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**“A house of cards which would not stand”:**

**James Headlam-Morley, the Role of Experts, and the  
Danzig Question at the Paris Peace Conference<sup>1</sup>**

**D.B. Kaufman**

Abstract. Recent years have witnessed increasing interest amongst international historians on the influence by experts on foreign policy decision-making. Most work thus far has concentrated on American foreign policy since 1945, but this analysis broadens the focus to consider the impact of experts on British decision-makers through the use of informal networks below the level of Cabinet ministers whilst debating the future of the city of Danzig at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. It shows that despite a tendency by the protagonists to interpret their actions as subverting the official role and function of the Foreign Office, sufficient evidence can be found to suggest that through the use of back-channels to David Lloyd George, the prime minister, via Philip Kerr, his private secretary, some officials, such as James Headlam-Morley, within the Office managed to influence high-level decision-making at Paris. Whilst experts must be seen as acting alongside professional diplomats, rather than marginalising them, a focus on the subject helps explain different approaches taken by participants at the Conference, and why senior figures such as Sir Eyre Crowe came to approve their intervention in the dispute over Danzig. It also allows a new view to be taken of why the compromise decision was taken, despite the guiding principles laid down by the peacemakers in the year before the Conference opened.

Among all the territorial problems dealt with at Paris none was more difficult than that of Danzig . . . . This question was the cause of acute differences of opinion within the British delegation itself, and was debated with great persistency between the Allies during the four months which preceded the settlement. The decision eventually arrived at was essentially a British one; it was suggested by members of the British delegation and carried through by the Prime Minister in the face of much opposition.

Headlam-Morley, April 1925<sup>2</sup>

Writing in April 1915, Lewis Namier, recently demobbed from the 20<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers owing to his poor eyesight, warned that “Pharisaic doctrine is almost as dangerous as the mongerer in ‘political geography’”.<sup>3</sup> His warning was apposite, as the Great War was in the process of destroying the established order of multi-national empires in Central and Eastern Europe. The question that confronted statesmen was: what would replace them? There was little agreement, save for the principle of national self-determination of peoples as a way to prevent a future war, when the present conflict was at least in part caused by the divisive force of frustrated nationalism. This concept, however, was far from a panacea to solve all of Europe’s problems. In applying the principle of “political self-determination” in the disputed areas of the continent, Namier suggested, “perhaps we should be guided by instinct rather than strict logic”. In these short lines, the future prominent historian of eighteenth century England outlined the key issue facing the peacemakers: the almost impossible task of matching a peace based on the goal of national self-determination onto the devastated patchwork territories of Central and Eastern Europe. This was especially the case in the contested border regions, which had resulted in fluid national identities.<sup>4</sup>

The Paris Peace Conference was the first major international congress for which diplomacy was undertaken by statesmen and professional diplomats, but also by a large number of academics, serving in various capacities in their respective national delegations.<sup>5</sup> Whilst Lord Castlereagh headed a British delegation to the 1815 Congress of Vienna numbering only 17, David Lloyd George, the prime minister, departed in January 1919 for Paris with almost ten-times that number, with 165 official advisors in the 500-strong British Empire Delegation – and more sent as problems multiplied.<sup>6</sup> There were a number of reasons why academics had successfully entered the corridors of power during the Great War, although it should be noted that in general, this was only in an advisory capacity rather than playing an active role in policy-making. This opportunity arrived for a number of reasons, first the call-up or volunteering of members of the Diplomatic Service for active service during the war and, then, the comparative paucity of available manpower to fill these roles. The Foreign Office, in particular, found itself to be under public attack. Shortly after the outbreak of war, the formation of the Union of Democratic Control shifted the focus to the conduct of foreign policy more generally. It sought to remove the “aristocratic bias” and shatter the “small clique of professional advisors far removed from public control”.<sup>7</sup> Opening up some sections of the Foreign Office to a select group of outside experts was one attempt to placate such calls for reform.<sup>8</sup> In addition, with the outbreak of war, diplomatic intelligence ceased to flow from the states that found themselves at war with the other belligerents. And last, statesmen were confronted with deciding the future of large swathes of the globe, their knowledge of which was found to be lacking. In France, Britain, and the United States, various military and political intelligence departments were formed or expanded to advise on conditions in enemy territory as well as liaise with propaganda departments.<sup>9</sup> This was especially the case concerning Eastern Europe, which had emerged from the domination of Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. 1919-1920 marked

the period of “peak intensity” for experts of the lands between the temporarily prostrate Germany and Russia.<sup>10</sup> During the war, Woodrow Wilson, the American president, had already displayed his almost complete ignorance of both the history and geography of the region.<sup>11</sup> Lloyd George was little better, admitting to the House of Commons in the midst of the negotiations in Paris that he had never heard of “that remote and miserable duchy” of Teschen.<sup>12</sup> That the statesmen knew so little was not, however, due to a lack of material presented to them on almost every conceivable subject. It was estimated that the American Commission to Negotiate Peace [ACNP] arrived in Paris with nearly 2,000 scholarly documents and 1,000 maps ready for use.<sup>13</sup> The problem was the intersection between politician and academic, as well as between diplomat and academic.<sup>14</sup> In Britain before 1914, there existed an uneasy relationship between the professional diplomat and amateur expert. The Foreign Office firmly believed that policy “decisions could only be made by those trained in the complicated art of diplomacy”.<sup>15</sup> The material written by academic experts was too voluminous for any interested party to digest, and the statesmen who gathered at Paris in the first weeks of 1919 were busy in the last months of 1918, for example, [delete Lloyd George] fighting the “coupon” election in Britain. More important, the suspicion, common to most academics, was that the material was probably never going to be read in any case.<sup>16</sup> Lloyd George, again, was a case in point. One key part of his Philip Kerr’s job as his private secretary was to sift through, read the mass of material submitted to his master, and pass on what he considered the prime minister needed to know.<sup>17</sup>

The role of experts has long been appreciated by students of the post-First World War Peace Conferences.<sup>18</sup> Traditional accounts, from John Maynard Keynes’s *Economic Consequences of the Peace* onwards, either ignored or downplayed the complicated and dynamic organisation of the Peace Conference to provide a more compelling narrative.<sup>19</sup> Other participants,

like Harold Nicolson, a Foreign Office advisor, later recalled that he “never moved a yard” without consulting “experts of . . . authority”.<sup>20</sup> Some of the legion of technical experts, historians, lawyers, and political geographers who attended the Conference did more than merely act as advisors to the plenipotentiaries who headed their delegations; they also often acted as negotiators in their own right.<sup>21</sup> Many served on the various commissions and sub-commissions that were spawned as the business of the Peace Conference developed. Some who served in this capacity were responsible for little more than making recommendations to the peacemakers and then drafting the provisions that were incorporated into the peace settlement. Others played a more prominent role, yet they could not be solely responsible for the formulation of policy, as they were not politically responsible; at Paris all matters were decided by the Council of Four, the heads of the British, French, American, and Italian governments.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, in questions where there was a degree of ignorance on the part of the professional diplomats, there was an expectation that the “experts” would act on the basis of their expertise. This principle was, however, rather uneven amongst the various Allied delegations. The French and Italians tended to follow instructions from above. Former members of the wartime United States “Inquiry” that looked at peace terms, for example, were chosen as members of the ACNP both for their knowledge and intellectual ability, but also for their connexions and political opinions. In the British Empire Delegation, a small number of experts were included on the Foreign and War Office staffs, working as intelligence officers and “Advisors on Special Subjects”. Unofficial networks amongst experts and advisors played an increasingly important role as the Conference at first meandered and then rushed towards the self-imposed deadline, 28 June 1919, when the peace with Germany was to be signed.

