

## [Christopher T. Husbands](#)

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## Discussion paper

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# German-/Austrian-origin Professors of German in British universities during the First World War: the lessons of four case studies

**Christopher T. Husbands**

Emeritus Reader in Sociology, London School of Economics and Political Sociology

**Abstract:** The treatment received during the First World War by four German-/Austrian-origin Professors of German at four different higher-education institutions in England and Wales is considered, looking at how their fates were determined both by factors within their institutions and also externally by the relevant apparatuses of the local and national state. These are Julius Freund at Sheffield, Albert Wilhelm Schüddekopf at Leeds, Robert Charles Priebisch at University College London, and Carl Hermann Ethé at University College of Wales Aberystwyth. The rather different fates of each are explained using a number of criteria, including their history of naturalization, their support among their academic colleagues, the strength of local feeling concerning their continued employment by their institution, the role of their institution's governing body, and whether or not the local municipality had significant control over their institution's finances. It is concluded that, for each case, a different and aleatory individual factor largely determined his fate, thus vitiating any general explanatory principle that might have been derived from a comparative analysis of the respective situations.

**Keywords:** treatment of Germans, First World War, universities, University of Sheffield, University of Leeds, University College London, University College of Wales Aberystwyth.

‘I tell you naught for your comfort,  
Yea, naught for your desire’

G K Chesterton (1874-1936), *The Ballad of the White Horse*, Book 1, ‘The Vision of the King’

An earlier article<sup>1</sup> by this author on the same theme as this one presented all that could then be discovered about the treatment of Karl Wichmann (1868-1948) during the First World War by the University of Birmingham, where he had been Professor of German since 1907. Wichmann was prevailed upon to resign his professorship in March 1917. However, he was far from the only German-origin academic, of professorial status or below, who encountered actual or threatened dismissal by British higher education institutions at that time.

This article gives detailed case-study analyses of four further such examples that, unlike the article concentrating solely on Wichmann, asks whether it is possible to use them for the comparative analysis of their different outcomes. All institutions concerned were operating in the same political context from the Home Office and the War Office about the treatment of enemy aliens and of those who might be considered to have pro-German sympathies; however, variations of treatment notwithstanding, the article seeks to discuss what institutional differences, if any, between the respective universities might have led to their outcomes. Among factors that are evaluated in this assessment are:

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher T. Husbands, ‘German academics in British universities during the First World War: the case of Karl Wichmann’, *German Life and Letters*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2007, 493–517. That article cites relevant literature about the treatment of German nationals in the First World War, in both higher education and generally, that it would be redundant to repeat in this one.

- The strength of local municipal interests in the governance of the relevant University
- The strength of local feeling concerning the employment of staff of German origin
- The nature of the role of the various institutions of the national state in each case
- The degree of institutional peer support of the person concerned from inside his University
- The degree of involvement by the person concerned in the affairs of his University

The examined cases are those of Julius Freund at Sheffield, Albert Wilhelm Schüddekopf at Leeds, Robert Charles Priebisch at University College London, and Carl Hermann Ethé at University College of Wales Aberystwyth.

### **The case of Julius Freund**

Julius Freund was Karl Wichmann's successor from 1 January 1908 in the Chair of German at the University of Sheffield, which Wichmann had vacated in 1907. Freund was born on 23 April 1871 in Marburg (Hesse). From 1882 to 1889 he attended the Gymnasium Philippinum in Marburg and from 1889 to 1892 he studied philology at Marburg. He received his DrPhil from Marburg on 3 August 1899, and also had MA degrees from Marburg and Sheffield. After well-attested military service in 1894 and 1895, he became a teacher for one year at the Friedrichsgymnasium in Kassel and then Lecturer in German at the University of Uppsala in 1896-97 and at the University of Lund from 1898 to 1902. Before taking the Sheffield post he had been Lecturer in German Language and Teutonic Philology at the University of St Andrews till 1907. He held the Chair of German at Sheffield till 1916. On 25 December 1912 he married Aenne

(also Anna Sara) Eisenberg, who was born on 9 May 1886 at Hofgeismar (near Kassel in Hesse). Their religion was Jewish.

Chapman's otherwise exhaustive history of the University of Sheffield is brief to the point of disingenuousness on the matter of Freund's departure. He merely says that 'when the Professor of German, Freund, was interned, he still being a German national, the Department of German was handed over to J. D. Jones'.<sup>2</sup> Freund had continued normally in post till July 1915, when he was interned.<sup>3</sup> He then continued to be employed and was paid at quarter salary until the end of 1916, when he was dismissed. Although this was not known to the Sheffield University authorities during the drama that followed, when war was declared Freund had in fact presented himself on 4 August 1914 to the German consul in Sheffield as a volunteer for frontline service<sup>4</sup> – one imagines that consciences about his fate might have been less troubled if this fact had been generally known. It was apparently impracticable then to bring him back to Germany, which is why for the time being he remained teaching at Sheffield.

Quite a full account of how he was treated by the University of Sheffield can be gathered from surviving material in the University Archive, especially minutes of relevant meetings of the Faculty of Arts, the Finance Committee, the Senate, and the Council. One may also consult copies of university correspondence from the Vice-Chancellor at the time, Herbert Albert Laurens Fisher.<sup>5</sup> Copies of the correspondence to which some of his letters were obviously replies apparently no longer exist, although the content of Fisher's reply often allows one a reasonable divination of the gist to which he was replying. Although Freund was dismissed, the story of the process of his dismissal is

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur W. Chapman, *The Story of a Modern University: A History of the University of Sheffield* (London: Oxford University Press for the University of Sheffield 1955), 259. The principal figures, including Dr John David Jones, among the universities of each case that is discussed are given in an Appendix to this article.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Newton's history of the Department of German at the University of Sheffield gives some further details, but is none the less far from exhaustive of potential sources. See Gerald Newton, *German Studies at the University of Sheffield: An Historical Perspective, 1880-1988 Together with a Graduate List, 1910-1988* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, Department of Germanic Studies 1988), 55, 67–9.

<sup>4</sup> See Der Verwaltungs-Direktor der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Personal-Akten des Lektors Professor Dr Julius Freund, Archive of the Humboldt Universität Berlin.

<sup>5</sup> A. Ryan, 'Fisher, Herbert Albert Laurens (1865–1940)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004); online edn, Jan 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33141>, accessed 17 April 2009].

certainly a nuanced one and his circumstance clearly attracted much sympathy from many of his colleagues and even, on occasions, from the Vice-Chancellor, who clearly had a tricky role to play as events unfolded.

On 18 August 1915 Fisher wrote to Freund as 'My dear Freund', then in a prisoner of war camp at Handforth in Cheshire, saying that he had written to the Home Secretary asking the latter for Freund to be given a degree of privacy to carry on his 'scientific work' and requesting Freund to say whether any consequent steps had been taken. On 13 September 1915 he wrote to Freund's wife, who was then living in London and had been served with a repatriation order; she seems to have inquired of him whether Freund might be released before the end of the War. Fisher was sympathetic, but unable to offer much positive information, suggesting that she should approach the Home Office with her inquiry. On 5 October 1915 Fisher wrote again to Freund saying that he had written to the Secretary at the War Office to urge that Freund be sent to 'one of the privileged camps, either Lofthouse Park, Wakefield or Alexandra Palace, London'. Instead, however, Freund ended up in the Aliens Camp at Douglas, Isle of Man.

By mid-1916 the University was concerned about the status and amount of Freund's continuing emolument. On 15 June 1916 Fisher wrote to the Military Governor of the Douglas camp asking first of all of the status of Mrs Freund as to whether or not she was known to have returned to Germany. However, his further question was:

Do you consider that, in order to maintain Dr Freund in a sufficient state of comfort to enable him to continue his University studies, it is necessary for the University to continue to pay him a sum of £100 annually? The position we have taken hitherto is that Dr Freund still remains a member of the University Staff and we desire that the unfortunate circumstances of the War should interrupt his studies as little as may be. On the other hand, we cannot afford to be unduly generous and we should greatly appreciate your advice upon the point.

Clearly, this inquiry produced a swift answer from the Governor of the camp, though his actual response has not survived. On 20 June 1916 Fisher wrote to the University's

Treasurer, Albert John Hobson, and to its Pro-Chancellor, Sir George Franklin, in the following terms:

I have just heard from Lt.-Col. Madoc, the Commandant of the Aliens' Camp, Douglas, to the following effect.

'Professor Freund informs me that his wife returned to Germany on October 12<sup>th</sup> 1915. I consider that £100 a year about covers his expenses with practically no margin. He lives very quietly and naturally gives no trouble. He is at present engaged in writing an Anglo-German dictionary.'

I notice that Dr Freund has exchanged his original plan of a grammar for the plan of an Anglo-German dictionary. And he may certainly very well improve upon the existing Anglo-German dictionaries, all of which appear to me to be bad.<sup>6</sup>

I am writing today to Dr Freund to make the enquiries that were suggested at the meeting of our Council yesterday [i.e., on 19 June 1916].

Fisher's letter to Freund of 20 June 1916 began 'My dear Freund'. He wrote:

I am sorry to say that the question has been raised by one of the members of our University Council as to the continuance of your quarter's salary, which is being paid to you during your period of detention.

The letter continued that, if Freund's intention was not to return to the University, some members of the Council thought that paying this quarter-salary was not justified. Fisher

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<sup>6</sup> This is an interesting comment, suggesting that Fisher was seeking to justify to his Treasurer and Chancellor that Freund was spending his time usefully in captivity on academically relevant work. Fisher was a cultivated polymath who almost certainly read German but one imagines that, for example, Karl Breul and the executors of Eduard Muret and Daniel Sanders (nineteenth-century authors of what remains one of the most impressive works in English-German lexicography) might have had very good reason to bridle at such a judgement.

asked Freund whether he would return to Sheffield or be more comfortable in Germany. Fisher continued, seeking one feels to be diplomatic but firm:

And am I not right in supposing that you were liable to military service in Germany at the beginning of the War and that you definitely decided before England had entered into the quarrel [*sic*] not to fulfil your military obligation in Germany, with the result that your position in Germany would not be very agreeable if you were to return at the end of the War.<sup>7</sup>

In either case, I am afraid that I can give you no positive assurance with respect to your continuance in the German chair. Personally, I should be very sorry to lose your services at the University. On the other hand, I am bound to recognise that the state of feeling might be such at the conclusion of the War that the position would be uncomfortable for you and that the work of the department would consequently suffer. I hope that this will not be the case, but it is certainly a possible contingency.

The letter concluded ‘With very kind regards, Yours faithfully’, unlike the earlier one of 18 August 1915, which was signed off with ‘Yours sincerely’.

To its credit, The University does seem to have made some attempt to ‘play fair’ by Freund, and it could no doubt have dismissed him earlier and with notice for want of performance had it been minded to do so. In the light of crucial meetings of the Finance Committee and the Council on 19 June 1916, as described below, Fisher wrote on 21 June 1916 to the Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office saying that the University Council wanted any information on whether English lecturers or Professors in German Universities or Schools now interned continued to receive any part of their emoluments from academic bodies served in before the War. He mentioned the example of Mr Lionel

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<sup>7</sup> Given what is now known of Freund’s volunteering to serve on the front line, Fisher’s supposition was clearly wrong.



Strachan,<sup>8</sup> who purportedly held the Chair of English at Heidelberg – had he been interned and what were his salary arrangements? In the light of later events concerning Freund, one must infer what the response to this was, but Fisher later wrote again to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs thanking him for the information on the matter that Lord Hardinge of Penshurst (1858-1944) had ‘kindly sent him’.

No record of a letter from the Vice-Chancellor to Freund about the latter’s dismissal exists and the apparently final letter from Fisher to Freund was dated 30 June 1916. It was a response to a reply from Freund to Fisher’s previous letter to him of 20 June 1916, written in the light of the Finance Committee and the Council meetings on the 19<sup>th</sup>. It is clear what the gist of Freund’s response must have been. Fisher wrote:

May I presume that you would desire to become naturalized as a British citizen after the conclusion of the War, as part of your general intention to resume your professorial duties here? You see that I am very anxious to put your case as strongly as possible before our Council. And can you tell me whether, under German law, you can cease to be a German citizen?

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<sup>8</sup> This is Lionel Richard Mortimer Strachan (MA, Oxford) (11 November 1876–10 January 1954), son of Richard and Bessie Strachan, born in Islington, married in Thornton Heath on 9 September 1903, and died in Birmingham. His father was a clerk in the Meteorological Office. In fact, Fisher was rather overstating Strachan’s status. He was indeed at Heidelberg but was merely a Lector in English there from 1 October 1901 until he was dismissed in September 1914. Thus, his fate would not have been too helpful to Freund for a determination of his treatment and it is not known whether Fisher received any answer to his inquiry on Strachan’s treatment.

In fact, Strachan was interned as an enemy alien prisoner of war in the internment camp at Ruhleben. In May 1915 he was petitioning for his release from Ruhleben. There is a letter from the Heidelberg University authorities dated 21 May 1915 to the local military command saying that Strachan was dismissed by the University at the outbreak of war and that the University would not intend to re-engage him. However, it did also say that he had served the University well and had enjoyed the high regard of his professorial colleagues. It is unlikely that there had been any continuing payment to Strachan. He was apparently employed on a basis that paid him according to the number of students enrolled in his classes at Heidelberg, an arrangement that could hardly continue in Ruhleben. However, it does seem from his Heidelberg file that the University paid him, well after the start of the War and after his dismissal, what he has earned in his final period of actual teaching at the University before his dismissal.

From 1919 till his retirement in 1942 Strachan was Lecturer in German at the University of Birmingham. When he retired, he was representative of the non-professorial staff on the Faculty of Arts at Birmingham. His published work, all apparently done whilst he was in Germany, seems to have been confined to translations into English of various theological texts.

I need hardly say that I have the greatest sympathy for you in your trouble, and hope that you are able to pursue your philological work with as little disturbance as possible.

The letter was signed off with 'Yours very truly' but seems to have been the last recorded correspondence from Fisher to Freund.

These correspondences were ongoing whilst Freund's case was being discussed by the relevant University bodies. Reviewing the two sequences of material enables a fairly thorough account of what happened to be determined.

