WILLIAM LE QUEUX AND RUSSIA

All the essays in this collection touch to some degree or another on William Le Queux's penchant for turning his own life – and the lives of others – into fantasy. It is perhaps this, more than anything else, which makes it so hard to disentangle truth from falsehood both in his fiction and in the stories which he told about his own biography. Le Queux was regarded as a risible figure by many of his contemporaries, but he still carved out a distinctive place for himself in the public imagination, achieving a kind of celebrity status which meant that he could not be easily ignored. His scare-mongering about the threat posed to Britain by invasion from abroad before 1914 became part of a national discourse that emphasised the country's vulnerability in a rapidly changing world. Le Queux was throughout much of his literary career adept at giving shape to emerging and half-articulated anxieties among the British public. His novels and other writings both captured and framed a pervasive sense of unease about developments ranging from the threat posed by growing German military power to concern over the loss of British moral fibre and national vigour.

Roger Stearn's article in this collection shows how difficult it is to recreate Le Queux's own biography with any confidence, but there was scattered amongst the falsehoods he told about his own life just enough truths to give a faint patina of authenticity to some of his claims. He did not invent radio or reveal the identity of Jack the Ripper. He was not the confidante of Kings, Celebrities and Crooks (to borrow from the title of his "autobiography").[1] But Le Queux *was* a Consul for San Marino (and therefore entitled to wear the elaborate ceremonial uniform in which he relished appearing in public). He *was* close to a number of leading journalists and politicians who believed that Britain urgently needed to re-arm to face the German threat. He did on occasion meet the minor scions of various European royal families – even if he was never, as he liked to claim, on intimate terms with them. And, for all the poor characterisation and formulaic plotting of his novels, he was adept at penning books that seemed to give an insight into a world of intrigue among a *haut monde* of which his readers knew little. It may indeed have been precisely because Le Queux was himself a fantasist, who was half-convinced by many of the lies he told, that his work seemed so convincing to many of his readers. The best con-men are often those who believe their own words. Above all, though, William Le Queux thrived in the murky borderland where nationalism, conspiracy, paranoia and resentment merged together to form

a brew in which "truth" was less a statement of fact, and more an articulation of diffuse anxieties seeking expression in concrete form.

Le Queux's name is inevitably associated with the public hysteria that erupted before 1914 over the military challenge posed by Germany. His 1906 book *The Invasion of 1910*, which chronicled an imaginary invasion of Britain by German forces, sold massively in book form (having previously been serialised in the high-volume *Daily Mail*). *The Invasion of 1910* did not create the German bogey, a trope that can be traced back at least to the closing years of the nineteenth century, but Le Queux was as so often effective in using his vivid imagination to present readers with grim pictures that already lurked in the fringes of their consciousness. His later books like *Spies of the Kaiser* (1909) moved the focus from the external to the internal threat, suggesting that thousands of German spies were already active in Britain, a claim that fed a growing public paranoia about the enemy within. Although there is something exaggerated in the claim that Le Queux's warnings about German agents helped lead to the creation of MI5[2] – its provenance was in reality complex and multifaceted – they did help to fuel the Germanophobia that became a common theme in political debate in Britain during these years.[3]

Although the public impact of books like *The Invasion of 1910* and *Spies of the Kaiser* has linked his name indelibly with the German menace, Germany was not the country that first attracted Le Queux's attention when he set out on his career as a novelist. That honour went instead to Russia, in which much of the action in Le Queux's early novels was set. In the 1890s he was convinced that Russia – along with France – posed the greatest threat to Britain's security (the two countries were from 1894 bound together by a formal alliance). And, as the following pages will show, his attitude towards Russia was often profoundly ambivalent. The country exercised a hold on Le Queux's imagination as a place that was both threatening and tantalising. He was bitterly critical of Russia's despotic government, yet intrigued by descriptions of the magnificent ceremonies of Petersburg High Society. He was appalled by the violence of the Russian revolutionaries, but believed they had justice on their side in fighting autocracy. Russia served for Le Queux as an elusive other, a blank canvas on which he painted pictures that said more about his own hopes and fears than they revealed about the nature of the Tsarist Empire itself.

Le Queux's ambivalent portraits of Russia echoed the sentiments felt by many of his fellow-Britons. For much of the nineteenth century, Russia was widely perceived as Britain's

'natural' enemy, a backward and uncivilised country with designs on India.[4] At times of international crisis, such as the Crimean War of 1853-56 and the disturbances in south-eastern Europe in 1877-78, Russia became the focus for attack in numerous British newspapers and journals. George William Hunt's famous Music Hall song of 1878 captured this jingoism perfectly:

> *We've fought the Bear before, and while we're Britons true,*
> *The Russians shall not have Constantinople.*

From the 1890s onwards, fears about a possible Russian attack on India became an increasingly common theme in the burgeoning invasion literature, such as George Griffith's very successful *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893), although military planners in London and Delhi had been exercised by the subject for decades.[5] Such anxieties also provided the backdrop to Kipling's *Kim*, the novel which helped to popularise the term *The Great Game*, the shadowy conflict between British and Russian military officers that was waged in the mountains and deserts of central Asia throughout much of the nineteenth century. Just as India represented the 'jewel in the crown' in the British imperial imagination, so fears of its loss haunted generals and politicians, as well as fuelling public anxieties about the vulnerability of Britain's far-flung Empire.

There was, though, a subtle shift taking place in some of these attitudes towards Russia by the closing decades of the nineteenth century. In part this was a matter of geopolitics. Gladstone's Liberals were from the 1870s onwards inclined to take a softer line with Russia, seeing it as a potential protector of the Christian population living under Ottoman rule. And, as the twentieth century dawned, Germany was for many Britons increasingly replacing Russia as the foreign 'bogey' (France, too, was less feared than before, in part because the French climb-down at Fashoda in 1898 showed the limits of French imperial power).[6] Such changes were accompanied by the development of a cultural Russophilia, not least thanks to growing interest in Russian literary classics, which became increasingly available to an English-speaking audience thanks to translations by the likes of Constance Garnett and Aylmer Maude.[7] Rosa Newmarch's voluminous writings on Russian music helped to increase awareness of composers ranging from Tchaikovskii to Musorgskii.[8] The arrival of the *Ballets Russes* in London on the eve of the First World War, complete with music by Stravniskii and elaborate stage sets by Leon Bakst, helped to confirm a sense of Russian

culture as rich and exotic, a repository of values and attitudes lacking in the more effete West. Russia increasingly became for many Britons an exotic place, a country of despotism and violence, but also of glamour and mystery.[9] It was for this reason that a significant market developed in the years before 1914 for books about Russia. Some 400 books were published in English during the reign of Tsar Nicholas II (1894-1917) describing travels by foreigners through Russia.[10] Countless works of fiction and drama were penned by writers ranging from Oscar Wilde to G.E. Henty on the subject of Russian revolutionaries.[11] When Le Queux began to write about Russian themes in his novels, then, he was engaging with a subject calculated to appeal to his audience.

