

**Guests of the Nation:  
The Reception and Relief of Belgian Refugees in Scotland by Glasgow Corporation  
during the First World War**

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### **Abstract**

Around 20,000 Belgian refugees came to Scotland as part of the wider exodus of 250,000 Belgians to Britain during the First World War. Glasgow Corporation, the city's municipal government, played a fundamental role in the administration of relief to these refugees. This thesis explores the operation of the refugee regime in Scotland by Glasgow Corporation and its implications for Belgian refugees.

The study begins with an introduction which outlines the main themes addressed in the thesis, its method and its structure. A comprehensive literature review of published work relating to Belgian refugees and the field of migrant history is also included. The principal arguments are conveyed through four chapters, a conclusion and an epilogue. The first chapter provides a history of Glasgow's civic development to contextualise how assistance was delivered in the city through municipal services. Chapter two provides an overview of the organisation of relief by Glasgow Corporation. In particular, it looks at how the municipal government acted on behalf of the state as well as the process of raising and spending funds. The contentious subject of the employment of refugees is also addressed. Chapter three considers how refugees were housed in shared, private and self-supported accommodation. The contribution of Scottish institutions in supporting the work of Glasgow Corporation is discussed in chapter four. The participation of Scottish Universities, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS) and the Catholic Church in refugee relief is also explored in this chapter.

This thesis therefore examines the role of Glasgow Corporation as an administrator of aid to Belgian refugees. It is argued that Glasgow Corporation's mission to assist refugees compelled an enthusiastic Scottish public to engage in a new form of collective action during the First World War. The refugee regime operated by Glasgow Corporation resembled contemporary welfare protocols and assistance for refugees was institutionalised. In assuming authority for a large foreign population, Glasgow Corporation acted on behalf of central government during a period of emergency.

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## Abbreviations

AAM	Anti-Apartheid Movement
AOH	Ancient Order of Hibernians
COS	Charity Organisation Society
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
BRF	Belgian Relief Fund
BWRC	Birmingham War Refugees Committee
EVW	European Volunteer Workers
GCBRC	Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee
GHPOA	Glasgow Housing and Property Owners' Association
GTC	Glasgow Trades Council
ILP	Independent Labour Party
NJCSR	National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief
LGB	Local Government Board
LGBS	Local Government Board for Scotland
SCWS	Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society
SNCR	Scottish National Council for Refugees
SSFA	Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association
SSPCC	Scottish Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children
STDA	Scottish Traders' Defence Association
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
SWHFS	Scottish Women's Hospital for Foreign Service
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UF Church	United Free Church
WRC	War Refugees Committee
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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## Introduction

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### The Relief of Belgian Refugees in Archives and History

The Belgian *Député* Antoine Borboux recounted his visit to Aberdeen in 1915 in the volume *A Book of Belgium's Gratitude*. Borboux described one “touching incident” which in his words:

Revealed to me how deeply the affection for my country had even penetrated the working class of Scotland . . . We came to the Cathedral of St Machar which rears in the middle of a cemetery, with purity of severe granite lines. The door to the church was closed. “I see the grave digger” said my friend. “Let us go and ask him for the key”. The sexton, an old man, with a fine expressive head and deep sunken eyes shaded by bushy eyebrows, had just finished digging a grave. “I should like to show my Belgian friend our beautiful Church, he has to leave very early tomorrow”. My friend had hardly finished speaking when the blue eyes of the old man fastened on me in an ecstasy of goodwill. He laid down his spade and whispered to my companion. “He asks if he can kiss your hand?”<sup>1</sup>

This moving, if exaggerated, anecdote sought to convey the distinctive Scottish hospitality Belgian refugees received during the First World War. Borboux’s comment on the dramatic gesture of the gravedigger aimed to illustrate how extensive sympathy was for Belgian refugees throughout Scotland.

This thesis considers the relief of Belgian refugees around Scotland between 1914-1919. It examines not just the sojourn of the c. 20,000 Belgian refugees who came to Scotland, but the administration they lived under. It explores the role played by Glasgow Corporation as an administrator of humanitarian relief. It also looks at the contribution of other local authority partners and third sector organisations. The shared endeavour of Scottish society to raise funds is additionally considered, as is the role played by charities and volunteers in accommodating refugees throughout central Scotland. Most importantly, the political discourse which the relief of refugees inevitably created, and its relationship to the wider home front is examined in detail. The thesis explores these questions as it aims to enhance understandings of the relief of Belgian refugees across Britain. In turn, the findings of this thesis inform our broader understanding of the historical experience of migrants.

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<sup>1</sup> Antoine Borboux, “En Ecosse,” translation H. Grierson, in *A Book of Belgium's Gratitude*, (London: John Lane, 1916), 303.

## Outline and Themes

This introduction establishes the key themes addressed in this work. These themes are discussed at length throughout the chapter. Following this a detailed literature review which examines relevant historiography on Belgian refugees, immigration and the First World War is provided. Finally, an overview of the methodology and structure adopted are presented. The thesis' principal arguments are referred to throughout the introduction.

As the contemporary global refugee crisis unfolds, its implications pose demanding questions of nation states. The study of an historic humanitarian effort to assist refugees offers relevant and applicable perspectives on present day migration. In the early twenty-first century the greatest movement of people since the Second World War has created considerable political debate, as modern societies and states' bureaucracies struggle to cope with the arrival of millions of foreigners seeking protection.<sup>2</sup> The Belgian case bears relevance to the contemporary global migration crisis, evidencing sympathetic and hostile reactions towards those fleeing war.<sup>3</sup> Despite its modern-day prescience, the relief of Belgian refugees has been "long forgotten," according to Jenkinson.<sup>4</sup> In histories of the British home front Belgian refugees feature as little more than a footnote.<sup>5</sup> Yet to those who took up the call to arms in August 1914 the defence of Belgium, a small nation state invaded by a larger neighbour, was a cataclysmic event. Comments from the *Falkirk Herald* during August 1914 exemplify this: "This time last year I passed through Belgium . . . The land was too precious to be wasted. The people thrifty and industrious, busy with their pigeon flying. No one imagined a year later the land could be drenched with blood."<sup>6</sup> The defence of Belgium, and by virtue the protection of Belgian refugees, was central to the War. As Laqua explains, refugees represented the "intersection between the home front and battle front."<sup>7</sup> To ordinary Scots, they symbolised in the words of a *Motherwell Times* columnist, Captain Kidd, "all the sufferings connected" to the "War."<sup>8</sup> Public enthusiasm and attitudes toward humanitarian relief during the War are discussed in detail throughout this thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Pine, "Migrant Crisis shows the West still does not Understand the East," *The Irish Times*, October 18, 2019, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Gatrell, "Refugees? What's Wrong with History?" *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 30, no. 2 (2017): 170-189, 170.

<sup>4</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Soon Gone Long Forgotten: Uncovering British Responses to Belgian Refugees during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016): 101-112.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

<sup>6</sup> "Belgium," *Falkirk Herald*, August 22, 1914, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Laqua, "Belgian exiles, the British and the Great War: the Birtley Belgians of Elisabethville," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 113-131.

<sup>8</sup> "How the World Wags," *Motherwell Times*, October 23, 1914, 5.



Kushner and Knox assert that the narrative of Belgian refugees is defined by an “ephemeral” nature.<sup>9</sup> To the British and Belgian authorities the refugees’ stay in Britain was merely temporary, by 1920 the great majority of the 250,000 refugees who came to Britain had returned home.<sup>10</sup> Historical amnesia of course is not limited to the case of Belgian refugees, but migrant history in general.<sup>11</sup> As Gatrell notes, historians’ interest in the development of their own nation-states has led them to ignore the experience of the immigrant and refugee.<sup>12</sup> Scholars argue that, as with women’s history and Black history, refugee history must be rescued from obscurity.<sup>13</sup> Minority histories serve to expand understandings of the past. They are of particular importance to the history of the First World War as they provide “diverse narratives” of conflict on the battlefield and on the home front.<sup>14</sup> As social histories they enhance how the War is understood.<sup>15</sup>

The study of the sojourn of Belgians, during the First World War, is valuable to broader historical understandings of twentieth century Britain. This case serves as a narrative of tolerance toward mass displacement.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the decentralised nature of relief means it provides a fresh perspective on local history.<sup>17</sup> This is particularly pertinent to the wider historiography of Scotland, as historically the country has been a source of emigration rather than immigration.<sup>18</sup> Investigating an episode of historical migration offers insights which confront present day assumptions regarding the past.<sup>19</sup>

The relief of Belgian refugees is examined against the wider historiographical question regarding the “origins” and “development” of state-sponsored welfare.<sup>20</sup> As Titmuss has noted in his classic study, warfare during the twentieth century repeatedly influenced social policy in

<sup>9</sup> Tony Kushner and Katherine Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 49.

<sup>10</sup> Panikos Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, (Edinburgh: Pearson, 2010), 40.

<sup>11</sup> Colin Holmes, *A Tolerant Country? Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities in Britain*, (London, Routledge: 1991), 25.

<sup>12</sup> Gatrell, “Refugees? What’s Wrong with History?” 170.

<sup>13</sup> Tony Kushner, *Remembering Refugees Then and Now*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 29.

<sup>14</sup> Hannah Ewence and Tim Grady, “Introduction, Minority History: From War to Peace,” in *Minorities and the First World War*, ed. Hannah Ewence and Tim Grady, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 6.

<sup>15</sup> Jenkinson, “Soon gone, long forgotten,” 104. Jenkinson refers to the work of Arthur Marwick and later historians of immigration such as Holmes, Kushner and Panayi.

<sup>16</sup> Colin Holmes, *John Bull’s Island Immigration and British Society 1871-1971*, (London: Routledge, 1988), 199.

<sup>17</sup> Rebecca, Gill “Belgian Refugees in World War 1: Local Archives & Histories,” *Local History News* (2016), 6-7, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Tom M. Devine and Angela McCarthy, *New Scots: Scotland’s Immigrant Communities since 1945*, (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2018), 5.

<sup>19</sup> Tony Kushner, “Social Inclusion: A Historians’ Perspective,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 20 no. 2 (2001): 75-83, 75.

<sup>20</sup> Asa Briggs, “The Welfare State in Historiographical Perspective,” *The European Journal of Sociology*, 2, no. 2 (1961): 221-258, 221.

Britain.<sup>21</sup> Temporary interventions during the War improved social conditions for many of the most vulnerable.<sup>22</sup> Bailkin, however, has convincingly asserted that refugees were frequently unwitting participants in experiments regarding social policy, employment and welfare.<sup>23</sup> This study considers whether refugees, resident in Scotland, benefited from expansion or experimentation in welfare provision.

Analysis of this question relates to refugees' treatment as foreigners, or to use contemporary terminology "aliens." Although refugees were beneficiaries of government assistance, they were also victims of the immigration policies of a "protectionist" state.<sup>24</sup> To what extent refugees were subject to the "systematic distrust" other minorities living in Britain faced, is considered.<sup>25</sup> The role of what Gatrell and others have described as the "refugee regime," in governing the everyday life of the exiled Belgian is also examined.<sup>26</sup> In addressing these aims, the thesis considers what charting the bureaucracy of refugee relief can tell us about the state's relationship to the foreigner in the early twentieth century.

### **Belgian refugees in Britain: Literature Review**

The historical narrative of Belgian refugees is complex. It has been neglected by many scholars of the Great War.<sup>27</sup> The individual stories of the 250,000 refugees, who sojourned to Britain, are often reduced to a simple account of British generosity and Belgian gratitude. Important histories of the First World War have ignored the affair entirely or reduced it to several lines. Hew Strachan, in *The First World War*, makes cursory mention of the arrival of Belgian exiles

<sup>21</sup> Richard M. Titmus, "War and Social Policy," in *Essays on the Welfare State*, ed. Richard, M. Titmuss, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1963), 78.

<sup>22</sup> Jay M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan: 1986), 140; Jay M. Winter, "The Impact of the First World War on Civilian Health in Britain," *The Economic History Review*, 30 no. 3. (1977); 487-507, 502.

<sup>23</sup> Jordanna Bailkin, *Unsettled: Refugee Camps and the Making of Multicultural Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 10.

<sup>24</sup> John Torpey, "The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System," in *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. Jane Caplan and John Torpey (Princeton University: Princeton, NJ, 2001), 256.

<sup>25</sup> John Horne, *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4; Peter Gatrell, "Introduction," *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhanko, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017): 1-22, 3; Claudena M. Skran, "The International Refugee Regime: The Historical and Contemporary Context of International Responses to Asylum Problems," *The Journal of Policy History*, no. 1 (1992): 8-35; Erika Feller, "The Evolution of the International Refugee Protection Regime," *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy*, 129, (2001): 129-143. Since many scholars of migration argue the refugee regime began with the creation of the UNHCR in 1951, Gatrell's understanding of the refugee regime is important as it determines the "administrative antecedents" of the regime were established during the era of the First World War.

