughts they spread can only encourage people to do evil’.75

In 1905, a curious pamphlet appeared entitled *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*. The author, Elliot Mills, presented his text as if he was looking backward from a perspective of hundred years in the future. He identified eight signs of national decay, including the prevalence for city living over the country, the growth of refinement and luxury, the decline of literary and dramatic taste, the gradual decline in the physique and health of the English people and the inability of the British to defend their empire. The people preferred the decadent splendour of music halls and Turkish baths rather than healthful atmosphere of the countryside. Novels dealing with morphine and cigarette addiction had become more widely read than the works of John Bunyan and Sir Walter Scott. Cricket and football had become a matter of spectators watching professionals rather than a form of healthful exercise. In the last days, ‘undisciplined sons’ rioted in the slums; there existed among them no respect for parents, but an insistence on the right to do as they pleased. Unable to defend their empire, the people fell to foreign rivals. ‘…Till the very night of their doom, the English never realised that, through the increased speed of the modern steamship, the British channel had virtually become a moat, and Britain had ceased to be an island’.76

Reginald Newton Weekes stated the threat in stark and arresting terms: ‘The seeking after machinery as a saving of labour is nothing more than a phase of universal love of ease and luxury…The nation that cannot see the writing on the wall—and what nation ever did?—rushes on till its madness ends in suicide’.77

There was also fear about the purpose to which scientific achievements would be put. As early as 1915, an English chemist, Frederick Soddy, publicly warned about the danger of a future atomic war. Soddy received a Nobel Prize for his research into radioactivity, and he became widely known as a public interpreter of the new science enabled by Marie Curie’s discovery. One pound of radioactive material could yield as much energy as 150 tonnes of coal, he explained to an audience in Aberdeen, and he asked them to consider what the present war would be
like if such explosive power was available. In his book, *The Interpretation of Radium* (1908), Soddy suggested the new science of radioactivity had tremendous teleological consequences. Science had reconstructed the story of human history as the continuous ascent of mankind away from the traditional view of the Fall in the Garden of Eden from a higher state. Once in possession of the power to ‘transmute matter’, human beings could reclaim not only this garden utopia on earth but also explore the outer realms of space and find, perhaps, an even better planet to inhabit. But, then again, a single mistake could reverse the positions of human as master and slave as servant. Curiously, Soddy suggested this ‘mistake’ had already happened in human history. The texts surviving from the ancient world suggested ‘some forgotten race of men attained not only the knowledge we have recently won, but also the power not yet ours’.78

Crime presented a signpost, a signal that expanding frontiers of transportation, communication and commerce did not necessarily lead to advanced civilisation. William Douglas Morrison, a prison chaplain and prolific writer, insisted that the progress of civilisation would not eliminate crime. Many ‘savage tribes’ living under primitive conditions demonstrated more respect for person and property than the ‘most civilised classes’ of Europe and America. Civilisation had managed to shift the form in which crime was perpetrated, while in substance, it remained. He offered statistics to show the increase of crime in America and Germany, and compared England with Ireland, and questioned the belief in poverty as the leading cause of crime.79 In an article, he took a step further. Morrison referred to statistics of the number of cases tried in English courts from 1860 to 1889 as evidence of an alarming increase in crime. During the 1860s, the yearly average was 466,687 cases tried, and during the 1880s, this figure had jumped to 701,060. This rise confirmed Rousseau’s contention that high civilisation made people worse than better. Fluctuations in crime statistics over a period of a few years reflected variations in social conditions, the rise or decline of political or industrial action, the ebb and flow of commercial prosperity or the violent emotions aroused by a state of war. But a steady climb over three decades pointed to a more profound cause. ‘The great centres of modern civilisation are large cities, but it is a melancholy fact that splendid capitals like London, Paris and Berlin contain in proportion to their population by far the largest number of criminals and the criminally disposed’. Statistics showing the number of police required to suppress criminal activity in London, compared to the countryside, also lent ‘enormous support to the theory that where there is most civilisation there is also most crime’.80
The times called for a new science to comprehend the impact of modern life on crime. Whereas crime in primitive society had been rare, modern civilisation gave rise to specific forms of criminality and insanity. ‘In our epoch of stress’ Havelock Ellis wrote in 1910, ‘and of much change and readjustment in the social surroundings and relations of individuals, ill-balanced natures become more frequent, and the anti-social and unlawful instincts are more often called out’. The professional criminals, the elite among criminal groups, devised skilful plots directed at property on a large scale. Professional criminals flourished in a rapidly changing civilisation society, such as the United States, where wild and unprincipled speculation ruled. What was worse, the attention to crime generated by mass circulation of news threatened to stir up criminality in an ever-wider population. The minute details of every horrible crime had become known to children in remote villages. This activated evil instincts in ill-balanced natures and portended an amplification of these evils. A community obsessed with crime news tended to reproduce crimes, beginning with children. The popular excitement over the Whitechapel murders by the ‘ripper’ served as one of any number of examples.81

Max Nordau explained the pessimism and anxiety about the pace of social change in his book, Degeneration, the international best-seller of the 1890s. ‘In our times,’ Nordau wrote, ‘steam and electricity have turned the customs of life of every member of the civilised nations upside-down’. He pointed to dramatic differences in life earlier in the nineteenth century to contrast the difference with life at its end. Just a few decades ago, the most sophisticated Europeans travelled by horse and attempted to light tallow candles without matches. He related statistics to show the growth of railways in Europe, increase in postal traffic, proliferation of books and circulation of newspapers. The humblest villager confronted a geographical horizon wider than the prime minister of a small state a century ago. A cook sent and received more letters than a university professor did formerly, and a petty tradesman travelled more widely than did a prince. Such a level could not be sustained. All these activities overwhelmed the nervous system, wore down the body. New discoveries and the pace of progress had taken humanity by surprise. Organs had insufficient time to evolve.82 This led to an increase in insanity, alcoholism and crime (Chapter 6).

But for others, the talk of professional criminals rather missed the point. It was not that advances in transportation, communication, industry and commerce produced a new category of professional criminals, but rather that crime was a bigger problem than had been
recognised, and the wrong people were made to suffer for it. ‘In none of the books on crime and its causes which I possess is there any mention of a low standard of commercial morality as a great cause of offences against property’, remarked a former chaplain at Clerkenwell Prison. It was a mistake to attempt to divide morality from religion and pointed to widespread practices of fraud and deceit in trading to illustrate the need for moral education. More disturbing than the furtive rise of underworld figures was the trumpeted success of those who made astonishing fortunes in trade. ‘Many of the large fortunes which have been amassed by mushroom financiers and promoters during the last few decades’, remarked one observer in 1912, ‘have been built upon foundations of trickery, deceit and fraud, and if we examine the means employed we find them little different from those of the racecourse thimble-rigger’.

Conclusions

Internationalising technologies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave ordinary crime extraordinary dimensions. Advances in transportation, communication, and commercial affairs held the promise of unprecedented power, and the first to master them could achieve spectacular success. Would the dizzying pace of scientific and technological achievement present a force for good and enable a brighter future across the planet? Or, would it unloose into the world sinister forces of evil, empowered by unprecedented devices for exploiting a greater number of victims on a wider scale?

Police and prison authorities became aware that in a shrinking world, crime had become increasingly international. A category of cosmopolitan individuals took advantage of opportunities for travel and correspondence. These professionals operated in an international space, ahead of the public, hidden from the police and beyond the prosecution of authorities. They seized the new technologies of the era to perpetrate age-old crimes of theft and burglary by novel means of deception and deceit. Mass circulation of news amplified the emerging threat. A popular theme in newspapers throughout the nineteenth century, crime had become international news by the start of the twentieth century. Did the police and the press exaggerate the threat of professional criminality? Perhaps. For both the police and press, exaggerating the scale and scope of professional criminality afforded a means of inflating their own significance. But whether crime was increasing in particular ways is not clear. It is clear that both exaggerated the use of technology for crime fighting and that scientific policing failed to bring about an
international approach. Political, legal and other issues presented barriers to meaningful international police cooperation, as did adherence to familiar methods of detective work. In understanding why international police cooperation did not work, it is possible to understand why professional criminals would have been able to work as effectively as was claimed.

There was, overall, no panic about the impact of world-shrinking technologies on crime. There were a number of people during this period engaged in science, business or politics, who were prepared to bet on a brighter, fresher, faster, easier and better tomorrow. But there were also those, who held positions in police, prisons or criminal law, who spotted a specific weakness in the infrastructure of that tomorrow. Concern about changes in criminality reflected deeper anxieties about the pace and direction of civilisation. Advances in science and industry promised a bright future, a future without, or certainly with less, crime, disease and suffering. But it also contained the possibility for victimisation on a wider scale.
2

World Empire

The late nineteenth century was the ‘age of imperialism’, a period when empires reached their territorial maximum. All the European powers—France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, the Netherlands and Great Britain—held overseas territories. America, as well, became an imperial power when it acquired the Philippine Islands following the Spanish-American War. But of all the imperial powers, Britain was the largest and most important. Edward VII, at the time of his coronation in 1902, became sovereign of over 400 million subjects in Europe, America, Asia and Africa. Great Britain held some 60 colonies, dependencies and protectorates, encompassing more than 11 million square miles; about a fourth of the inhabitable surface of the planet.

The number of police forces and prisons under the control of the Colonial Office made it, at least in theory, the largest criminal justice system ever organised in the history of the world. The geographic scope of crime control across the British Empire made the international congresses concerning police, prisons, white slavery and anarchism seem like regional events. In practice, colonial administrators achieved nothing like a coordinated or centralised system. The administration of justice took place within legal systems characterised by the mixture of British legal principles and local customs and codes so that prisons and police in each colony acquired certain distinctive features. But in examining the British Empire, we can see the homogenisation of crime as an administrative issue across political and natural borders.

The British Empire represented an intercontinental network of knowledge, ideas, people and policies. The white settler colonies of Canada, the Cape and Natal, Australia and New Zealand were largely self-governing based on the Westminster model. Other colonies in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf, in the West Indies and Central Africa
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did not have large settler populations. Known as crown colonies, these were administered directly by a governor answerable to the secretary of state for the colonies. India, with its 294 million people, was a case apart. The viceroy, the British Raj, ruled with a relatively small number of administrators within the Indian Civil Service. Although the discussion in this chapter includes India and references to settler colonies, we will concentrate on the crown colonies. Our goal is to see how the maintenance of this global empire universalised perceptions of crime; we are interested in how the administrators of the Empire perceived crime and how they responded.

**Imperial knowledge of crime**

From all over the planet, the empire builders gathered information about the people and places they added to their map. They surveyed and charted, took censuses, produced statistics and created classifications and sub-classifications. They intended to create an encyclopaedic knowledge of the world, an archive of knowledge that was both positive and comprehensive.³ This can be seen in the collection of botanical plants. Kew Gardens became the repository for plants gathered from across the empire, a living library of the world’s flora. It can also been seen in human behaviour, including criminal behaviour. In some colonies, British authorities discovered very little crime. In their annual reports, colonial administrators of Bermuda, the Virgin Islands, Falkland Islands and Grenada marvelled at the lack of serious criminality, although they did not see this as a point worthy of further study. Rather, the crime-free quality of particular colonies was understood to be a characteristic of the population or offered as evidence of the effectiveness of British administration. In other colonies, British authorities encountered what they took to be indigenous criminality of extraordinary size and shape.

Officials and civil servants catalogued these curious species of *homo criminalis*. In Trinidad and Tobago, the British administration found ‘wife murder’ to be prevalent, particularly among the Indian immigrants resident in the islands.⁴ In Lagos, the colonial secretary noted the native criminals’ superstition frequently led to their apprehension and conviction. Burglars tended to wear charms meant to put the householder to sleep or render themselves invisible, and when apprehended, the culprits almost always retained the evidence for prosecution tied around the neck. In the Gold Coast, the governor had come across a case of human sacrifice. He despatched a large force of Houssas to Larteh, where
it had been reported that a sacrificial killing had taken place six months earlier. His forces directed one of the chiefs, Ababio of Adukroom, to proceed to Accra to answer charges. In the Straits Settlements, officials wrangled with secret societies. These were divided into the Toapeh Kong, Ghee Hins, Ho-Seng, Chhun Sim, Hai San and Ghee Hok. The police in Penang province suppressed quarrels between the Ho-Sengs and the Ghee-Hins and between the Ho-Sengs and the Toapeh Kongs. But the Ghee-Hins were a powerful tribe, with ample funds and large holdings, and the Toapeh Kongs had the backing of the Chinese. In Sierra Leone, the police failed to stop the activities of the so-called ‘human leopards’. Men, dressed in leopard skins attacked individuals in solitary places and murdered them for ‘some special purpose’. It was said that these crimes might have involved cannibalism, but the colonial secretary surmised that they had more to do with the activities of ‘secret societies’.

In order to suppress crime effectively, it was essential to develop knowledge of resident culture. Governor William Robinson explained this situation in his annual report from Hong Kong for 1894. ‘There is, perhaps, no Colony in which police duties are so varied and so responsible as in Hong Kong’ he stated. Nine gang robberies had occurred during the previous year and except for one case, all of the perpetrators had eluded the police. The assailants in most cases appeared to be respectable Chinese, dressed in customary long coats with extra-large sleeves. This costume provided a convenient place for concealment of firearms and other weapons. The robbers would enter a shop, ostensibly to examine the wares; one would throw pepper into the eyes of the shop-keeper while the others drew their firearms. While the shop-keeper was held at gunpoint, others gathered the spoils, before they all made off in silence. Rarely, Robinson sighed, did the police make arrests given the want of timely information. The difficulties of responding to these crimes could ‘only be fairly estimated with a knowledge of local circumstances’.

Nowhere did authorities find as much exotic criminality to inventory as in India. The administrator-scholars of the East India Company, and after 1858, the British Raj, relied on identification and classification to administer a vast continent of varied peoples. By mid-nineteenth century, notions of racial difference and distinctive characteristics of ‘castes’ and ‘tribes’ had been established. These included descriptions of ‘criminal tribes’ who were thought to have originated in antiquity and who were more-or-less given to crimes as a vocation. Awareness of the importance of native forms of crime led to the establishment of the Department of Thagi and Dakaiti in 1830 by Governor General Lord Bentinck. An important part of the rationale for the Department
came from William Sleeman, the officer appointed by Bentinck to hunt down the thugs of northern India. The Department pursued a conceptualisation and enumeration of criminal tribes while governments in the Punjab and North-Western provinces experimented with ways of curtailing tribes’ activities.

In India, the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 established a means by which provincial authorities could petition the government for a tribe to be declared criminal. It authorised local governments to recommend to the governor-general any tribe, gang or class of persons who were ‘considered addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences’. If the governor-general concurred, the tribe or gang would be notified, and the local government could proceed to confine them or order them removed to particular settlements. Upon registration, the members of a tribe would be restricted to daily reporting to local officials, roll calls and tickets of leave, and punishments included whipping and imprisonment. In the first decade, the act put into place a process for registering known tribes. In the Punjab, the Sansi tribe was registered in 1873, the Pakhiwars, Gurmangs, Harnis, and Baurias in 1875 and the Minas in 1876. Registrations continued, and the Act received further amendments in 1897, 1911 and 1916.10 This approach informed colonial administration elsewhere. The British government of the Straits Settlements saw a particular parallel between the criminal tribes of India and the ‘secret societies’ of Penang province. Ordinances passed in 1869 and 1870 provided for registration of secret societies, and by 1885, the government had enumerated 71,371 members of secret societies.11

A number of handbooks appeared delineating the tribes of the Punjab and Bengal; these collated research undertaken by police, provincial officials and ethnologists into the tribes’ outlook and habits. Notes on Criminal Classes in the Bombay Presidency, published by the government printing service of Bombay in 1908, described the 16 criminal classes within Bombay along with the seven tribes known to visit Bombay. It was compiled by a deputy inspector-general of police from police reports gathered in the states and districts. The descriptions included information under the following headings: appearance, modus operandi, tricks, particular crimes, speciality tools, the role of women and children, use of disguises, weapons and argot. The author, with experience in criminal investigation related to railways, included details about crimes related to transportation. The chief occupation of the Bhamptas, for example, consisted of thieving from railway platforms and from any place where crowds gathered. The extension of the railway system provided these specialists in highway robbery with lucrative fields in which to carry out
their predations by day and night. They excelled in breaking open bags and transferring the contents to their own bags without being noticed. A special chisel, developed by the Bhamptas for this purpose, could be seen on display at the Bombay District police museum.12

Accounts and anecdotes about India’s criminal tribes found wide circulation in England. Reports of the Thagi and Dakaiti Department arrived each year and provided a reliable supply of topics for discussion. Quarterly Review informed its readers of a ‘truth worth remembering’: the Thagi, the only religion that preached murder, was not then extinct. The article took the occasion of the annual report to revisit the story of the thuggee which had originally emerged around 1810. Supposedly, the thuggee formed a cult of murder involving strangulation of the victim with a silk scarf sanctified to the Hindu goddess Kali (or Devi).13 Anecdotes from returning civil servants also furnished material for weekly newspapers and literary magazines. Gentleman’s Magazine detailed ‘an Indian crime’ unknown to occur anywhere else. The author offered several examples of the crime, which he had learned about while working in a district near Agra, ‘that of the murder of children for their ornaments’. It represented a truly strange form of crime because it was always committed by persons unconcerned about concealing their evil and did not seem to diminish despite the fact that it was almost always discovered and punished.14 Blackwood’s Magazine provided a description of Indian opium-smuggling. Smugglers took advantage of the railways, as well as the traditional method of smuggling by country-boat, to sneak opium out of the country in defiance of British restrictions.15 These reports also found their way to English readership outside Britain. Accounts in American social science journals and literary magazines amplified ‘knowledge’ of India’s criminal tribes.16

Strange goings-on in India provided interesting reading, but these accounts were taken for more than entertainment. Lombroso’s theory of the atavistic criminal lent itself to comparison of criminality across domestic and colonial populations. The criminal population at home, like the colonial populations encountered abroad, was to be understood as a historical anachronism. Criminals, according to Lombroso, amounted to savages who had survived the death of the society to which they belonged.17 As a class or race of individuals, they found it impossible to live up to the standards of modern society. While few criminologists in Europe shared all of Lombroso’s views, they did tend to share his belief in the connection between criminals and savages. In Austria, Hans Gross and Robert Heindl expressed similar views, as did Gabriel Tarde in France and Adolphe Prins in Belgium.18 Lombroso
even found some agreement on this point among French anthropologists, despite the celebrated opposition of the French to Italian criminal anthropology (Chapter 6). M. Bordier, professor of medical geography at the School of Anthropology, published a paper on the skulls of murderers in the *Revue d’Anthropologie*. The skulls, which had been on display at the pavilion of anthropological sciences at the Universal Exhibition of 1878, all showed ‘characteristics of atavism’. Bordier’s examination of the skulls ‘reminded him of prehistoric types’ which led him to the conclusion that ‘criminal man [was] an anachronism, a savage in a civilised country’.19

Havelock Ellis, Lombroso’s chief British interpreter, reviewed research concerning tattoos, slang and hieroglyphs (graffiti). He explained the criminal slang in London paralleled that of slang used by ‘savage races’. Certain tribes in the Cameroon taught themselves to speak their language backwards, and the ‘back-slang’ used by criminals in the slums of the civilised world was as accomplished as the ‘African savage’. Ellis drew a direct comparison in his discussion of religion or superstition. In all countries, criminals adhered to their superstitions. The Sansya dacoits in the highlands of Central India, he said, spilt a small amount of alcohol on the ground before beginning a depredation to appease the goddess Kali. Similarly, English burglars kept a small piece of coal in a coat pocket for good luck, or some other charm, such as a bit of chalk, small stone, or horse-shoe nail.20 This similarity began with physical characteristics. ‘It thus happens that our own criminals’, Ellis commented, ‘frequently resemble in physical and psychical characters the normal individuals of a lower race’. Vernon Harris, onetime governor of Chatham convict prison, claimed there was always something peculiar about the eyes, ears or noses of habitual criminals, ‘in the masculine character of the women and the feminine features of the men’ and the ‘childishness of both sexes’. Both men and women shared ‘somewhat of the nature of the lunatic and somewhat of that of the savage’.21

Lombroso emphasised this point in *La Donna Delinquente*, his treatise on the female criminal. As the criminal represented a reversion to a more primitive type of human being, the female criminal necessarily reproduced the telltale signs of primordial womanhood; specifically, a closer resemblance to the male in stature, brain and muscular strength. Prostitutes, especially the ‘lower orders of prostitutes’, tended to grow fat after 20 years of age, Lombroso said, and this followed the pattern of women from colonised areas of the African continent. ‘Hottentot, African, and Abyssian women when rich and idle grow enormously fat, and the reason for this phenomenon is atavistic’. He added that
women in prisons and asylums tended to grow more fat than the men in these institutions and that he had observed a girl of 12 who displayed more characteristic African features than were found in the average African woman—more Hottentot than a Hottentot. Tattooing confirmed this pattern. Compared to criminal men, fewer criminal women wished to display tattoos. The explanation was found in atavism: savage women displayed fewer tattoos than aboriginal men. In Polynesia, where men covered large portions of their body with tattoos, women preferred to have only a few delicate bands inscribed on their feet or hands.22

British officials made a point of rejecting Lombroso only to pursue Lombrosianism. The world’s foremost power did not wish to be seen importing foreign ideas for its administration but rather exporting them to less-civilised places on the global map. Instead of citing Lombroso as the authority for ideas about the criminal body, the authorities preferred to credit British sources for similar ideas. British sources, typically prison doctors, expressed Lombrosian ideas in other language.23 The author of a 1909 article about crime in the South African Law Journal, for example, reviewed the work of Lombroso and Ferri before settling on the eugenic approach advocated by English socialists. Nevertheless, the article contained statements such as ‘[h]eredity and atavism between them have produced the criminal recidivist, the throwback in the evolution of mankind’, and a quarter of criminals ‘have received the criminal taint in their blood’. About the same time, a judge in the South African Republic, referred to Lombroso in his comments on a recent book dealing with psychology and crime. The judge said that while German and American psychologists had rejected the notion that people were ‘born to crime’, and rightly so, there were criminals ‘deficient in self-control’. This ‘general physical and mental inferiority’ characterised criminals and distinguished them from ‘those who are higher on the scale of humanity’.24

The complex relationship between theoretical sources of ideas on criminality and the ideology of colonialism meant that while Lombroso seldom received unqualified endorsement, his ideas had some resonance with colonial administrators. In India, Dr Sañjīvi offered a course in criminology and detection at the Institute of Criminology, Tinnevelly, in the Madras presidency. He described ‘instinctive criminals’ using Lombrosian language, although he stopped short of an endorsement. Instinctive criminals displayed certain physical characteristics: heavy protruding chins, small shifty eyes, heavy dark hair and beards. There may be some truth, he said, in the observation that the
‘natural criminal’ is left-handed and in this class, women displayed a more masculine appearance. But he advised his students not to act upon this information, as such features occurred in persons of unimpeachable character as well. In New Zealand, Reverend Charles Hoggins regularly cited proceedings of the international congresses of criminal anthropology in his comments of prison reform. He followed Lombroso in the belief that criminality resulted from a predisposition beyond individual control. ‘On the whole...’, Hoggins concluded, ‘the criminal is simply a man whose special peculiarities have brought him into opposition to the prevailing tendencies of his age; he belongs to a type which the majority of his fellow men had left behind’. In Malta, Major Ralph Turntton displayed some affinity as well. Turntton, commandant of the detention barrack, had been sent to review the situation at the British-built civil prison at Corradino. In expressing concern over the detention of boys at the prison, he said:

Professor Lombroso, the well known criminologist, in his great work ‘L’Uomo Delinquente’ declares that the criminal, like the insane, is a defective, a physical, nervous, mental anomaly—a specialised type of humanity somewhere between the lunatic and the savage, and requires curing rather than punishing. If that is true as regards criminals, it must be far more true as regards juvenile offenders.

The idea of criminal class

To create the imagined social entity that was the British Empire required the appearance of a consistent and uniform government. The empire builders recreated in the colonies the institutions they had left behind at home, often from the outside-in. Colonial architecture reworked British themes, and government buildings from Jamaica to Malta and Australia to India bore the familiarity of English castles, churches, railway termini, prisons and hospitals. In the arena of crime control, however, colonial administrators were far from convinced that British institutions could be easily and simply applied. Colonial populations did not necessarily share the familiar virtues and vices of the British working class. To guide their decision making, colonial administrators made use of ‘domestic-imperial analogies’. These evoked a sense of familiarity or affinity with the colonial populations as well as difference and otherness. And, they worked in both directions. The anthropologists who ventured into London to catalogue ‘the residuum’ and ‘undeserving poor’ compared them to ‘savages’ in ‘darkest Africa’. And, one reason colonial administrators
found the behaviour of ‘natives’ so objectionable was the resemblance they saw to the residuum and undeserving poor back home.28

General William Booth’s *In Darkest England* appeared the same year as Stanley’s *In Darkest Africa*. Booth’s volume sought to demonstrate the darkness closer to home. It begins with Stanley’s journey into the tropical rain forest ‘where the rays of the sun never penetrate’ and the pygmies and cannibals condemned to live in this dark world ‘lurk, live and die’. Hard as it is to admit, Booth continued, the stony streets of London revealed tales of ‘tragedies as awful, of ruin as complete, of ravishments as horrible, as if we were in Central Africa’. In the section of this text devoted to crime, he explained that according to census returns, the criminal classes of Britain numbered about 90,000, not counting prostitutes and brothel-keepers. ‘The hereditary criminal is by no means confined to India’, Booth concluded, ‘although it is the only country that they have the engaging simplicity to describe themselves frankly in the census returns’. The comparison served as a literary device, but it was not only that. Booth recommended the regeneration of criminals by means of the ‘Prison Gate Brigade’. He explained that he already had a good deal of experience in this work, both in England and in Bombay, Ceylon, South Africa, Australia and elsewhere. Booth also advocated overseas colonies as a solution. He urged a return to transportation and the establishment of labour colonies in South Africa. The success of the United States and Australia demonstrated how well transportation worked.29

The Salvation Army began its work in the East End of London during the mid-nineteenth century. A follower of Wesley, Booth pursued those most marginal to middle-class Victorian values: drunks, thieves, prostitutes and other notorious characters. In 1882, the Salvation Army began its first overseas missionary project, and within a decade, had grown to an organisation with some 9416 full-time members, 4506 in the United Kingdom and the rest distributed around Europe, the colonies and India. Activities commenced in India with the activities of Frederick de Latour Tucker, who married William Booth’s daughter Emma. The Booth-Tuckers began their work in 1882, much to the disapproval of British authorities. British officials distrusted the efforts of the Salvation Army because of the working-class background of its members and because of the unorthodox methods employed in winning converts. The authorities saw street processions and open-air meetings as noisy breaches of public order, embarrassment for the Crown and, possibly, incitement to riot. In 1908, Booth-Tucker became formally involved with the criminal tribes when the Salvation Army agreed to take over a
reformatory for criminal tribes. Following their accomplishments in the United Provinces, the Salvation Army took over reformatories in other provinces. They urged the importance of bathing and washing clothes, internal discipline and time-keeping, in addition to Bible study. Blackwood's Magazine described the theology of the Salvation Army as a ‘rudimentary and imperfect form of Christianity. We know its ritual to be vulgar, noisy and ludicrous’. But they saw in the overseas colony one of the ‘practical points’ in Booth’s proposals for rescuing fallen women, the intemperate, and criminals on their discharge from prison.

The notion of the ‘criminal class’ had been associated with the emergence of expanding cities and concentrations of the poor in rookeries and slums. In England in the 1860s and 1870s, social critics feared the craving for drink and cheap entertainment on the part of the poor would engulf civilised London. Political and social commentators worried about the distinction between respectable working class and that ‘the residuum’ would become blurred beyond delineation. The criminal class would spill over from the East End into the city. The most authoritative writer on the concept, Henry Mayhew, documented the criminal class, or classes, of London. Along with his assistant, John Binney, Mayhew proposed a ‘scientific classification’ of the ‘strange members of the human family…at war with all social institutions’. They divided criminals into three ‘distinct families’ of beggars, cheats and thieves and subdivided these into specialist areas (ten kinds of beggars, three kinds of cheats and three kinds of thieves). It is clear Mayhew thought of the criminal class as a race. He described the peculiarities of each classification from ‘an ethnological point of view, as those of the people of other countries, and we have learned to look upon them as a distinct race of individuals, as distinct as the Malay is from the Caucasian’. Mayhew also sought to make a direct connection between the criminal races of London and those of faraway places. London contained nearly every ‘geographic species’ of the human family. ‘If Arabia has its nomadic tribes, the British metropolis has its vagrant hordes as well. If the Carib Islands have their savages, the English capital has types almost as brutal and uncivilised as them. If India has its Thugs, London has its garrotte men’. Further, he insisted that the language differences of races across the globe did not significantly differ from the distinct modes of speech found in London’s underworld. Thieves made use of slang or argot; the ‘secret language’ of London’s thieves originated in medieval Latin.

In South Africa, anthropologists and administrators transferred this understanding directly to the native population. Africans in their natural tribal habitat, they surmised, were restrained and their society
relatively crime-free. Belief in the power of the spirit world, and spirits that watched and adjudged behaviour, served to restrain anti-social behaviour. But in towns, these controls and restraints lost their place. Contact with ‘poor whites’ and undesirable aliens led to criminal classes comprising both blacks and whites. A report of the Transvaal CID commented on the number of restaurants, liquor dens and gambling saloons frequented by ‘habitual criminals’ in the towns. Most habitual criminals chose to live with ‘kaffir women’ with expertise in the illicit production of beer.34 But if the reports to the Colonial Office from other parts of the empire were to be accepted, criminal classes were not manufactured by harsh city environments, nor limited to visible areas of industrial centres. Rather, there were populations of criminals on islands in the West Indies and Mediterranean similar to those found in the slums of Britain’s largest cities. One of the most curious and profound theories to emerge from colonial anthropology was that of the origins of the gypsies of Europe. The authors of the Punjab Administration Report for 1862–1863 referred to the criminal tribes of the Punjab as peoples who existed under other names and other appellations, and were to be ‘found in all parts of the world, presenting the same features, and even to some extent the same dialect’. The gypsies of Europe were presumed to have originated in north-western India, the descendants of a lowly caste of minstrels.35

Seen in this way, the native criminals of the empire were not merely analogous to the criminal classes of London, but versions of the same worldwide criminal class. Walter Hely-Hutchinson, the colonial secretary in Barbados, reported that he was prepared to take severe measures in defence against the threat of habitual criminality. The census of 1881 revealed 5000 adults without employment or visible means of support, not counting inmates of public institutions. ‘These idlers cannot urge deficiency of employment as an excuse; the demand for labour has been exceptionally brisk…’ he lamented. ‘They live by thieving and begging, and it is worthy of consideration whether, in the interests of the community, the punishment of theft should not be made more severe, certain, and effectual than it is at present’.36 Governor Robinson in Hong Kong thought the figures compiled for crime in the colony overall during the previous year indicated a ‘satisfactory’ situation as the ‘criminal class’ amounted to less than 1 per cent of the colony. But there had been a serious breach of order during the Chinese Feast of Lanterns when a quarrel between several men attracted rival clubs, who despatched their ‘professional fighting men and bullies’. This led, in turn, to guerrilla warfare and bold assaults in broad daylight. While the initial disturbance had
no political significance, it did disrupt shipping and ‘revealed the existence in our midst of a class of ruffians dangerous to the public safety of the community’.37

Habitual criminals could be found not only in Britain but across British colonies from Jamaica to Singapore. In Jamaica, the government maintained police surveillance over some 1200 habitual criminals in 1884. It is believed, H.W. Norman said, the attraction of high wages on the works of the Panama Canal had relieved the island of many of these men.38 F.M. Hodgson provided figures for ‘a class of habitual criminals’ in Barbados in response to a circular from Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office. Hodgson found no evidence of a significant increase in the number of habitual criminals from 1884 to 1903 and concluded no special legislation would be required in response. The governor of Jamaica, responding to the same circular, acknowledged a class of persons who led a persistently dishonest or criminal life in the colony and believed no limit on terms they were meant to serve should be written into Colonial Office regulations.39 In the Straits Settlements, the administrator of Penang province, C.J. Irving, attributed a decrease in the number of habitual criminals to the Prevention of Crimes Ordinance 1880 which paid attention to previous convictions. He said that ‘heavy sentences in the case of habitual offenders is, I believe, the most effectual way of dealing with the class’. In 1888, the government decided to take action in the form of the Banishment Ordinance. This act provided for the expulsion of habitual criminals found to be aliens on release from prison and resulted in the departure of 30 ‘incorrigible scoundrels’ in 1894.40

The sense of a criminal class across the empire coincided with the sense of an overall social hierarchy. The empire builders imagined an elaborate social pyramid, its base extending to the four corners of the earth, with England, above other colonial powers, at the top, and the peoples subjected in the colonies, including criminal classes, at the bottom. This worldwide social network connected the most backward tribes in remote corners of the globe, through the colonial government to the semi-divine sovereign in London at the pinnacle. Within the framework, crime problems in various colonies could be explained by movements within this sedimentary layer of the colonial population. The governor of British Honduras reported an increase in crime. It was not due to any aspect of administration in the colony, but the influx of ‘strangers from Guatemala’ who had been employed in railway construction. These strangers consisted of ‘foreigners of all nationalities’ but chiefly the ‘off-scourings of the United States’. The governor of Hong
Kong reported a similar phenomenon. Most of those in the gaol at Victoria belonged ‘to the mendicant class, who find their way to Hong Kong from the mainland of China’. The police arrested most of them on arrival for vagrancy and promptly locked them up, which, to the governor’s chagrin, is exactly what they hoped would happen as they saw the gaol more as a place to receive medical services than a form of punishment. The colonial administrator of the Straits Settlements warned of a similar problem. ‘It is yearly becoming more and more apparent,’ A.M. Skinner reported, ‘that this Settlement is becoming the receptacle for all the bad characters from the surrounding countries, and to thin our prisons, and preserve life and property, some means of ridding the colony of such characters is a matter of pressing importance’. In British Guiana, the assistant government secretary had no doubt the ‘wilder life of the gold diggings [had] attracted a large part of that lawless population that helps swell prison statistics’. In Trinidad and Tobago, the governor attributed an increase in crime figures over the previous year to the ‘influx of immigrants of an alien race’.

In the colonies, the migratory feature of the criminal class upset colonial administrators. To confront crime in their colonies, they relied on criminal justice measures such as improved gaol discipline and increased vigilance of the police and expressed frustration when statistics they collected suggested such measures had had no impact. Crime remained stubbornly high, even increased. Back home, the awareness of colonial criminality created deeper anxieties. In extending to remote corners of the globe, the British had made contact with primitive evil, and there was the disturbing possibility it would migrate from colonial backwater to domestic setting. Arthur Conan Doyle made use of the connection between London slum and colonial outpost to emphasise the transfer of criminal victimisation. In A Study in Scarlet, he uses the character of Watson to comment on London as ‘that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of empire are irresistibly drained’. The Sign of the Four relies on the interchange between periphery and metropole to supply the evil at the centre of the story. The story begins in India and ends in London, the periphery and metropole of empire drawn together in close interchange of criminality.

The fiction of leading writers during the age of imperialism, Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, H.G. Wells, and especially Bram Stoker, experimented with the disturbing idea of the colonisers finding themselves in the position of the colonised, the exploiters becoming exploited. Their stories stirred this theme among the perceived decline of the British Empire in which the racial, moral and spiritual bankruptcy made the
nation vulnerable to attack from vigorous ‘primitive’ peoples. Doyle took particular interest in the effect of colonisation on the colonisers and the return of Europeans who had failed in the colonial project. A number of his stories, such as ‘The Bascombe Valley Mystery’ and ‘The Crooked Man’, feature characters who failed to succeed in the colonies and return to England where they become perpetrators of crimes or suspects of investigations. While colonisation produced a wealthy ruling class, it simultaneously produced an underclass of poor whites. One class of colonials prospered, another declined. Colonisers brought technology, techniques and knowledge but were made aware of the weakness and vulnerability of their bodies in primitive landscapes. The class of persons diminished by their encounter with the colonial environment returned home and were poised to threaten their well-to-do counterparts. This ‘imperial lumpenproletariat’ could be found throughout the empire, including Australia, India and Africa.

Bram Stoker dealt with the dark vision of ‘reverse colonisation’ in *Dracula*: the novel presents the threat of primitive evil attempting to colonise the civilised world. Professor Van Helsing explains how vampires thrive in the wake of racial enervation and the decline of the empire—the precise social conditions affecting British society in the late nineteenth century. Count Dracula’s move to London signals that the heart of the empire, not the Carpathian Mountains, represents the scene of the connected struggles. The count is described as possessing increasing vigour, the British men surrounding him are pale, weak-looking, exhausted and nervous. As a transplanted Irishman with divided loyalties, Stoker knew about issues of imperialism and domination. The concern with questions of the empire can be found in all of his fiction, and in Dracula, he recalls the list of people once great in Transylvania—Huns, Magyars, Romans, Danes and Vikings. He invokes the cycle of empire, the rise, decay and collapse of empires and displacement by peoples who take advantage of their miscalculations, excesses and faults. The threat of the story is resolved when the evil count is driven back to Transylvania and destroyed. The image of the Irish in Britain was of a backward, primitive people who brought dirt and violence to British cities. When violence erupted in Phoenix Park in 1882, it seemed to suggest one of the consequences of imperial domination.