Russian themes and settings played a central role in Le Queux's first three books: *Guilty Bonds* (1891); *Strange Tales of a Nihilist* (1892); and *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894). *Guilty Bonds*, like many of Le Queux's Russian novels, dealt with the activities of Russian 'nihilists'. The term nihilist was popularised in English by the Russian radical Sergei Kravchinskii – better known by his revolutionary *nom de plume* Stepniak – who moved to London where he wrote a series of fictional and non-fictional books providing a positive portrait of revolutionaries who used violence in an effort to overthrow tsarism.[12] The Russian revolutionary movement attracted a great deal of attention in Britain during the decades before the First World War, and whilst terrorism in Western Europe was almost universally condemned in the British press, a kind of glamour was often attached to Russian terrorists as desperate figures seeking to overthrow a brutal and despotic government.[13] Le Queux's work both reflected and shaped the surprisingly positive image of Russian revolutionaries held by many Britons in the 1890s.

The action in *Guilty Bonds* echoed many of these wide and varied perspectives. The story begins with a murder in a house in London, which gradually leads the hero Frank into the murky world of the Russian revolutionary movement, where he falls in love with a young Russian woman Vera. Vera tricks Frank into transporting some jewels into Russia, as it turns out to fund revolutionary activity, resulting in the hero's arrest and incarceration in a dungeon where his wrists were placed 'in bonds of iron', to be followed by eventual exile to Siberia to 'a living tomb in the quicksilver mines beyond Tomsk'.[14] In a series of typically unconvincing plot twists, Vera is gradually revealed to be less a manipulator and rather a fighter for justice, and in due course becomes Frank's wife. The revolutionary movement itself is treated by Le Queux in *Guilty Bonds* not necessarily as justified in its brutality – in

many of his novels nihilists are firmly divided into 'good' and 'bad' – but certainly as a natural reaction to the brutality of the Tsarist state.

Le Queux's second novel, *Strange Tales of a Nihilist* (1892), bore more than a passing resemblance to its predecessor – although intriguingly some changes were made in a second version published four years later under the title *Secret Service: Strange Tales of a Nihilist*.[15] The story in its 1892 incarnation focuses on the life of Vladimir Orlovski – a Russian Jew – whose parents and sister are exiled to Siberia where they are treated with great brutality (in the graphic frontispiece of the revised 1896 edition, the sister is shown stripped to the waist, and tied to a wooden frame awaiting her flogging).[16] Orlovski himself is imprisoned, before escaping via Canada to London, which is described in the book as 'the headquarters of the most powerful secret organisation in the world'.[17] *Strange Tales* is narrated in the first-person by Orlovski, who early on makes clear his desire to convince his readers that Russian nihilists were not simply terrorists and murderers, but rather men and women fighting to 'sweep off the face of the Russian soil ... the present shameful and ruinous system of organised robbery and tyranny'. Le Queux wrote in his Preface that the book was based on first-hand knowledge, and that he had been helped to compile it by members of the so-called 'Russian Revolutionary Party' in London, with the result that he had changed some incidents in order to protect his informants.

The blurring of fact and fiction by claiming a factual basis for fictional events was to become a hallmark of many of Le Queux's books and, as will be seen later, was often used to give dramatic power to his fictional work and enhance its marketability. It also gave his work a distinctively propagandistic character. In his 1923 autobiography, *Things I know About Kings, Celebrities and Crooks*, Le Queux claimed to have visited Russia a number of times, on one occasion having an audience with Tsar Nicholas II. Le Queux certainly travelled widely across Europe, including the Balkans, but there is limited evidence that he ever visited Russia. And, whilst he was adept at referring to Russian place-names and people, in order to give an aura of truth to his narrative, there is little to indicate that he possessed any real first-hand knowledge of the country. He later claimed to have visited the country with his friend the writer and explorer Harry de Windt,[18] who wrote at length about his own travels in Russia, but if the trip ever took place at all it was not until 1907.[19] Nor does a close look at the chronology of Le Queux's life give much credence to the idea that he travelled to the Tsarist Empire during the early 1890s, a conclusion supported by Stearn's biographical article in this collection.

Le Queux *did*, however, apparently have some knowledge beyond the general of the nihilist movement that he wrote about in *Guilty Bonds* and *Strange Tales*. In 1890, at a time when he was still a journalist on *The Globe*, Le Queux contributed two articles to the *Times* on Feliks Volkhovskii, who had fled to Britain from his Siberian exile, and was without doubt the original of Vladimir Orlovski.[20] It is not clear under what circumstances Le Queux met Volkhovskii (Le Queux wrongly implied in his autobiography that the meeting took place in Russia). Nor is there any surviving correspondence between the two men in Volkhovskii's voluminous papers in North America and Russia (as the authors of several volumes in this collection point out, archival traces of Le Queux's life are surprisingly scanty, given his prominent position over many decades). Le Queux's most recent biographers have nevertheless found evidence that he received payment for his articles in the *Times*.[21] In the first of these pieces, Le Queux characterised Volkhovskii's life as a 'romance', describing his imprisonment and flight from Siberia, along with a brief account of how his young daughter Vera was separately smuggled out by friends.[22] In the second article, Le Queux reported Volkhovskii's description of Russian prisons, complete with details of their 'filth and disease', which killed many prisoners crushed by 'an existence which is worse than death'.[23] Although George Kennan's *Siberia and the Exile System* was not to appear until the following year,[24] Siberia already had a reputation in the British imagination as a place of harsh exile, and Le Queux's two articles taken together were designed to present Volkhovskii and other political radicals as heroes in a fight against a brutal regime.[25]

The sympathetic portrayal of Orlovski / Volkhovskii in *Strange Tales of a Nihilist* is at first glance surprising from the pen of a man who was, as Harry Wood points out in his article on Le Queux, instinctively a figure of the radical right. Volkhovskii himself quickly became involved in the formation of the Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom, which brought together Russian émigrés and British radicals in a campaign to highlight the harsh nature of Tsarist rule, as well as organising the illegal dispatch of revolutionary literature into the Tsarist Empire.[26] Although the organisation was far from 'the most powerful secret organisation in the world', and was indeed committed to establishing a degree of respectability in British society, the Russian secret police (*Okhrana*) office in Paris was concerned enough to make extensive efforts to discredit the organisation during the mid-1890s (Le Queux showed a surprisingly acute knowledge of the *Okhrana's* European operations in *Strange Tales*).[27] Nor were their fears entirely groundless. By 1905, Volkhovskii and others associated with the Friends of Russian Freedom were at least

tangentially involved in running guns to Russia to support uprisings against the Tsar.[28] He had also been involved for many years in managing the Russian Free Press Fund which produced a wealth of revolutionary literature that was smuggled back into Russia.