Meeting on 5 October 1914, before the issue of internment arose but after the start of the War and also after the date by which Freund, as a German national, would have had to register as an alien enemy, the University's Finance Committee agreed a salary of £450 for Freund for 1 October 1914 to 30 September 1915. A year later, after his internment, the same Committee agreed on 4 October 1915 that 'the Professor of German be paid his full salary up to the date of his internment and afterward a quarter salary'. On 8 October 1915 a meeting of Senate agreed with a report from the Faculty of Arts that 'Dr J D Jones be appointed to take charge of the Department of German during the absence of the Professor'. This decision was re-affirmed by the Faculty of Arts on 1 December 1915, then by the Senate on 17 December 1917, finally by the Council on 7 January 1916.

There was then an uneasy hiatus till late June 1916. Uncertain how to handle the matter, the Finance Committee discussed this at its meeting on 19 June 1916 and resolved 'that the question of continuing payment of a quarter salary to the Professor of German during his internment be deferred until the next meeting'. However, the Council was seemingly unhappy at this prevarication. Meeting later the same day, it heard the Minutes of the Finance Committee and resolved 'that the payment of a quarter salary to the Professor of German, who is interned, be continued to the 24<sup>th</sup> instant [i.e., for a further five days], and that an intimation be sent to him that the question of making further payments is under consideration'. It is not incontrovertibly ascertainable whether or not, when Council met on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Fisher had the information from Lieutenant-Colonel

Madoc at Freund's camp that Freund could just about manage on £100 per year; this intelligence may have arrived actually on the 20<sup>th</sup>. In any case, Fisher's letter of 20 June to Freund as a result of the Council resolution of 19 June, discussed above, referred to 'one of the members of our University Council' having raised the matter. The Council Minutes do not record the views of individuals but it is perhaps to be wondered whether the reference to 'one' was not a benign attempt by Fisher to soften the blow for Freund. It seems unlikely that the resolution of the Council, given what its terms were, could have been passed without a significant proportion of the membership in at least passive support. If one person particularly led the cause, it is not known who this was, although subsequent events suggest that it might have been the Lord Bishop of Sheffield, Leonard Hedley Burrows, who was first Bishop from 1914 of the newly created Sheffield diocese.

Although the issue was already apparently almost a *fait accompli*, the crucial decisions on Freund's fate were formally taken on 4 September 1916. The Finance Committee met on that date with the following present: Hobson, the University Treasurer, in the Chair, Franklin the Pro-Chancellor, Fisher, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hall, Professor Pye-Smith, Professor Ripper, and Mr Turner. The Committee considered the question of continuing the payment of a quarter salary to the Professor of German during his internment and resolved:

That the Finance Committee feel that it is very doubtful whether the University Council will consider it expedient to have a German teaching German after the War. That holding the view that a German Professor in an English University should be treated as we would wish an English Professor to be treated in a German university, the Finance Committee feel that the present allowance to Professor Freund should be continued during his internment.

The Council met later on the same day, the 4<sup>th</sup>. Given the importance of its decision, it is appropriate to name all attendees, who were: Franklin in the Chair, Fisher, The Lord Bishop of Sheffield (Burrows), Professor Baker, Mr Bennett, Mr Newton Coombe, Mr Ellis, Mr Willoughby Firth, Mr Holmshaw, Professor Leathes, Mr Marsh, Mr Osborn,

Professor Pye-Smith, Professor Ripper, Mr Turner, and Professor Wynne. Apologies for absence came from Hobson, Colonel Hughes, Professor Arnold and Messrs Vickers, Watson and Blake Walker. Having heard the Minutes of the preceding Finance Committee, the Council resolved that ‘so much of the acts and proceedings of the Finance Committee as relates to the payment to Professor Freund of part of the salary while interned as an alien enemy be not confirmed’. This was proposed by Mr Bennett and seconded by Mr Holmshaw. The Council resolved, proposed by the Lord Bishop and seconded by Mr Ellis:

That three months’ notice be given to Professor Freund to terminate his tenure of the Chair of German in the University; the notice to expire at the end of the Michaelmas Term 1916. That the payment to Professor Freund during the currency of this notice be at the present modified rate of £112 10s [£112.50] per annum.

The action of the Council was clearly not popular with Freund’s immediate colleagues. A meeting of the Faculty of Arts on 6 October 1916, presumably the first of the Michaelmas Term, was attended by the Dean of the Faculty (Professor Green), Professors Appleton, Baker, Leahy, Moore Smith, Summers, Dr Jones, Mr Sleeman and Mr Knoop (the Faculty Secretary). Professor Baker, as a member also of Council, ‘was invited by the Dean to tell the Faculty the circumstances which led to the dismissal of Professor Freund by the Council. After [hearing] his statement, a discussion followed and the following resolution was passed’:

That the Senate be recommended to ask the Council to be good enough to state the grounds on which [Professor Freund] a Member of the Faculty had been dismissed from his Chair.

These quotations are from the University of Sheffield, Faculty of Arts, Minutes, Vol. II, at p. 201. They are interesting because these Minutes were hand-written (presumably by Mr Knoop) and the two matters shown within brackets were in the original written

version and then deleted from it. The resolution displays a clear dismay at the behaviour of the Council and, in the hand-written version, there is even the suggestion of an exclamation mark after 'his Chair'.

This resolution went to the Senate, meeting five days later on 11 October 1916. Its report from the Faculty of Arts meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> was minuted by the Senate as:

The Faculty recommends: –

(1) THAT the Senate *should* ask the Council *to be good enough* to state the grounds of the dismissal from office of a member of the *Faculty* at the September meeting of the Council.

This was the version produced typed and in mimeograph in the Senate Minutes. However, its language was clearly seen as somewhat intemperate for passing on to the Council. It was amended to read, instead, with the amendments written by hand into the Senate Minutes as:

THAT the Senate ask *its Chairman to invite* the Council to state the grounds of the dismissal from office of a member of the *Senate* at the September meeting of the Council.

The variations between the two versions are italicized. So amended, proposed by Professor Green and seconded by Professor Baker, it was approved and adopted.

The matter finally came before the Council on 6 November 1916. Present were Fisher, Hobson (in the Chair), Burrows, Sir William Clegg, Mr Bennett, Mr Newton Coombe, Mr Denton, Mr Ellis, Mr Willoughby Firth, Professor Green, Mr Harland, Mr Marsh, Mr Osborn, Professor Pye-Smith, Professor Ripper, Professor Trotter, Mr Turner, Mr Blake Walker, Mr Holmshaw, Colonel Herbert Hughes, Professor Leathes, Mr Watson, Mr Wightman, and Professor Wynne. Mr Vickers apologized for his absence. A

notable absentee was Sir George Franklin, former Pro-Chancellor, who had died on 23 September 1916.

It was there:

Resolved that the Council desires the Vice-Chancellor to inform the Senate that on the occasion of the last meeting of the Council on Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> 1916, it was resolved that Professor Freund's connexion with the University should be terminated as from Christmas next. In view of the fact that he has been interned as an unnaturalized alien enemy since July 1915, Professor Freund has been unable to discharge the duties of his office as Professor of German, and, in the opinion of the Council, it appeared to be improbable that the state of political feeling would permit of a German subject filling a professorial post to the advantage of the University at the end of the War.

This resolution was in turn read by the Vice-Chancellor to the meeting of the Senate on 10 November 1916. With one exception, that seems to have been the end of the matter; there is no further mention of it in, for example, the Minutes of the Faculty of Arts or of the Council. The exception is the Finance Committee, meeting on 11 December 1916, which resolved that it be a recommendation to the Council:

- 1) That Professor Freund's share (including the Council's contributions) of the Retiring Fund be paid to him if
  - (a) the University solicitors consider such a course advisable in view of the letter which Professor Freund has written intimating that he will contest the Council's right to terminate his engagement at Christmas next, and
  - (b) the Commandant of the Camp in which Professor Freund is interned, or other proper authority, gives consent to the payment being made.

Whether these conditions were satisfied is unknown. If Freund did want to contest his dismissal, there is no evidence that he took any action further than the letter that he

apparently wrote and none that he initiated litigation. One imagines that, even in his particular circumstances, his case would have been a poor one, since he was self-evidently in breach of contract by dint of non-performance of most of his contractual duties, even if for reasons not of his choosing.

One wonders about the exact role and motivation of Fisher in the denouement of this whole episode. He seemed to have behaved throughout most of the events with a degree of honour but, in his final agreement with dismissal, perhaps he was piqued by the apparent obstreperousness of the Faculty of Arts, or perhaps he was conscious of the clear mood of his Council, or perhaps he was merely again seeking to be as diplomatic as possible to all parties (except Freund). Whatever the reason, he proposed the Council resolution of 6 November 1916, which was seconded by the Lord Bishop. Perhaps he knew that he might already have an exit strategy. Barely a month later, he was offered the post of President of the Board of Education in Lloyd George's new Coalition government and he resigned as Vice-Chancellor. He saw his resignation as temporary during the unusual circumstances of the War and his post was kept open *pro tempore*, but he did not in fact return to it.

The University and its German Department moved on. On Monday 28 April 1919 the Faculty of Arts proposed to the Senate the advertisement for an independent lectureship in German with a salary of not less than £400 a year, since the arrangement of having the Department of German being in the charge of the Lecturer in English was seen as no longer sustainable. A meeting of the Council on 11 July 1919 reported a recommendation from the Senate of 25 June 1919 that Dr Leonard Ashley Willoughby, MA, DPhil, PhD be appointed to the lectureship at a salary of £400 per annum.

Many University players in this episode emerge with no great discredit, especially the Faculty of Arts and the Finance Committee. However, the University was obviously coming under pressure from the local city Establishment to dismiss Freund, given the documented prominent role of the Lord Bishop and some of the lay members of the Council – an indication of the power of their local municipal establishments over the civic universities at this time. Certainly, Sheffield's Council was well stocked with local industrialists. Freund's case seems to have attracted no local attention at the time. Thus,

the local Sheffield press, the *Sheffield Independent*, the *Sheffield Telegraph* and the *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, around the dates of the crucial meetings in the University on 4 September and 6 November 1916 contained no mention of Freund's case, although they were naturally much concerned with war and domestic war-related news and had the odd story about the University on unrelated matters. Without the intrusive public involvement of the local municipal authority that was so significant in Wichmann's case at Birmingham and (as is described below) Schüddekopf's case, there was little for the local press to report. Without such coverage to be picked up by the national press, *The Times* was wholly silent on the case as it unfolded in 1915 and 1916, whilst Wichmann's difficulties attracted several articles.

In February 1918 Freund was a beneficiary of an exchange of prisoners and from May to September 1918 worked in the Intelligence Division of the German Foreign Office. From 1 October 1918 he was employed as Lektor in English at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (now the Humboldt-Universität) in Berlin, and from 10 August 1919 as Professor. During this time his only child, a daughter Ruth Marianne, was born in Berlin on 27 January 1919.

By the 1920s he had an entry in *Kürschners Deutscher Gelehrten-Kalender* but by 1922 he had not made it to the German *Wer ist's*, though his pre-war entries in *Who's Who* had been very detailed. A letter from the German Embassy to the University of Sheffield in 1925 asked for the difference between his quarter-salary and full salary to be made up by the University for the period from internment in July 1915 to December 1916. The University felt unable to comply with the request. However, Freund clearly retained friendly relations with some at Sheffield, for on 28 September 1928 he was present at a dinner held in King's College London in honour of the seventieth birthday of George Charles Moore Smith (1858-1940), Emeritus Professor of English Language and Literature in the University of Sheffield.<sup>9</sup>

From 1919 to 1922 Freund also taught seminars at the Handelshochschule in Berlin. In 1929 he had extensive sick leave to recover from the heart ailment of angina pectoris. Because he was Jewish, he was compulsorily retired for racist reasons on 21

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<sup>9</sup> *The Times*, 1 October 1928, 16.



September 1933 under Paragraph 3 of the new regime's Law for the Reconstitution of the Professional Civil Service; Paragraph 3 excluded non-Aryans from public office in the civil service. He continued to receive some form of reduced financial support till 1936, but this was refused for 1937. The University had initially pushed the Ministry of Education for the most generous pension settlement but later by 1937 came to the view shared by the Ministry that Freund had enough private means on which to live. The last inclusion in his Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität file is dated 19 June 1937.

Freund last appeared in the Berlin address books in 1939, living at his long-time address of Leistikowstraße 6 in Charlottenburg. Thereafter the trail apparently runs cold, as previous researchers have found.<sup>10</sup> The 1875-1960 Berlin Population Registration Card Index does not contain him or his wife and daughter, although there are gaps in what has survived of this Index. Given that almost 6,200 Jews from Charlottenburg were murdered or driven to suicide by the Holocaust, Freund and his family would clearly have been in very serious danger if they had still been there.<sup>11</sup> In fact, on 12 July 1939 he and his wife managed to emigrate to Sweden but Freund himself died barely two months later on 29 September 1939 in Stockholm,<sup>12</sup> where he is buried in the northern cemetery.<sup>13</sup> Freund's continuing German assets and those of his wife were itemized in 1941 and 1942 and formally confiscated by the Gestapo in November 1943. The purported authority for this was the Eleventh Ordinance to the Imperial Citizenship Law of 25 November 1941 that deprived German Jews living abroad of their German

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<sup>10</sup> Gunta Haenicke and Thomas Finkenstaedt, *Anglistenlexikon, 1825-1990: Biographische und bibliographische Angaben zu 318 Anglisten*, I & I Schrift Band 64 (Augsburg: Konrad Schröder, 1992); Utz Maas, *Verfolgung und Auswanderung deutschsprachiger Sprachforscher, 1933-1945*, Band 1, Einleitung und biobibliographische Daten A-F (1<sup>st</sup> ed.; Osnabrück: Secolo Verlag, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Verein zur Förderung des Gedenkbuches für die Charlottenburger Juden (ed.) *Juden in Charlottenburg: Ein Gedenkbuch* (Berlin: Verlag Edition Berlin, 2009). Its enumeration of victims (pp. 266-445) is based on, with supplementations, the Bundesarchiv's 2006 publication, *Gedenkbuch – Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden unter der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland 1933-1945*. The listing in the Charlottenburg publication makes soberingly depressing reading, though there are positive features of this work in its description of the postwar recovery of Berlin's Jewish community. Neither Freund nor his family appears in the Bundesarchiv's listing, which covers all of Germany; see <http://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/directory.html.de#frmResults>, accessed 29 December 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Julius Freund's file, Vermögensverwertungsstelle, Der Oberfinanzpräsident Berlin-Brandenburg, 1941-43, Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv; I am grateful to Herr Wolfgang Knoll of the Verein zur Förderung des Gedenkbuches für die Charlottenburger Juden for locating this source for me.