**Circulation of people**

Not only was the British Empire an imagined social entity, it was a functioning political system. This system relied on a small army of civil
servants, officials, administrators, secretaries and clerks, who managed railway and telegraph networks, English-language schools, hospitals and dispensaries and, generally, everything else thought necessary, from drainage of effluent water to production of naval biscuit. To police the colonies, the empire builders created police forces using a combination of British officers and local constables. To train and maintain such forces, they moved police, both groups and individuals, across continents and oceans. Police in the British Isles served in the colonies, heads of police forces in the colonies went to other colonies, or returned to posts in Britain. The idea of an ‘interchangeable police’ was, in fact, a point of discussion among colonial administrators. The governors of Jamaica, Barbados and British Guiana discussed a proposal for a single constabulary in the West Indies.48

The peculiar place of Ireland in the empire gave it a prominent place in the production of police. It was, by the Act of Union, meant to be part of the United Kingdom, and yet in the way it was governed and in social attitudes, regarded as a nearest thing to an overseas colony. The Royal Irish Constabulary became the nominal model for colonial police forces and, at an informal level, became the training centre for individuals who would serve as constables and offices in colonial forces. The Irish police represented the paradigm for colonial forces because it had been called on to serve a dual role. In Ireland, there was the potential for social and political conflict, as well as order maintenance and law enforcement, and the police force was meant to respond to both these contingencies. The Royal Irish Constabulary wore military-style uniforms and carried military weapons, including long rifles with sword bayonets. Irish policing spread throughout the Empire via the export of its military ethos, and the circulation of officers and advisors, who brought with them ideas about tactics, uniforms, training and so on.49 That said, the colonial police forces did not follow the Irish model as manufactures from a single mould. In each colony, Irish and British methods mixed with local customs to produce police forces characteristic to the cultures in which they operated.50

In some colonies, the connection to Ireland was direct. In Jamaica, Governor A. Musgrave, admitted to an increase in property crime but noted that this had occurred in ‘prædial larceny’. This was not very serious; it constituted a class of offence comparable to the theft of an apple or a turnip in England. Probably, it was due to a severe draught following the cyclone that struck the island in August of 1880. But he also noted an increase in the felonious wounding of horses and cattle. This was becoming quite prevalent in St Mary’s parish. It was very
difficult to trace and in all likelihood was motivated by revenge: ‘In this respect being not unlike the analogous class of offences in Ireland’. The similarity was so obvious it required the import of personnel with specialist knowledge of Irish criminality; in 1896, two sub-officers from the Royal Irish Constabulary joined the Jamaica police. Although cattle maiming increased, these specialists were thought to have improved discipline and methods of police work generally.\(^5\) In other colonies, personnel came from Britain, not Ireland. In the Straits Settlements, Governor J.F.A. McNair imported 23 ‘European’ police, 21 constables, two inspectors, along with 165 Sikhs, including an assistant superintendent trained in the Punjab police force in 1881. A fresh batch arrived three years later. The European contingent had been recruited from the police forces of large towns across England and Scotland. While they seemed to have performed well enough in Singapore, there was ‘serious discontent’ among the ranks in Penang.\(^5\)

The circulation of policing expertise can be seen in development of the Malta Police Force in the late nineteenth century. The Malta police originated in 1814 when the first British governor, Thomas Maitland, consolidated the coast artillery, provincial corps and police corps into a single organisation. He appointed Francesco Rivarola, a Corsican who had distinguished himself fighting alongside the British in the Italian campaign, as inspector general. In 1836, the Colonial Office appointed John Austin and George Cornewall Lewis to enquire into conditions on the island in the light of discontent with the government. They described the distribution of policing duties across several institutions and recommended further consolidation. Austin and Lewis submitted detailed proposals for staffing and organisation of a police force and coast guard.\(^5\) Reorganisation took place at mid-century with the intervention of governor Richard More O’Ferral who pursued a series of projects including a civil hospital, prison and poor-house. O’Ferral said that he took the ‘English police force’ as his model. He reduced the number of officers and increased the number of constables; he divided the constables into three classes and introduced the prospect of promotion as ‘an inducement to a better class to enter the service’.\(^5\) In 1885, the British government in Valletta passed the Police Act, which reorganised the police force ‘on the model of the Royal Irish Constabulary Act’. The act established qualifications for enlistment, created a code of conduct with good conduct pay, improved the salaries of inspectors and sub-inspectors and established a superannuation scheme. Walter Hely-Hutchison, the chief secretary to government, insisted that the police force had been the cause of complaint for
many years. Discipline had been ‘lax’, the duties ‘multifarious’ and the abuses ‘rife’.55

In the late nineteenth century, the Maltese desired a detective branch but colonial officials were reluctant to authorise it, at least at first. As early as 1882, the editor of a local newspaper urged the government to establish ‘a proper detective system’ in response to reports of an increase in burglaries and robberies. ‘If this is really so, the sooner this evil is remedied and an efficient detective force organised, the better’.56 But nothing happened until Tancred Curmi, who became superintendent in 1903, pressed the matter. A Maltese, popular with his colleagues, he was the first superintendent to have come up through the ranks. He took the opportunity to argue for a detective force in his testimony before a commission to enquire into the police force in 1904. He explained that when crimes were committed in the villages, the offender was known to many, but ‘country people’ would not cooperate with the police for fear of ‘private revenge’. At the same time, middle and higher classes of Maltese considered it inappropriate to assist the police in prosecuting crime. Attempts to secure information from informants had failed, as had occurred recently when a man on the police payroll used in the investigation of several bomb outrages turned out to have been part of the gang responsible for them. ‘This is why I insist on having a proper criminal investigation department under control of the director’ Curmi said. The committee concluded, however, that while ‘a few detectives would be very useful’, there would be insurmountable difficulty in finding properly qualified men and concealing their identity in a ‘small place like Malta’.57

The Maltese desire for a police service organised for crime prevention ran up against the British interest in a police force to maintain public order. The police became increasingly driven by the colonial model given the influence of Gerald Strickland, who served as principal secretary to the governor from 1888 until 1902. He was born Conte della Catena, the son of a Maltese woman of nobility and a British military officer and was educated in Rome and Oxford. He dominated Maltese politics for several decades. After serving as governor of the Leeward Islands, Tasmania, West Australia and New South Wales, he returned to Malta where he won election as prime minister. In Malta during the 1890s, Strickland committed himself to Joseph Chamberlain’s anglicisation campaign. He had a prominent role on the committee to review the police force in 1889 which dealt with issues of qualifications, pay, uniforms and overall strength. Strickland’s committee determined that the candidates for admission to the police force were illiterate and
came from ‘the lowest grade of the working classes’. The committee recommended candidates who could read, write or speak English and efficiency pay for those constables who could read and write English or Italian. Strickland established a rigid system of police surveillance. He commissioned the use of the truncheon as a police weapon, engaged in disruption of opposition meetings through *agents provocateurs* and the prohibition of political meetings. In 1901, when political opposition intensified, he enlisted units of the Royal Malta Artillery to reinforce the police and engaged detectives imported from Italy to detect anarchists.

In 1909, the Colonial Office sent Colonel E.B. McInnis to review the organisation of the Malta Police. He prepared a discipline code with the primary purpose of preventing crime. The absence of crime should serve as the best proof of an efficient force, and constables who kept their beats free from crime merited special recognition and reward. He outlined a number of extraneous duties carried out by police: delivery of telephone messages, keeping registers of vaccination, sale of postage stamps, numbering of street doors and issuance of licences to wine-and-spirit shops. McInnis stressed the need for primary training of recruits and proposed establishment of a police school. Former sailors and soldiers of good character of the Royal Navy and Regular Army should be given every opportunity to join the police with preference extended to former members of the Royal Malta Artillery. He agreed with Curmi about the need for a detective department. A detective department should be composed, McInnis said, of members of the police who have shown special aptitude, those with superior education and those with ability to read, write and speak English, Maltese and Italian. He urged weekly meetings of the whole staff and events of criminal offences discussed with the head of the branch. The detective office should maintain records of known thieves and circulate information about known offenders to constables. McInnis stressed that one or more members of the detective office should receive training in making and classification of fingerprints. Photographs of prisoners would also assist in identification. Further, the existing aliens branch should be amalgamated into the detective office, with a new aliens law passed along the lines of that enforced in England. The Aliens Law (1899) imposed unnecessary work on the police and was not as effective as it could have been.

In Malta, as elsewhere, colonial administration provided for the diffusion of ideas across space and time. Officers in police forces travelled between colonial posts, as well as between posts in Britain and the colonies, and in the process, diffused methods, strategies and practices. Some officers made their own career moves as individuals. Others were
transferred, either as individuals or in aggregate, around the empire to meet the expedient needs.\textsuperscript{61} This system saw not only the circulation of people and policing expertise but also the distribution of technologies for policing, including telephones, bicycles, whistles, batons, revolvers, handcuffs and lanterns.

**Policymaking across the colonies**

On paper, the colonies were administered centrally from Downing Street. This was particularly true of the crown colonies where governors ruled subject to the authority of the secretary of state for colonies with whom they maintained constant correspondence. Correspondence between the secretary of state for the colonies and the governors in the colonies dealt with every subject of importance, and quite often, matters of the most trivial detail. The machinery of crown colony administration was embodied in a set of rules, the Colonial Department Regulations, which became over the years the guide for colonial administration. These regulations covered the keeping of accounts, the manner of correspondence, wearing of uniforms and firing of salutes. But, crime policies are more than a technique, practice or strategy that can be codified. They must be conceptualised as ‘integrated concepts, which have emerged in a particular institutional setting’ and within ‘a legal and public culture of crime prevention and control’. Specific values and symbolic meanings are as much a part of policies as institutional designs, which lead to unavoidable difficulties in transport and translation across settings.\textsuperscript{62}

In reality, policy making was less uniform, less coherent. Requirements introduced from London appeared in the colonies in diluted or distorted forms, or not at all. Policies also originated in the colonies, spread to other colonies and even back to Britain. The policy making can be compared to the telegraph network of land lines and undersea cables that tied London with colonial capitals: communication along these lines flowed in all directions. Fingerprints, as a basis of criminal identification, began in Bengal. Edward Henry worked out a practical system for classification, in conjunction with two sub-inspectors, in the 1890s that led to its adoption throughout India in 1897. Henry carried his system to South Africa, where he organised the police of Johannesburg and Pretoria and introduced a fingerprint-based labour pass, before returning to London, where he became assistant commissioner of Metropolitan Police and established the fingerprint bureau at Scotland Yard in 1901. The ‘Henry method’ of fingerprint identification spread to Europe and
back to the colonies. The ‘mark system’ also spread from the colonies back to Britain. It originated with Captain Alexander Maconochie in Van Diemen’s Land. He introduced the idea to the Transportation Committee of the House of Commons in 1837 and implemented the system at Norfolk Island. In Ireland, Sir Walter Crofton experimented with the system, which went into English code and ‘ticket-of-leave men’ appeared on London streets (and imagination). The mark system spread to English colonies (several in the Caribbean initiated it in the 1880s), as well as to Europe (Denmark, Hungary, Croatia by 1910) and America (Elmira).

One of the most perplexing tasks for policy makers responsible for the administration of justice across the empire was the imprisonment of women. Prison reformers, both women and men, believed that feminine characteristics made women more difficult to manage in confinement. The Victorian outlook assigned women to particular roles in society as a function of the natural order of things, and figuring out what to do with the small number of women who did not meet with these expectations presented an irksome and difficult problem. The prison regime arranged for men could not be simply or easily applied to women. ‘Women in prison are often restless and excitable, and their charge is far from an easy one to those whom the duty is confided…’ remarked Vernon Harris; ‘It is, to be sure, a recognised fact that the women give more trouble than the men’. History had shown few women contributed to the ranks of notorious criminals. But that said, a bad woman was worse than a bad man. ‘As we know, “a bad woman is the worst of all creations” ’.

At the International Prison Congress at Paris in 1895, delegates debated the prison regimen for women. Was it advisable to adopt separate regulations for women, compared to the men, with respect to work, discipline, diet and punishment? Madame Dupuy, inspector of French prisons, and Eliza Orme, a member of the English delegation, electrified the proceedings with statements urging separate regulations for women. The penal code of France, Dupuy said, had forgotten women. She looked forward to the day when, in addition to treating women with humanity and kindness, the law would provide for the ‘peculiarities of the female temperament’. She urged regulations allowing work for women similar to that of their former occupation and setting aside Sundays for work or attention to family matters outside. She advocated a system of voluntary transportation, which would allow young women who retained a sense of shame and begged to be sent away to be sent to a distant country (colony) where their infamy would not follow them. Eliza Orme also emphasised the importance of organised
work in relation to the habits and occupations of women. In learning a suitable trade, women acquired a defence against returning to prostitution and vice. She also urged shorter sentences for women, because women aged faster than men. Their arguments provoked intense discussion. Although a vote was taken in favour of separate confinement for women, in recognition of the need for special quarters for women with children, the delegates could not agree, and the resolution was endorsed by only a portion of those assembled. They could not agree whether it was just to frame separate regulations, whether it was necessary to create special arrangements for women with children or whether there should be a tendency to soften the discipline and improve the diet for women.67

In the colonies, the controversy concerning women’s imprisonment generally found expression in the specific issue of whether to cut women’s hair. The practice occurred within colonial prisons throughout most of the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth, and remained a point of serious contention for at least three decades. It was the general practice for men, although even this proved contentious. In 1856, the inspector-general of prisons in India, F.J. Mouat, directed that men’s hair was to be kept short unless there was some religious exception. The problem for prison officials was to figure out whether a prisoner’s objection had to do with religious, caste or other reasons, and in the 1860s and 1870s, the regulation became subject to cultural practices within gaols. The Bengal Jail Code of 1867 specifically exempted cutting hair of Sikhs, for whom it would be ‘offensive and degrading’ and in 1886, the Amended Rules on the Subject of the Cropping or Shaving of Hair of Convicts in Jail stipulated that no prisoners should have their hair cut within a month of release.68 For women, hair-cropping was not practiced as a matter of routine but carried out for specific reasons. In India, prison officials could crop women’s hair for ‘health or cleanliness’ or ‘flagrant or continued misbehaviour’. In the Australian colonies, cropping of woman’s hair took place as early as 1826, when the governor of New South Wales, Ralph Darling, introduced the practice as punishment for ‘incorrigible’ women at the female prison factory. Some women protested strenuously to the degradation and humiliation of a shaved head, and did, at the female factory in Parramatta in 1833 precipitate a riot. Hair-cropping had taken place in Van Diemen’s Land but had been abandoned by 1841, perhaps owing to this adverse effect on discipline (although the principal superintendent of convicts there Josiah Spode continued to believe in its effectiveness as a means of discipline).69 The practice appears to have continued for the longest time in colonies in
the West Indies, and this led to increasing tension between domestic and colonial policy.

In England, the Quaker reformer of women’s prisons, Elizabeth Fry, saw cutting of women’s hair as contributing to an overall regimen of reform. She advocated uniform dress, ‘plain and simple’, without any appeal to ‘vanity’ in the dress and deportment. This meant the absence of ‘ear-rings, curled hair, and all sorts of finery’. The simplicity and humbleness of imprisonment began with cutting of the hair; women’s hair should be cropped and kept short throughout their sentence. Shortened hair represented a ‘certain, yet harmless punishment’ and promoted ‘that humiliation of spirit’ necessary for personal reformation.70 By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, cutting the hair of women prisoners came to be seen as a degrading and humiliating act inconsistent with modern prison discipline. The Prisons Act (1865) specified

the hair of a female prisoner shall not be cut without her consent, except on account of vermin or dirt, or when the surgeon deems it requisite on the ground of health, and the hair of the male criminal prisoners shall not be cut closer than may be necessary for purposes of health and cleanliness.

Testimony taken before the Committee of Inquiry on Prison Dress (1899) revealed hair cutting to be arbitrary and unequal. The committee affirmed support for the 1865 prohibition of the practice in England and recommended it be adopted in Scotland and Ireland.71 By the end of the nineteenth century, allowing imprisoned women to style their hair as they wished became the mark of a progressive prison administration. Major Arthur Griffiths observed that matrons would be overwhelmed, if they strove to check every attempt among women to adopt the coiffures in fashion; ‘fringes’, while falling out of style in society at large, remained popular, and tolerated, in prison. ‘Criminals will trim their hair as it pleases them, and the wisest disciplinarian affects to see nothing of the fringe’.72

These developments left the Colonial Office with the distinct challenge of implementing empire-wide prison-hair policy. In December 1871, Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, issued a circular concerning the practice of cropping the hair of women prisoners. The circular asked colonial administrators to report on the practices in their prisons, and the results put Kimberley in a dilemma. Hair-cropping did not take place in a number of colonies, including Gibraltar,
Gambia, the Cape, Natal, Ceylon, Hong Kong, St Lucia, Grenada and the Falklands. But it was practiced in others, mainly in the West Indies, and officials in these colonies insisted on its usefulness as a deterrent. In Jamaica, the practice commenced in 1864, and led, according to Mr Shaw, the inspector of prisons, to a 70 per cent reduction in the number of women imprisoned. The governor of British Guiana reported that a woman's hair was cut on second offence or for disorderly conduct. It was appropriate, the governor felt, as punishment for use of offensive language. The governor of Glendiary Prison in Barbados said that if the routine practice of cropping women's hair was to be discontinued, the number of women committed to prison would increase considerably. Hair-cropping represented such an effective punishment not only because of the shame experienced from the loss of hair but also because loss of hair marked the status of a former prisoner on release. Officials in the Virgin Islands, Turks Islands and Sierra Leon reported the practice worked well in dealing with women prisoners, and those in St Helena, Bermuda and the Bahamas emphasised the usefulness of the practice for dealing with incorrigible offenders. The governor of Bermuda, John Henry Lefroy, told Kimberley that it was not the practice to crop women's hair. But, in cases where it had been done, it had a decidedly deterrent effect. He included a report about a woman, an ‘incorrigible offender’, who had resisted the gaoler while he attempted to cut her hair. She managed to escape with one side shorn, and became such an object of scorn, she never returned to prison.

Clearly, Kimberley would have preferred to have banned the practice outright. He pointed out that cutting the hair of women prisoners was prohibited in British prisons but realised the difficulty of eliminating a widespread practice. He felt it would be ‘inexpedient’ to interfere in the administration of colonial prisons in this way but decided to issue some guidelines nevertheless. The punishment of hair cropping should be reserved for female prisoners convicted of serious offences or convicted more than once. The decision should not be left with prison officials but should be ordered by the court of sentence, by the governor or by some other official specifically designated for the purpose. It should never be inflicted for breaches of Master's and Servants acts nor for breaches of Immigration Acts. Further, cutting a woman's hair, even for health or sanitary reasons, should require a finding by the medical officer of the prison that it was really necessary. The Earl of Carnavon, who succeeded Kimberley at the Colonial Office, took over where he had left off. Carnavon ordered the practice of hair-cropping to be suspended and asked colonial administrators to report on the ‘experiment’.
The Invention of International Crime

Officials in Jamaica reported that it was necessary as a means of enforcing discipline and asked for the practice to be reinstated. The governor of Trinidad stated there was ‘no question’ the experiment had meant authorities had ‘lost control over the female prisoners’. Without the sanction of hair cropping, prison officials had resorted to hand-cuffing women and fitting straight waist-coats.75

Despite Carnavon’s instructions, hair-cropping continued. In 1907, the British government in Barbados marshalled a defence of their continued use of the practice in response to a directive issued by Lord Elgin, the secretary of state for the colonies, indicating his desire that the practice of cropping the hair of female prisoners should be done away with. In an exchange of despatches marked CONFIDENTIAL, the acting governor, S.W. Knaggs, explained the provisions under the law of Barbados authorising use of hair cutting. A woman’s hair could not be cut except when ordered by the medical officer, for second or serious offences and for certain breaches of prison discipline (attempted escape, assaults, blasphemous language). The law also gave the court power to authorise hair-cropping as a condition of imprisonment for women accused of cutting or wounding with a knife, razor or other sharp instrument. The governor also enclosed the statements from the chief justice and inspector of prisons insisting that while the punishment was seldom used, the threat of it remained essential to the administration of criminal law. The governor also insisted that he had no authority to overturn law written by the legislature established for Barbados. The chief justice believed the legislature was unlikely to pass a law restricting its use and believed its use was protected under the authority of law established for Barbados.76

In response to this challenge of the Colonial Office’s authority, Elgin backed down. He suggested that Barbados might enact legislation limiting use of hair-cropping, as had taken place in British Guiana. But Greaves told him that this was not likely to occur in Barbados, nor was it, for that matter, likely to occur in St Lucia either. Elgin suggested officials in Barbados quietly allow the practice to fall into disuse, but the chief justice insisted it fell within the courts’ discretion to inflict the punishment if necessary. This discretion had been written into law in 1884 in response to women convicted of wounding by means of a knife, razor or sharp instrument. There had been 21 women convicted of this offence during the previous five years, and 11 of them had been ordered to suffer hair-cropping in addition to imprisonment. Elgin said ‘the reason why we have been writing on the subject is that the punishment in question is precisely of the kind which is likely to excite hostile comment
in this country as being contrary to English opinion and practice’. Elgin informed Knaggs that ‘we do not press the matter at present’ but also warned ‘that if the question is raised over here at any time the Secretary of State will not feel himself able to defend the infliction of such punishment. These explanations are due to you.’

Conclusions

To administer the British Empire, colonial administrators sought to create encyclopaedic knowledge of human behaviour, including criminal behaviour. They also made use of analogies to the domestic context in Britain. This meant that while governors, police and other officials in the colonies encountered strange and shocking behaviours, they also found familiar and recognisable populations. In the poor sugar colonies of the West Indies and military posts in the Mediterranean, in the Persian Gulf and Africa, as well as in the sub-continent of India, they found criminal classes and habitual criminals very much like those back home. Reports to from the colonies gave the impression of a ‘global criminal class’.

The British Empire established and maintained what was the largest criminal justice system in the world. While it did not function as a coherent and coordinated system, but was much more of a colossal improvisation, it promoted the circulation of police officials around the world. In Malta, this involved the struggle between the goals of empire and emphasis on policing for order with the goals of criminal justice and crime prevention. The empire also spread British policies, which travelled on the bureaucratic network in all directions, from metropole to colony, colony to colony and colony to metropole. This can be seen in prison practice concerning cutting the hair of women prisoners. The Colonial Office sought to bring colonial prisons in line with Home Office regulations, and although it was less than successful in the West Indies, colonial administrators did spread British practices across the continents. Spreading British models around the planet involved several mechanisms: aggregation of knowledge, replication of institutions, circulation of expertise and implementing policies and practices.
In 1905, Great Britain became the first European state to establish a modern system of immigration control at the point of entry.\footnote{Parliament passed the Aliens Act in response to anxieties about the impact of aliens on British society, particularly Jews, who were said to have introduced novel and excessive criminality.\footnote{The great social surveys of the Victorian era audited crime and poverty among indigenous populations. Now, in the fin de siècle the aetiology of criminal behaviour was no longer to be found within the city and social conditions in British society but, rather, in the racial character of foreign arrivals. London’s crime problem was believed to have originated along Russia’s western frontier.}} Jews were not the first immigrants to Britain in the nineteenth century to become subject to racialisation and criminalisation. Even before the influx of the Irish during the famine of the 1840s and 1850s, there was widespread belief in their innate criminality. The image of ‘Irish criminality’ preceded, and to a certain extent, rivalled that of ‘Jewish criminality’ in the 1880s.\footnote{But, the issue of ‘Irish criminality’ is less important for our purpose as it did not raise the spectre of international criminality. In the minds of a number of politicians, journalists and opinion-leaders, the problem of ‘Jewish criminality’ reflected the much larger problem of ‘international Jewry’. The immigrant Jews huddled in London were said to comprise, as a matter of race, an aspect of a worldwide network of Jews including influential Jews, working behind the scenes, in government ministries, banks and the press. There was a visible portion of Jewish criminals in the East End, and an invisible network of unethical Jews who shielded them from reasonable government intervention, and who kept the British people from learning the truth about their misdeeds. In the run-up to the Aliens Act, internationalism...}
with respect to crime took an especially sinister course reflective of the anti-Semitism across Europe.

This chapter explores how the Aliens Act and its aftermath encouraged British interest in an international system of immigration control. Britain in the late nineteenth century committed itself to free borders and the right to asylum, consonant with liberal belief in free trade. It is also true that issuance and monitoring of passports (in the modern sense) did not come into effect until the Great War. But, the view of crime as the result of a foreign presence encouraged the view of border control as a crime control measure. And, in the decades between 1881 and 1914, the point of control shifted from the point of arrival to the point of embarkation.

Jews, immigration and crime

Between 1880 and 1914, some 2.4 million Jews left the pale of settlement along Russia’s western frontier, driven by pogroms, repressive regulations, political upheavals and degrading poverty. In Russia, Jews had been prohibited from engaging in agriculture, denied residence in cities and barred from education and professions. Russian Jews had become luftmensch, a class of persons without earth to stand on, forced to make a living for themselves out of air. In one of the great population shifts in modern Jewish history, they began a mass exodus from Eastern Europe. Most of these were heading to die goldene medine, ‘the golden land’ of America, but tens of thousands took refuge in Britain, as they did in Austria, Holland and France.

Emigration routes took the emigrants to a junction on the railway lines, such as Kiev, Warsaw or Brody, then to a depot mid-continent, often Vienna, Berlin or Breslau, and finally to a port city. The largest lines operated through as many as 2000 agents in Europe, and their sub-agents and solicitors worked every district of the continent. Fierce competition among trans-oceanic steamships and inter-continental railways led to a price war so that an immigrant could travel from Liverpool to Chicago in 1888 for ten dollars or about two guineas. British passenger ships enjoyed a somewhat better reputation than German, although the voyage as a ‘steerage passenger’ was not pleasant. Steerage accommodation was crowded and uncomfortable, but sanitary controls made outbreaks of disease rare and major lines provided kosher kitchens. Some port cities had receiving houses but not the ports of London. On arrival, a Custom House official boarded the vessels, entered the steerage and questioned the passengers about their number, means, destination and
what arrangements had been made for their landing. A medical officer, on duty at Gravesend, also met immigrant ships to carry out a medical examination. Essentially, the officer went alongside to enquire whether there was any sickness on board. If the captain replied in the negative, the ship was allowed to proceed. On arrival, many of the passengers were met by friends or relatives. Shipping agents met trans-migrants and provided accommodation. Destitute or stranded arrivals received assistance from the Jewish Board of Guardians or other charities.7

Beginning in the 1880s, hundreds of steamships arrived in London ports each year, their hulls filled with Russian and Polish Jews. Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow acquired significant Jewish populations, but the largest number—some two thirds of all Jews settling in Britain—stayed in London. Between 1880 and 1914, London’s Jewish population increased from 20,000 to 400,000.8 Most crowded into the two square miles from the City to Mile End Road, and from Bethnal Green to Cable Street, where they sought an income from tailoring, cabinet-making and shoemaking. For many of these arrivals, the goal remained America. Steamship agents in Europe promoted life in the New World, and their sub-agents and solicitors who received commissions for passengers would have had an incentive to exaggerate the welcome they would receive. But some had spent all of their savings and possessed no means to travel further. They remained in the ‘corridor’ of Whitechapel long enough to learn a trade, save enough money and proceed to the Golden Land. The Jews who settled permanently in England formed the largest East European group outside the United States. By 1894, the British Consul General in Odessa warned those proceeding to England not to settle there, as it was already overcrowded with unemployed workmen.9

As a proportion of the British population, immigrant Jews were insignificant, but their settlement prompted journalistic and political discussion about the impact of ‘Jewishness’ on British society. The ‘Jewish question’, or ‘aliens question’ as it was most often phrased, had to do with the influx of would-be workers and might-be paupers. The apparent willingness of newcomers from the pale to accept poor working conditions and substandard housing led to the fear of ‘sweating’, price-cutting and unfair competition in the clothing trades. Anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic agitators circulated leaflets linking Jews with prostitution, gambling and other crimes. MPs, journalists and police authorities made use of the impact of the ‘alien menace’ to justify calls for restriction of immigration. Jews were said to have foisted the ‘sweating system’ on manufacturing, introduced unfair trade practices spread the risk of disease and brought about a housing shortage from London to Leeds.10
In 1884, Britain’s leading medical journal, *The Lancet*, formed a ‘sanitary commission’ to investigate conditions within the ‘Jewish colony’. The commission described appalling conditions for workers in homes and shops and heaps of rubbish, containing a large quantity of refuse from fish, the staple diet. Few houses had flush toilets. Ventilation, ineffective drainage and defective water supply threatened the outbreak of disease. The report did not see these so much as a feature of the city, or the inadequacy of public assistance, but as a symptom of the character of the people. The ‘principle grievance to be brought against these Jew tailors’, the report made clear, ‘is that they work in unwholesome, crowded houses’. This was due to the foreign Jews themselves who evaded the Factory Act and Sanitary Act; it was pointless to question the women as they would lie, saying they were a daughter or niece, to thwart the law. The problem was due to the influx of ‘foreign Jews’ who had filthy habits, unlike the English Jews. To defend themselves against complaints from the Jewish press, the commission insisted that they were ‘compelled to take notice’ whenever ‘the difference of race, religion, and nationality gives rise to habits that have a direct bearing upon sanitation’.11

Editorials in the popular press developed similar themes, but abandoned discussion of public health for the alarmist rhetoric of anti-immigrant agitation. *Blackwood’s Magazine* claimed that the immigrants had ‘Judaised London’: more than 110,000 Jews resided in London, 100,000 in the East End. This population, considered alongside 20,000 Jews in Manchester and 8000 in Leeds, indicated the ‘alien terror’, although exaggerated, was ‘something of a reality’. The problem, as the magazine saw it, was that Jews, unlike other foreign immigrants, brought their ghettos with them. They lived together to be able to purchase ‘kosher’ goods and to pursue typical trades. Russian and Polish Jews introduced to English cities the ‘un-English squalor’ of Russian villages. These victims of the Tsar’s police presented a poor specimen of humanity. Feeble in physique, they settled for long hours of work and appalling living conditions. They communicated in Yiddish, which retarded the process of anglicisation. ‘London shall be for Londoners’, *Blackwood’s* proclaimed, ‘not for alien hordes debilitated by social and legislation persecution’.12

Anti-alien agitation centred on the Jewish population, particularly after the ‘ripper’ murders in 1888. For three months, a murderer the press called ‘Jack the ripper’ perpetrated a series of gruesome killings. *The Lancet* took the opportunity to point out that the atrocious murders occurred in precisely the same district where its commission had
demanded enforcement of the Sanitary Act. ‘Undoubtedly great poverty, overcrowding, dirt and bad sanitation have a lowering, brutalising tendency, which renders more probable the conception and execution of such crimes’. Robert Anderson, who was responsible for criminal investigations at Scotland Yard, saw a connection between Whitechapel, Jews and murder. He convinced himself that the murderer lived in the immediate area and voiced his suspicion that ‘he and his people were low-class Jews’. The ‘ripper’ was known to other people, people that would not surrender him to a police search: ‘for it is a remarkable fact that people of that class in the East End will not give up one of their number to Gentile justice’. In September, crowds gathered in the streets saying that it must have been done by a Jew, because no Englishman could have committed such crimes.

Rumours of ‘Jacob the ripper’ persisted. One alleged that the murders had been carried out as part of a ritual practiced by Jews in Eastern Europe. The killing of one of the women was said to resemble a crime committed in Galicia, near Cracow, in which a Jew had gone on trial for the murder and mutilation of a Christian woman. Hermann Adler, Britain’s Chief Rabbi, despatched letters to leading newspapers in the hope of quashing the accusation. No Jewish book referenced the idea of ritual slaying of a Christian, nor was a single conviction for such a crime in evidence in any other country. Another rumour proposed that the mutilation of the bodies had been carried out by someone with the skills of a kosher butcher, giving plausibility to the search for a Jewish culprit. To refute this allegation, the knives used by the Jewish slaughterhouse were sent to the City Divisional Surgeon, to whom detectives had sent the bodies. Having inspected the instruments, the surgeon was satisfied that none had been used in the slayings. Yet another rumour proposed a Jewish anarchist. In October of 1888, a victim was found in Berner Street, leading to speculation that the ‘ripper’ had some connection to the Jewish socialist club there. The body had been discovered in a yard, adjacent to the International Workingmen’s Club, by Louis Dienschütz, the club’s steward. He acknowledged that the club was socialist but insisted that membership was open to persons of any nationality.

‘Jewish criminality’ invoked the idea that novel and excessive criminal behaviour, originating along Russian’s western frontier, had relocated to the East End of London. The immigrants brought within them habits of behaviour developed in response to their bitter experience in the Russian Empire. Arnold White said that while he sympathised with the plight of Russian Jews, he also appreciated the dilemma faced by the Tsar’s government. White, a journalist who made four unsuccessful
attempts to enter Parliament, contented himself with social criticism. The ‘incontestable intellectual superiority, temperance, and assiduity of the Russian Jew’, he wrote, would lead to ‘judiasing the whole Russian administration if the professions were open to them’. It may be that Russia should grant equality and education. But ‘what Russian ministry in its senses could permit a country to commit suicide by handing over its control and management to the small Jewish minority?’ In ‘plain English’, White said that centuries of repression had brought about extensive changes in the moral characteristics of Jews in Eastern Europe. Some individuals retained high character, but sordid cares, habitual want and hopelessness blighted the majority. ‘We in England can see this for ourselves, in the Magistrates Courts of East London, where recent arrivals among Jewish immigrants display the unloveable characteristics’. The ‘moral defects’ acquired by Russian Jews presented a problem ‘too conspicuous for practical statesmanship to ignore’.20

London’s underworld had become strange and sinister because it had been infused with under-civilised residents from a brutal and backward corner of the planet. Beatrice Webb (née Potter) developed this explanation in her anthropological study of Jews in the East End. In the 1880s, she carried out her enquiry in connection with the larger study made by her cousin, Charles Booth. She took a flat in the East End for four months and worked in a Jewish shop, disguised as a lower-class girl. Ostensibly, her observations were limited to the Russian and Polish Jews she encountered there, but nevertheless, she applied her analysis to Jews in general. She presented the Jews as a backward people who undermined the English tailors by means of their adherence to old world ways. They had imported their society, derived from the shtetls on the western frontier of Russia, into London. ‘Jüdisch [Yiddish] is the language of the streets’, she explained, ‘and Hebrew characters are common in shop windows and over door-ways’. The East End Jews did not attend the great synagogues built by Anglo-Jewry but preferred their chevras, small associations combining public worship, Talmud study and social benefits. There were some 30–40 chevras in the East End, and to enter one of them on a Sabbath morning was tantamount to travelling to ‘a far-off Eastern land’.21

The way in which Jews engaged British society, Webb said, had been established in the pale of settlement using the means they devised over the centuries to counter the Tsars’ persecution. Russian attempts to legislate Jews out of Russian society ‘met with the superior mental equipment of the Jew’ and could not eliminate them but merely managed to force them into ‘low channels of parasitic activity’. Jews roamed across the
Russian frontier, armed with a ‘capacity for silent evasion of the law’ and a facility for ‘secretive and illicit dealing’. The immigrant population gathering in the East End presented the ‘concentrated essence of Jewish virtue and vice’. Jews turned their well-developed intellect to commerce and finance and, combined with secretive dealings, became an inevitable success. The Jews would not confront them with opposition, whether in politics or trade, in an open and direct manner as this was not in keeping with centuries of life under the Tsar. ‘Why bluster and fight when you may manipulate or control in secret’?

There were alternative voices. Geoffrey Drage calculated (in 1895) the total number of resident foreigners to be 219,523, or 5.8 per cent of the total population of the United Kingdom. ‘Were it not for the fact that the immigrants congregate in the three centres—London, Manchester, and Leeds—and engage almost exclusively in the cabinet-making and clothing trades, we should hear little of the “displacement of native labour by the lower priced labour of aliens”’. Giving the division of labour and conditions in the industry, he explained that it was accurate to say that foreign Jews had not displaced workers so much as introduced new trades. He also explained why the fear of pauperism was unfounded. Jewish workers did claim assistance, but most of this assistance came from co-religionists, not the government. John Dyche defended Jewish immigrants. In an article in the *Contemporary Review*, he described himself as a typical immigrant to Great Britain. He was a Jew, born in Russia, who landed in England nine years earlier. He learned the tailoring trade in Leeds. He described the popular prejudice against Jews made worse by a certain ‘low class of politicians on the look-out for cheap popularity’. Anti-immigrant agitators claimed that Jews brought vice to Britain common to continental large cities, but this was not true. Criminal statistics reviewed by the Board of Trade Report on Alien Immigration revealed a smaller percentage of criminals amongst Jews than in the native population. But anti-immigrant rhetoric in the case of the Jewish immigrants invoked not only the image of a foreign pauper but the invisible hand of ‘international Jewry’.

‘International Jewry’

The Jewish contribution to crime in Great Britain could be found in an escalation of professional criminality. As Beatrice Webb saw it, there was a connection between the criminality of the new arrivals in the East End and the settled population of West End. The racial character of Jews pushed them towards particular forms of crime and propelled
them to the forefront of the economy. Unlike their English counterparts in the needle trades, immigrant men quickly became ‘small masters’ by employing unskilled labour beginning with their wives and daughters. The prevalence of these small masters was explained by ‘the strongest compelling motive of the Jewish race—the love of profit as distinct from other forms of money-earning’. The desire for profit, the Jew’s greatest virtue, allowed the immigrant population to avoid problems related to alcohol and prostitution. The women remained chaste, the men avoided drunkenness, and men and women sacrificed personal comforts to assure the welfare of their children. But, as she explained further, Jewish morality could not be extracted from Jewish criminality. What made the recent arrivals so efficient at coat-making determined their one weakness: gambling. The ‘disorderly houses’ operated by Jews revealed the ‘vice characteristic of the profit-seeker’. The capitalism of the Fleet Street bankers and the criminality of the Mile End tailors both originated in the Jewish passion for the ‘successful deal’. As she put it: ‘It is this dominant race impulse that has peopled our Stock Exchange with Israelites; it is the same instinct that has made the Rothschilds’ the leaders of European finance and the bankers of emperors and kings.

William Evans-Gordon argued a similar point. Evans-Gordon became MP for Stepney in 1901 and, shortly after taking his seat, became one of the leading anti-alien agitators in the House of Commons. He travelled to Russia, Poland, Galicia and Romania and reported his observations in *The Alien Immigrant* (1903). He relayed the contents of letters from British consuls in Odessa, Riga and Warsaw warning of the Jewish proclivity for unsavoury financial transactions. After establishing good relations with British merchants, he said, Jews arranged a financial transaction in connection with a large deal and then transferred the funds to family members or others out of reach of foreign creditors. The British consulate-general in Warsaw told him: ‘You are quite right in saying that fraudulent bankruptcy prevails amongst the Jews in Poland and Russia; it can be put down to a regular profession’. Frequently, after perpetrating the swindle, they would sneak across the Russian or Polish frontier to England. (Most of them, he added, get out of the country without passports which the Russian law requires them to obtain. Smuggling this class of emigrants across the frontier constituted a large illicit business). In England, they repeated their fraud. Fraudulent bankruptcy was on the increase among aliens. Evans-Gordon added an appendix dealing with ‘certain noxious activities’ that had been transferred with the emigrants to England, activities that had to do with cases of trafficking in women and girls for prostitution.
Detective Inspector John Sweeney made numerous references to the ‘trouble’ aliens in London gave the police during his 27 years of service. Foreigners had colonised large sections of the East End, including Stepney, Shoreditch, Hackney, and Bethnal Green. So many Italians had moved into Soho it could properly be called a ‘foreign colony’. Ice cream merchants imported batches of Italians (chiefly from Naples) to work for them, but these presented a small nuisance compared with the situation in Stepney. ‘They are shrewd and clever [in Stepney]; as may be expected, this is particularly true of the Jewish section’. For the most part, immigrant Jews were temperate and industrious. But there was ‘a good deal’ about them that was ‘unattractive’. They displayed a tendency to ‘low, underhand ways of doing things’, and their regard for the truth was ‘not too strict’. They would bargain when they could and cheat when they could not bargain. According to Sweeney, before the Jews arrived, most of the local professionals could have been classified as watch-thieves and ‘trippers-up’, that is, women who took advantage of drunken sailors. But the new aliens introduced much more ‘scientific’ criminality. They organised forging, illicit stills and gambling dens. Most of the fences, or receivers of stolen goods, came from abroad. Fraudulent bankruptcies represented a method of making money ‘of which they are rather fond’. They tended to ‘incendiarism’ and arson-for-profit schemes. Fire insurance companies, Sweeney said, were wary of issuing policies to Russian Jews of the East End.

James Devon, medical officer of HM’s prison at Glasgow, described colonies of foreigners in the west of Scotland. Foreigners settled there in large numbers. They remained aliens in the sense that they retained the habits they had brought with them and were not as well absorbed as they ought to have been. The aliens he had in mind differed from those who had settled in large cities of Britain. ‘There are immigrant aliens who do speak the language and who are present in large cities,’ Devon said. ‘These are the professional criminals who import their vices, and work their business, in a very systematic way’. He described a criminal network remarkable for their knowledge of the law who presented a small but dangerous element within society. They maintained an organised system of correspondence and travelled from one part of the country to another. Capable of ‘any atrocity’, and in possession of extensive connections with others, these Jewish criminals presented a criminal of the professional class unlike the familiar British variety. ‘Crime is their business and they place business first’.