All this lay in the future in the early 1890s, though, when Le Queux was certain that 'nihilism' represented an inevitable and justified response to despotic rule. He was reluctant to condemn outright the use of violence, although in his *Times* articles he suggested that Volkhovskii rejected such methods (a claim that was not at the time without foundation). Le Queux's real fear was of the power of the Russian state, which he believed was hostile to Britain, and capable of behaving in a way that challenged British interests across the globe. He was convinced that an unreformed autocracy represented a threat both to other countries *and* to the long-term welfare of Russia itself. It was for this reason that, at the end of *Strange Tales of a Nihilist*, he was happy to put into Orlovski's mouth a prediction that a continuation of repression would bring 'disaster upon the House of the Romanoffs'. [29] In the 1896 edition of the book, when the name of Orlovski is for some reason changed to Prezhov, the closing words are even stronger. Prezhov invokes the spectre of the violence of the French Revolution, writing that the Russian people would in time 'demand an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The sins of the past will be visited on the guilty with all the horrors to which the oppressed in time past have been subjected.'[30] Le Queux was an unlikely sympathiser with the nihilist cause. His sympathy for the Russian nihilists was above all rooted in his fear of the Russian state rather than in any real support for the cause of revolution, as became clearer in his later invasion tales.

Le Queux's Changing Attitudes towards Russia

The real challenge posed by Russia to Britain in the 1890s was above all in Asia, in an arc running from Mesopotamia to the Far East, a region vital to Britain's economic interests and control of India. In *The Great War in England in 1897*, though, Le Queux constructed a fantasy in which Russia and France combined to invade Britain itself. The geopolitical background of the story made some sense, given the recent treaty between the two countries, but few serious politicians or military analysts believed that the Franco-Russian alliance was designed to foster an invasion of Britain (the real focus was on Germany). Le Queux nevertheless used his book as, in his own words, an 'endeavour to bring vividly before the public the national dangers by which we are surrounded, and the absolute necessity which

lies upon England to maintain her defences in an adequate state of efficiency'.[31] In line with many other invasion narratives, *The Great War in England* achieved much of its power by setting the horrors of invasion and war in locations familiar to its readers: chapter titles included 'Bomb Outrages in London', 'The Massacre at Eastbourne', 'Terror on the Tyne', and 'Manchester attacked by Russians' (see figures 1 and 2 for illustrations of the Russian invaders).

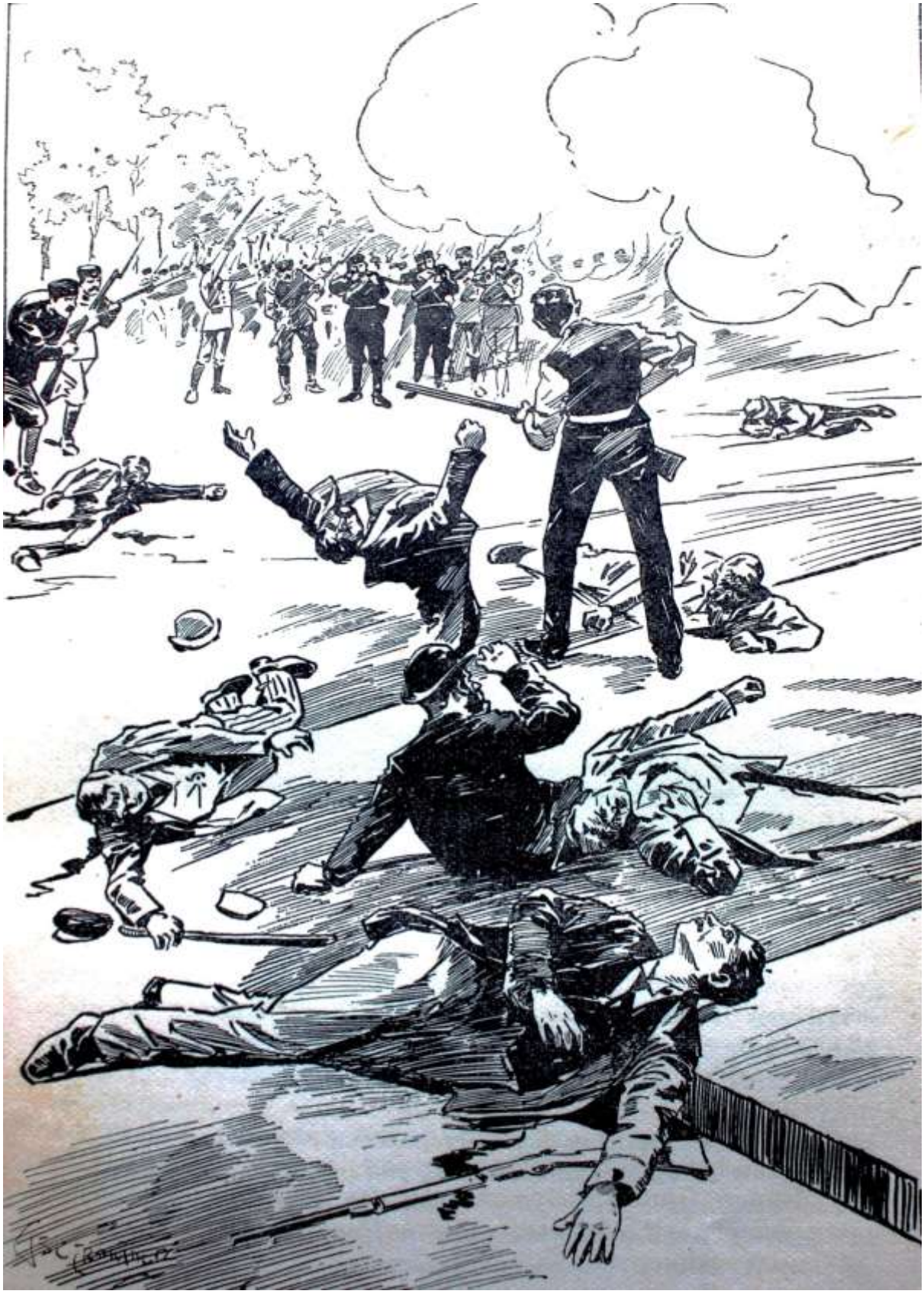

Figure 1: ‘Landing of Russians, and massacre in Terminus Road, Eastbourne’, in William Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower, 1894), p. 66.

Figure 2: 'Russians attacking the barricade in Stretford Road, Manchester', in William Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower, 1894), p. 222.

The Russian invaders, far more so than the French, were described in terms of their brutality and ruthlessness:

> Horrible were the deeds committed that night: English homes were desecrated, ruined, and burned. Babes were murdered before the eyes of their parents, many being impaled by gleaming Russian bayonets; fathers were shot down in the presence or their wives and children ... The massacre was frightful.[32]

Raw Russian military power – symbolised by the huge guns of warships like the *Pamyat Azova* and the *Imperator Nicolai I* – was combined in Le Queux's vivid narrative with the Asiatic brutality of Cossack troops as the means of destroying the fabric of a Britain that had lost its will to defend itself. Vivid illustrations of ordinary Britons caught up in bloodshed gave the book still greater power than text alone could provide.