<sup>27</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Soon gone, long forgotten," 102.

in Britain, while Adrian Gregory simply notes that Belgian refugees “flooded the country.”<sup>28</sup> Even social histories of the First World War, such as Modris Eksteins’ *The Rites of Spring*, only mentions Belgian refugees as a footnote.<sup>29</sup> This illustrates the limitations of some First World War histories and reflects their preoccupation with the themes of military tactics, diplomacy and politics.<sup>30</sup> These histories fail to recognise the significance and scale of Belgian exile in Britain or the voluntary responses it motivated. Even historians of the Low Countries share this reticence, the Dutch historian Kossmann makes this apparent describing Belgian refugees’ residence in Britain as little more than “a long and extremely dull vacation.”<sup>31</sup>

The history of Belgian refugees remains, however, important to Britain and Belgium’s national stories. It is relevant not just to historians of the First World War, and those interested in the minority experience, but also to those concerned with the broader history of modern Britain. The treatment of refugees can be used to confirm or question the existence of liberal “British values.”<sup>32</sup>

This literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the body of academic work which does discuss the experiences of Belgian refugees in Britain during the First World War. It considers the study of Belgian refugees through empirical analysis and examines four principal themes which emerge from academic work on Belgian refugees in Britain. It does so to situate the arguments made in this thesis against the wider historiography on the history of refugees. The work first provides an overview of historians’ discussion on the treatment of Belgian refugees in Britain. Having established these, the work discusses the role and importance afforded to propaganda in motivating refugee relief. The literature review then considers the influence of humanitarianism, its relationship to the administrative organisation of refugees and the role of the state in relief. Following this the review examines issues in the relevant literature concerning the employment of refugees, their use of welfare and the question of Belgians’ armed service. Finally, the study addresses comparisons made between the

<sup>28</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War: Volume I - the Call to Arms*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 107; Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 26.

<sup>29</sup> Modris Eksteins, *The Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, (New York: Mariner Books), 366.

<sup>30</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *The First World War: An Illustrated History*, (London: Penguin, 1963); Jerome Elie, “Histories of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee & Forced Migration Studies*, ed. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, Nando Sigona, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 30. Elie contends that, while the factors which led refugees to leave their homes are well understood by historians “those involved” have been for the most part ignored.

<sup>31</sup> E.H. Kossmann, *The Low Countries 1780-1940*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 517.

<sup>32</sup> Hannah Ewence, “Bridging the Gap between “War” and “Peace,” The Case of Belgian Refugees,” in *Minorities and the First World War*, ed. Hannah Ewence, Tim Grady, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 90.

treatment of Belgian refugees and that of other aliens living in Britain during the First World War. Throughout the literature review key arguments which emerge from academic scholarship, and which relate to the thesis will be referenced.

## Overview

Refugees are a by-product of modern warfare. They pose a considerable quandary for the governments of host states. As Gatrell has identified, the movement of millions of refugees during and after the First World War forced states to consider: “How far should the central government accept responsibility for managing refugee relief, and what powers might be devolved on to voluntary agencies?”<sup>33</sup> As this literature review will identify these concerns were evident in relation to the sojourn of Belgians in Britain. Historians who consider the treatment of refugees consistently identify the question of responsibility for refugee affairs to be a key theme which emerges from primary source material examined. For example, Cahalan’s 1977 thesis, *The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England during the Great War*, considers this subject.<sup>34</sup> In examining the transition of authority for refugee affairs, between the voluntary War Refugees Committee (WRC) to the Local Government Board (LGB), Cahalan identified the important relationship of state welfare to refugee relief.<sup>35</sup> As Cahalan articulated: “The relief of Belgian refugees began as an instance of philanthropy at its most confident and dynamic. It ended with the state heavily involved in funding and to a lesser extent guiding the course of relief.”<sup>36</sup> Cahalan’s thesis was the first academic study to consider the experience of Belgian refugees in detail. It has been important in informing many of the principal arguments around Belgian refugees. His study contended that the WRC was forced to cede authority because the charitable drive of volunteers and the public declined as the war continued beyond 1916. Cahalan argued those “willing horses,” who had demonstrated their enthusiasm as volunteers, “began to resent” their role and charitable donations toward refugees declined.<sup>37</sup> Cahalan’s view, regarding the narrative of Belgian refugees being a process of diminishing support, has prevailed amongst many historians. Kushner, for instance, assesses that the “hyperbolic sentiments” toward refugees as well as the charitable donations made in

<sup>33</sup> Gatrell, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England During the Great War,” (PhD Dissertation, McMaster University, 1977).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 501.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 507.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 507.

the first months of the War could not be “sustained.”<sup>38</sup> Grant has argued that the financial and administrative responsibility for looking after hundreds of thousands of refugees was too great for the volunteer led WRC.<sup>39</sup> The LGB’s assumption of control over refugee affairs was inevitable.<sup>40</sup> Kushner has identified, however, LGB control over refugee affairs was kept from the public to stop accusations that “the state was helping aliens above its own citizens.”<sup>41</sup>

Holmes argues that Belgian refugees were the beneficiaries of a sympathetic welcome in Britain during the First World War.<sup>42</sup> Efforts to assist Belgian refugees were driven by pragmatism as well as humanitarianism. As Holmes has shown, the “gallant refusal” of Belgium’s citizens to submit to the “Hun” made them an important source of propaganda.<sup>43</sup> The state’s interest in refugees thus “spread beyond private charity.”<sup>44</sup> Through the War, the state enacted administrative and legislative control over refugees, forming a distinct “refugee regime.”<sup>45</sup> As Elliot notes, through these procedures, the government organised the employment, conscription and repatriation of refugees.<sup>46</sup>

To Panayi, the involvement of the state in the relief of Belgian refugees was an act of economic self-interest.<sup>47</sup> The impact of military recruitment, on the total urban workforce of Great Britain, accounted for almost a thirty percent reduction in workers.<sup>48</sup> Belgian refugees were, therefore, a vital source of auxiliary labour which contributed to the industrial manufacture of munitions.<sup>49</sup> As Cahalan states, the “shipment of refugees from Holland was an essential part of British economic policy rather than an exercise in philanthropy.”<sup>50</sup> Panayi argues, that the LGB’s control of refugee affairs set a precedent of state involvement in later refugee movements to Britain.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Tony Kushner, “Local Heroes: Belgian refugees in Britain during the First World War,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 18 no. 1 (1999): 1-28, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Grant, “Mobilizing charity: non-uniformed voluntary action during the First World War,” (PhD Dissertation, City University London, 2012), 162.

<sup>40</sup> Kushner, “Local Heroes,” 5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 99.

<sup>44</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 100.

<sup>45</sup> Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> Rosemary Elliot, “An early experiment in national identity cards: the battle over registration in the First World War,” *Twentieth-Century British History*, 17 no. 2 (2006):145-176, 146.

<sup>47</sup> Panikos Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, (Edinburgh: Pearson, 2010), 317.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Dewey, “The New Warfare and Economic Mobilisation” in *Britain and the First World War* ed. John Turner (London: Routledge, 1988), 74.

<sup>49</sup> Of those Belgians repatriated between 1918-1919 66% of men and 20% of women had permits to work in munitions. Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 91.

<sup>50</sup> Cahalan. “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 249.

<sup>51</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 279. State involvement was apparent in the later settlement of Basque children, *Kindertransport* refugees, European Volunteer Workers and Ugandan Asians.

In spite of the important role Belgian refugees came to play within the British wartime labour market, most notably munitions, sympathy towards Belgian refugees was genuine and sustained. Gill has shown that volunteers from different political, religious and social backgrounds coalesced to assist refugees.<sup>52</sup> The work of local relief committees evidences the “liberal mindedness” of those communities who came together to assist Belgians.<sup>53</sup> To Kushner, the philanthropic responses of volunteers toward refugees should be seen as part of a broader historical tradition of welcome toward migrants.<sup>54</sup>

Historians have also compared the treatment of Belgian refugees with that of other migrant communities resident in Britain during the Edwardian era. According to Panayi, Belgian refugees received overwhelmingly favourable treatment:

The group which experienced the most universal approval from both the British state and society over the last two hundred years has consisted of the quarter of a million Belgians.....the attitudes towards Belgians contrasted dramatically with the treatment of Germans during the War.....While the Germans in Britain faced press vilification, rioting, internment and confiscation of their property, the Belgians represented the fight against the Hun.<sup>55</sup>

Panayi thus asserts that Belgian refugees symbolised the fight against Germany. Kushner and Knox have identified, in the eyes of the British public the Belgian refugee was regarded as a hero while the German migrant was a dangerous infiltrator.<sup>56</sup> This contrast was furthered by aliens’ legislation which categorised German migrants as “enemies” and Belgians as “friendly.”<sup>57</sup>

The divergent treatment of these two groups perhaps limits the value of the Belgian and German comparison. Contrasting the experience of Belgians with other friendly alien groups offers a more informative and relevant perspective. As Jenkinson has identified, Belgian refugees and other friendly alien communities living in Britain were impacted differently by aliens’ legislation.<sup>58</sup> Each community was subject to different treatment in terms of their employment, military service and repatriation.

In comparison to other friendly alien groups, Belgians refugees’ treatment was for the most part favourable. Ewence has argued, however, that the repatriation of Belgian refugees at

<sup>52</sup> Rebecca Gill, “Brave little Belgium” arrives in Huddersfield ... voluntary action, local politics and the history of international relief work,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 132-150, 145.

<sup>53</sup> Kushner. *Remembering Refugees*, 29.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>55</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 245.

<sup>56</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 48.

<sup>57</sup> John C. Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918*, (London: Routledge, 1986), 8.

<sup>58</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “Friendly Aliens on the Home Front: Migrants, Refugees and Colonial Workers in Scotland During the and After the First World War,” *Scottish Archives*, 22 (2016): 39-53, 53.

the end of the War was swift and clinical.<sup>59</sup> This, she argues, betrayed the humanitarian gesture of offering sanctuary to refugees. Although repatriation was enforced by the state, government requests for refugees to leave were by no means as brutal as those which deported colonial workers from British port cities at the end of the War.<sup>60</sup> As Holmes has assessed, Belgian refugees were never subject to the same xenophobia and hostility that other communities received.<sup>61</sup> “Apathy” instead defined the British public’s response to Belgian refugees.<sup>62</sup>

To regard the chronicle of Belgian refugees in Britain to be an initial rush of enthusiasm followed by disinterest, however, would be a simplification. As Jenkinson argues, looking only at the work of the WRC and the LGB provides little understanding of the localised or personal responses toward refugees which took place.<sup>63</sup> As Ewence identifies, “legacies of war time refugee presence linger” in the “communities who provided housing, jobs and charity.”<sup>64</sup>

The historical accounts of Belgian refugees which have predominated have thus been, largely metropolitan and “Anglocentric.”<sup>65</sup> Only recently has scholarship by Hughes, Buck, and Jenkinson begun to explore the reaction to Belgian refugees in the “Celtic fringes” of Britain.<sup>66</sup> These studies have greatly enhanced how refugee relief is understood and evidenced significant variation in the treatment of refugees. Similarly, fresh insight on the reception of Belgians in urban settings has been offered by De Vuyst, Myers and Van Gorp, as well as by Jenkinson and Verdier, on the much-neglected subject of how refugees accessed welfare and healthcare.<sup>67</sup> In examining these themes historians have offered a wider perspective on the refugee regime, under which Belgians in Britain lived. By exploring the arrangements made by Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee (GCBRC) this thesis continues the case study approach, revealing new insights on the settlement and relief of refugees.

<sup>59</sup> Ewence, “Bridging the Gap,” 90.

<sup>60</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 111.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

<sup>63</sup> Jenkinson, “Soon Gone Long Forgotten,” 104.

<sup>64</sup> Ewence, “Bridging the Gap,” 90.

<sup>65</sup> Jenkinson, “Soon Gone Long Forgotten,” 104.

<sup>66</sup> Lorna M. Hughes, “Finding Belgian refugees in Cymru1914.org: using digital resources for uncovering the hidden histories of the First World War in Wales,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 210-231, 219; William Buck, “Come and find sanctuary in Eire: The experiences of Ireland’s Belgian refugees during the First World War,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016): 192-209, 195; Jenkinson, “Soon Gone Long Forgotten,” 104.

<sup>67</sup> Jolien De Vuyst et al, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizens? Access, Control and Entitlements of Belgian Refugees During the First World War,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, (2020): 1-18, 12; Jacqueline Jenkinson and Caroline Verdier, “War Trauma Among Belgian Refugee Women in Scotland in the First World War,” *Women’s History Review*, (2019): 1057-2025, 1057.

## Propaganda

Holmes identifies that the invasion of Belgium was a prominent feature in political discourse throughout the War.<sup>68</sup> The presence of refugees in Britain was thus a useful source of propaganda for the state. Belgium, for much of the nineteenth century, occupied an important place in British diplomacy due to its geographic proximity. As Pearce and Stewart state: “Traditionally it was felt that the independence of Belgium was a vital interest, ensuring that no single power should occupy the coastline opposite to Britain and thereby make invasion easier.”<sup>69</sup> The invasion of Belgium to Britain thus represented a display of German imperial aggression. The assault, on the world’s sixth most industrialised country, epitomised the brutality of the Teutonic nation.<sup>70</sup> Monger argues that to those seeking to justify war, the invasion was depicted in “Manichean” terms.<sup>71</sup> The violation of Belgian neutrality and the killing of civilians by the *Deutsches Heer* in Louvain, Liège and Dinant was termed the “Rape of Belgium.”<sup>72</sup> Newspaper articles in British national and local press repeated vivid stories of German bloodshed.