The preoccupation with the love of money as the key to Jewish success and to Jewish criminality occurred in a wider context of anti-Semitic
denunciations of ‘international Jewry’. In Russia, the pogroms of 1881 and 1882 began six weeks after the murder of Tsar Alexander II. Foreign criticism gave the government some motivation to intervene, however much it was resented. But the attitude developed (within the Foreign Ministry) that because all the agitation was the work of ‘international Jewry’, an anti-Jewish riot or two would teach foreign Jews a lesson. In Germany, rumours circulated about the murder of a Gymnasium student in the West Prussian town of Konitz. Anti-Semitic editors claimed that the authorities were trying to cover up a ‘Jewish ritual murder’; ‘the Jews’ had gained control of the judicial process and used it to advance their own interests over those of true ‘German’ patriots. There was hardly an evil act that could not be imagined as being precipitated by Jews. In 1894, an anti-Jewish newspaper in Germany claimed not only that ‘Jack the ripper’ was an Eastern European Jew but that he functioned as part of an ‘international Jewish conspiracy’.32

Oxford-educated social critic John Hobson described the Jew as a ‘terrible economic competitor’ and ‘the “fittest” person to survive in trade competition’. Jews learned ‘dishonourable tricks of the trade’ by means of a ‘superior calculating intellect’ enabling them to profit from ‘every weakness, folly and vice of the society in which [they] live’. In 1899, the Manchester Guardian sent Hobson to South Africa to report on the war against the Boers, and he convinced himself that Jews were responsible. He argued that the resources of the region had become concentrated within ‘a small group of international financiers, chiefly of German origin and Jewish in race’. The Jewish role in the war remained hidden, however, because of Jewish influence over the press as well as the cabinet.34 H.M. Hyndman made similar arguments. A newspaperman from a wealthy family, Hyndman founded Britain’s first socialist party, the Social Democratic Foundation (SDF), in 1881. He used the SDF’s weekly publication to denounce ‘the rings of Jew moneylenders who now control every Foreign Office in Europe. A more contemptible gang never held influence and an organised attack on them would be perfectly justifiable. But as Socialists we have no race prejudices whatever …’.35 Jewish ownership of London newspapers was a serious matter because ‘they act in accord with their fellow capitalist Jews all over the world’.36 In denouncing ‘imperialist Judaism in Africa’, he claimed the Boer War represented a project to extend the ‘Anglo-Hebraic Empire’.37

Arnold White, like Hobson and Hyndman, imagined a conspiracy of Jews engaged in banking, publishing and politics. He advertised the threat of ‘pauper aliens’ although he seldom referred to any immigrant group other than Jews. Russian and Polish Jews had invaded and
occupied whole areas of London. ‘Rule by foreign Jews is being set up. The best forms of our national life are already in jeopardy’. In establishing themselves within the ‘smart society’ of Europe, Jews had already demonstrated the power to destroy whole classes, as in Austria and France. He made it clear that in England there was less to fear from poor Jewish immigrants huddled in the East End than German Jews exercising hidden control of the press and financial transactions. ‘The Jewish community in England, though not numerically strong, control so large a portion of the financial and journalistic power of the country’ that no government ministry dared confront them. ‘The beginnings of modern anti-Semitism’ White claimed, ‘are due to the new appreciation of the growing financial power of the Jewish race’.39

In the House of Commons, Hilaire Belloc seldom missed an opportunity to denounce Jewish influence on British society. He invoked the experience of Oscar Slater to illustrate the problem of ‘international Jewry’. Glasgow’s High Court convicted in 1909 Slater, a German Jew, for the murder of an 83 year-old-woman. Several witnesses characterised Slater as a ‘pimp’, and the lord advocate made much of this in his presentation to the jury. Following the trial, a number of publications appeared championing the cause of Slater’s innocence. Had Slater been a Catholic or Huguenot, Belloc claimed, there would have been no special interest in the case. There was widespread interest in his case because of his Jewish identity; Jewish witnesses flocked to testify on his behalf. In fact, some 15 witnesses had been called by the defence, and only two were Jews. Some 20,000 members of the public signed a petition for commutation of the sentence, and a number of figures who were not Jews took an interest in the case (including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle). But as far as Belloc was concerned, there was nothing peculiar about this public support—it was inevitable because he was a Jew. ‘With his international consciousness’ and the past history of his race in mind, ‘the Jew must tend to help the Jew whenever he fears race prejudice’.41

Several years later, Belloc sought to make the ‘Marconi scandal’ into a denunciation of Jewish influence. The scandal stemmed from a 1911 meeting during which Asquith approved a plan for a network of wireless stations to be constructed throughout the British Empire. Herbert Samuel, the Postmaster General, was asked to find a company to undertake the work, and he found the Marconi Wireless Telegraphy Company. The tender involved an exchange of shares in the American Marconi Company between Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Alec Murray, Liberal Party Chief Whip; Godfrey Isaacs, Marconi’s managing
director; and his brother, Rufus Isaacs, the Attorney General. Although
the contract had not been made public, the value of a Marconi share
increased from around £2–£9 in less than a year. The parliamentary
enquiry into the affair determined that although Lloyd George, Rufus
Isaacs and Herbert Samuel had profited from inside knowledge about
the contract, they were not guilty of corruption.\textsuperscript{42}

Belloc, who had penned a series of ‘comic novels’ with devious Jew-
ish characters, saw in the attempt of politicians to profit from their
access to information, the invisible hand of ‘international Jewry’. In the
columns of \textit{Eye-Witness}, he ranted against ‘cosmopolitan finance’, which
was, he pointed out, another way of saying ‘Jewish finance’. It was a
‘Jewish conspiracy’ that had corrupted the government. In the parlia-
mentary enquiry, Charles Granville, who had been part of the paper’s
management, said the real motives behind the attack on Rufus Isaacs
and Herbert Samuel had been anti-Semitism. Belloc had concocted the
story, not from ‘data’ or ‘facts’, but from his own ‘attitude of mind’. Bel-
loc insisted that he had pursued the case with ‘honest indignation’ and
eschewed ‘crazy prejudice’ against Jews. He claimed many Jews among
his personal friends, including two from his days at Balliol. But he con-
tinued to insist that ‘cosmopolitan finance’ represented a ‘dangerous
power’ and recognised ‘as everyone must, that the racial Jewish element
in cosmopolitan finance is a large element’.\textsuperscript{43}

The fear of Jewish over-involvement in crime reflected a wider anti-
Semitic reaction to Jewish immigration in Europe and America. Criminal
behaviour amongst Jews, compared to Christians, generated a flurry of
social-scientific analyses in the late nineteenth century. Arthur Ruppin,
Franz von Liszt, Jakob Thon, Maurice Fishberg and Joseph Jacobs dis-
cussed patterns of crime among Jews in Austria, Germany, Holland and
America. Essentially, these studies sought to explain why the Christians
who were involved in crime were more likely to be involved in crimes
of violence, while the Jews involved in crime were more likely to be
involved in crimes of fraud. For some, this pattern of Jewish prefer-
ence for economic crimes revealed the Jewish character. Hugo Hertz’s
\textit{Verbrechen und Verbrechertum in Oesterreich} (1908) claimed to present ‘a
critical study of the connections between economics and crime’. He por-
trayed Jews as the key motor of nineteenth century economic history.
The love affair between Jews and the ‘Manchester system’ influenced
criminal behaviour: ‘In the antisocial world of criminality, Jewish cap-
talism and acquisition ethics resulted in the growth of new kinds of
crime that replaced the physical force of previous days with criminal
cunning’. Hertz concluded that modern criminality did not consist of
atavistic acts of violence but criminal exploitation of economic spaces opened up by twentieth-century methods of commercial transaction.44

Other social scientists, many of them Jews, took exception to these interpretations. Arthur Ruppin said that ‘it would be absurd’ to attribute crimes in which Jews were over-represented (in Germany: bankruptcy, forgery, fraud and libel) to ‘inborn criminal disposition’. The difference between Jews and Christians was ‘due solely to difference in social conditions’, specifically, the restriction of Jews from agriculture, concentration on trade and industry and greater inclination towards education. Similarly, Maurice Fishberg concluded, on review of recent statistics collected for Germany and Holland, that the criminality of Jews was explained by ‘special conditions under which they live’. Most Jews resided in cities where they had taken up professions in commerce, industry and finance. Discounting these circumstances, there would hardly be any difference between Jews and Christians.45 However, the notion of a racial Jewishness was accepted by most writers on the subject before the Second World War. Before 1920, no Western lexicon included a term like ‘ethnicity’ to convey a sense of historical or cultural identity separate from biology and heredity. Jewish social scientists had little choice but to use the prevailing racialised language in defending Jews against racial characterisations. It was difficult to describe Jews sharing a common religious and cultural heritage in language that could not be taken as evidence of an international network based on race.46

The Aliens Act

Ostensibly, ‘alien criminality’ encompassed the immoral propensities of more than one immigrant population. For some, the Italian immigrants presented a special worry. In letters to The Times, W.H. Wilkins warned of the alarming increase in immigration of Italians and the particular form of criminality they introduced to British society.47 ‘The saddest aspect of this question of Italian immigration’, he wrote, ‘is the traffic in Italian children’. He described a system of child slavery in England carried out by padroni. These ‘labour bosses’ brought children from Italy, obtained for the most part from poor peasant families in Calabria and the south of the Italian peninsula. The men imported the children for the purpose of ‘vagrant professions’ in London and elsewhere. They sent the children out early in the morning with an accordion or concertina, to sing before houses, and wait for money. If, at the end of the day, the children did not bring home sufficient money, they were sent to bed hungry or beaten. The children ‘grow up immoral, illiterate, vicious, and
low; a degraded class, exercising a most undesirable influence among the surrounding population’. Signor Righetti, the secretary of the Italian Benevolent Society, estimated the number of Italians in London to be 9000. About 2000 found employment as cooks and waiters, and the remainder sought to make a living as organ-grinders and ice-cream vendors. Wilkins denounced these as ‘the idle, the vicious, and the destitute’, who had come to the city to carry out begging denied them in their own land.\textsuperscript{48}

Some worried about the Chinese. Dickens dramatised opium smoking by the Chinese in his unfinished novel \textit{The Mystery of Edwin Drood} (1870). There were 665 Chinese in Britain in 1881 and most lived in the East End, Stepney and Poplar. The number of licensed houses for opium-smoking remained small (there were 14 in 1910) but generated attention from those in favour of narcotics control and immigration restriction. In a speech to the British Medical Association in 1892, Surgeon-Major Pringle spoke of the importance of getting rid of ‘opium smoking saloons’ in London. Medical specialists within the anti-opium campaign agreed that moderate, recreational use of the drug was impossible. Addiction was inevitable and moral and physical decline sure to follow. The need to get rid of opium dens was underpinned by hostility to the Chinese and their ‘alien practises’. The image of opium dens run by ‘cunning and artful Chinamen’ emerged with the worries about a surge of Chinese opium-smokers in London and of their ability to contaminate English people. There was some anxiety that opium-smoking would undermine the fitness of British sailors, spread to the working class of the East End, or both.\textsuperscript{49} Then again, Walter Besant, who visited an opium den in 1900 reported: ‘the place was neither dreadful nor horrible’. He observed a man smoking from a pipe while two slept and a few others waited their turn. The only horror he experienced while in an opium den was the ‘intolerable music’, comparable to ‘a thousand-fingernails scratching the window, or ten thousand slate-pencils scratching a school boy’s slate’.\textsuperscript{50}

In 1888, a Select Committee of the House of Commons, chaired by Howard Vincent, enquired into the ‘aliens question’. The committee concluded it was impossible to determine the number of alien residents in the United Kingdom but surmised that the alien population was not so large as to cause alarm. Although it was increasing, this increase was confined to a few cities and a few specific trades. Discussion within Parliament in 1892 on alien immigration prompted an investigation into the experience of the United States. Some reports from America had suggested a significant problem of alien criminality. Theodore Bingham,
Commissioner of the New York Police, published a 1908 article concerning ‘Foreign Criminals in New York’ in which he claimed that Jews committed about half of the crime in the city. Later, he issued a retraction in which he admitted that he had not collected the figures firsthand and suggested his interpretation had been unfounded, but his personal view did not appear to have changed. In a speech to the Washington Square Association a few months after the initial article appeared, he complained about the ‘Yiddish-speaking people swarming down upon us’. Jews had lived so long under tyranny in the Old World that when they arrived in the New World they ‘[mistook] liberty for license’. Once in the United States, Jewish immigrants became ‘childish’ and could not understand the social and political conditions of their adopted country. As long as immigrants, Jews and Italians continued to arrive, the police department would need to expand in proportion.51

The Board of Trade, charged with collecting statistics on alien immigration into Britain, commissioned John Burnett to make inquiries into the American situation. He produced a massive document which included information on a range of aspects and significant discussion on Jewish immigrants. Criminality was as important as pauperism, if not more so, he said, but there was little reliable information on which to base a judgement. The number of Jewish prisoners could not be extracted from figures supplied by the Bureau of the Census, nor from annual reports of the New York Police Department. These statistical references showed nativity (such as the number from Russia and Poland) but did not distinguish races. From ‘the apparent general tendency’ of these statistics, it appeared that ‘the Jewish immigrants form a fairly law-abiding section of the community’. He quoted a chaplain connected to the Jewish Ministers Association of New York who had said that most of the Jewish prisoners were young men between 16 and 30 years of age. The immigrants among them had come to trouble through ignorance of American law and a false notion of the country brought with them from Europe—that America is ‘a country of swindlers and humbugs’ and immigrants could get rich only by fraudulent manipulation and transactions.52 Several months after the report appeared, the Marquis of Salisbury, then Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords, introduced a restrictive measure. The measure was not carried into law. In 1899, the Earl of Hardwicke introduced the first part of Salisbury’s bill, and the Lords passed it, but the bill was not passed in the House of Commons.

In 1901, Vincent succeeded in becoming chair of the Parliamentary Pauper Immigration Committee, consisting of 52 members, including
representatives from East London. The following year, a group of anti-alien MPs, led by Major Evans-Gordon, succeeded in their call for an enquiry into the impact of Jewish immigrants in English society. The Royal Commission on Alien Immigration sat for 13 months beginning in April 1902 at Caxton Hall, Westminster. The purpose of the Royal Commission was to investigate the ‘evils’ attributed to unrestricted immigration and review measures taken for immigration restriction in foreign countries and British colonies. The seven members included Lord James of Hereford, who occupied the chair, Lord (Nathan Meyer) Rothschild; Kenelm Digby, Home Office permanent under-secretary; William Evans-Gordon and several other MPs. The commissioners heard from some 175 witnesses: members of the clergy and educational institutions, magistrates and police; representatives from manufacturing, trade unions; individual members of trades and others, including leaders of Jewish charities. The Royal Commission proposed establishment of an Immigration Department with the power to enforce regulations over vessels arriving from abroad and certain classes of immigrants. Officers of the Immigration Department should have the power to turn back ‘undesirables’: criminals, prostitutes, lunatics and those of bad character. Officers would be responsible for acting on information received about the arrival of prohibited categories of immigrants. Ship-owners would be responsible for returning to the place of embarkation persons determined to be suffering from physical or mental disease.53

Much of the argument involved statistics concerning the amount and type of alien crime. The Prison Commissioners supplied figures to show an increase in the number of prisoners from Russia and Poland (from 282 in 1899 to 474 in 1903), and an increase in the number of habitual criminals among the aliens (from 231 in 1899 to 409 in 1903). Police inspectors from several London districts reported that the number of foreign prostitutes had increased. In C Division, the number of charges against foreign prostitutes climbed from 286 against British subjects and 150 against foreigners in 1892 to 350 against British subjects and 347 against foreigners in 1902. The foreigners had introduced gambling, as evidenced by the large proportion of prosecutions for keeping disorderly houses, and increased the production of untaxed distillation and distribution of spirits, as evidenced by the Jewish authorities warning new arrivals not to become involved in the making of spirits. Their report also pointed to a subject ‘closely allied’ with crime: the prevalence of ‘systematised bankruptcy’ amongst foreigners, chiefly Germans and Russians.54 (Figure 3.1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Russia, Poland</th>
<th>Norway, Sweden, Denmark</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Americas*</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total Foreign</th>
<th>Foreign percentage of total prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>2181</td>
<td>1.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>397</td>
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<td>266</td>
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<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>2880</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>3449</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3.1  Nationality of Foreign-Born Prisoners in England, 1899–1903

* Includes persons born in North, Central and South America.

*Source: Adapted from Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, part 3 (London: HMSO, 1903, Cd 1741), pp. 64–5.*
When challenged on the accuracy and reliability of such figures, the experts deferred to personal knowledge. Lord Rothschild questioned Inspector Stephen White of the Criminal Investigation Department about the matter of foreign prostitution. White admitted that the ‘number of persons charged’ did not necessarily reflect the actual amount of illegal practices. When pressed on the foreign element, White claimed to know this from ‘general observation, from what I see on the streets. I see more foreign prostitutes than I do English’. But he added: ‘Of course I do not know all the prostitutes’. Frederick Mead, magistrate of Thames Police Court, suggested that many Russian, Polish and German women came to London specifically to practice prostitution. He did not offer court statistics to support this claim but insisted the foreign prostitutes were in the ‘large majority’, and compared to the English women, more ‘shameless and more persistent’.  

The most effective arguments linking Jewishness with crime occurred at the margins of statistical claims, in the white spaces between columns of numbers. ‘Now the first evidence that we are importing a criminal Jewish population’, Arnold White testified, ‘is shown by the fact that the Government, without mentioning the matter in the House of Commons, are building synagogues at Wormwood Scrubs, Parkhurst, and Pentonville’. White made this claim earlier, in his book *The Modern Jew* (1899). Essentially, what he seemed to be saying was that the problem of Jewish criminality was both visible and invisible. Jewish criminals were filling England’s prisons and a hidden cadre of influential Jews were keeping it a secret. But, unlike the pages of his book, when he made this claim during the proceedings it met with a response. Lord Rothschild pressed White on the speciousness of his argument. Prison synagogues had nothing to do with a Jewish crime wave. The first had been built at Portsmouth Convict Prison in 1872 by his father as a matter of *t’sedakah*, the Jewish obligation to help the poor.

Yiddish, the language of the Jews, came to be seen as the language of hidden criminality. Richard Hyder, Sub-Divisional Inspector, testified that foreign criminals who did not speak English had an advantage over the police. Jews could more easily carry out and conceal their crimes using their own language. The chair of the County of London Sessions, W.R. McConnell, testified that immigrants, but principally the ‘German and Yiddish-speaking nationalists’, had perpetrated a wave of burglaries: a ‘scientific’ form of house-breaking enabled by specialised tools and specific knowledge. Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Edward Henry had in fact put into effect a system for Yiddish language instruction. As he explained to the undersecretary of state, the continued
settlement of Jews in Whitechapel meant that a growing population spoke and wrote solely in Yiddish. As no member of the police force was acquainted with the language, he provided cash prizes to members of H Division willing to undertake its study.59

Kenelm Digby and Lord Rothschild signed the final report but issued separate memorandum declaring their disagreement with particular findings. Digby agreed that while the figures supplied by the Prison Commissioners did suggest a considerable amount of alien crime, there was little reason to believe that a considerable number of criminals arrived as steerage passengers from Eastern Europe. The criminal element took place along routes entirely separate from those along which the great tide of immigration flowed. Efforts to stop alien criminals at the point of entry would prove futile. The report proposed to give to officers of the Immigration Department the authority to make enquiries into the background and status of new arrivals, but it was difficult to see how this would yield useful information as criminals and prostitutes would be unlikely to volunteer information of use to authorities. The suggestion that all immigrants secure a certificate of good character prior to arrival would not work as the wrong people would likely procure such documents by extra-legal means. At the same time, any attempt by police authorities to act on information about bad characters supplied by foreign governments would likely generate the ‘gravest mistakes’ of identity.60

Newspaper editor H. Hamilton Fyfe also characterised the report as a disappointment, but for different reasons. Despite the efforts of Major Evans-Gordon, who understood the extent of the problem and proposed remedies for it, he had been thwarted by Lord Rothschild. Rothschild brought ‘all his influence to bear’ so that no check could be placed on immigration whatever, because, as Rothschild believed, any restrictive measures aimed at ‘undesirables’ would ‘disadvantage deserving and working-class men’. Fyfe urged Parliament to pursue the Royal Commission’s recommendations for restrictive measures and the setting up of an immigration department. In the interests of the Empire, as well as that of the nation, it was necessary to prevent any single district from continuing to serve as ‘the sink of Europe, the dumping-ground for all the needy and unpopular elements among the populations of the Nearer East’. But this immigration department would need to be effectively administered, or the organisers would ‘keep their fingers upon the handle of the siphon and twelve batches of immigrants would continue to be shot into London every week with the same regularity as at present’.61
Fyfe explained how the flood of aliens presented three interrelated difficulties: labour, housing and criminality. A greater portion of crime occurred among aliens than amongst the native born, he claimed, but the police, magistrates and judges could cope with this. Labour and housing provided more serious threats because the presence of aliens had transformed certain areas of the East End into foreign quarters. The British Empire faced a period of crisis, and in order to survive, the government had to improve the stock of people from which to ‘breed an imperial race’. The decline of the national physique, the lowering of national intelligence, and the deplorable conditions in which many people lived meant that the nation could not afford to tolerate the continual inflow of aliens. They taught nothing, brought no wealth, could not speak English and had no conception of British ideals. Fyfe insisted the alien question was not anti-Semitic—he would have preferred to discuss the matter without even mentioning Jews. But, at one time, England persecuted Catholics. It was right to have done so, because they were Catholics first and Englishmen second. If Jews insisted on being Jews first, they would surely arouse the same response. ‘Let them take a hint this time, and show that they put the interests of Great Britain and the British Empire before the interests of alien Jews’.62

In the run-up to the Aliens Act, Vincent issued a number of ‘stirring pamphlets’ urging immigration restriction. The alien immigration question represented an ‘urgent matter’ for the Unionist Party, he insisted, and every ‘friend of the British working-man’ was in favour. Major Albert Goldsmid, founder of the Jewish Lads Brigade, found Vincent’s arguments convincing. ‘No unprejudiced Jew’, he said, ‘[could] deny much in favour of time for placing restrictions on immigration into the British Isles of pauper aliens’. He urged the Jewish community to ‘decentralise’ the immigrant population and convert the foreign element from a weakness of the state into a source of strength, via institutions like his Jewish Lads Brigade.63 In response, the London Committee of Board of Deputies of the British Jews issued its own pamphlet defending the alien immigrant. The pamphlet denied Jewish immigrants to Britain constituted a ‘weakness’ and itemised objections to the Aliens Bill. The London Committee acknowledged that crime was a problem: ‘The criminality among the foreigners generally in this country is greater than that among the native population’. But, they denied that Jews were primarily responsible. The ‘real Immigrant, the Russian and Pole’ was not the cause, but ‘American and German swindlers and professional burglars, classes which do not enter the country by the same channel as the Immigrants, and entirely distinct from them’.64
The Aliens Act came into force on 1 January 1906. It established that certain ports where immigrant ships discharged passengers, there were to be immigration officers with the power to reject the undesirables. It had been passed in the final days of a Conservative government, and it was meant to be enforced by a Liberal government (the Liberal party had opposed it but did not repeal it when it came to power). The Home Office designated 13 ports on the east and south coasts, including London and Liverpool, to be ‘immigration ports’ and defined an ‘immigration ship’ as those carrying twelve steerage passengers or more. For proof that an arrival was not ‘undesirable’, the officers decided a passenger should be in possession of at least £5.65. Winston Churchill, while Home Secretary, concluded that it was not possible to prevent the entry of ‘undesirable individuals’ under the Aliens Act, ‘however administered’, or under any other administrative machinery ‘which would not cause more inconvenience than it is worth. Britain adhered to ‘the principle of expulsion for abuse of hospitality’ while it affirmed the ‘right of asylum’. In the wake of the Sidney Street affair (Chapter 5), he favoured a bill with ‘two naughty principles’: distinction between aliens and British subjects, and deportation of aliens for commission of criminal offences. The deportation provision would prove more effective at ridding the country of common alien criminals of the most dangerous type, than interfering with the right to asylum.

More systematic surveillance

The Aliens Act had ignored a number of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and in implementing the Act, the Home Office avoided acting on the extreme views of Evans-Gordon, White and other anti-alien agitators. Nevertheless, the British government had taken a significant first step in establishing a system of immigration control at the point of entry. This offered a novel means of responding to crime, the opportunity to stop crime at the border, before it entered the country. There remained leaders committed to exploiting this possibility.

There was only one problem: it had no chance of working. When Edward Henry, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, appeared at the Royal Commission, the first question he was asked was how to prevent alien criminals from arriving in the country. ‘I think it would be impracticable for the police to differentiate the criminal from the non-criminal alien on arrival’. Although Britain could impose some indirect measures, there were no direct measures to prevent entry of criminals.
Suppose the police had information, obtained by the police at the point of embarkation, connecting a specific individual to crime—this could be sent by telegram, could it not? ‘That is probably not feasible’ was the reply. Henry explained that there was no provision on the continent requiring a person carrying papers to show that he had been convicted of a crime. In France, there had been a requirement to carry identity papers, and this included material about military service. But even this was inadequate for the purpose. The Metropolitan Police had recently arrested a man in Glasgow who had French identity papers on his person, but his certificate of good conduct from the military turned out to have been forged. Photographs did not supply an adequate means of identification, and even if they did, there were too many people disembarking at too many ports for police constables to spot them. Fingerprints, he agreed, furnished proof of identity, but not all countries used the fingerprint classification. France continued to rely on anthropometric measurements. The question was put for a third time: You do not see how the criminal is to be stopped? Henry: ‘I do not’.68

Additional experts on the subject affirmed Henry’s view. When the Royal Commission appealed to Edward Bradford, the former commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, he declared that he agreed with Henry. Sir Albert de Rutzen, chief magistrate at Bow Street Police Court, was then summoned and asked how to prevent alien criminals from entering the country. He said that he agreed with what Mr Henry and Sir Edward Bradford had said. John Sweeney and James Devon expressed similar views. Sweeney observed that ‘the criminal and the non-criminal obviously cannot be differentiated on their arrival, because no Continental law forces a man to carry papers about showing he is a criminal, and no country professes to deport its own criminals’.69 James Devon explained that while aliens might be required to show that they were not living off the proceeds of crime, and could be refused entry of criminal character was established, this would not prevent serious criminals from entering the country—‘these people know how to get past the immigration authority’.70

Robert Anderson appears to have been the lone police authority who believed it was possible to stop criminals at the port of entry. He acknowledged Britain’s tradition of offering asylum to those persecuted in other lands, but no one could argue that Britain benefitted either socially or economically by the Jewish victims of anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia. There was a real danger in allowing sympathy for these victims to interfere with the practical administration of immigration control. Some of the Jewish immigrants included so-called ‘anarchist criminals’
and the country needed to rid itself of these dangerous malefactors whatever the cost. To formulate a response required active enforcement of the Aliens Act (1905). It was easier to deal with criminal aliens when they arrived in a channel steamer than with the paupers who landed as steerage passengers at other ports. Criminal aliens were already known in their own country, and he was confident foreign police would supply Britain with dossiers, photographs and fingerprints. He favoured enforcement at a purpose-built immigrant reception centre in London.\(^\text{71}\)

In 1907, the Home Office proposed to convert a redundant Admiralty hulk into a receiving house at Tilbury. The plan called for the shipping companies to maintain it, but they declined. In 1911, another report recommended the construction of a receiving house on a site offered by the Port Authority at Tilbury, but the Treasury insisted that any expense should not be undertaken by the government, but by the shipping companies, and the plan never came off.

Major Evans-Gordon agreed with Anderson that exclusion of criminal aliens should take place at the point of entry but felt this could not be achieved solely by action taken at ports, whether with or without receiving houses. It would ‘not be practical’ to subject saloon passengers and those on short-haul service lines to the necessary inspection. For this reason, the authorities would be unable to detect ‘expert burglars and other skilled criminals’. These individuals had the resources, derived from ‘highly lucrative vice’, to travel first-class. Professional criminals could only be dealt with by means of a registration system as in Germany: ‘[f]oreign examples show us that such a system can easily be put into operation’. He encouraged Scotland Yard to consult German authorities about formulating a detailed scheme of registration.\(^\text{72}\)

Jasper Kemmis promoted the continental system as well. He believed the Aliens Act (1905) to have accomplished ‘a good deal to lay the basis of a more systematic surveillance than has heretofore existed’. But it did not go far enough. He favoured the system of registration in place within most European cities. The police required hotels, pensions, lodging-houses etc to send regularly to the police the names, description and character of arrivals and departures. \textit{Permits de séjour} had to be completed under penalty of non-fulfilment more rigorously enforced. These measures provided for locating the errant stranger to a more satisfactory extent than in England. Enforcement of registration provisions would present a large bureaucratic challenge, particularly the duties of forcing boarding-houses and hotels to submit lists of arrivals and departures. As an alternative, he favoured registration of alien passengers on arrival. The proposed receiving house at Tilbury provided an opportunity to
register aliens likely to reside in the country and, therefore, make it possible to separate the ‘sheep from the wolves’.\textsuperscript{73} Anderson argued that although it was possible to make all foreigners liable to the supervision to which English people were subjected in Continental countries, it was not advisable. It would be difficult to acquire returns from small hotels and lodging houses in Soho and Whitechapel without requiring all hoteliers and lodging-house keepers across the country to supply such information. He favoured a system in which the police could demand particulars about suspected criminal aliens; such a law would be administered by the police under the Home Office control and fell within the discretionary powers entrusted to the police.\textsuperscript{74} He also had his doubts about the usefulness of foreign police in supplying information of use in denying entry. While police on the continent took more active steps to monitor transitory populations, they could in no way be relied upon to inform Scotland Yard. In fact, one observer commented, ‘if they know that an alien criminal or undesirable, for whom a warrant has not actually been issued, is on board an immigrant ship, they conveniently look the other way until that ship has left their port’.\textsuperscript{75}

In the first decades of the twentieth century, nations on the continent maintained a registration system of surveillance. In France, Holland, Belgium and Italy, the system was limited to foreigners. The law required foreigners who intended to remain in the country for some length of time to file their names with the police, and hotel and lodging houses reported arrival and departure of guests. Citizens filed their names with city authorities, for purposes of tax and census, rather than for police measures. In Germany and Austria, this system extended to citizens. The Meldewesen or registration system required all persons to report their arrival, departure, or change of dwelling to the police. Laws (of cities and states) required travellers to ‘announce’ their presence on arrival; new arrivals gave their name, business, date of birth, place of birth, religion, former residence and marital status to the police. In addition, new arrivals were made to present an Abzugsattest, a certificate of character, from the police of the locality they had left. Supplemental documents included certificates of birth, marriage and any military service. German authorities rigidly enforced these laws, using elaborate card-file systems and routine checks of hotel and lodging-house registers made evasion very difficult. Each card contained information about the individual, as well as notes concerning travel. In Berlin, registration cards recorded essential details for all persons born in the city and new arrivals; these cards contained information about parents, spouse, etc; any change of
residence; and criminal record. If a person had arrived in Berlin from Dusseldorf, the Berlin police could verify information from the authorities in Dusseldorf and could refuse to allow the person to remain in Berlin. The criminal file followed the person from city to city.76

Those opposed to the settlement of foreigners in Britain pointed to the lead of the United States in imposing restriction on immigration. The Act to Regulate Immigration (1882) imposed a duty of 50 cents on each alien arriving by sea from a foreign port, and excluded convicts, idiots and lunatics and persons likely to become a public charge. It authorised the Secretary of the Treasury to arrange for inspectors to board ships arriving at ports and identify convicts, idiots, lunatics and idiots and other persons likely to become a public charge. All foreign convicts were to be sent back to nations of embarkation. The Immigration Act (1891) expanded this provision. Section one defined aliens to be excluded as ‘all idiots, insane persons, paupers,’ and persons likely to become a public charge: those with a ‘loathsome or a dangerous contagious disease’, as well as those ‘convicted of a felony or other infamous crime’. Section two provided for more vigorous enforcement of the provisions of 1885. Sections three and four sought to prohibit steamship companies from solicitation of advertising agents in Europe and from encouraging immigration generally.77 Congress expanded several of these provisions in 1893 and 1894. The Act of 1903 consolidated existing law and further expanded classes of prohibited aliens. New language excluded epileptics, insane persons, beggars, anarchists and contract labourers.

American statesmen, it was argued, recognised the evils of unrestricted immigration. The government took steps to protect the country from invasion by Fenians and dynamitards from Ireland, members of secret societies from Italy, nihilists from Russia and socialists from Germany, driven by the points of bayonets from their own countries, as well as Jews fleeing from persecution by the Tsar. In contrast, Great Britain maintained a liberal policy of free immigration, consistent with the liberal belief in free trade. But for how long could the government afford to operate this laissez faire policy with respect to the arrival of foreigners? America had a habitable area of more than three million square miles and a population of not more than 65 million. England had a geographical area of some 32 million acres and a population of more than 25 million. ‘What must be thought of the laissez faire policy which allows our little British Islands to be overrun by the class of foreigner which America so rigorously excludes?’78 Barrister Montague Crackanthorpe insisted that the best method was for Parliament to pass an alien exclusion act adapted from legislation in the United
States. Aside from the direct benefits of excluding paupers and undesirables, alien exclusion would have indirect benefits of curtailing crime. ‘For long before its prohibitory clauses were enforced’ Crackanthorpe claimed, ‘it would have checked the operations of traffickers in human flesh and blood who are at present pursuing that nefarious trade for their own pecuniary ends’.79

‘The example of America is continually referred to,’ M.J. Landa argued, ‘and yet restrictive measures notwithstanding, alien immigration into the United States had almost doubled in the past four years’. In 1900, about 450,000 steerage passengers arrived in the United States, and by 1904, this number had reached 800,000.80 Theodore Herzl, who led the effort to establish a Jewish state, also emphasised the failure of American policy. When asked during his speech to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration whether he was aware that America had a policy of immigration restriction (of the sort he was encouraging the British government not to emulate), he said that he was. It was ineffective because although it required immigrants to possess a certain amount of money as surety, this had been met by the formation of a small company for lending Jews the amount for entry. Despite America’s restrictionist approach, the stream of Jewish immigration to New York was twice that of London. ‘New York now has the greatest Jewish population of all the towns in the world’.81

The passport system

There were calls for a coordinated approach to immigration on the part of many nations. James Davenport Whelpley insisted that while the United Kingdom had taken steps in the Aliens Act (1905), immigration was not merely a national question but rather an international question. ‘All countries are concerned with keeping their own useful citizens at home. All countries are concerned in preventing the ingress of foreign criminals, defectives or diseased’. So immense was the scope of the problem it could only be addressed by an international binding agreement. Such an agreement would encourage high moral, physical and educational standards among immigrants, and would guard against the spread of disease. It would encourage each nation to live up to its full responsibility to care for its own deficient populations and lead to the amelioration of political and economic wrongs in given areas. It would also seek to ‘maintain a world-wide system of police identification and restraint of criminals’. The desire to emigrate resulted from natural causes, such as the restlessness of youth, as well as economic
and political circumstances. But there was also an artificial cause: the steamship companies and their efforts to profit from human cargo. An international agreement could check undue activity on the part of the steamship lines and their agents in Europe. To carry out the idea of international cooperation in matters of emigration and immigration, Whelpley proposed an international conference of all powers. The international exchange of police information was already carried out to some extent, he claimed, but lacked a system. One of the outcomes of the conference could be the establishment of an international bureau ‘which would make an offender against the laws of his native land an object of watchfulness throughout the civilised world’.82

In America, A.B. Lewiston argued for a more pervasive detective system. Based on figures for 1908, he claimed that alien criminals comprised 10 per cent of the nation’s prison population. Immigration authorities, despite the advantage of a receiving house and the power to exclude any person likely to become a public charge, admitted hundreds of criminals. He urged the consular service, working in cooperation with foreign governments, to do more to check the tide of immigrant criminals, and he advocated establishment of a new force of ‘immigration detectives’. The detectives would be placed on every ship carrying immigrants, and by mingling with steerage passengers, would be able to discover ‘many of the undesirable class and thus prevent their admission to the country’.83 Arresting alien crime at the point of entry had become arresting alien crime before the point of entry, at a place in international waters some distance from national borders.

Much of the discussion about an international approach centred on introduction, or re-introduction, of passports for travel. France obliged all travellers to carry state-issued identity cards from 1792 when it initiated modern passport regulations. Similar provisions went into effect in other European states during revolutionary and the Napoleonic wars. These had been repealed, or allowed to lapse during the nineteenth century, so that by the beginning of the twentieth century, there was no serious administrative impediment to movement of persons between states. In the United Kingdom, the passport amounted to a letter of introduction, a privilege granted to the most notable. Passports were issued to Britons travelling abroad to be used for that individual’s protection while travelling in foreign countries. In the event of a war breaking out, the document insured the bearer of status as a member of a neutral country. In times of peace, only a few countries required passports to be carried by travellers. Only Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Turkey required foreign travellers obtain a passport. British travellers did not
need a passport for travel in Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Denmark, Norway or Sweden. By the beginning of the twentieth century, there were no serious administrative impediments to movement of persons between nations.

In 1913, the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology commissioned Robert Ferrari, a New York attorney, to prepare a report on crime and immigration. He made several recommendations concerning the need to carry out thorough searches of arrivals for weapons and more careful scrutiny of cabin passengers as criminals could afford the difference between fares of steerage and second-class cabin. Two of his recommendations concerned implementation of a passport requirement. Passports should be required of immigrants, making special provision for those immigrants fleeing from religious or other persecution that could not obtain passports. He chided current immigration policy for not making use of passports in existence. The Italian government required emigrants to obtain evidence of their moral character before embarking; yet the immigration authorities in America failed to make use of it. European systems of recording, identifying and tracking criminals were ‘excellent’ and it was ‘folly’ not to take advantage of what would prove to be one of the most effective methods of preventing undesirable criminals from entering the country. ‘International agreements’, he advised, ‘should be entered into to make effective and easy-moving the provision calling for passports’. Ferrari welcomed the Dillingham bill, to be introduced in the next session of the US Congress. In 1907, Senator Dillingham of Vermont had introduced changes to immigration law, and while Ferrari could not agree with every aspect in principle, he welcomed the provision that passports should be required from aliens. The provision had caused great alarm among ‘one race’ in Europe, Jews, who would be unable to obtain passports from a government they sought to escape. He recommended a clause allowing those fleeing religious or political persecution to arrive without a passport ‘because the government under which he lived and from which he is fleeing has refused to give him a passport’.

Ferrari joined a chorus of experts outside of government calling for passport control and close cooperation between governments as a means of regulating migration of crime. Henry Pratt Fairchild, a sociologist, felt that the literacy test, which had been subject to considerable debate in the American political context, would facilitate assimilation among immigrants and attract those less prone to pauperism and crime. The primary measure, however, should be the requirement for all immigrants to carry a passport bearing the approval of the foreign nation and
explaining the circumstances of emigration. The passport requirement would encourage foreign governments to scrutinise potential emigrants and afford American immigration authorities with better means of managing settlement of immigrants in the United States. The requirements of a passport, coupled with better distribution of immigrants across the country, would mitigate the dangers of pauperism and crime in New York and other cities. Fairchild also envisioned international agreements in which the United States would agree to accept a desired number of immigrants from Germany during one year, Italy the next and so on. Passports from unskilled immigrants from countries outside the agreement in any particular year would not be recognised. He called on social scientists to support his system of managed immigration because if ‘social scientists hold aloof’ from policy making, ‘it will be done by selfish interests and quack politicians’.87

Passports were not required for travel in the Atlantic world until the Great War; the United Kingdom introduced passport requirements followed by the United States. The international system of states comprising mutually exclusive bodies of citizens was taking shape, and nations were less willing to extend their protections to non-citizens, giving rise to the international passport system. The ‘temporary’ imposition of passport controls established a system that would become regularised during the twentieth century. Passage of the National Registration Act (1915) in the United Kingdom obliged citizens to carry identification cards. The United Kingdom introduced a new passport design in 1915 which incorporated a photograph. British citizens found themselves subject to the internal control they despised on the continent. In response to European restrictions, the United States required all citizens leaving for a foreign country to have a passport prior to departure. In 1918, with the war nearly at an end, the US Congress gave statutory authority to passport regulations concerning ‘hostile aliens’ adopted by executive order in December 1915. By the end of the war in 1918, pressure within the United Kingdom led to the abandonment of identification cards. But governments across Europe, as well as the United States, learnt just how closely a population could be monitored and just how easily this could be justified.88

Conclusions

In identifying ‘Jewish criminality’, authorities had determined a domestic crime problem to be of foreign origin. Crime in the East End of London was said to have originated along Russia’s western frontier. The
solution, therefore, could not be local. Crime had to be stopped at the border, before criminals could enter the country. In passing the Aliens Act (1905), Great Britain established a system of immigration control at the point of entry. While the threat of alien crime served to justify immigration restriction, crime control by means of inspection proved impossible. Leading police officials, with at least one exception, had declared there was no way to sift through immigrants at ports to find those likely to engage in criminal behaviour.