It is difficult to know, given the paucity of archival material, whether Le Queux was genuinely preoccupied by questions of national security, or instead recognised that invasion scare literature was likely to prove a good seller. The first edition of *Great War in England*

included a letter of commendation from the revered veteran military leader of many imperial campaigns, Lord Roberts, who was later to become a leading advocate of conscription and a pivotal figure in the National Service League.[33] The book was dedicated to Alfred Harmsworth (later Lord Northcliffe), 'a patriotic Englishman', who had commissioned it for his high-volume weekly magazine *Answers* to capitalise on the rising popularity of invasion tales, and who exploited this yet again as proprietor of the *Daily Mail* in 1906 with Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910*.[34] Such evidence suggests that Le Queux was genuinely determined to play his part in arousing his fellow-countrymen to Britain's weakness, as well as shrewd enough to know that invasion literature was becoming a popular genre at a time when mass literacy and cheaper publishing techniques were creating a new market for a particular kind of literature.[35] Le Queux had previously shown in his nihilist tales that he recognised how dramatic prefatory claims could increase the sales of his books. Indeed, at the end of 1891, when the press was full of claims that copies of *Guilty Bonds* bound for Russia had been seized by the authorities there, and that Le Queux himself had been given official notice by the Russian Embassy in London that his books would in future be banned, Le Queux wasted no opportunity of repeating the story, and for many years to come.[36] The story is unlikely to be true, but the reports helped to create the image of Le Queux as a man of importance, whose activities were the concern of governments across Europe.

Le Queux's treatment of Russia began to change somewhat from the mid-1890s onwards, although many of the old themes still recrudesced in his writings, even as the German threat emerged as his *idée fixe*. He may have been influenced by his friend De Windt, whose own biography is almost as mysterious as that of Le Queux himself (and archival footprint equally scanty). De Windt published in 1892 a book entitled *Siberia As It Is*, describing his trip to examine prisons and penal colonies in the region, which took a far more positive view than George Kennan had done in *Siberia and the Exile System*. *Siberia* included a preface by Olga Novikov, the 'MP for Russia', who for many years used her links with members of the British political elite to counter the negative portrayals of her country that predominated in the British press.[37] In a record of a conversation between the two men, published in 1900, Le Queux acknowledged that under De Windt's influence 'all my cherished notions regarding this great land' had for some time been 'vanishing into thin air'.[38] Whatever De Windt's influence, though, Le Queux's increasingly positive attitude towards Russia was almost certainly in large part a function of geopolitics. As the German government began to develop its navy in the late 1890s, concern grew in Britain about the threat it posed to the British

Empire, with the result that, by the start of the twentieth century, popular attitudes towards Russia were becoming more positive and views of Germany more negative. The establishment of the Anglo-Russian rapprochement in 1907, albeit focused on imperial tensions in central Asia, symbolised the extent to which Germany had replaced Russia as the principal bogey both in British diplomacy and the British national imagination. It was a trend that was also predictably visible in the voluminous invasion literature. In the 1890s Russia and France were almost always the main aggressors. After 1900 the role was increasingly played by Germany.

The biggest shift in emphasis in Le Queux's treatment of Russia from the mid 1890s was his more positive treatment of Russia's Romanov rulers and his increasingly negative portrayal of revolutionary nihilism. The change was already visible in his 1897 book *Whoso Findeth a Wife*. The geopolitical background of the book was very much that of *Great War in England*, for the plot revolved around a war scare between Britain and Russia that erupted when news leaked of a new defensive treaty between London and Berlin. The hero of the novel, a young Foreign Office official called Geoffrey Deedes, is wrongly accused of allowing the document to be stolen. In a series of revelations unusually fantastic even by Le Queux's standards, Deedes initially suspects his wife of the theft, particularly when it emerges that the young 'Englishwoman' he has married is in fact a Romanov princess in disguise. At the denouement of the novel, though, it becomes clear that 'Ella' (or rather the Grand Duchess Elizaveta Nikoaevna) has played a critical role in preventing the outbreak of war. The Russian diplomats and policemen described in *Whoso Findeth a Wife* are for the most part portrayed as devious and untrustworthy – but those with the true Romanov blood are innocent of the most heinous crimes of the Russian autocracy. Le Queux – consciously or unconsciously – sought to insulate the Russian monarch from being complicit in the misdeeds of their bureaucrats. It was a literary device that allowed him to maintain his instinctive belief in the value of the monarchical principle whilst preserving intact his distrust of the Russian state.

A similar theme runs through *The Czar's Spy* (1905), in which tsarist officials are presented in a bleak light (one senior official is described as 'The Strangler of the Finns'), whilst the Tsar himself is at least partially exonerated on the grounds that he has no knowledge of the brutality of the men he appoints. In his 1913 novel *The Price of Power: Being Chapters from the Secret History of the Imperial Court of Russia*, Le Queux portrays the revolutionary nihilists in almost entirely negative terms, not least on the grounds that they

were creatures of the Tsarist Secret Police (a fantasy doubtless fuelled by the Azev affair, a few years earlier, when it became clear that the leader of the terrorist faction of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party had worked for the *Okhrana*).[39] The Tsar himself is presented in the book as the victim of a plot by officials to fabricate a threat of revolutionary violence designed to force him to live a secluded life in bomb-proof rooms. The hero of the novel, a young British diplomat named Colin Trewinnard, has numerous private audiences with the Tsar, and is convinced that the Emperor is determined to root out abuses of power and alleviate the suffering of his people, only to be thwarted by those around him. The plot itself revolves around the figure of the young Grand Duchess Natalia, who is sent to Britain by her uncle the Tsar, for fear that her flirtatious ways will bring scandal on the Court. There she falls in love with a British commoner, in-between dodging various plots against her life by both nihilists and members of the Tsarist Secret Police, and is eventually given permission to marry once the Tsar himself becomes aware of how he has been manipulated by his officials. 'The camarilla who had so long ruled Russia, placing the onus of their oppression on the Emperor, had ... been broken up and a new honest Cabinet established in its place'.[40]

Le Queux's attempt to exonerate the Romanovs from responsibility for the harsh character of Russian autocratic rule may have reflected his shrewd recognition that fantastic yarns in which exotic foreign royalty fell in love with young British gentlemen were bound to prove a popular hit. It was also an expression of his deep interest in European royalty. His autobiography was full of accounts of his supposed meetings with European monarchs. In the first two chapters alone, Le Queux described meetings with Tsar Nicholas II, King Nicholas of Montenegro and the King Victor Emanuel of Italy. He also described his friendship with other members of European royal families including Princess Louisa of Saxony. It seems unlikely that many of these meetings took place. They were instead designed to impress his readers, responding to the popular fascination with monarchy, as well as adding to his own self-mythology. Certainly the meeting with Tsar never happened, given that Le Queux probably never set foot in Russia, whilst his descriptions of the words "spoken" to him by Nicholas II are utterly fantastic. Le Queux at one point has the Tsar note that 'You British do not, I fear, understand us .... We are such a complex nation, such a mixture of European and Oriental, and ... so far behind in civilization as you in England and in America know it'.[41] Although the sense of backwardness was a pervasive theme of pre-revolutionary Russian history, it was not one that greatly exercised Nicholas, who was instinctively attuned to the Russian nationalist myth that Russia's 'backwardness' was a sign

of difference as much as inferiority. It was by contrast more likely to find a resonance amongst British readers for whom the idea of Russian barbarism was commonplace. Le Queux nevertheless knew that an account of his 'meeting' with the Tsar of all the Russias would create an aura of glamour that would intrigue his readers, and add to his assumed *persona* as a man on familiar terms with the most important figures of the day.