The centralisation of British decision-making under Lloyd George’s “prime ministerial” leadership not only took policy-making away from the Foreign Office, but also limited its role in

even offering advice.<sup>23</sup> In an attempt to reverse this trend, Lord Hardinge, the Foreign Office permanent under-secretary, formed the Political Intelligence Department [PID] in February-March 1918, largely by poaching ten members of staff from the Intelligence Bureau in the Ministry of Information.<sup>24</sup> It meant that within the Foreign Office, a group of “experts” were admitted who did not conform to the predominant pre-war social and professional background of the majority of Foreign Office officials, and this was to have important ramifications during the Peace Conference where the Political Section numbered a mere ten officials in addition to a further seven advisors. Of their number, one, James Headlam-Morley, a softly-spoken classicist who had temporarily transferred to various wartime propaganda departments from the Board of Education, was to play a significant role in the development of the Peace Conference, including finding a solution to the Danzig question.<sup>25</sup> The proximity that Headlam-Morley was able to orbit around Lloyd George and Kerr allowed for the Foreign Office to have some degree of influence on the peace settlements, something subsequent scholars have not always fully appreciated.<sup>26</sup> Appointed to Lloyd George’s “Garden Suburb” in February 1917 as a non-political amateur appointment, Kerr was responsible for advising the prime minister on Imperial and foreign affairs.<sup>27</sup> Kerr was the only member of this group to survive into the Peace Conference, and his role expanded as he worked more closely with his political master, even serving as an unofficial diplomat himself.<sup>28</sup> He shared some of the same suspicion that his chief felt towards professional diplomats and cultivated relationships with numerous experts, allowing him to provide detailed advice often in opposition to that coming from the other side of Downing Street. Figures such as Sir Eyre Crowe, head of the Political Section of the British Empire Delegation, which effectively served with Arthur Balfour, the foreign secretary, as an advance party of the Foreign Office in Paris, was “almost in despair” as the prime minister had taken “everything out of the F.O.’s hands”.<sup>29</sup> However, the preference that Lloyd George felt

for “private rather than official advice” did allow for some unconventional Foreign Office access to him outside of the usual channels.<sup>30</sup>

These relationships developed during the last year and one-half of the war with the fusion of journalism and propaganda work. Kerr, who had made a name for himself as the editor of the influential, but little read, journal, *The Round Table*, mixed in the same circles as R.W. Seton-Watson’s *New Europe* group. There was a remarkable confluence of contributors to these two periodicals and the staff of the PID. Lewis Namier, the PID expert on Polish affairs, found himself excluded from the British Delegation in Paris, having fallen foul of Roman Dmowski’s exile Polish National Committee [KNP], yet, Headlam-Morley ensured him privileged access to Lloyd George. He wrote to Kerr shortly after the Conference opened:

as you know, he [Namier] is not altogether *persona grata*, and it is I think increasingly difficult for him to get a hearing . . . I am sure that his knowledge and his point of view deserves attention. I am, at his request, sending you privately and unofficially, some of the letters and papers which I have received from him. I can feel little doubt from what I hear from other sources that in his main contention he is right.<sup>31</sup>

As well as corresponding with Kerr, Namier continued an almost daily communication with Headlam-Morley, advising him on Polish and Ruthenian affairs. His tone tended to be vehemently anti-Polish and these filtered, as Headlam-Morley did not uncritically accept his views on Poland, were also selectively passed on to Kerr and, through him, more selectively Lloyd George.<sup>32</sup> It was through “individuals rather than institutions”, none more so than Headlam-Morley, who worked in a rather uneasy relationship under Crowe on German problems at the Peace Conference, that the Foreign Office was able to provide a measure of influence over their chief,



including the compromise decision to create the Free City of Danzig. Through his position at the Conference, Headlam-Morley acted “as a link between the old diplomacy and the new”.<sup>33</sup>

A crucial problem for the experts was getting their advice under the noses of their political masters and then acted upon. Opportunities for this largely depended on the roving interests of the Big Four – Wilson, Lloyd George, and the French and Italian premiers, Georges Clemenceau and Vittorio Orlando. The knowledge, or otherwise, of the leading figures of the Conference on various questions could also enable privileged access to the inner workings of the Council of Four. One such issue that intersected both the attention and unfamiliarity of the leading statesmen was the future of Danzig, a German port city, but crucial for the future economic development of Poland, newly re-emerged as an independent state following 123 years of partition amongst the Romanov, Habsburg, and Hohenzollern empires. The outbreak of war in 1939, ostensibly over Danzig, has ensured that the origins of the Free City have been examined extensively by historians.<sup>34</sup> Such work has provided a comprehensive blow-by-blow account of the “politics of the great powers” in the midst of the negotiations over the Polish-German border. The use of Poland as a pawn between the Allied and Associated Powers in 1919 is an aspect of the historiography that will only be touched on here.<sup>35</sup> This study seeks to nuance their interpretations of both the decision to grant Danzig sovereignty through a free-city status, but also the debates amongst British officials on employing experts as opposed to professional diplomats through the use of private material either not available to or employed by other scholars.<sup>36</sup> There is some disagreement about the basis of British policy towards Poland and its territorial boundaries. Maria Nowak-Kiełbikowa was undoubtedly right that British policy was largely “indifferent” towards the frontiers of the Polish state, outside of the consideration that when Germany and Russia regained their status as Great Powers, they would be able to accept them and thus allow for stability

on the continent.<sup>37</sup> In this context, the British were essentially “pragmatic” towards Poland’s territorial demands. Lloyd George has been granted a prominent role from contemporary Polish participants and, subsequently, for following an anti-Polish policy that ensured that Poland’s territorial claims at the Peace Conference were not realised.<sup>38</sup> For Dmowski, the sole Polish plenipotentiary until 6 April with the arrival of Ignacy Jan Paderewski in Paris, the “politics of an enemy was represented by a ruthless and cunning Welsh lawyer”.<sup>39</sup> He continued, any “sensible, serious statesman” who did not work “wrongheadedly” would have seen a more favourable outcome for Poland’s territorial demands. For Dmowski, the malign influence of Jews such as “that little Galician Jew”, Namier, who operated “behind the scenes”, was primarily responsible for Britain’s anti-Polish policy at the Conference.<sup>40</sup> Whilst Namier communicated with Kerr extensively and with Headlam-Morley on an almost daily basis, his advice was treated with great scepticism due to his open anti-Polish bias.<sup>41</sup> It is not possible to refute the hostility that Lloyd George periodically displayed towards Poles and their territorial claims, but decisions at the Peace Conference emerged largely as a result of following the principles laid down by the peacemakers in the year or so before the Conference formally opened on 28 January 1919.

What then were these principles, as applied to Danzig? Headlam-Morley argued in 1923: In setting up the new Polish State, there were two principles which had to be followed: (1) There should be assigned to Poland all territories predominantly Polish; (2) Poland was to receive free and secure access to the sea. It was under the second of these, and the second alone, that any Danzig question arose . . . all reference to historical facts and the former relationship of Danzig to Poland is completely irrelevant.<sup>42</sup>

The principles by which the settlement in the West was decided were unworkable in the East: the strict application of national self-determination, which would have left Danzig under German

sovereignty, was rejected as it would not give Poland the necessary security, whilst a Polish enclave at the port of Neufahrwasser – a district of the city of Danzig – was rejected on the advice of the Admiralty on strategic grounds. The third solution, to grant Poland full sovereignty over Danzig, was rejected on purely political grounds as it would have given Germany a ground for refusing to sign the peace. The necessary result was that a “compromise was adopted” as no solution was acceptable to either Poland or Germany.<sup>43</sup> Strategically, Headlam-Morley acknowledged even before the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the arrangements for both Danzig, and West and East Prussia were “quite impossible”; but he saw it as “an advantage . . . it seems to me the right thing frankly to build up a system which cannot be maintained” unless the League was sufficiently strong enough to impose “peace and disarmament”.<sup>44</sup> This was no small matter, as “the treaty linked the viability of the Free City to the viability of the League of Nations” and, therefore, the entire international order.<sup>45</sup>

The shape of future peace settlement was considered from the early stages of the war, but planning towards the peace only really commenced in 1916. Headlam-Morley became a central figure in this process, through his position as deputy director of the PID, under the leadership of the disinterested but occasionally brilliant Sir William Tyrrell, who saw his role as more defending the unconventional temporary political intelligence officers under his charge, rather than looking to use his position to try to shape policy. Headlam-Morley, who had come to note as author of the most authoritative account of the immediate origins of the conflict, found himself the chief German expert in the PID, with his work taken seriously in the upper echelons of the Foreign Office.<sup>46</sup> This was unintentionally re-enforced by Lloyd George’s attempt to circumvent the Foreign Office by assigning the task of preparing the formal British peace brief to his advisor, the South African General Jan Smuts. The overworked Smuts was forced to rely on the large body of PID memoranda

sent up to him.<sup>47</sup> The task ultimately proved too much for him, and instead of a single document of the type the American Inquiry produced, the British Delegation relied on the PID's "P" series of memoranda, which constituted the "Foreign Office case", augmented by material from other departments.<sup>48</sup> Headlam-Morley was assigned the task of producing a short brief for the settlement in Europe as well as Germany.