The historical question of German war atrocities has been contested. As early as 1928 the Labour MP Arthur Ponsonby critiqued British media reports of atrocities.<sup>73</sup> Ponsonby’s treatise on First World War propaganda, *Falsehood in Wartime*, was influential and gained credence with German historians such as Ralph Lutz. Lutz argued that allegations of German crimes against humanity, during the First World War, were little more than propaganda which was used to “form and control public opinion.”<sup>74</sup> Lutz and Ponsonby’s arguments were significant, they led German atrocities to become regarded as disinformation.<sup>75</sup>

To Cahalan, the “criminal” Belgium was portrayed as the “victim” in British propaganda.<sup>76</sup> Cahalan alleged that earlier Belgian atrocities in the Congo were reinvented by propagandists and politicians such as Sir Gilbert Parker and Herbert Samuels.<sup>77</sup> In this atrocity narrative Germany assumed the role of the wicked colonial oppressor. The *Bryce Report* of

<sup>68</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Malcolm Pearce and Geoffrey Stewart, *British Political History 1867-1990*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 143.

<sup>70</sup> Larry Zuckerman, *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>71</sup> David Monger, “Transcending the Nation: Domestic Propaganda and Supranational Patriotism in Britain, 1917–18,” in *World War One Propaganda* ed. Troy Paddock (Leiden: Brill Books, 2014), 35.

<sup>72</sup> Zuckerman, *The Rape of Belgium*, 3. Throughout this thesis French names for Belgian places will be predominantly used, as contemporary British sources referred most frequently to these French names.

<sup>73</sup> Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime* (London: Bradford & Dickens, 1942), 1.

<sup>74</sup> Ralph H Lutz, “Studies of World War Propaganda, 1914-33,” *Journal of Modern History*, 5, no. 4 (1933): 496-516, 496.

<sup>75</sup> Cahalan. “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 12-13.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 13.



1915, which collated the accounts of refugees to verify press stories and add credence to their assertion of German brutality, noticeably reported amputations and atrocities committed against babies.<sup>78</sup> Cahalan, writing over forty years ago, was sceptical of the *Bryce Report* due to its bias and exaggeration.<sup>79</sup> More recently, the emotive nature of this propaganda has been likened to the fabricated Nayirah testimony which preceded the Gulf War.<sup>80</sup>

In spite of the diplomatic importance of Belgium to wartime Britain, during the late 1880s and early 1900s, Belgium had been regarded as an international “pariah” on account of atrocities in Congo Free State.<sup>81</sup> According to Nzongola-Ntalaja, the treatment of Congolese workers on rubber plantations was considered, by many, within Britain as “a crime against humanity.”<sup>82</sup> The number of Congolese killed by injury, overwork or disease in the Free State is estimated to have been upwards of twenty million.<sup>83</sup> Support for organisations like the Congo Reform Association in the early twentieth century was significant, its denunciation of King Leopold II did much to besmirch Belgium’s international reputation. French has identified, however, the years before the War saw an increase in anti-German sentiment.<sup>84</sup> Anti-German hostility helped restore Belgium’s status.

Revisionist historians, such as Wilson, have shed more light on the invasion of Belgium. Writing in 1979 Wilson argued that the *Bryce Report*, although flawed, contained many unequivocal facts.<sup>85</sup> As Wilson explained, Viscount Bryce was deliberately selected to investigate as he was regarded as a neutral and fair party.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, later studies conducted by Horne and Kramer using German soldiers’ war diaries, and reports by contemporary commissions, have illustrated the reality of German atrocities in Belgium.<sup>87</sup> Further, statistical work by Karen Shelby has shown that 20,000 Belgian civilians were killed in 1914 alone.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>78</sup> These were crimes the Congo Reform Association had often accused the *Force Publique* of the Congo Free State of committing.

<sup>79</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 13.

<sup>80</sup> Robin Andersen, *A Century of Media: A Century of War*, (Pieterlen: Andrew Lang, 2006), 170. Andersen’s study of media and warfare recognises the precedent set by anti-German propaganda, noting that the Nayirah testimony falsely claimed that Iraqi soldiers had thrown babies from incubators and murdered civilians in Kuwait prior to the Gulf War.

<sup>81</sup> Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 5.

<sup>82</sup> Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo*, (London: Zed Books, 2007), 24.

<sup>83</sup> Antoon van den Braembussche, “The Silence of Belgium: Taboo and Trauma in Belgian Memory,” *Yale French Studies*, 102 (2002): 34-52, 44.

<sup>84</sup> David French, “Spy Fever in Britain, 1900-1915,” *The Historical Journal*, 21, no. 2 (1978): 355-370, 356

<sup>85</sup> Trevor Wilson, “Lord Bryce’s Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium, 1914-15,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14, no. 3 (1979): 369-383, 382.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 382.

<sup>87</sup> John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2001), 5; John Horne and Alan Kramer, “German “Atrocities” and Franco-German Opinion, 1914: The Evidence of German Soldiers’ Diaries,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 66, no. 1 (1994), 1.

<sup>88</sup> Karen Shelby, *Flemish Nationalism and the Great War*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2014), 7.

Yet as Zuckerman has revealed, in spite of the contemporary documentation of atrocities in reports and within media there was little appetite after the War to prosecute German military leaders as war criminals.<sup>89</sup> German bombardment of towns and summary execution of Belgian civilians motivated an outpouring of public anger toward Germany across the British Empire.<sup>90</sup> Refugees arriving in Britain during the Autumn of 1914 became the focus of humanitarian endeavour and charitable goodwill.

Cultural responses to the invasion of Belgium are significant. They encouraged recruitment, support for the War and philanthropy toward refugees. Morelli notes, in her treatise on Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime*, artistic responses to the invasion of Belgium helped ennoble the cause.<sup>91</sup> Thacker has shown too, that the plight of Belgium inspired literary, musical and artistic works by Henry James, Thomas Hardy, Edward Elgar and Glasgow artist Norah Neilson Gray.<sup>92</sup> These artistic expressions depicted a romanticised representation of Belgium. They portrayed refugees as a deserving but devout "peasantry."<sup>93</sup> To artists, writers and musicians, the defence of the Belgian people was an important liberal cause. For instance, the poet Rupert Brooke was motivated to enlist after encountering a Belgian refugee.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, the Ministry of Information and Wellington House made use of the work of those who had experienced the conflict first hand including cartoonist Louis Raemaekers and the playwright Émile Cammaerts, to offer vivid portrayals and accounts of the German invasion.<sup>95</sup> This creative work struck a chord with the public, and many leading Scottish intellectuals and artists assisted refugees.

According to Todd, narratives of Belgian victimhood in war propaganda fostered officially sanctioned anti-German feeling.<sup>96</sup> She notes that propaganda posters, as late as 1918, urged the British public to "remember Belgium," evoking calls for retribution by alluding to the German army's use of sexual violence.<sup>97</sup> The Belgian cause served as a rallying cry throughout the War, motivating aggression and hostility against Germans. Macdonald contends

<sup>89</sup> Zuckerman, *The Rape of Belgium*, 4. Although Germany consented to international trials these never took place, political turmoil in Germany worried the nations of the Triple Entente as trials may have fermented more unrest.

<sup>90</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?* 25.

<sup>91</sup> Anne Morelli, *Principi elementari della Propaganda di Guerra* (Rome: Ediesse, 2005).

<sup>92</sup> Toby Thacker, *British Culture and the First World War: Experience, Representation and Memory*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 72.

<sup>93</sup> Grant, "Philanthropy and Voluntary Action," 7.

<sup>94</sup> Alisa Miller, "Rupert Brooke and the Growth of Commercial Patriotism in Great Britain, 1914–1919," *Twentieth Century British History*, 21, no. 2 (2010): 141–162, 144.

<sup>95</sup> Christophe Declerq, "Belgian Refugees in Britain 1914–1919", in *I Died in Hell - (They Called it Passchendaele)*, ed. Luc Devoldere, Sophie De Schepdrijver, (Rekkem: Ons Erfdeel, 2014), 62.

<sup>96</sup> Lisa Todd, "The Hun and the Home, Gender and Sexuality in First World War Europe," in *World War One Propaganda*, ed. Troy Paddock, (Leiden: Brill Books, 2014), 137.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 137.

that the release of the *Bryce Report* less than a week, after the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 was a significant influence on anti-German riots that occurred in the weeks that followed.<sup>98</sup> Even in provincial Scottish towns, such as Dumfries, vandals scrawled “Louvain” on a German trader’s door, an indication that they saw their actions as a legitimate expression of justice.<sup>99</sup> The propaganda depiction of the enemy “Hun” was juxtaposed with that of the brave Belgian. As Kushner and Knox identify, however, the line between friendly and enemy aliens was easily blurred.<sup>100</sup> The arrest in Portsmouth of, Charles Hessel, a Belgian refugee suspected of being a German, outlines this.<sup>101</sup> Any European stranger could be easily branded German in the mind of the suspicious public.

Belgians were also the subject of German propaganda. As O’Neil has noted, newspaper reports appeared in Germany and Switzerland likening the treatment of Belgian refugees in British factories to the treatment of “coolies” on the roads and plantations of Empire.<sup>102</sup> This allegation carried evident racial overtones. In France auxiliary labour was recruited from colonies such as Indochina, Algeria and French West Africa.<sup>103</sup> German propaganda was eager to stress this comparison, highlighting that refugees were little more than an expendable, second class, work force to the British. Whilst Belgian refugees were not treated as indentured servants, they were a source of labour which made important contributions to the production of munitions.<sup>104</sup>

The German invasion of Belgium and the barbaric atrocities which followed legitimised British entry into the First World War. Although allegations of German atrocities were exaggerated, Wilson’s work evidences the veracity and seriousness of claims of abuse.<sup>105</sup> Media throughout the War reported on the atrocities committed by the German army in Belgium. Thus, Holmes is correct in arguing that the “Gallant Little Belgium” narrative motivated an overwhelmingly positive public response towards the relief of refugees.<sup>106</sup> This mobilised a genuine sympathetic reaction towards the assistance of refugees in Scotland.

<sup>98</sup> Catriona Macdonald, “May 1915: Race Riot and Representations of War,” in *Scotland and the Great War*. ed. Catriona Macdonald and E.W. McFarland, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press: 1999), 160.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 160.

<sup>100</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 48.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>102</sup> Claire O’Neill, “The Irish Home Front 1914-1918 with particular reference to the treatment of Belgian refugees, prisoners of war, enemy aliens and war casualties,” (PhD Dissertation, National University of Ireland, 2006), 84. Switzerland became a hotbed for German espionage and many erroneous news stories originated there.

<sup>103</sup> John Horne, “Immigrant Workers in France during World War I,” *French Historical Studies*, 14, no. 1 (1985): 57-88, 60.

<sup>104</sup> Declerq, “Belgian Refugees in Britain 1914-1919,” 57.

<sup>105</sup> Wilson, “Lord Bryce’s Investigation,” 382.

<sup>106</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, 15.

## Humanitarianism, Administration and the State

In turning to examine the influence of humanitarianism, its relationship to the administration of refugee relief and the role of the state, paintings which depict refugees offer insight into how the British perceived the assistance of Belgium. Fredo Franzoni's *The Landing of the Belgian Refugees* depicts exhausted families in worn clothing landing in large numbers at Folkestone.<sup>107</sup> The refugees in this image appear grey in comparison to their British hosts. Franzoni presents an image of exodus with ships waiting to disembark. Significantly, the British hosts feature more prominently than the refugees themselves. Other paintings which depict Belgian refugees similarly reflect the image of a biblical flight. The subjects in these paintings appear hopeless. Norah Neilson Gray's *The Belgian in Exile*, and Andre Cluyensaar's *Britannia with a Belgian Refugee*, similarly present destitute and melancholy subjects who appear at the mercy of the viewer. As Grant indicates, these artistic portrayals of refugees were representative of the British public's emotions towards their guests, conveying pity and mercy.<sup>108</sup> The widespread concern for Belgian refugees and their visibility in British society meant that refugees became part of "the national imagination" of wartime Britain.<sup>109</sup>

Many regarded the assistance of Belgian refugees as a moral duty. According to Holmes, organisations like the War Refugees Committee (WRC) exemplified this humanitarian feeling.<sup>110</sup> Enthusiasm towards refugees was considerable, as Jenkinson has noted, around 2000 refugee committees alone were formed in the initial weeks of the War.<sup>111</sup> The relief of refugees tapped into political feelings of voluntarism and philanthropy. As Frost contends, there was an increasing trend of charitable and voluntary endeavour towards humanitarian causes in the early twentieth century.<sup>112</sup> In particular the displacement of civilians in the Balkans, the Near East and Armenia, prior to the War, motivated philanthropic campaigns and charitable giving.<sup>113</sup> A "narrative of responsibility" encouraged contributions as, Baughan argues, increasing numbers of individuals offered to assist humanitarian aid efforts through direct action.<sup>114</sup> Many were convinced by "narratives of responsibility" which

<sup>107</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 39.

<sup>108</sup> Grant, "Philanthropy and Voluntary Action," 7.