Le Queux and the Rasputin Myth

Le Queux claimed in *Things I Know* that he once saw Rasputin during one of his non-existent trips to Russia. He described how, when disembarking from a tramp steamer at the northern port of Alexandrovsk, he saw a 'scraggy-bearded, long-haired, ill-conditioned man in a greasy black robe'. The ship's captain told Le Queux that the man was Rasputin, 'the great friend of the Emperor', who had 'come down to see the place and report to [the Tsar].[42] The claim was undoubtedly false (not least because Nicholas II profoundly distrusted Rasputin and certainly never asked him to carry out any missions for him). Le Queux was, though, deeply fascinated by the figure of Rasputin. In his autobiography he quoted from a manuscript supposedly dictated by Rasputin, which claimed that the real Jack the Ripper was one Alexander Pedachenko, a Russian doctor who had moved to London.[43] He also claimed that the manuscript was one of a large number of documents seized from the cellar of Rasputin's house in 1917, and handed over to him, so that he could write 'an account of the scoundrel's amazing career'. Le Queux had previously written two accounts of Rasputin, *Rasputin the Rascal Monk* (1917) and *The Minister of Evil: The Secret History of Rasputin's Betrayal of Russia* (1918), as well a further fictional book on *Rasputinism in London: Revelations of the Secret Cult of Beauty and Happiness Established by the Monk Gritcha of Petrograd* (1919). The three books were all written to take advantage of the stir caused by murder of Rasputin at the end of 1916. The first two in particular played a role in cementing the image in the British imaginatin of Rasputin as debauched and dangerously pro-German, as well as linking him firmly to the military and political implosion of Russia that culminated in the country's withdrawal from the war with Germany in March 1918.

Both *Rascal Monk* and *Minister of Evil* discussed at length Rasputin's 'debauchery' and his magnetic appeal to aristocratic women from the Russian Court ('From this man, crafty, cunning and elusive...no woman, however high-born, high-minded or religious was safe').[44] Le Queux described how Rasputin was responsible for 'terrible scandals' in various convents

across Russia, and quoted (false) official reports about the 'Cult of Naked Believers' established by the mock saint, whose rituals combined Gospel readings and 'disgusting debauchery' that took place in a room 'decorated with pictures of a nature which would shock the modesty of all but the *demi-monde*'.[45] Rasputin himself was described as 'the High Priest' of an 'erotic sisterhood'.[46] In *Rascal Monk*, Le Queux also described how Rasputin's supposed healing powers, which won him favour with the Tsarina when he appeared adept at controlling the haemophilia suffered by the young tsarevich Alexei, were entirely bogus. The 'holy man' was instead responsible for poisoning the tsarevich, which then allowed him to 'heal' the boy, by temporarily stopping the 'secret Chinese drug' which caused his bleeding.[47] As a result, according to Le Queux, Rasputin became almost a member of the Imperial Family, commanding the implict trust of both Nicholas and Alexandra, who refused to listen to warnings about his behaviour. Recent research, along with the release of police surveillance reports, has certainly confirmed Rasputin's penchant for sex and alcohol![48] It is also clear that he was adept at winning the trust of a very small number of women at Court,[49] although Le Queux's details about secret sexual cults attracting female devotees in high places were pure fabrication. They instead represented an attempt to articulate in definite form the kinds of rumours that had run rife in Russia during the years before Rasputin's murder.[50] Details of orgies and intrigue were calculated to appeal to a British readership who had heard tales of Rasputin's activities, along with the claims that he had played an important role in undermining the position of Russia's Royal Family.

The Rascal Monk and *The Minister of Evil* were set against the backdrop of real (if sometimes erroneously described) events. Le Queux made much of Rasputin's relations with the conservative ministers who dominated political life in Petrograd during the fatal months and years before the 1917 Revolution. He also made some references to figures who received less attention in the British press, ranging from Sofiia Tiucheva (governess of the Romanov princesses) to Anna Vyrubova (who served an important role as intermediary between the Empress and Rasputin). Le Queux also peppered his work with references to prominent members of the Russian aristocracy and particular geographical places (houses, streets, cities). Most of his references were, though, lacking in detail and of a kind that could have been derived from easily-available sources. A review of British newspapers and periodicals that appeared from 1914 onwards reveals a number of articles published under such headlines as 'Russia's Evil Genius' and 'Lay Brother Rasputin: Literally Adored by Great Ladies'.[51] It was, though, only with his murder at the end of 1916 that Rasputin's name really began to fill

the British press. By the summer of 1917, Rasputin's name was firmly linked both with debauchery, and claims about his sinister influence over the Romanov Court, which he had used before his death to pursue a pro-German agenda.

Le Queux claimed in his preface to *The Rascal Monk* that the book was based on material recovered from Rasputin's house (though he did not claim, as he later did, that it had been handed over to him by members of the Provisional Government which came to power following the fall of the Romanov dynasty in February 1917). In the preface to *The Minister of Evil* he claimed that 'the same source' had subsquently given him 'a bulky manuscript upon very thin paper which contained certain confessions, revelations, and allegations made by its writer, Feodor Rajevski, who acted as the mock-saint's secretary and body-servant'.[52] The book itself purported to be Rajevski's account of Rasputin's career. Le Queux sought to add to the verisimilitude of Rajevski by describing him as the son of a Polish musician, who lived for a long period of time in Bologna, and wrote his account in Italian. It is almost superfluous to point out Le Queux's claim about the provenance and authenticity of his sources was entirely bogus. Rajevski did not exist (or if he did he was not Rasputin's secretary – who later published his own highly questionable Memoirs).[53] There is in Russian archives significant material relating to Rasputin, but not of the kind spoken about by Le Queux, and the Provisional Government most certainly did not hand over any stash of material to a foreigner.