Both memoranda outlined the view that the territorial problems facing Western Europe had already been "brought to a satisfactory conclusion".<sup>49</sup> Whilst broad areas of policy had transformed well from statements of war aims in the West, this was not the case in the East where the unresolved problem of revolutionary Russia loomed over the Peace Conference.<sup>50</sup> The main question relating to Germany's western borders was Alsace-Lorraine, the return of which was a long-standing and firmly established war aim of all of the Allied Powers. The Foreign Office argued it was not desirable that "His Majesty's Government should take any initiative or interfere with regard to it".<sup>51</sup> In contrast, the disputed borderlands between Germany and the new Polish and Czechoslovak states were repeatedly raised in the discussion of Allied war aims, but no consensus had been reached since the discussion began in earnest after the opening of the Russo-German Brest Litovsk peace talks in December 1917.<sup>52</sup> The Allied Governments, at a meeting of the Supreme War Council on 3 June 1918, formally pledged themselves to the Versailles Declaration that sought "the creation of a united and independent Polish State, with free access to the sea".<sup>53</sup> To fulfil this declaration, the Foreign Office initially hoped that a "commission consisting of representatives of Germany and Poland" should be appointed to determine the new frontier, which would "leave a clear strip of territory in German hands, connecting East Prussia and Pomerania, Danzig being left to Germany" under the provision that the German government would grant Poland "full and free communication with the open sea, and will either establish the

town of Danzig as a free port, or will permit, as an alternative, a free port to be established on German territory under Polish sovereignty”.<sup>54</sup> Such a solution proved hopelessly naïve, and even without the inclusion of German and Polish representatives on the Commission on Polish Affairs, it proved to be one of the most divisive issues confronted by the Peace Conference.

The Foreign Office memorandum on the “Settlement with Germany” was emblematic of the problems facing the British Delegation in Paris. As Crowe, newly returned to political work after serving in the Ministry of Blockade, minuted, “in the plan of work and distribution of duties in connection with the Conference, no specific place” had been “given to ‘Germany’ as a whole”.<sup>55</sup> As usual, Crowe volunteered to “superintend” any such work, to which Hardinge agreed. The ever-cautious Crowe then urged a pragmatic approach: “I would strongly advise our not pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for the Poles or Lithuanians. Let them worry the other Powers first, and let *us* reserve our opinions when we see how the situation develops”.<sup>56</sup>

Simultaneous with Headlam-Morley’s memorandum on Germany, other parts of Whitehall were attempting to grapple with the same issues. The War Office, seeking to advise the Cabinet from a strategic perspective, acknowledged that neither a narrow strip of German territory linking East and West Prussia or a “narrow tongue” of Polish territory “projecting from Poland proper to the sea” would be militarily defensible.<sup>57</sup> Esme Howard, until October 1918 the British minister at Stockholm, recalled to the Foreign Office with responsibility for the settlement in Northern and Eastern Europe, suggested that rather than a Polish Corridor, the Germans should be allowed such a corridor through Polish-inhabited territory, following the line of the main railway from West to East Prussia “in which should be included the district and town of Danzig”.<sup>58</sup> Howard made his proposals on the basis of self-determination, but noted that compensation could be given to Germany, “set off through the reparation due by Germany” to Poland to allow it to buy out private

interests in mines in Silesia as well as the port of Neufahrwasser. This proposal fell in line with the recommendation of Professor Charles Oman, the expert commissioned to advise the Foreign Office on a possible solution to the German-Polish border. Oman argued that Danzig, on the principle of “racial determination”, should remain German, but that the port of Neufahrwasser should go to Poland. Whilst, he suggested, this “may appear highly unnatural” – he equated it as drawing an international frontier between Glasgow and Greenock – it was the only way that he could see to reconcile the contradictory aims.<sup>59</sup> Howard, often accused in the subsequent literature of pronounced pro-Polish views on account of his Catholic faith, argued for a pragmatic solution with a “strong and compact Poland” including all indisputably Polish territory, but excluding “large alien minorities” that would run the risk of “recreating the conditions which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century led to the partitions of Poland”.<sup>60</sup> The formal Foreign Office submission on Poland, under Howard’s signature, but heavily influenced by Namier, re-enforced this by arguing that Danzig was the “most difficult” of all the problems connected with Poland, and acceding to Polish claims would merely “create an unstable position which would probably render the Polish position untenable if, and when, Germany recovers”.<sup>61</sup>

The British were, of course, not working in a vacuum. The French and Americans as well as the Poles all submitted long cases for the future eastern frontier of Germany. Almost all sought to assign Danzig to Poland, fulfilling Woodrow Wilson’s war aims – the thirteenth of his “Fourteen Points” – rather than on the basis of national self-determination.<sup>62</sup> For S.J. Zwierchowski, who worked in the Polish Division of the Inquiry under the name Zowski, the “principle of nationality” should be cast aside, arguing that it “must not be blindly and mechanically” applied to the case of Danzig, where history had “furnished unmistakable proofs of a small foreign colony being perfectly happy of and grateful for its allegiance to a greater nation”.<sup>63</sup> Statistical evidence was

also deliberately ignored, but on the basis of the moral case for the uncompromising policy of Germanisation that had been pursued in the Prussian partition of Poland by the Wilhelmine regime. For the territory either ceded to Poland directly, according to the “falsified” 1910 German census, out of a total population of 2,931,000, some 1,844,000 were Polish: 62.91 percent.<sup>64</sup> In the plebiscite areas, the proportion was 58.89 percent – 1,540,000 Poles from a total population of 2,615,000. Even taking into account the manipulated statistics, the *Regierungsbezirk* of Danzig was an overwhelmingly German town well before the question arose in the last years of the Great War, with Poles only constituting 16,000 out of the total pre-war population of 324,000, some 4.94 percent.<sup>65</sup> It was clear that either a question of principle or longer-term questions of stability were going to have to be compromised at the Peace Conference.

The chaotic working methods of the early weeks of the Peace Conference actually facilitated a close working relationship between experts in the British and American delegations. Before the structure of territorial sub-committees was set up in February, the necessity was to push the mass of work forward. Clive Day, the American expert on the Balkans, wrote in his diary on 8 January 1919, “if we are going to accomplish anything here, I feel confident that we shall do it by working with the English, who are far less selfish and particularist in their aims than any of the other powers except ourselves”.<sup>66</sup> Howard and Robert H. Lord, the American expert on Poland, met to find a joint position on the German-Polish borderlands.<sup>67</sup> The resulting Howard-Lord Agreement of 5-6 February generally sought to grant the most favourable border as possible to Poland, following “the linguistic frontier as closely as topography and some peculiarities of the railway system will allow”.<sup>68</sup> This was a reversal of Howard’s position on Danzig before the Peace Conference opened.<sup>69</sup> The same day as Howard submitted his draft agreement, Headlam-Morley read the text and immediately submitted a memorandum to Hardinge on the question of the Polish-

German border as it “raise[d] serious problems of policy” on account of the fact that Howard had completely reversed his position on the Polish Corridor.<sup>70</sup> Headlam-Morley “ventured to urge, therefore, that this decision be seriously reviewed and considered, not only in connection with the Polish question, but with the general question of the German treaty”, a matter for which he – and Crowe – was responsible rather than Howard. Crowe agreed with Hardinge’s assessment that the Howard-Lord agreement was “unfortunate from an ethnographical, self-determinant and common sense point of view”.<sup>71</sup> Senior Foreign Office officials and their political masters who saw the Howard-Lord agreement were almost unanimously against it, seeing perhaps the wider issues that it would throw up. Dr. George Prothero, soon to resign as head of the Foreign Office Historical Section, noted that if the agreement were followed, “Germany would never forget her loss”.<sup>72</sup>

Howard, perhaps too open in his opposition to Lloyd George’s proposal to invite all shades of Russian political opinion to meet on the island of Prinkipo, was despatched to the entirely peripheral fact-finding Inter-Allied Commission to Poland.<sup>73</sup> Tyrrell, his replacement as nominal British expert on Polish affairs at Paris, was little interested in them. On 21 February, the Commission on Polish Affairs met in the absence of both Howard and Lord, the latter sent to Poland for the more justifiable reason that the Americans assumed that it was sensible to send someone knowledgeable to assess the situation. As such, it was left to others to draft the recommendations to the Supreme Council in Paris. In their task, they were largely left to “work out . . . problems as it thought just and right, always bearing in mind the general principles adopted by the Peace Conference”.<sup>74</sup> The American representative on the Commission, Isaiah Bowman, tried to interpret the few signs coming from Wilson, and Tyrrell left much of the detailed negotiation to H.J. Paton the Polish expert in the Admiralty Naval Intelligence Division, who had been called to Paris to replace Howard, and Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Kisch, who served in



the Military Intelligence Division.<sup>75</sup> It was only on 1 March, at the third meeting of the Commission, that the Polish-German border was discussed. Tyrrell announced that the British had “already completed a study as regards the western frontier of Poland”.<sup>76</sup> He immediately handed over to Kisch, who explained that it was

based mainly on ethnographical distribution, [with] due account being paid to economic considerations, particularly those affecting means of communication [a reference to the port of Danzig]. Wherever possible, existing administrative frontiers had been adhered to so as to simplify the process of delimitation and to give rise to the minimum of disturbance in the normal life of the inhabitants.<sup>77</sup>