<sup>109</sup> Kushner. "Local Heroes," 7.

<sup>110</sup> Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, 101.

<sup>111</sup> Jenkinson, "Soon gone, long forgotten," 105.

<sup>112</sup> Mark R. Frost, "Humanitarianism and the Overseas Aid Craze in Britain's Colonial Strait's Settlements 1870-1920," *Past and Present*, 236, no. 1 (2017):169-205, 169.

<sup>113</sup> Sandra Barkhof, *War and Displacement in the 20th Century*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 8.

<sup>114</sup> Emily Baughan, "International Adoption and Anglo-American Internationalism 1918-1920," *Past and Present*, 239, no. 1 (2018), 181-217, 188.

emphasised that personal contributions, such as volunteering or adoption, were vital.<sup>115</sup>

The main organisation established to care for refugees, the WRC, was formed in this vein. The WRC was established by two prominent aristocrats, Lady Flora Lugard and Dame Edith Lyttleton.<sup>116</sup> O'Neill observes that Lugard and Lyttleton used the administrative framework put in place by Loyalist James Craig's Ulster Relief.<sup>117</sup> Ulster Relief was intended to support Protestant civilians who would have potentially fled Ireland in the event of a sectarian Irish civil war. The WRC used the lists of names and addresses of families who had agreed to house refugees. Gatrell points out the irony of these circumstances, as a scheme devised to help Protestants flee a Catholic uprising was used to assist the predominantly Catholic Belgians.<sup>118</sup>

While the WRC undoubtedly did much good, its actions have been critiqued as illustrative of a contemporary and prevailing sense of British superiority. White illustrates that class division was reinforced by the WRC through preferential treatment of upper class refugees.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, those deemed delinquent were sent to a large encampment established for refugees at the Earl's Court in London for the duration of the War.<sup>120</sup> To Storr, these actions exemplify the social conservatism of the WRC's most prominent leading member, Lady Lugard.<sup>121</sup> Despite being financially independent and receiving notoriety as a journalist and author, Lugard was politically reactionary. For instance, she opposed extending the franchise to women. This, asserts Storr, is indicative of the conservative and contradictory opinions which underpinned aspects of the WRC and its volunteers' work.<sup>122</sup>

To Knox and Kushner the WRC's actions were shaped by the Belgians' alien status.<sup>123</sup> They argue that Belgians' visible signs of difference, particularly the wearing of clogs were treated as a mark of simplicity. The WRC reinforced the image of the Belgians as an honest but oppressed people. These stereotypes, contend Declerq and Baker, stressed Belgian homogeneity and ignored the linguistic, political and cultural differences between the Walloon

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>116</sup> Grant, "Philanthropy and Voluntary Action," 7. Lugard and Lyttleton were prominent aristocrats who dedicated themselves to what were regarded as good causes across the Empire. Lyttleton helped found the Victoria League and Lugard wrote extensively on the civilizing mission of the British Empire.

<sup>117</sup> O'Neill, "The Irish Home Front 1914-1918," 54.

<sup>118</sup> Peter Gatrell, "Refugees and Forced Migrants during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 26, no.1 (2008): 82-110, 92.

<sup>119</sup> Sally White, *Ordinary Heroes: The Story of Civilian Volunteers in the First World War*, (Stroud: Amberley, 2018), 20.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>121</sup> Katharine Storr, *Excluded from the Record: Women Refugees and Relief*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 112.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>123</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 39.

and the Flemish.<sup>124</sup> Preoccupation with refugees' good character and references to "childlike" Belgians exposed a "patronising racism," believes Kushner.<sup>125</sup> As Cahalan explains, these opinions were rooted in Britain's historically patchy relationship with Belgium.<sup>126</sup> The circumstances of the war led Britain to ally itself to both Belgium and Serbia, small countries, which prior to the War the public had not regarded well.<sup>127</sup>

Nonetheless, voluntary action in aid of refugees was deemed a vital contribution to the War. As Cahalan contends, this work represented a form of patriotism particularly amongst the wealthy and middle class.<sup>128</sup> The salvation of Belgium was central to the War's aims. By comparison, Crowe asserts that this voluntary support toward refugees was borne from growing political feelings of transnationalism and a desire to relieve the distressed.<sup>129</sup> Monger combines these views arguing that propaganda simultaneously appealed to both political values.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, the work of refugee committees could be framed as an act in support of the War or an act to support those displaced by the War. Monger's argument is supported by studies of Belgian refugees that indicate that there was divergence in the political beliefs and occupational backgrounds of volunteers within relief committees.<sup>131</sup> This is evident in urban case studies of relief. Analysis by Gill, of Huddersfield's Belgian Relief Committee reveals the involvement of liberal and radical figures such as Florence Lockwood, a suffragist, and socialist Ben Riley.<sup>132</sup> The participation of those opposed to the War, such as Riley, displays that refugee relief was regarded by some as advancing the causes of "ethical socialism" and "internationalism."<sup>133</sup> If Gill's analysis of committee membership is compared to Jenkinson's, one can see that the key figures from the GCBRC came from the city's political elite.<sup>134</sup> Councillors from various political backgrounds joined together under the common aegis of

<sup>124</sup> Christophe Declercq and Helen Baker, "The Pelabon Munitions works and the Belgian village on the Thames: community and forgetfulness in outer-metropolitan suburbs," *Immigrant & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016): 151-170, 159.

<sup>125</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 11.

<sup>126</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 12.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. The Red Rubber scandal had tarnished Belgium's reputation, particularly amongst liberals in Britain. Serbian troops were accused of killing thousands of Albanian civilians during the Balkan Wars. International Commissions established to investigate atrocities in the Congo in 1903 and the Balkans in 1914 were backed by Britain.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 331. The most senior figures within the WRC came from influential political and aristocratic circles.

<sup>129</sup> David Crowe, *War Crimes, Genocide and Justice a Global History*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2014), 91.

<sup>130</sup> Monger, "Transcending the Nation: Domestic Propaganda," 35.

<sup>131</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 155; Gill, "Brave little Belgium," 144.

<sup>132</sup> Gill, "Brave Little Belgium arrives in Huddersfield," 133.

<sup>133</sup> Marc Segesser, "The Punishment of War Crimes Committed against Prisoners of War, Deportees and Refugees during and after the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 26 no.1 (2008): 134-156, 149; Gill, "Brave Little Belgium Arrives in Huddersfield," 133.

<sup>134</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief: Glasgow Corporation's Support for Scotland's c.20,000 Belgian Refugees," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016): 171-191, 173.

assisting Belgian refugees. They regarded their duty as in keeping with the city's traditions of liberalism and progressive support for "collective action" towards the unfortunate.<sup>135</sup> As Aspinwall has identified, Glasgow had a long and proud tradition of local government raising money to donate to a variety of domestic and international causes.<sup>136</sup>

Historians note that humanitarian action on behalf of Belgian refugees particularly appealed to women. For middle class women, volunteering on behalf of refugee charities offered a degree of respectability. As Watson contends, female involvement in fund raising, craft activities and the care of the vulnerable confirmed and celebrated ladylike behaviours.<sup>137</sup> Although labour dilution may have seen many women enter factories and take on roles that had been the preserve of men before the War, Edwardian attitudes towards gender roles did not change overnight. Work which was seen to be an extension of women's duties were naturally regarded as appropriate for those within the middle classes.<sup>138</sup>

While women worked in prominent positions in the WRC, men were involved at both an organisational and operational level. Cahalan argues that former Liberal Home Secretary Herbert Gladstone's membership of the WRC, gave the organisation cross-party support.<sup>139</sup> Prior to Gladstone's participation, the WRC had mainly attracted sympathies from figures within the Conservative Party. Gladstone's contribution ensured that the work of the WRC was regarded as important to both sides of the political divide. This lends credence to Monger's opinion, regarding refugee relief appealing to conservatives and liberals alike.<sup>140</sup>

Although the WRC was the largest and best supported Belgian relief organisation, it was not the only group seeking financial support from the British public. Panayi notes, that up to sixty-nine charities existed to aid Belgian refugees alone.<sup>141</sup> The multitude of charities founded during the First World War to assist those affected by the conflict within Britain and beyond evidences, according to Crowe, a growing enthusiasm towards humanitarianism.<sup>142</sup> Belgians were not the only refugee group who received sympathy and material relief in Britain

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>136</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States 1820-1920*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), 154. In the decades before the War money was raised for a variety of humanitarian appeals such as the Indian Famine, 1899-1900, and the Ottawa Fire 1900.

<sup>137</sup> Janet K Watson, "Khaki Girls, VADs, and Tommy's Sisters: Gender and Class in First World War Britain," *The International History Review*, 19 no. 1 (1997): 32-51, 36.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>139</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 34. Herbert Gladstone was a Liberal politician and the youngest son of William Gladstone. He served as Home Secretary between 1905-1910 and as Governor General of the Union of South Africa. He was close to LGB President Herbert Samuel. Through the War Gladstone was the patron of a number of War charities.

<sup>140</sup> Monger, "Transcending the Nation," 35.

<sup>141</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 279.

<sup>142</sup> Crowe, *War Crimes*, 91.

either. Organisations such as the Serbian Relief Fund and the Macedonian Relief Fund also attracted charitable support. Little identifies that these organisations were in direct competition with one another.<sup>143</sup> Cahalan supports this argument too, as he identifies that the Belgian Relief Fund was an organisation that supported refugees outside of Britain. It was often rebuked by the WRC.<sup>144</sup> The WRC believed the Belgian Relief Fund was misleading the British public over where their donations were going. Allegations of mismanagement and embezzlement were made against some refugee charities based in Scotland too.

The large number of charities which proliferated during the War led the government to take action to register and limit their actions under the War Charities Act, 1916, following media criticism from Robert Donald of the *Daily Chronicle*.<sup>145</sup> This according to Pedersen, indicates that by 1916 there was declining support for charitable causes as the public became disillusioned with the War.<sup>146</sup> This study will show, however, within Glasgow assistance toward Belgian refugees was sustained for the duration of the War.

The work of the WRC and its off shoots was not without criticism or fault. By 1915, the LGB assumed complete control over the Committee.<sup>147</sup> O'Neill insinuates that early governmental involvement in the work of the WRC paved the way for this.<sup>148</sup> Cahalan suggests this was due to the president of the LGB, Herbert Samuel's underestimation of the scale of relief that would be required.<sup>149</sup> To Kushner, however, close relationships between the WRC and leading politicians meant that the LGB influenced decision making prior to 1915.<sup>150</sup> It seemed the scale of the Committee's work was too large to be entirely supported by charity. Jenkinson furthers this assertion, observing by 1915 half of the WRC's budget was provided by the LGB.<sup>151</sup>

The role played by the LGB in assisting refugees was important in influencing later refugee policy. Bailkin's observation that it was the LGB, the department responsible for welfare and health, which assisted Belgians rather than the Home Office is significant.<sup>152</sup> LGB control could be regarded as simply a practicality to improve coordination. The WRC was

<sup>143</sup> Branden Little, "An explosion of new endeavours: global humanitarian responses to industrialized warfare in the First World War era," *First World War Studies*, 5 no. 1 (2014):1-16, 1.

<sup>144</sup> Cahalan. "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 133.

<sup>145</sup> Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action*, 9.

<sup>146</sup> Susan Pedersen, "Gender, Welfare and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War," *The American Historical Review*, 95, no. 4 (1990): 983-1006, 986.

<sup>147</sup> Declerq, "Belgian Refugees in Britain 1914-1919," 57.

<sup>148</sup> O'Neill, "The Irish Home Front 1914-1918," 54.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 83-84.

<sup>150</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 5.

<sup>151</sup> Jenkinson, "Soon gone, long forgotten," 105.

<sup>152</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 12.



reliant upon accommodating refugees in many state and local government run institutions.<sup>153</sup>

Relations between the LGB and the WRC were “strained” at times.<sup>154</sup> Despite this, Kushner contests that, the LGB sought to maintain an illusion that the WRC was a charitable “third party” for the duration of the War.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, the WRC served as a “screen” for LGB involvement which avoided accusations of wasteful expenditure on Belgians.

In the case of Scotland, however, Jenkinson has revealed that local government involvement in Belgian affairs was transparent.<sup>156</sup> Glasgow Corporation held a “unique role” serving as the Scottish authority for Belgian refugees.<sup>157</sup> Charged with the responsibility of assisting refugees by the LGB, Jenkinson argues that, Glasgow Corporation “assumed powers which elsewhere remained in the hands of central government.”<sup>158</sup> Glasgow Corporation administered aid and assistance to Belgian refugees throughout Scotland. The case of Glasgow exemplifies Gatrell’s assertion, that the refugee regime was never “singular” or static, rather it evolved on an “ad hoc” basis to meet demand.<sup>159</sup> Thus, in Scotland, relief was led by local government rather than volunteers for the duration of the War. The operation of this unique arrangement will be considered in greater detail in this thesis.