The act had significance in symbol, if not substance. In passage of the Aliens Act, Britain became the first state in Europe to enact modern immigration control. In that sense, the legislation marks the beginning of the current period of control of borders. Even more important, it marked the beginning of a conceptualisation of social space in which to address crime. Within this space, a space not confined by municipal or even national borders, the point of intervention moved from the border of the country of destination to consular offices within the country of departure. The advocates of immigration restriction imagined control at a point on an international map further and further from the nation: from inspectors carrying out thorough checks at ports, to detectives making enquiries aboard ships in international waters, to consular authorities analysing documents in foreign capitals. The logic of this migration culminated in the system of passport control. Passports originated with the security desires of the First World War, but continued after the war owing to the threat of crime.
4

White Slave Trade

No issue of public morality, in the decades before the Great War, attracted greater international attention than trafficking in women and girls for prostitution. The French term for the problem, traité des blanches, emphasised the whiteness of the victims; the German term, der Mädchenhandel, called attention to their youthfulness. Both drew on the moral imagery of the ‘white slave trade’ as used in Great Britain and the United States. The English term, an allusion to the abolition of chattel slavery earlier in the nineteenth century, was meant to emphasise the gravity of this activity as a moral offence. The language reflected an era of melodrama when workers and women described themselves as ‘slaves’ to emphasise their plight to government authorities notoriously indifferent to their circumstances.¹

White slavery generated tremendous emotional appeal. The anti-trafficking movement took place in Britain and British colonies around the world,² in Europe and the Americas.³ Activists attacked the threat to morality within regulated prostitution; they sought an end to licensed brothels or prostitution altogether. They also made use of the problem in the pursuit of a number of political and moral agendas. The anti-trafficking campaign involved an array of groups: vigilance societies, church groups, Jewish and Catholic protection societies, moral purity crusaders, feminists and women’s groups. The response to the traffic invoked anti-immigrant and anti-Jewish prejudices; journalists, politicians and others warned of foreign men snatching domestic girls from the streets.⁴

Concern about the white slave trade led to a series of international conferences beginning with the conference, convened by voluntary initiative, at London in 1899. The French government convened the first official conference three years later, which led to an agreement signed by
15 governments. Amendments were agreed at subsequent international events in 1906 and 1910. While the Paris agreement did lead to some cooperation, significant differences remained among the parties over the causes of the traffic and about the most effective strategies for ending it. This chapter examines how white slave trading emerged as an issue in Great Britain and the central role of Britain in international efforts.

**From Brussels to Babylon**

In 1876, the Charge d’Affaires at Brussels, H. Barron, sent a letter to *The Times* warning of the threat to Englishwomen who sought opportunities abroad. A recent meeting of the British Charitable Fund, Barron said, brought to light some startling facts about increasing numbers of Englishwomen lured to Brussels by deceptive representations. Attracted by the promise of paid employment, the novelty of visiting a foreign city, or the glamour of life in the theatre, a significant number of women from England had been led to ruin in Belgium by ‘traders in vice’. The fund had repatriated several English women, but Barron believed ‘this evil should be more generally known’ and he looked ‘to the Press as the chief means of warning against this danger’. Alfred S. Dyer, a London publisher, and George Gillett, a London banker (and like Dyer, a devout Quaker), paid several visits to Brussels in 1879 and 1880. With the help of local pastors, they carried out an investigation into the brothels, argued for greater enforcement of existing laws and the passage of new laws and attracted publicity in the Belgian press.

Dyer and Gillett added their signatures to a letter sent to Lord Granville, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The letter spelt out ‘a system of systematic abduction to Brussels of girls who are British subjects, for purposes of prostitution’. The girls were sold to keepers of licensed houses and detained against their will. Many had been induced by men of respectable exterior to travel abroad on the promise of marriage or employment. On arrival, they were made to present themselves to the office of the morals police, the *police des mœurs*, to be registered as prostitutes. Often, they were registered under false names to complicate efforts on the part of families or others to find them. As the girls knew nothing of the language, they presumed they had arrived at a customs house. Once registered, and installed in a *maison toléré*, it became impossible for them to escape. The houses were designed to prevent alighting without knowledge of the keepers. The inmates were intimidated with threats and violence, and they were kept in debt to keepers or other persons profiting from the misery. Young women almost never left
the houses: ‘She becomes practically a British subject sold into slavery under the regulations of a Foreign State’. Dyer, Gillette and associates had found English, Scots and Irish girls in Brussels, decoyed into this ‘foul slavery abroad’.6

Dyer and Gillett placed some of the women they brought back to England with Josephine Butler in Liverpool. She had campaigned successfully for repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in the United Kingdom and led a confederation of morality associations that extended across Europe. (Her father, John Grey of Dilston, had been a key supporter of the anti-slavery movement which had succeeded in 1833 in ending slavery in British colonies.)7 From one of the refugees, Butler learned first-hand about experiences of English women caught in the sex trade in Brussels. The woman recounted how she had been whipped for refusing to participate in some ‘exceptionally base proceedings’. Butler contacted her associates in the city, and when they confirmed the account, she swore an affidavit before a stipendiary magistrate at Liverpool as provided for by the Extradition Act. Her statement contained allegations against Belgian officials. She shared this statement with her contacts in Brussels, who relayed a translation to a Belgian newspaper, *Le National*.8 Belgian authorities protested with fierce denials. The police condemned the editor who was prosecuted and convicted of defamation. Meanwhile, Dyer launched a campaign in the British newspapers, and along with Gillett, and other moral purity campaigners, formed the London Committee for Suppressing the Traffic in British Girls for Purposes of Continental Prostitution. This committee included Charles J. Tarring, a leading barrister and later consular judge at Constantinople, who developed a speciality related to offences committed in foreign countries.9

The anti-trafficking campaign put the British government in a political dilemma: the accusations denied by Belgian officials had been made by respectable members of British society. Josephine Butler also presented a memorial to the Foreign Secretary, signed by 1000 women, requesting changes be made in English law to make it ‘impossible for any young girl in our country... to be kept in a foreign city in bondage for the basest purposes’. Granville conferred with Sir William Harcourt, the Home Secretary, and they appointed Thomas Snagge, a French-speaking member of the English bar, to carry out an enquiry. Snagge journeyed to Brussels and, with the assistance of the HM’s Minister there, investigated the facts. He reviewed the cache of documents related to the traffic, which had been placed with Scotland Yard by Dyer and Gillett, with the cooperation of the Foreign Office and Belgian
government. Snagge’s report substantiated the accusations contained in
the letter, and as a result, legal proceedings began in Belgian courts.
A number of officials took the opportunity to resign. The chief of the
Belgian police, found to have supplied keepers of the houses with wine
and other commodities, was dismissed from office. The burgomaster,
charged in the Belgian press with complicity, resigned on grounds of ill
health. The head of the police des mœurs was censured by the Municipal
Committee and later resigned his office as well. The editor of Le National
had his conviction overturned on appeal.10

The House of Lords select committee sat during sessions of 1881 and
1882, and after some delay, produced their reports, which introduced for
public view considerable evidence concerning the traffic. ‘Mr Snagge’s
report’, said The Times, ‘is exhaustive and conclusive…it reveals the
“White Slave Trade” between England and the Continent was carried
on as a regular business’. The report detailed the decoying of young girls
for immoral purposes to Belgium where they were said to be forcibly
detained in houses of ill-fame. Typically, they were snared with the
offer of a place as an actress or barmaid, and once lodged in Brussels,
found themselves under the regulations of the police des mœurs. Snagge
made clear how those who profited from this ‘lucrative’ and ‘infamous’
trade had nothing to fear from English law but captured young girls in
England ‘for what is hardly distinguishable from slavery’. He acknowl-
edged that some of the women had been prostitutes before leaving
England but urged the government to act nevertheless. He told the Lords
why he believed it should be a criminal offence to tell a woman she
would work as a barmaid abroad and make her instead an inmate of a
brothel. The article quoted Mr Justice Stephens as saying that ‘if it is not
in the legal sense of the word a crime, [it] ought to be one’. The arti-
cle also referred to statements made a few days earlier by Mr O’Donnell
about the importance of including within the scope of the proposed
inquiry into the importation of girls from Europe into India, through
Calcutta and Bombay.11

The Lords had found enough in Snagge’s report and the testimony
of witnesses they consulted to conclude that during the 1870s English
girls had been induced by agents in London to go to Brussels for pros-
titution. While it appeared most had led immoral lives in England, and
knew were relocating for prostitution, they did not realise the extent to
which they would be trapped in licensed houses. They were ‘practically
prisoners’. Their reports concluded with recommendations for strength-
ening laws relating to prostitution in Britain and enforcement activities
to prevent juvenile prostitution. Juvenile prostitution had increased to
a disturbing extent in England owing to ‘vicious demand’ for young girls, overcrowding in residential areas and lax parental control. Their reports also suggested a problem of trade in girls and women by ‘agents or placeurs’ of international dimension.\textsuperscript{12}

The evidence was contradictory, but it appeared white slave trading was not limited to England and Belgium. In testimony before the Lords, Thomas E. Jeffes, British consul at Brussels, said he had first learned of English girls in the city’s brothels in October 1879. Captain Beaumont Hotham, consul at Calais, had not heard of any girls being ‘trafficked’ to Calais during his more than 20 years of service. As for Paris, he could not be sure but surmised there was nothing like an organised system. Alexander Truitt, a member of the French bar, contradicted this assessment, saying ‘Prostitution clandestine is very strong in Paris’. There were women working in the sex trade in the city outside the registration system, and some of them were English. The first Lords report included a letter from Monsieur Emile de Laveleye, who stated that the white slave trade was being carried on between England and France. If it appeared to be more extensive in Brussels, this was not because Belgium was less moral or more corrupt. John Mallow, superintendent to the Commissioners of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, reported that he was unaware of traffic in young girls from Ireland to England. Irish girls who allowed themselves to be seduced did make their way to brothels in England, ‘but such girls know well what they are about’. James Nugent, the chaplain for the Borough Gaol of Liverpool, had never heard of a girl being exported for prostitution abroad from the city.\textsuperscript{13}

Anti-traffic campaigners asked Ellice Hopkins to prepare an abstract of this evidence for circulation among philanthropic, religious and charitable societies engaged in the moral purity movement. Hopkins had founded in 1883 the White Cross Army ‘for the protection of women and children from prostitution and degradation’.\textsuperscript{14} To emphasise the scale of moral harm, campaigners encouraged the analogy to the African slave trade. Those opposed to the commercial sex traffic argued that although the trade in African slaves had been abolished, the trade in young women continued. Although this trade occurred on a smaller scale, it was more odious because it took place, not in faraway colonies, but in the midst of Christian and civilised nations.\textsuperscript{15} From 1879, and the Brussels affair, white slave trafficking had the connotation of young women tricked or coerced into prostitution and held against their will in brothels. There were British women in Brussels’ brothels, who had been prostitutes in Britain, and had relocated to secure better opportunity, only to be disappointed. Now trapped in working conditions they
could not avoid, they wanted out, and sought the help of anti-trafficking campaigners. The campaigners did not always make these distinctions, realising that instances of girls abducted and coerced into prostitution would attract the greatest sympathy.

No one succeeded more than Stead in arousing popular indignation. In July of 1885, journalist W.T. Stead sensationalised white slavery as a problem for Victorian society. He published a series of articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, entitled ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’, in which he revealed the findings of an undercover inquiry into London’s underworld. To call attention to this barbaric practice in the middle of advanced civilisation, Stead recalled myths from classical antiquity, in which the Athenians tossed seven maidens, every nine years, to the hideous minotaur. In Stead’s London, aristocratic rakes frequenting brothels assumed the role of the lust-filled minotaur. He introduced readers to a tale of brothel-keepers and drug addiction, sound-proofed rooms and beds equipped with leather straps. In the first instalment, he introduced Lily, a child of 13 he had purchased for £5 simply to show how easily it could be done. The trade persisted, he said, because of complicity on the part of London’s elite. The city’s leading men either benefited from or overlooked the procurement of poor girls, including, he claimed, a well-known MP who was prepared to buy young girls at £25 each.16 Howard Vincent, director of criminal investigations at Scotland Yard, later claimed that Stead had lifted most of this material from his (Vincent’s) testimony before the Lords’ commission. Stead presented the facts ‘dressed up in sensational colours’, and Vincent warned him not to take his crusade too far. If he persisted in his enthusiasm, he would find himself in the dock.17

This is, in fact, what happened. Stead went on trial over the acquisition of Lily (Eliza Armstrong). He had not obtained the consent of the father, nor had he obtained a written agreement from the mother, and along with two assistants, stood accused of abduction and indecent assault. His conviction and three months’ imprisonment may have undermined the credibility of his effort, but his flamboyant literary style secured a wide following. In London, the ‘Maiden Tribute’ exposé precipitated a panic over sexual victimisation; a public demonstration of some 250,000 gathered in Hyde Park to protest the traffic. All sorts of stories, however improbable, passed by word of mouth. Rumours spread of disappearances, abductions and attempts to entice innocent girls. Public authorities warned girls against accepting chocolates from strangers and conversing with unknown passengers on railway carriages. Provincial newspapers carried editorials denouncing the traffic with great ardour
and indignation. In less than three months, 41 public meetings took place in London, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield.\textsuperscript{18} Political activists of various kinds set aside their ordinary campaigns to press for legislation. In a matter of weeks, Parliament enacted the Criminal Law Amendment which raised the age of consent for girls from 13 to 16 and gave police greater power to prosecute streetwalkers and brothel-keepers.\textsuperscript{19}

Stead’s description of sex trafficking travelled widely. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster remarked in October 1885 that the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} revelations had led to a profound moral shock in journals and correspondence ‘now daily coming back upon us from all parts of Europe and from the United States’.\textsuperscript{20} In the Netherlands, the articles prompted the women’s branch of the Protestant Dutch Women’s Union for Raising Moral Consciousness to take action. The group petitioned the government with 15,000 signatures for anti-trafficking legislation. This led to a treaty in 1887, the first of its kind, between Belgium and the Netherlands to collaborate in trafficking cases. Treaties between the Netherlands and Austria and Germany followed.\textsuperscript{21} In New Zealand, the \textit{Auckland Evening Star} reprinted the series within weeks of its appearance in the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette}, and informed readers of ‘the sensation of the month’ in the ‘revelations of English vice’. The Salvation Army and other religious groups investigated white slavery scandals, leading to legislative changes, vice commission reports, and white slavery films.\textsuperscript{22} And, years after the original series, Stead took the message personally to the United States and Canada. During the autumn of 1893, Stead came as a visitor to Chicago, where after a brief look at the world’s fair, he made a visit to the notorious red light district known as the Levee. Accompanied by a detective, and a posse of newspaper reporters, Stead audited vice activities. He subsequently made a stop at a police station and some cheap lodging houses to inspect the quartering of the homeless.\textsuperscript{23}

There were those who felt the evil of white slavery should not have been publicised. Stead’s vivid descriptions of sexual exploits should not have become the basis for a moral purity crusade, and the matter of prostitution was best dealt with outside the public arena. Superintendent Thomas Byrnes of the New York Police Department explained the situation this way. He appreciated press coverage when it appeared that the police had the upper hand. To deal with criminals effectively, ‘they should be made to feel that the heel of the law is upon them and that they are mere dust . . . that they are utterly insignificant and that the law has them completely in its power’. But at the same time, he frowned on the efforts of reformers to make use of the press to sensationalise crimes
in an effort to spur government action. The campaign against traffick-
ing in women for prostitution only made the problem worse. ‘These
people who indulge in sensational crusades against the social evil take
a fearful responsibility upon themselves, and, far from accomplishing
any good, do an untold amount of harm’. Spotlighting vice districts
encouraged traffickers to take cover in respectable areas, which made
them more difficult to police, and tended to spread their evil further and
wider. Detailed and frequent newspaper accounts of shameful activities
degraded public morality.\(^{24}\)

But Stead garnered loyal support from reformers and campaigners
who appreciated his ability to motivate the public and irritate public
officials. Ellice Hopkins quoted the Bishop of Durham on the impor-
tance of public opinion in the legislation of morality. ‘What it seems
to me we want’, he told his diocesan conference, ‘is the formation of
a vigorous public opinion on the subject. Public opinion, indeed, will
not pierce the inmost recesses of the heart. But no one who looks into
himself, and questions himself frankly, will refuse to own how much
he owes to public opinion in other provinces of morality, as honesty
or truthfulness, for instance’. Hopkins saw large public meetings as a
vital means of responding to a great danger. ‘Mass meetings are power-
ful agents in purging the moral atmosphere and letting in these great
purifiers, light and air’. Religious enthusiasm in particular could field
vigilance associations, such as the White Cross Army, so important for
protecting the unprotected and defending the defenceless. These organ-
isations together represent the basis for a protective organisation of
international scope: ‘Is it not obvious that a great organised evil can
only be met by counter-organisation?’\(^{25}\)

The counter-organisation Hopkins had in mind was necessary to
overcome ‘do nothing’ officialdom. The British minister at Brussels
had known about British women in the city’s brothels but, as he
explained to the Foreign Office, did not take action in the belief that
no virtuous girl wound up in a brothel overseas by accident. Hopkins,
Stead and their associates envisioned an organisation of national scope
and international influence. At the Hyde Park demonstration, they
announced the formation of the National Vigilance Association (NVA).
Following Stead’s release from prison in October, he criss-crossed the
country to establish local chapters, many from the local morality asso-
ciations Hopkins had set up in the early 1880s. The NVA received
funds from evangelical philanthropists, and in later years, acquired sup-
port from regional social purity organisations. The Birmingham chapter,
autonomous until 1894, had been supported by chocolate-maker George
Cadbury.\(^{26}\)
Stead chose W. Alexander Coote to serve as secretary and administrator and paid his salary in the early years. Although Coote did not possess sufficient education (he had been a compositor at *The Standard* when Stead found him), he exercised superb management skills at the NVA for many years. Under Coote, the NVA developed an efficient two-way referral system with police: local branches offered the police information about brothels, rape cases and obscene booksellers, and the police referred cases for prosecution, as it was easier for private groups to obtain a conviction in some cases. Coote won influential allies of national and international stature for the cause. He built a working relationship with Ishbel, Lady Aberdeen, who was married to Canada’s governor-general, and who had set up the National Council of Women in 1893. On her return to Britain, she became president of the international council, a role in which she collaborated with the NVA.27 Coote became the international ambassador of social purity. Within a matter of years, he had visited every capital and organised national committees in every country in Europe. He received recognition for his work from the Emperor of Germany, the President of France and the King of Spain.28

The Jewish Association

There were other voluntary organisations, in addition to the NVA and the White Cross, engaged in efforts against human trafficking. One of these, the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women (JAPGW or Jewish Association), drew support from the leading Jewish families in Europe and developed an extensive and extended international campaign against trafficking in women.29

What became the JAPGW began in 1885, when Lady Battersea (née Constance de Rothschild) received a visit from the spouse of a London minister operating a mission in the East End. Mrs Herbert relayed her encounter with two Jewish women of the streets who declared that it was hopeless to consider giving up their way of life. The doors of the Jewish community were closed to them as a matter of *halakha*, and they did not wish to enter a Christian mission, ‘for, however bad we may be, we will not give up our faith’. Lady Battersea wrote to her cousin Claude G. Montefiore, and he, along with a rabbi, the Reverend Simeon Singer, visited the mission. Although the two men did not succeed in locating the two women, they all realised the need for ‘rescue work’ within the Jewish community. Lady Battersea invited Mrs Herbert to address several Jewish ladies, most of whom happened to be friends and relatives, and they met at the home of Battersea’s sister, Annie Henrietta
Yorke, in May. Mrs Herbert concluded by saying: ‘And these unfortunate creatures declare that no help is forthcoming to them from members of their own race; that they are looked upon as too vile even to be saved from the gutter’. To which Reverend Singer was said to have exclaimed: ‘This is surely untrue!’

The first meeting of the Jewish Ladies Society for Prevention and Rescue Work was held in April 1885 with Lady Battersea as secretary and her cousin, Lady (Emma) Rothschild, as president. The Society resolved to establish a shelter for reception of ‘fallen Jewish girls’; they planned to canvass workhouses to identify Jewish women and to house them under the care of a Jewish matron. As it happened, their initial survey of hospital wards in workhouses failed to turn up Jewish women. But the first meeting’s business also included a resolution that some preventive work should be taken with regard to ‘foreign girls’ arriving at the port. Lady Rothschild proposed, at a meeting in November of that year, that a person be engaged to meet all passenger ships arriving in London. Their perception of this need became the mainstay of the organisation. In 1886, the Society opened Charcroft House in Mile End, which re-located two years later to the suburb of Shepherd’s Bush where it tended to serve as a hostel for unmarried mothers and their babies. In 1888, the Society opened a second house at Tenter Street, Rosaline House. It became known as Sarah Pyke House after 1893 and tended to function as a boarding house for ‘respectable working girls’, catering to British-born unmarried women in between domestic jobs.

The Society also installed an agent, Jacob Sternheim, at the port of London. At other ports of England, the Home Office had arranged receiving houses to process immigrants but not at Tilbury where new arrivals received a bewildering welcome. Men and women frequented the riversides and landing stairs watching for girls and women who appeared to be on their own. Through misrepresentations of various kinds—promises of ‘through tickets’, low-cost housing and domestic employment—these ‘runners’ lured them into the control of traffickers. Sternheim boarded incoming ships, identified Jewish girls and young married women travelling alone and assisted them in making arrangements with friends and employers. Within several years, the Society deployed several agents. Although the agents did not wear uniforms, they did display badges with the name of the Society in English and Hebrew script. On a visit to the port in 1888, Reverend Singer was shocked by the ‘immorality of Jewesses’ he saw, and he suggested to Lady Battersea that her Society authorise a subcommittee of gentlemen to supervise the work there. The ladies agreed and
a Gentlemen’s Committee, including Singer, was formed. Arthur Moro, a London solicitor, became secretary of the Gentlemen’s Committee the following year.

The leaders of the Society came to understand the international dimensions of trafficking in women for prostitution from Dr Löwy of the Anglo-Jewish Association. In 1890, Lady Rothschild read a letter from him concerning the ‘abominable traffic’ in Jewish girls from Austria, Romania and Galicia. Löwy subsequently appeared as a speaker and explained the ‘horrors of this traffic’ firsthand. He said that he was contacting rabbis in these areas to advise them of the problem, and he told the Society that they could help by placing advertisements in foreign newspapers warning girls against leaving home with strangers. The Society resolved to form an alliance with the International Society for the Suppression of Vice.35

The Society’s name change came about in 1897. The ladies received word from the Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA) expressing an interest in their efforts to discourage trafficking in women to Buenos Aires. In 1890, Baron Maurice de Hirsch possessed one of the world’s largest fortunes (acquired by building railways in Austria, the Balkans and Russia) and emerged as one of the greatest philanthropists of his day. He founded the ICA in 1891 to underwrite the re-settlement of Russian Jews in Argentina. The Jewish Ladies Society became the Jewish Association for Protection of Girls and Women in March 1897 in anticipation of receiving a grant. Hirsch’s ICA provided an initial three-year grant of £1200 to be used exclusively for ‘foreign traffic work’.36 At the centre of this grant, and name change, was Claude G. Montefiore. He joined the Gentlemen’s Committee that year and became a major figure in the JAPGW’s work. One can guess at what Montefiore might have said to convince Hirsch’s representatives. Likely, he pointed out the perception of Argentina as a destination for Jewish women engaged in prostitution and the extent to which this would jeopardise Hirsch’s colonies there. He would also have emphasised the significance of London as a point of transmigration. Jews leaving Eastern Europe en route to Argentina, including those engaged in trafficking, would necessarily pass through London.37

London’s JAPGW persuaded Jewish communities around the world to join with them in tackling the threat to Jewish women. Pappenheim was (in addition to her identity as the ‘Anna O’ of Freud’s and Breuer’s case study in hysteria) a devout Jew and founder of the German feminist movement. Pappenheim could not stop thinking about the numbers of
Jewish women from Galicia and Poland caught up in the trafficking. She sought to make clear to the German public the conditions of extreme poverty and structural discrimination that had driven Jews of the Pale into commercialised sex. She encouraged members of other religions to join in the anti-trafficking campaign, believing that so long as it remained a Jewish issue the victimisation involved would not be taken seriously. She believed that in taking on trafficking, her organisation could promote moral purity and raise the social status of women.\(^{38}\)

*Der Mänchenhandel* supplied the issue that led Bertha Pappenheim to organise the League of Jewish Women. Her organisation attracted a large following; some 30,000 women, mostly middle-class, joined before the Great War.\(^{39}\)

Pappenheim's *Jüdischer Frauenbund* and Battersea's JAPGW seemed to have inspired each other. It was the JAPGW that had supplied the information so important to Pappenheim. The 1902 report tells of the Association's participation in a Hamburg conference of German Jewish charities and of the impressive figure of Pappenheim: ‘At that meeting Miss Pappenheim strongly advocated a plan for sending female Jewish missionaries among the poor of Poland, Galicia and other centres of suffering and oppression to point out the dangers of the traffic and to try and improve the material and moral condition of those unfortunate people. We have lately had reason to think that such a scheme, if properly carried out, would have excellent results. We admire Miss Pappenheim's resolve to live among the very poor of Galicia and so to learn their needs before appealing to the community for workers’.\(^{40}\) However much the leaders of Britain's Jewish community admired Pappenheim's determination they did not seek to follow her example. Like its German counterpart, the JAPGW believed in the need to educate Eastern European Jews about the dangers of trafficking. But they did not commission 'female Jewish missionaries'. Nor did they seek to advance the feminist aspects of the German programme. The British anti-trafficking effort remained focussed on trafficking, and especially on the criminalisation of traffickers, and did not pursue a wider project to elevate the social standing of working-class women. To the extent the JAPGW aided the women's movement in Britain, it did so through spotlighting the issue of human trafficking that suffragists used as a part of their overall movement.

The JAPGW threw its support behind legal measures in Britain to suppress the trade. Trafficking presented a thorny legal problem because it involved recruiting women in one country (Russia, Romania, Galicia), making arrangements through another (Great Britain), for prostitution
in another (the Argentine). ‘There is but one way in which to check the evil of White Slave Trafficking…’ the JAPGW’s report for 1905 declared, ‘and that is by making those engaged in it feel that it is a dangerous undertaking’. Arthur Moro, a solicitor, worked in conjunction with the Jewish Board of Deputies to secure laws enabling the successful prosecution of traffickers. At a joint meeting in 1908, the two associations resolved to suggest amendments to the Criminal Law Amendment Act and Vagrancy Acts.41

Members of the JAPGW were also aware of uses of the issue by anti-Semites and political agitators. Moro reported that in 1906, reference to ‘foreigner’ in public discussion of white slavery was a polite disguise for ‘Hebrew’.42 But they pressed on to obtain a pledge from the Home Office to support measures to close the loopholes for bullies, procurers and brothel-keepers. In fact, the JAPGW claimed to be ‘the original promoter’ of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1912).43 In their effort to protect Jewish women, they decided it was necessary to criminalise the few Jewish men involved and risk the negative attention their efforts would attract. George Sims, who claimed expert knowledge of the seamy side of London life, surmised that crimes of violence had decreased as a result of Jewish settlement in the East End. But crimes of morality had increased. The Jews claimed a disproportionate share of the trade in white slaves: ‘Although others were involved, I think that Jews, by their business aptitude, are much cleverer and more ingenious in carrying on the nefarious trade’. The vigilance societies had an impact and leading Jews could do more. ‘The respectable Jews could do much to render the existence of these scoundrels in their midst impossible’.44

They also pursued an international effort. In 1910, the JAPGW convened the first Jewish International Conference on the Suppression of the Traffic in Girls and Women. The conference, which took place in London, drew representatives from across Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Galicia, Holland, Romania and Russia, as well as Turkey, Australia, and South Africa. In his address, Arthur Moro stressed that ‘the traffic is carried on by Jews and Jewesses’ and ‘should be discussed openly and frankly’. It should be dealt with so that Jews could not be accused of hiding anything nor blamed for more than they deserved to be. He also stressed ‘the traffic of Jewesses is almost world wide’. He related the contents of letters he had received about traffic from rabbis in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Singapore, Cairo, Odessa, Calcutta and Constantinople. Jewish societies should be formed in all countries where they did not presently exist, and should take the JAPGW, the Frauenbund and American Council of Jewish Women for models. Jews should
also join non-sectarian committees organised against the traffic in an effort to get the laws of countries enforced or strengthened. Leaflets were to be printed in Yiddish and other languages and distributed through rabbis, to warn young women against extra-legal contracts for marriage and to warn parents against marriage brokers (schadchen) allied with traffickers. The participants also agreed to designate the JAPGW as the central bureau, to receive regular communication for national and local Jewish Societies, for aggregation of information and statistics.45

The JAPGW despatched Samuel Cohen to South America, a leading destination for women brought through London. Cohen visited Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, San Paulo, Santos and Montevideo to ascertain the state of affairs. In Rio de Janeiro, the chief of police had completed a series of raids on gambling dens and was starting a campaign against immoral houses. On-street solicitation was very noticeable, and there were whole districts chock-a-block with licensed houses. At every door and window, there appeared girls of all ages, colours and nationalities, overly dressed and barely dressed, calling out to men who passed by. Some were fairly young, but most appeared to be between 25 and 30 years of age. He also noticed a large number of prostitutes in the music halls, cinemas, cabarets and certain cafés. Mostly these were French women who attracted a higher price than the brothel women. As for Jewish women, the purpose of his visit, he could confirm they comprised a significant portion of the brothel scene. While passing by a large number of houses, he overheard their conversation to each other in Yiddish. At the leading synagogue, he found members eager to rehabilitate the good name of Jews in Brazil. He also found the Sailors’ Mission, YMCA and Catholic International Society concerned with commercialised vice.46

The international conferences

The official international response to white slave trading began during the spring of 1899. Coote journeyed to Paris, Brussels, the Hague, Berlin, Copenhagen, Stockholm and St Petersburg on behalf of the Duke of Westminster, president of the National Vigilance Association, to gin up support for an international meeting. He found considerable support among aristocrats and nobility, an interest among the affluent that extended upwards to royal families across Europe. In Paris, he received an enthusiastic response from Senator Bérenger. In Berlin, the Empress agreed to send Count Bernstorff, a member of her palace staff,
and in St Petersburg, Count Mouravieff promised to send his private secretary. Russia, Germany and France agreed to send accredited diplomatic representatives, if the conference were made official. The Duke of Westminster approached the Foreign Office, but Lord Salisbury felt that to give the conference an official character might prove embarrassing to the participants.47

In 1899, the International Congress on the White Slave Traffic convened at the Westminster Palace Hotel in London. The Duke of Westminster welcomed representatives from Berlin, Sweden, Brussels, The Hague, Bremen, Stockholm, Russia and Paris. The main part of the time was occupied with replies to sets of questions distributed in advance. The delegates read papers addressing possibilities for legal sanctions against trafficking, involvement of private organisations in the issue, the need for trustworthy statistics and related legal and organisational issues. The laws of France, Belgium and other countries did not allow for punishment of men who enticed adult women into careers of vice. England, Germany and Austria took a different view—that such doings were immoral and should be punished. The Swiss contingent proposed the establishment of a system of international inspectors at strategic points who would be in a position to interrupt the transport of girls out of Europe. The congress also heard from the Bishop of London, Lady Battersea, Chief Rabbi Dr Adler and Alexander Coote who spoke on behalf of the London Jewish Committee.48

Before the end of the first day, the participants resolved to form a permanent international organisation for implementing the resolutions of the congress. The international bureau would comprise representatives from national committees within each country. It would be based in London and directed by two English members and three members, nominated by the NVA, from other countries. The congress also passed resolutions regarding governments and organisations represented. Governments should agree to furnish ‘penalties of equal degree’ for procuring women or girls by violence, fraud or ‘improper pressure’; to carry out investigations into these crimes; prevent conflict of jurisdiction before trial; and enter into international treaties for extradition of the accused. Philanthropic and charitable societies should communicate concerning emigration of women and distribute this information prior to arrival.49 Following the conference, national governments took some steps. The German government established elaborate arrangements for supervising the ports and reporting instances of the traffic. In Russia, committees formed in the large cities for protection of girls, and revisions were made to the system of regulating brothels.50
The first official conference on the international white slave trade took place in 1902. After some correspondence with Coote, the French government agreed to convene an international conference of official delegates sent by their governments to address the traité des blanches. The conference assembled at the Quai d’Orsay in July with delegates from 15 European states. They produced two documents, signed provisionally by all the governments represented, and met for a second time at Frankfurt in October of the same year, at which they turned their attention to the organisation of the international bureau as envisioned by the London conference. The 1902 conference also led to an international agreement, signed in 1904, for suppression of the white slave traffic. The purpose of the London conference had been to consider international aspects of the question rather than national aspects, and each signatory of the Paris agreement essentially agreed to pursue the case from an international point of view. Or, in other words, in signing the agreement, the governments pledged to fight the traffic ‘not only as it affects the women of the country itself, but as it affects the women of other countries’.51

The Paris agreement of 18 May 1904 was signed by the delegates of 15 nations: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Russia, Spain and Switzerland. It was meant to centralise information regarding the white slave traffic, to provide governmental protection to young women travelling from one country to another, to extend official protection to victims of the traffic and pursue prosecution and punishments of traffickers. Major provisions of the agreement appeared in the first three articles. In Article 1, each of the contracting governments agreed to establish a central authority to aggregate information and correspond directly with central authorities in other countries. Article 2 sketched out a plan for mutual arrangements including general surveillance over railway stations and ports. The arrival of persons involved in the traffic, whether procurers or victims, would be communicated through consuls and diplomatic agents against the trade. In Article 3, the governments agreed to ascertain the country of origin of victims, and with the advice of institutions of public or private charity, return to their countries women who had been enticed away. The signatories further agreed to provide for the punishment of procurers, even when the crime constituted acts committed in several countries. The agreement provided for extradition of offenders and for mutual assistance in assembling evidence against accused persons. The signatories envisioned a system for surveillance at a registry office which would outplace foreigners as well.52
Perhaps the most concrete achievement was the designation of central authorities (Figure 4.1). Britain’s central authority was established to collect information about the traffic and share this with authorities appointed in other countries, monitor railway stations and ports, arrange repatriation for victims of the traffic and maintain surveillance of agencies which offer women and girls situations abroad. To head it, the Home Office appointed Frederick Bullock of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard. He was charged with carrying out activities agreed by the international treaties, and fostering working relationships between the police and voluntary and unofficial associations allied in anti-traffic work. He was given a fund from which to defray the expenses of women unable to pay the cost of returning to their homes. The central authority issued notification to all police forces in the United Kingdom to provide information of any kind bearing on traffic in women and girls. They provided for a home in London, to which girls found by the police, in need of assistance or protection, could reside until repatriation. Scotland Yard also formed a special branch of police to enquire into cases of traffic and to collect information on the subject.53

The central authorities arranged, in conjunction with voluntary organisations, for the surveillance of railway stations and ports. In England, a deputation from the International Bureau, chaired by Lord Aberdeen, met with the Home Secretary in March 1903, who approved a 6-month work by Coote’s NVA at railway stations, streets and ports of embarkation. Steps were taken to secure workers capable of speaking two or more languages. The chief commissioner of the police expressed his interest in the work and made it known to all Metropolitan police stations. Coote met with railway companies to permit workers to attend stations. The South Eastern and Catham Railway printed cards for use by workers in London.54 The central authority wrestled with subjects such as protection of girls on emigrant ships, in the colonies and abroad, at theatrical performances and public houses, from the invitations of newspaper advertisements, employment agencies and ‘every device that the scientific developments of electricity and steam have placed at the disposal of the evildoer as well as that of the good citizen’.55

The United States began in 1906 to take an interest in international efforts. American delegates arrived, for the first time, on the second day of proceedings at the international conference on the white slave traffic at Paris in October of that year.56 In December 1906, W. Alexander Coote received an invitation to visit New York, Baltimore, Washington, Boston and Philadelphia to form an NVA with the special object of suppression of the white slave traffic. By February 1908, America had
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Figure 4.1  Countries and Colonies Entered into the International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic, 1907

become interested to the extent of appointing an inspector at Ellis Island to carry out investigations. The New York Vigilance Committee formed and became immediately busy in organising branch organisations.57 The United States approved the Paris agreement (1904) in June 1908. In most of the European countries, responsibility for carrying out provisions of the agreement had been entrusted to the national police service, but in the United States, where police were not a department of the national government, responsibility was placed with the Bureau of Immigration (forerunner of the Federal Bureau of Investigation). The Immigration Commission released its report, *Importation and Harboring of Women for Immoral Purposes*, establishing that large numbers of women had been brought into the country for immoral purposes.

A 1909 article in *McClure’s* magazine had an effect comparable to that of the *Pall Mall Gazette* 15 years earlier. In it, muckraking journalist George Kibbe Turner insisted that New York City had eclipsed Paris as the centre of white slave traffic and that by means of political protection the traffic had assumed worldwide proportions. The men engaged in the trade shipped girls, mostly obtained from tenement districts of New York, to every continent on the globe. The problem began, Turner claimed, with the immigration of Austrian, Russian and Hungarian Jews to New York. ‘Among these immigrants there were a large number of criminals, who soon found that they could develop an extremely profitable business in the sale of women in New York’. They operated through a Jewish society, the New York Benevolent Association, without interference from the police and criminal courts who were under the control of Tammany Hall politicians.58 The allegations led to a grand jury investigation, chaired by John D. Rockefeller, beginning in January 1910, before which Turner was summoned to appear.

The Rockefeller Grand Jury, as it became known, turned up evidence of white slave trading but declined to say that there was an organised syndicate or ‘vice trust’ operated in New York with worldwide connections.59 The white slave trade was carried on by individuals known to each other because they frequented the same clubs and associations. There was no evidence that the New York Benevolent Association had engaged in the trafficking, but some of its members as individuals did. They made use of their membership in the association to make arrangements with criminal associates in other cities. Owing to publicity surrounding the enquiry, the grand jury could not generate evidence of trafficking. Although dealers boasted of extensive interstate operations, and their success in recruiting women, they became extremely cautious. Nevertheless, undercover agents did purchase two
women: one for $60 and the other for $75. In its presentment, the grand jury offered several recommendations for reducing the threat of white slavery. Americans caught trafficking should be prosecuted with the ‘utmost rigour’: moving picture shows should be closely supervised and regulations concerning patrons more strictly enforced; manicure and massage parlours found to cloak immoral practices should be made subject to licensing authority of the health department; and laws relating to immoral conduct at apartments and tenement buildings more rigorously enforced. Rockefeller’s grand jury also recommended that a commission be appointed to make a careful study of ‘the methods of dealing with the social evil in leading cities of this country and of Europe with a view to devising the most effective means of minimizing the evil’.

In 1910, the US Congress passed the White Slave Traffic Act, prohibiting the transportation from one state to another, or from foreign countries, of women for the purpose of prostitution. The first section dealt with international traffic, the second with interstate traffic. The act provided a penalty of no more than $5000, or imprisonment of up to five years, or both, at the discretion of the court. If the victim was under 18 years of age at the time, the amount of the fine and term of imprisonment doubled. The act charged the commissioner-general of immigration with collecting information about the procuration of foreign women, under the Paris agreement (1904) relating to the white slave traffic, and with exercising supervision over such alien women and with ascertaining who induced them to leave their native country.

In an address to the Sixth International Purity Congress at Columbus, Ohio, an assistant district attorney for New York City, James B. Reynolds, reviewed the role of the United States within the worldwide slave trade and international trafficking efforts. He made a thorough investigation of white slave trafficking in the city. The vulnerability of foreign-born women fostered an increase of ‘pimps’, many of whom also controlled American girls. The trade in American girls from the Pacific Coast to Japan and China presented an even greater cause for concern. In Oriental cities, richly attired American prostitutes had become so common that ‘American girl’ had become synonymous with ‘prostitute’. The situation facing America could be compared to the trade in European girls to South America, Turkey and South Africa. ‘It does not matter,’ Reynolds insisted, ‘whether we can proclaim the existence of an organized syndicate. The statements of leading official and unofficial authorities in Europe establish…that in some form these traders have social and commercial solidarity through which they achieve easy communication and business success’. Traffickers utilised coded cablegrams and way stations
along travel routes to manage their business. They had all the agencies and facilities needed to carry out a successful commercial enterprise: transportation, delivery and exploitation of the goods. To deal with the vice trade in China and Japan, Reynolds was prepared to withdraw protection of citizenship to American women working as prostitutes. He sought direct communication between the American government and the governments of Japan and China and favoured entering into a formal treaty in which each of the governments would agree to make use of their police to prevent international trade.

Interest in international conferences continued into 1910, when meetings took place at Paris and Madrid. The Paris conference of 1910 opened with an address by Bérenger, who was elected president of the proceedings. Frederick Bullock attended on behalf of the British government. The discussion concerned the overlap of civil and criminal proceedings, expenses incurred in prosecution of foreign traffickers, the competence of legal tribunals dealing with trafficking cases and the related issue of obscene publications. The conference was convened to clarify and amend provisions of earlier agreements. Britain had some difficulty with extradition. The law made clear that prosecutions could not occur in cases in which women were taken abroad (to South America) ostensibly to perform at theatres by men who disposed of them (while in Buenos Aires) for immoral purposes and returned, unless the women returned also. There was also some difficulty with the minimum age. The agreement of 1904 did not specify when a girl was under age, and the delegates agreed that there should be one age for all countries. If no agreement was reached on this matter, the trade would shift to the country in which the age was the lowest. The delegates did adopt a definition of white slave trafficking based on language concerning procurement by ‘force’ or ‘fraud’, ‘violence’ or ‘abuse of authority’ and included language about women being ‘lured’ or ‘enticed’ to travel across borders for immoral purposes. Britain signed the 1910 amendments, along with Austria/Hungary, Spain, France, the Netherlands and Russia.