<sup>13</sup> The information on Freund's place of burial was supplied by Judiska Församlingen i Stockholm.

citizenship and, according to Paragraph 3, required that their remaining assets should revert to the German state.

Freund's daughter had escaped to the United States in June 1938, arriving in New York from Rotterdam on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*. Freund's widow must have joined her daughter in America after the War in November 1945, sailing from Oslo to New York on the *Stavanagerfjord*, her previous residence having been Stockholm. In 1951 she was living in Philadelphia, where she was naturalized as an American citizen on 19 July 1951.<sup>14</sup>

### **The case of Albert Wilhelm Schüddekopf**

Schüddekopf was born at Göttingen on 19 November 1861, the son of Heinrich Justus Hermann Schüddekopf and his wife Friederike Hulda Schüddekopf (*née* Levison) and he achieved his DrPhil and MA from Göttingen University. His wife Margaret Mary Wilhelmina, a daughter of Wilhelm Blau, came from Berlin, but their son, Walter George Adolphus Schüddekopf, was born in Leeds in 1891. Schüddekopf himself had become Professor of German at Bedford College London in 1888. Then in 1890 he came Lecturer in German at Yorkshire College in Leeds (the constituent institution of the future University of Leeds), before becoming Professor of German in 1897. His subsequent title at the University of Leeds was Professor of German Language and Literature, and he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1912 to 1914. In May 1913 he was instrumental in introducing into the University curriculum the opportunity for British students to spend one year of their three-year course at a Continental university, a major innovation in British higher education at the time.<sup>15</sup>

He was uncontroversially naturalized to British citizenship on 3 May 1912 at Leeds, taking the oath of allegiance on 14 May 1912. With four other professors of German, he co-signed a letter to *The Times* on 14 May 1915 avowing their commitment

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<sup>14</sup> Some of the details of Freund's fate have already been published; see Christopher T. Husbands, 'Karl Wichmann: A Research Note', *German Life and Letters*, vol. 65, no. 3, 2012, 333–43, Appendix.

<sup>15</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 22 May 1913, 12.

to their country of adoption, though (as also with Wichmann) in Schüddekopf's case it did him little good in being spared his subsequent fate.

Wallace's book gives a brief summary of what happened, but its briefness necessitates the omission of certain important points.<sup>16</sup> Schüddekopf's troubles began almost immediately after that letter. On 6 July 1915 the Unionist MP for York, John George Butcher (1853-1935),<sup>17</sup> was asking the Home Secretary, Sir John Simon (1873-1954), in the House of Commons a question with implied criticism of Schüddekopf's commitment to Britain. Butcher phrased his question by asking whether the Home Secretary's attention had been called to the case of Schüddekopf, whose son formerly held a commission as a second lieutenant in the 7<sup>th</sup> Service Battalion Leeds Rifles; and whether, when the battalion volunteered for service, Schüddekopf had told the commanding officer that he refused to allow his son to fight abroad against Germans. On that basis, said Butcher, Simon should consider whether Schüddekopf and his son ought to be interned, which Simon said in reply, albeit without apparent conviction, was being considered. However, Simon's inquiries had apparently confirmed in their essentials the facts adduced by Butcher. Then, when Butcher questioned whether an officer holding His Majesty's commission could decide which enemies he might fight and which not, Simon replied that Schüddekopf junior belonged to a Territorial regiment and only those of its officers who volunteered to serve abroad would be sent abroad.<sup>18</sup>

In the event, on 7 September 1915 the Home Secretary issued an order under the Defence of the Realm Act 1914 that Schüddekopf 'should not associate with any members of His Majesty's Naval or Military Forces without the permission of a

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<sup>16</sup> Stuart Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany: British Academics, 1914-1918* (Edinburgh: Donald 1988), esp. 163-4; in fact, the University of Leeds' Central Records Office has much of the associated correspondence and papers preserved, albeit somewhat precariously, on an 8 mm microfilm made in the 1970s (Reel Ref. 225.F61). These materials, as well as available formal Minutes of various committees and other bodies and also some 'Rough Minutes' of the same events, permit a thorough reconstruction of what happened from 1915 to 1916. Despite this plenitude of information, neither of two standard books on the history of the University of Leeds contains any mention of Schüddekopf, let alone the furore about his employment by the University; see A. N. Shimmin, *The University of Leeds: The First Half-Century* (Cambridge: University Press 1954), and P. H. J. H. Gosden and A. J. Taylor (eds), *Studies in the History of a University, 1874-1974* (Leeds: E J Arnold & Son 1975).

<sup>17</sup> KC, JP; later 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Butcher of Danesfort, who was MP for York from 1892 to 1906 and from 1910 to 1923.

<sup>18</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 7 July 1915, 3.

competent Naval or Military Authority'. He was also ordered out of Leeds, and the Home Secretary agreed that he and his wife could live instead in Harrogate. In September 1915 Schüddekopf was given temporary leave of absence from the University, on three-quarter pay. By now the City Council, through its Education Committee and in particular the Higher Education and Training College Sub-Committee, was becoming difficult about the City's normal grant of £5,650 to the University whilst Schüddekopf remained on its staff. The principal implacable opponent (though not the only one) of any payment of the grant whilst Schüddekopf was employed was Alderman Charles Henry Wilson, later knighted and the Conservative MP for Leeds Central from 1923 to 1929, whose *Who Was Who* entry bristles with non-combat military activities.

Wilson's case against Schüddekopf was flimsy in the extreme. Shortly after the start of the War, the latter had allegedly uttered in the presence of some of Wilson's friends some indiscreet comments that had been passed back to him. The content of these comments is not known – perhaps they referred to the position of his son. He later claimed that Schüddekopf had been responsible for smuggling into an internment camp a book by Nietzsche (whether in German or in translation was unspecified) marked with a University label, plus a bottle of whisky; whether this event actually occurred cannot now be confirmed or disproved. However, the University's Vice-Chancellor, Sir Michael Ernest Sadler, to whom the claim was made, did personally ascertain that no book by Nietzsche was then checked out of the University library. Later, Wilson was claiming to Sadler to know of further evidence on the basis of which Schüddekopf should be interned, but no such evidence was ever adduced.

Payment of the University's grant was delayed and the matter rumbled on till July 1916, with Sadler having at one point sought, without success, the intervention of the Home Secretary to resolve the matter. Sadler was throughout insisting to the City authorities that nothing had been adduced against Schüddekopf that went beyond the situation as it had been in September 1915 which had led to the restriction order, and that the Home Secretary himself had said to the University that even this order 'implied nothing to his [Schüddekopf's] discredit'. Still, by June 1916 a crisis threatened and Sadler did visit Schüddekopf in Harrogate and sought to persuade him to resign,

suggesting that he moved on to one of the American universities, as his position at Leeds would be untenable. Schüddekopf was reluctant, judging from his correspondence to Sadler, to undertake such a step and wanted to present his case to the University. He never did resign. On 19 July 1916 the Leeds Education Committee agreed to pass and pay the University's grant,<sup>19</sup> but it is clear that this victory might have been short-lived. It was agreed after Alderman Wilson had apparently been given to understand, as he had thought, that Schüddekopf would be dismissed because the Vice-Chancellor had purportedly given him that assurance. However, Sadler denied to Wilson, and to the University's Pro-Chancellor, who was Arthur Greenhow Lupton,<sup>20</sup> that he had ever given any such assurance, and it is clear from the pointedly brittle correspondence between Sadler and Wilson that the latter felt he had been tricked. Whatever the Vice-Chancellor had actually said to Wilson, it is unlikely that he could have pulled off the same trick on any further occasion.

Because of Schüddekopf's enforced leave of absence, the Department of German was in the executive hands of a 'Committee on the Department of German' a joint committee of the University Council and Senate; the Committee comprised the Pro-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, Arthur James Grant (Professor of History), Walter Garstang (Professor of Zoology), Percy Fry Kendall (Professor of Geology), and three lay members from the University Council. Two meetings of the Committee, on 14 and 17 August 1916, were particularly crucial. All the academics, and to an extent the Vice-Chancellor, tended to favour some position that postponed the ultimate decision or assisted Schüddekopf, with Grant and Kendall particularly against succumbing to pressure from the City Council. The others, the non-academics, were – even if out of expediency rather than conviction – for termination in some way, which the Pro-Chancellor said would require six months' notice. However, at the latter meeting Garstang gave notice of his intention to move at the next meeting recommending that the

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<sup>19</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 24 July 1916, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Lupton was a member of a distinguished Leeds family with several connections to the University. He was born in Hunslet and was by occupation a woollen cloth manufacturer. He married in 1882 but his wife died in 1890.

University Council grant leave of absence without salary to Schüddekopf until the end of the war.

It scarcely mattered; less than a month later Schüddekopf was dead, aged merely fifty-four. He died on 11 September 1916 in a nursing home in Harrogate. The stated causes of death, according to the death certificate, were cerebral haemorrhage (i.e., a stroke) of twenty-four days' duration (i.e., since 19 August) and chronic Bright's disease, a designation that covers a range of diseases of the kidneys. Wallace's account implies that Schüddekopf died of stress and depression at how he had been treated, which is probably true, and he must already have been ill for some time. Reading all the documentation concerning events leading seemingly inevitably towards his death, one cannot but recall, even if perhaps melodramatically, the final clause in Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* on the fate of Paul Bäumer, 'als wäre er beinahe zufrieden damit, daß es so gekommen war'.<sup>21</sup>

*The Times* reported Schüddekopf's death in a short, neutrally toned, obituary, mentioning the letter of May 1915 but nothing about any difficulties with the Home Office, Leeds Education Committee, or the University of Leeds.<sup>22</sup> The *Manchester Guardian* also contained a short report from its Leeds correspondent, who was perhaps referring obliquely to Schüddekopf's troubles in saying that the war 'came as a tragic blow to him' and 'he regarded the conflict as a catastrophe to European civilisation, and his own personal attitude towards it was inevitably torn by conflicting interests and affections'.<sup>23</sup> As well as a formal death notice in the personals section, a long and sympathetic obituary also appeared in the *Yorkshire Post*,<sup>24</sup> unsigned almost certainly written by Arthur Grant. The Pro-Chancellor decided against flying the University's flag at half-staff, lest it 'stir up a hornets' nest'. A Leeds student publication of the time was extremely positive in recording its appreciation of Schüddekopf's work on students' behalf.<sup>25</sup> Quite how, or whether, the University provided in any way for Schüddekopf's

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<sup>21</sup> 'as if he were almost content that it had come to this'.

<sup>22</sup> *The Times*, 13 September 1916, 11.

<sup>23</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 13 September 1916, 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 12 September 1916, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Gryphon*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1916, 15.

widow is unclear; a meeting of the Superannuation Committee on 20 October 1916 apparently referred Schüddekopf's affairs to 'legal representatives'.

Schüddekopf's son, a British citizen by birth, was in 1916 aged twenty-five; he almost immediately started using the alternative surname of 'Shuttleworth', something that he would have then been able to do only because of his British citizenship acquired by birth. In 1911 he had been described as a medical student and he became a dentist. He lived on till his death at Croydon aged sixty-nine on 16 July 1960.

### **The case of Robert Charles Priebisch**

Robert Priebisch was a distinguished academic who was to have a career of more than thirty years in the University of London.<sup>26</sup> He was born, the second son of Johann Priebisch and his wife Eleonore, on 11 June 1866 at Tanvald in the present-day Czech Republic (Tannwald in German and in Bohemia, in what became known as the Sudetenland). He contracted poliomyelitis in his childhood, which later exempted him from military service. He was educated at Gymnasiums in Prague and in Reichenberg (now Liberec in the Czech Republic), and his university education was at the Universities of Leipzig, Prague, Berlin, Strasbourg and Graz, from where he earned his doctorate. He became a Lecturer in English Language at Liverpool University in 1896 and Professor of German in University College London from 1898. From 1902 this appointment was an established one of the University of London.

Although his wife, Ada Mary (*née* Radermacher), whom he married in 1898 was English, only after war was declared in 1914 did Priebisch apply for British citizenship, whose certificate was issued on 28 October 1914. He took the oath of allegiance on 4 November. The UCL authorities had been concerned that his naturalization should be effected speedily as they were wary about what the stance of the University of London Senate might be to having an unnaturalized enemy alien on the staff. His application was

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<sup>26</sup> Priebisch is probably now best known as co-author with William Collinson of *The German Language*; see R. Priebisch and W. E. Collinson, *The German Language*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1934 (6<sup>th</sup> rev. ed.; London: Faber & Faber Limited 1966).

supported by Sir Arnold Foster, William Paton Ker, Sir Henry Alexander Miers, Sir William Ramsay KCB, and John George Robertson.

Because of this late application, Pribsch's case was one of those considered by the Certificates of Naturalization (Revocation) Committee set up under the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1918 to examine under s3 whether enemy aliens who were naturalized after the start of the War should have their naturalization revoked. The Committee's decisions on these cases were final and the Home Office had no authority to revoke or review them.

Pribsch's case was among the first to be considered, and the Committee formally decided that his naturalization should be revoked. The actual decision to revoke was taken by the Committee as early as late October or early November 1918 because Pribsch's name was listed among the revoked certificates in the Committee's Fourth Interim Report dated 11 December 1918.<sup>27</sup> The case was heard in the Grand Committee Room, next to Westminster Hall, on 24 October 1918. The Committee comprised its President His Honour Mr Justice Atkin,<sup>28</sup> the Right Honourable Viscount Hambleton,<sup>29</sup> and His Honour Judge Radcliffe.<sup>30</sup> The Committee's Secretary was Richard Whitbourn Turner.<sup>31</sup>

The full transcript of the hearing survives in the National Archives file.<sup>32</sup> Pribsch was represented by Robert Mortimer Montgomery KC (1869-1948),<sup>33</sup> who he said was briefed at the direction of the University of London Vice-Chancellor Sir Edwin Cooper

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<sup>27</sup> National Archives, HO 144/13376.