The memorandum referred to by Tyrrell was in fact written by F.B. Bourdillon, also of the Naval Intelligence Department – not Paton as usually ascribed – and described “some suggested modifications of the ethnographic frontier” that would provide Poland with access to the sea but the possession of no “usable port and of means of communication with it”.<sup>78</sup>

Bowman casually mentioned that the Americans had “prepared a study of this frontier on the same principles” and, “except a few minor deviations”, the line proposed was the same as the British. The British and Americans effectively confirmed the exclusion of the other Allied delegations, as it was based on the Howard-Lord Agreement of 3 February,<sup>79</sup> rather than the conclusions of a second meeting of Anglo-American specialists on 21 February.<sup>80</sup> Whilst Bowman led the Americans, only Paton of the British members of the Commission on Polish Affairs was present at the meeting, which accepted the Howard-Lord recommendations regarding the southern boundary of East Prussia. According to Paton’s later recollection, “the French showed a little restiveness . . . but the French produced no materials or maps of any kind”.<sup>81</sup> The responsibility for drafting the border was thus left to a Sub-Committee consisting of General Henri

Le Rond, Bowman, and Kisch, who deliberately looked to draw the frontier from the south to give themselves more time to get some instructions on the thorniest issue: the fate of Danzig.<sup>82</sup>

Almost no instructions were forthcoming, however, with the result that the First Report of the Commission on Polish Affairs recommended “the question of the town and port of Danzig has been the subject of the very careful consideration by the Commission, who are unanimously of the opinion that . . . [it] should be given to Poland in unrestricted ownership”.<sup>83</sup> Crowe, a member of the Central Territorial Committee, had an opportunity to comment on a near final draft of the Report on 12 March. Other than some reservations about the extent to which plebiscites should be used, he recommended, along with the American delegate, Sidney Mezes, the adoption of the Report, “having had time to examine the line of the frontiers”.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, when the Committee next met two days later, led by Kisch, “no one proposed to modify the line recommended for the western frontiers of the Polish state”.<sup>85</sup> Namier, in London, was not surprised by the recommendation to award Danzig to Poland, but he warned Headlam-Morley that if the same arguments were “applied to Ulster [it] wd. drive it all into the sea, or would deliver it to Sinn Fein”.<sup>86</sup>

The First Report of the Commission on Polish Affairs was discussed in the inter-Allied Council of Ten on 19 March. Bowman later recalled that on reading the recommendation to grant Danzig to Poland, “suddenly Lloyd George changed from a state of bored indifference to one of aggressive participation. From that moment forward Lloyd George never relaxed his interest or his control”.<sup>87</sup> The prime minister voiced strong objections, but the members of the Polish Commission refused to alter their recommendations, despite further discussion in the Council of Ten on the morning of 22 March.<sup>88</sup> Not for the first time, Lloyd George was leaked against, with reports of his objections appearing in the French press.<sup>89</sup> Concerns over Danzig were not the primary reason for him to spirit away with a small group of his trusted advisors – not including

any member of the Foreign Office – to the Hotel de France and D'Angleterre in Fontainebleau over the weekend of 22-23 March. The top of Kerr's list, with news arriving of the establishment of a Hungarian Soviet Republic the day before, was a German "Peace which can accept Bolshevism".<sup>90</sup> Compared to the situation in Germany, stability in Poland was of secondary importance.<sup>91</sup> The first draft of the Fontainebleau Memorandum, dictated by Lloyd George "giving a general trend of his thoughts" only mentioned briefly placing Germans under Polish rule.<sup>92</sup> The final draft, revised and expanded after further discussion with Kerr, Sir Maurice Hankey, the British Delegation secretary, and General Sir Henry Wilson, the chief of the Imperial General Staff, warned that if Germany felt "unjustly treated", it would "find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors".<sup>93</sup> In an oft-quoted passage, Lloyd George unleashed what would become a public broadside. Using much of the same language he employed in the Council of Four,

the proposal of the Polish Commission that we should place 2,100,000 Germans . . . under the control of a people . . . which has shown a proverbial incapacity for self-government throughout its whole history must in my judgment lead sooner or later to a new war in the East of Europe.

To avoid this course, "as far as is humanly possible the different races should be allocated to their homelands", with this "fundamental criterion" needed to "override considerations of strategy or economics or communication". To reverse the recommendations of the Commission, he chose the Foreign Office as his tool.<sup>94</sup> Kerr passed a draft of the Fontainebleau Memorandum to Tyrrell, the only Foreign Office member to see it before its completion, asking for comment. Danzig, he remarked, was a "great difficulty", and the "only solution" he could suggest was that it should be made a "free port under an international commissioner", resurrecting a plan from the Quai d'Orsay – as well as Balfour – for the first time since the Peace Conference had opened.<sup>95</sup>

Crowe was then despatched, nominally as a member of the Central Committee on Territorial Questions, but at the “special request” of the French, to arbitrate. In all likelihood acting under instruction from Lloyd George, Crowe rebuked the Commission, reminding them that “the question is whether, as we have already here made recommendations about the frontier, whereas this Commission is rather charged with making a recommendation”;<sup>96</sup> the stenographic record added that he reminded the Commission, “we don’t fix these frontiers – we merely submit recommendations”.<sup>97</sup> Despite Kisch’s opposition, “it was settled that . . . the principles laid down by the British Delegation [i.e. ethnographic principles, and not moderated by economic or historical considerations] might thus serve as the basis for the work of the commission”, and that “the territories whose ethnical character was debatable or uncertain, should not at present be assigned to Poland”.<sup>98</sup> These principles were also used to sway Woodrow Wilson, who then used them to ensure that Fiume should not go to Italy.<sup>99</sup> These terms were then presented by Lloyd George to the Council of Four on 27 March both as the only viable basis of peace between both Germany and Poland and also for Europe in the long-term.<sup>100</sup>

The following day, over dinner with Lloyd George, Henry Wilson, and Hankey, Crowe was given an “unpleasant and thankless task” of proposing an “alternative scheme of frontiers which will lock off Poland from the sea”.<sup>101</sup> Crowe met Lloyd George again on 1 April, but still no detailed instructions were forthcoming. Not unreasonably, Crowe complained to his wife that the Lloyd George did “not know from one day to another what he wants. He has now given to someone else entirely contradictory instructions, on lines altogether different from what he told me”.<sup>102</sup> The other official was Headlam-Morley, who received his instruction directly from Lloyd George, on Kerr’s recommendation, three days previously, on 29 March. He was granted “official authority” to deal with this question – along with Homer Haskins of the American Delegation –

by the prime minister's request on 2 April, the day after Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George had decided the fate of Danzig in the Council of Four.<sup>103</sup> It is clear that Crowe thought that he was to be given the authority to deal with the entire Polish question, with Headlam-Morley reporting to him, but Headlam-Morley, in effect, worked directly for Lloyd George through Kerr.<sup>104</sup> In this capacity, he provided Lloyd George with reasoned objections to the decision to allocate Danzig to Poland.<sup>105</sup> The prime minister had given him a "sort of roving commission . . . to deal with German matters", including reversing the recommendations of the unanimous Commission on Polish Affairs.<sup>106</sup> On 7 April, the decision reached by Lloyd George was announced at the meeting of Allied prime ministers. The main point of difference with the Commission remained Danzig, now to be a Free City.<sup>107</sup> It was, however, on the Lloyd George's orders that Poland would not be given sovereignty over Danzig. The Commission on Polish Affairs had been brought to heel, Crowe replaced the ill Tyrrell, who returned to London suffering from conjunctivitis on 17 April; and, with Headlam-Morley, Kisch, most outspoken in defending the First Report, co-signed the revised memorandum, "Relative to the Settlement of the Danzig Question and the Polish Frontiers of East and West Prussia". It was submitted on 20 April to the prime minister and amounted to a victory for Lloyd George over the Commission on Polish Affairs.<sup>108</sup> A precedent had clearly been set by Lloyd George's objection to the First Report of the Commission on Polish Affairs. Woodrow Wilson proposed to ask that "all our territorial commissions" should "review their reports and to change them if need be along the lines indicated by our fundamental principles".<sup>109</sup>

As was not untypical, however; when Lloyd George's eye moved onto other matters, the direct line of contact was broken.<sup>110</sup> He also thought it "rather unfortunate" that the French had been "entirely left out" over Danzig. Headlam-Morley later reflected in 1925,

there is no record as to the reasons why this abnormal system was adopted; the only conjecture I can make is that the French objected so strongly to any revision of the decisions arrived at by the commission that they refused to have anything to do with it, and left the responsibility entirely with the British and the Americans . . . . in the drafting of this part of the treaty they had no share, and no responsibility . . . except that which arises from the fact that after the draft had been completed they accepted it.<sup>111</sup>