The Madrid conference proved to be the largest with over 400 delegates from 16 countries. Official delegates came from Spain, Germany, Austria, France, Hungary, Belgium, the United States, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Argentine, Denmark, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru. Bullock felt this level of interest proved that ‘great progress’ had been made in the movement during the previous six years since the Paris agreement had been signed and in the 25 years since the United Kingdom enacted the Criminal Law Amendment Act. The conference also attracted the patronage of several royal families. Louis Fernando
of Bavaria, who had shown an interest in the movement for some years, attended as did King Alfonso of Spain, who opened the meeting with a welcome address. Delegates heard from members of the Spanish national committee, German national committee and W. Alexander Coote on behalf of the international bureau. They attended a reception at the Royal Palace, received a banquet at the Hotel Ritz and rode a chartered train to Toledo.65

Compared to the guest list, the list of resolutions was rather less impressive. Too much time was wasted, Bullock thought, on an attempt to think up a more accurate description of the problem at issue than *traité des blanches*. The discussion concentrated on the word *blanches* and ‘it was pointed out that coloured women of Oriental races, as well as white women, were increasingly victims of the traffic’. Discussants suggested *traité des femmes*, ‘trafficking in women’, as a worthy alternative. There was a consensus that more needed to be done concerning employment agencies, involvement of foreign societies in railway work and the particular circumstances of Egypt. In his report, Coote spotlighted the need for ‘active work’ to curb the growing sex trade in Egypt and the Near East. Unlike earlier gatherings, the United States added its voice to the international conversation. The American delegate, Sadie American (her father had changed the family name from Abraham), declared that thousands of girls arrived in the United States as immigrants. An enquiry a few years earlier (by the Immigration Bureau), had learned that of some 5000 immigrants bound for destinations in the United States, some 2000 never arrived. Jewish committees in cities across the country undertook investigations to learn their fate.66

**Controversies over causes and strategies**

‘Since 1885’, Lady Bunting declared in 1912, ‘it has become clear that the traffic in girls is a vast international organisation’. Mary Hyett Bunting, who pursued social reform work along with her husband, Sir Percy Bunting, was active in the NVA. She described a worldwide business, based on management principles, carried on by a hierarchy of owners, brokers and agents. Their organisation reached every country. ‘We see that to put down this traffic there must be international agreement and understanding’.67 But understanding of the problem did vary among anti-trafficking tacticians.

There was the matter of victims and perpetrators. Lady Bunting insisted that international action was needed to protect English girls from foreign traffickers. The government should take action because
foreign agents advertised in British newspapers, made use of British ships, operated offices in British cities and forced into sexual slavery not girls from other countries but ‘our English girls’. Bullock disagreed. He agreed that Great Britain should be actively engaged in anti-trafficking measures but could not agree that the reason for this was protection of English girls. In 1907, a few years before Bunting’s remarks, Bullock reported that ‘scarcely any cases have come to light in which English girls have been concerned’ and when, in connection with some cases, enquiries had been made, they ‘point to the fact that few, if any English girls are victims of this trade’. It was possible that isolated cases involving English girls did exist, but he was confident that within the international trade in women for prostitution, ‘girls and women of the British race are rarely found among the victims’. It was important for Britain to be actively engaged because a considerable number of women pass through London on their way from Europe to countries in South America and South Africa, and it was incumbent on the government to do everything it could to end this ‘nefarious traffic’.

In 1912, WT Stead perished with the sinking of the RMS Titanic and his supporters seized the opportunity to push Parliament into additional legislation. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, better known as the White Slave Traffic Bill, attracted hyperbole so characteristic of the concern surrounding the movement. In the House of Commons debate leading up to the passage of the act, MPs resorted to racialised images of traffickers. The issue became one of protecting English women from being snatched off London streets by foreign men. Reginald McKenna, the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, contended that procurers operating in London were ‘almost entirely of foreign origin’; the problem of trafficking involved a ‘particular class of persons that have recently come into this country’. Another MP insisted that a man found guilty of procuring was ‘not a man but an animal’ and punishment applied to the back was one of the few means ‘to make an impression on him’. This led another member to point out that if nearly all of the procurers were of foreign nationality, they could be deported under the Aliens Act, so there was no need for a barbaric penalty such as whipping.

These images supported a controversial provision within the legislation that reinstated flogging for traffickers. Section 3 authorised courts in England and Wales to order whipping for ‘male persons convicted on indictment of a second or subsequent offence of living on the earning of prostitution’. Colonel Charles R. Burn MP declared that ‘protect[ing] the womanhood and childhood of this country’ required whipping and deporting. ‘When you deport such a man,’ the Colonel said, ‘I should like him to have the hallmark of some British muscle on his back’.70
He emphasised London as the centre of the international white slave traffic, a point Montefiore had pressed and insisted that while whipping would not suppress the traffic, it would divert the ‘foreign trade’ to Buenos Aires from going through British ports. Arthur Lee announced that he had conducted his own study during the past 12 months into the problem. White slavery involved not hundreds of ‘these people’, but thousands, and the largest portion of them ‘are not Englishmen’. Nevertheless, he did encounter ‘not merely debased Englishmen, but dozens of negroes in the West End of London running white English girls on the streets’. Another MP suggested that just as whipping was appropriate for Africans it was appropriate for traffickers: ‘You are dealing with the brutal nature of the Kaffir, and here you are dealing with the brutal nature of the white man and you should deal with them in the same way’.71

The bill passed despite considerable opposition. A.R. Orage marvelled at the ‘strange attitude’ towards trafficking that had led to such a sanction. ‘Just when psychologists, doctors, and sociologists had begun to look forward to subtler and gentler remedies and defences against crime…’ his editorial remarked, ‘the police and lawyers and their ignorant dupes must needs feel their vested superstitions in danger’. On the occasion of its passage, Orage’s *The New Age* reprinted Lord Eversley’s speech in the House of Lords. Lord Eversley pointed out that in passing the act, Britain became the only ‘civilised county’ to provide for such a punishment; flogging had completely come to an end across Europe.72

As far as the leadership of the JAPGW was concerned, the act did not contain everything they hoped it would, but it was a forward step. They figured it had been responsible for displacing a larger number of traffickers from Great Britain to France, Belgium and other parts of Europe.73

There were also disagreements about failures in surveillance, monitoring and enforcement of treaties. Not to mention lax enforcement of national laws that effectively shifted traffic across national borders and displaced problems to other governments. An animated discussion occurred at the Paris conference of 1906 following a report by the German delegate. Based on his personal investigation of the situation in South America, he declared that although it had been frequently reported that many of the prostitutes there were of German origin, he found very few women of German background. He had learned of many women from across the continent of Europe engaged in prostitution; large numbers had been shipped from Havre via Southampton from different ports on the continent. The French delegate interpreted these remarks as a charge that Havre was a depot for the traffic, and regarded his comments as an insult to French administration. After some delay,
the proceedings moved forward when the president of the German national committee succeeded in putting forward a motion that effective cooperation with central authorities would be possible only when national committees had been organised in all countries affected by the traffic. The delegates resolved that committees be formed in Budapest, New York, Warsaw and Athens.  

Swiss and German representatives also objected, at the 1906 conference, to London as the site for the international bureau. A bureau situated on the continent, they insisted, would be more central. The president of the French national committee disagreed and rose to the defence of the London office as directed by Coote. For many years, Coote had carried out successfully the work of the international bureau without expense to the other countries. The other delegates echoed this assessment, and they decided that the conference pay tribute to Coote for his energy and labour. Coote himself declared that while he was willing to abide by the decision of the conference, he had, and would continue, to pursue administration of international work without seeking financial assistance from other countries. As a result, the conferees agreed unanimously to maintain the international bureau in London as the central office and for national committees to submit information regularly.

There was more agreement about several specific sources of the problem. The anti-traffic workers found that the ease of travel afforded significant opportunity for trafficking and made their efforts quite difficult. It was impossible to say with certainty for how long the white slave trade had been carried on, Frederick Bullock explained, but ‘undoubtedly it had grown with the increased and cheapened facilities of railway and steamboat communication between England and the Continent during the last quarter of the century’. Great Britain had particular difficulty in this respect. Unlike nations on the continent, with territorial boundaries, fixed railway routes, and well-known ports of embarkation, Britain had seaboard all around. The nation maintained links with Europe, America, Africa and India. These included London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Bristol and Hull and direct routes such as Dover, Folkestone, Newhaven, Harwich, Grimsby, Weymouth, Southampton and Plymouth.

When it came to policing ports, government delegates saw particular value in coordinating police efforts with those of voluntary and philanthropic associations. The national committees urged the formation of local committees, in frontier towns and seaports, to monitor the young girls among emigrants. In 1903, the London Committee recommended
action to be taken at railways along the lines of the *Amies de la Jeune Fille* on the continent. The *Union des Amies de la Jeune Fille*, established at Geneva in 1877, provided assistance to girls travelling by themselves. Representatives met them on arrival at railway stations and assisted them in making arrangements with their families and friends. The London Committee declared ‘devised and put in operation some scheme for watching, systematically, the outports and places of embarkation and disembarkation of passengers, at the Railway Termini in London, and elsewhere, so as to hinder the import and export of women and girls now carried on for immoral purposes’. Coote’s NVA accepted the request. At Hull, they succeeded in obtaining agreements by railway owners, steamship companies and philanthropic societies to arrange for the reception of young women. Captains of steamships signalled as they entered the Humber to indicate the need for respectable lodgings, escorts and cabs, which were arranged to meet the steamship at dock-side. The secretary of the association also maintained ‘telephonic communication’ with the police and philanthropic workers to arrange protection for young women in need of assistance at any time of the day or night.

There was also agreement on the need for regulation of employment practices surrounding music halls. At the Paris conference (1906), the French delegate reported that within France certain theatres, music halls and cafés sponsored a considerable amount of prostitution. The salaries paid to the female artistes did not provide sufficient allowance for living expenses, and in some cases, did not even pay for the costumes required for performances. The employment agencies stressed youthfulness and attractiveness of the women, rather than professional accomplishments or musical talent, and presumed that the meagre salaries paid would be supplemented by commercial sexual activity. The London-based international bureau also expressed concern about this. In 1912, a letter arrived from the British Consul at Hamburg drawing attention to the dangers of English girls working in various troupes in continental music halls. The spread of the entertainment industry, chiefly in the form of cheap concert halls, night cafés and *Cafés chantants* provided an attractive alternative to brothels. A special committee of legal members of the NVA resolved to take the matter into consideration. The following month, a letter arrived from South America along the same lines. Theatrical girls faced particular dangers. However, it was reported that an act dealing with the regulation of theatrical agencies was a ‘dead letter’, and efforts would need to proceed concerning regulation of advertisements, not agencies.
Rescue workers and anti-trafficking campaigners worried about a world of increasing geographic mobility and changing social, cultural and economic conditions that opened up for women new dangers as well as new possibilities. The regularity of travel across continents and oceans had undermined traditional methods of regulating behaviour between men and women. In the United States, 1000 trains a day brought carriage-loads of single women to Chicago. Many had never seen a city but now hoped to make it their home; they sought work as typists, stenographers, seamstresses and weavers. Jane Adams, founder of Chicago’s Hull House, was moved to state: ‘Never before in civilisation have such numbers of young girls been suddenly released from the protection of the home and permitted to walk unattended upon the city streets and to work under aliens roofs’. Sadie American pressed this point on the delegates gathered in Madrid for the fourth international conference. She emphasised the independence of young girls and pointed out they were unlikely to seek the aide of philanthropic agencies.

If the Americans stressed the new possibilities for women, the British concentrated on the new dangers. Frederick Bullock suggested that the Madrid conference discussion had addressed the wrong question. Rather than asking ‘what is the principal source of the white slave traffic?’, those concerned with international measures should ask: ‘why women and girls allow themselves, or are allowed to become an article of commerce?’ Many women, he said in answer to his own question, hope to earn a livelihood by selling themselves rather than working for low wages. ‘It is the economic condition of many women which drives them to this sad condition, coupled with defective education, moral and religious’, he concluded. This could be seen in enquiries undertaken in the United States, he said, where defective economic conditions, low wages, want of education and absence of religious teaching led to a loss of self-respect and self-restraint.

The Jewish Association echoed this view. The official definitions of the situation reflect Victorian sensibilities with regard to women and sexuality. When the JAPGW considered the combination of men, women, money and sex they arrived at a predictable conclusion for the time: the men were criminals, the women their victims. ‘The term “trafficking” implies’, explains the annual report for 1898, ‘that the girls have been lured from their parents and natural protectors…[and] forced to lead lives of shame and misery’. Traffickers recruited women with a proposal of marriage, or other false pretence, brought them to an unfamiliar land, and treated them with shame and cruelty. ‘Pleasure, then profit for the
wrong-doers; and disillusion, physical suffering, and moral degradation for the victims’. Nevertheless, the Association realised that not all the women they encountered had been tricked or coerced into the oldest profession. ‘Unfortunately, there are also girls who leave their homes knowing that they will lead impure lives’. The agents did encounter women on-board ships who insisted on making their way to dubious addresses in the East End despite advice to the contrary. The JAPGW concluded that in nearly all such cases the women had made a decision to enter the sex industry. ‘But these too are victims’ the JAPGW maintained. This decision had been shaped by the constraints of time and place. The real source of the trafficking was to be found in the demoralising poverty in Eastern Europe, conditions so desperate that life as a prostitute appeared to be a worthwhile alternative.

British campaigners also expressed concern about the situation in the colonies. ‘We shall not be content with stopping the traffic only in Great Britain’, Bunting declared, ‘We are responsible for the conduct of her Dependencies, and ought not forget the girls, both European and Asiatic, who are practically enslaved in India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Egypt, and elsewhere’. She favoured emigration of women to the colonies for the benefit of the men. ‘Our vast Empire draws our sons to the ends of the earth, but not our daughters’ she explained. This lead to a million more women than men in Great Britain at a time when men in the colonies were ‘pining for female companionship’. She favoured conditions on emigrant ships that made it safe for women to travel overseas, and the emergence of a higher civilisation hampered by low ideals.

Bullock as well stressed the danger to women in societies with large numbers of men. In countries with a considerable majority of men, such as South Africa, many men of European nationality, mostly single, lived without the restraints imposed on them by ties of civilisation and family; they engaged in traffic.

Action to curb the white slave trade in the colonies began with the first revelations of English girls in Brussels. To emphasise the importance of British action, activists pointed to London as a cross-roads for two routes. The western route led to Buenos Aires and destinations in South America, and the eastern route led to destinations in East Africa and Asia, with Shanghai and Hong Kong as points of arrival. Enquiries in the House of Commons forced colonial authorities to open a file on importation of European girls into India for ‘immoral purposes’ in 1881. Sensational allegations of abductions reported kept the issue alive in the 1890s and led to a bill, introduced in 1912 in the imperial legislative council, for the suppression of female slave traffic in India. Although
the council rejected the act as ‘unsuitable’, controversy in the legislature ensured that white slavery became one of the most debated issues in British India. The British government in Hong Kong enacted the Protection of Women and Girls Ordinance in 1889. The system of purchasing and kidnapping girls at a tender age for purposes of prostitution, Governor William des Voeux explained, appeared to be prevalent in China, and this made suppression of the sex trade in Hong Kong difficult. He hoped the measure would place a serious check on the system. But, given that so many people had a stake in it, and the ‘extraordinary cunning of the Chinese’ employed in concealing its operation, it was too much to expect its complete eradication.

The British government in Malta regarded the Aliens Law (1899) as a useful tool in the fight against crime and, particularly, white slave trafficking. The law required masters of ships to present a list of passengers to the collector of customs and directed all foreigners to make declarations (name, profession, place of embarkation) to the police. The police added the names of those intending to establish residence to the ‘register of resident aliens’ and provided that persons on the list could be deported for conviction of crime or ‘leading an idle and vagrant life’. Few deportations for crime occurred—23 between 1899 and 1904—and the police came to regard the law as burdensome and ineffective. But, when enacted, Gerald Strickland, the acting secretary to government, applauded its use in the defence of foreign involvement in the sex trade. ‘The suppression of organised houses of ill-fame and the expulsion of the worst class of foreigners who live on this traffic will shortly be effected under recently enacted laws’.

Conclusions

Intense and sustained concern about traffic in women and girls for purposes of prostitution led to the recognition of a crime problem of global dimension: the white slave trade. Campaigners had their own motives, ranging from protection of women to exclusion of foreign men and women, and collectively they forced governments in London, Washington DC and other capitals to pursue national legislation and international agreements. The white slave trade also became an outlet for the reform-minded ambitions of leading families of Europe, including leading Jewish families and royal families.

Despite the desire, meaningful international action faced several problems. Varying legal provisions across jurisdictions, not least of which was the matter of identifying precisely what constituted a criminal
offence, made it difficult to police and prosecute. In Britain, activities pushed Parliament to enact severe measures including whipping, but most nations were unwilling to take their response this far. There were also undeniable differences in national attitudes towards prostitution. The British, Dutch, Spanish and American approaches regarded licensed brothels as the problem to be addressed, while France and Belgium did not regard the abolition of regulated prostitution as a necessary step. Collectively, they managed to make the ‘white slave trade’ the most pressing international social problem of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even the United States, so indifferent to European affairs, felt obliged to participate.

As in the case of ‘alien criminality’, prejudice fuelled the anxiety over ‘white slavery’. Concern about keeping white women from the devices of foreign men invested the issue with tremendous xenophobia and parochialism. While the term ‘white slavery’ had been selected to emphasise the immorality of the offence, and not the exclusivity of its victims, and campaigners readily acknowledged women of ‘coloured races’ caught up in the trade, and took steps to protect and assist them, white slavery remained the term of art throughout the period (and did not change, officially, at the international level, until 1921). It reinforced the image of young girls abducted by force or deception from their homes and traded among the lechers of the world for the most reprehensible purposes.
In the decades before the Great War, a handful of imperial powers claimed political authority over much of the world’s population. Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States ruled not only over peoples in Europe and North America but also over vast tracts of Africa and Asia. It was the moment in modern history when the number of rulers bearing the title ‘emperor’ reached its maximum. Between 1876 and 1915, the ‘advanced’ states distributed or redistributed amongst themselves as colonies about one quarter of the land surface of the planet. It was also the moment in history when a number of individuals who called themselves, or were identified by others as, ‘anarchist’ emerged.

The story of why anarchism appeared when it did, and what it represented, is a complex tale overlapping the history of workers and trade unions, socialism and political ideology, anticlericalism, mass migration and xenophobia. We will focus on ‘anarchist outrages’ and, particularly, the response of governments to them. Some persons within anarchist circles set off explosions in capital cities and assassinated heads of state. Police records of almost every European country contain reports of anarchist activity and several countries passed special laws to deal with it: Austria-Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Belgium, Denmark and Spain. Across Europe, the Ottoman Empire and the United States, anarchist violence (or violence associated with anarchism) between 1880 and 1914 killed 150 people and injured 460.

Essentially, this chapter deals with the confluence of ideas and events leading up to the International Defence Against Anarchism Conference convened at Rome in 1898. Understanding why nations sent delegates, and equally important, why they stepped back from a formal agreement,
provides essential insight into the nature of crime as an international problem. The focus is on Britain vis-à-vis Europe and the United States. London served as the gathering place for a multi-national group of anarchist intellectuals, activists and refugees. It became the site for one of the most curious outrages: the attempt to blow up the Royal Observatory at Greenwich in 1894. The Greenwich Observatory was likely the most well-known international symbol in the world at the time and the choice of target illustrates the extent to which criminal events could take on wider political meanings.

Outrages in the news

Beginning in the 1880s, British newspapers reported regularly on ‘anarchist outrages’ across Europe. In March 1881, assassins cornered Tsar Alexander II on a bridge in St Petersburg and killed him with two bombs. The Times told its readers the assassins belonged to a secret society, formed earlier in the century, composed of nihilists. Although the society had few members, ‘the spirit of murder is one which is difficult to control’, and the writer warned that ‘the practice of assassination will always find admirers’. The assassins had stalked the Tsar for two years. They perpetrated an earlier attempt on the Tsar’s life in April 1879, detonated a bomb in the Moscow railway in November of that year and in February 1880 set off an explosion at the Winter Palace.

In France, eleven dynamite blasts occurred in a four-year period during the 1890s. In March 1891, the homes of the presiding judge and prosecutor at a trial involving arrests of anarchists (for a disturbance at Clichy) were blown up. In November of the following year, a mysterious machine arrived at the Paris office of the Société des Mines de Carmaux. The police carried it to the nearest precinct station where it exploded. In 1893, the notorious Valliant carried a saucepan he had packed with dynamite and nails to his seat in the public gallery of the Chambre des Députés before hurling it down on the delegates in session below. Seven days later, an explosion in the Café Terminus of Gare St Lazare injured scores of people gathered for an evening drink. Explosions subsequently occurred in Rue St Jacques, in Faubourg St Germain, in the Church of the Madeleine and the popular Restaurant Foyot. In Spain, an anarchist who had been with the infamous Malatesta sent two mortars into a parade of troops in Barcelona in 1893. Weeks later, two bombs flew down from the balcony of Barcelona’s Teatro Liceo, on the opening night of opera season, into the seats of notable families. In June 1896, during Barcelona’s Corpus Christi observance, a bomb was thrown into the procession as
it entered the church. Representatives of the church and army avoided injury; eleven religious pilgrims lay dead.\textsuperscript{7}

In Germany, where two attempts had been made on the life of Emperor Wilhelm I, a series of arrests and trials involving anarchists took place in the 1880s. In December 1880, police arrested 44 anarchists in nine towns and cities. The mayor’s home in Walsenhausen was demolished by two bombs; two police were shot in Wattenscheid; and a factory owner was stabbed to death in Erfeld. One anarchist, Reinsdorf, planned to throw a bomb from the gallery of the Reichstag onto the deputies while in session and set off an explosion at the dedication of the Niederwald Monument in 1883, which could have killed numerous members of the aristocracy and governmental dignitaries. He was arrested in 1884 for a dynamite blast at the police station in Frankfurt am Main and explosions in Elberfield the previous summer. The following year, eight anarchists stood trial for explosions at the Wilhemsen Restaurant, an explosion at the Festhalle in Rüdesheim and the Niederwald plot. In 1885, anarchists were suspected in the murder of the Frankfurt police chief.\textsuperscript{8} In Austria, anarchist violence resembled ordinary violent crime. Between 1882 and 1884, radicals and anarchists robbed and murdered a shoe factory owner, a police officer and a trader in foreign currency along with his two sons.\textsuperscript{9}

Assassinations claimed the heads of state of five countries: France (1894), Spain (1897), Austria (1898), Italy (1900) and the United States (1901). President Sadie Carnot was stabbed to death while riding in an open carriage during a visit to the Lyons Exposition by a man who shouted afterward: ‘\textit{Vive la revolution! Vive l’anarchie!}’ An Italian anarchist followed Spain’s Prime Minister, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, to a mountain resort in the Basque country and shot him to death. The man appeared on the terrace where the Premier and his wife took morning coffee, pulled a revolver from his pocket and fired three bullets. Empress Elisabeth of Austria-Hungary, the wife of Emperor Franz-Joseph, was waiting for the steamer to cross the lake at Quai Mont Blanc in Geneva. An anarchist looked under her parasol, then plunged a knife fashioned from a rusty file into her heart. King Humbert I of Italy died near the royal summer residence in Milan when a man ran up to his car and fired at him from about 2 yards. The assassination of the Italian monarch prompted a newspaper journalist in the United States to publish an article asking whether President William McKinley was safe from attack. A month later, the whole nation found out. A man walked up to McKinley at the Pan-American Exhibition in Buffalo, New York, and fired two bullets. He explained afterwards that he had studied
anarchism for several years and felt it was his duty to carry out the execution.\textsuperscript{10}

There were many more attempts. One contemporary researcher counted some 59 attempts to assassinate political leaders in the Atlantic World between 1897 and 1902. The most attempts occurred in France, but the most ‘successful’ attempts took place in the United States. There were ten attempts to kill Britain’s head of state.\textsuperscript{11} (Figure 5.1) One of these began in America in 1911. In June, the Foreign Office received a report from the Consul General in New York that a ‘notorious anarchist’ was about to leave the United States with the object of assassinating King George V. Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, secured the services of Pinkerton’s Detective Agency. The report had come from the editor of an Italian language paper, Bollettino Della Sera, who had received a tip from an Italian immigrant in Illinois. The informant indicated that three anarchists were involved; one had left for France and one had left for New York to purchase ‘arms’. They would carry out their plot against the King at the time of the Coronation or on his tour of India. The Pinkertons tracked the men to Chicago, and one of them, as far as Bessemer, Michigan, before deciding it was unlikely any had sailed for England. It was difficult to establish the difference between an attempt and a rumour of an attempt. The police and the press chased many more phantoms than villains.\textsuperscript{12}

Every month brought threats, scares and hoaxes. ‘Seldom did a week go by’, Inspector Melville Macnaghten recalled of the 1890s, ‘without the finding of a bomb being reported, and though there was nothing to it, the authorities of the Home Office “had no sinecures”’.\textsuperscript{13} In December 1894, parcels of a suspicious character arrived at government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of attempts</th>
<th>Number of assassinations</th>
<th>Per cent completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\textit{Figure 5.1}  Attempts to Assassinate Political Leaders, 1897–1902
offices in London and the homes of several provincial mayors. The parcels were handed to Scotland Yard, who contacted Midland Railway authorities, and ascertained they had been sent as a hoax. Two young men from Tamworth had distributed two dozen ‘bombs’ to advertise a weekly periodical. They rolled a copy of the periodical into a pipe, fitted with a percussion cap and hammer, so that when the parcel was opened, a bang would announce the advertisement. ‘Naturally there was some little excitement at the government offices’. Popular anxiety extended to the countryside. In 1901 a bearded stranger appeared to threaten the Prince of Wales (George V). The incident occurred during a stay at Chatsworth, the Yorkshire home of the Duke of Devonshire. As the party returned from a day’s shooting, a ‘strange looking man, of short stature, dressed in a tall hat and frock coat’ appeared at the Edensor gate. Reported to be a foreigner, he subsequently disappeared, and the ‘police grew apprehensive of assassination’. They found him in the luggage room where he managed to blurt out enough English to identify himself as a member of the Viennese orchestra performing for the prince that evening. Although there was nothing to the incident, rumours circulated in the villages surrounding Chatsworth of an attempt on the life of His Royal Highness by a foreign anarchist. Anxious citizens invented the necessary details of the attempt, how the potential assassin had stalked the prince and, but for the intervention of police, would have carried out the planned attack.  

Anarchists presented such a menacing, sinister presence because they seemed to be everywhere. Presses established in London and the suburbs distributed anarchist pamphlets, newspapers and leaflets throughout the United Kingdom. Speakers preached at open-air meetings and lecture halls in Glasgow, Liverpool, Leicester and Birmingham—sometimes in connection with the Independent Labour Party or Socialist League. Some brought the anarchist message to unemployed men. Some to children; there was an anarchist school in Liverpool. There was never a coordinated, worldwide movement, but some number of artists, writers and philosophers, as well as political agitators and revolutionaries, chose to identify themselves, or avoid disassociating themselves, with anarchism as a political vocabulary. Café intellectuals, political agitators and self-proclaimed bohemians wrote books, gave lectures, printed leaflets and peddled newspapers under the banner of anarchism. Even among the political anarchists there was nothing like a coherent ideology. There were individualist, socialist and communist strains of anarchist philosophy. Some campaigned for improving working conditions, others for reform of marriage laws. Some ranted against religion and
over-dressing, some for ‘direct action’—strike, revolt, burglary assassination. It is also true that some criminals glossed over their offences with the pretence of anarchist motivations.\textsuperscript{17} Havelock Ellis reviewed research by French, Spanish and American criminologists showing many ‘anarchists’ in prison to be nothing more than common law offenders, who had committed robbery or some other violent crime for personal gain. Most of the explosions to have occurred in Paris during 1893 and 1894 were not the work of anarchists but professional criminals professing to have anarchist sympathies and who took great satisfaction when the police took their letters seriously.\textsuperscript{18}

Anarchism and Outrage, a pamphlet circulated in England following the events in Barcelona, explained what anarchists hoped to achieve with political murders, bomb plots and explosions. The author said anarchists sought ‘natural groups’ of people, formed over some years by mutual aid, self-protection and collective development. ‘Artificially formed Empires, constructed and held together by force, he regards as miserable shams’. These artificial societies lacked real sympathies and common aims. Anarchist social organisation, dedicated to increasing ‘the opportunities of the individual’, rejected English society wherein ‘a comparatively few men claim a right to exclusive possession of the soil’. Contemporary social organisation failed because it promoted the authority of ‘man over man’ as a moral principle and because it recognised the ‘right of property’. Anarchist outrages resulted from prevailing social conditions that had, throughout history, goaded the desperate classes into homicidal acts. Anarchists recoiled at destruction and mutilation of human beings, which is why they opposed war, execution and imprisonment, the grinding down of workers, the sexual slavery of women, oppression of children and ‘cruelty and injustice to man in every shape and form’. The guilt for the loss of life in outrages did not rest with anarchists but with ‘every man and woman who, intentionally or by cold indifference, helps to keep up social conditions that drive human beings to despair’.\textsuperscript{19}

To the annoyance of those advocating urgent democratic reform, the press tended to toss every would-be reformer in the same pan and reduce the mixture to a terrorist threat.\textsuperscript{20} George Bernard Shaw declared that in the press, anarchism had become synonymous with criminality. Newspapers made no distinction among those hostile to the existing social order: all revolutionists are socialists, all socialists are anarchists, and all anarchists are incendiaries, assassins and thieves. In a speech to the Fabian Society in 1891, he explained that not all persons called anarchists by their political opponents actually were anarchists nor were
all those who claimed the label of anarchist for themselves. Too many imaginative French and Italian criminals, when arrested for burglary or murder, declared themselves to be anarchists acting on principle. Shaw rejected anarchism, both individualist and communist strains, in favour of social democracy. The social democrat must turn away from ‘useless denunciations’ of the state. ‘When democracy fails there is no antidote for intolerance save the spread of better sense. No form of anarchism yet suggested provides any escape...’ But he added that he did not regard the hostility to democratic government behind communist anarchism as any more dangerous than Toryism.

William Morris also distanced himself from anarchism and, particularly, terrorist violence. He declared his commitment to communism and stated his affinity for anarchist-communism. Like the anarchist-communists, he yearned for life based on small communes and villages. But, theoretically he insisted on the necessity of individual submission to collective decisions—the authority of the majority. In 1890, Morris yielded control of the Commonweal, the literary review he founded, to David Nicoll and Harry Samuels who made it the organ of extremist and eccentric views within the anarchist and socialist circle. Morris regarded anarchist outrages as a ‘social disease caused by the evil conditions of society’, but added that the objectives of anarchists were opposed to those of socialists. Bomb-throwing was not only ‘criminal’, it was also ‘a blunder’ as a matter of political strategy because such acts provoked disgust and justified brutal repression of anarchists and socialists alike.

Other well-known figures celebrated the virtues of anarchism, or at least one element of it. In The Survivors of the ‘Jonathan’ (1909), Jules Verne outlined anarchist philosophy in the character of Kaw-djer. He is an anarchist who has left the civilised world to live on the Hoste Island in the Magellan Strait; he recognises no social principle other than absolute freedom of the individual. But when an American ship, the Jonathan wrecks nearby and brings a crowd of people, disorder and confusion to the island, he must intervene. A new community is born, Liberia, led by socialists and communities, but it succumbs to famine, bands of robbers and civil war. Kaw-djer intervenes a second time, re-establishes law and order, only to be undermined by a rush of adventurers following discovery of gold on the island. Kaw-djer orders his militia to defend the inhabitants leading to the deaths of 1000 gold-seekers and, having been forced to carry out what he abhors, retreats to the solitary life on another island. Kaw-djer is the only character in Verne’s writings to articulate a systematic political philosophy, and
Verne demonstrates great familiarity with anarchist themes. He made a clear delineation between anarchists ‘eaten up by envy and hatred, very ready for violence and murder’ and, others, ‘true poets dreaming of a chimeric humanity from which evil would be forever banished’. Kawdjer, who resembles Prince Peter Kropokin, belonged ‘to the dreamers, and not the professionals of the bomb and the knife’.25

Not all anarchist leaders were as careful. They avoided denunciation of those behind the bomb blasts and shootings and chose to emphasise instead the social conditions that motivated such acts. H.M. Hyndman, founder of Britain’s first socialist party, proclaimed that assassination was, in certain circumstances, not only justifiable but laudable. In the pages of Justice, the party’s weekly newspaper, he argued for a strong imperial navy to protect the colonies, the special heritage of the English working class and seldom missed an opportunity to denounce the ‘rings of Jew moneylenders’ who controlled politics and the press. As far as he was concerned, the ‘wild justice’ of political violence did not further economic development but was certainly understandable. ‘These outrages are lava spouts from a volcano of misery and discontent seething below’.26 Harry Samuels made his views plain in the columns of Commonweal. ‘In a struggle like this we hold that all means, however desperate, are justifiable. Individual and collective action alike are necessary and urgent’. As revolutionary anarchist-communists, ‘we have no blame for those who are using any sort of means whereby they think to better their condition’.27 By applauding, or not apologising, for the violent acts, anarchist leaders reinforced the illusion of an international anarchist conspiracy on the brink of overwhelming settled social order.28

Anarchists in Great Britain

In more than one way, anarchism was an international activity. Leaders criss-crossed the globe, giving speeches, organising meetings and distributing literature. Anarchists gathered at international congresses and advertised the activities of kindred spirits in other national contexts.

From the perspective of anarchists in England, one of the most significant events occurred in the United States in 1886. In May of that year, labour organisers in Chicago held a rally near Haymarket Square to protest the police shooting of several strikers at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Works on the previous day. Some of the speakers advocated violence, but despite appreciative applause, the gathering remained calm. The police arrived, and began to wade into the crowd,
when someone hurled a bomb into their lines. The police began shoot-
ing; the bullets struck civilians and other police. Seven police died and
60 others sustained wounds. Although the subsequent investigation
failed to identify the bomb thrower, eight anarchists stood trial for mur-
der. Three received a prison sentence, one committed suicide and the
rest were hanged at Cook County Jail in 1887. Six years later, the gover-
nor of Illinois, John Peter Atgeld, pardoned the three sent to prison and
criticised the police, prosecutor and trial judge for bringing about the
Haymarket tragedy.29

At the time, the public, press and authorities responded to the bomb
blast with shock and anger at anarchists. The British Consul at Chicago,
J. Hayes-Ladler, furnished the Home Office with regular despatches.
Eight men had been brought to trial, and after proceedings of 52 days,
seven had been sentenced to death or between 1 and 15 years impris-
onment. The trial had raised the question of the safety of the state,
the despatch explained, and had created much anxiety in the city. The
verdict produced a sense of relief through every class of society. ‘It is
thought here that anarchists will now comprehend that they will no
longer be able to carry the liberty they enjoy to the point of abuse,
and that a severe check has been put to the dynamite propensities of
the socialist movement’.30 The judge who presided at the trial, Joseph E.
Gary, admitted that there was prejudice against the men but insisted the
jury had been right in their original verdict. The men, he said, had been
members of an international organisation opposed to republican gov-
ernment. Anarchist publications distributed by this organisation incited,
advised and encouraged throwing bombs, such as the one that killed
the police. Under Illinois law, if several persons conspired to commit an
unlawful act, and death occurred in pursuit of this act, all conspirators
became guilty of homicide.31

The nations affected by anarchism divided into net exporters and
importers of those potentially inclined to violence. Thomas Brynes of
the New York Police Department complained that anarchists hounded
out of Europe gravitated to America, and most of them decided to settle
in New York City. Except for a few leaders, most anarchists remained
passive. But it would be a mistake, he said, to suppose that in cross-
ing the Atlantic they forgot to pack their revolutionary principles. They
were not only opposed to monarchies, but all forms of government,
including republican government.32 But London, rather than New York,
became the most significant international centre of anarchists. The will-
ingness to shelter political and religious refugees made England a unique
case in Europe. Throughout the 1890s, anarchists from various nations
gathered in London, along with spies sent by the police forces of these nations to keep an eye on them.33

International anarchists gathered in the West End and East End. The Autonomie Club, founded in 1887 at No. 6 Windmill, Tottenham Court Road, was the most well-known. The area, Fitzrovia, was a straggling grid of third-rate Georgian houses with a few squares. Bookshops, pubs, cafés and tobacconists occupied the ground floors, with three or four floors with flats above. Although a ‘very dingy, badly furnished, ramshackle place’, the Autonomie became the meeting point for a gaggle of figures from across Europe. German, French, Italian and English anarchists held regular meetings there and prepared literature for distribution throughout the continent. The club offered ‘Sunday schools’ for children where they were taught revolutionary hymns and led in observance of anarchist ‘holy days’, such as the commemoration of the Haymarket affair. The International Socialist Club in the East End was at 40 Berner Street. Opened in 1885 by Morris Winchevsky to spread ‘true socialism’ among workers, it housed the Society of Jewish Socialists. The club also housed Arbeter Fraint, the ‘Worker’s Friend’ newspaper; it became anarchist from 1891 when S. Yanovsky became editor. Berner Street was a two-storey wooden building with a 200 seat theatre, stuffed into a passageway off Commercial Road. Communists and socialists sought converts there, and trade unionists lectured to tailors and cabinet makers. The club also staged Yiddish theatricals and Russian dramas.34

There were centres of anarchist activity outside London as well. Sheffield, a city with a long tradition of labour organisation and political agitation, supported a significant population. The Sheffield Socialist Club, formed in 1886, attracted individuals with diverse political and cultural aspirations; the circle included trade unionists, socialists, radicals and anarchists. Havelock Ellis, William Morris and Prince Kropotkin all spoke at the club in the 1880s. From 1889, the anarchists took the initiative in organising street meetings in an effort to reach those employed in the heavy steel works. By 1891, a distinct anarchist communist group emerged, led by John Creaghe, Fred Charles and Auguste Colon (who was likely a police spy). Outdoor speakers in Sheffield tended to get more carried away than their counterparts in the capital. They told crowds to refuse to pay rent and to learn how to make bombs.35 When the African explorer, H.M. Stanley, lectured at Sheffield’s Albert Hall, the ‘Sheffield socialists’ made an effort to disrupt the visit. One of members sold a pamphlet inside the hall entitled Stanley’s Exploits, or Civilising Africa, which denounced the slaughter of African peoples. When members of the audience, believing they had purchased a printed version of
Stanley’s lecture realised the content, they shouted ‘Fraud!’ and ‘Turn him out!’ A police sergeant ended sale of the pamphlet before Stanley himself arrived. At the conclusion of the talk, a number of anarchists made loud groans to cover the applause.36

Dr John Creaghe was among the most outspoken of the Sheffield anarchists. He opened a dispensary where he offered medical services and sold socialist literature. He had arrived in Sheffield in 1890 from Buenos Aires where French, Spanish and Italian anarchists had been organising. He worked as a ‘sixpenny doctor’ in Attercliffe, charging fees for medicines but not for his medical advice (which is also how the young Conan Doyle established himself in medicine before turning to writing).

In 1891, the court fined him for assaulting a bailiff and police constable. The bailiff sought to collect rent Creaghe owed to his landlady and Creaghe chased him off with a poker. The bailiff returned with the constable, and after a scuffle and a speech to bystanders about evictions in Ireland, they brought him to the police station. In court, Creaghe said that he had refused to pay rent because he had made improvements to the premises and had assaulted law enforcement because they had removed furniture from his dispensary without his knowledge (as payment for debt).37 However, in a letter to a local newspaper the following day, Creaghe said that his actions reflected anarchist strategy.