Regardless of Glasgow’s role in assisting Belgians, the LGB remained the executive authority for all refugee relief. Holmes believes that the LGB’s decision to exert control over the WRC and to introduce the War Charities Act, was borne from a desire to regulate fund raising, prevent fraud and target resources.<sup>160</sup> Although charity required regulation the government did not necessarily discourage it. Cahalan states, “charitable work was a form of symbolic enlistment for thousands of citizens too old or of the wrong sex to be able to fight.”<sup>161</sup> Segesser furthers this argument, noting that charity mobilised enthusiasm amongst the public for the duration of the War.<sup>162</sup>

The WRC and the state held important roles ministering to refugees. The WRC’s prominence, asserts Holmes, evidences considerable wartime support for humanitarianism.<sup>163</sup> While the role of the LGB in relief, argues Bailkin, illustrates central government’s desire to

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>154</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 48.

<sup>155</sup> Tony Kushner, “Local Heroes,” 5.

<sup>156</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 186.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 186.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 186.

<sup>159</sup> Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

<sup>160</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 299.

<sup>161</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 505.

<sup>162</sup> Segesser, “The Punishment of War Crimes,” 149.

<sup>163</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 101.

control relief work.<sup>164</sup> The WRC's work was undoubtedly influenced by contemporary social opinion. As Storr and White exemplify, this undermined the WRC's overall mission.<sup>165</sup> Glasgow Corporation's efforts to assist refugees were similarly affected by the social and religious values of the day.

Nevertheless, philanthropic enthusiasm towards Belgium flourished in the early years of the War. This was motivated, as Monger notes, by a blend of patriotism and humanitarian idealism.<sup>166</sup> Growth in public resentment, however, towards flag days and can collections, as well as the relative lack of oversight of charities, led the government to introduce legislation to regulate the third sector.<sup>167</sup> Despite fluctuating financial support for refugees, volunteering was widespread and sustained for the duration of the War within Scotland.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, the assistance of Belgian refugees was an important source of pride, and as Gill has shown local voluntary committees attracted diverse support.<sup>169</sup> This was apparent in Glasgow where the city council controlled relief on behalf of Scotland.

### **Employment, Welfare and Armed Service**

The literature review turns now to examine the themes of employment, welfare and armed service in relation to Belgian refugees. The question of refugees' employment proved contentious. Industrial work in the Edwardian period, according to Garrard, was highly regulated, and trade unions were hostile toward the use of immigrant labour because of a perceived association between migrants and strikebreaking.<sup>170</sup> Many of the anti-migrant sentiments of the Victorian and Edwardian era centred on the supposed threat that foreigners, particularly the Irish and Eastern European Jews, posed to the availability of work.<sup>171</sup>

The Munitions Crisis, however, made prescient the necessity to increase military production, as Burk argues this change was symptomatic of the wider need to regulate the economy during the War.<sup>172</sup> The Munitions of War Act of July 1915 established the Ministry of Munitions and turned private manufacturers of munitions into "controlled

<sup>164</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 12.

<sup>165</sup> Storr, *Excluded from the Record*, 112; White, *Ordinary Heroes*, 20.

<sup>166</sup> Monger, "Transcending the Nation: Domestic Propaganda," 35

<sup>167</sup> Pedersen, "Gender, Welfare and Citizenship," 986.

<sup>168</sup> Jenkinson, "Soon Gone Long Forgotten," 108.

<sup>169</sup> Gill, "Brave Little Belgium arrives in Huddersfield," 133.

<sup>170</sup> John A. Garrard, *The English and Immigration 1880-1910*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 24

<sup>171</sup> While the Irish had been regarded as strike breakers Jewish workers became associated with exploitative sweated industries in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. M. A. G. Ó Tuathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 31 (1981): 149-173, 160.

<sup>172</sup> Kathleen Burk, "Introduction" in *War and the State: The Transformation of the British Government 1914-1919* ed. Kathleen Burk, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), 3.

establishments.”<sup>173</sup> Kirby observes that this act also weakened trade unions by ensuring that labour could be diluted.<sup>174</sup> As a result unskilled workers, women and friendly aliens, were brought into key industries to boost production. As Holmes has shown, significant numbers of Belgians were employed in the manufacture of munitions.<sup>175</sup>

There was concern, in the early days of the War, about the potential negative impact of a surplus Belgian workforce. As Jenkinson has highlighted, questions over the employment of refugees resulted in tensions between refugee committees, trade unions and Labour politicians in Glasgow.<sup>176</sup> As Hughes notes, Belgians were initially subject to restrictions on their employment and movement in the first months of the War.<sup>177</sup> As time went on, however, the employment of refugees became a priority. It seemed both the WRC and LGB realised sustaining a large unemployed population would be a considerable burden. Jenkinson identifies the importance of a government commission, chaired by Sir Ernest Hatch in 1914, which recommended that: “Belgians should only be employed at the same rates of pay as native Britons. It also adopted another recommendation for formal arrangements to place Belgian refugees in work – via application to Labour exchanges.”<sup>178</sup> This policy, argues Jenkinson, was successful in ensuring the widespread employment of refugees and by 1917 up to 57,000 refugees were registered as formally employed.<sup>179</sup> Despite the involvement of central government in the employment of refugees, Belgian authorities carefully monitored labour conditions in Britain. Hughes observes that Emile Vandervelde, leader of the socialist *Belgische Werkliedenpartij* and Minister of State during the War, was dispatched around Britain to oversee the employment conditions of Belgian refugees.<sup>180</sup> Such central government actions mitigated allegations that Belgians undercut wages.

Belgian refugees were vital to the British War effort because of their involvement in the manufacture of ordnance. In some cases, Belgian refugees were recruited directly from France and Holland.<sup>181</sup> Laqua notes that these refugees went on to work in one of the largest

<sup>173</sup> Angela Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munition Workers in the Great War*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1994), 90. The radical Clyde Workers’ Committee was established to oppose the Act.

<sup>174</sup> Maurice Kirby, “Industry, Agriculture and Trade Unions” in *The First World War in British History*, ed. Stephen Constantine, Maurice Kirby and Mary Rose, (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 54.

<sup>175</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 91. Holmes notes that 66% of Belgian men and 20% of Belgian women held permits to work in munitions.

<sup>176</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 182.

<sup>177</sup> Hughes, “Finding Belgian refugees in Cymru1914.org,” 219.

<sup>178</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 180.

<sup>179</sup> Jenkinson, “Friendly Aliens on the Home Front,” 44.

<sup>180</sup> Hughes, “Finding Belgian refugees,” 222.

<sup>181</sup> Laqua, “Belgian exiles,” 114.

munitions factories in Britain at Birtley, in north eastern England.<sup>182</sup> This Belgian run factory became known as Elisabethville and employed 6000 Belgian men seconded from the military. Elisabethville, like the Pelabon factory in Twickenham and the Kryn and Lahy metalworks in Letchworth, was staffed almost entirely by Belgians.<sup>183</sup> The Birtley colony, Holmes observes, was policed and regulated by the Belgian government.<sup>184</sup> Laqua contends the use of gates, fences and guards evidenced a desire to physically “segregate” Belgian and British communities.<sup>185</sup> This separation of the Belgian workforce from the rest of the population may have been an attempt to discourage local hostility. Laqua’s study of Elisabethville indicates, however, the factory became a source of tension amongst local Britons who lived near it.<sup>186</sup> Disagreements, fights and indiscretions both within and outside the camp raised questions about the effectiveness of Belgian jurisdiction in a foreign country.<sup>187</sup> Cahalan argues that British criticism of Belgian run camps was a source of antagonism between the two governments.<sup>188</sup> While Cahalan dubs Belgian jurisdiction a failure, Kushner believes it helped maintain Belgian identity within exile.<sup>189</sup> Belgian schools, cafés, shops and clubs similarly indicate the existence of a parallel Belgian society. Declercq and Baker assert that Belgian refugees were an inward looking community, this explains why refugees’ presence in Britain faded so quickly after repatriation.<sup>190</sup>

Despite the widespread employment of refugees and the shortage of labour in wartime Britain, some refugees remained unemployed.<sup>191</sup> In analysing the occupational backgrounds of Belgian refugees, Jenkinson has revealed that there was an overrepresentation of urban professionals and skilled workers from the towns and cities of Flanders.<sup>192</sup> This calls into question the representation of the Belgian refugee as a rural peasant. Panayi asserts that the Belgian refugee most closely resembled the wealthy mercantile immigrants, who came to Britain in the nineteenth century from Germany and Switzerland.<sup>193</sup> Gill furthers this argument, stating: “Some Belgians, particularly those with sufficient personal resources” were able to,

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>183</sup> Declercq and Baker, “The Pelabon Munitions,” 151.

<sup>184</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 91.

<sup>185</sup> Laqua, “Belgian exiles,” 121.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>187</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 401

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 285.

<sup>189</sup> Kushner, “Local Heroes,” 23.

<sup>190</sup> Declercq and Baker, “The Pelabon Munitions,” 162.

<sup>191</sup> Hughes, “Finding Belgian refugees,” 224.

<sup>192</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 181.

<sup>193</sup> Panikos Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 57.

come “independently to Britain.”<sup>194</sup> While those Belgians who came to Glasgow were not from the elite, there were certainly many professionals who came from the middle class.

By 1915 many working class refugees had found jobs in factories. Within the professional class, however, some refused work they regarded as unbecoming. As a Ministry of Health report on Belgian refugees published after the War admitted, professional refugees often could not be found suitable work.<sup>195</sup> This forced some to rely on wages earned in occupational workrooms or on welfare payments.<sup>196</sup> These refugees, it appears, struggled to adapt to life in exile. Bourgeois tastes and habits died hard amongst those refugees who felt they deserved better treatment.<sup>197</sup> Personal accounts of those who worked on behalf of the WRC indicate disapproval toward such aspects of Belgian behaviour.<sup>198</sup> These sentiments were recorded in Glasgow too, by volunteers who worked on behalf of Belgian refugees.<sup>199</sup>

The WRC and the LGB encouraged differentiated treatment for refugees on the grounds of class. As Bailkin has observed, the first Belgian refugees to arrive in Britain were given pink and blue cards which indicated their social status to WRC volunteers.<sup>200</sup> Bailkin’s assertion that class was used as a determining factor in refugees’ treatment is important.<sup>201</sup> Within Glasgow the question of refugees’ class and character became a source of concern for Glasgow Corporation when assisting refugees with accommodation.

Life in exile for many middle class refugees meant being declassified. The Belgian refugee experience in Britain can be regarded as similar to that of Polish ex-service men and European Volunteer Workers (EVWS) settled in Britain after the Second World War.<sup>202</sup> J.A. Tannahill identified that these post-1945 groups were condemned to an “abrupt change” in circumstances.<sup>203</sup> Buck has identified that the accommodation of Belgian refugees in workhouses provoked criticism, particularly in Ireland.<sup>204</sup> Members of both these First and Second World War communities struggled to reconcile their position on arrival in Britain with

<sup>194</sup> Gill, “Belgian refugees in World War One: Local Archives and History,” *Local History News*, 119 (2016):6-7, 7.

<sup>195</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government in the Reception and Care of the Belgian Refugees*, (HMSO, London, 1920), 12.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>197</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 167; 249.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, 167.

<sup>199</sup> Imperial War Museum Archive (hereafter IWMA), Mary E Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, BEL 6100/5, 1918, 24.

<sup>200</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 98. Pink denoted those who were middle class and blue those who were working class.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, 98. Bailkin notes that WRC volunteers made assumptions based on refugees’ clothing and appearance.

<sup>202</sup> Eizabeth Staudlis, “The Resettlement of Displaced Persons in the United Kingdom,” *Population Studies: A Journal of Demography*, 5 (1952): 207-237, 16.

<sup>203</sup> J.A. Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 82.

<sup>204</sup> Buck, “Come and find sanctuary in Eire,” 195.

the comfort and social status of their former lives.

At the beginning of the War many refugees were accommodated in welfare institutions until alternative provision was found.<sup>205</sup> This, Bailkin notes, was “controversial” as it “involved moving the poor” elsewhere.<sup>206</sup> Although the LGB ordered that Belgian refugees be separated from the poor of welfare institutions, refugees’ residence in these establishments “likened” them to the local “poor.”<sup>207</sup> Glasgow Corporation utilised available homeless shelters, welfare institutions and temperance hotels to accommodate refugees.

Sections of the Belgian refugee population were forced to rely on welfare. Refugees, however, were not always eligible for assistance. De Vuyst et al illustrate, that in Birmingham refugees’ alien status meant they were disqualified from receiving assistance.<sup>208</sup> They note the “social rights of Belgian refugees were fragile.”<sup>209</sup> Welfare in Britain had long been linked to settlement and locality. While more work must be done to explore to what extent refugees could access welfare in Britain, it seems that in Birmingham Belgian women’s receipt of separation allowance excluded them from other benefits.<sup>210</sup> Yet in Glasgow, refugees were deemed eligible for benefits such as poor relief.<sup>211</sup>

Other welfare was applied nationwide. Cahalan has concluded that throughout the War “thousands of refugees received medical help of some kind at small expense of the British taxpayer.”<sup>212</sup> In Glasgow, refugees were able to access medical facilities. Jenkinson and Verdier have explored Belgian refugees’ use of medical provision more fully, examining cases of war trauma amongst refugee women in Scotland.<sup>213</sup> Jenkinson and Verdier have shown that some refugee poor law applicants in Glasgow were treated for symptoms associated with war trauma in psychiatric hospitals and poorhouse medical units.<sup>214</sup> In most cases this treatment was paid for by Glasgow Corporation. Where Belgian refugees were employed or had relatives, their families were expected to contribute.<sup>215</sup> This was the same policy that applied to local applicants. Jenkinson and Verdier note, Belgian refugees in receipt of poor law assistance in Scotland were less likely to be described as destitute.<sup>216</sup>

<sup>205</sup> IWMA, Memo on Workhouses for Refugees, October 22, 1914, BEL 1 2/5, 1.