<sup>28</sup> James Richard Atkin (1867-1944), Baron Atkin of Aberdovey and a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary from 1928.

<sup>29</sup> William Frederick Danvers Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Hambleton (1868-1928), Conservative MP for Strand from 1891 to 1910.

<sup>30</sup> His Honour Francis Reynolds Yonge Radcliffe (1851-1924), Judge of the County Courts Oxford Circuit since 1914.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Whitbourn Turner (1867-1932) was a barrister, acting Secretary to the Lord Chief Justice (Rufus Isaacs, Earl of Reading) from 1915 to 1919, from which post he was seconded to be Secretary of the Revocation Committee. In 1924 he was an actual member of the Committee, whose activities continued intermittently throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s. From 1928 Turner became an additional judge at Westminster County Court and Judge of Uxbridge County Court.

<sup>32</sup> It is in Pribsch's file in the National Archives, which contains much other material from which some of the following account has been drawn; see National Archives, HO 144/1659/263413.

<sup>33</sup> Montgomery was subsequently from 1926 Recorder for Chester.



Perry,<sup>34</sup> and who seems from the vagueness of some of his replies to questions from the panel not to have been in total command of his brief. Written testimonials of support had been sent by Foster, Ker (who wrote to Fisher at the Board of Education), Robertson, William Edward Collinson, Leonard Ashley Willoughby (who had just moved to Sheffield from Oxford), and Edmund Crosby Quiggin. Both Collinson and Quiggin were then Lieutenants in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Witnesses in person were Foster, Robertson, Willoughby, Collinson (and his father). Ker had to excuse himself from a personal appearance because of a teaching commitment. There was also one further witness in person whose testimony was devoted exclusively to claiming that Priebisch's wife, despite the Germanic family name, was several generations English. None of this support sufficiently swayed the Committee.

What particularly told against Priebisch was the alleged closeness of his relationship to Kuno Meyer,<sup>35</sup> whom he had come to know while teaching in Liverpool in the mid-1890s. This supposed closeness was inferred from a number of circumstances. Priebisch had been unwise to continue an intermittent correspondence with Meyer in America probably until at least early 1917, a correspondence that he claimed was on 'matters of scholarship and personal relationships'. However, perhaps most damaging was a compromising letter from Meyer to Priebisch using the personal address 'My dear Robert' dated 2 May 1917 and sent by Meyer from the Twentieth Century Limited en route from Chicago to New York. This letter from Meyer was intercepted by MI5 and never reached Priebisch. The letter had been referred to the Committee by the head of MI5, Sir Vernon George Waldegrave Kell (1873-1942), the notorious '[then] Colonel Kell'. Another letter dated 18 March 1917 and mentioning Priebisch to a correspondent in Switzerland that had also been intercepted by MI5 was used in further evidence. The Committee was unswayed by other evidence in Priebisch's favour, specifically that he had

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<sup>34</sup> In fact, Montgomery's brief came from the UCL solicitors, Sharpe, Pritchard & Co of 12 New Court, Carey Street, WC2, possibly from the senior partner, William Arthur Sharpe (1847-1920).

<sup>35</sup> Kuno Meyer (1858-1919) had been Professor of Germanic Languages at the University of Liverpool till 1911, when he transferred to the University of Berlin as Professor of Celtic Philology. He had long been associated with the cause of Irish independence and, during a lecturing visit to the United States, he gave a widely reported speech to the Clan-na-Gael Society of New York on 17 December 1914 in which he had spoken of a German intention to encourage Irish military prisoners in Germany to forgo their allegiance and to participate in an invasion of England and Ireland; see *The Times*, 24 December 1914, 10.

pushed for British nationals rather than Germans as appointees to Chairs of German at British universities, such as Collinson at Liverpool.

The Home Office was concerned in cases such as Priebisch's about the lack of information being supplied to it by the Committee about the reasons for their decisions to revoke; that was expressed in a Home Office document drafted on 30 December 1918 and sent to the Committee on 1 January 1919. However, the Home Office was able in Priebisch's case to assess what might have determined the Committee's decision because on 24 December 1918 the Home Secretary, the Unionist Sir George (later Viscount) Cave (1856-1928), had requested the transcript of the shorthand notes of six cases of revocation, including Priebisch's. However, that would have been for little more than internal private information in these particular cases because of the Home Office's lack of any authority to question or overturn the decision. The Home Secretary, who was now the Liberal Edward Shortt (1862-1935) who had taken over this office from Cave on 14 January 1919, issued the revocation order of 8 February 1919. On 15 February the Home Office informed the competent authorities such as the Metropolitan Police that Priebisch was to be registered as an enemy alien but to be provisionally regarded as exempt from internment or repatriation. The formal public announcement in *The London Gazette* was on 28 February and was repeated in *The Times* on the following day. The relevance of this to this article is how his employer and his colleagues reacted to this revocation when it became publicly known.

It is possible to give a quite thorough account of what happened to Priebisch from his National Archives file and also from records surviving in University College and the University of London, although some UCL records may have been lost among the many of its records destroyed by a flood during the Second World War in its supposedly secure store to which records had been removed to protect from bombing. Numerous of Priebisch's UCL colleagues rose to his defence but untangling exactly how events unfolded in the University is complicated by the fact that at least four bodies were formally involved, three at University College (the College Committee, the Professorial Board, and the *ad hoc* Committee set up by the Professorial Board) and one at the

University of London (the Senate). The proactive responses came from both University College and from individuals in the University of London.

*College Committee on 4 March 1919*

At this first meeting where the matter is formally documented, the Committee (comprising the Vice-Chairman of the College, the Vice-Chancellor, the Acting Treasurer, the Provost and ten others [four of whom Professors]) noted, ‘in re Professor R. Priebisch’:

The Provost<sup>36</sup> made a statement with respect to the circumstances leading up to the Home Secretary’s action in cancelling the Certification of Naturalisation granted to Professor R. Priebisch. In connection therewith a petition signed by Members of the College Professorial Board was submitted.

It was then resolved by the Committee to recommend to the Senate ‘that, pending further action by the Home Office, no action be taken upon the above information’.

*Professorial Board on 10 March 1919 and 25 March 1919*

The College Professorial Board’s initiative of a petition may have been an immediate reaction by some of its members beyond the formal proceedings of that Board. For the first formal recognition of the issue in the Board’s official Minutes is found in those of its Special Meeting six days later, on 10 March 1919. Minute 100 says:

In Re Professor R. Priebisch:

Professor Gardner referred to the action recently taken by the Home Secretary in the matter of the cancellation of the Certificate of Naturalisation granted to Professor R.

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<sup>36</sup> The Provost was Sir Thomas Gregory Foster.

Priebsch. The Provost made a statement with respect to the circumstances which had led to this decision, and to the action which had already been taken with reference thereto.

On a motion of Professor Gardner, seconded by Professor Simpson, resolved *unanimously*:- that the following resolution be forwarded on behalf of the Board to Professor Priebsch.

The Professorial Board have heard with the utmost surprise of the decision to revoke your Certificate of Naturalisation. During the twenty-one years of your tenure of the German Chair, they have always found you a loyal and honourable colleague, with single-handed devotion to the cause of learning and scholarship, and they do not believe that you were capable of making use of your position here in any way detrimental to your country of adoption. They would regard it as a serious loss to the College and to the cause of scholarship if you were unable to continue the work you have so long carried on with the greatest energy and distinction.

#### RESOLVED

(a) That a Committee be appointed to consider the steps to be taken with a view to obtaining, if possible, the cancellation of the order recently made by the Home Secretary with respect to the Naturalisation Certificate granted to Professor Priebsch, and that the Committee be empowered to prepare such petition or petitions as they deem expedient in the matter.

(b) That the Committee consist of Professors Gardner, Murison, Simpson and Dr Chambers.

A meeting of this same Board on 25 March 1919 reported a letter from Professor Priebsch thanking them for their resolution in respect to him.

*University of London Senate on 26 March 1919*

This meeting comprised the Vice-Chancellor (Sir Edwin Cooper Perry), the Chairman of Convocation (Sir Edward Henry Busk), and thirty-four<sup>37</sup> named members (one of whom was Sir [later Baron] Charles Swinfen Eady, who was Master of the Rolls). The matter is reported at length as Item ‘XL.- Revocation of Certificate of Naturalization of Prof. Priebisch’.<sup>38</sup>

Considered: A Report from the University College Committee (4 March 1919) in regard to the matter indicated in the heading, containing a confidential statement by the Provost of University College which includes a letter from the College Solicitor<sup>39</sup> and an extract from “The Times” of 1 March 1919 [The Report will be on the Table]

Sadly, this Report and the letter from the College Solicitor have proved untraceable, but the extract from *The Times* was clearly the brief report that the naturalization of Priebisch and of several others (including Karl Wichmann and his wife) had been revoked by the Home Secretary. The Minutes continue:

Reported: There was appended to the Provost’s statement (1) a copy of the Order Revoking the Certificate, which is as follows: - . . . and (2) the following statement signed by 17<sup>40</sup> members of the professorial board of University College: -

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<sup>37</sup> The full membership of the University Senate, including its senior officers and drawn from many sources, comprised fifty-six individuals, and its quorum was fifteen.; see *University of London Calendar for the Year 1918-1919* (London: University of London Press 1918), 101-103.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of Meeting of University of London Senate, 26 March 1919, 1975-1984, 29-30

<sup>39</sup> The letter, whatever it may have said, was presumably from the UCL solicitors, Sharpe, Pritchard & Co.

<sup>40</sup> This was, however, by no means a majority. At this time there were fifty-seven members of the UCL Professorial Board, including the Provost and Priebisch; see *University of London, University College Abridged Calendar, Session MCMXVIII–MCMXIX* (London: Taylor and Francis 1918), xxxv-xxxvi. However, the number of actual professors on the Board was fewer, forty-two; see W. H. Dawson (ed.), *The Yearbook of the Universities of the Empire 1918-1920* (London: G. Bell and Sons 1920), 104.

We, the undersigned members of the Professorial Board, have heard with indignation of the revocation of Professor Priebisch's certificate of naturalization, and venture to express the hope that the College Committee will do all in its power to retain Professor Priebisch's services for the College and University. We know from personal intercourse, extending in many cases over 21 years, that he is a typical student who takes singularly little interest in any political question and is in our opinion quite incapable of any disloyal conduct.<sup>41</sup>

The attention of the Senate is particularly called to the fact that the Order of Revocation sets out no reasons for the revocation other than that the question whether it is desirable that the certificate should be revoked has been referred to the Certificates of Naturalization (Revocation) Committee and that such question has been answered in the affirmative. It will be seen on comparing this order of Revocation with the Orders affecting other persons referred to in the extract from "The Times" that in the case of some of those persons the reasons for the revocation are stated, e.g., that he "has shown himself by act to be disloyal to His Majesty" or "that the continuance of the certificate is not conducive to the public good."

In accordance with the Report of the University College Committee,

RECOMMENDED:-

*41 That, pending any further proceedings by the Home Office, no action be taken consequent on the Revocation of the Certificate of Naturalization of Professor Priebisch.*

As an amendment, Sir Albert Rollit moved: -

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<sup>41</sup> This text is clearly the 'petition' by the University College professors referred to earlier. The signatories were all listed, in no particular order, as: Arthur Platt, J N Collie, E. A Gardner, J G Robertson, A F Pollard, H E Butler, R W Chambers, Jas P Hill, A Wolf, W M Bayliss, G Dawes Hicks, M J M Hill, E G Coker, Ernest H Starling, F C Montague, W H Bragg, and F W Oliver.

That in line 1 the words “pending any further proceedings by the Home Office” be omitted.

The Chairman of the Council intimated his willingness to accept the amendment.

After debate, the Amendment was carried.

The amendment being now before the Senate as a substantive motion, as follows

*That no action be taken consequent on the Revocation of the Certificate of Naturalization of Professor Priebisch.*

On a motion of Dr. [Thomas Bateman] Napier, seconded by [Revd] Dr. [Herbert Brook] Workman, it was resolved:-

That the Senate do proceed to the next business.

The motion, as set out above (Minute 1982), accordingly dropped.

Given the strength of feeling among some UCL professors in favour of Priebisch, it is at first difficult to know what to make of these events. They certainly do not show unequivocal support for Priebisch. Of course, the University was unaware of the issues that had determined the decision of the Revocation Committee. It is clear, however, that Rollit – though undoubtedly keen not to see Priebisch removed from the employment of the University of London – manoeuvred to downplay the issue within the University and, in particular, to remove any aspersion against the Home Office. It is as if it was known that the final outcome – that the revocation would stand but without internment or repatriation – was known and so there was no reason to irritate the Home Office. The Senate was persuaded against being critical of the Home Office, perhaps in case that inflamed passions there. The motion on the amendment to remove mention of the Home

Office was passed by a large majority, though that to move to next business had a reduced majority. Good relations with the Home Office were essential and the Senate already knew, as is shown below, that the Home Office was not disposed to pursue Priebisch's internment or repatriation. On the following morning, the 27<sup>th</sup>, Rollit rang the Home Office to report about the Senate meeting that some members had taken a very hostile line regarding the revocation decision, but he had moved that all reference to the Home Office be dropped from an intended amended final motion. Next business had then been moved and accepted, and so even the amended motion had not been put to a vote, and the meeting had moved on. Rollit thought that the Secretary of State 'would like to know'. On 29 March Shortt sent him a brief note of thanks for this information. On 1 April 1919 Rollit sent a long letter to the Home Office again outlining what had happened at the Senate meeting, making clear that he personally did not want to impugn the decision of the Revocation Committee (given its judicial authority), and also describing how he had managed the Senate meeting.

*Professorial Board on 29 April 1919*

A later meeting of the University College Professorial Board on 29 April 1919 was able to proceed in the light of the Senate's deliberations on the matter. The Board had an agenda item 'Report of Committee *in re* Professor R. Priebisch' and considered the report of the special *ad hoc* Committee upon the steps to be taken in connection with the cancellation of Professor Priebisch's naturalization certificate.