In ‘An Anarchist’s Letter’, Creaghe defended his medical practice. He took exception to the bailiff referring to him as a ‘quack’ and the editor’s decision to refer to him as a doctor in inverted commas. A member of the College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons in Ireland, he chose to establish a practice among the poor to further his mission as an anarchist and because he enjoyed the company of those in poverty better than the well-to-do. He outlined a theory in which the poor dispensed popular justice to the rich when he explained that he had no regrets about the altercation with the bailiff, except that he failed to ‘punish the wretched instruments of landlord robbery as they deserved’. Creaghe had joined in the call of Sheffield anarchists for a rent strike and saw the non-payment as just desserts for the crime of collecting rent. He also urged individuals to carry out property crimes as a means of resistance to landowners. He urged his readers to take up revolt collectively against the authority exercised by the State.38 Creaghe’s colleagues celebrated the event as a step forward for the cause. When advertising a rent-strike meeting in July 1891, David Nicoll distributed a handbill entitled MURDER! in which he had written: ‘Hurrah! For the kettle, the club and the poker. Good medicine always, for landlord and broker’.39
England produced its own anarchists, but the authorities did not worry about them. *The Times* dismissed all the local anarchists saying: ‘There are very few English anarchists and they are of little account’.\(^{40}\) But the foreign anarchists were another matter. There were ‘shouting’ anarchists and ‘shooting’ anarchists, and the foreign members tended towards the latter category. A growing minority in Westminster, led by Lord Salisbury, regarded violent anarchism as a new phenomenon, unlike anything before, nullifying the antiquated liberal rules. The Special Branch at Scotland Yard began in the 1880s as the Special Irish Branch, and in 1893, William Melville became head. The Special Branch watched the Autonomie Club and kept track of the ragged-trousered set in Fitzrovia. Melville, and later, Patrick McIntrye, sat in on so many anarchist gatherings that they only bothered to disguise themselves for Sunday evening lectures.\(^{41}\) Melville also made use of *agents provocateurs*. One of these, Auguste Colon, travelled widely within anarchist circles, including the Autonomie group and the Sheffield Socialists.\(^{42}\)

The public impression of anarchism as a foreign menace was sealed by the Houndsditch murders. In December 1910, three police constables were killed while attempting to thwart a burglary. The police had arrived at a jeweller’s shop in Houndsditch, in response to a report of a break-in, and the thieves began shooting with a Mauser automatic pistol. Newspapers printed police descriptions of three suspects, one of whom spoke with a foreign accent, and suspicion turned to the usual suspects: Russian and Polish Jews. Houndsditch bordered Whitechapel, an area harbouring ‘some of the worst alien anarchists and criminals who seek our too hospitable shores. And these are men who use the pistol and the knife’.\(^{43}\) About three weeks after the jewellery shop murders, the police cornered two of the suspects in Sidney Street, Mile End Road. A large crowd gathered, and the superintendent of police detached hundreds of constables to keep them away from the scene. The men used automatic pistols, and the police returned fire into the house. A detachment of Foot Guards from the Tower of London was despatched, along with the Royal Horse Artillery from the barracks at St. John’s Wood. Winston Churchill, the Home Secretary, arrived at noon, where he was photographed, looking on with police authorities. An hour later, a column of smoke appeared from a second floor apartment, and fire spread throughout the building. Within an hour, the police recovered two bodies, described as ‘anarchists’, from the rubble.\(^{44}\)

*The Times* developed the theme of essential difference between foreign (Jewish) and English criminality. The circumstances were similar to a shooting in Tottenham two years earlier in which alien criminals
used a pistol to kill a police constable in front of bystanders. ‘Now the British criminal never does a thing like that’. It was suggested that the nature of the shooting indicated the objective was not merely to escape but murder police: ‘A savage delight in taking life is the mark of the modern Continental anarchist criminal. We have our own ruffians, but we do not breed that type here, and we do not want them’. 45 Robert Anderson made a similar argument. The events at Houndsditch and Sidney Street had made visible the peril of foreign anarchist criminals, and exceptional measures were needed in response. Authorising police to take steps to rid Great Britain of ‘these criminals’—the ‘Houndsditch and Stepney type’—would enable the country to rid itself of ‘many alien criminals of the ordinary type’. Jews had been mistreated in Russia, and Britain had a tradition of tolerance, but no one should pretend that British society benefited ‘either socially or economically by an influx of… the Jewish victims of anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia today’. 46 If it were not for the ‘alien leaven in our midst’, he said, the volume of crime would be small, as British subjects were essentially peaceful and honest.47

The Greenwich incident

The first anarchist outrage to occur on British soil happened in February 1894 when a young Frenchman attempted to blow up the Royal Observatory at Greenwich Park.48 According to The Times, the park keeper heard a blast near the Royal Observatory and went to investigate. He found a well-dressed, horribly mutilated man at the scene; the man was about 30 years of age and asked to be taken home. For the explanation, The Times deferred to the Central News Agency, which had reported Scotland Yard’s claim to having uncovered an anarchist conspiracy. The man in the park had come from a house in Tottenham Court Road, a meeting place for anarchists, English and foreign, that had been under police surveillance. The police guessed the man had stumbled while carrying his ‘infernal machine’; the Royal Observatory, a government building, had been the target.49

On the following day, The Times said the man, who had died in hospital, had been identified as Martial Bourdin, an anarchist linked to the Autonomie Club. He was an out-of-work tailor, originally from France, but who had lived in America before settling in Fitzrovia. He had ties to the French anarchist Émile Henry, who had been linked by the Paris police to the bombs at the Société des Mines and Café Terminus. Scotland Yard used the incident to carry out a major raid.
Inspector Melville's force took over the club at 9 o'clock in the morning, and took the anarchists there to the basement where detectives searched them for documents. Other detectives, armed with their bull's eye lanterns, made a thorough inspection of the premises. The police said they had learned of the plot to blow up the observatory from spies at the club and had been shadowing Bourdin. Rival explanations circulated. Bourdin's brother, Henri, told the press that so far as he knew, his brother was uninterested in political philosophy; Martial's association with anarchists in London came as a surprise.50

The official view emerged from the coroner's inquest. Colonel Vivian Majendie, Scotland Yard's Inspector of Explosives, stated that Bourdin could not have fallen on the bomb. Ignition had occurred during a bungled attempt to apply sulphuric acid, which set the mixture ablaze a few minutes before it was intended to explode. As Bourdin's body had been found under the windows, it was apparent that he intended to attack the Royal Observatory. Police recovered recipes for explosives in his pockets along with £13 in gold. It was also revealed that Bourdin had made recent trips to France and America; he had £40 when he started for America (and lent his landlord £20 before departing).51 The police had been watching the movements of persons in and out of Tottenham Court Road but Bourdin had cleverly managed to shake them off. The Times reported, however, that news of the explosion had been sent by the inspector at Greenwich to Scotland Yard, not by telegram, but by letter, for which he was fined £4. The police raid on the Autonomie Club occurred too late to recover whatever evidence might have been found. The most alarming aspect of the incident was not that the police had botched the investigation as well as the surveillance but that they knew far less about anarchist activities than they wished the public to believe. It was clear that Britain would need to rely on 'outside sources' to keep ahead of foreign anarchists in London.52

The authorities worried that anarchists would make Bourdin into a martyr for their cause and policed the funeral closely. The order for removal of the body had been given to Henri Bourdin, but he declared that he would not take responsibility for funeral arrangements unless the money recovered on the body was given to him. Charles Darling MP reported that the body had been taken from the Seaman's Hospital to an undertaker's establishment in Chapel Street, and anarchists had hoped to make a parade of the transfer of the body to Finchley cemetery for burial. He sent a note to the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, asking whether British law allowed the government to avoid a public funeral. The French government had taken this course with Valliant.53 The Home
Office instructed the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Edward Bradford, to proceed by the shortest route, not to allow a hearse in the procession, to pre-empt any attempt to start a procession and to prohibit speech making at the cemetery. At the funeral, the police won praise from *The Times* for ‘firmness and tact’ in contending with a ‘dangerous crowd’. People began to assemble in Chapel Street about noon, and within an hour, the crowd numbered in the hundreds. One person with a black banner appeared but was stopped before breaking through the police cordon. At the cemetery, as the coffin was lowered into the earth, a man stepped forward and began to speak: ‘Fellow anarchists . . .’. The police announced the ban on public speaking and shouldered him away from the grave. Someone in mob shouted ‘Hang him!’ Half an hour later, Finchley Cemetery was quiet. ‘The anarchists will not, perhaps, be eager to attempt another public celebration of the kind for some time to come’.55

The fact of a terrorist attack on British soil divided anarchists themselves. Henry Seymour, who claimed to be one of the first anarchists in England, was scheduled to lecture at the Autonomie Club several days after the incident. He did not appear, and, in his letter of explanation, said that he did not want anarchists to be blamed for Greenwich. He supposed his speech would be postponed. Harry Samuels, who spoke in his absence, said the club had not even considered postponing Seymour’s lecture because the members had nothing to do with the explosion. From the beginning, anarchists and others speculated that there was more to the Greenwich incident than it appeared. Rumours at the time suggested Martial Bourdin had not carried out the attack on his own but had been put up to it. In his memoir, Melville Macnaghten of Scotland Yard referred to Bourdin as a ‘crack-brained enthusiast’ incapable of carrying out a dynamite plot on his own. ‘How he came into possession of the bomb has never been satisfactorily explained,’ Macnaghten reflected; ‘There was at the time an unpleasant feeling abroad that the terrible form of the *agent provocateur* had overshadowed this misguided youth’. Within anarchist circles, it was widely believed the entire affair had been concocted by the police. The bomb had been planted in Bourdin’s room by one of their agents and Bourdin, fearing arrest, had gone to the park to dispose of it when it detonated accidentally.

The incident became the basis of Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* (1907). To write the novel, Conrad made use of information from friends who travelled in anarchist circles. He introduced the character of Adolf Verloc, a loathsome evil-doer who brings ruin on those around him. He pretends to be an anarchist while taking money from the Russian
Secret Service, and when his handlers demand action, he tricks his wife’s younger brother, Stevie, into carrying out a bomb attack. Conrad’s Verloc resembles Henry Benjamin, or ‘Harry’ Samuels, who was married to the sister of Martial Bourdin. He was born in Hull, where he engaged in the tailoring trade, although from autobiographical references in his writing (and use of American spellings), he appears to have been educated in the United States. He returned to England sometime after 1885 when he began making speeches along with English anarchists Turner, Cantwell and Mowbray and, in 1888, was active in the Leeds gas strike. 59

Samuels used inflammatory rhetoric that seldom met with the approval of anarchists and their allies, and even within anarchist circles, he found it easy to lose friends and annoy people. David Nicoll accused Samuels of being an agent provocateur, paid by the police to discredit the movement. He recalled seeing Samuels for the first time in 1886 at a meeting of Hyndman’s socialists. ‘At the end of [Hyndman’s] speech, a pale young man with a dark moustache, and features of the Jewish type rose, and put several questions to the lecturer…’ 60 The questions had to do with paralysing London by dynamiting the city’s reservoirs. Nicoll claimed that Samuels was a spy, scheming to provoke anarchists into acts that would lead to arrest and imprisonment of the leadership. Specifically, Nicoll claimed Samuels was working for Lord Salisbury, who had introduced a bill in Parliament in 1894 to tackle foreign radicals taking refuge in Britain and, Nicoll argued, was keen to make political capital from every bomb blast and pistol shot. 61

Conrad’s interpretation of the event may have come from a comment Colonel Majendie made at the inquest. ‘To my mind’, Majendie told the coroner, ‘the fact that the reputation of Greenwich Observatory is worldwide and that Frenchmen have rather an objection to its pre-eminence, may have been influential….’ 62 He emphasised Martial Bourdin’s French nationality, and as his brother Henri testified, Martial was fairly educated. He was not, in other words, much like the pliable Stevie who had been duped by the scheming Verloc in Conrad’s tale. But it was Conrad who described the significance of the target. The explosion at Greenwich Park took place on the 10th anniversary of the International Prime Meridian Conference. Vladimir instructs Verloc to carry out a bomb outrage, directed not at royalty or religion but at science. Assassinating a crowned head or president, bombing a restaurant or theatre—these had almost become conventional. The attack must not be against people, Vladimir explains, but against the most revered institution in the modern world and the most widely known. ‘The whole civilised world has heard of Greenwich’.
In 1884, representatives from two dozen nations convened in Washington, DC, where they adopted Greenwich time as the worldwide standard. Essentially, the conferees agreed politically to what had been decided by scientists at a conference in Rome the year before. The scientists gathered for the Seventh International Geodesic Conference had explored the subject thoroughly and found Greenwich was the most suitable location for the prime meridian. They opened their conference with the observation that the ‘want of a universal time’ had become a cause of embarrassment in a world of trade and commerce, ever since the extension of communication by electric telegraphs and railways brought together countries and continents which had used completely different times.\(^63\) The conferees in Washington had a number of practical reasons as well. The British Empire, with its 20 million square kilometres and population of 250 million, extended throughout the world. Railroads throughout the United States and Canada had been timetabled according to Greenwich. American railroads employed 75 different times and adoption of a single time was a matter of importance to establishing a national system. Further, the best marine charts, particularly for distant places and long journeys, were English. The Nautical Almanac, based on the Greenwich meridian, was used throughout the world. The United States, Germany, Austria and Italy used the Greenwich meridian for navigation, which meant that some 90 per cent of navigators in foreign trade calculated their longitudes from the meridian of Greenwich.\(^64\)

Despite scientific and practical rationales, there were inescapable social and political aspects of Greenwich time. In Britain, standard time sat squarely in the cross-roads of efforts to regulate industrial working conditions and the perils of alcohol. During the Victorian Era, Parliament passed a series of acts imposing regulation of working hours by a ‘public clock’. Factory acts from early in the nineteenth century referred to inspectors’ naming of a public clock but did not refer to a common standard time across the United Kingdom. Clocks in this context became subject to conflict because although the factory clock could keep time precisely, the time on display could also be wholly inaccurate. Employers could tamper with the clock or operate two clocks showing different times. Regulation of the sale of liquor by means of clock time also proved controversial. It reflected long and acrimonious debate about the effort to contain the evil of drink within temporal limits. More than 30 statutes governing the sale of liquor went on the books between 1828 and 1889 in an effort to impose nationwide restrictions. But enforcement required both publicans and inspectors to gain access to the same time for tavern clocks. In the absence of standard time, regulation was
not about actual time of day but about a single time that could be agreed upon. In 1880, Parliament passed legislation declaring Greenwich Mean Time as the definition of time that would apply in all legislation. The architect of the system explained that Greenwich time ensured uniformity of time across all public and private clocks and, might have added, uniformity across all spheres of social activity, from work to leisure.65

The adoption of Greenwich time as the world standard extended the power and intelligence afforded by a single clock to regulation of populations and activities worldwide. The systematisation of time had become a central feature of industrial and economic developments in the late nineteenth century. The use of clocking-in machines was widespread by the 1890s. However useful for navigators, scientists and railway managers in exerting control over their work, time represented, for workers, the means by which control was exercised over them. Time-and-motion measurements contributed to Frederick Winslow Taylor’s *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), so important to Henry Ford’s assembly-line methods, largely in place by 1913. Universal time subordinated individuals to political authority, an authority characterised by empire.66 Early in the deliberations, the French had objected to London as the centre of time. If not Paris, why not some location neutral in a political sense, a ‘non-national meridian’? The French delegates had offered to accept Greenwich if the Anglo-American alliance agreed to accept metric measurement, but when this was not forthcoming, they abstained from the final vote. The French reaction was similar to that of the Irish several years earlier. The Statutes (Definition of Time) Act regularised Greenwich time throughout England, Wales and Scotland, but Ireland retained Dublin time until the passage of the Time (Ireland) Act (1916).67

**Explanations and controversies**

In the early 1880s, Irish revolutionaries from America carried out a series of bomb attacks on targets in Britain. During ‘the dynamite war’, operatives set off explosions at railway stations, the Tower of London, the House of Commons and other places. Two men were brought to trial, convicted and sentenced to penal servitude for life; a third perished in an attempt to blow up London Bridge. One planned to emulate Guy Fawkes and set out to blow up the House of Commons, while in session, and had twice reconnoitred the ground from the Stranger’s Gallery. In 1883, the police discovered a nitro-glycerine factory in Birmingham, ready to supply the means for untold further attacks. It was all very
troubling, but less troubling than anarchist outrages. In the case of the Irish ‘dynamitards’, their ambition was reasonably clear: to wrest control of Ireland from British overlords. The goal of the anarchist violence was not clear, nor even comprehensible. Understanding the ‘why’ of explosions and assassinations seemed a prerequisite to finding a solution, but political authorities could not agree. British observers contributed to an international conversation about causes and solutions.

For some, it was a disagreeable, but understandable, reaction to tyranny. Charles Johnston, of the Indian Civil Service, took issue with the notion of a worldwide conspiracy of anarchists poised to attack the privileged by emphasising differences in anarchists groups. Each country—Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria and the United States—produced anarchists but for somewhat different reasons. In Spain and Italy, great ruling families pushed the peasants to the verge of starvation, and an ineffective, wasteful government kept national treasuries on the brink of bankruptcy. Ecclesiastical privilege compounded economic injustice. In Austria, race injustice added to economic injustice. The Magyars, who had won their rights a generation earlier, now opposed recognition of equality of the Slavs. In France and Germany, modern conditions had removed old injustices of ecclesiastical tyranny and excesses of nobility, only to impose new injustices. Excessive taxation, to pay for armies, kept people in a state of perpetual want. While employers grew richer, labourers could barely rise above subsistence level. Secondary causes of anarchy did not remove the primary cause: failure to do justice among people.68

Britain celebrated its near immunity from attack given its liberal and democratic government. Despite, or because of, so many anarchists in residence, Britain seemed to enjoy protection from outrages. In the view of police authorities, anarchists respected British soil because they knew the British working classes had their limits. John Bull tolerated a healthy serving of political dissent, and appreciated a dollop of eccentricity, but stopped short of insurrectionist violence. The welcome extended to foreigners would end as soon as the violence started. Police authorities surmised that the anarchists behaved themselves in England because they knew that the slightest outburst of violence would be met with a public reaction culminating in the withdrawal of political asylum.69

Others doubted that in extending free speech, Britain reserved for itself the happy fate of avoiding murder of leaders as in less liberal regimes. The assassination of the Grand Duke Serguis in Moscow, in revenge for ‘Red Sunday’, could not occur in the United Kingdom. Or, British authorities wanted to believe it could never happen. ‘Democracy
has no better chance of escape than bureaucracy’ *Blackwood’s Magazine* declared; ‘America has paid the heaviest toll of all for no sins of her own’. The murder of President McKinley demonstrated this, as he embodied neither privilege nor tyranny. It was not about hunger or political discontent as the radicals claimed. In the eyes of Europe, McKinley was a worthy representative of a great country. The war with Spain had not been of his own ambition but expressed the ‘natural desire of a free and prosperous nation for an empire beyond its own borders’. In 1905, President Roosevelt spoke to Americans about ‘good Americanism’ in a lecture hall packed with police and an army of detectives. The contradiction in this image would be amusing, if it did not illustrate the ubiquity of the anarchist menace.70

Francesco Nitti of the University of Naples stressed that while Italians had been responsible for the murders of France’s Carnot, del Castillo of Spain, and the Empress of Austria, anarchist violence was not particular to Italy. He explained how anarchist propaganda appealed to Italians living abroad. Anarchist ideas had been planted in Italian soil during the 1860s by Michael Bakunin who lived in Florence and Naples. At the same time, radical bourgeoisie had at times portrayed the murder of a tyrant as an act of heroism. Under the influence of propaganda and agitation, and political conditions peculiar to Italy at the time, the kingdom experienced a series of small revolutionary movements. In Florence and Pisa, during demonstrations of the people, revolutionists threw bombs into crowded streets. Italian workers, driven out of Italy by dire economic conditions for employment abroad, became receptive to propaganda. They left with a feeling of bitterness and sorrow and vague ideas of transformation by violence. They arrived in France, Switzerland and Austria without culture and with hot tempers, where they met fellow workers who accelerated active imaginations. They came to see that even in rich countries, poverty exists; poverty was a condition not particular to a backward nation but a condition of modern civilisation. The idea entered their minds that the fault lay with social constitution, and only by dismantling society could workers obtain justice.71

*Blackwood’s Magazine* insisted that anarchy could not be understood unless observers came to realise ‘that it is an affair of temperament, not of policy’. To find the answers, it was necessary to look into the distorted reality of the anarchist imagination, not in the governance and policies of the political leaders they victimised. It was no use searching for a rational purpose behind the attempt to murder the King and Queen of Spain at Madrid; the idea that it signified revenge for the treatment of Spanish prisoners was fantasy invented by apologists.
Anarchists were ‘born vain, cruel and superficial’. They did not devise explosive machines for the sake of justice in connection with a particular political grievance but because of a ‘vague feeling of discontent’ and a search for personal attention. To recite a few passages in a crowded courtroom before pronouncement of sentence was enough. The anarchist should be tried in silence; without advertisement in public prints, interest in explosives would evaporate. A similar argument appeared in *North American Review*. King Humbert was about the most liberal sovereign in Europe. He did his best to balance the contest between clerics and secularists. President Carnot, like Premier Canovas, promoted reforms. Carnot, in his own way, promoted democratic structures; he opposed the despotism of church and state. The Empress of Austria provided further proof: for the last three years of her life she had removed herself from all interference in politics. The content of their policies provided insufficient rationale for murder. Enrico Ferri advanced this explanation as well. For Ferri, anarchists fell into a category of ‘criminal madmen’, an intermediate type of criminal, partially rational, partially insane. Criminal lunatics included perpetrators of attacks on statesmen, men with grievances and writers of insane documents.

There was another explanation for anarchist crimes, one that had to do with the recent availability of infernal technology. But for the invention of dynamite, any number of anarchist outrages would not have occurred. Dynamite had been invented by Alfred Nobel in 1867. It combined an ingenious device for diminishing the risk associated with transport of nitroglycerine (which had been invented by an Italian chemist in 1847). Nobel realised that nitroglycerine could be exploded by means of a percussion cap or detonator, and this vastly increased the usefulness of what had been a little more than a curiosity. But during the 1860s, a series of accidents occurring from transport of liquid nitroglycerine led to acts prohibiting its manufacture to a few authorised agencies. This led Nobel to experiment with absorbing the nitroglycerine into an inert base, and he found that a particular kind of earth found in large quantity at Hanover, known as *kieselguhr*, worked best. Nobel took out patents for the manufacture of his invention, dynamite, and earned a large fortune. Up until 1881, the manufacture of dynamite in the United Kingdom was a monopoly enjoyed by Nobel’s Explosives Company, Glasgow. But those patents expired in 1881, and the number of explosives companies multiplied. The opening of English markets to foreign manufacturers led to the import of additional supply; by the end of that year, more than a million pounds had been imported.
‘Science has immensely strengthened the arm of the individual when raised against society’, Arnold White declared, ‘Explosives, easily manufactured, manipulated by one determined man may at any time change the history of Europe’. Or, if not redirect the course of history, create significant destruction. Colonial Majendie warned that an ‘immense amount of mischief, in the form of serious loss of life’ could occur even given a small amount of dynamite. It was impossible to carry a sufficient amount in a portmanteau to blow up a large public building. And, limiting the sale of blasting gelatine to ‘licensed magazines or stores’ prevented this substance from falling into the wrong hands. The substance used in anarchist outrages amounted to an inferior grade of dynamite (sawdust saturated with nitroglycerine) and limited the explosive power of infernal machines. But he conceded that even relatively small blasts undermined confidence in government and disrupted trade. Another commentator gave evidence of the failure of licensing as a security measure. The series of bombings in France between 1892 and 1894—that ended as quickly as it began—could be explained as ‘momentary and accidental’. The theft of nearly 800 pounds of dynamite, 500 yards of fuse, and 1400 percussion caps from a quarry at Soisy-sous-Etiolles, near Paris, in 1892 made direct action ‘easy and inexpensive’. Anarchist violence, as crime in general, came down to means and opportunity.

Bomb making was not exactly common knowledge in the 1890s but the information was freely available. In 1894, Scotland Yard searched the residence of Fritz Ball in Chelsea where they obtained recipes for explosives, a photograph of Valliant, and materials for working with nitroglycerine. Among the anarchist newspapers was a booklet entitled The Science of Revolutionary Warfare, and it contained detailed instructions about the preparation of explosives: how to obtain materials, how to prepare the machine, and how to protect oneself. This same publication had been sold at picnics and mass meetings of anarchist organisations in Chicago prior to Haymarket. As Judge Gary explained, it contained 16,000 words of instruction in the preparation of nitroglycerine, dynamite, gun cotton, fulminating mercury, bombs, fuses, and the like. Another publication available in the city, The Alarm, praised the invention of dynamite as a defence against injustice. ‘DYNAMITE! Of all the good stuff, this is the stuff… In giving dynamite to the downtrodden millions of the globe, science as done its best work. The dear stuff can be carried around in the pocket without danger, while it is a weapon against any force of militia, police, or detectives that may want to stifle the cry for justice.’ The publication went on to say that while
dynamite could be used against persons and things, it was better to use it against persons rather than bricks and masonry.  

International conversation about the causes of anarchism confronted the issue of political crime. It became a major area of dispute among the delegates at the first international congress of criminal anthropology at Rome in 1885. Lombroso, along with Rodolfo Laschi, a lawyer from Verona, presented findings from research into the frequency and facility with which ‘criminals place themselves at the head of the masses’. Political crime presented a particular threat because of the overlap of biological and social causes; atavistic criminals were not only dangerous because of what they did but also because of their ability to inspire an epidemic of imitation among the masses. They presented elaborate maps to show the distribution and chronology of revolutions (designated as progressive or regressive) in world history. French delegates, who opposed the Italian project to begin with, took exception to the argument that revolution originates in the degeneracy of some individuals. To find the cause, criminologists need look no further than the despotic government. Lombroso and Laschi restated their argument at the second international congress of criminal anthropology at Paris in 1889. They invoked conceptions of race, genius, climate and density of population to bolster their theories that anarchism could be explained as a socio-biological process pushing civilisation towards revolution or revolt. These factors compounded, through the process of heredity, to produce pockets of revolutionary characters. The most revolutionary cities of Europe, such as Paris, were those that manifested the most vivacity of thought owing to heredity. Once again, the French were unimpressed.

In Britain, Helen Zimmern found much to like in Lombroso’s theory of political crime. In an extensive review of Il Delitto Politico e la Rivoluzione, she explained his conception of misoneism. The hatred of new things, activated by changes in climate, racial differences and in the proportion of geniuses and insane led to revolt and revolution in the history of civilisation. Civilisation made a way for itself through small social movements, and legislation served to ensure that a series of small movements did not become a big one. Revolutions never occurred among backward peoples but always occurred in the pursuit of highest ideals. Rebellions represented the work of a limited group; they could involve persons of high status. Climate was certainly a factor. Insurrections rarely took place in extremes of hot or cold. Race had an enormous influence; alcoholism could stifle sedition. ‘It might be contended that we knew all these things before, that some are even trite’,
Zimmern concluded, but ‘ordered by Lombroso’s hand they assume new significance’. Lombroso’s explication of the milieux in which political agitation occurred confirmed how external influence worked on the whole being, both on individuals and masses, and raised a moment for deep reflection of the extent of independent thought and action.82

Others found the conception of political crime less useful. Gustavo Tosti insisted that ‘within the range of acts involving murder or theft, there is no such thing as “political”’ crime. He turned immediately to the impossibility of any sustainable and consistent distinction between revolution and rebellion. The theory presumed success as the demarcation between political dissidence and ordinary crime. Within this system of thought, political crime, when involving murder or theft, differed from common crime only in its motive. The motive of the political criminal was not led by vengeance, lust or greed as the common criminal but a desire to see a change in political organisation on behalf of the group. Tosti agreed that anarchism was not merely criminal. The socialist theory espoused by anarchists was ‘something more than an academy of non-sensical talk preparatory to the asylum’. In anarchism, there was to be found a confluence of two currents: an intelligence which is proved incapable of becoming an agency of social progress (and has therefore moved into fantasy) and a character which has failed to adapt to social exigencies (and has, as a result, moved into the realm of rebellion and violence). Anarchistic theory became a channel for criminal instincts; it found the most fertile soil in those regions characterised by high illiteracy and high criminality.83

The question of political crime presented more than a point of debate for journalists and professors. Extradition of persons understood to be guilty of ‘political crimes’ stretched international treaties to the breaking point. In 1885, several law professors explained the legal complications to an American public concerned with the new generation of ‘dynamite criminals’. A crime represented an offence against a sovereign within whose dominions it was committed, and the question of punishment remained with the sovereign. Few nations bothered to punish persons for violations of other nation’s laws, and indifference to crimes committed in other lands remained the traditional international understanding. Among enlightened nations, however, it came to be recognised that crimes constitute evil in themselves. Their criminality did not derive from local policy or statute but from injury to the world at large. Murders committed in France or Germany did not merely concern the conscience and threaten the security of people in these countries but made life less secure the world over. Given that the means of rapid
communication between countries had increased, it became essential to the safety of all societies that persons guilty of grave offences should not be able to find refuge in foreign soil. Accordingly, extradition treaties has multiplied in recent years. From these treaties, however, two classes of offences were commonly excluded: misdemeanours, the insignificance of which did not justify formal negotiation, and political crime.\textsuperscript{84}

A political crime, like any offence, constituted an offence against sovereignty. But it was particular in that it was committed for the purpose of overthrowing an existing government, or a government seeking to defend itself from revolutionary activity. It was the attempt at revolution that determined the criminality of the act and not the viciousness or immorality of the deed. Depending on the act, onlookers in other nations may sympathise with the individual perpetrator against the government, or with the government seeking to defend itself. But whatever the view, no other government could aid in arresting, convicting or punishing the perpetrator without becoming party to the controversy out of which the offence derived. The attempt to blow up London Bridge or the Tower in order to compel the British government to be more lenient or just to the Irish presented a political offence. A nation could not expel Irish nationalists and remain neutral on the justness of their cause. In the 1880s, the United States reversed its position on Irish nationalists. What had been seen as revolutionary activity akin to America’s own revolutionary tradition came to be seen as criminal activity of the sort that led to the murder of President Garfield.\textsuperscript{85} When the British consul at Washington DC, Sir Edward Thornton (Jr), complained about the use of violent and hostile language by Irish nationalists in New York newspapers, the State Department affirmed its commitment to ‘the greatest freedom of speech’. Thornton insisted that conspiracies were being conceived for the destruction of life and property in England by means of explosives but could not specify persons or locations involved in their manufacture. When he pressed the State Department on the matter, he received assurance that the United States was ‘not disposed’ to Irishmen who acquired American citizenship for the purpose of returning to Ireland and agitating against Her Majesty’s government.\textsuperscript{86}

**International defence against anarchism**

After the Tsar’s assassination, there was a proposal, circulated by Russia, Austria and Germany, for an international conference to discuss measures against nihilism. France engaged in talks with Russia towards this
end, but Great Britain was reluctant and thwarted diplomatic initiatives. The tradition of asylum meant that any agreement to alter laws for extradition of political offenders would be ‘politically impossible’.87 Following the bomb attacks in Barcelona and Paris in 1893, diplomats across Europe renewed discussions of international cooperation. This time, proposals came from Spain and France; Britain, Germany and Austria showed some interest but worried about domestic political opposition. The British government feared Irish opposition in the House of Commons. Austria proposed a more efficient means for exchange of information among police of different countries. But this, too, met with mixed support, because each country interpreted anarchist activity within their own legal framework, and each country had a different sense of how to respond. The Swiss government did not want to be held to a political agreement with Catholic Spain; the French disapproved of Switzerland’s practice of imprisoning anarchists together.88

The assassination of Empress Elisabeth of Austria in 1898 became the spur for governments to consider a coordinated strategy of countermeasures. Less than a week after the murder, the Italian government invited European governments to Rome for a conference. Italy took the lead because, as the foreign minister made clear, it felt a responsibility because so many anarchist crimes had been committed by persons of Italian nationality.89 Of 29 states invited, 22 sent delegates, including Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden and Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. Britain sent three representatives: Godfrey Lushington and Philip Currie, each of whom had served as assistant undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, and Howard Vincent, assistant commissioner of the metropolitan police and head of the criminal investigation division (CID).

When the conference opened in November, Germany spelt out three objectives: to define anarchism in a way to make possible its recognition as a criminal offence across Europe, to reach an agreement concerning treatment of anarchists by magistrates and police and to work out the particulars concerning appropriate authorities in the participating states to further the international effort. Of these, only the objective to arrange for more efficient exchange of information among police forces succeeded. ‘Academic discussion’ about how to define anarchism absorbed much of the time. Vincent complained that the representatives of minor states, such as Monaco, Luxembourg and Romania made up in oratory what they lacked in importance. The conferees resolved that anarchist
outrages did not constitute ‘political crimes’ in any sense but should be handled within the scope of existing criminal procedures. No change would be made in British law.\textsuperscript{90} Vincent took the lead in arranging a separate closed-door session dealing with police matters, along with the heads of political police in Paris, Berlin and Basel. It was clear, he explained some years later, that little could be accomplished by visible diplomatic means. The defence against anarchism was ‘wholly a matter for international police communication’.\textsuperscript{91} As these meetings were meant to be secret, the official minutes of the conference contain no report of their discussion. The final protocol did offer an outline of what had been agreed: each country pledged to deal with its own anarchists within its own borders; each country pledged to identify a central office for surveillance of anarchists and relay information to other offices; and all states adopted the \textit{portrait parlé} method of criminal identification.\textsuperscript{92}

At the conference, Britain’s representatives made a point of stating the United Kingdom’s reluctance to engage in political policing. Sir Philip Currie declared that while anyone who committed murder, or conspired to commit murder, would receive severe punishment under British law, the government did not target individuals based on potential to commit crime. Since the law was based on the presumption of innocence, there was no possibility for legal intervention before a crime had been committed. ‘We do not in England’, he claimed, ‘place under police surveillance individuals against whom no charge of plotting a crime or inciting to a crime can be levied’.\textsuperscript{93} This was, of course, for external consumption. In practice, the government engaged regularly and routinely in surveillance of anarchists. As Edward Henry explained in a confidential Home Office memorandum of 1902: ‘the police have always been compelled to keep a number of suspects under more or less sustained observation, an observation not sanctioned by express provision of the law, but by usage only, and by the general acquiescence in it of the community, who realise that it is necessary . . . ’. Observation by plain-clothes officers, and through ‘other agents’, had been carried out by the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police since 1887. The Special Branch maintained an Anarchist’s Register ‘with a view to more or less strict surveillance being maintained’.\textsuperscript{94}

During the 1890s, Scotland Yard monitored the arrival of numerous individuals expelled from other countries for political activities. In 1892, for example, Robert Anderson informed the Home Office of the arrival of two anarchists from France, Eugene and Arthur Verhagen. Expelled by the French police, the pair arrived in Dover, carrying a wooden box filled with tools. The men reported that they were on
their way to Nottingham, and the police put them on the train. When the train arrived in London, police escorted them to St Pancras Station and informed the Nottingham Borough police of their departure. The Nottingham police met the men on arrival and searched the box; it contained clothing and lace-making tools. The men carried with them a letter addressed to James Varney, Secretary of the Lace-makers Union from French lace-makers at Calais. The men worked at various firms in England until 1896 when Eugene Verhagen left for France. He returned to Nottingham the following year and resumed employment with a lace-making firm, Bridgett and Sons. Anderson had learned from operatives in France that Eugene that Verhagen had been deported by French authorities, and he complained to the Home Office that there was no reason to believe Verhagen was a British subject. Although of Belgian extraction, Verhagen was a native of France, and his emigration to Britain constituted an ‘unfriendly and improper act’ on the part of the French authorities.95

Scotland Yard was not the only political authority unhappy with Britain’s liberal stance towards immigration. In 1893, the German ambassador Hatzfeldt passed on a request from Berlin about the character of the Autonomie Club, and specifically, whether the Club had a connection with the Autonomie newspaper. Scotland Yard’s William Melville informed the ambassador that the club was ‘the foyer of foreign anarchism’ in England; anarchists of various nationalities, Germans in the large majority, met there. The club published the Autonomie newspaper, formerly entitled Der Rebel.96 The following year, the Brazilian Minister in Court at London asked about Clementine Hugo, a Frenchwoman who claimed that her husband was the brother of Victor Hugo. She had correspondence with an anarchist named Lazone who had been arrested in Rio de Janeiro. Inspector Melville reported than Countess Hugo had come to London from Italy to escape the king who had kidnapped her daughter. She lived in ‘reduced circumstances’, visited the British Museum daily, and wrote books to make a living. She neither associated with known anarchists nor did she attend anarchist meetings. Many anarchists wrote to her, knowing of her sympathy for the poor, to ask for money.97 In 1895, Edward Bradford fielded a complaint from the Italian ambassador about a bomb-making factory in London. Bradford reported that his men had made enquiries but could not confirm (nor disconfirm) the manufacture of bombs as alleged by the ambassador. The Italian government persisted in the belief that a secret association of anarchists manufactured explosives in London for distribution throughout Europe.98
The British government received advice from the continent about how to deal with anarchists but resisted it. Britain felt it had its own reservoir of knowledge and, specifically, of police who had contended with secret societies. To maintain its grasp of Ireland, the British government had established a system for gathering intelligence. The constabulary set up a centralised special crimes office in Dublin Castle staffed by a county inspector, a district inspector and several clerks. This system had originated after the Fenian Rising of 1867. An experienced crown solicitor, Samuel Lee Anderson, was based at Dublin Castle to deal with Fenian matters, and later, agrarian and political crime. Following the Phoenix Park murders in May 1882, a separate division was established and Samuel Anderson and his associates were transferred to the new unit, under the charge of Edward G. Jenkinson. An essential task of this new unit was to collate intelligence from police reports and daily newspaper stories; these notes were forwarded to the chief secretary regularly. This unit became part of the chief secretary’s office under James H. Davies. The structure put into place to counter radical Irish nationalists became the basis for its approach to anarchists.99

The intelligence gatherers were select police employed on work connected with political crime and intelligence. The Royal Irish Constabulary’s Special Branch had some 42 men in the field; the branch also received reports from specific sergeants and constables across the country. Although the special branch men were attached to a barracks in Dublin, they were meant to be secret from ordinary policemen. Detectives conducted their work in secret and remained unknown to members of the police unless necessary; they kept their communication in separate entries, and there were no copies. They gathered information, life histories and photographs on individuals believed to pose a threat. The central technique came to be known as ‘shadowing’ or constant following a suspect. Those suspects on the ‘A List’ included leading nationalists. They also employed a technique called ‘cyphering’; this system kept track of ‘A list’ suspects when they left their normal district and forwarded their movements by telegraph to Dublin. Throughout Ireland around 1890 the special branch kept some 150 spies in regular employment.100

In the years following the Rome anti-anarchist conference, the Russian government pressed the European states to commit to more intensive police action. In his first message to the US Congress in 1901, President Theodore Roosevelt denounced the anarchist violence that had killed his predecessor. The anarchist represented ‘one type of depraved criminal, more dangerous than any other because he represents the
same depravity in greater degree’. Roosevelt demanded legislation to keep foreign anarchists out of the country and called for an international agreement to make anarchism crime an ‘offense against the law of nations’. The Russian ambassador in London made use of the president’s remarks to renew the call ‘strict and uniform application’ of anti-anarchist measures. Germany signed on as co-sponsor of the proposal and encouraged Britain to do so as well, but, the British government demurred. In 1904, Russian authorities drew up a ‘Secret Protocol for the International War on Anarchism’ and obtained signatures from a number of European governments, particularly in Eastern Europe. Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Romania and Turkey signed; Luxembourg and Switzerland waffled. Britain, France and Italy declined. The secret proposal made into an agreement what had been left as recommendations at the Rome conference. Among other provisions, the agreement provided for rigorous surveillance of anarchists by means of central bureaux in each country. These bureaux would exchange information among themselves. The agreement provided for regulations concerning the expulsion of anarchists from countries in which they were not subjects and for including action against subversive publications within the Penal Code Against Anarchists. The agreement also sought a more comprehensive definition of anarchism.