<sup>206</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 99.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, 99.

<sup>208</sup> De Vuyst et al, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizens?,” 12.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>211</sup> Jenkinson and Verdier, “War Trauma Among Belgian Refugee Women,” 1057.

<sup>212</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 338.

<sup>213</sup> Jenkinson and Verdier, “War Trauma Among Belgian Refugee Women,” 1057.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, 1057.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid*, 1058.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*, 1058.

White has shown there was a perception that unemployed Belgian refugees relied upon welfare and this was a source of resentment in some locales.<sup>217</sup> Moreover, to some volunteers refugees were seen as ungrateful. This made them resemble, in Watson's words, "the natives in the colonies" to those middle class ladies who had initially been eager to assist them.<sup>218</sup> Cahalan contends that disillusionment amongst volunteers led to declining support for refugees.<sup>219</sup> Refugees living in Glasgow were not immune to these sentiments. Glasgow Corporation volunteers and figures within the labour movement regularly disapproved of the perceived special treatment of refugees. Such attitudes strengthen Kushner and Knox's assertion that British attitudes toward Belgian refugees bordered on "racism."<sup>220</sup>

Heizman has argued that these opinions lead us to question whether Belgians were really regarded as; "guests of the nation" or "guest workers?"<sup>221</sup> To Panayi and Cahalan, Belgians were certainly guest workers and their relief was largely in the British state's self-interest.<sup>222</sup> Yet it is important to note that regardless of the Belgians' utility to the industrial manufacture of weaponry, a significant number of Belgians were wholly reliant on charity or welfare. As Kushner and Knox argue, "public concern about the Belgians was matched by practical aid."<sup>223</sup> In the case of Glasgow many refugees took up employment in munitions and other heavy industries that were vital to the war. Nevertheless, in the eyes of those who oversaw refugee relief in Scotland, assisting Belgians was first and foremost a humanitarian endeavour.

As Jenkinson has shown, in her study of Glasgow, the issue of military recruitment amongst refugees was more controversial than refugees' employment or use of the welfare system.<sup>224</sup> This could be regarded as the primary source of antipathy towards Belgian refugees. Letters to newspapers, as early as 1915, reflect bubbling public discontent at the presence of so many young male refugees. Gatrell assesses that young male refugees were an unhappy reminder of the war's toll on British society.<sup>225</sup> At Birtley, for instance, the number of Belgian men of fighting age was a source of tension and confusion for locals who felt as if they had been cheated out of work.<sup>226</sup> In Ireland the issue of Belgian service, according to Buck, entered

<sup>217</sup> White, *Ordinary Heroes*, 20.

<sup>218</sup> Watson, "Khaki Girls," 36.

<sup>219</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 501.

<sup>220</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 39.

<sup>221</sup> Kristina Heizman, "Guests of the Nation" or "Guestworkers"? 'Belgian Refugees in Great Britain, 1914-1918,' in *Glances into Fugitive Lives*, ed. Elizabeth Tietmeyer, (Berlin: Museum Europäischer Kulturen, 2017), 72.

<sup>222</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 317.

<sup>223</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, 55.

<sup>224</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 182

<sup>225</sup> Gatrell, "Refugees and Forced Migrants," 92.

<sup>226</sup> Laqua, "Belgian exiles," 113.

into the discourse of nationalism as many questioned why the Irish should serve and Belgians stay behind.<sup>227</sup>

British-Belgian relations and the treatment of refugees were regarded as a highly sensitive matter by central government. Jenkinson makes this apparent, describing the introduction of three Defence Notices relating to Belgian refugees, in July 1916.<sup>228</sup> These barred public reporting on Belgian refugees in relation to employment, military service, housing and prevented their description as “aliens.” Jenkinson contends that robust censorship of negative press stories regarding Belgians, suggests that the British government saw the promotion of good relations between guests and hosts as critical.<sup>229</sup> Despite the restrictions on reporting in relation to refugees, armed service of foreign nationals in Britain was encouraged by the British government. Initially the Belgian state had some success in voluntary recruitment amongst exiles. Conscription, however, for Belgian men between the ages of eighteen to forty-one was later introduced.<sup>230</sup>

Jenkinson and Hughes have shown that the government was eager to ensure Belgians were employed through formal channels, to prevent the undercutting of wages.<sup>231</sup> The need for labour, however, was significant and as Holmes has highlighted, Belgian refugees became vital to the manufacture of ordnance.<sup>232</sup> Yet, Belgian refugees were not simply a surplus labour force. The question of welfare requirements, military service and accommodation inevitably led to resentment toward Belgians. Moreover, as Bailkin has noted, to volunteers and authorities social class was also an important concern. As Jenkinson has identified, however, the strict control of Belgian affairs by government limited antagonism.<sup>233</sup> This mitigated public hostility and reinforced the image of the Belgian refugee as a “friendly” alien.

### **Belgian Refugees and Other Alien Communities**

As Panayi has stated, using a comparative approach identifies the “fundamental similarities” in migrants’ treatment whilst at the same time recognising that “no two groups have had an identical experience.”<sup>234</sup> In adopting a comparative approach, towards minorities, scholars seek to evidence the nuances in each groups’ treatment.

<sup>227</sup> Buck, “Come and find sanctuary in Eire,” 198.

<sup>228</sup> Jenkinson, “Soon gone, long forgotten,” 106.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>230</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 90.

<sup>231</sup> Jenkinson, “Friendly Aliens on the Home Front,” 44; Hughes, “Finding Belgian refugees,” 222.

<sup>232</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 91.

<sup>233</sup> Jenkinson, “Soon gone, long forgotten,” 106.

<sup>234</sup> Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism*, 7.



The outbreak of the War saw the passing of several important pieces of immigration legislation. Under the 1914 Aliens Restriction Act and the subsequent Consolidation Orders, foreigners resident in Britain were placed under special restrictions.<sup>235</sup> The systematic surveillance and management of refugees imposed by the Aliens Restriction Act of 1914, is evidence of what Gatrell termed the “bureaucratic administration” associated with the refugee regime.<sup>236</sup>

War time aliens’ legislation required foreigners in Britain to register with the police, and prevented their residence in certain restricted areas. According to Bird, this legislation was aimed primarily at enemy German and Austrian immigrants, however, it also affected Belgians.<sup>237</sup> The limitations on where foreigners could and could not reside included in the Act particularly affected the way in which refugees were settled in Britain. Jenkinson identifies that much of Scotland’s coast was designated a “prohibited” area, meaning refugees were settled in Glasgow and its satellite towns.<sup>238</sup>

The Aliens Restriction Act was not the first piece of immigration legislation which was introduced in Britain. Juss, a legal scholar, has evidenced that liberal attitudes towards immigration were pervasive until the early twentieth century.<sup>239</sup> The introduction of the Aliens Act in 1905 sought to reduce the migration of Eastern European Jews and Romani to Britain. According to Bird the act “swept away the last vestiges of traditional laissez-faire” opinion toward migration.<sup>240</sup> Wray has argued, however, the 1905 Act was “timid” in comparison to the Aliens Restriction Act of 1914 and the extensions which followed.<sup>241</sup> Although Belgians were deemed “friendly” the measures imposed by the Aliens Restriction Act and its subsequent Orders required refugees to register with the police.<sup>242</sup> Further registrations and the creation of a refugee register were organised in late 1914 by the LGB and became the subject of another alien order.<sup>243</sup> Local government and private businesses were drawn into the state’s surveillance of refugees, with hotel and inn keepers being required to notify police of

<sup>235</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?* 24.

<sup>236</sup> Gatrell, “Introduction,” 16.

<sup>237</sup> Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians*, 5.

<sup>238</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 183.

<sup>239</sup> Satvinder S. Juss, “Free Movement and the World Order,” *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 16 no. 3 (2004); 289–335, 292. As the legal scholar Satvinder S. Juss has articulated, states’ desire to secure borders has gone against the historical norm of free movement.

<sup>240</sup> Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians*, 5.

<sup>241</sup> Helena Wray, “The Aliens Act 1905 and the Immigration Dilemma,” *Journal of Law and Society*, 33 no. 2 (2006); 302–323, 303. This measure was designed to curb the migration of Eastern European Jewish refugees and Romani.

<sup>242</sup> Declercq and Baker, “The Pelabon Munitions,” 163.

<sup>243</sup> Elliot, “An Early Experiment,” 150.

foreigners.<sup>244</sup>

The requirement of refugees to register with police, if they moved, would be an important aspect of the legislation's effects on Belgians.<sup>245</sup> Cesarani believes that the introduction of this regulation, during the War, evidences the emergence of state sponsored xenophobia.<sup>246</sup> Despite the draconian reputation of the Aliens Act, immigration legislation was often not enforced as it was intended. As Taylor has shown: "Histories of the regulation of immigration into Britain have been commonly constructed as a story of inexorable extension of state control . . . overall histories have tended to be written with the presumption that subsequent immigration legislation was unproblematically enforced."<sup>247</sup> Taylor is right to make such an assertion. Although foreign nationals were monitored, imprisoned or deported, the state found it difficult to always enforce its will. As the thesis identifies, refugees in Scotland evaded and ignored restrictions on foreign born residents, as the overstretched police force had other priorities.

Nevertheless, throughout the First World War the British state regulated society in ways it had previously not done before. Torpey argues that the government's tighter regulation of migrant entry should be regarded as part of this state expansion.<sup>248</sup> Elliot has noted that state gathering of data was part of a larger government effort to record statistical information for the purposes of the War.<sup>249</sup> Registering refugees attempted to deal with the logistical problems arising from the Belgian refugees' widespread dispersal. The preparation of this data allowed the state to organise employment and arrange repatriation for refugees.<sup>250</sup>

Storr argues that from 1916 onwards, the state's intentions were to repatriate refugees as soon as the War was over.<sup>251</sup> Jenkinson has identified that the Belgian government "was keen to have. . . exiles return to aid post-war reconstruction."<sup>252</sup> Ewence believes that the British government's support for this premature return was borne from a desire to "neutralise possible sources of localised tension."<sup>253</sup> Initial repatriation efforts were voluntary and were

<sup>244</sup> Torpey, "The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System," 256

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>246</sup> David Cesarani, "An alien concept? The continuity of anti-alienism in British society before 1940," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 11 no. 3, (1992): 24–52, 52.

<sup>247</sup> Becky Taylor, "Immigration, Statecraft and Public Health: The 1920 Aliens Order, Medical Examinations and the Limitations of the State in England," *Social History of Medicine* 29, no. 3 (2016): 512–533, 514.

<sup>248</sup> Torpey, "The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System," 256

<sup>249</sup> Elliot, "An Early Experiment," 146.

<sup>250</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 24.

<sup>251</sup> Storr, *Excluded from the Record*, 112.

<sup>252</sup> Jenkinson, *Colonial, Refugee and Allied Civilians after the First World War*, (London: Routledge, 2020), 149. Refugees leaving Glasgow for instance were given additional winter clothing.

<sup>253</sup> Ewence, "Bridging the Gap," 89.

regarded positively by many Belgians. While Ewence asserts that repatriations were “brutal,” Jenkinson argues that repatriations were arranged in a manner which “incentivised” Belgians to return.<sup>254</sup> Repatriation was thus driven by the needs of both the Belgian and British governments. Nevertheless, the return of refugees was representative of a broader trend of xenophobia in Britain, which was codified under the Aliens Act of 1919.<sup>255</sup>

Belgians, like other migrant communities, did experience public hostility. Declercq and Baker observe that habits such as “chewing tobacco” and “speaking loudly” became singled out as peculiarly Belgian and distasteful by the natives of Richmond.<sup>256</sup> Despite government attempts to stifle criticism of the Belgian policy, opposition towards the refugees’ presence in Britain was palpable as anti-Belgian feeling on rare occasions turned violent. In Fulham during 1916 an anti-Belgian riot, centred on the pressure placed upon housing by Belgians, saw the matter of armed service explode as rioters called for Belgians to “fight or go home.”<sup>257</sup> Cahalan alleges, that these incidents, alongside the increased involvement of the LGB with the WRC, evidence declining sympathy for Belgian refugees.<sup>258</sup>

Yet Jenkinson has noted this is far from the whole story.<sup>259</sup> Belgians were by no means the only migrant group who were criticised in wartime Britain.<sup>260</sup> Moreover, in many instances Belgians were treated favourably. Their presence was ubiquitous in many small towns and villages.<sup>261</sup> As a result, Belgian refugees were remembered fondly amongst those who lived through the War. Writing at the end of the twentieth century, Kushner and Knox noted the positive memories older residents had of their Belgian guests in the village of Thoreverton in Devon.<sup>262</sup> These progressive interactions are best understood in their local context. Analysis of case studies, such as this, reveal a rich and varied social history of co-operation and engagement. This is apparent in Myers’ work on the education of refugee children in England.<sup>263</sup> The full immersion of some Belgian children into British schools for the duration of the War, is indicative of the normalisation of refugees’ presence in Britain. Furthermore, there is evidence of professional and academic co-operation between British and Belgian

<sup>254</sup>Jenkinson, *Colonial, Refugee and Allied Civilians*, 149; Ewence, “Bridging the Gap,” 89.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>256</sup> Declercq and Baker, “The Pelabon Munitions,” 169.