Did Le Queux genuinely seek to convince his readers that what they were reading in his books about Rasputin was fact? As so often with Le Queux, the question is hard to answer, and might not even have been answerable by the author himself, given his penchant for myth-making and fantasy. He certainly told his readers that 'no [fictional] work of mine has ever contained facts so extraordinary as the real life of this unwashed charlatan'.[54] Some newspapers also seemed to assume that the books like *Rascal Monk* should be treated as fact rather than fiction.[55] Le Queux's accounts of Rasputin were widely advertised to readers as a real historical account.[56] One advertisment for the serialisation of *Rascal Monk* in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* proclaimed that 'all who wish to understand what is happening in Russia to-day … should read these remarkable articles'.[57] Some readers certainly responded to such suggestions. One correspondent wrote to the *Hull Daily Mail* urging its readers to read Le Queux's books on events in Russia, warning that such German-inspired machiavellian developments could take place in Britain too, and that the British needed to be alert to 'malignant evils' closer to home.[58] And, intriguingly, a short letter written by Le

Queux shortly before his death suggests that he may himself have come to belief in the truth of what he had written nearly ten years earlier about Rasputin.[59] Le Queux did not 'invent' the Rasputin myth for a British audience, but he did play a significant role in developing it, building on motifs that were already present to construct a narrative that itself then fed into Rasputin's legend. This reciprocal process of influence is similar to that outlined by Brett Holman's article in this collection on Le Queux's promotion of paranoia about a German 'Invisible Hand' of spies and sabateurs at work in war-time Britain.

Both *Rascal Monk* and *Minister of Evil* fitted firmly into Le Queux's Germanophobic discourse. The British and French governments fretted throughout 1915 and 1916 that the Tsar was surrounded by a pro-German clique which wanted Russia to make a separate peace with Germany. Nor was their fear entirely groundless. There were ministers in Russia who believed that Russia's interests would be served by a separate peace, and the Tsarina herself may have been tangentially involved in efforts to prompt such a development. It was also true that Rasputin was close to ministers – such as the Prime Minister Boris Stürmer – who favoured sounding out Berlin.[60] There was, however, no truth in Le Queux's portrayal of Stürmer as a companion in Rasputin's journeys through the seamier side of the St Petersburg *demi-monde*. Nor was there much truth in the claim – familiar at the time and repeated by Le Queux in his books – that Rasputin effectively dictated policy to the Tsar (Nicholas was deeply suspicious of Rasputin, although the Tsarina certainly wrote repeatedly to her husband praising her 'holy man'). In *Rascal Monk*, Le Queux claimed that Rasputin was in the pay of the German government, and devoted his energy to promoting 'German influence eastward', as well as placing German spies in the Tsar's immediate circle. Ministers like Stürmer and Protopopov were described as 'pawns' in Germany's 'subtle and desperate game'.[61] Le Queux also quoted from a supposed letter to Rasputin from the German Secret Service, giving detailed instructions for fostering revolutionary agitation in Russian factories, in order to disrupt munitions production.

The German government did indeed provide money to Russian revolutionaries in an attempt to weaken Russia.[62] Berlin also pursued a number of attempts to sound out prominent Russians about a separate peace. Le Queux's books on Rasputin show that he was well-aware of these things – but rumours on such matters were widespread in London – even beyond the confines of the Foreign Office. The evidence he put forward was largely bogus, at best providing fictitious historical clothing to events that were suspected but little-known, but the narrative was given an air of authority by his recurrent tactic of juxtaposing the real

and the fictional. Le Queux described how the 'Head of the German Secret Service', one Steinhauer, had long before 1914 visited Rasputin in St Petersburg on numerous occasions in order to to build up a network of agents ahead of war. The real Steinhauer – Gustav Steinhauer – was in fact a former member of the German Navy's Intelligence Section and a specialist in British affairs. Le Queux undoubtedly knew that the British Secret Service had been active before 1914 in disrupting Steinhauer's attempt to build up a network of spies in Britain (which is probably how he came across the name). But there is no evidence that Steinhauer was involved in intelligence work in Russia – and he certainly had no dealings with Rasputin. Such references nevertheless cleverly hinted at Le Queux's supposed access to secret information unavailable to more ordinary mortals, allowing him to present himself as the public's trusted confidante, as he had done when campaigning previously for the British government to take firm action against German spies.

Files that came to light in the 1990s have shown that some of the Rasputin 'myths' were in fact not myths at all. The Tsarina was certainly in his thrall to a degree that worried many of those around her.[63] Rasputin himself really was an habitué of what Le Queux would probably have called 'dens of vice'. But he was not the high priest of a cult of naked believers; nor was he scheming with German spies to destroy Russia. In another book, *Secret Life of the ex-Tsaritza* (1918), Le Queux once again returned to the theme of the collapse of Russia, this time by telling his readers that the book was in reality a memoir by one Baroness Zenaide Tzankoff, supposedly an intimate friend of the Empress Alexandra since childhood. The book even began with a supposed letter from Tzankoff to Le Queux asking him to circulate it to a wide circle of readers. Tzankoff does not seem to have existed, but the memoir relates her time with the young Alix of Hesse, describing her flirtations and love affairs. Attentive readers of Le Queux's work – not it must be said a large category of people – will note that her youthful adventures are remarkably similar to those of the fictional Grand Duchess Natalia of his ealier *Price of Power*. Le Queux seems to have gone to the extremes of taking one of his earlier fictional creations and re-presenting her as a flesh-and-blood historical figure.

The story of Empress Alexandra told in *Secret Life* is once again quite at odds with historical reality. Le Queux (through the narration of Tzankoff) argues that the marriage between Alexandra of Hesse and Nicholas of Russia was a diplomatic match promoted by Kaiser Wilhelm in order to increase German influence in Petersburg. In reality, as countless books have attested, the marriage was a genuine love-match that took place in the face of

some unease at the Russian Court.[64] The mixture of real and imaginary historical settings was once again designed to increase the authority of the book (there are indeed debates on internet bulletin boards today about whether the memoirs are genuine – showing the lasting power of Le Queux's approach).[65] Rasputin plays a smaller part in the narrative: he remains the shamanic figure of *Rascal Monk*, but in *Secret Life* the Tsarevich's illness is put down to an attack by an assailant armed with a germ-ridden knife. The 'holy man' is, however, still described as being in the pay of the Germans. *Secret Life* also describes an elaborate plot, put in motion before the outbreak of war, designed to ensure that Russia would only mount a weak defence of its territory against Germany before seeking a separate peace. Alexandra herself is presented as an active participant in efforts to rid the Russian government of 'patriots' so that they can be replaced by ministers sympathetic to Germany. The book was first published early in the summer of 1918, a few months after the Bolshevik seizure of power, and a few weeks after the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which led to Russian withdrawal from the war against Germany. It carefully reflected and promulgated a set of myths around Rasputin, the Empress Alexandra and the weak Tsar Nicholas: namely that the 'loss' of Russia had been due to intrigue and malevolence rather than defeat on the battlefield and a failure to adapt the Russian economy to the demands of war. Le Queux had become a significant figure in reflecting back to his readers a set of fantasies and conspiracy theories that had some grounding in truth – but were above all the product of an attempt to interpret the complexity of contemporary events through the prism of hidden forces and malign intentions.