It was reported that 'the Committee have had before them a private letter from the Home Secretary to the President of the Board of Education with respect to the matter'. One does wonder how such a letter between these correspondents came into the Committee's possession. The President of the Board of Education was then Herbert Fisher, having by then moved on from his Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Sheffield, and he had probably passed a copy of it on to Sir Gregory Foster, the Provost of UCL. Priebisch's National Archives file contains a letter to Fisher dated 23 February 1919 (i.e., before the *Gazette* announcement) from Lord Reay, the UCL President,



seeking Fisher's intervention, and Foster had doubtless also written to Fisher in similar terms, although no copy of the letter from Foster is in the file. Fisher had then written to Shortt on the 24<sup>th</sup> asking simply whether there was 'anything can be done in the matter', and must have enclosed Foster's letter. The Home Secretary replied on 8 March 1919 that he was powerless to alter or review the decision but that there was 'no intention of interning [Pribsch] or of repatriating him at present'. Also, no public attention would be drawn to his case by the Home Office.

On the recommendation of the Committee, it was resolved that 'no further action be taken at present in the matter of the cancellation of Professor Pribsch's naturalization certificate'. It does therefore seem likely that the Home Secretary's private letter was considered reassuring to that extent and no immediate further action was thought necessary. Certainly by 10 and 24 June 1919 Pribsch was being recorded as present at Special and Ordinary meetings of the Professorial Board.

Returning to the College Committee, at its meeting of 6 May 1919 it was reported that in the Proceedings of [the University] Senate at the meeting on 26 March 1919, as reviewed earlier, 'with respect to the case of Professor R. Pribsch, the Senate discussed the matter and carried a resolution "that the Senate do proceed to the next business"'. In this connection there was also reported a letter from Professor Pribsch to the Committee thanking it for the action taken by them at the previous meeting.

As shown by an internal note dated 6 February 1919, the Home Office was aware from the beginning that it could have a fight on its hands, if only from the response of UCL, and that such an action might lead to public embarrassment. Rollit, as a member of the University Senate, had written to the Home Secretary on 24 March 1919 (i.e., two days before the significant meeting of the Senate) pointing out the concerns of the UCL professors. The Home Office was privately grateful that its lack of authority in the matter relieved it of the necessity of publicly defending these decisions and, in any case, there was also some internal sympathy there for Pribsch's position and a feeling that the Committee had indeed not dealt fairly with his case, giving excessive weight to the suspect material about Meyer and failing to recognize Pribsch's efforts in pushing for British appointees to Chairs of German in British universities. Thus, whilst the Home

Office had no authority to restore naturalization, it was not bound to act aggressively on the revocation and was clearly willing to let the matter lapse, initially provisionally and then long-term. It agreed that there was no reason why Priebisch should not be allowed to exercise his profession here. Also, there is evidence that several other cases of revocation were allowed to remain in the country, although Priebisch was not specifically mentioned in that respect.<sup>42</sup>

Priebisch's friends were still not idle on his behalf. On 15 October 1919 a lengthy properly printed petition was submitted to the Home Secretary from UCL, with sixty-six signatories from UCL, elsewhere in the University of London, and from other academic institutions including the British Museum. It protested at the general iniquity of Priebisch's treatment and concluded:

On the general grounds indicated . . . and in view of the changed nationality of Dr Priebisch brought about by the terms of peace, we beg leave to urge that his Letters of Naturalisation should be returned to him.

The Home Office privately recognized the strength of this petition but noted in reply on 13 November 1919 that no action was open to it. However, there was a suggestion within the Home Office, though it was not passed back to the petitioners, that Priebisch's new, Czechoslovak, nationality (if recognized) – based on his place of birth – meant that he might then apply to renew an application for British citizenship.

However, there is no record of any formal re-admission to citizenship, or of any attempt by Priebisch to secure this. Priebisch's case was included routinely in a comprehensive listing, marked 'Confidential', of all the Committee's decisions that was prepared as late as January 1931, where Priebisch's last location was listed as 1 Downside Crescent, Haverstock Hill, London, NW3, which was his address continuously from 1906 to 1931.

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<sup>42</sup> Later in 1919 a letter from MI5 to the Home Office inquired about the stay status of revoked cases and in a letter to MI5 dated 23 August 1919 it is clear that several other revoked cases were being allowed to stay [National Archives, HO 144/13376].

What perhaps also assisted Priebisch in staying in this country is that his wife was born in St Pancras, London, in 1870 and so had been a British citizen; the family was of German origin but, in Priebisch's hearing before the Committee, much was made of the fact that this family's German origins were of several generations back and the family was now thoroughly British. In fact, Ada Mary was a British citizen throughout. Under the terms of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens 1914 she would necessarily have assumed the nationality of her husband if he had not been British. However, this Act came into force only on 1 January 1915 and in any case Priebisch had naturalized as British in the preceding October.

UCL itself apparently carried on seamlessly with Priebisch on its staff. On 6 May 1919 he is reported – and there is some irony in this – as being one of several who received a payment, of £12, for having taught on a German Course for Officers. There is no reference to the incident in the Provost's Report on the Session 1918–19 made to the Assembly of the Faculties of University of London, University College on 3 July 1919.<sup>43</sup> On 9 July 1919 Priebisch was recorded as appointed the examiner for German for the Engineering Matriculation and the Goldschmid Engineering Entrance Scholarship. In June 1920 it was being recommended that his salary for 1920–21 be £800.<sup>44</sup>

After moving to Austria in 1932 after his retirement, Priebisch was living when he died at the Pension Monopol, Rathausstraße 17 in Vienna, and he died on 25 May 1935 at the Waldsanatorium, in Perchtoldsdorf, Vienna. His estate of £4,844 3s 10d in England was administered by his daughter, Hannah Margaret Mary. One might have assumed that, before returning to Vienna, he would have to have negotiated both a dispensation for his having sought British citizenship, but that might have been unnecessary because he was

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<sup>43</sup> *University of London, University College Abridged Calendar, Session MCMXIX–MCMXX* (London: Taylor and Francis 1919), xcv-ciii.

<sup>44</sup> It is perhaps revealing that a standard history of University College London says nothing about the Priebisch saga in UCL's history. Harte and North's book, to be sure a copiously illustrated centenary valedictory rather than a standard history, makes no mention of difficulties with the Home Office, but briefly acknowledges in a short paragraph Priebisch's contribution to German studies at UCL and has a photographic image of him, calling him a 'correct but kind Austrian'; see Negley Harte and John North, *The World of University College London, 1828–1978* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode for University College London 1978), 152–3. Negley Harte's *The University of London, 1836–1986: An Illustrated History* (London: The Athlone Press 1986) contains much material specifically about UCL but not even a mention of Priebisch, despite his connection with the University for more than thirty years and his role in the teaching of German.

then a citizen of Czechoslovakia newly created by the post-war settlement in central Europe. His 1935 obituary in *The Times* merely mentioned that he had been naturalized; through ignorance or (more likely) deliberate omission, there was no mention of the revocation.<sup>45</sup> *The Times* also published an appreciation by Henry Gibson Atkins (1871-1942) and Frederick Norman (1897-1968),<sup>46</sup> and also one by William Collinson,<sup>47</sup> both were heavily, though not exclusively, concerned with Priebisch's academic and bibliophilic activities.

His wife, Ada Mary, returned to live in England at 23 Heathway Court, West Heath Road, Hendon, and she died on 7 October 1937 at University College Hospital of a vague lexicon of ailments related to the gall bladder. The daughter also administered her estate, worth £6,568 13s. 7d.

### **The case of Carl Hermann Ethé**

Carl Hermann Ethé at Aberystwyth was a victim obliged to leave the university, but because of the intolerance of the Aberystwyth populus and the Town Council and not of the University College authorities, who later supported him with an annuity and thereby acted against the views of the local Council. True, the University College, even though in straitened circumstances, was none the less not as affected by the loss of financial support from its local government authority as Universities of Birmingham and Leeds might have been in their analogous cases, but the differences between University College and Town Council on Ethé's case created considerable tensions in the small and isolated town of Aberystwyth.

Ethé's case is mentioned by Panayi, but his discussion covers only some of the events of October 1914 and gives a seriously misleading description of their

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<sup>45</sup> *The Times*, 28 May 1935, 21.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 May 1935, 16. Gibson was Professor of German at King's College London. Norman was then Reader in German at UCL and King's College London.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 May 1935, 21.

denouement.<sup>48</sup> The original entry on Ethé's life in the hard-copy *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* also mentions the case, but its account of this particular matter was by brevity or omission also significantly misleading, and unfair, in its implications about the role of the University College; it simply said that 'in October 1914 a wave of popular anger forced the college to dismiss him [Ethé]', which is factually wrong.<sup>49</sup> However, the latest online version of this entry contains important revisions and corrections, including the removal of the unfair aspersion against the behaviour of the University College. In the existing literature, the fullest and fairest recounting of what actually happened to Ethé is that of Ellis.<sup>50</sup> Even this is far from exhaustive and what follows elaborates and extends Ellis's account.<sup>51</sup>

Ethé was born of French origins on 18 February 1844 in Stralsund (then in Pomerania in Prussia and now in the contemporary region of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), son of an engineer Franz Ethé and his wife Mathilde (*née* Lappe). He had received his DrPhil from Leipzig and a later honorary MA from Oxford. He was Lecturer in Oriental Languages at the University of Munich from 1867 to 1871. He was recruited by Oxford University in 1872 on the recommendation of Professor Max Müller to be an assistant librarian at the Bodleian Library to complete a catalogue of its Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pashto manuscripts and to compile a catalogue of its Arabic manuscripts. Also in 1872 Ethé was entrusted by the Secretary of State for India to catalogue its Persian manuscripts in the India Office Library, the first volume of which was published in 1903.

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<sup>48</sup> Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (New York: Berg 1991), 194-5. Despite its purported support of two newspaper sources (one the *Manchester Guardian*), there is nothing in what is known to have happened that justifies Panayi's saying (p. 195) that 'the College authorities managed to satisfy the local council [presumably intended is the Town Council] of Ethé's innocence'. The *Manchester Guardian* merely reported Principal Roberts' account given to the Court of Governors (24 October 1914, 4) in the same terms as recounted below from the report in the *Cambrian News* of 30 October 1914.

<sup>49</sup> J. T. P. de Bruijn, 'Ethé, (Carl) Hermann (1844–1917)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004).

<sup>50</sup> E. L. Ellis, *The University College of Wales Aberystwyth 1872-1972* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 1972), 171-3.

<sup>51</sup> Its various sources are documents in the archive of the University College, several issues of the *Cambrian News*, and material in the file in the National Archives entitled 'Nationality and Naturalisation: Ethe, Harriett [*sic*] Dora, Resident in Bristol, Certificate 2,786 issued 20 August 1917' [National Archives, HO 144/1394/270704]. The bulk of this file is actually material concerning Ethé himself rather than his wife.

In 1875, on the recommendation of Müller, he became Professor of German and Oriental Languages at the University College of Wales Aberystwyth and was certainly the one scholar of truly international distinction then at the University College. Till 1894 he was also Professor of French Language and Literature there. He was polyglot in a substantial number of mid-Asian languages and offered lectures on Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Syriac or Ethiopic, and Sanskrit, as well as teaching modern languages such as German and Italian, though one cannot but wonder about the demand for learning such languages as Syriac among the students of Aberystwyth. He was associated with Aberystwyth for nearly forty years from 1875 and, even with his Germanic style, was hugely regarded by the College authorities. He was also widely respected, and his seventieth birthday in early 1914 attracted its own celebratory article in *The Times*.<sup>52</sup> He continued to be engaged in the long-term project of further cataloguing the Persian manuscripts in the India Office.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, even after he was no longer living in Aberystwyth, he continued – though still a German national – pursuing this work for the India Office.

Already a widower aged fifty-five,<sup>54</sup> he had married on 11 July 1899 the twenty-nine-year-old and British-born spinster, Harriet Dora Phillips, born in Lichfield and daughter of a fish and game dealer, Abraham Phillips. The couple were in Munich on holiday when the War broke out. The University College's reaction to this was subdued. A meeting of its Council on 2 October 1914 received a report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee three days earlier that merely reported that Ethé was detained in Germany and unable to take up his duties at Professor of German and Oriental Languages. As Ethé was a German national who had never naturalized, he might have been prevented from returning but, on application made on 5 October to the Home Office by the University College Principal, Thomas Francis Roberts, he was able to

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<sup>52</sup> *The Times*, 13 February 1914, 9.

<sup>53</sup> The second volume of this was published in 1937, revised and completed by a later editor.

<sup>54</sup> His first wife, Anna Francisca, born in 1848/49 in Reuthen (then in Prussia and now in the contemporary region of Brandenburg just south of Cottbus), had died in Aberystwyth on 16 July 1897 – according to her death certificate of late effects of some form of syphilis. They had had at least one child, a daughter Anna Louisa Helena, who died of bronchitis in infancy aged one year nine months on 15 April 1875. Indeed, it may have been her death in Oxford that gave the place uncomfortable associations and made Ethé receptive to the offer from Aberystwyth.

return, arriving in Aberystwyth on the evening of 13 October. However, a potentially violent mob threatened his homecoming to Aberystwyth and, for his longer-term safety, he and his wife had to leave the town.

*Events in Aberystwyth in October 1914*

How this came about is a case study in mob violence. Ethé and his wife had escaped from Germany via The Netherlands with the assistance of the American consul in Dresden and the Dutch authorities, sailing from Vlissingen to Folkestone. There they had been allowed entry to the United Kingdom on an instruction sent by the Home Office to Folkestone on 8 October and they moved on to London, from where Ethé sent Roberts a postcard saying that on the following day he and his wife would be back in Aberystwyth on a train from London due to arrive at 17.25. Roberts had appreciated that the local mood was sensitive and, after consultation with the local Chief Constable, agreed that he, the Registrar and a representative of the students should meet the couple at Aberystwyth station and, having had no earlier method of communicating with them, warn them to be discreet in their demeanour because of anti-German sentiment in the town. However, the reception party at the station was widely observed and misinterpreted as one of formal welcome. On the following day, the Wednesday, Ethé had gone to work in the morning to the College, leaving his wife at their home. In the course of that morning typed flyers were distributed around the town calling for a midday meeting of the local population before the Shiloh Chapel to demand that Ethé leave town. The meeting of up to 2,000 people, reportedly predominantly working men and women,<sup>55</sup> was incited by two senior local figures, the solicitor Thomas John Samuel and especially the doctor Thomas Davies Harries,<sup>56</sup> to seek to expel Ethé. Under the prompting of a local commercial traveller, the crowd then moved from the town centre to Ethé's house at 3 Caradog Road, then in a suburb about a

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<sup>55</sup> *Cambrian News*, 16 October 1914, 5.