The peacemakers at Paris were essentially given a choice between drafting a treaty that the Germans might not sign and, in the words of Paton, the “real danger of Poland’s collapsing immediately with the result that anarchy would sweep over *Europe* and a genuine peace possibly postponed for years”.<sup>112</sup> Faced with this choice, the “Big Three”, led by Lloyd George, readily accepted by Wilson and reluctantly by Clemenceau, chose to disregard the Polish case over Danzig in what they saw as an effort to provide a lasting peace.<sup>113</sup> Disagreements over the Polish-German borderland were not so much debates between the Poles and the Allied statesmen and officials, but more within the delegations themselves, and more significantly between the delegations and their political masters. The direct result of the manoeuvrings over Danzig was to sow the seeds of mistrust amongst the wartime Allies over the motives of the British that dogged international relations throughout the 1920s.<sup>114</sup>

What then were the implications of the negotiations over Danzig for the working of the Foreign Office in the immediate post-war period? Other officials in the Office sought to get a hearing with Lloyd George through Kerr, although with less success. Howard attempted to reverse the Council of Four’s decision on Danzig by sending memoranda from two temporary clerks in the Admiralty, acknowledging perhaps that it was unlikely that his professional advice would be heeded, or even seen, by the prime minister.<sup>115</sup> For Crowe and Headlam-Morley, an exchange of

private letters at the beginning of June 1919 is instructive. Whilst Crowe was relieved not to have to deal with Danzig, he was angered by the further use of Headlam-Morley by the Council of Four to draft the Polish minority protection treaty.<sup>116</sup> He saw “a slight on the Foreign Office”.<sup>117</sup> Headlam-Morley’s position as an outsider was keenly felt, and he was forced to justify himself to Crowe, arguing

I have always considered myself merely as the representative of the Foreign Office . . . .

Since I came to the Foreign Office a year ago, my one effort has been to do everything in my power to help the work of the Office as an Office.<sup>118</sup>

Crowe responded warmly, reassuring Headlam-Morley that “there is no one here who more than I appreciate the work which you have contributed to the peace settlement”.<sup>119</sup> Frustration at the way in which key questions were being “dealt with and settled over the heads of Hardinge and myself, and I hear even of Mr. Balfour” led to the not uncharacteristic outburst. In a number of tense meetings with Hardinge, Headlam-Morley was made to feel quite how annoyed his superior was for undertaking work at the “initiative of the Prime Minister” and then working independently of the Foreign Office.<sup>120</sup> Headlam-Morley defended himself, arguing that he had “never had any kind of instructions” from his superiors in the Foreign Office.

The accusation that the use of experts had undermined the Foreign Office, however, seemed to stick, but was not part of the decision to close the PID, which occurred against Hardinge’s wishes through post-war budget cuts.<sup>121</sup> Most of the PID staff, including Namier, had already left government service before the Department was closed. Others, including Headlam-Morley, in the newly-created position of Historical Advisor, remained in the Foreign Office. The back-channel to Downing Street was effectively closed well before Kerr’s resignation in March 1921. The “system . . . of autocratic government” developed during the War, which both enabled

and necessitated the early experiment in informal networks between policy advisors and experts, effectively came to a halt in 1922 with the fall of Lloyd George.<sup>122</sup> For him, the system was more pragmatic, as he sought out experts who would undertake the detailed labour, following-through on his impulses.<sup>123</sup> It is likely that the temporary clerks who served as experts at Paris saw their fate: that their time influencing policy-making directly was coming to an end. A group of British and American experts and politicians, excluding their French colleagues, held a meeting, convened by one temporary clerk, Lionel Curtis, on 30 May 1919 to propose an “institute for international affairs” that would facilitate continued access to, and discussion with, diplomats and statesmen.<sup>124</sup>

Kerr’s informal network was central to the debate over the application of the problematic concept of national self-determination in the eastern half of the continent, yet there were strict limits to its influence. Writing to her brother-in-law, Arthur Cayley Headlam, bishop of Gloucester, in August 1919, Headlam-Morley’s wife, Else, noted of her husband’s role in Paris that “unfortunately it lies not in his power to change the Peace Treaty into a decent thing; he can only make insignificant improvements; yet this is better than nothing”.<sup>125</sup> The fate of Danzig was decided on wider geo-political interests as they arose, rather than any reference to national self-determination, or a determined plan to deprive Poland of Danzig. It did not figure in Lloyd George’s mind before it lodged there for a short time in March-April 1919. It is hard to disagree with Headlam-Morley’s observation that “the people at the top had no really clear conception of what they wanted: as always they are being driven by events and do not foresee them”.<sup>126</sup> Concern about a return of German power, and with it the prospect of reactionary pact between Soviet Russia and Germany, preoccupied Lloyd George, and it swayed his Council of Four colleagues. Thus, the security concerns of the wider European settlement trumped the idealism of many of the delegates at Paris, both experts and permanent officials. For Poland, this meant that after 1919



Britain clearly saw her obligations towards Danzig and the German-Polish frontier as being “only those of one member of the League of Nations to another”.<sup>127</sup>

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Eyre Crowe, quoted in James Headlam-Morley, Political Diary, 25 June 1919 [although the section on Danzig was written on 27 June], HDLM [Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge] “Political Diary”, ACC 727/1/14. Much of the diary was published as Agnes Headlam-Morley, Russell Bryant, and Anna Cienciala, eds., *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (London, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Headlam-Morley, “The Eastern Frontier of Germany. A Chapter of the History of the Peace Conference”, 4 April 1925, FO [Foreign Office Records, The National Archives, Kew] 371/10997/N2267/43/55.

<sup>3</sup> L.B. Namier, *Danzig: Poland’s Outlet to the Sea. Reprinted from the Nineteenth Century and After, February 1917* (London, nd [1917]), 1.

<sup>4</sup> For a nuanced examination of the Polish population of Prussian Poland, see PID [Namier], “Report on Poland”, nd [received 3 December 1918], FO 371/4354/PC73. These broad issues are discussed with more specific focus on Upper Silesia in Tomasz Kamusella, “Upper Silesia in modern Central Europe: On the significance of the non-national/a-national in the age of nations”, in Tomasz Kamusella, James Bjork, and Timothy Wilson, eds., *Creating Nationality in Central Europe, 1880-1950: Modernity, Violence and (be)longing in Upper Silesia* (London, 2016), 11-13; Timothy Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence: Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918-1922* (Oxford, 2010), 9-15.

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<sup>5</sup> Margaret MacMillan and Patrick Quinton-Brown, “The uses of history in international society: from the Paris Peace Conference to the Present”, *International Affairs*, 95/1(2019), 183.

<sup>6</sup> Some 18 members of the Foreign Office were part of the British Delegation, compared to the 37-strong War Office Military Section alone. See “Memorandum on the Function of Officers detailed for the Military Section, Peace Conference”, 29 November 1918, Webster [Charles Webster Papers, London School of Economics Library, London] 3/9.

<sup>7</sup> Zara Steiner, “The Foreign Office and the War”, in F.H. Hinsley, ed., *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey* (Cambridge, 1977), 529.

<sup>8</sup> By “expert”, I mean specialists who are not career diplomats, brought in, usually temporarily, to government service. See Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, Jakob Vogel, “Introduction”, in idem., eds, *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s* (NY, 2015), 1-20.

<sup>9</sup> Erik Goldstein, *Winning the Peace: British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1916-1920* (Oxford, 1991), 53, noted the close links between the political and military intelligence section MI2(e), as both contained a high proportion of Oxford and Cambridge historians and was headed by Harold Temperley of Cambridge. See also Alan J. Sharp, “Some Relevant Historians – The Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, 1918-1920”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 34/3(1989), 359-68; Volker Prott, “Tying Up the Loose Ends of National Self-Determination: British, French and American Experts in Peace Planning, 1917–1919”, *Historical Journal*, 57/3(2014), 727-50.

<sup>10</sup> R.J.W. Evans, *Great Britain and East-Central Europe, 1908-48: A Study in Perceptions* (London, 2002), 6. In addition to the academics who Evans discusses, military advisors performed a vital function at the Peace Conference; the secretary of the Military Section of the British

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Delegation, Major [and Professor of Modern History, the University of Liverpool] C.K. Webster recorded that it was often said that “only the soldiers at Paris knew any geography”. Webster, “Sketch of History of the Military Section British Delegation Congress of Paris. December 1918-July 1919”, September 1919, Webster 3/10.

<sup>11</sup> Mieczewśław Bolesław Biskupski, “The ‘Free City of Danzig’ and the League of Nations in American Strategic Conception, 1917-1918: A Wilsonian Geostrategic Experiment”, in Marek Andrzejewski, ed., *Gdańsk – Gdynia – Europa – Stany zjednoczone w XIX i XX wieku: księga pamiątkowa dedykowana profesor Annie Cienciale* (Gdańsk, 2000), 84.