The theme of Rasputinism continued to intrigue Le Queux, and in 1919 he published *Rasputinism in London*, which told the story of how 'Grichka' himself had visited Britain to establish a branch of his cult. He made no effort to present *Rasputinism in London* as anything other than a book of fiction, although it once again helped to cement the myth of Rasputin as an orchestrator of debauchery and intrigue. Le Queux seems in the years that followed to have lost interest in Russia. Such neglect was surprising. The rise of the Bolsheviks to power in Russia caused alarm across much of the Western World, and a whole slew of red-scare 'future fiction' emerged, imagining how Bolshevism might sweep the world and smash civilisation.[66] Many of these books echoed pre-war invasion narratives in their language and themes, combining an obvious polemical intent of 'waking up England' with a shrewd recognition that creating a frisson of fear could sell books. Le Queux's views of revolutionary socialism were hardly benign, but Red Russia did not seem to slide easily into

the imaginative vacuum left in his mind by the defeat of Wilhelmine Germany. The books he wrote during the final years of his life represented an even more eclectic mix of romances and thrillers than his pre-war works. International politics – even as fantasy – featured less frequently in his output after 1918.

William Le Queux was both an entertainer and a campaigner. Fact and fiction almost certainly elided together in his own mind, perhaps to the point where he could not distinguish between them, a phenomenon that may actually have accentuated the power of his writing. He was adept at identifying emerging public anxieties, articulating them in a way that made them seem vivid, simple and powerful, thereby striking a rapport with readers who found in his books ideas and plots that encapsulated their own concerns. Le Queux lived imaginatively in a world of black and white, of threat and security, and his books expressed such a dualism in crude if vivid prose. In the years before Germany played the role of principal pantomime demon in Le Queux's mind, it was Russia that occupied such a place, an alien and half-civilised country that threatened the security of a Britain vulnerable to the machinations of its enemies. But as Germany became ensconced in the public mind as Britain's principal enemy, Russia faded from prominence in Le Queux's work, replaced by books that focused almost hysterically on the extent of the German threat. The disintegration of the Tsarist regime was, after 1917, treated by Le Queux as yet another consequence of the malign ambitions of the German Empire. Rasputin and the Empress Alexandra were both figurative and literal expressions of the expansion of the German bacillus into Russia. Members of the Russian political elite, who had once sought to use their country's own strength to destroy the British Empire, now sacrificed their own country to Germany in return for money and power. The Russian arc in Le Queux's fiction was, of course, just as fantastic as anything he wrote about Germany. It was also just as extensive, even if it has until now been overlooked by scholars interested both in invasion literature in general, and the strange imaginative world of William Le Queux in particular.

[1] William Le Queux, *Things I Know About Kings, Celebrities and Crooks* (London: Eveleigh, Nash and Grayson, 1923).
[2] On the formation of MI5, including some comments on about Le Queux's role in shaping public opinion, see Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: the Authorised History of* MI5 (London, Penguin, 2009), 3-29.
[3] For a useful recent discussion of British perceptions of Germany, see among the voluminous literature Petra Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans, 1890-1950* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) and Richard Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence, 1860-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012).
[4] For a dated but still persuasive account of the rise of anti-Russian sentiment in Britain, see John Howes Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).
[5] See, for example, R. Cromie, *For England's Sake* (London: F. Warne, 1889).
[6] For a classic early statement of this growing Germanophobia see 'The ABC Memorandum' (formally entitled 'British Foreign Policy'), *National Review* (November 1901).
[7] On Garnett's career see Richard Garnett, *Constance Garnett: A Heroic Life* (London: Sinclair-Stephenson, 1991); on Maude see Darya Protopova, 'Leo Tolstoy's Translator Aylmer Maude (1858-1938) and his Correspondence on Tolstoy', *Bodleian Library Record* 22, 1 (2009), 49-73.
[8] On Newmarch, see Philip Ross Bullock, *Rosa Newmarch and Russian Music in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 2009).
[9] On the Ballets Russes in Britain see Lynn Garafola, 'In British Eyes', in Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman Baer (eds), *The Ballets Russes and its World*.
[10] Statistics derived from Anthony Cross, *In the Lands of the Romanovs: An Annotated Bibliography of First-hand English-language Accounts of the Russian Empire, 1613-1917* (Cambridge: Open Books, 2013).
[11] Oscar Wilde, *Vera, or The Nihilist* (London, 1880); G.A. Henty, *Condemned as a Nihilist: A Story of Escape from Siberia* (London: Blackie, 1892). For a useful discussion on this theme see Jillenne Bydder, 'Cossacks, Whose Brutality was Fiendish: Russians as Villains in English-Language Fiction in the 1880s and 1890s' (available at http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/byddervpaper.pdf).
[12] Among the books published by Stepniak in emigration see, for example, *Underground* Russia (New York, Scribner's, 1883); *The Russian Peasantry* (London: Sonnenschien 1888); *The Career of a Nihilist: A Novel* (London: Walter Scott, 1889).
[13] Michael Hughes, 'British Opinion on Russian Terrorism in the 1890s', *European History Quarterly*, 41, 2 (2011), 255-77.
[14] William Le Queux, *Guilty Bonds* (London: 1891), 46, 50.
[15] The reasons for the changes are not clear. It is tempting to assume that Le Queux wanted to benefit commercially from the move, winning new readers by issuing the book with a new title, whilst making enough textual changes to be able to justify the idea that 1896 was something more than a simple reprint.
[16] The theme of flogging of young women was one of the standard tropes in British accounts of Russia. Reports of such happenings certainly appeared from time to time in the press – and there is evidence that many female political prisoners in late imperial Russia were abused by their guards – something described by the radical émigré Felix Volkhovskii who provided Le Queux with first-hand descriptions of developments in Russia (see footnote 20).
[17] William Le Queux, *Strange Tales of a Nihilist* (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1892), 26.
[18] Le Queux, *Things I Know*, 117.
[19] The projected trip to the arctic north certainly received significant press coverage – and a satirical poem about 'The Two Desperados' 'Harry Le Queux' and William De Windt'! See *Hampshire Advertiser*, 24 August 1907.
[20] On Volkhovskii see, Donald Senese, 'Felix Volkhovsky in London, 1890-1914', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 2, 3 (1983), 67-78; Donald Senese, 'Felix Volkhovsky in Ontario: Rallying Canada to the Revolution', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 24, 3 (1990), 295-310. Also see E.A. Taratuta, *S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii: revoliutsioner i pisatel'* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1973), *passim*.
[21] Chris Patrick and Stephen Baister, *William Le Queux: Master of Mystery* (Purley: Patrick and Baister, n.d.), 23.
[22] *Times*, 11 October 1890. Hamburg
[23] *Times*, 10 November 1890.