<sup>56</sup> These were Thomas John Samuel, JP MBE (1864-1939), a local solicitor and town councillor, and Thomas Davies Harries (1850-1938), son of a farmer and a doctor and local magistrate. Samuel, son of a bootmaker, had been a minimally successful student at Aberystwyth from 1882 to 1883, but then left without a degree to become articled to a solicitor in Aberystwyth. He was by 1914 an ex-Mayor of Aberystwyth. Although it does not explain his behaviour of this early occasion, Harries' later enthusiastic opposition to Ethé and his treatment may have been affected by the death in the War of his younger son, Eric Guy Harries, who became a Captain in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and died aged twenty-two of wounds on 17 August 1915.

kilometre away, and confronted his wife alone in the house. The experience must have been truly frightening for her and she handled it with commendable bravery. The mob milled in the front garden and then threw open a front window to demand Ethé. His wife appeared and, explaining that he was not in the house, argued with the crowd for some five minutes, before the intervention of two College professors, John Wilson Marshall (who commanded the local Officers' Training Corps) and Owen Thomas Jones, discouraged further overt hostility. However, the crowd then moved on to Professor George Adolphus Schott's house to threaten him; he was born in Yorkshire but had a German wife but refused to be intimidated and remained in his house. Ethé was not the only victim; Germans working in two local hotels and at a local hairdresser's shop were also forced to leave the town. That evening Ethé and his wife exiled themselves from the town (he never to return), staying overnight in Llandrindod Wells, before continuing to Reading, where they lived initially at 42 Western Elms Avenue in the household of Ethé's and her brother-in-law, John Warburton Phillips, and his wife Mary Evelyn (Harriet's sister) and their young son.

Given its options, the role here of the University College is, though difficult, largely above reproach in the circumstances. A public meeting on Wednesday 21 October 1914 had sent a letter to the University College protesting Ethé's non-dismissal. The College Council initially discussed and then effectively ignored this and referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the question of whether Ethé should be paid. There is an interesting and extensive account of this process in the Minutes of a Meeting of the University College Council that convened on the morning of 23 October 1914 that is worth reproducing in full. Among the Agenda item on Correspondence was:

- (c) *Return of Dr. Ethé.*—From Mr. T[homas] J[ohn] Samuel, Solicitor, of Aberystwyth, enclosing the following resolution “passed at a public meeting of the inhabitants of this town held last evening (21<sup>st</sup> October) in the Queen's Square”, viz.:-



“That as the College Authorities have not replied, as promised, to the deputation which waited upon the Principal last week<sup>57</sup> respecting the dismissal of the German Professor, this meeting of the inhabitants of Aberystwyth protests most strongly against having a German subject on the staff of a Welsh National College while Germany is at war with our country; and that this resolution be sent to the College Council, and Governors, for their decision and reply.

Principal Roberts explained the circumstances under which he and the Registrar [John Humphreys Davies] met Dr. Ethé on his return to Aberystwyth.

After carefully considering the matter, on the proposition of Principal Owen Prys, seconded by Dr. J[ohn] Gwenogvryn Evans,

It was RESOLVED—

- (i) That, having heard the explanation of the Principal as to the incident connected with the return of Dr. Ethé, the Council regard it as satisfactory; and as the Council is of opinion that the explanation would remove the misapprehension that exists in the mind of the public, ask the Principal to repeat the statement to the Court of Governors and to the Press.
- (ii) That the temporary arrangements made for the carrying on of the work of the Departments concerned be continued for the Session.

On the proposition of the Rev. Richard J[enkin] Rees, seconded by D[aniel] Lloyd Lewis, Esq.,

It was RESOLVED—

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<sup>57</sup> This was apparent reference to a meeting on 14 October near the College, perhaps in the open air, in which Roberts sought to buy time by explaining to the crowd that professors could not be sent away at a moment's notice and suggested that action be postponed for a week to enable the College authorities to consider the matter and in the meantime Ethé might leave the town, pending this consideration. The crowd had accepted this as an assurance; see *Cambrian News*, 16 October 1914, 5.

That the question of the payment (or not) of salary to Dr. Ethé for the present Session be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The Court of Governors that received Roberts' statement met on the afternoon of the same day and the full text of his statement later appeared in the local press.<sup>58</sup> Its thrust was a description of how Ethé and his wife had been met on their return to the town, particularly seeking to counter the perception that the reception group had been providing a formal welcome rather than seeking to warn Ethé of the need to be careful in view of the anti-German feeling running in the town.

The events in Aberystwyth excited national publicity, both for and against how the town had treated its German residents. Roberts received an undated anonymous message, written with a limited level of literacy, threatening Ethé's death if he were brought back to Aberystwyth by the University College – as the writer gnominically put it (perhaps suggesting that he/she was not actually from the locality), 'his [Ethé's] life will be in danger if he has the face to come here and take our English [*sic*] money' and 'let a British man have it'. It is unclear quite when this was sent but it was presumably in November 1914; it attached a press cutting, undated and unsourced, saying that 'the services of three German professors have been dispensed with by the Toronto University authorities,' events that occurred in November 1914.<sup>59</sup>

*Ethé's exile in Reading and the unsuccessful attempt at naturalization*

Roberts clearly had to balance several divergent demands on his options. Still, to Ethé he was initially apparently optimistic, perhaps genuinely but more likely out of a concern for Ethé's feelings, about the latter's return to Aberystwyth. On 28 October he wrote to Ethé

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<sup>58</sup> *Cambrian News*, 30 October 1914, 3.

<sup>59</sup> The full story of what actually happened at the University of Toronto is rather more nuanced; see James G. Greenlee, *Sir Robert Falconer: A Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1988), 205-13, and Martin L. Friedland, *The University of Toronto: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2002), 260-1. The three were not in fact dismissed but, as a compromise in November 1914 between University President Falconer and his supporters, who wanted to keep them, and hawks on the University Board who wanted them immediately dismissed, the three were given leave of absence on full pay to 30 June 1915, though nothing was said about what might happen thereafter. In the event, two had resigned by December 1914 and went to the United States, while the third resigned by June 1915, moving to McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, then a private institution.

saying that, while he could not advise when it would be safe to return to Aberystwyth and advising Ethé to stay away for the present session [i.e., 1914-15], he ‘thought that matters would right themselves in due course and he [Ethé] need have no anxiety’. Ethé replied on 7 November complaining of the enforced idleness and the ‘sad exile from our beloved home’. He was working hard on proof sheets for the Clarendon Press, ‘the only thing that makes life bearable for me under these cruel circumstances’.<sup>60</sup>

Attempts were made on Ethé’s behalf to secure his naturalization. Roberts approached one of the University College’s most distinguished alumni, Sir Ellis Jones Ellis-Griffith, MP for Anglesey and from 1912 to 1915 Under-Secretary of State in the Home Department, to seek his intercession. Ellis-Griffith had suggested that Roberts write to the Home Secretary Reginald McKenna, who was also MP for North Monmouthshire. This Roberts did in early November 1914. However, the College Registrar had, at Ethé’s request, already made a formal application for naturalization as early as 16 October. It is clear from Ethé’s Home Office file that there was some sympathy for his case within the Home Office but, from a later exchange of letters with Roberts, it is also apparent why naturalization was unsuccessful. The Home Office had wanted to know whether the University College was behind the request for naturalization. Roberts replied to the Home Office on 5 December 1914 that he did not object to naturalization but saying that it was then inappropriate to bring the question before the College Council. He clearly feared that he would not secure unanimous support from the College Council, saying that ‘a discussion on this point might lead to a division of opinion which is unconnected with the merits of the case’. The contingent nature of this support for Ethé’s naturalization was interpreted by the Home Office as unacceptably lukewarm. On 19 January 1915 Roberts wrote again to the Home Office repeating this position but wanting to make clear his personal support for naturalization. However, the Home Office felt that this did not move the matter much further forward and the naturalization issue then lost momentum.

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<sup>60</sup> This would seem to have been Ethé’s *Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Persian, Arabic, and Hindustani*, 250 copies of which were printed for the National Library of Wales by the Clarendon Press in 1916.

Although the naturalization attempt was unsuccessful, Roberts was able to secure Ethé's salary for 1915, a matter doubtless of some delicacy as it was clandestinely made through private contributions from four individuals at the College (including Roberts). In his letter of thanks of 25 January 1915 to Roberts, Ethé promised him to keep this issue 'strictly private'. Ethé also then expressed his annoyance at the effects of an action by Kuno Meyer, described as 'foolish and absolutely unjustifiable' and clearly detrimental to the interests of German nationals still resident in Britain.

Ethé remained stuck in Reading. On 16 March 1915 he had written to Roberts saying that his application for a special permit to visit Clifton in Bristol, where his wife's mother and a sister were living, was refused by the Chief Constable of Bristol. Ethé was then still seeking, unsuccessfully, for naturalization and wondered whether Lord Kenyon or Sir Samuel Thomas Evans<sup>61</sup> might put in a word on his behalf. By 3 April Ethé was reporting that his wife, albeit not he, had permission to go to Clifton. However, he was clearly concerned at overstaying his welcome in his brother-in-law's house and had been offered the possibility of moving on invitation to the residence in Manchester of Charles Herford.<sup>62</sup>

As a German national, Ethé was also a candidate for repatriation to Germany, something which he greatly feared. On 1 June 1915 Ethé wrote to Roberts saying that he had just received from the Home Office a form of application for exemption from repatriation. He needed the names and addresses of British subjects willing to vouch for his good behaviour. Roberts, of course, agreed to provide this surety. On 15 May 1915 the India Office had communicated to the Home Office its view that Ethé should not be repatriated, and similar views came from the Reading police and from Ethé's academic colleagues, Edward Milner-Barry<sup>63</sup> and Herford. Thus, Ethé did avoid repatriation.

### *Ethé's pension and resignation from the University College*

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<sup>61</sup> These were Lloyd Tyrrell-Kenyon, 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Kenyon (1864-1927), then a Senior Deputy Chancellor of the University of Wales and Sir Samuel Thomas Evans [(1859-1918) an alumnus of Aberystwyth and formerly MP for Mid-Glamorganshire.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Harold Herford (1853-1931), Professor of English Literature at the University of Manchester.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Leopold Milner-Barry, MA (1867-1917), Professor of German and Teutonic Philology at the University College of North Wales at Bangor.

However, after his case had been out of the University College's immediate concerns for eight months, it suddenly moved inexorably to a climax. One member of the College Council, Frederick Llewellyn-Jones, a solicitor and former student who had done much to establish the Law Department, threatened to move in the Council that Ethé should be deprived of his chair. On 4 June 1915 he sent a letter to the Registrar requesting the following notice of motion on the agenda for the next meeting of the Council:

To call attention to the fact that the name of Dr Hermann Ethe [*sic*] a German subject still appears in the Calendar of the University College of Wales as a Professor at the College and to move a resolution that steps be taken with a view to his being deprived of his chair and all the emoluments connected therewith at the earliest possible date.

By the same post Llewellyn-Jones sent a letter to Roberts to explain why he had formulated his motion. He pointed out that Ethé had been in Britain for forty years and could have naturalized during that time. As he had not, he was a German, and thus a member of 'a nation of savage barbarians who will stop at nothing in their attempt to crush Britain'. Llewellyn-Jones noted two recent events that disturbed him (and, it is true, had generally greatly inflamed anti-German feeling in Britain), *viz.*, the use of poison gases in warfare (first used by the Germans on 22 April 1915 in the Battle of Ypres) and the sinking of the *Lusitania* (which occurred on 7 May 1915); he also referred to 'the murder of innocent women and children'. Thus, to Llewellyn-Jones, 'a "German" professor at Aberystwyth cannot be tolerated'.

Roberts replied to this on the 5<sup>th</sup>, seeking to placate Llewellyn-Jones and offering to meet him personally at any place of his convenience, but this effort at placation was not successful. On the 7<sup>th</sup> the latter responded, reinforcing his earlier position, suggesting that Dr Ethé be invited to send his resignation to the Council, and failing that he was threatening to raise the issue before the Court of Governors, which he suggested to Roberts would be a mistake since there would then be greater publicity than would be the case if the matter were dealt with by the Council. Over the next couple of days Roberts

continued to seek the personal meeting with Llewellyn-Jones to ensure that ‘no mistake is made in our handling of [the matter]’. On 9 June Roberts responded elliptically to Llewellyn-Jones assuring him that the matter would be dealt with and saying, in a postscript, that in view of this assurance he trusted that he had Llewellyn-Jones’s consent to his instruction to the Registrar to hold back his notice ‘for the present’. Roberts proposed in the meantime that he would ‘take steps with a view to an arrangement *by consent* [italics added]’. From what is known of what happened, it becomes clear what this last phrase meant.

On 14 June Roberts wrote to Colonel Dunne of the Rendel Trustees<sup>64</sup>, pointing out that Ethé’s payments from the India Office and British Museum were suspended but four members of the College (including Roberts) were privately guaranteeing his £200 salary. Roberts explained that the Registrar had been in communication with Mrs Ethé suggesting to her that Ethé should resign on the understanding that the Council should pay him what he should receive under the pensions scheme on attaining his 75<sup>th</sup> year, *viz.*, £150 per annum.