<sup>12</sup> Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking, 1919* (NY, 1933), 25.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas F. O’Connor, “Library Service to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace and to the Preparatory Inquiry, 1917-1919”, *Libraries and Culture*, 24/2(1989), 146.

<sup>14</sup> For a more optimistic reading on the use of “applied history”, see Robert Crowcroft, “The Case for Applied History: Can the study of the past really help us to understand the present?”, *History Today*, 68/8(2018), 36-41.

<sup>15</sup> Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Cambridge, 1969), 211.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Webster wrote a history of the Congress of Vienna for the Foreign Office Historical Section’s Peace Handbook series, which he was concerned would be little used. In addition to the 30 copies he handed out in Paris, it was read by at least one diplomat on the train there. See Nicolson, *Peacemaking*, 31; Webster to Prothero, November 1918, Webster 3/8.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, the exchanges between Kerr, Balfour, and Curzon: Alan J. Sharp, “The Foreign Office in Eclipse 1919-22”, *History*, 61/202(1976), 206-07.

<sup>18</sup> Dimitri Kitsikis, *Le rôle des experts à la Conférence de la Paix de 1919. Gestation d’une technocratie en politique internationale* (Ottawa, 1972); John Felix Kadlubowsk, “The Experts

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and Poland's Frontiers at the Paris Peace Conference" (PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, 1977); Goldstein, *Winning the Peace*; Volker Prott, *The Politics of Self-Determination: Remaking Territories and National Identities in Europe, 1917-1923* (Oxford, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> On the Conference organisation, see F.S. Marston, *The Paris Peace Conference: Organisation and Procedure* (Oxford, 1944).

<sup>20</sup> Nicolson, *Peacemaking*, 126.

<sup>21</sup> James T. Shotwell, *At the Paris Peace Conference* (NY, 1937), 153-98.

<sup>22</sup> Kitsikis, *Le rôle des experts*, 209.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, "Lloyd George's Premiership: A Study in 'Prime Ministerial Government'", *Historical Journal*, 13/1(1970), 130-57.

<sup>24</sup> Sharp, "Relevant Historians", 360.

<sup>25</sup> Headlam-Morley's contribution at the Peace Conference has long been appreciated by historians; see especially Alan J. Sharp, "James Headlam-Morley: Creating international history", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 9/3(1998), 266-83; idem., "Holding up the Flag of Britain . . . with Sustained Vigour and Brilliance or 'Sowing the seeds of European Disaster'? Lloyd George and Balfour at the Paris Peace Conference", in Michael Dockrill and John Fisher, eds., *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919: Peace without Victory?* (Basingstoke, 2001), 37. Prott, *Politics of Self-Determination*, 134-42 rather comparatively downplays his role. Interwar observers tended to criticise his contribution. Casimir Smogorzewski, Roman Dmowski's private secretary at the Peace Conference, attacked him for his "fear of simplicity, but no fear at all of confusion and obscurity": Casimir Smogorzewski, *Poland's Access to the Sea* (London, 1934), 303, 328.

<sup>26</sup> There has been a tendency in the literature to focus on high politics, for example, G.H. Bennett, "Lloyd George, Curzon and the Control of British Foreign Policy 1919-22", *Australian Journal of*

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*Politics and History*, 45/4(1999), 467-82; Gaynor Johnson, "Curzon, Lloyd George and the Control of British Foreign Policy, 1919-1922", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 11/3(2000), 224-36.

<sup>27</sup> Kerr was not an amateur in the financial sense, as he was paid £1,000 a year, which Hardinge compared unfavourably to the £150 "pittance" that Nicolson made: Goldstein, *Winning the Peace*, 58.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, his account of a meeting with Aleksander Skrzyński, under-secretary of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Kerr to Drummond, 4 April 1919, Lothian [Marquess of Lothian Papers, National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh] GD40/17/884. Cf. John Turner and Michael Dockrill, "Philip Kerr at 10 Downing Street, 1916-1921", in John Turner, ed., *The Larger Idea: Lord Lothian and the Problem of National Sovereignty* (London, 1988), 33-61.

<sup>29</sup> Prothero diary, 2 April 1919, Prothero [George Prothero Papers, King's College Archives Centre, London] GWP/1/13. I would like to thank Professor Goldstein for sharing this material with me.

<sup>30</sup> Roberta M. Warman, *The Foreign Office, 1916-1918: A Study of Its Role and Functions* (NY, 1986), 15, 23.

<sup>31</sup> Headlam-Morley to Kerr, 25 January 1919, HDLM ACC 688/2. The Lothian papers contain abundant evidence of Namier's prolific output between 1917 and 1919, including, in particular, informing Lloyd George of the personal attacks to which he was subject in the Polish press: for example, Namier to Kerr, 19 April 1919, Namier to Kerr, 24 April 1919 enclosing a copy and translation of "Dmowski contra [sic] Lloyd George", *Gazeta Polska* (6 April 1919) that included the allegation that Lloyd George's unfavourable attitude towards the Poles was the result of him taking a Jewish mistress, Lothian GD40/17/892/1 and 895/1. On relations between Dmowski and

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Namier, see Paul Latawski, "The Dmowski-Namier Feud, 1915-1918", *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 2(1987), 37-49.

<sup>32</sup> Headlam-Morley to Rex Leeper, 27 February 1919, HDLM ACC 688/2. Namier wrote in 1915 that "no reconstruction of Poland can be considered complete unless it includes Danzig": Namier, *Danzig*, 2. His later correspondence suggests that his motivation was based on giving Poland "wide territories in the west, even in contravention of the ethnic principle, [that they] were to be absolutely prevented from making any annexations in the east", Namier to Headlam-Morley, 7 June 1919, HDLM ACC 688/2.

<sup>33</sup> Sharp, "Headlam-Morley", 270; Michael Dockrill and Zara Steiner, "The Foreign Office at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919", *International History Review*, 2/1(1980), 86.

<sup>34</sup> Excluding works written during the interwar period, the following is but a fraction of the literature on the subject: Anna M. Cienciala and Titus Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno. Keys to Polish Foreign Policy, 1919-1925* (Lawrence, KS, 1984); Kay Lundgreen-Nielsen, *The Polish Problem at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study of the Policies of the Great Powers and the Poles, 1918-1919* (Odense, 1979); Patricia A. Gajda, *Postscript to Victory: British Policy and the German-Polish Borderlands, 1919-1925* (Washington, DC, 1982); Anna M. Cienciala, "The Battle of Danzig and the Polish Corridor at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919", in Paul Latawski, ed., *The Reconstruction of Poland, 1918-23*, (NY, 1992), 71-94, Biskupski, "Free City of Danzig", 82-96; Lutz Oberdörfer, "Die Entstehung der Freien Stadt Danzig im internationalen Kontext", *Acta Cassubiana*, 11(2009), 178-233.

<sup>35</sup> See Lundgreen-Neilson, *Polish Problem*, passim, as well as the influential Piotr S. Wandycz, *France and her Eastern Allies: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno* (Minneapolis, MN, 1962), 29, who argued that British policy towards the

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German-Polish borderlands was rooted in a latent hostility to what Lloyd George saw as Poland being used merely as “an instrument of French Imperialism, faced opposition from Britain, which treated the German-Polish boundaries less on their own merit than as part of the French scheme of European settlement”.

<sup>36</sup> The Howard Papers were unavailable when Lundgreen-Neilson wrote his study and, since then, these and other private collections have become available to researchers. For an example of a study that made extensive use of Howard’s papers, see B.J.C. McKercher, *Esme Howard: A Diplomatic Biography* (Cambridge, 1989). Subsequent studies have not used these collections to their fullest extent, for example: Lutz Oberdörfer, “The Danzig Question in British Foreign Policy, 1918-1920”, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 15/3(2004), 573-79; Roger Moorhouse, “‘The Sore That would Never Heal’: The Genesis of the Polish Corridor”, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 16/3(2005), 603-13.

<sup>37</sup> Maria Nowak-Kiełbikowa, “British Policy Towards Poland in the 1930s”, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 20(1979), 98, 99.

<sup>38</sup> For a nuanced discussion of these issues, see Piotr S. Wandycz, “Dmowski’s Policy at the Paris Peace Conference: Success or Failure?” in Latawski, *Reconstruction of Poland*, 117-32. See also, Titus Komarnicki, *The Rebirth of the Polish Republic: A Study in the Diplomatic History of Europe, 1914-1920* (London, 1957); Maria Nowak-Kiełbikowa, *Polska-Wielka Brytania w latach 1918-1923: kształtowanie się stosunków politycznych* (Warsaw, 1975), 96.