[24] George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System* (London: James R. Osgood, 1891), 2 vols. Kennan had however already published a series of articles on this theme in *Century Magazine* which included details about Volkhovskii's time in exile.
[25] Volkhovskii? once in Britain himself published extensively on the subject. See, for example, Felix Volkhovsky, 'My Life in Russian Prisons', *Fortnightly Review* (November, 1890), 782-94.
[26] On the SFRF see Barry Hollingsworth, 'The Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 3 (1970), 45-64. Volkhovskii himself edited the Society's newspaper *Free Russia*, largely aimed at moderate British socialists and radical Liberals, whilst also jointly editing the Russian language *Letuchie listki* aimed at Russian radicals in emigration.
[27] Archive of the Imperial Russian Secret Police (Okhrana), Hoover Institution (Stanford), Box 35, Folder 1 (Memorandum on relations between the Okhrana's Paris Office and Scotland Yard). See, too, the Okhrana inspired article Ivanoff, 'Anarchists: Their Methods and Organisation', *New* Review, 10 (1894).
[28] On this issue, see Michael Futrell, 'Episodes of Russian Revolutionary Transport and Communications through Scandinavia and Finland 1863-1917 (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 66-84; Dmitri B. Pavlov, 'Japanese Money and the Russian Revolution, 1904-1905', *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 11 (1993): 79-87; K. F. Shatsillo, 'Iz istorii osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia v Rossii v nachale XX veka (0 konferentsii liberal'nikh i revolutsionnikh partii v Parizhe v sentiabre-oktiabre 1904 g)', *Istoria SSSR,*4 (1982), 51-70. For a useful memoir account casting light on these issues see S.G. Hobson, *Pilgrim to the Left: Memoirs of a Modern Revolutionist* (London: Edward Arnold, 1938), 126-27.
[29] Le Queux, *Strange Tales of a Nihilist*), 149.
[30] William Le Queux, *Secret Service: Being Strange Tales of a Nihilist* (London: Ward, Lock & Co), 320.
[31] William Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing Company, 1895 edn). The words did not appear in the original Preface to the 1894 edition.
[32] Le Queux, *Great War in England*, 61.
[33] On Lord Roberts, see Rodney Atwood, *The Life of Field Marshall Lord Roberts* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
[34] I. F. Clarke, 'Introduction', in *The Battle of Dorking* and *When William Came* (Oxford: Oxford Popular Fiction: 1997), p. xv.
[35] For a series of essays containing useful information about changes in publishing and readership in the decades before 1914, see David McKitterick (ed), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 6, 1830-*1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[36] *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 12 November 1891; *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 23 November 1891, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 November 1891.
[37] Harry De Windt, *Siberia As It Is* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1892). On Novikov see W.T. Stead, *The MP for Russia: Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madam Olga Novikoff* (London: Melrose, 1909), 2 vols, esp. Vol. 2, 315-20.
[38] See, for example, 'A Chat about Siberia' in *The Ludgate* (October 1900).
[39] On the Azef affair, see Anna Geifmann, *Entangled in Terror: the Azef Affair and the Russian Revolution* (Wilmington, DEL: Scholarly Resources, 2000).
[40] William Le Queux, *The Price of Power* (London: Hurst and Blackett), 339.
[41] Le Queux, *Things I Know*, 16
[42] Le Queux, *Things I Know*, 270-1
[43] To see how this claim made its way into 'Ripperology', both then and now, see Spiro Dimolianis, *Jack the Ripper and Black Magic: Victorian Conspiracy Theories*, *Secret Societies and the Supernatural Mystique of the Whitechapel Murders* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011)
[44] William Le Queux, *Rasputin the Rascal Monk* (London: Hurst and Blackett), 8.
[45] Le Queux, *Rascal Monk*, 9.
[46] Le Queux, *Rascal Monk*, 13.
[47] Le Queux, *Rascal Monk*, 58.
[48] For a useful translation of secret police reports detailing some of Rasputin's less savoury activities, see http://www.alexanderpalace.org/palace/rasputinreport.html.
[49] For Anna Vyrubova's Memoirs, which give a very different account of her relations with Rasputin, see Anna Vyrubova, *Memories of the Russian Court* (London: Macmillan, 1923).
[50] On the rumours about Rasputin and other unsavoury aspects of Court life, see Boris Kolonitsky, 'The Desacralization of the Monarchy: Rumors and "Political Pornography" during World War I', in I. Halfin (ed), *Language and Revolution: Making Modern Political Identities* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 47-82.
[51] *Manchester Guardian*, 17 May 1914; 14 July 1914.

[52] William Le Queux, *The Minister of Evil* (London: Cassel, 1918), Preface.
[53] Aron Simonovich, *Rasputin i evrei: Vospominaniia byvshego sekretaria Grigoriia Rasputina* (Riga: Izd-vo Istoricheskaia biblioteka, 1928). Although there is no such thing as a reliable biography of Rasputin, the highly-coloured Edvard Radzinsky, *Rasputin: the Last Word* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000) is based on a range of previously unused archival sources that only came to light in the 1990s.
[54] Le Queux, *Minister of Evil*, 2.
[55] *Grantham Journal*, 16 June 1917.
[56] See, for example, *Lincolnshire Echo*, 14 November 1918.
[57] *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough*, 16 June 1917.
[58] *Hull Daily Mail*, 6 September 1918.
[59] University of Queensland, Fryer Library (Special Collections), F1703, Letter from Le Queux to Baxter, 9 October 1926.
[60] On British concerns about Rasputin and pro-German sentiments at the Russian Court, see Michael Hughes, *Inside the Enigma: British Officials in Russia, 1900-1930* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), 67 ff.
[61] Le Queux, *Rascal Monk*, 65.
[62] For discussions of German support for the Bolsheviks, see the articles by George Katkov and Alexander Dallin in Richard Pipes (ed), *Revolutionary Russia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968). See, too, Semion Lyandres, *The Bolsheviks' "German Gold" Revisited: An Inquiry into the 1917 Accusations*, (Pittsburg: Center for Russian and East European Studies, 1995).
[63] Radzinsky, *Rasputin*, *passim.*
[64] See, for example, Andrei Maylunas and Sergei Mironenko (eds), *A Lifelong Passion: Nicholas and Alexandra, Their own Story* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996).
[65] http://forum.alexanderpalace.org/index.php?topic=12056.0 (accessed 1 February 2017).
[66] On this theme see Keith Neilson, 'Tsars and Commissars: W. Somerset Maugham, "Ashenden" and Images of Russia in British Adventure Fiction, 1890–1930', *Canadian Journal of History*, 27, no. 3 (1992), 475-500; Michael Hughes and Harry Wood, 'Crimson Nightmares: Tales of Invasion and Fears of Revolution in Early Twentieth-Century Britain, *Contemporary British History* 28, 3 (2014), 294-317.