<sup>257</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 140.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, 406.

<sup>259</sup> Jenkinson, “Refugees Welcome,” 38.

<sup>260</sup> Gavin Schaffer, “Unmasking the “muscle Jew”: the Jewish soldier in British war service, 1899-1945,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46, (2012): 375-396, 389.

<sup>261</sup> Gill, “Belgian refugees in World War One,” 67.

<sup>262</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 37.

<sup>263</sup> Kevin Myers, “The hidden history of refugee schooling in Britain: the case of the Belgians 1914–18,” *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, 30, no. 2 (2001):153-163, 159.

organisations.<sup>264</sup> In Scotland refugees were referred to endearingly as “guests of the nation” and there were multiple incidences of co-operation and cultural exchange through ceremonies, pageants and parties.

These experiences contrast significantly from the treatment Germans received. The German migrant population, longer established and better integrated than the recently arrived Belgian refugees, was quickly rounded on by the public, press and politicians. Germans were deemed dangerous infiltrators in the febrile atmosphere of the First World War. Panayi asserts that the treatment of Belgian refugees is best understood through consideration of anti-German hostility.<sup>265</sup>

According to both Manz and Panayi, Belgian refugees received a positive response on account that they symbolised the fight against Germany and because they “virtually all returned home after 1918.”<sup>266</sup> To Panayi the internment of Germans and their treatment as the “main immigrant threat” evidences a tradition of xenophobia in British political thought.<sup>267</sup> Bird disagrees with this assertion, however, arguing instead that the 32,000 interned enemy aliens were treated by and large “humanely.”<sup>268</sup> Nevertheless, the differing treatment between Belgian and German migrants underlines their respective demarcation as friendly and enemy aliens.

A better comparison is made between Belgian refugees and that of the other friendly alien communities living in Britain, such as Russian Jews and Lithuanians. These older refugee and migrant communities were subject to the same scrutiny and pressure to join the colours and contribute to the War effort, asserts Jenkinson.<sup>269</sup> The Lithuanian and Russian Jewish communities were reluctant to fight on behalf of Russia for political reasons.<sup>270</sup> These political objections were ignored by the state and these communities increasingly became maligned as foreign shirkers or malevolent socialists.<sup>271</sup>

Hostility towards the Russian Jewish community, in particular, took on an anti-Semitic tone and led to violence.<sup>272</sup> Riots in the Bethnal Green area of London and in Leeds during

<sup>264</sup> Uttenhove Pieter, “The garden city education of Belgian planners around the First World War,” *Planning Perspectives*, 5, no. 3. (1990): 271-283, 271.

<sup>265</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 278.

<sup>266</sup> Stefan Manz and Panikos Panayi, “Refugees and Cultural Transfer to Britain: An Introduction,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 30, no. 2 (2012): 122-51, 127.

<sup>267</sup> Panikos Panayi, *Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1991), 6.

<sup>268</sup> Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians*, 6.

<sup>269</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “The Impact of the First World War on Migrant Lithuanians in Scotland, c. 1917–1921,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 31, no. 2 (2013): 171-188, 175.

<sup>270</sup> Kushner, “Local Heroes,” 23.

<sup>271</sup> Jenkinson, “Friendly Aliens,” 46.

<sup>272</sup> Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876-1939*, (London: Routledge 1979), 145.

1917 centred on the recruitment of Russian Jews into the army.<sup>273</sup> The introduction of the Anglo-Russian Military Service Agreement in late 1917 evidences the strength of public feeling on this matter. Indeed, Schaffer notes, even voices from within the Anglo-Jewish community called for Russian Jews to serve or be deported.<sup>274</sup>

Consideration of the allegations of cowardice that were levelled at Belgian refugees, Russian Jews, and Lithuanians, alongside the xenophobic treatment of Germans, perhaps more broadly reflected a growing opposition to a migrant population. Horne argues that the extraordinary conditions of total warfare created a climate of “systematic distrust” of foreigners and minorities in many European states.<sup>275</sup> The restrictive British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1918 and the Aliens Restriction Amendment Act of 1919, contends Panayi, represented a significant change in policy and discourse towards migration.<sup>276</sup>

The Seaport Riots, 1919, characterised this shifting political feeling. This unrest saw the relatively small Black, Arab and Indian colonial communities of London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Hull and Cardiff targeted. These events occurred alongside incidents of violence against Irish and Chinese workers too. As Lawrence observes, “post War anxieties” concerning the “irrational crowd” influenced political decisions.<sup>277</sup> Holmes has illustrated that where violence occurred calls to repatriate Black, Arab and Indian workers followed.<sup>278</sup> Many of these workers were, however, British subjects who had contributed to the War effort.<sup>279</sup> The withdrawal of their right to live and work in Britain was explained as a necessary evil in difficult economic circumstances.

By 1919, Holmes identifies, the British state had the additional power to deport and withdraw naturalised immigrants’ passports.<sup>280</sup> While this authority was largely used against Germans, the introduction of this legislation signified the zeitgeist of post First World War Britain. Belgian refugees were repatriated quickly and those refugees who tried to remain within the country had all financial help withdrawn. The treatment of Belgian refugees after November 1918 was symptomatic of War malaise and growing feelings of prejudice in British

<sup>273</sup> Schaffer, “Unmasking the “muscle Jew,” 381.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*, 389.

<sup>275</sup> Horne, *State, Society and Mobilization*, 10.

<sup>276</sup> Panayi, *Immigration Ethnicity and Racism in Britain*, 105.

<sup>277</sup> Lawrence’s article argues that race riots, while xenophobic, additionally had “Saturnalian” motivations. Such events were nevertheless regarded by the media and politicians as distasteful. Jon Lawrence, “Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain,” *Journal of Modern History*, 75, No. 3, (2003): 557-589, 571.

<sup>278</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 111.

<sup>279</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “The Glasgow Race Disturbances of 1919,” *Immigration & Minorities*, 4 no. 2 (1985): 43-67, 53.

<sup>280</sup> Holmes, *John Bull’s Island*, 112.

society.

The monitoring of Belgian refugees by the state for the duration of the War under the 1914 Aliens Restriction Act formed aspects of the refugee regime in Britain. Elliot argues, the British state's control of immigration was part of its war time expansion.<sup>281</sup> Like all other foreigners in Britain, refugees found themselves under a degree of suspicion, monitoring and restriction. The thesis will examine in greater detail how the system to regulate and monitor refugees operated in Scotland.

Belgians were subject to xenophobia. This treatment was similar to that received by other friendly alien groups. The end of the War was characterised by a hardening of attitudes towards immigration and Belgians became regarded as one of the many unwanted foreign communities resident in Britain.

Nevertheless, the treatment of refugees did differ significantly from the treatment of other migrant groups. British and Belgian interactions were predominantly positive, as Gill notes.<sup>282</sup> The fond collective memory of Belgian refugees in towns across Britain evidences the popularity of refugees' presence. Belgians were immersed into British education, industry and society. As Panayi identifies, the Belgian refugee symbolised resistance towards Germany.<sup>283</sup>

## Conclusions

The history of Belgian refugees in wartime Britain is complex and multifaceted. Academics agree that the sojourn of Belgian refugees can be used to stress Britain's "innate tolerance" towards migrants.<sup>284</sup> It provides a heartening narrative which confirms the nation's status as a safe haven.<sup>285</sup> However, this review of academic opinion has provided a deeper, and perhaps darker, insight into British political motivations in housing Belgian refugees.

Holmes has correctly argued that Belgian refugees were an important source of propaganda as they served as a reminder of the War's noble cause.<sup>286</sup> As Laqua has identified, refugees sat at the "intersection" between the home front and the battlefield.<sup>287</sup> As Grant has shown, an understanding of this motivated considerable humanitarian work by the British

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<sup>281</sup> Elliot, "An Early Experiment," 146.

<sup>282</sup> Gill "Belgian refugees in World War One," 67.

<sup>283</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 279.

<sup>284</sup> Kushner, Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, 49.

<sup>285</sup> Ewence, "Bridging the Gap," 89.

<sup>286</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, 15.

<sup>287</sup> Laqua, "Belgian exiles," 113.

public.<sup>288</sup> This generosity, which was partially stimulated by patriotic enthusiasm for the war, did not simply diminish after 1916 as alleged by Cahalan, Kushner, Holmes and Panayi.<sup>289</sup> Central government control over refugee relief, although hidden, was under the supervision of the Local Government Board. Bailkin highlights the significance of this, as the LGB was the ministry responsible for the care of the poor and the sick.<sup>290</sup> In Scotland, Jenkinson has demonstrated that authority for Belgian refugees was delegated to Glasgow Corporation for the duration of the War, evidencing the development of a localised refugee regime.<sup>291</sup>

Administering refugee affairs meant the government had to consider how to deal with contentious issues relating to refugees' access to welfare, military service and employment. As has been shown by Jenkinson, these issues were politically sensitive and held broader significance to the home front.<sup>292</sup> Belgians, as Holmes notes, were considered a required source of labour by central government.<sup>293</sup> Nevertheless, as aliens, they remained under scrutiny and subject to monitoring and restrictions. Within Britain the aliens' legislation formed the core element of the "refugee regime," as described by Gatrell.<sup>294</sup> While the regulations of aliens' legislation were severe, Panayi is correct in arguing that refugees were by no means subject to the harsh or xenophobic treatment that other contemporary alien groups received.<sup>295</sup> As Gill has shown, refugees were received warmly by host communities and their presence was regarded positively.<sup>296</sup>

This literature review has established the principal historiographical opinions on Belgian refugees in Britain during the Great War. It has provided a thematic analysis of academic opinion relating to Belgian refugees and War propaganda, humanitarianism and the state, employment, welfare and military service and the comparative experience of Belgian refugees with other migrant communities. Throughout, how these perspectives relate to the research discussed in this thesis has been identified.

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<sup>288</sup> Grant, "Philanthropy and Voluntary Action," 32.

<sup>289</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 406; Kushner, "Local Heroes," 7; Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, 15; Panayi, *An Immigration History*, 317.

<sup>290</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 12.

<sup>291</sup> Jenkinson, "Soon Gone Long Forgotten," 104.

<sup>292</sup> Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5; Jenkinson, "Soon Gone Long Forgotten," 104.

<sup>293</sup> Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, 91.

<sup>294</sup> Gatrell, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>295</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 279.

<sup>296</sup> Gill, "Belgian refugees in World War One," 67.

## Methodology

The archived material researched in the process of writing this thesis has influenced the themes addressed in each chapter. The sources examined have come from a number of archives and repositories which hold records relating to Belgian refugees and Glasgow Corporation. These sources are diverse in their form and rich in detail. They include: statistical data, newspaper articles, council minutes, correspondence, governmental reports, contemporary academic journals and financial records. These sources shed light on how refugee relief was organised by Glasgow Corporation between 1914-1919.

The thesis benefits significantly from analysis of a digitised record of Glasgow Corporation's Refugee Register. This register was compiled by Glasgow Corporation's City Assessors' department between 1914-1915 and records 8241 names of the 20,000 refugees who came to Scotland. While the bulk of this register records only refugees' names, family relations and addresses in Belgium, over 3136 records provide information on where refugees resided in Scotland for at least a period. The register is a rich source and one of the most valuable and complete sources on Belgian refugees in Britain. It has allowed this study to trace and chart the experience of many refugees in exile. As will be shown, the register in recording refugees' addresses, has provided unique insight into the living conditions of Belgian refugees resident in Scotland.

In spite of the value of sources examined, such as the Refugee Register, much of the archive material studied has a significant deficit, the voices of Belgian refugees are almost entirely absent. This is a major quandary for those interested in refugee history.<sup>297</sup> As Gatrell has noted, in relation to the experience of forced migrants in the Baltic region, archive materials frequently perceive refugees as passive subjects who are spoken at by authorities.<sup>298</sup> Corporation files may provide details of thousands of names and addresses of those who came to Scotland, yet the opinions of the Belgians themselves are not recorded. Other primary records note which councillors greeted refugees arriving in Glasgow at Central Station and what refugees ate as their first meal in Glasgow, but their responses to this hospitality are not documented. Irrespective of the immense collection of data which took place in relation to Belgian refugees in Scotland, their opinions remain hidden to the historian.<sup>299</sup>

The barriers presented to the researcher of Belgian refugees are therefore considerable.

<sup>297</sup> Elie, "Histories of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies," 31.

<sup>298</sup> Peter Gatrell, "Population displacement in the Baltic region in the twentieth century: from "refugee studies" to refugee history," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 38 no. 1 (2007): 43-60, 54.

<sup>299</sup> Ewence, "Bridging the Gap," 90.