<sup>39</sup> Roman Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa* (Warsaw, 1989), 149.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 150, 153, 154. Wandycz, “Dmowski’s Policy”, 125-26.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, the sharp disagreement between the two men in early February over Namier’s “reading of the Polish character”: “if you will not mind me saying so, I know that nothing interferes

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so much with the value of your work as the feeling which you allow to appear that you have no sympathy with Poland at all”: Headlam-Morley to Namier, 3 February 1919, HDLM ACC 688/2; Namier to Headlam-Morley, 10 February 1919, HDLM ACC 727/15.

<sup>42</sup> Headlam-Morley, “Note on the Relation of the Treaty of Versailles to the Polish-Danzig Convention of 1920”, 3 July 1923, H/M [James Headlam-Morley Papers, Special Collections, University of Ulster, Coleraine] Danzig file, Box 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Headlam-Morley, Political Diary, 25 June 1919.

<sup>45</sup> Leonard V. Smith, *Sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Oxford, 2018), 138.

<sup>46</sup> J.W. Headlam, *The History of Twelve Days, July 24th to August 4th, 1914: Being an Account of the Negotiations preceding the Outbreak of War, based on the Official Publications* (London, 1915). In 1918, Headlam received royal licence to assume the name and arms of Morley and became James Headlam-Morley.

<sup>47</sup> Goldstein, *Winning the Peace*, 94-98.

<sup>48</sup> Headlam-Morley to Zimmern, 20 December 1918, HDLM ACC 727/36.

<sup>49</sup> Headlam-Morley, “The Settlement. Europe”, 19 November 1918, FO 371/4353/PC55.

<sup>50</sup> Keith Neilson, ““That elusive entity British policy in Russia’: The Impact of Russia on British Policy at the Paris Peace Conference”, in Dockrill and Fisher, *Paris Peace Conference*, 67-101.

<sup>51</sup> Headlam-Morley, “Memorandum on the Settlement with Germany”, 23 December 1918 [the date of the final draft and the basis for internal discussion in the FO was received on 26 November; the printed version was revised on the basis of comments by Hardinge, Tyrrell, and Crowe], FO 371/4354/PC56.

<sup>52</sup> Prott, *Politics of Self-Determination*, 132-34.



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<sup>53</sup> *Procès-verbal*, third meeting of the sixth session of the Supreme War Council, 3 June 1918, CAB [Cabinet Records, The National Archives, Kew] 25/122/SWC 307.

<sup>54</sup> Headlam-Morley, “Memorandum on the Settlement with Germany”, 23 December 1918, FO 371/4354/PC56.

<sup>55</sup> Crowe minute, 27 November 1918 on Headlam-Morley, “Memorandum on the Settlement with Germany”. The borders of Germany were to be the responsibility of three men – Crowe, Western and Northern Germany; Howard, North Eastern and Eastern Europe – including Poland; Sir Ralph Paget, the borderlands of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire: Hardinge to Howard, 8 November 1918, Howard [Baron Howard of Penrith Papers, Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle] DHW 9/29.

<sup>56</sup> Hardinge added, “I agree”: Crowe minute, 30 November 1918, on Headlam-Morley, “Memorandum on the Settlement with Germany”.

<sup>57</sup> See Sir Henry Wilson [written by Thwaites, Director of Military Intelligence], “General Staff Desiderata Regarding Territorial Adjustments” [WCP 121], 19 February 1919, FO 608/265/22.

<sup>58</sup> Howard minute, 20 November 1918, on Oman, “Note on the Most Practical boundary for the new state of Poland”, nd [received 14 November 1918], FO 371/4354/PC46.

<sup>59</sup> Oman, “Most Practical boundary”.

<sup>60</sup> On Howard’s supposed pro-Polish tendencies, see Lundgreen-Nielsen, *Polish Problem*, 58. On 1 July 1919, Howard’s “compact” proposals for Polish borders would still include “more than 1,000,000 Germans”: Howard, “Poland”, 9 December 1918, FO 371/4354/PC46. For a more nuanced interpretation of Howard’s attitude towards Poland, see McKercher, *Esme Howard*, 202-03 and *passim*.

<sup>61</sup> Howard, “Poland”, 9 December 1918, FO 371/4354/PC46. Namier’s clear influence can be seen with the inclusion of sections of his unsigned 3 December 1918 “Report on Poland” in

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Howard's formal "P" Series submission on Poland, FO 371/4354/PC73; cf. Namier to Headlam-Morley, 11 April 1919, HDLM ACC 727/15. Dmowski's influence was, by contrast, far less: Dmowski, "The Territory of Poland", nd [October 1918], FO 371/4354/PC160.

<sup>62</sup> For a summary of the French and American positions, see Cienciala, "Battle of Danzig", 72-73; Prott, *Politics of Self-Determination*, 132-33.

<sup>63</sup> The American position was influenced by Namier's pamphlet on Danzig: see S.J. Zowski, "Poland's Access to the Sea", ACNP [American Commission to Negotiate Peace Records, Library of Congress, Washington DC] 34. Zwierchowski and his colleague, Henryk Arctowski, passed information to the KNP: Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919* (New Haven, CT, 1963), 205-06.

<sup>64</sup> Naval Intelligence Department, "I.D. 1202 A. Poland: Memorandum on the Language Statistics of Prussian Poland", February 1919, 3, H/M 4/48; "The Territorial Settlement in Europe", in H.W.V. Temperley, ed., *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Volume II: *The Settlement with Germany* (London, 1920), 214.

<sup>65</sup> "Territorial Settlement", 215.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted in Arthur Walworth, *Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (NY, 1986), 92.

<sup>67</sup> Lord was professor of history at Harvard between 1915 and 1918 before joining the Inquiry. Paton complained that "Lord . . . is pro-Pole and besides cannot make up his mind about anything. This simply plays into the hands of the French": Paton to Namier, 25 March 1919, HDLM ACC 688/3.

<sup>68</sup> Harold I. Nelson, *Land and Power: British, Allied and German Policy on Germany's Frontiers* (Newton Abbot, 1971), 148 suggested that Lord, "The Polish-German Frontier", nd, [ACNP

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United States National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD] 185.1127/11 is the agreement; but it is likely that this was merely the American discussion document for the meeting. See Howard, “Proposed Joint Recommendation of British and American Delegates on Frontier of Poland and the Baltic Provinces”, nd [but either 5 or 6 February 1919], FO 608/141; Howard diary, 3-6 February, DHW 1/5.

<sup>69</sup> Howard’s earlier Neufahrwasser solution had proved unworkable: McKercher, *Esme Howard*, 222.

<sup>70</sup> Headlam-Morley to Hardinge, “The Fate of Danzig”, 6 February 1919, HDLM ACC 727/19.

<sup>71</sup> Hardinge minute, 4 February 1919, Crowe minute, 9 February 1919, both FO 608/66/20216. In the absence of Lloyd George, Lord Milner, the colonial secretary, and Balfour both read Headlam-Morley’s memorandum; on 26 February, Balfour cabled Howard warning him “pray be very careful not to commit yourself in any direction as regards its [Danzig’s] future disposal”: Balfour to Howard, 26 February 1919, HDLM ACC 727/19. It would appear that Howard did not fully comply with this request: Howard to Balfour, 23 March 1919, FO 608/65/5378.

<sup>72</sup> Prothero, 20 February 1919, HDLM ACC 727/19.

<sup>73</sup> Howard received his instructions personally from Kerr – including Lloyd George’s current views on Poland – on the day he departed for Warsaw: Howard diary, 9 February 1919, DHW 1/5. Howard’s report on Poland sought to convince the prime minister to grant Danzig to Poland as there would be “such an explosion of feeling in Poland that it is difficult to predict the result”. Lloyd George ignored the letter: Howard to Lloyd George, 10 April 1919, LG [Earl Lloyd George Papers, Parliamentary Archives, London] F/576/1/; Howard to Kerr, 17 April 1919, Lothian GD40/17/888.

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<sup>74</sup> Robert H. Lord, "Poland", in Edward Mandell House and Charles Seymour, eds., *What Really Happened at Paris: The Story of the Peace Conference by American Delegates* (NY, 1921), 72.

<sup>75</sup> Neil Smith, *American Empire Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley, CA, 2003), 149-56.

<sup>76</sup> "Minutes of the Third Meeting, March 1, 1919, at 10 a.m", ACNP 181.213201/3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> F.B. Bourdillon, "Memorandum Outlining Arguments for and Against the Inclusion of Danzig in the New Polish State", 1 March 1919, FO 608/65/3339.

<sup>79</sup> Lord and Howard used the Allied declaration of 18 June 1918 as a basis for their work and undertook a detailed examination of the 1910 German census: Howard diary, 3 February 1919, DHW 1/5.