This was agreed through what was a surreptitious cloak-and-dagger operation to hide what was going on, particularly from the population of Aberystwyth. Roberts apparently briefed his Professor of Zoology, Herbert John Fleure, as his emissary to Ethé. On 22 July 1915 Fleure sent Roberts a personal letter from a London hotel saying that he had been in Reading that afternoon and could report that Ethé was willing to accept his pension. Fleure reported that Ethé was begging that it not be ‘finally and irretrievably settled that he is never to return [to Aberystwyth] and the thought of return ‘keeps him up’. Fleure reported that he wired [i.e., sent a telegram] to ‘J. H.’, who was clearly John William Hey Atkins, the Professor of English who was on the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the College, ‘Barkiss willing, but still hopes return some day’. This was apparently a pre-arranged code – ‘Barkiss’ being a code name for Ethé, a ruse clearly adopted to prevent some indiscreet telegram operative in Aberystwyth from getting wind of any settlement and broadcasting the fact around the town. Further to

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<sup>64</sup> Colonel Dunne was Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Marten Dunne (1864-1944), who married into the Rendel family and had been Liberal MP for Walsall from 1906 to 1910. The Rendel Trustees were named after Stuart 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Rendel (1834-1913), President of University College Wales from 1895.

substantiate the ruse, Fleure emphasized that he had sent his telegram from London and not from Reading, where Ethé might have been known to be residing.

Ethé did thereupon resign.<sup>65</sup> At its meeting on 24 September 1915 the College Council noted that the resignation of Professor Ethé as holder of the Chair of German and Oriental Languages, together with an application for his pension, was received. On a motion by Gwenogvryn Evans and seconded by Owen Prys, his resignation was accepted and the payment of his pension of £150 per annum was authorized from 1 October 1914. Gwenogvryn Evans proposed, seconded by Walter Jenkin Evans, that detailed arrangements for the payment of the pension be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration and report. The Council's next meeting, on 29 October 1915, received a report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee about how Ethé's pension was to be funded, £75 per annum from College funds and the balance from the purchase of an annuity by cash in hand in the Pension Fund to provide the further £75.

#### *The relationship of the University College and the Town Council*

The relationship between the University College and the Town Council progressively deteriorated over the course of Ethé's case. The latter criticized the College for awarding the annuity to him, particularly as some of it came from College funds. *The Times* reports that at the Town Council's monthly meeting on 11 April 1916 a motion, moved by Alderman Samuel,<sup>66</sup> was carried condemning the action of the Council of the University College of Wales in 'recommending payments out of the College income to Dr. Ethe, an alien, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the next meeting of the Governors of the College'. Professor Edward Edwards, who was also a Councillor on the Town Council, pointed out in the debate that Ethé had condemned the Kaiser in strong terms

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<sup>65</sup> Of course, outright dismissals, or invited resignations, outside higher education must also have been common. For example, a meeting of Northampton Town Council called for the resignation of the German-born manager of the Corporation Tramways, albeit with a 'solatium' of £300. He had apparently held this job for twelve years but, like Karl Wichmann and Robert Priebisch, he had sought naturalization only after the War had started. See *The Scotsman*, 27 October 1914, 7.

<sup>66</sup> This was the Thomas John Samuel mentioned above; the motion was seconded by Councillor Harries.

and was still engaged, at the India Office, in government work.<sup>67</sup> The conferment of the pension had been done with a degree of confidentiality and it took nearly six months before Samuel and the Town Council received wind of it. Samuel proposed suspension of standing orders to allow his emergency motion in view of the fact that the College Governors were due to meet at Rhayader a couple of weeks later. He even suggested that a deputation of the Town Council should wait on the College Governors and convey the resolution to them expressing its disapproval and disgust.<sup>68</sup>

When they met on 28 April 1916, the Governors, chaired by Sir Garrod Thomas, initially considered referring the Town Council's motion to the College Council but then withdrew it and left it on the table. Given that Ethé had contributed to the College's pension fund, paying him the pension was regarded as a moral duty, though it is true that some of it did come directly from College funds. This egregious snub exasperated the Town Council and when in May 1916 the Registrar informed it of the expiry of the term of office to the Court of Governors of one of its nominees, Alderman Samuel proposed that no appointment be made 'after the treatment given by the Court of Governors at Rhayader to the protest against Dr Ethé's pension'.<sup>69</sup> This was approved in a vote of fourteen to one (the dissentient being Edward Edwards).

Llewellyn-Jones may also have been unhappy about the annuity. He had not been a frequent attender at College Council meetings but, if absent, had usually previously sent an apology for absence. However, in the three meetings after he sent his notice of motion, in June, September and October 1915, he neither attended nor sent any notice of apology.

Even after Ethé's death in 1917, the Town Council's hostility to him was unabated. In October 1917, suspiciously close to the end of his annual term, the town's Mayor, a draper Caleb Morgan Williams (1853-1928), resigned from the Court of Governors and Council of the University College because the Governors had ignored the earlier protest of the Town Council about the payment of a pension to Ethé. Given that he could have readily have resigned these posts much earlier in his term of office, one wonders about his thinking, although this must have been a difficult year for him as his

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<sup>67</sup> *The Times*, 13 April 1916, 11.

<sup>68</sup> *Cambrian News*, 14 April 1916, 6.

<sup>69</sup> *Cambrian News*, 12 May 1916, 3.



wife had died early in his term, in March 1917. The letter announcing the resignation was sent on 6 October 1917 and received on the 9<sup>th</sup>. The *Cambrian News* reported the letter on 12 October 1917 and the Governors received it at their next meeting.<sup>70</sup> The Registrar had sent a brief acknowledgement of regret and said that he was sure no discourtesy had been intended. Still, perhaps an indication that the Town Council later felt rather ashamed of its stance is that Ethé's defender, Edward Edwards, became Mayor of Aberystwyth for 1919-20.

### *Parliamentary issues about Ethé*

In the latter part of 1916, possibly orchestrated after the College's rejection of the strictures of the Town Council, a series of parliamentary questions were asked, designed to embarrass the Government about Ethé's continuing work for the India Office. The first came from William Joynson-Hicks<sup>71</sup> on 18 May 1916. Davies, the College Registrar, actually wrote to the Home Office on 26 July 1916 asking whether the Home Office could support Ethé's having a pension in view of this parliamentary question. The Home Office replied saying that it saw no reason to repudiate an entitlement but beyond that did not want to intervene. In October and November 1916 Sir Henry Dalziel<sup>72</sup> also asked a series of further parliamentary questions – whether Ethé was being employed on work for the Government,<sup>73</sup> why was Ethé not naturalized, when was his last visit to Germany, had the Home Office influenced his return to this country? In the course of the replies to questions raised by Dalziel and others on 2 November 1916, it emerged that Ethé had received no payment for his work since about 1901 (when his first volume of India Office documents was finished), that the documents to be catalogued were being sent to him at his residence, and thus that he did not attend the India Office itself. That Ethé had worked for fifteen years without further payment clearly puzzled at least one Member of

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<sup>70</sup> *Cambrian News*, 26 October 1917, 6.

<sup>71</sup> William Joynson-Hicks (1865-1932), then Unionist MP for Brentford from 1911 to 1918, a lawyer who had a controversial political career, culminating as a repressive Home Secretary from 1924 to 1929.

<sup>72</sup> James Henry Dalziel (1868-1935), Liberal MP for Kirkcaldy Burghs from 1892 to 1921 who was Chair of the Committee in Charge of German Prisoners of War from 1914 to 1918; he became 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Dalziel of Kirkcaldy in 1921.

<sup>73</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 26 October 1916, 4.

Parliament, to whom it was explained by the Government spokesman that Ethé continued to do the work because he was interested in it.<sup>74</sup>

Several professional colleagues rallied to Ethé's defence. For example, his friend and former colleague, Charles Herford, wrote a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* arguing for Ethé's 'anti-Prussianism', claiming that hostility to his views by the German Imperial Ministry of Education had frustrated attempts to lure him back to a chair at a German university, and pointing out the preposterousness of the charge that his India Office work might be treasonably used for sending information to Berlin.<sup>75</sup> On 10 November 1916 Milner-Barry also wrote a letter of support for Ethé to the Inspector of Aliens at the Home Office, claiming that the agitation was merely a result of the Town Council's failure to get the pension stopped.

#### *Ethé's final year and death*

In the spring of 1916 Ethé and his wife had managed, with the consent of the local Chief Constable, to move to an apartment at 29 Royal York Crescent in Clifton that had been found for them on a three-year lease by another brother-in-law, Robert Bruce Wilson, who had married another of Harriet's sisters and was living nearby. Ethé even managed to have some of his books and effects transferred from Aberystwyth. There was initially some further concern that he might be forced to move from Bristol because it was a prohibited area but, after a plea to the Home Office, this threat passed.

Just a year later, on 7 June 1917, Ethé died at his home of a neck cancer and on 11 June he was buried in Canford Cemetery in Bristol. The University College's reaction to this was even more than sympathetic. At its meeting on 29 June 1917 Roberts reported to the College Council Ethé's death and said that the Senate had drawn up a resolution of condolence and forwarded it to Mrs Ethé. The Council then resolved 'that the Council associated itself with the Senate in the great loss that the College *has* [emphasis added] sustained through the death of Prof. Ethé and its deep sympathy with Mrs. Ethé in her sorrow and bereavement'.

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<sup>74</sup> *The Times*, 3 November 1916, 9; *Manchester Guardian*, 3 November 1916, 7. For a more whimsical and tongue-in-cheek account of the same event in the *Manchester Guardian*, see 3 November 1916, 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 6 November 1916, 10.

Immediately after his death, Ethé's widow applied for re-admission to British citizenship from the German citizenship that she had by her marriage. Her brother-in-law, Robert Wilson, wrote to the Home Office on 13 June 1917 asking whether she could take steps to become renaturalized and, if so, how she should proceed. She was clearly entitled and duly filed an application. Supported by character references from the Chief Constables of Bristol and Cardiganshire and by John Humphreys Davies, this re-admission was granted at Bristol on 20 August 1917. When she wanted to reclaim her British nationality, her application for re-admission was a requirement of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914, which became operative from 1 January 1915. This necessity for the British widow of a deceased foreign national having to re-apply for her British nationality was in Part III of the Act. Ethé's widow's re-admission was doubtless one of those said by the Home Secretary, Sir George Cave, in a Commons debate on 17 December 1917 to have been his only naturalizations, these all being of widows of German and Austrian husbands.<sup>76</sup> Her Home Office file noted that the notification with her distinctive name when it appeared in the *London Gazette* might excite adverse comment but she was none the less fully entitled to be re-admitted to citizenship.<sup>77</sup>

It is always wrong to say that the victim brought his/her troubles on himself/herself by the failure of some deed that might have spared him/her from victimhood. However, Ethé's problems with the people of Aberystwyth in October 1914 might have been less if he had sought more to identify with his local community. Despite his obvious facility at languages and despite his long residence in a strongly Welsh-speaking part of Wales, he never troubled to learn Welsh, allegedly believing – according to Ellis<sup>78</sup> – that the only Welsh word one needed to know was *cwrw* [beer].

## Conclusions

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<sup>76</sup> Panayi, *op. cit.*, 64.

<sup>77</sup> She lived on, without remarrying, as Ethé's widow for more than a further thirty years, living near her birth town of Lichfield and dying in Tamworth Hospital on 27 September 1947 from secondary shock following an accident falling downstairs.

<sup>78</sup> Ellis, *op. cit.*, 171.

The circumstances of these four case studies clearly differ. However, do they permit any general conclusions about the role of anti-German feeling against German-/Austrian-origin academics in British higher education at the time of the First World War? And what do they say about the status of certain universities, particularly the civic ones, within their local political environments?

The case of Leeds, as well as that of Birmingham with Karl Wichmann,<sup>79</sup> demonstrate how vulnerable were these civic universities to the financial sanctions that could be imposed by their local authority if there were one or more local dignitaries who were determined to see the dismissal of the relevant German professor. A similar judgement applies to the case of Freund at Sheffield where, although financial threats were not made, the impetus for dismissal clearly came from important non-University members of the University Council.<sup>80</sup> It does seem, however, that the existence of an actual or potential financial sanction is often important. The case of Aberystwyth was one where the University College, confronted by a situation not of its choosing or within its control when local residents forced Ethé to leave the town, none the less faced down the Town Council, which over several years raved impotently at the College but, unlike the situation of the English civics, had no financial sanction that could be applied. The behaviour of Aberystwyth Town Council and most of its members leaves little doubt that they would have applied a financial sanction if in a position to do so.

The presence of sympathetic colleagues within the University is superficially helpful, though far from determining. Freund at Sheffield and Ethé at Aberystwyth were clearly supported with enthusiasm by many of their academic colleagues and by at least neutrality by the remainder, which bolstered the position of their University authorities,

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<sup>79</sup> Husbands, 'German academics', *op. cit.*

<sup>80</sup> A case that might have developed similarly to Freund's was that of Otto Schlapp (1859-1939) at Edinburgh University. Schlapp had given up his Prussian nationality in 1889 and was, in effect, stateless. He had apparently considered seeking British naturalization in 1909 but had not thought it worth the £5 fee! At the start of the War the Edinburgh University Court wanted to consider his position, regarding him as German, and that of two others. Schlapp thereupon sought to be naturalized as quickly as possible in order to secure his University position. With the support of, among others, Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) who was Chancellor of Edinburgh University, this was effected. His certificate of naturalization was issued on 22 September 1914 and the threat against him lapsed. See National Archives, HO 144/1372/264842. (His son Walter later served in the First World War.)

but only in the short term until matters became critical.<sup>81</sup> When the tolerant views of the academic staff at Sheffield were opposed by the more hard-line sentiments of its University Council, Fisher deferred to the latter.

The case of Priebisch at UCL is different in an important respect. There had been no problem about his employment (after his naturalization) during the War; his difficulties arose only later. He was strongly supported by many colleagues but the fact remains that none of their supplications actually changed anything; indeed, given the terms of the legislation under which Priebisch's naturalization had been revoked, that was always unlikely. What was determining about Priebisch's exact fate was that the Home Office was probably never minded to intern or repatriate him; despite the conclusion of the Revocation Committee, Priebisch was always going to be allowed to stay in this country. Thus, a crucial test of the success of such lobbying – whether it might have overturned a decision by the Home Office if that decision had been to intern or repatriate – is not part of the history of the case. The mood of the country after the War differed from that during it, but it may be significant that there is no record of any public objection from outside the University (e.g., from Parliament) at Priebisch's continued employment by UCL after the revocation. This contrasts with the cases of both Schüddekopf and Ethé, who both attracted hostile Parliament scrutiny during the War, albeit for very different reasons.