Liberalism in Britain may have been stretched and strained during the 1890s, but it remained strong enough to resist political policing. Rather than institutionalise measures taken on the continent, and contribute to the international system, Britain held out for a more traditional approach. Nevertheless, anarchism had presented a dilemma. Britain could not legislate against the terrorist threat and follow the lead on governments on the continent for fear of a backlash from domestic constituencies. At the same time, Britain could not do nothing for the sake of European governments under threat. The solution was to emphasise the adequacy of existing laws, although this involved a good deal more ‘political policing’ that the government was prepared to acknowledge. Concealment of anti-anarchist activities offered two political advantages (in addition to the practical advantages of protecting informers and avoiding forewarning conspirators). Concealment acted as a protective cover beneath which detectives could operate more freely, and if Britain’s political policing was not known, then the government could not be blamed when it failed. The United States declined to sign the agreement for similar reasons, although without a national police force, it would have been difficult to comply with the provisions concerning
a ‘central bureau’ (as it was in this case of the Paris white slavery agreement).  

Conclusions

Anarchist outrages became an international concern beginning in the 1880s. Although there was nothing like a coherent international movement, anarchist leaders spoke as if there was. Anarchists referred to themselves as an international fraternity, and if the press and public thought anarchism represented a concentrated force capable of taking the great imperial powers to the wall, they would let them. News of anarchist outrages on the continent kept Britain in a state of alert during the decades before the First World War, particularly during the 1890s. Irish revolutionaries also attacked, but unlike the ‘Irish business’, anarchist outrages raised unanswerable questions about ‘who’ and ‘why’.

As political leaders responsible for public security tried to make sense of anarchist objectives and formulate responses to bomb blasts and assassinations, they found themselves in a more-or-less continuous discussion with counterparts in other nations about the need for a coordinated strategy. The perception of anarchist outrages as an international threat led European nations to Rome in 1898 for the international anti-anarchist conference. Delegates strove to define ‘political crime’ and tried to work out legal language recognising anarchism as a criminal offence. But they stepped back from an international agreement. The conference did not produce an international agreement because political crime defied a satisfactory definition. Owing to unwanted diplomatic repercussions, it tended to have been excluded from extradition agreements. Most nations had reasons for avoiding official commitments with rivals and former enemies. And there was a deeper reason. Under threat, states in the Atlantic world preferred the security version of economic protectionism. Each retreated to its own legal procedures and extra-legal methods of dealing with political trouble-makers.

The Greenwich incident reveals the extent to which the world had become internationalised. Technological advances, in transportation, communication, and trade, called for the establishment of a single system of time worldwide, and the Royal Observatory at Greenwich became the premiere symbol of an international world. The attack did not have significant political consequences, but it did symbolise the overlap of between crime and international politics.
Between 1885 and 1911, there were seven international congresses of criminal anthropology. The international dimension of these meetings gave the impression of a professional community and a body of knowledge with universal application. Discussions relied on the language of science, which provided the platform for the launch of criminology as an intellectual tradition recognised throughout the world. The meetings spurred controversies that crossed national and disciplinary boundaries, beginning with the first congress and continuing for a decade or more after the last.

The congresses took place every four years or so: Rome (1885), Paris (1889), Brussels (1892), Geneva (1896), Amsterdam (1901), Turin (1906) and Cologne (1911). They attracted anthropologists, doctors, judges and lawyers, typically academics, although not exclusively. French remained the official language of the proceedings, except for the meeting at Cologne when it switched to German. The programme followed a familiar format: each of the meetings had an governmental sponsor, with sessions opened by the minister of justice or another official from the host country. Each meeting, divided into two half-day sessions, included reports, discussion, banquets and visits to exhibitions coincident with the congress. Although there were official delegates, these were not official in the diplomatic sense, but individuals representing themselves or organisations engaged in public science. They brought the conceptual language of science to the study of crime and introduced techniques for research that could travel across jurisdictions and populations. Criminal anthropology claimed to be scientific, yet it did not require specialised knowledge. It remained accessible to all. Judges, lawyers and prosecutors could express their approval or disagreement; prison and police authorities could share in data collection and interpretation.
Our purpose in this chapter is to understand how criminal anthropology generated the impression that people talking about crime problems in different countries were talking about the same thing. One of the most curious aspects of the rise of criminology (as it would be called from 1889 or so) is the way it allowed for behaviours across very different cultures, political regimes and geographic contexts to be brought within the same metric of explanation. Criminal behaviour, whether brigands in the south of Italy, thieves in poor districts of Buenos Aires, unlicensed hawkers on the island of Malta, or women murderers in Russia, came to be understood as having the same origin. The pretence of scientific analysis allowed the implications of a study conducted in one country to apply to others and generated an inter-continental exchange of views over the interpretation of results. Sante de Sanctis, director of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Rome, expressed this idea in his response to Goring’s *The English Convict* (1913) when he wrote: ‘He carries the statistical deductions in regard to English convicts over bodily to criminals in general without regard to nationality. That is strange... Goring speaks only of the criminal and identifies the English convict with the international criminal.’

**Lombroso and his critics**

The international congresses took place around the figure of Cesare Lombroso. More than anyone else, Lombroso initiated a worldwide conversation about the origins of criminal behaviour. His perceptions of Italy’s ‘backwardness’, embodied in the bandits of Calabria, became the lens through which aberrant social and psychiatric behaviour could be understood across national contexts. His primary text, *L'uomo delinquente*, found an audience in Europe; in North, Central and South America; in Central Asia, Australasia and in the Far East. In Spain, Rafael Salillas, the director general of prisons, relied on Lombroso to produce *El Delincuente Espanól, ‘The Spanish Criminal’*, in 1898, and Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós, who worked for Salillas at the ministry of justice, *Mala Vida en Madrid, ‘The Low Life of Madrid’*, in 1901. In Japan, Seiichi Terada published a Japanese translation of *L'uomo delinquente* in 1914. He was secretary of the Japanese association of criminology, founded in Tokyo the previous year. In Costa Rica, Luis Castro Saborío, who opened a training school in scientific policing, urged the introduction of ‘modern penology’. He reviewed Lombroso’s work in a series of articles on criminology in the *Anales del Ateneo de Costa Rica, ‘Annals of*
the School of Costa Rica’, in 1913. In the Philippines, legal forensic specialist Sixto de Los Angeles found inspiration in Lombroso for his clinical studies (combining anthropometric measurements, autopsies and observations) of criminals at the Bilibid prison. In Russia, Dr Pauline Tarnowsky of St Petersburg performed an anthropometric survey on 160 Russian women imprisoned for murder. She dedicated her book, *Les femmes homicides* (1908) to Lombroso.

Many who had little to do with, or little interest in, the study of crime knew of Lombroso as well. He journeyed across the real world of anthropometric measurement and academic journals to the imaginary worlds of Sherlock Holmes and Count Dracula. Novelists—Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, Leo Tolstoy, Joseph Conrad—could not resist referring to him in their fiction. They mocked more often than adored, but in these appearances, the criminologist became a profession as well known as that of detectives, spies and master criminals. In *Le voleur* (1907), ‘The Thief’, Georges Dariens tells the story of Georges Randal, an accomplished rogue. Randal, who spends much of his time on ships and trains in the course of his ‘work’, finds himself in the same railway compartment with a prominent criminologist. A conversation ensues in which the criminologist—Lombroso—describes his theories of the criminal mind and physiognomy. Not only does Lombroso fail to spot the professional thief across from him but invites Randal to contribute to a new journal, *La revue pénitentiaire*. Randal agrees to write an article concerning ‘The Influence of Tunnels on Public Morals’ in which he argues that tunnels provoke self-reflection leading to abrupt change of behaviour. He presents statistical evidence to support his conclusion that the character of citizens across European countries varies with the number of tunnels on railway lines in each country. The journal’s readers, like Lombroso, are completely taken in; they praise Randal’s brilliant work and confirm his status as an expert in criminology.

Lombroso held a chair in psychiatry and legal jurisprudence at the University of Turin from 1876. He was born into a Jewish family at Verona in 1835 and studied medicine at Padua, Paris and Vienna. He spent the early part of his career in southern Italy working as a medical officer attached to infantry fighting brigandage, where he developed an interest in mental disease. While serving as the medical superintendent at the provincial asylum at Pesaro, he initiated the autopsy-based research that would make him famous. During the course of post-mortem examinations of criminals from the nearby penitentiary, he thought he had confirmed the presence of ‘theramorphism’. Theramorphs or ‘atavisms’ were meant to be vestigial organs left over
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from an early stage of evolutionary development. He surmised that the relative frequency of theramorphism gave rise to anatomical features recognisable in the living bodies of prisoners as well as ‘savage races’.8 Essentially, to prove his theory of evolution, Darwin needed a skeleton, half human, half animal, and Lombroso believed he had discovered that skeleton. He published his investigations during the 1870s, before republishing them in the form of L’uomo delinquente. In five Italian editions of the book, culminating in the three-volume edition of 1897, he presented the central themes of criminal anthropology. The aetiology of criminal behaviour was a natural phenomenon, discoverable through scientific analysis, not a philosophical speculation. There was a strain of criminals that possessed common physical and psychological characteristics: ‘marks of degeneration’. These characteristics originated in atavism, the persistence of the physical and mental characteristics found in savages.9

In Italy, Lombroso’s research had appeal because it challenged the hegemony of the Catholic Church. The church–state relationship was profoundly antagonistic for most of the years between 1860 and 1924. The kingdom of Piedmont provided the crucible for the forging of Italy by pioneering the reduction of ecclesiastical privileges vis-à-vis the state. The construction of Italy reduced the Papal States and, in 1870, saw the military occupation of Rome. Pius IX, who declared himself a ‘prisoner’ in the Vatican, demanded non-participation of Catholics in the state’s new institutions, which led many liberals to regard the church as a powerful and reactionary institution. Lombroso attracted reform-minded professionals who found in his exploration of atavistic criminality the means to express their aspirations for modernisation.10 Enrico Ferri, professor of criminal law at the University of Rome, and Baron Raffalae Garófalo, professor of criminal law and the University of Naples, became two of Lombroso’s earliest and most committed supporters. But Lombroso attracted many more, such as Antonio Marro, superintendent of the insane asylum at Turin, who produced a flurry of studies for consumption in Italy. Using scientific equipment for measuring the human form, la Scuola Lombrosiana reinforced the idea of the criminal body as the subject of legal reform. Many of these studies appeared in the Archivo di psichiatria ed anthropologia criminale, founded in 1880 by Lombroso, Ferri and Garófalo.

Ferri and Garófalo expanded and interpreted Lombroso’s ideas. Along with Lombroso’s daughters, and their husbands, they contributed to a conversation amongst a multinational elite of professors concerned with
The production of scientific knowledge. They came from the liberal or reform-minded wing of the elite and upper middle-class intelligentsia with the financial and cultural resources for travel, private libraries and study abroad. Most were multilingual; individuals who could read scientific work in French, German and English. They contributed to universities, institutes and government agencies thought to be essential for the development of progressive reforms in public health, education and the law. One of the most pressing problems for members of this elite was that of the recidivist or habitual offender. From the 1870s, it was thought that reconvicted prisoners comprised some 50 per cent of the population of prisons in Europe. Science, or more specifically, morphology of the human body within evolutionary development supplied the means of projecting the explanation of bandits of south Italy onto recidivists, incorrigibles and habitual offenders across Europe and the Americas.

The first criminological-anthropological congress, in Rome, had been planned to occur alongside the international penitentiary congress in 1885. Italians dominated the organising committee, speakers and programme; no one from Britain participated, and only a few Germans and Austrians made the trip. Though disappointed by the few in attendance, the Italians spoke authoritatively about Lombroso’s great discovery of the atavist criminal. Ferri explained that heredity did not predispose an individual to criminal behaviour because atavistic tendencies only became active in interaction with the social environment. Criminal acts resulted from impulses, which may remain dormant for some period of years but which suddenly break out under the influence of passion, mental disease or narcotics. Some expressed agreement, including the Viennese neurologist Moritz Bendikt. He had given a series of lectures to the Vienna Law Society several years earlier on the natural evolution of criminals in which he spelt out all of the elements of criminal anthropology. Others challenged the body-based approach and called attention to the influence of social milieu. Alexandre Lacassagne, professor of legal medicine at the University of Lyons, dismissed atavism theory and pointed to social milieu as the single most important factor. ‘The important thing’ Lacassagne pronounced, ‘is the social milieu… the social milieu is the mother culture of criminality; the microbe is the criminal, an element which gains significance only at the moment it finds the broth which made it ferment’. He had produced a study, Les tatouages (1881), which denied the significance Lombroso attached to tattoos.
The second gathering, at the Palais Trocadero in Paris in 1889, inaugurated the congress as an international event. The minister of justice welcomed nearly 200 delegates from 22 countries, including participants from Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, the United States, Holland, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Russia, Serbia and Sweden. What the Italians regarded as a stage to announce their discoveries amounted to a denunciation by the French before an international audience. The argument began even before the participants arrived—they had exchanged criticisms immediately after leaving Rome. In 1886, Gabriel Tarde published *Criminalité comparée*, a sociological challenge to anatomical explanations of criminal conduct. Lombroso countered with *L’Homme criminel*, a French digest of his work, the following year. The Paris programme divided the presentations into two large themes, crime in relation to biology and crime in relation to sociology. Lombroso opened with an overview of ‘his school’ in which he marshalled the evidence for the physical peculiarities of the criminal type (drawing on photographs of skulls supplied by Sir Francis Galton) and stressed findings in relation to epilepsy in accounting for in-born criminal tendencies.17

Léonce Manouvrier, professor in the School of Anthropology, disputed Lombroso’s claims on behalf of the French contingent. Manouvrier dismissed Lombroso’s discoveries as nothing more than an expanded version of phrenology. He denied any physical difference between ordinary persons and the criminal type and plunged the congress into a debate over whether criminals were born or made. Paul Topinard, director of the School of Anthropology, added further insult by suggesting Lombroso’s work did not merit the label anthropology. Following a presentation concerning medico-psychologic observations of Russian criminals, Topinard declared his opposition to the title of ‘criminal anthropology’. He suggested it should be replaced by that of ‘criminology’ as shorter, easier and having a precise meaning. Although no one advanced this suggestion at the moment, Topinard continued to insist on a name change, and criminology became the title for the new discipline that would emerge.18

The third congress at Brussels lacked the verbal fireworks of Paris owing to the absence of the Italians. To resolve the Paris controversy, the congress had agreed to a motion by Baron Garófalo to form a commission of seven experts. The commission would undertake a systematic comparison of the anatomy of 100 criminals with 100 ordinary persons and report their findings at the next meeting. But the commission, led by the French, did not produce the study, because Manouvrier
argued that there was no way to distinguish these groups *a priori* from one another. So, in retaliation, the Italian contingent avoided French-speaking Brussels. The programme featured presentations concerning criminal anthropology in general, the psychology and psychopathology of criminals, criminal sociology and legal and administrative applications. There were several papers dealing with ‘criminal suggestion’ (hypnosis) and the more pressing problem of incorrigibility. Dutch law professor G.A. van Hamel argued that the penalty against incorrigible criminals should operate on the principle of social defence and award indeterminate detention, subject to periodic review by the judiciary. Adolphe Prins, inspector-general of prisons in Belgium, acknowledged the importance of indeterminate detention for incorrigibles owing to ‘degeneracy’ but foresaw practical difficulties in those incorrigible because of ‘passion’. The solution to the incorrigible offender was to be found in progressive aggravation of punishment and the possibility of freedom.¹⁹

With one notable exception, Great Britain took little notice of the congresses. The Home Office despatched Major Arthur Griffiths to the fourth congress, convened at the lecture hall of the University of Geneva, in 1896. He was the first, and only, official delegate from Great Britain at any of the international meetings of criminal anthropology.²⁰ Griffiths appreciated presentations by Garófalo, van Hamel and others on classification. But he felt too much of the discussion had been theoretical and attempted to push the congress in a more practical direction. In his presentation, Griffiths addressed habitual crime, a subject of ‘extreme importance’. He talked about how habitual crime had proven resistant to existing methods of repression and relayed statistics from English prisons to emphasise the extraordinary number of reconvictions. ‘The habitual criminals’, he pointed out, ‘constituted the essence of the criminality of a country’. He proposed to substitute the terminology of ‘determined habitual criminal’ for ‘born criminal’ in order to avoid the controversy surrounding the Italian formulation. In this way, some of the science on display at the congress might be put to use in Britain: ‘Criminal anthropology, as we know, has never taken root seriously in this country’.²¹

Not all those charged in responding to crime shared this official indifference. Isabel Foard, physician at Dartmoor prison, championed *la scuola Lombrosiana* as presented in Rome and Paris. She chided British scientists working in the area of degeneration for failing to show more interest in the work of Lombroso and criminal anthropology. Delegates had gone to Paris from all parts of the world but not *one* from Great
Britain. She reviewed the work of Ellis and Maudsley, alongside Lombroso and Ottolenghi, to show the ‘recidivist is in a state of atavism, or degeneracy from birth; no matter what his surroundings are, he always returns to the crime’. Understanding the hopeless condition of the recidivist using the bearings of criminology explained why a good deal of moral and legal reforms came to nothing. Treatment of the chronic criminal and confirmed alcoholic had been founded on a model of rationality rather than atavism, and this was not rational given the science of recidivism. Much more attention should be directed at the occasional criminal, and those interested in reform needed better understanding of Lombroso’s insights. ‘We ignore the science of anthropology, all very well for the university “ologists”, but beneath our study. It is this that renders our philanthropic efforts such failures’.22

The Cologne congress, the last to be held, was organised by Gustav Aschaffenburg and Hans Kurella, two German criminologists of international renown. This meeting drew nearly 300 participants, including psychiatrists, anthropologists, magistrates, prison and police officials, prosecutors, as well as criminologists. The participants had occasion to view the International Exposition of Criminal Anthropology, a large collection of ‘documents of human degeneration’, instruments used in the commission of crimes and technical means used in investigation of crime. The indeterminate sentence received considerable discussion, and the participants enacted a resolution that ‘hardened and professional criminals’ who present a ‘grave danger to society’ should be deprived of their liberty ‘for as long a time as they are dangerous’. They considered sterilisation of criminals, as practiced in Indiana, in the United States, but had grave doubts about the advisability of such a procedure. Lombroso had died in 1909, but his daughter, Gina Lombroso-Ferrero, presented a paper on ‘Probation Systems for the Education of Juvenile Delinquents’. The French contingent did not appear and issues related to the social origins of crime left a hole in the programme. Ferri offered a paper explaining three factors related to criminal behaviour, anthropologic, telluric and social. He regretted the absence of papers on social factors but felt that without the French: ‘It was easy for the Italians to present their own views to the Germans and not views distorted by passage through the murky waters of our enemies’.23

The French reaction may have soured the congresses from the Italian point of view, but French–Italian exchange spurred interest in other countries. Scientific criminology in Germany began in response to Lombroso’s claims. Lombroso, who had earned a living at one point
making translations of German documents, published some of his ear-
liest ‘discoveries’ in German journals. Emil Kraeplin wrote a favourable
review of the third Italian edition of *L’uomo delinquente*, and it remained
the primary introduction to Lombroso’s work until 1887, when the
first volume of the German translation appeared. This work sparked
a lively debate in the 1890s when several individuals, mostly prison
doctors and psychiatrists, produced a series of books that engaged ‘the
criminal type’ and other aspects of Lombroso’s work. Hans Kurella, a
psychiatrist at the provincial insane asylum in Brieg, Silesia, defended
criminal type theory and became Lombroso’s German champion. In
1903, Gustav Aschaffenburg published the book that established him
as Germany’s foremost expert in criminology. Although he did not
accept the idea of the atavistic criminal, he did not present the book
as a critique of Lombroso. His work marked the first criminologi-
cal work in a decade that was neither a refutation nor defence of
Lombroso.24

The International Union of Criminal Law began in response to the
controversy between Lombroso’s positivistic school and the social-
psychological school led by Laccassagne and Tarde. Led by Franz von
Liszt, Adolphe Prins and G.A. von Hamel, the organisation argued for
perceiving crime as a social phenomenon and formulating criminal
law in response. Legislation should take into consideration the results
of anthropological and sociological studies, chiefly, the distinction
between habitual and occasional delinquency. The Union convened
annual meetings beginning with Brussels in 1889; later meetings took
place at Oslo (Christiana), Paris, Antwerp and Hamburg. The partici-
pants pursued related themes, including systematic methods of obtain-
ing statistics and plans for the production of international comparative
statistics. In the years before the Great War, the union turned its atten-
tion towards mutual assistance among police authorities, the growth of
international crime, including prostitution and the white slave trade.
The organisation attracted a European membership. Early on, most of
the members came from Germany and Austria, but within two decades,
the union had more than 600 members from across Europe. A number
of these, including the leadership, participated in congresses of criminal
anthropology.25

Degeneration

The conceptual language of degeneration reverberated throughout the
congresses of criminal anthropology.26 In Paris, at the second congress,
Valentin Mangan, superintendent of the St Anne Insane Asylum, presented photographs of girls between 7 and 12 years of age he described as ‘hereditary degenerates’. Marguerite, aged twelve, presented a ‘good physique, and without any apparent mark of physical degeneration’, but ‘it was sexual troubles which dominated her’. In a later session, the participants heard a presentation about the relation between ‘mental degeneration’ and insanity. At the Brussels congress, Franz von Liszt of the University of Halle distinguished between criminals by nature and criminals by occasion. Among the criminals by nature, he found a large number of ‘degenerated’ individuals, marked by heredity, and he recommended measures to combat criminal degeneracy—for young degenerates, education; for older, it was necessary for society to protect itself. At the seventh congress, in Cologne, Ferri delivered the first lecture. Thirty years earlier, he said, Lombroso’s ideas had been ignored or mocked. But Lombroso had become widely accepted, as lawyers, legislators and judges had come to realise their systems, founded on ‘criminal meta-physics’, had failed. Even public opinion had become aware of various forms of criminal behaviour as a result of individual degeneration. Degeneration generated an astonishing amount of commentary across Europe from the mid-nineteenth century, and criminal anthropology brought the origins of criminal behaviour to this wider conversation.

In Britain, degeneration provoked intense and sustained debate. Dr Robert Rentoul told the Medico-Legal Society in 1905 that the question of degeneracy was of national importance. There were more than 7.8 million ‘mental and physical degenerates’ in the United Kingdom: insane criminals, habitual inebriates and weak-minded prostitutes. He recommended compulsory registration, regulation prohibiting marriage and sterilisation to mitigate proliferation. ‘The time has come when we must put into practical operation the survival of the fit’ he declared. George Bernard Shaw, who was in the audience, was the first to comment. He did not think Rentoul had supplied an adequate definition of the term and worried that application of the regulations along the lines proposed would result in the loss of very interesting people—including Rentoul and himself. Journalist Arnold White, also in attendance, said that he had anticipated the need for sterilisation of the unfit 20 years earlier. He feared Rentoul had missed the target. White knew from personal experience that not all degenerates could be found in asylums and prisons, and national degeneracy was deeper than even Dr Rentoul imagined. Sir William Collins MP regretted so much loose talk on a practical subject. There could be no precise legislation, based
on evolution, because the science was still evolving. Some maladies believed to be hereditary had later been found to result from environmental causes. He had no faith in esoteric medical practices kept secret from the public and would hold up his hand against compulsory legislation.\textsuperscript{30}

Ostensibly, degeneration referred to a process found in nature. In 1880, E. Ray Lankester, director of natural history at the British Museum, explained that it was a concept capable of wide explanation of existing forms of life. It referred to a loss of organisation making a life-form simpler in structure than its ancestor. Degeneration appeared in animals and plants as a gradual change in which an organism became adapted to less advanced and less complex conditions of life, as occurred when food and safety became easy to obtain. He pointed to certain lizards, crustaceans and other examples from nature and indulged himself in reflections recognised on the implications for the human species. Drawing on examples from history, he observed that higher states of civilisation give way to degenerate states. Many ‘savage races’ in the contemporary world were degenerate, that is, descended from ancestors possessed of elaborate civilisations. While this was not true of all savages, it was true for the Indians of Central America and modern Egyptians, and probably the Australians, who exhibited evidence of descent from ancestors more cultivated than themselves. As for the ‘white races of Europe’, the possibility of degeneration was worth consideration. The assumption of universal progress had led to the belief in steady and uniform improvement in civilisation. But as Europeans too were subject to the laws of evolution, the population was as likely to degenerate as progress. He warned that if people allowed themselves to sink into a life of contentment and enjoyment, accompanied by ignorance and superstition, modern civilisation would decay. The surest, and only, defence against degeneration was the pursuit of scientific understanding.\textsuperscript{31}

Anyone who had something to say about social conditions had a view of degeneration. Commentary on social problems—crime, insanity, poverty and intemperance—used the vocabulary of ‘degeneration’. One social critic lamented the influence of urban life and the ‘extinction of the Londoner’. Life in London meant unsanitary conditions, overcrowding and vicious surroundings, and any people who lived there, as did their parents and grandparents, were bound to suffer physical degeneration and sterility. Londoners, whose only conception of the country was a seaside holiday, had committed themselves to a way of life that led to their own destruction.\textsuperscript{32} Another critic went further: ‘physical degeneration’ characterised both urban and rural populations. Bad housing,
parental neglect of children and early sexual contacts added up to a smaller generation. The average height of standard recruits for the army had decreased some five inches during the late nineteenth century. Inferior food, lack of milk for children and contaminated living conditions, following on a stock already enfeebled by over work and deprivation, explained why cities reproduced ‘excitable, nervous organisms’ and ‘physically depressed’ individuals. Even the *Gentleman’s Magazine* had a comment about ‘physical degeneracy’ of the English worker. Without accurate statistical measurements over the centuries, it was impossible to gauge the extent of change within the English population, but it was impossible not to see the obvious. A Sunday afternoon walk would convince even the most optimistic observer that ‘under the degrading influences of city life our working population is growing terribly stunted’.

The Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration (1904) investigated the fear of physical degeneration of certain classes. The committee heard from some 68 experts, including Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree, who spoke on a wide range of subjects, including the effects of urbanisation, crowding, pollution, factory work, alcoholism, adulteration of food and parental neglect. One of the ongoing discussions concerned the abuse of tea. Some of the experts said that tea drinking lead to anaemia, to indigestion and constipation. One claimed tea caused as much harm as alcohol, another testified that the harmful effects of tea had been exaggerated. Overall, the committee decided they did not possess sufficient data to reach a definitive conclusion, and they recommended the establishment of an anthropometric bureau to carry out regular surveys. They surmised, from what witnesses said, that no ‘progressive physical deterioration’ was underway. But the committee agreed that the alleged causes of degeneration did represent ‘evils’ that merited a response and called on public spirit to prevail over prejudice. More could be done to ‘check the degeneration resulting from “drink” ’ by teaching about the effects of alcohol on physical efficiency than by editorialising on the moral wickedness of drunkenness.

No one took degeneration further, or had a wider influence, than Max Nordau. He was born in Budapest, where he completed the course for a medical diploma at the university, then went to Vienna to complete conscription duties as a military surgeon. Nordau travelled widely throughout Europe before settling in Paris where he launched his literary career. His book, *Entartung* caused an immediate sensation when published in Germany in 1893. It was immediately translated into several languages: *Degenerazione* in Italy, *Dégénérescence* in France and
Degeneration in Great Britain and the United States. It generated considerable attention in America and Great Britain, more than any other book of the 1890s, and became one of the bestselling books in Europe. Entartung offered an explanation of disturbing increases in criminality, madness and suicide and the appearance of brutality connected with anarchist outrages. During the 1880s and 1890s, scientists had documented a number of new nervous diseases. In Prussia, in 1840, there were 714 convictions per 100,000 persons; by 1888 that figure had increased to 1,102. Across Europe, there were 63 suicides per 10,000; in 1883, there were 109, and that rate increased since then. Degeneration explained the appearance of revolutionists and anarchists: degenerates proved incapable of adapting to circumstances; they rebelled against conditions. Without self-control, the degenerates could not manage, but became improvers of the world, inventors of designs for making all of humankind happy.

The source of degeneration, Nordau said, was found in the characteristics of the era and, particularly, use of narcotic drugs and stimulants: alcohol, tobacco, hashish and opium. He reproduced statistics from Great Britain, France, Prussia and the German Empire concerning the consumption of alcoholic drinks. Use of such stimulants exhausted the nervous system, producing disastrous and reciprocal effects. Drinkers and smokers beget weakened and enfeebled children, hereditarily fatigued and vulnerable to excessive drinking and smoking owing to inherited vulnerabilities, weakened character and inchoate will power. Residence in the cities was also a cause. The inhabitants of large towns, even the wealthiest, could not escape polluted air and consumption of stale, adulterated food. This combined with a constant state of nervous excitement to produce a malaria-like condition, comparable to living in a marsh or a swamp. In such conditions, children did not develop normally. Organs ceased to develop or took erratic developmental pathways, leading to a ‘strange and repulsive mixture of incompleteness and decay’. Adults tended to age more quickly. Teeth tended to fall out sooner, grey hairs appeared earlier.

Nordau had much more in his sights than a few incorrigible criminals. Anatomical features, such as deformities, stunted growth, asymmetry of the face, squinty eyes and irregularities of the teeth, expressed degeneration. But it was not only the body that fell victim but also the mind. ‘It is not necessary’, Nordau wrote, ‘to measure the cranium of an author, or to the lobe of a painter’s ear, in order to recognize the fact that he belongs to the class of degenerates’. The asymmetry of the face found its counterpart in unbalanced philosophy. The mental characteristics of
degeneration included lack of moral sense, emotionalism and despondency. The degenerate mind assumed a form of pessimism, a vague fear of others and demanded freedom from these fears. Nordau attacked the ‘decadent’ movement in art and literature. By applying the concept of degeneration, he tried to show how the cultural avant-garde, far from being modern and progressive, revealed themselves to be atavistic and regressive. The preoccupation of fin de siècle writers with themes inspired by anarchism, socialism, sexuality and mysticism displayed the stigmata of mental degeneracy.

What Huxley was to Darwin, Nordau was to Lombroso. In Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897), Professor Van Helsing urges Mina Harker to describe the evil count. Harker responds: ‘The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him...’ In discussing degeneration, the Edinburgh Review reviewed the work of Nordau who ‘intended his work to be an extension of theories of Lombroso’. The author felt Nordau was rather too pessimistic about the contemporary era and doubted Lombroso’s claims about the link between ‘degenerate structure and criminality’. Robert Anderson, director of criminal investigations at Scotland Yard, declared that Lombroso’s theory had no application to the professional criminals with which he was familiar; these men had ability, charm and manner. He related an encounter with Max Nordau who called on him. To test his ‘type theory’, Anderson showed him two photographs. One, Anderson explained, was an eminent public man, the other a notorious criminal (William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Raymond Worth, ‘the Napoleon of Crime’). Nordau failed Anderson’s test. ‘Need I add that my story is intended to discredit—not his Grace of Canterbury but—the Lombroso type theory.’

Nordau said that he owed it all to Lombroso, whom he had met in Turin during the 1880s. His ‘Dear and Honoured Master’ had shown him the way by identifying degenerates who were ‘criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics’. But, he disagreed with the maestro about the prevalence of degenerates in society. Lombroso had associated degeneracy exclusively with ‘born criminals’ when born criminals presented only a sub-division of degenerates. Nordau provided a ‘scientific classification’ of degenerates in literature and the arts; he divided decadent authors into categories of deviancy, insanity and criminality. He also disagreed with Lombroso about the extent to which criminality reflected degeneration. Some criminals were not degenerates, but normal human beings who turned to crime through defects in child-rearing,
education, irreligion and a deprived environment. This applied to many criminals, and Lombroso himself admitted as much in his discussion of the ‘occasional criminal’. But, the great majority of habitual criminals, Nordau suggested, did result from the ‘inability to check their impulses, bluntness of conscience, lack of judgment’.46

Lombroso could accept the broad cultural critique embodied in Nordau’s work. ‘It is a prevalent delusion of our times that we are always progressing’ Lombroso preached. Political reforms were not new but repeated improvements already discovered, implemented and abandoned by ancient societies. The most recent discoveries in the arts repeated the past as well; innovations celebrated as novelties were really very old. There could neither be evolution without involution nor progress without retrogression. ‘The march of mankind proceeds by continual action and reaction; no people, however lofty its position, can boast too much over the lowest savage’.47 He also welcomed the extension of his project from a theory of criminality to literature and art. Lombroso considered himself a man of science but worked very hard to popularise his ideas. He regarded this excursion, what he called ‘applying psychiatric research to literary criticism’, as a useful and valuable means of promoting himself to a wider public. What he could not forgive was Nordau’s trivialisation of his ‘criminal type’. Lombroso saw in literature and art a means of demonstrating the reality of his criminal type theory; the appearance of the criminal type in portraits and characters confirmed its existence as a scientific concept. Nordau had identified decadent authors and artists with a criminal mind to signal their true perversion, when Lombroso wanted to see in aesthetic perversion the triumph of his scientific insight into the nature of criminal behaviour. Ferri produced just the sort of critique Lombroso preferred. In his excursion into art and literature, he pointed to examples of each kind of criminal first revealed by ‘the positive data of the new criminal science’. Shakespeare had found the reality of criminological classification without realising it: Macbeth is the born criminal; Hamlet, the insane criminal; and Othello, the criminal by passion. Poets and painters revealed the reality of the Italian’s scientific work.48

The great controversy surrounding degeneration in the late nineteenth century produced at least one permanent legacy: the international Olympic movement. Pierre de Coubertin organised the first Olympic Congress in 1894 and staged the first modern games at Athens in 1896. The idea of reviving athletic festivals along the lines of the ancient Olympic Games had been proposed earlier in the nineteenth
century, but de Coubertin succeeded in founding a sustained multi-
national movement with global pretensions by reviving the myth of
the Olympic cult. Olympianism served up ersatz religious experiences
to people disillusioned with European ‘progress’ and positivist think-
ing. The fin de siècle took great interest in ancient civilisations, and
when a German archaeologist in the 1870s unearthed the foundation
stones of archaic Olympia during excavations in Greece, it revealed the
altis, the site which had been the centre of the Olympic cult. Here de
Coubertin had found an appropriate symbol for the highest human
ideal, that of the scholar-athlete, which had only been approximated
in the English ideal of the sportsman/gentleman. De Coubertin estab-
lished the modern games not only as a celebration of athletic prowess
but also as a cultural festival to celebrate art and beauty. To achieve an
international event beyond a world sporting championship, de Cou-
bertin infused the games with the symbolism and pageantry of youth,
beauty and strength.49 De Coubertin said that he revived the games as
a way of ‘bringing to perfection the strong and hopeful youth of our
white race, thus again helping towards the perfection of all human
society’.50

Anthropometric laboratories

The criminal-anthropological congresses affirmed the need for anthro-
pometric laboratories at clinics, hospitals and prisons. At the first
meeting in Rome, the congress agreed to a proposal from Gabriel Tarde
concerning the usefulness of studying criminal behaviour within pris-
ons. The ‘congress, in agreement with the scientific tendency of criminal
anthropology, is of the opinion that prison authorities… should admit
to the clinical study of criminals all professors and students of penal
law’.51 But anthropometric measurement also provided a means of
criminal identification, an essential tool solving individual crimes, iden-
tifying suspects and tracking habitual criminals. Government officials
who added laboratories to police establishments could insist they were
meant to serve as a practical aid to the legal process, or a centre for
the study of criminal behaviour, as the same techniques of photogra-
phy, anthropometry and even fingerprint analysis could be used in this
way. The fact that in many cases this distinction was never made clear
advanced the cause of criminal anthropology.52

Participants at the Paris congress of 1889 heard a presentation from
Alphonse Bertillon on the use of anthropometry in the aid of police
and arrest of criminals. When he finished, the first person to comment following his lecture was Lombroso, who praised him for having demonstrated the ‘everyday usefulness’ of criminal anthropology. Lombroso emphasised the need for identifying the accused persons with scientific accuracy and regarded Bertillonage as ‘undoubtedly the best’ system for this purpose. (Although, he could not resist advertising an apparatus he invented for taking Bertillon measurements by means of an ‘electric pen’ allowing the process to become purely mechanical and reduced the sources of error in the French procedure.) Bertillon developed his interest in anthropometry from his father, a co-founder of the School of Anthropology. His father helped him acquire a post as a clerk with the Préfecture de Police, and he received permission to make experiments, in his off-hours, amongst the inmates of the prison at La Santé. His system of signalement anthropométrique won the support of his superiors, and in 1882, he was asked to make measurements of all persons brought into police headquarters. Three years later, the director of criminal administration for the interior ministry ordered the system of anthropometrical measurement extended throughout France, and in 1888, Bertillon was given his own office of criminal identification under the eaves of the Palais de Justice. By that time, anthropometric identification had become compulsory across France for all persons arrested except for the lowest grade of offences.