<sup>80</sup> Details of the second meeting that met specifically to discuss all the proposed frontier changes to Germany was attended by: Aretas Akers-Douglas, the Foreign Office Political section of the British Delegation with responsibility for Western Europe, Lieutenant-Colonel J.H.M. Cornwall, head of A section of Military Intelligence, Headlam-Morley, and Paton on the British side; and Isaiah Bowman, Homer Haskins, Major H. Johnson, Dr. Sidney Mezes, and Charles Seymour on the American: in Headlam-Morley to Kerr, 11 March 1919, Lothian GD40/17/65/18. Cf. Isaiah Bowman, "Constantinople and the Balkans", in House and Seymour, *What Really Happened at Paris*, 159; "Memorandum of Meeting", 21 February 1919, FO 608/66/20216; Nowak-Kielbikowa, *Polska-Wielka Brytania*, 80.

<sup>81</sup> "Note of Conversation with Mr. H.J. Paton", 9 July 1920, HDLM ACC 727/15.

<sup>82</sup> "Minutes of the first meeting of the Sub Commission on Polish Affairs for the Study of the Western and Northern frontiers", 1 March 1919, ACNP 181.2132201/1.

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<sup>83</sup> “Report No. 1 of the Commission on Polish Affairs – Frontier Between Poland and Germany”, 19 March 1919 [completed by 12 March], draft report in Paton’s handwriting, both ACNP 181.213202/1.

<sup>84</sup> Minutes of the second meeting of the Central Committee on Territorial Questions, 12 March 1919, ACNP 181.2101/2.

<sup>85</sup> Minutes of the third meeting of the Central Committee on Territorial Questions, 14 March 1919, ACNP 181.2101/3. Namier suggested that Kisch favoured the Polish claims as he might be “afraid that otherwise he might be accused of being or feeling a Jew”: Namier to Headlam-Morley, 22 March 1919, HDLM ACC 727/15.

<sup>86</sup> Namier to Headlam-Morley, 18 March 1919, HDLM ACC 727/15.

<sup>87</sup> Bowman, “Constantinople”, 160. Paton later recalled that a “shiver went through the members of the Committee present” on hearing Lloyd George’s objections: “Note of Conversation with Mr. H.J. Paton”.

<sup>88</sup> Commission on Polish Affairs to Clemenceau, 20 March 1919, Annex to the Minutes of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Commission on Polish Affairs, ACNP 181.213201/13.

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, “Dantzig à nos alliés”, *Le Matin* (20 March 1919), 1.

<sup>90</sup> Untitled note, nd [circa 22 March 1919], Lothian GD40/17/60, 38. Hankey claimed that he had prompted the retreat by outlining his concerns that the peace was not “developing along sound lines of policy”. He did not mention national self-determination or the Polish-German borderlands: Hankey to Lloyd George, 19 March 1919, HNKY [Lord Hankey Papers, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge] 8/10. Despite some confusion, fuelled by Lloyd George’s unreliable memoirs, the prime minister was accompanied by Henry Wilson, Edwin Montagu, the Indian secretary, Kerr, and Hankey. On 23 March, they were joined by Lords Sumner and Cunliffe to discuss reparations.

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<sup>91</sup> Howard warned the loss of Danzig might create “disorder [which would in turn] create Bolshevism” in Poland. It is unclear whether Lloyd George was apprised of the contents of these reports: Howard to Kerr, 22 February 1919, Lothian GD40/17/879/2.

<sup>92</sup> Hankey, “Final Treaty of Peace. Diary Showing its Development”, and “Prime Minister’s Preface”, 23 March 1919, CAB 1/28/15.

<sup>93</sup> Lloyd George, “Some Considerations for the Peace Conference before they finally draft their terms”, 24 March 1919, CAB 1/28/15.

<sup>94</sup> “Our Foreign Office has always been anti-Dantzig to the Poles and I think they are right”: Lloyd George to Bonar Law, 31 March 1919, LG F/30/3/40.

<sup>95</sup> Tyrrell to Kerr, 25 March 1919, Lothian GD40/17/61; Headlam-Morley minute on untitled Howard memorandum, 7 April 1919, FO 608/65/20216.

<sup>96</sup> Crowe to Clema, 26 March 1919, Crowe [Eyre Crowe Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford] MS.Eng.e.3023. Stenographic record of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Commission on Polish Affairs, 25 March 1919, ACNP 181.213201/14.

<sup>97</sup> Fourteenth Meeting of the Commission on Polish Affairs.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Diary, 28 March 1919, David Hunter Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris. With Documents*, Volume 1: *Diary – Memoranda – Personnel* (NY, 1924), 208.

<sup>100</sup> Meeting of the Council of Four, 27 March 1919, Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24-June 28, 1919): Notes of the Official Interpreter Paul Mantoux* Volume I (Princeton, NJ, 1992), 38.

<sup>101</sup> Crowe to Clema, 28 March 1919, Crowe MS.Eng.e.3023.

<sup>102</sup> Crowe to Clema, 2 April 1919, Crowe MS.Eng.e.3024.

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<sup>103</sup> Hankey to Hardinge, 2 April 1919, HDLM ACC 727/19. Haskins was replaced by Sidney Mezes, an academic philosopher, head of the Territorial Section, and House's brother-in-law. Headlam-Morley confided to Namier that he "did not like" the Commission's Report and that "my view is that it is the duty of the lawyers to draft treaties, however difficult, in accordance with the wishes of the political people": Headlam-Morley to Namier, 20 March 1919, HDLM ACC 727/15.

<sup>104</sup> Crowe to Lloyd George, 1 April 1919, LG F/11.

<sup>105</sup> Headlam-Morley, "Notes on the Report of the Polish Commission", 1 April 1919, Lothian GD40/17/882; Headlam-Morley to Kerr, 3 April 1919, HDLM ACC 727/19.

<sup>106</sup> Headlam-Morley Political Diary, 25 June 1919.

<sup>107</sup> Headlam-Morley to Tyrrell, 7 April 1919, FO 608/65/20216. This was confirmed at the meeting of the Council of Four on 9 April 1919: Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, Volume V (Washington, DC, 1942-1947), 293-94.

<sup>108</sup> Headlam-Morley and Kisch to Hankey, 20 April 1919, HDLM ACC 727/19.

<sup>109</sup> "Meeting of the Council of Four, 1 April 1919 at 4 pm", *Deliberations of the Council of Four*, I, 110.

<sup>110</sup> As early as 12 April, Headlam-Morley wrote to Kerr, "I am . . . in the dark as to the attitude of the Council of Four with regard to Danzig": Headlam-Morley to Kerr, 12 April 1919, Lothian GD40/17/886/1.

<sup>111</sup> Headlam-Morley, "The Eastern Frontier of Germany".

<sup>112</sup> Paton to Drummond, 19 April 1919, Lothian GD40/17/890/2.

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<sup>113</sup> On Wilson's opaque views on Danzig, and a different interpretation on whether Lloyd George swayed or merely confirmed his views, see the detailed discussion in Biskupski, "Free City of Danzig", 90-93.

<sup>114</sup> According to E.H. Carr, then an advisor on East European affairs in the Political Section of the British Delegation, the British were suspected of "trying to make something out of it [Danzig] in our own interests": Carr to Headlam-Morley, 16 October 1919, H/M 19.

<sup>115</sup> Bourdillon memorandum, nd, with Paton memorandum, 17 April 1919 contained in Howard to Kerr, 17 April 1919, Lothian GD40/17/888/1.

<sup>116</sup> Crowe to Clema, 2 April 1919, Crowe MS.Eng.e.3024.

<sup>117</sup> Headlam-Morley to Crowe, 11 June 1919, H/M 24.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Crowe to Headlam-Morley, 14 June 1919, H/M 24.

<sup>120</sup> Headlam-Morley Political Diary, 7 July 1919; Headlam-Morley to Hardinge, 13 October 1919, HDLM ACC 688/2.

<sup>121</sup> Sharp, "Relevant Historians", 365.

<sup>122</sup> "Note of Interview with Mr. Philip Kerr", 21 May 1920, HDLM ACC 727, Box 11.

<sup>123</sup> The same can be said of Wilson: Biskupski, "Free City of Danzig", 94.

<sup>124</sup> Headlam-Morley was an active member, later heading the British Institute of International Affairs' Publications Committee, but Crowe opposed the proposal: M.L. Dockrill, "Historical Note: The Foreign Office and the "Proposed Institute of International Affairs 1919", *International Affairs*, 56/4(1980), 665-72.

<sup>125</sup> Else Headlam-Morley to Arthur Cayley Headlam, 19 August 1919, EHM [Else Headlam-Morley Papers, Special Collections, University of Durham, Durham], J19/3/9.



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<sup>126</sup> Headlam-Morley to Namier, 13 April 1919, HDLM ACC 727/15.

<sup>127</sup> Report of a conversation between Austen Chamberlain [foreign secretary] and Alexander Skrzyński [Polish minister of foreign affairs]: Chamberlain to Crowe, 14 March 1925, FO 371/10728/C3753/459/18.