However, if there is a general inference from the four case studies, it is perhaps that each was *sui generis*. They differ from each other more than they are the same and it was often the aleatory bad luck of a particularly intractable local political authority or Court of Governors, or local population, that determined whether the German professor encountered critical difficulties. Hermann Georg Fiedler (1862-1945) at Oxford had no serious problems, though his naturalization was as late as 1913 (albeit he was helped by

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<sup>81</sup> This contrasts with Wichmann at Birmingham who, even after he was naturalized and with no evidence of any disloyalty against him, was the subject of demands for his dismissal by some science professors within the University, one of whom probably 'shopped' him to the local War Office official, who issued Wichmann with a Military Order under Regulation 14 of the Defence of the Realm Act 1914 requiring him to live at least ten miles from Birmingham. The pretext for this was that the professor concerned was conducting experiments with explosives for the war effort and thought it inappropriate that 'a German' (which technically Wichmann no longer was) should therefore still be at the University; see Husbands, 'Karl Wichmann: A Research Note', *op. cit.*

having been German tutor to the Prince of Wales) and Karl Hermann Breul (1860-1932) at Cambridge encountered no ill-feeling, though it is true his naturalization was as long ago as 1893 and he also lost a son fighting for Britain in the War.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> However, quite a number of non-professorial Germans were dismissed by various British universities and several German professors in Irish universities (when Ireland was still in the UK) were treated harshly. For example, Max Friedrich Ernst Freund (1879-1980), Professor of Modern Languages at Queen's College Belfast from 1903 to 1909 and, when the College became Queen's University, Professor of German and Teutonic Philology, was dismissed from office in October 1914 on grounds related to the fact that he was an enemy alien.

### Appendix: Principal players in each case

Styles and qualifications are those with which the persons concerned finished their professional careers, but styles assumed after 1916 are given in brackets and the offices given are those relevant at the respective time. Styles assumed after that are given in brackets.

#### *University of Sheffield*

Appleton, Henry William (1867-1939), MA; Professor of English and of History,

Member of the Faculty of Arts

Arnold, John Oliver (1858-1930), DMet, FRS; Professor of Metallurgy, Member of the

Council

Baker, Alfred Thomas (1873-1936), LittD, PhD, FRSL; Professor of French, Member of

the Council and of the Faculty of Arts

Bennett, Charles Frederick (1860-1918); Member of the Council

Burrows, Right Reverend Leonard Hedley (1857-1940), DD, DLitt; Lord Bishop of

Sheffield, Member of the Council

Clegg, Sir William Edwin (1852-1932), Kt, CBE, LLD, JP; Solicitor, Member of the

Council

Coombe, John Newton (1854-1936); Member of the Council

Denton, George (1855-1928); Member of the Council

Ellis, [Sir] William Henry (1860-1945), Kt, GBE, DEng, MInstCE, JP; Master Cutler,

Member of the Council

Firth, Edward Willoughby (1867-1937), JP; Member of the Council

Fisher, Herbert Albert Laurens (1865-1940), MA, DLitt, LLD, FBA, FRS; Vice-

Chancellor, Member of the Council and of the Finance Committee

Franklin, Sir George (1853-1916), Kt, DLitt, FCA, JP; Pro-Chancellor, Chairman and

Managing Director of National Telephone Co Ltd, Member of the Council and of the Finance Committee

- Green, John Alfred (1867-1922), BA, MA; Professor of Education, Dean of the Faculty of Arts (1916-19), Member of the Council
- Hall, [Sir] Arthur John (1866-1951), Kt, MA, MD, DSc, FRCP; Professor of Medicine, Member of Finance Committee
- Harland, Albert (1869-1957), JP; President of F Graucoh Ltd and Nu-Swift Ltd, Member of the Council
- Hobson, [Sir] Albert John (1861-1923), Kt, LLD, JP; Ex-Master Cutler, Director of Birmingham Small Arms Co, etc., Treasurer, Member of the Council and of the Finance Committee
- Holmshaw, Robert (1856-1919), JP; Member of the Council
- Hughes, Colonel Herbert (1853-1917), CB, CMG, LLD, Territorial Army (retired); Member of the Council
- Jones, John David (1875-1952), BA (London, 1903), DPhil (Berlin, 1911), MA; Lecturer in English and Acting Head of the Department of German, October 1915-1919; he stayed on at the University of Sheffield, retiring (still as Lecturer in English) in 1939
- Knoop, Douglas (1883-1948), MA, ARIBA; Lecturer (later Professor) in Economics, Member of and Secretary to the Faculty of Arts
- Leahy, Arthur Herbert (1857-1928), MA; Town Trust Professor of Mathematics, Member of the Faculty of Arts
- Leathes, John Beresford (1864-1956), MA, MB, BCh, DSc, FRCS, FRCP, FRS; Professor of Physiology, Member of the Council
- Marsh, Harry Parker (1857-1933), LLD, JP; Member of the Council
- Moore Smith, George Charles (1858-1940), LittD, PhD, LLD, FBA; Professor of English Language and Literature, Member of the Faculty of Arts
- Osborn, [Sir] Samuel (1864-1952), Kt, LLD, JP; Director of Samuel Osborn & Co, Member of the Council and of the Finance Committee, Liberal
- Pye-Smith, Rutherford John (1848-1921), ChM, FRCS, JP; Professor of Surgery, Member of the Council and of the Finance Committee



- Ripper, William (1853-1937), CH, DEng, DScEng, JP; Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Principal of the Technical School, Member of the Council and of the Finance Committee
- Sleeman, John Herbert (1880-1963), MA; Lecturer in Latin and Philosophy (later Professor of Classics, University of London, 1922-1946), Member of Faculty of Arts
- Summers, Walter Coventry (1869-1937), DLitt, MA; Firth Professor of Latin, Member of the Faculty of Arts
- Trotter, William Finlayson (1871-1945), KC, LLD, MA; Professor of Law, Member of the Council
- Turner, Albert Edward Mann (1870-1948); Member of the Council and of the Finance Committee
- Vickers, Douglas (1861-1937), DEng, JP; Chairman of Vickers Ltd, Member of the Council, Conservative
- Walker, George Blake (1854-1921), MEng, MInstCE, JP; Lecturer in Mining, Member of the Council, retired mining engineer
- Watson, John Hudson (1845-1925), JP; Member of the Council
- Wightman, Arthur (1842-1924), JP; Solicitor, Member of the Council
- Willoughby, Leonard Ashley (1885-1977), MA, DPhil, PhD; appointed Lecturer in charge of German in 1919 (later Professor of German in University College London)
- Wynne, William Palmer (1861-1950), DSc, MA, FRS, ARCS, FRIC; Firth Professor of Chemistry, Member of the Council

*University of Leeds*

- Bowring, Henry Illingworth (1869/70-1934); Chairman of the University Finance Committee, 1902-1921; Life Member of the Yorkshire College Council and University Court; Benefactor of the University

Cockburn, Sir George Jack (1848-1927), JP; Member of the Court and Council of the University

Garstang, Walter (1868-1949), MA, DSc, FLS, FZS; Professor of Zoology

Grant, Arthur James (1862-1948), MA; Professor of History

Kendall, Percy Fry (1856-1936), DSc; Professor of Geology

Lupton, Arthur Greenhow (1850-1930), LL.D.; Pro-Chancellor

Sadler, Sir Michael Ernest (1861-1943), KCSI; Vice-Chancellor

Wilson, [Sir] Charles Henry (1859-1930), LL.D.; Alderman of City of Leeds

*University College London and University of London*

Bayliss, [Sir] William Maddock (1860-1924), MA, DSc, FRS (General P.); Professor of Physiology, Member of the UCL Professorial Board

Bragg, [Sir] William Henry (1862-1942), KBE, MA, DSc, FRS; Quain Professor of Physics, Member of the UCL Professorial Board

Busk, Sir Edward Henry (1844-1926), MA, LLB, FUCL; Member of University Senate as Chairman of Convocation

Butler, Harold Edgeworth (1878-1951), MA; Professor of Latin, Member of the UCL Professorial Board

Chambers, Raymond Wilson (1874-1942), MA, DLitt; Reader in Language and Literature, and also UCL Librarian, later Quain Professor of English Language & Literature, UCL, 1922-41; Member of the UCL Professorial Board and of its *ad hoc* Committee in the matter of Professor Priebsch

Coker, Ernest George (1869-1946), MA, DSc, MSc, ARCS, MICE, FRS (Civil and Mechanical Engineering); Professor of Civil Engineering, Member of the UCL Professorial Board

Collie, John Norman (1859-1942), LL.D., DSc, DrPhil, FIC, FRS; Professor of Organic Chemistry, Member of the UCL Professorial Board

- Eady, [Baron] Sir Charles Swinfen (1851-1919), LLB; Judge and Master of the Rolls,  
Member of University Senate co-opted to represent the Inner Temple
- Foster, Sir Thomas Gregory (1866-1931); Provost of UCL, Member of the University  
Senate; knighted in 1917, he became a baronet in 1930, Vice-Chancellor of the  
University of London from 1928 to 1930
- Gardner, Ernest Arthur (1862-1939), MA, LittD; Yates Professor of Archaeology,  
Member of the UCL Professorial Board and of its *ad hoc* Committee in the matter  
of Professor Priebisch
- Hicks, George Dawes (1862-1941), MA, LittD, DrPhil; Professor of Philosophy, Member  
of the UCL Professorial Board
- Hill, James Peter (1873-1954), DSc, FRS (Zoology and Comparative Anatomy); Jodrell  
Professor of Zoology, Member of the UCL Professorial Board
- Hill, Micaiah John Muller (1856-1929), MA, ScD, LLD, FRS; Astor Professor of  
Mathematics, Member of the UCL Professorial Board and of the University Senate;  
formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, 1909-11
- Ker, William Paton (1855-1923), FBA, MA; Professor of English Literature, Member of  
the UCL Professorial Board
- Miers, Sir Henry Alexander (1858-1942), DSc, MA, Hon. DCL, Hon PhD, Hon DSc,  
Hon LLD, FRS, FGS, FCS; Principal of the University of London, 1908-15
- Montague, Francis Charles (1858-1935), MA; Professor of History, Member of the UCL  
Professorial Board
- Murison, Alexander Falconer (1847-1934), MA, LLD; Professor of Jurisprudence &  
Roman Law, Member of the UCL Professorial Board and of its *ad hoc* Committee  
in the matter of Professor Priebisch
- Napier, Thomas Bateman (1854-1933), LLD; Member of University Senate for  
Convocation (Laws)
- Oliver, Francis Wall (1864-1951), MA, DSc, FRS; Quain Professor of Botany, Member  
of the UCL Professorial Board

- Perry, Sir Edwin Cooper (1856-1938), MD, MA, FRCP, MRCS; Physician and medical administrator; Vice-Chancellor, University of London, 1917 to 1919, Principal, University of London, 1920 to 1926
- Platt, John Arthur (1860-1925), MA; Professor of Greek, Member of the UCL Professorial Board
- Pollard, Albert Frederick (1869-1948), MA, LittD; Professor of English Constitutional History, Member of the UCL Professorial Board
- Quiggin, Edmund Crosby (1875-1920), MA; Lecturer in Greek and Celtic and Fellow of Caius and Gonville College, Cambridge
- Ramsay, Sir William (1852-1916), KCB, LLD, DSc, MD, PhD, FRS, FCS; Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, UCL
- Reay, Lord [Baron Mackay of Ophemert, Donald James Mackay] (1839-1921), PC, DL, JP; President of UCL
- Robertson, John George (1867-1933), MA, BSc, DrPhil; Professor of German [at Bedford College for Women], Member of the UCL Professorial Board
- Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye (1842-1922), DCL, LLD, LittD, BA, FKCL, DL; Member of University Senate
- Simpson, Frederick Moore (1855/56-1928), FRIBA; Professor of Architecture, also Civil and Mechanical Engineering, Member of the UCL Professorial Board and of its *ad hoc* Committee in the matter of Professor Priebisch
- Starling, Ernest Henry (1866-1927), CMG, ScD, MD, BS, FRCP, FRS; Jodrell Professor of Physiology, Member of the UCL Professorial Board
- Wolf, Abraham (1876-1948), MA, DLitt; Reader in Logic and Ethics, Member of the UCL Professorial Board
- Workman, Revd Herbert Brook (1862-1951), DD, DLitt, MA; Member of University Senate for Convocation (Divinity)

*University College of Wales Aberystwyth*

- Atkins, John William Hey (1874-1951); Rendel Professor of English Language and Literature (1906-40), Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Davies, John Humphreys (1871-1926), MA; Registrar, 1905-19, Principal, 1919-26, Member of the University College Council
- Edwards, Edward (1865-1933), MA; Professor of History, Member of Aberystwyth Town Council in 1916, Mayor of Aberystwyth, 1919-1920
- Evans, John Gwenogvryn/Gwenogfryn (1852-1930), MA, DLitt; Oxford-based palaeontologist, Member of the University College Council
- Evans, Walter Jenkin (1856-1927), MA; Principal of Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, Member of the University College Council
- Fleure, Herbert John (1877-1969); Professor of Zoology and Lecturer in Geography, Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Jones, Owen Thomas, MA, DSc (1878-1967); Professor of Geology
- Lewis, Daniel Lloyd (1854/5?-1935); Farmer and Bank Manager, Member of the University College Council from 23 October 1914
- Llewellyn-Jones, Frederick (1866-1941), BA, LLB; Solicitor and His Majesty's Coroner for Flintshire, Member of University College Council; later Liberal MP for Flintshire, 1929-35
- Marshall, John Wilson (1857-1923), MA; Professor of Greek and Vice-Principal of University College
- Prys, Revd Owen (1857-1934), MA, DD; Principal of Aberystwyth Theological College, 1891-1927, and Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and Dogma, Member of the University College Council
- Rees, Revd Richard Jenkin (1868-1963), MA; Non-Conformist Minister, Member of the University College Council
- Roberts, Thomas Francis (1860-1919), MA, LLD; Principal, 1891-1919, Member of the University College Council
- Schott, George Adolphus (1868-1937), BA, DSc; Professor of Applied Mathematics

Thomas, [Sir] Abraham Garrod (1853-1931); MP for South Monmouthshire, 1917-18,  
and Chair of the Governors of the University College