On Friday, 16 August, the congress made a visit to Bertillon’s establishment to observe his method of determining personal identity. With an angle and callipers, he charted the terrain of the human body: height, length and breadth of the head and right ear, length from elbow to tip of middle finger, length of middle and ring finger, length of left foot and length of trunk. He recorded these measurements on fiches d’identité, or identity cards, along with a photograph, full face and profile. He created portraits parlés, or descriptions, using standardised terminology that could be sent in telegraphic code. Bertillon’s most significant insight was to assign a unique number (typewritten in the upper left-hand corner) to each card. This numbering scheme established criminal identity, because a numerical match between an identity card and a suspect served as legal proof during court proceedings. It also provided a ready means for search-and-retrieval. The arrangement of the cards within the anthropometric cabinet corresponded to body measurements so that once the measurements were taken on an individual suspect, the identity card, if there was one, could be located in the drawer. Bertillon won over the congress of criminal anthropology.
They agreed unanimously to his proposed resolution inviting all governments to adopt his system when they needed to establish individual identity.58

Not only did the criminologists gathered at the Paris conference learn of the practical value of Bertillon’s system, they also heard about its usefulness as a means of scientific research. Topinard and Manouvrier relied on anthropometry to study categories of French people, including racial differences as delineated by colour of eyes and hair, as well as skin. A member of the French Union for Saving Infants spoke at the congress about the association’s relationship with the police and their role in taking into care a great many children that would otherwise have been sent to prison. He asked for the aid of an anthropologist, who was at the same time an anthropometrician, to visit the Palais de Justice with him each morning, go through the crowd of arrested children and make the scientific examination that could generate statistics. Dr Manouvrier promised his assistance, and they agreed to meet at the anthropometric laboratory of Bertillon.59

Salvatore Ottolenghi’s School of Scientific Police at the University of Rome became the paradigm. The school included a laboratory for application of scientific methods in describing individuals, by means of photographs, fingerprints and shoe prints. It centralised Italy’s identification service. The archive contained a complete collection of anthropometric cards for Italian criminals, along with cards sent by foreign police departments.60 It included equipment for microscopic and chemical analysis of blood and poisons, and a psychological laboratory, using simple equipment, for registering psychological profiles. And it was more. As Ottolenghi, who had studied with Lombroso at Turin, saw it, the laboratory enabled all police work to rest on a ‘thorough knowledge of man, especially of the criminal type’. It made use of teachings of criminal anthropology for better prevention of crimes and more efficient supervision of criminals.61 Comparable establishments sprouted up across Europe, in Switzerland, Austria and Germany. In Austria, Hans Gross, professor of criminal law, founded the first university-based institute of criminology in 1912 at the University of Graz. He described the comprehensive clinic-laboratory as including provision for lectures in criminal anthropology, circulating library, scientific journal, museum of criminology, laboratory and identification bureau.62

This model sprouted up across South and Central America. Argentina became the second country to establish a national system for criminal identification. Officials installed anthropometric cabinets in provincial police headquarters and prisons and, in 1890, opened the national office
of identification. This office followed Bertillon’s system of measurement, notation and classification until the arrival of Juan Vucetich at the scientific branch of the Buenos Aires provincial police. Vucetich, who had emigrated from Croatia, became responsible for a monthly statistical bulletin. He introduced a system of fingerprint classification that became the basis of criminal identification. The office of identification archived fingerprint and anthropometric measurements for prisoners and those arrested at police stations.63

In 1907, José Ingenieros opened an institute of criminology at the national penitentiary of Buenos Aires. Ingenieros, educated in psychiatry, served as clinical chief of the police service of observation and recognition and created the experimental psychology laboratory within the psychiatric and criminological clinic within the prison. He published scholarly treatments on delinquency in medical journals before founding his own journal, the Archivos de Psiquiatría y Criminología, which he edited from 1902 to 1913. The 1910 edition of his book, Criminologia, became the founding text of clinical criminology. It developed his approach to criminal behaviour and his research project applied to the study of criminals at the prison. For Ingenieros, criminals shared the same morphology as all degenerates; the difference between criminals and other degenerates could be discovered only by means of psychopathology. He divided criminology into three areas: criminal aetiology, dealing with the causes of crime; clinical criminology, which had to do with inferring the risk of dangerous activity from a prisoner’s background; and criminal therapy, the individual and social interventions for defence of society. His institute became the leading centre for scientific criminology in South America.64

The British government pursued its own ‘experiment’ with anthropometric identification beginning in the 1880s. The Home Office learned of anthropometric measurement in 1887 and, following a visit of Lord Charles Russell and Sir Richard Webster to the Paris Identification Bureau, authorised a further enquiry. The Identification of Criminals Committee, convened in 1893, recommended the Home Office adopt the main features of the Bertillon system for all convicts and persons accused of serious offences. Bertillonage went into effect in Great Britain, and in India, where Edward Henry, inspector of police in Bengal, implemented the system. He also experimented with fingerprint classification, as outlined by Sir Francis Galton. The ‘Henry system’ became the basis for the fingerprint bureau established in 1902 at Scotland Yard and supplanted Bertillon’s anthropometric method of criminal identification in Europe. Bertillon stressed that his system of personal
identification had a range of purposes in modern society: it could be used for soldiers of an army or travellers to distant lands. If there was a question of identity in a contract, such as life insurance, or proof of death, anthropometric measurements would be invaluable. Measurements would also be useful in establishing the identity of persons who suffered violent death, as the result of a crime, accident or shipwreck. There was, however, a certain social stigma attached to Bertillonage. Military authorities considered using it to avoid reenlistment of undesirables. But Bertillonage was not approved on the ground that it was not appropriate to apply a process used for criminals to members of an honourable profession.65

Nevertheless, there were those who continued to insist on the usefulness of anthropometry and the potential for research into criminality presented one of the leading arguments. Edmund Spearman, an English magistrate long resident in Paris, campaigned for the introduction of Bertillon’s method in England. He emphasised the usefulness of anthropometric identification for avoiding mistakes of identity in criminal prosecutions and in the capture of international criminals.66 John Garson, the scientific advisor to Scotland Yard on criminal investigation and vice president of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, claimed that the anthropometric cabinet contained the power to pinpoint individual identity, distinguish between races and gauge the degree of degeneration. He pointed to anthropometry as a means of characterising individuals and explained how, in a text on anthropology, the same procedure was used to investigate differences between races. At a lecture to the Anthropological Institute in 1900, a member of the audience questioned the overlap of the two purposes: ‘The measurements referred to must either show racial characteristics and be of use to the ethnologist, or they must show individual peculiarities and therefore be of value to the prison expert. They certainly cannot do both at once’. In his reply, Garson claimed that body measurements were important for both criminal identification and race science. The measurements of the convicted in Britain reflected the balance of various races, Garson explained, as well as elements of ‘degeneracy’, particularly in towns.67

The situation for anthropology was more complicated than Garson made it out to be, but leading anthropologists did think anthropometric measurement revealed characteristics of a criminal population. In 1903, an American anthropologist Daniel Folkmar made anthropometric measurements on prisoners confined in Bilibid prison in the Philippines. The project was not intended to explore atavistic tendencies but
classify racial types. As far as Folkmar was concerned, Bilibid confined an ‘unexcelled collection’ of ethnic types found in the 7000 islands of the archipelago. He put 1,024 photographs and 128 plaster casts on display at the World Exhibition in St Louis to demonstrate the typical Filipino. But prominent anthropologist Frederick Starr criticised the study given the population. Prison cases everywhere represented ‘exceptional and aberrant types, and in no true sense representative of their race’. It may be that many of those measured by Folkmar represented ‘political prisoners’ and not the ‘degenerate and abnormal’ class of persons prisoners would otherwise have been, but it should have been easier for Folkmar to find people in villages to measure.68

American participants at the international congresses of anthropology did seem quite interested in this aspect. The fifth congress of criminal anthropology held at Amsterdam in 1901 approved a resolution, sponsored by the American Louise Rabinovitch, in favour of the establishment of psycho-physical laboratories. These laboratories would provide for the practical application of physiological psychology to sociological data, especially as found in institutions for criminal, pauper and defective classes.69 Anthropometric laboratories opened in American prisons beginning in the 1880s. In 1899, Evelyn Ruggles-Brise returned from America with news of efforts to set up a national anthropometric laboratory there. In his report on prisons, he remarked at the zeal and energy with which Americans had pursued the Bertillon system. The wardens of state prisons had formed an association and enlisted the Pinkerton detective agency in establishing a register of known criminals. The association proposed to establish a central bureau in Chicago for general reference; each prison would carry out and record its own anthropometric measurements. This system only applied to state prisons, but as they confined the bulk of American convicts, Ruggles-Brise figured it would not be long before America had a national system.70

Chicago opened a bureau for anthropometric identification in 1890 and, in preparation for the Columbian Exposition in 1893, expanded and improved its operation. The bureau contained photographs, measurements and descriptions of thousands of persons said to be the most notorious criminals across the United States and Europe. Following Bertillon’s classification scheme, the Chicago police boasted the ability to find the measurement in the collection for anyone being measured and confront the suspect with complete information. The bureau aggregated records from prisons across the country; from large cities in the country, as well as Canada, Mexico and European capitals. Because the
bureau had already taken the measurements of ‘most of the principal “crooks” and criminals’ of Europe, a fair number would consider not coming. The chief of police boasted that Chicago would be even less of a resort for the criminal classes than it—or any large city—usually was.71 Chief Justice Harry Olson of the municipal court of Chicago favoured the creation of such a laboratory in all criminal courts. The diagnosis of a criminal along neurological, psychological and sociological lines would be of ‘immediate practical value’ to the judge in deciding the sentence in individual cases. The aggregation of this information concerning criminals would also prove to be of ‘great scientific value’.72

Arthur MacDonald, who attended the Brussels congress, nearly succeeded in his effort to establish a national laboratory. A ‘specialist in education and crime’ at the U.S. Bureau of Education, he had spent time in Europe studying medicine and criminal psychology. While in Turin, he attended lectures of Lombroso, who wrote the introduction to his (MacDonald’s) text, Criminology, published in 1893. During the early 1890s, MacDonald authored a series of articles dealing with the scientific study of degeneracy and acquired equipment for measurement of physical characteristics and psychological testing. He promoted the ideas of Lombroso and Bertillon and argued that a laboratory would be of use to study the causes of crime, pauperism, alcoholism and other forms of abnormality. He explained in clear terms how criminology incorporated laboratory-based anthropometric research: ‘Criminology is a branch of sociology and treats those actions, thoughts, and feelings which are especially dangerous either to the individual or society’. Criminology could be divided into three branches: general, special and practical. General criminology concerned theory and synthesis of the known facts. The special branch consisted of investigation of individual cases—‘physically, historically, and psychically considered’—which represented the most promising area for breakthroughs in this new science. Practical criminology included all methods and institutions for prevention and repression of crime. The Bertillon method, while intended for a practical end, furnished a tool for scientific purposes as well.73 After attempts to set up a laboratory with the US Bureau of Education and US Department of the Interior failed, MacDonald lobbied the US Congress for funds to establish an independent criminological laboratory. He succeeded in 1902 in having bills introduced in both Houses calling for a laboratory to study the ‘criminal, pauper and defective classes’. This effort proved a failure in large part because MacDonald had discredited himself with an ill-conceived study of sexual behaviours which appeared as Abnormal Women (1895).74
The criminal type

The series of international congresses of criminal anthropology opened with the great debate between the Italians and the French and ended with the great debate between the Italians and the British. Griffiths’ participation in the Brussels congress led to the largest study of Lombroso’s criminal anthropology to be carried out in any country before the First World War and a debate about the interpretation of its findings that continued after the last congress in Cologne.75

In some cases, Lombroso’s critics disagreed with him about the interpretation of the same evidence. The disagreement between the Italians and French—to return to Paris in 1889—had been about the skulls—the same skull, in fact. Skulls provided essential data for anthropologists in the nineteenth century and were a key source of the evidence used in criminal anthropology. In London, earlier that year, the skulls of two infamous warriors, a Burmese dacoit and a Chinese warlord, were exhibited at the Anthropological Institute. Reverend William Morrison, who attended the exhibition, remarked that nothing had been done to test the contention that in most cases the skulls of criminals displayed remarkable points of differences to ordinary persons. He explained the theory of the criminal type as the average between the savage and the lunatic. He referred those in attendance to the latest edition of L’uomo delinquente by Lombroso and the congress of criminal anthropology to be convened in Paris. Morrison said that he had reservations about Lombroso’s claims. Lombroso had compared the skulls of criminals with that of soldiers and soldiers represented a selected portion of the population.76

At Paris, Lombroso lectured on the significance of the occipital fossa in the skull of Charlotte Corday, which he held up as an example. He could hardly have selected a more divisive and contested place to begin. The skull, part of the collection of Prince Roland Bonaparte on display in the anthropological section of the Universal Exhibition, had been authenticated as that of Corday by an earlier anthropological analysis. In life, she was known to have assassinated Jean-Paul Marat during the French Revolution, and this immediately sent the French into a discussion about whether she was a patriot rather than a criminal. When Lombroso claimed that the skull revealed the characteristics of innate criminality, Topinard responded by saying that the skull was normal and that it further revealed only that it was the skull of a woman. Following the Paris meeting, Topinard published in L’Anthropologie a detailed study of the skull with numerous illustrations. He attached no importance to the
alleged abnormalities and reaffirmed his claim: the skull was quite normal. A month or so later, Bendikt published his study of the same skull in the *Archives de l’Anthropologie Criminelle*. He agreed in part and disagreed in part with Lombroso. He found the skull to display a number of masculine characteristics but felt that these did not allow for classifying the skull as normal or abnormal. Lombroso provided his rejoinder in *La donna delinquente* (1893), ‘the female offender’. ‘Not even the purest political crime, that which springs from passion, is exempt from the law which we have laid down’, Lombroso declared, and offered his ‘rapid inspection’ of the skull of Charlotte Corday as proof. There were an extraordinary number of anomalies, confirmed even by ‘Topinard’s very confused monograph’. These anomalies resembled characteristics of the skull of a young man, and these manly characteristics could also be observed in the faces of prostitutes from Pavia. (In *Crime and its Causes*, Morrison suggested that so long as a prominent anthropologists failed to agree on a basic point of evidence, it would be impossible to arrive at any firm conclusions about the criminal skull.)

In other cases, the critics countered with comparative evidence. The year before his encounter with Lombroso at Geneva, Major Griffiths published an article criticising Lombroso’s view of women criminals. Lombroso said the typical female criminal had coarse, black hair, but this was only true of Italians as there was no such pattern among the Anglo-Saxon races. Lombroso claimed that the criminal women were marked by the absence of feminine traits and could wear male clothing without detection. The worst type, the ‘born criminal’, was not so common among women as men, and ‘occasional criminals’ represented the large majority of female criminals. But the two types overlapped to such an extent that the distinction hardly seemed likely; when speaking of ‘born’ and ‘occasional’ criminals within feminine criminology, all traits could be found to a greater or lesser degree. The Italian theories of facial and physical characteristics were less than thoroughly convincing because they had been adduced from data too narrow, and dealing with too few nationalities, to be declared universal. Griffiths also found unconvincing Lombroso’s argument about the female offender as a product of civilisation. This theory could not be sustained by a look at English prisons. Nothing, Griffiths said, was more remarkable than the steady decline in admissions of women to English prisons: between 1882 and 1892, the number of women admitted to prison had fallen by 41 per cent.

Henry B. Simpson, assistant secretary at the Home Office, shared this view. Simpson insisted that from 1882 until 1894, the overall amount of
crime had been diminishing. The increases in certain offences, taken as evidence of a habitual class, did not comprise a problem of real significance. He was prepared to admit that government efforts had failed to exterminate crime but found the case for proceeding along ‘novel lines’ insubstantial. Any understanding of murderers in Italy, even a scientific understanding, was insufficient given murders seldom occurred in Britain. British criminals were not obliged to resemble a ‘criminal type’ seen in other countries. To establish the existence of a criminal type would require a very large number of persons for making comparisons. Further, the presence of a large number of undetected criminals among the respectable classes undermined conclusions about the criminal classes. The examples held up by criminal anthropologists, styled as a form of ‘atavism’ or ‘degeneration’, did represent shocking offences. But such outbursts of ‘primitive savagery bear no relation to the ordinary crime of civil society… It is not the sensational criminals that fill our prisons, but the commonplace pickpockets, swindlers, housebreakers, shoplifters, and all the many varieties of the common thief’. English legislators and administrators would be mistaken to formulate their policies in response to fear of ‘degenerates’.81

After listening to the exchange between the French and Italians at the Geneva congress, Major Griffiths decided it was time for the English to weigh in. ‘It might be productive of good’, he remarked in his report, ‘to make some medical experiments on the subject, and to collect data on which a decisive opinion might be given as to the value or otherwise of the theories put forward’.82 G.B. Griffiths, deputy medical officer of Parkhurst prison, offered to perform the field work. He planned to select a large number of prisoners convicted of similar offences, compile accurate body measurements for them and determine whether there was any statistical basis to declare that they differed from those who had not committed crime. Data collection began in 1902, and two years later, Griffiths published a small study with body measurements of a 100 ordinary and 30 lunatic criminals.83

About this time, Charles Goring took over. Goring, a medical officer attached to various English prisons, completed his M.D. in 1903. Assisted by other prison medical officers, he began collecting 96 anthropometric and psychometric measurements for some 3000 convicts. As the scale of the work mushroomed, he decided to contact Karl Pearson for his advice on preparing the tables and, after a secondment to Pearson’s laboratory at University College London, managed to submit his report for publication in 1913. He compared measurements for different classes of prisoners, and prisoners against hospital inmates; students at
Cambridge, Oxford and Aberdeen; non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Engineers. The evidence offered no assurance of a criminal type. ‘The “facts” of criminal anthropology, gathered by prejudiced observers employing unscientific methods, are inadmissible as evidence either for, or against, the existence of this type’, Goring said. ‘The type may be a real thing: but if so, it is real despite of, and not because of, the spurious evidence of its supporters; its existence may be scientifically proven by future investigation’.84

In Goring’s mind, he had exposed Lombroso’s scientific analysis as a fraud. Lombroso had founded criminology as a ‘superstitious study’ derived from preconceived notions of criminality. To prove that ‘Lombroso’s doctrine’ would never amount to anything more than the ‘superstition of criminology’, Goring even compared the head measurements for 2,349 of his convicts with those of skulls unearthed in Whitechapel in 1893. The skulls, regarded as typical of well-to-do London English who perished in the plague, displayed ‘trifling differences’. The cephalic diameters of English convicts agreed with those of Englishmen who had lived 300 years earlier. He could find none of the ‘extraordinary number of anomalies’ Lombroso claimed to have perceived in the skull of Charlotte Corday. Goring explained that by introducing evidence of ‘Charlotte Corday and of other historical personages’, Lombroso had made criminology into an ‘impossible science’ because he had confused the ‘technical’ criminals who had been imprisoned, and available for scientific analysis, with the ‘anthropological’ or ‘real’ criminals, available only to the criminologists imagination.85

Karl Pearson described *The English Convict* as ‘epoch making’. The point was not so much about Goring’s conclusion but the means by which he attained it. Many commentators had before 1919 discarded Lombroso’s theory, but they had done so on the basis of their vague notions. Goring had reached his decisions by means of science, and the study confirmed the importance of introducing the scientific study of defectives. In America, laboratories of criminology had been established within prisons, asylums and hospitals, and Pearson reckoned it was past time for England to do the same.86 *The English Convict* echoed the conclusions of a 1902 study using Pearson’s published statistical techniques. W.R. Macdonell, Pearson’s assistant at the biometric laboratory, sought to discover ‘the extent to which the criminal classes diverge in physical characters from other classes in the community’. Using anthropometric cards obtained from New Scotland Yard (made in connection with the register of habitual criminals), Macdonell compared the anatomical
characteristics of 3000 male prisoners with 1000 male students at Cambridge (cards courtesy of the Cambridge Anthropometrical Committee). ‘I conclude that there is a substantial difference in stature, and in size and shape of the head between the two classes’, Macdonell wrote, ‘I do not assert that the source of criminality is to be found in this difference, but only that criminals are drawn from a different section of the community’.87

The Italians were far from convinced that Goring had sunk Lombroso’s approach. In the Archivo di Anthropologia Criminale, Gina Lombroso-Ferrero explained that Goring had carried out the most extensive and intensive study of her father’s theory. She thanked the Home Office for initiating the research—research she hoped would be undertaken in other countries. Whereas Garófalo had asked for a study comparing only 200 persons, Goring had given him a study of 3,000. Goring was not disposed to accept the atavistic theory but had wanted to disprove it. His results represented ‘one of the most important and best arguments in favour of criminal anthropology’. The statistical analyses proved, Goring maintained, that the ‘type of the born criminal’ did not exist, but that there was ‘a physical, mental and moral type of normal person’ who tended to be convicted of crime. This English convict, compared to university students, had defective physical, mental and moral capacities. And in arguing this, Lombroso-Ferrero concluded: ‘Goring becomes more Lombrosian than Lombroso’.88 Similarly, Sante de Sanctis agreed that Goring may have been correct in denying the morphological characters, considered peculiar to criminals, to be indicative of innate criminality. But this did not refute criminal anthropology. Goring limited his analysis to the refutation of an ‘average physical type of criminal’ when the Italian criminologists had moved beyond such a simple construction to grasp sociological and psychological factors. Goring had pointed to the significance of mental deficiency and heredity. Mental deficiency had been studied by the Italians, and as for heredity, Goring’s claim that this was the principal factor made him ‘more Italian than the Italians’. But the most significant point was the conception of criminality. In his reliance on English convicts as a means of refuting claims about Italian convicts, Goring dismissed the importance of national differences. In speaking of the ‘English convict’ as a means of refuting the criminal type, Goring had created something along the lines of ‘the international criminal’, divorced from the actual bodies of criminals.89

The controversy over the significance of Goring’s work crossed the Atlantic. In the United States, it appeared two years after an English
The Invention of International Crime

translation of Lombroso’s work, *Crime, Its Causes and Remedies*, became available for the first time. Americans knew about Lombroso, from the efforts of MacDonald and others, and while some endorsed his views discussed in the book, they did not necessarily accept his view of the atavistic criminal. While all the American popularisers of Lombrosian criminology reviewed the ‘criminal type’, most also expressed doubts that it existed in the form Lombroso had claimed.90 John H. Wigmore, dean of law at Northwestern University, became one of the leading forces for the diffusion of his work. He founded the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, and the institute’s *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology* became a primary resource for learning about criminal anthropology. Wigmore recalled that ‘in 1909 we knew and cared nothing about Criminology—the very name was unknown’. From 1910 until 1917, the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology published the series in ‘modern criminal science’: English translations of European texts in criminal anthropology. These books were ‘eaten up by all groups of persons concern with crime repression’.91 Gina Lombroso-Ferrero’s response to Goring’s research, translated into English, subsequently appeared in the *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*. A prison physician who reviewed Goring’s study in the same journal shared her conclusion. In declaring criminals to be mentally and physically defective, in discounting the importance of the social environment, in referring to the hereditary transmission of criminal traits, and in distinguishing classes of criminals by mental and physical attributes, Goring became ‘the defender of the Lombrosian doctrine concerning the criminal’.92

The great debate between the Italians and the British furthered the engagement with criminal anthropology. Goring supplanted the skull with the body of the ‘English convict’ and established a new round of discussion in the United States and Europe. Some took Goring to task for his own methodological shortcomings. He regarded criminals as those confined to prison when this population necessarily meant only those arrested and convicted. He had failed to measure mental deficiency adequately; the Binet-Simon tests became available about the time he had finished data collection. Further, Goring had mistaken ‘conditions associated with criminality’ for ‘causes of crime’.93 Others complemented Goring for producing the definitive refutation of Lombroso before going on to ignore his conclusions. Dutch criminologist Wilhelm Bonger quoted Goring’s statement about there being ‘no such thing as a physical type’. But, he insisted, there was a relationship between external appearance and ‘character’; it was possible to read a person’s character...
from their face or gait. While serious research had scarcely begun, one thing was certain: the relationship was not of the ‘coarsely elementary nature which Lombroso imagined it to be’.94

Conclusions

Criminal anthropology, fortified by concepts such as degeneration, provided the means by which an explanation for rural banditry in a portion of the Italian peninsula became a means of explaining criminal behaviour among peoples around the world. Few accepted Lombroso’s theory of atavistic criminality, but many believed he had in the study of criminals demonstrated a valuable route to knowledge of criminal behaviour. In their critiques, reviews, assessments and refutations, they shared his language. The grammar of science transcended differences in national politics, legal systems and cultural differences in the sense that it gave doctors, lawyers, lawmakers and government officials in different countries a means of talking to one other about reforms. Criminal anthropology enabled a member of the Italian parliament to discuss habitual criminality with German law professors. It allowed a prison physician in England to regard a study of English prisoners as a definitive statement about crime in various regions of Italy. It provided for the laboratory at Paris, established for criminal identification, to become the model for research into criminality within Argentina’s national penitentiary at Buenos Aires.

Goring showed how Lombroso’s attempt to apply science to immoral conduct could only be properly assessed with more science. This was ‘epoch making’ though not for the reasons Pearson thought. For the greater part of history until the nineteenth century, political leaders assumed that knowledge of the past could inform them of how to organise society. The past presented a reservoir of knowledge from which to choose the best course on which to proceed into the future.95 The criminologists presented scientistic observation not only as the best, but the only, source of knowledge for planning. Social science supplanted history as the basis of knowledge for statecraft. Criminal anthropology reduced the understanding of crime to the human body, and with it, the significance of history as a basis for means of enquiry. All the historical knowledge necessary for grasping and responding to the problem of crime could be found in the human skull; the natural history of crime would be made into a policy science by means of a calliper and angle.
Conclusion

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Great Britain confronted crime problems believed to have originated beyond its borders. In a world tied together by intercontinental railways, undersea cables, steamship routes, telegraph wires and wireless signals, trouble in ‘far-away places’ was seen as jeopardising domestic pursuits. The misery inflicted by the Russian empire on Jews transferred to London in the form of alien criminals. The trade in young women for sexual exploitation brought white slaves through British ports on their way from Eastern Europe to Asia and South America. Anarchists with grievances against governments across the Continent gravitated to London where they lectured, published and plotted. Clever, cosmopolitan criminals took advantage of every advance in communication, transportation and commerce to perpetrate theft and fraud. The problems were even bigger, so it seemed, than the biggest empire. Crime was international.

This confrontation was not about surging rates of crime, as suggested by statistics (although the criminologists who appeared in the 1880s were happy to manufacture and supply them). Nor was it limited to activities within the traditional scope of criminal law. It was about expectations and contingencies, speculations and forecasts, and anxieties and doubts. It was about what people thought was happening, would happen or might happen, given the ‘world-shrinking’ tendency of technologies on display. Domestic crime signified the failure of police and prisons, the need for another approach and a change of administration.\(^1\) International crime invoked a threat from a foreign source, and earlier in time; it coincided with worries about the pace and direction of social, economic and cultural change. Professional criminality, alien criminality, white slavery and anarchist violence provoked some popular fear, but in the making of crime as an international
issue, the extent of actual victimisation was secondary to potential and future victimisation. The international dimensions of these activities amounted to rising barometric pressure, and a set of officials, reformers and critics thought they could read the signs of an impending storm.

The British Empire during this period operated what was the largest criminal justice system in the world, an intercontinental network of policies, practices and techniques that extended across the planet. Colonial experience informed the understanding of problems in England. When government authorities encountered anarchist outrages, they turned to the knowledge acquired from dealing with ‘secret societies’ in the colonies. At the same time, colonial administrators saw crime through the lens of social attitudes in England. They approached crime problems, whether in the West Indies, Far East or Mediterranean, as the work of a familiar criminal class. The vision of a ‘global criminal class’ projected an understanding of crime in London onto peoples and cultures in various places; it made strange immorality understandable and predictable. It contributed to the ideal of the empire as an imagined social entity and advanced the rationale of colonisation. It also contributed to an emerging internationalist view of crime. While important work on the role of empire has been carried out, there is room for much more. The ‘cross-fertilisation’, as Georgina Sinclair and Chris A. Williams put it, between domestic and colonial policing suggests a wider source of influences on ‘British’ policy and practice.

Britain participated in international conferences convened in response to particular problems of crime. The alarming frequency and spontaneity of anarchist violence drew the nations of Europe to Rome for a conference in 1898, although the conferees did not reach a diplomatic agreement. Great Britain championed the right of asylum in keeping with liberal values of free trade, despite political pressure from foreign and domestic sources. Britain preferred to collect and analyse its own information and did not trust other nations to reveal useful and timely warnings. The authorities chose to rely on surveillance techniques developed in Ireland, which were not allowed to become the basis of diplomatic discussion in Rome. Further, London had not experienced anarchist violence as had capital cities on the continent and celebrated immunity from anarchist attack as did the United States, which did not bother to attend the conference. British and American authorities chose to regard anarchist violence as a foreign import.

White slave trading attracted greater international cooperation, at least on paper. More than a dozen European states met for a series of congresses on the issue, beginning with unofficial conference in London.
in 1889. These congresses produced the Paris treaty of 1904, agreed by Britain, France and other European nations and, later, the United States. The congresses of 1910 in Paris and Madrid provided for the infliction of severe punishment on white slave traders, which reflected a level of consensus, although Britain took its pledge further than anyone else. Passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1912) reinstated whipping as a punishment, which although endorsed in some colonies, did not find equivalent support in Europe. Unlike anarchism, there was a cross-national movement that spurred government action: Stead’s newspaper campaign focused attention on the need for urgent action and religious and philanthropic groups kept the issue on the public agenda. The National Vigilance Association, which had organised the first congress, supplied the leadership for an international bureau provided for by the Paris agreement. The Jewish Association for Protection of Girls and Women hosted its own international conference (in 1910) and became the model for similar organisations in other countries.

Attention to anarchist outrages and the white slave trade reveal the extent to which governments had started to think of crime as numbering among the ‘trivial incidents’ that could precipitate wider conflicts. In Britain, police, journalists and others complained about the arrival of foreign anarchists; the German and Italian governments complained about Britain giving shelter to their enemies. The Italian government worried enough about the repercussions of Italians carrying out murders in other countries to host the Rome conference. Insults, claims and allegations about the identity of anarchists, white slave traffickers, professional criminals and foreign criminals took on meaning in a world shaped by a changing balance of power. America’s increasing influence in world political affairs and Germany’s rising industrial supremacy supplanted the world in which French had been the language that mattered in international diplomacy. The feeble attack on the Greenwich Observatory in 1894 could have had profound consequences. As it happened, it did not amount to much more than rumours about foreign intrigue and agents provocateur, but serious damage to the structure by a man with ties to anarchists in France would have raised a diplomatic challenge. The most significant thing about the event was the identification of the observatory as an international symbol, the clock by which all the watches, in all the pockets, of all the people in the world were set.

Concerns about alien criminality did not lead to international cooperation. Although some British commentators urged development of a coordinated system, the international passport did not emerge until the Great War. In Britain, a number of journalists, MPs and police
officials fulminated over the menace of alien criminality, particularly immigrant Jews who were associated not only with white slave trading and anarchist violence but also with professional criminality. This agitation resulted in the Aliens Act (1905), one of the first efforts in Europe to control immigration at the point of entry. Advocates pointed to restrictive legislation adopted in America and the effectiveness of police registration as practiced in Germany and elsewhere on the continent. The anti-immigrant lobby did not get what they wanted but succeeded in popularising the foreign element in criminal activity. According to this logic, London’s crime problem originated along Russia’s frontier, and specifically, in the backwardness and treachery of Jews who resided there. Immigrants brought their strange criminality with them on the journey; it was one of the few things many possessed on entry into the United Kingdom. The alleged plague of alien crime provided a rationale for governments to project regulation over interstitial spaces: bodies of water, frontier regions and, in time, the skies overhead. The links between criminal identification, individual identity and surveillance within an international context have been revealed, but there is more of interest in this emerging area of historical research.

If governments were slow to respond to the ‘need’ for a universal system of establishing individual identity, the criminologists were not. Lombroso, the leading populariser of scientific criminology, welcomed Bertillon, the inventor of anthropometric identification, as a contributor to the practical usefulness of criminal anthropology. Lombroso and Bertillon shared, along with police and prison officials, a belief in the rise of ‘professional criminality’. The prospect of cosmopolitan criminals who took advantage of modern methods for communication and travel pointed to the importance of establishing coordinated systems for identifying, tracking and monitoring individuals. The criminologists also claimed expertise over anarchist violence. Italian, French, Austrian and other specialists in the aetiology of criminal behaviour issued tracts concerning anarchism; their conceptions of ‘political crime’ became the starting point for diplomats gathered at the Rome anti-anarchist conference. From the beginning, criminology was meant to be international. And although criminologists talked about professional criminality and anarchism, the international pretensions of this aspiring field of knowledge derived less from the object of study than the means of enquiry.

The scientific analysis of criminal body, championed at the seven congresses of criminal anthropology between 1885 and 1911, universalised the study of criminal behaviour. Criminal anthropology provided
a language in which to express agreement and disagreement about the formula of criminality with the assurance that research undertaken in one area could be generalised in another. Britain professed not to be interested in what Lombroso had to offer but ended up sponsoring the largest study of criminal anthropology to date and furthered interest in the criminal body into the twentieth century. While the name of Cesare Lombroso appears in formative discussions of criminology in countries throughout the world, the riddle of his legacy remains as perplexing as ever. David Garland and Paul Rock demonstrate how little Lombroso’s ideas mattered to developments in criminology and criminal justice within Britain;8 Richard Wetzell and Nicole Rafter show how Lombrosian language metamorphosed into criminal biology and contributed to the climate of opinion that facilitated implementation of Nazi eugenics policy.9

The internationalist view of crime to emerge in the late nineteenth century offered stark representations of crime but did not furnish a coherent guide to action. Some aspects of this view were more imaginary than real. Concerns about professional criminality, alien criminality, white slave trading and anarchist violence included fabulous elements from a worldwide criminal class to ‘international Jewry’. At the same time, many of those who advocated this internationalist view disagreed about causes and strategies. The pace of technological change, surge of migration, changing role of women and decadence of fin de siècle culture figured more or less prominently in explanations, depending on the source. The British government took steps to alleviate the threat of international crime by means of legislation and secret practices as well as by treaty.

By comparison, the United States was less involved in international agreements, and Germany and France, more involved. Americans preferred national legislation (or state legislation) over international cooperation and only joined conferences dealing with white slavery. Germany signed the ‘secret protocol’ for the international war on anarchism drawn up at St Petersburg in 1904 and, along with France, participated in the first international congress of police held at Monaco in 1914. Whether international structures put into place in response to perceptions of international crime have reduced victimisation or enhanced repression is another important area for further research. White slavery, a key issue for feminist organisation, became in the interwar period a means of increasing women’s participation in international affairs. At the same time, Hitler ranted about prostitution and international police, and prison organisations fell under Nazi control.10
All of the voices across various conversations—alien criminality, white slavery, anarchist violence, etc.—combined to promote consciousness of social, political and economic problems that transcended national borders. In Britain, government authorities shared with critics of government authority concerns about the impact of an interconnected world, despite their disagreements about what needed to be done in response to these impacts. Collectively, governments, voluntary organisations and individuals made crime an international issue of some significance. The people who lived in the decades between 1881 and 1914 were the first to grasp crime as an international issue, and they introduced ways of thinking and responding that continue into the present era.
Notes

Introduction


10. E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875–1914* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 6. Philipp Blom makes a similar observation: ‘In large part, the uncertain future facing us early in the twenty-first century arose from the inventions, thoughts and transformations of those unusually rich fifteen years between 1900 and 1914, a period of extraordinary creativity in the arts and sciences, of enormous change in society and in the very image people had of themselves’ (p. 3). See his *The Vertigo Years: Change and Culture in the West, 1900–1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2008).


20. And, it worth pointing out, that the search for national traditions in criminology has produced a wealth of historical scholarship. See, for example, Shadd Maruna, ‘Crime, Punishment and the Search for Order in Ireland’ *British Journal of Criminology* 47 (2007), pp. 980–2.


1 Technology of Change


2. Hartsfield refers to the period before the First World War as ‘the golden age of professional criminals’. He sees the professional crime in connection with cities and corruption, but also as ‘a symbol of both America’s promise and danger’ (p. 8). See Larry K. Hartsfield, *The American Response to Professional Crime, 1870–1917* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985).


49. ‘Pictures by Telegraph from Paris’ Daily Mirror, 8 November 1907, p. 3; ‘First Picture by Cable’ Daily Mirror, 9 November 1907, p. 3.
50. ‘How Pictures Come by Wire’ Daily Mirror, 29 April 1908, p. 3.
68. Charles van Onselen, ‘Jewish Police Informers in the Atlantic World, 1880-1914’ *Historical Journal* 50 (2007), p. 139. Because the United States lacked a national police system, it was unable to meet its information-sharing commitments under the 1904 agreement on white slavery (Chapter 4) and for this reason declined to enter into a similar agreement concerning anarchist violence (Chapter 5). See Richard Bach Jensen, ‘The United States, International Policing and the War Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1900–1914’ *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13 (2001), pp. 26, 31.


2 World Empire


Caribbean, 1835–95’ in Anderson and Killingray, eds, *Policing the Empire*, p. 84.
15. ‘Opium Smuggling in India’ *Blackwood’s Magazine* 151 (1892), pp. 669–77.
25. *Criminology and Detection* (Tinnevelly, India: Institute of Criminology, 1915), p. 3. British Library. At a meeting of the Indian Medical Congress in 1909, the president of the medico-legal section devoted his address to the opening up of criminal anthropology to the large field of study within India. Ellis, *The Criminal*, p. 403.
39. Governor of Barbados, 27 June 1904 (CO 28/263) and 30 August 1902 (CO 28/257); Governor of Jamaica, 19 November 1914 (CO 137/705). National Archives, London.
44. Ronald Holmes, ‘The Fingerprint of the Foreigner: Colonizing the Criminal Body in 1890s Detective Fiction and Criminal Anthropology’ *ELH* 61 (1994),


54. O’Ferrall to Grey, 7 May 1849. National Archives of Malta, Rabat (GOV 1.2.24).


73. Winward Islands, Grenada ... National Archives, London (CO 321/6/41)
74. Kimberley to Lefroy, 19 January 1872; Bermuda 1872 (CO 37/202/4).
75. Musgrave to Carnavon, 2 November 1877 Jamaica 1877 (CO 137/485); Lefroy to Hicks-Beach, 6 May 1878 (CO 295/281).

3 Alien Criminality


14. Robert Anderson, ‘At Scotland Yard’ Blackwood’s Magazine 187 (March 1910), pp. 357–8. Anderson went so far as to claim (in 1910) that he knew ‘the ripper’s’ identity, but could not reveal it as it would have little ‘public benefit’. The man, he said, had been confined to an asylum, and the only person who had ever had a good view of him, identified him at once, but when the witness learned the suspect was ‘a fellow-Jew’ he declined to swear to it.


19. In Germany, a newspaper journalist suggested that ‘Jack’ was only a functionary, part of a larger ‘international Jewish conspiracy’. Gilman, ‘I’m Down on Whores’, p. 159.


55. Ibid., pp. 258, 551.


58. Ibid., pp. 252, 431.


63. ‘The Jewish Lads’ Brigade and the Alien Immigration Question’ *Jewish Chronicle* (23 August 1901), p. 6.


78. Ibid., p. 135.

4 White Slave Trade


16. The articles appear in the *Pall Mall Gazette* during 4–10 July 1885.


29. For a more extensive discussion of the motivations and activities of the JAPGW against the larger question of Jewish identities in the English context, see Paul Knepper, ‘“Jewish Trafficking” and London Jews in the Age of Migration’ Journal of Modern Jewish Studies 6 (2007), pp. 239–56.
31. JAPGW, First Minute Book, Mtg. of 20 March 1885. MS 173, 2/1/1. Special Collections, Hartley Library, University of Southampton. [hereafter: Hartley Library].
32. JAPGW, First Minute Book, Mtg. of 20 November 1885. Hartley Library.
34. JAPGW, Second Minute Book, Mtg. of 10 January 1888. MS 173, 2/1/2. Hartley Library.
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37. Lady Battersea, Reminiscences, p. 147.
40. JAPGW annual report (1902), 29. Box A-9, File 17. Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Centre, University of Tel Aviv Library. [hereafter: Diaspora Research Centre].
42. Bristow, Prostitution and Prejudice, p. 242.
44. ‘Our Seamy Side’ Jewish Chronicle, 15 July 1910, p. 16.
63. Bell, Fighting the Traffic, pp. 207–8.
64. Correspondence Respecting the International Conferences on Obscene Publications and the ‘White Slave Traffic’ (London: HMSO, 1912, Cd 6547).
66. Correspondence Respecting the 4th International (1911), pp. 3, 5.
68. Ibid.
69. Correspondence Respecting the International (1907), p. 11.
70. Hansard, Commons Parliamentary Debate, 5th ser., vol. 43 (1 November 1912) cols768–9, 770, 777, 786.
74. Correspondence Respecting the International (1907), p. 4
75. Ibid., p. 5–6.
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85. JAPGW annual report (1898), 15. London Library.
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88. Correspondence Respecting the International (1907), p. 11.

5 Anarchist Outrages

International Policing and the War against Anarchist Terrorism, 1900–1914’ Terrorism and Political Violence 13 (2001), p. 16.
216 Notes

52. Ibid., p. 5 and ‘The Explosion at Greenwich’ (22 February 1894), p. 5.
57. Melville Macnaghten, Days of My Years (London: Edward Arnold, 1914), p. 78.
58. Latouche, Anarchy, p. 132.
69. The Times, ‘Sir Howard Vincent on the Anarchists’ (5 June 1906), p. 3; Macnaghten, Days of My Years, p. 78. In the 1890s, Americans celebrated the same immunity from anarchists violence: anarchists, whether imported or home-grown, had no reason to attack public officials. Jensen, ‘The United States’, p. 17.
78. Sweeney, At Scotland Yard, pp. 271–2.
Notes 217

91. The Times, ‘Sir Howard Vincent on the Anarchists’ 5 June 1906, p. 3.
95. Keegan to Anderson, telegram of 27 April 1892; Keegan to Anderson, memorandum of 3 March 1897; Anderson to Under-Secretary of State, 16 March 1897. National Archives, London (HO 144/587/B2840C).
103. Marquess of Lansdowne to Scott (4 February 1902). Correspondence Respecting the Measures … (FO 412/68). Richard Bach Jensen makes the point that the provisions of the St Petersburg protocol concerning anarchists mirrored
the Paris agreement concerning white slavery that had been agreed earlier that same year. Jensen, ‘The United States’, pp. 25–6.


6 The Criminologists


27. Wilson, Criminal Anthropology, p. 650.


29. Ferrari, ‘Professor Ferri’s Comment’, p. 49.


38. Ibid., p. 36.
39. Ibid., pp. 16–22.


59. Ibid., p. 652.


Notes

82. Report to the Secretary (1896), p. 12.
86. Ibid., pp. 4, 20.

Conclusion


4. This was true even in the empire. In India, the British government tended to label all Indian nationalists carrying out violent acts as anarchists linked directly to European groups. When in 1908, a bomb blast in Bengal killed two British subjects The Times of London surmised the anarchist menace in Europe had reached ‘a certain section’ of the population of India. Richard B. Jensen, ‘The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880–1930s’ Terrorism and Political Violence 21 (2009), p. 90.

5. This can be seen in a 1909 despatch from the British Consul at Buenos Aires suggested a connection between white slave traders and anarchists. The consul had received a letter from an anarchist society, threatening to blow him up within the year if he did not assist two Russians carrying British passports. The letter writer claimed to have two bombs: one for the consul and one for the President of the Argentine Republic. The consul surmised the letter may have been a hoax but could not dismiss it because the two Russians, in the hands of the Buenos Aires police, had been arrested recently for charges connected with white slavery. The ‘Russians’ turned out to be English-born Jews, and when another despatch informed the Home Office they had been expelled and were on their way towards London, the matter reached the highest levels of government, the Secretary of State Sir Edward Grey and Winston Churchill. Jose Moya, ‘The Positive Side of Stereotypes: Jewish Anarchists in Early-Twentieth-Century Buenos Aires’ Jewish History 18 (2004), p. 23.


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