Indeed, the written correspondence from Belgian refugees to authorities in Scotland was minimal and newspapers which covered issues relating to Belgians tended to talk about refugees rather than articulate their opinions. Unlike *Kindertransport* exiles there are few personal accounts written by Belgian refugees in the War's aftermath.<sup>300</sup> The overwhelming return of most of the 250,000 refugees to Belgium at the end of the War, meant that relatively few descendants lived on in Britain to tell their stories either. Belgian refugees' sojourn to Britain was thus momentary and the records examined reflect this.<sup>301</sup>

Yet glimpses of refugees' thoughts can be obtained through analysis of some sources. For instance, the pronouncement of a Belgian expatriate priest, Father Octavius Claeys, that Belgians deplored institutions, suggests that Belgians were unhappy finding themselves living in the communal care of Glasgow Corporation's institutions.<sup>302</sup> Similarly, the Belgian diplomat and Edinburgh professor Charles Sarolea's intercession on behalf of wealthy refugees illustrates that affluent refugees sought to have their status recognised by the Corporation as grounds for preferential treatment.<sup>303</sup> The prosecution of numerous refugees for consistently violating the Aliens Restriction Order reveals that Belgians were willing and able to disobey the restrictions placed on them by British authorities.<sup>304</sup> These sources offer a small degree of insight into the thoughts and opinions of refugees. As Gatrell contends, such materials, although imperfect, offer the "best prospect" for historians writing refugee history.<sup>305</sup> The limitations of the records surveyed, however, mean that the subject of Belgian refugees' views on their treatment do not form a large aspect of the thesis.

While the voices of refugee themselves are missing from the archive of the GCBRC, examining records of the Corporation allows the historian to retrace how relief was delivered. This offers contemporary insight into how Scottish local government viewed those who relied on its services. The thesis thus provides an organisational history of the GCBRC. The work of council members, Corporation employees and numerous volunteers presents a case study of how one small nation responded to a humanitarian emergency.

The case study approach is utilised throughout the thesis as the efforts to assist refugees in Glasgow are compared to that of Birmingham. In doing this, the study considers to what extent was Glasgow Corporation's role in assisting refugees exceptional? Birmingham serves

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<sup>300</sup> Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in An Age of Genocide*, 58.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

<sup>302</sup> "Glasgow's Belgian Refugees," *Glasgow Observer*, October 31, 1914, 12.

<sup>303</sup> Centre for Research Collections Edinburgh University, (hereafter CRC) Correspondence of Charles Sarolea, Letter to Campell Gibson, December 10, 1914, SAR Coll 80 GEN 215.

<sup>304</sup> "Charge Against Belgian Refugee," *Perthshire Advertiser*, November 24, 1917, 3.

<sup>305</sup> Gatrell, "Population Displacement in the Baltic Region," 55.

as an excellent comparison to Glasgow. These large urban metropolises, of regional significance, shared a similar civic history and population size. Chapter four also utilises case studies to assess the effectiveness of voluntary organisations in assisting Glasgow Corporation. The contribution of Scottish universities, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Catholic Church to refugee relief are considered.

Examining the documentation and archives of organisations, presents challenges to the historian. Hutchison argues that official records seldom reveal evidence of mistakes, failings or criticisms.<sup>306</sup> Organisational reports are all too often at pains to demonstrate high standards.<sup>307</sup> Furthermore, welfare records are at times, unfeeling in their discussion of those who used these services. References to Belgians refugees who required financial assistance, for instance, are clinical. Yet those who worked on behalf of Glasgow Corporation were not devoid of compassion as discussion of “Christmas treats” for refugee children reveals.<sup>308</sup>

In exploring an administrative history it is necessary to look beyond the official record. Analysis of newspaper reports and private correspondence seek to fill in the blanks of the organisational narrative. Newspapers and magazines provide a rich historical source. They reflect the popular sentiments which were directed toward Belgian refugees, give detailed accounts of Belgian misdemeanours and offer examples of sympathy, xenophobia and condescension. Newspaper reports reveal, for instance, that Belgians were victims of anti-Catholic prejudice in some locations, something that Glasgow Corporation’s council minutes fail to mention.<sup>309</sup> Scrutiny of personal correspondence similarly reflects what occurred amongst refugees that Glasgow Corporation did not wish to disclose to the public. For example, letters report the dismissal of a married Scottish gardener, who was conducting an illicit relationship with a young Belgian woman staying at an institution.<sup>310</sup> Such material, while anecdotal, evidences disagreements, financial scandals and abuses of power. Thus, examining the public and private narratives of the GCBRC together creates a nuanced account of refugee relief in Scotland.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Iain Hutchison, “Institutionalisation of Mentally Impaired Children in Scotland, C. 1855-1914,” *History of Psychiatry*, 22 no. 4, (2011): 416-433, 430.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid*, 430.

<sup>308</sup> Glasgow City Archive, (hereafter GCA) Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow November 1916 - April 1917, December 19, 1916, C/13/52.

<sup>309</sup> “How the World Wags,” *Motherwell Times*, October 23, 1914, 5. Captain Kidd, a *Motherwell Times* columnist, noted that some potential refugee hosts in Motherwell “changed their minds when they learned that Belgians were practically all Catholic”.

<sup>310</sup> GCA, Correspondence Sanitary Inspector Weir to Provost Rodger, July 31, 1916, RU4/5/163.

<sup>311</sup> It would be wrong to assume that the incidences of misconduct and irregularity reflected in the archives tell the whole story of refugee relief in Scotland. Newspaper reports which describe misdemeanours by refugees or

As this thesis' research is drawn from text rich archived material such as minute books, letters, reports and newspaper articles it adopts a primarily qualitative approach. It aims to show the subtlety of Corporation decisions and the factors which influenced them through this method. Taking a qualitative approach allows the researcher to discuss events and procedures in detail. Moreover, by examining the qualitative detail recorded in the Glasgow Corporation Refugee Register, the individual stories of many refugees can be understood. In emphasising a qualitative approach, the thesis shows that Corporation decisions with respect of relief were related to a range of wider local and national factors.

The thesis additionally draws on quantitative data. Statistical records are referred to throughout. These allow us to identify important details such as where refugees lived and how many refugees were accommodated in individual properties. Additionally, Corporation financial records are examined and discussed. These provide important information on where the Corporation found support and what contribution refugees made to their own financial relief. Where appropriate numeric data is displayed in tables.

GCBRC's statistical records were compiled by employees from within the Corporation's City Assessor's department. This department was skilled in handling financial data and statistical information, these records can be regarded as accurate.<sup>312</sup> Nevertheless, it should be recognised that many of the numeric records examined, including the refugee register are incomplete or only partial in nature. Statistical information on refugees, in particular, often only covered short periods of time. On account of this, the quantitative data provided in the thesis is limited to examples which can be corroborated.

## Structure

Through four chapters and an epilogue Glasgow Corporation's role as a facilitator of relief is examined. How this civic community assisted refugees by providing relief, accommodation and work is considered.

Chapter one sets the scene for a detailed discussion of the relief of Belgian refugees in Scotland. As Holmes has noted, the legacy of the Belgian refugees can be traced through researching refugees' association with the places where they lived and worked.<sup>313</sup> Thus, a history of Glasgow's economic, civic and political development prior to the First World War

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letters that detailed scandals were for the most part rare. These reports are used as evidence to balance out the official record.

<sup>312</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 175.

<sup>313</sup> Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, 91.

is given. This evidences that Glasgow Corporation, although politically powerful, was increasingly challenged by the Scottish Office. This context is related clearly to the Corporation's decision to act on behalf of the Scottish nation in relieving refugees. The implications posed by the 1914 Aliens Restriction Act in this decision is also considered.

Chapter one discusses the expansion of welfare services in Glasgow too and makes reference to the important social and economic issues in the city which were to feature in the debate regarding how refugees would be cared for. Overcrowding, unemployment, taxation and spending would all be prescient concerns for those involved or interested in the relief of refugees. Yet providing aid to refugees motivated enthusiasm and support which the Corporation harnessed to create a national campaign, captivating public attention.

Chapter two will examine the challenges presented to Glasgow Corporation in respect of how relief was administered and funded. The role it played in assisting with the employment of refugees is also considered. It is argued that Glasgow Corporation operated a distinctive "refugee regime" which differed from models of relief operating elsewhere in Britain.<sup>314</sup> This local government led system, assisted refugees using the Corporation's expansive welfare bureaucracy. Welfare provided thus resembled that administered to the poor and infirm. Conscious, however, of political disapproval from left and right regarding extensive spending, Glasgow Corporation embarked on an ambitious national fundraising campaign to ensure that refugees were assisted adequately. The Corporation also worked to ensure that Belgians were employed by assisting refugees into work in industries important to the War.

As overcrowding is singled out as a pressing issue for Glasgow Corporation, chapter three considers how refugees were accommodated in Scotland. The housing of refugees in shared, private and self-supporting accommodation is examined. It is argued that care for refugees was institutionalised by Glasgow Corporation. It is also identified that class was a determining factor in the selection of refugees by private hosts. The chapter grapples with the difficulties encountered in searching for refugees in relation to the discussion of those Belgians who were self-supporting.

Chapter four examines how external organisations supported Glasgow Corporation in delivering relief. The close relationships of figures within Glasgow Corporation with important political, social and religious organisations is considered. The Corporation utilised its close-knit networks with a range of civil and religious groups which in turn assisted refugees. Through three case studies the role played by important national institutions, representing a

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<sup>314</sup> Gatrell, "Introduction," 3; Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

diverse section of Scottish society, is examined. The work of Scottish universities, the Catholic Church and the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society in providing assistance to refugees is analysed. Discussing Glasgow Corporation's relations with these different, yet powerful organisations will provide insight into how Scotland's refugee regime successfully delegated authority.

The thesis' epilogue deals with a number of closely related issues which cannot be examined in detail in the four principal chapters. The repatriation of refugees from Scotland is considered, as is the reallocation of remaining funds for Belgian refugees. The unrealised movement to commemorate Belgian refugees in Glasgow is also explored, as is the continuing legacy of refugee relief. Analysis of these subjects sheds further light on what impact refugee relief had upon Glasgow beyond 1918.

### **Summary**

As has been illustrated in this introduction, studies which examine the relief of Belgian refugees enhance understandings of early twentieth century Britain. The research in this thesis will unpick how the relief of Belgian refugees was carried out in Scotland. By examining how a local government provided welfare to a destitute alien community, in a time of unprecedented crisis, the evidence in this thesis will contribute to the wider historiography of the Great War, migration and welfare in Britain.

## Chapter One

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### Dear Green Place: Glasgow's Civic History

The city of Glasgow played host to Belgian refugees on behalf of Scotland throughout the War. The “Dear Green Place,” however, was a city with a contested reputation. William Smart, a Glasgow University economist, remarked in 1895 that: “Like most great centres of population Glasgow is severely divided into two portions- the factories and the houses of the poor in the East and the terraces and villas in the West.”<sup>1</sup> Smart’s comments communicated the intractable social division present in Glasgow for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Disease, crime, overcrowding and squalor were persistent problems which plagued the city.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the criticism Glasgow attracted on account of its association with poverty, the city received admiration from those impressed by its efficient municipal government, progressive welfare services and its advanced transportation and energy provision. The American journalist and academic Dr Albert Shaw made this apparent, reporting in 1907 that Glasgow was: “A type of modern city with a highly developed and vigorous municipal life and with complex yet, unified industrial and social activities, in short as one of the most characteristic of the great urban communities in the English speaking world.”<sup>3</sup>

This chapter outlines the history of Glasgow’s civic development. It does so to contextualise the relief of Belgian refugees provided by Glasgow Corporation. The city’s municipal expansion during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is first discussed. The chapter will reflect upon the socio-economic and political context of Glasgow in the years between 1845-1914. This will illustrate how Glasgow’s recent and contemporary history influenced refugee relief. Secondly, the city’s provision of welfare in the years between 1845-1914 will be examined. Welfare, it will be argued, was a central feature of the relief of Belgian refugees in the city. Thirdly, the role and the relationship of municipal services to Glasgow’s civic development will be considered. Discussing the provision of municipal services will reveal important insights into the decisions made by the Corporation around refugees. Finally, the establishment of the Belgian Refugee Committee by Glasgow Corporation will be

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<sup>1</sup> William Smart, “Glasgow and Its Municipal Industries,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, no. 9 (1895): 199-194, 189.

<sup>2</sup> Martin J. Daunton, “Housing” in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, ed. F.M.L. Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 197. Quoting the Board of Trade 1908 report, on *Working Class Rents*, Glasgow was by some estimates one of the most overcrowded places in Europe by 1900, second only to Paris.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Shaw, *Municipal Government in Great Britain* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 70.

considered.

To discuss Glasgow's civic development with accuracy has involved considering a range of historical materials which chart how the city expanded. This primary evidence has come from the city's archive, as well as contemporary newspapers and published work relating to Glasgow. Considering Glasgow's historical development has also necessitated examining the abundant historiography published on the city. Much of the discussed relevant secondary literature focuses on medical and social reform. Other literature cited concentrates on the creation and impact of local welfare services and the rise of the labour movement. The chapter is informed by the perspectives of: Brown, Levitt, Aspinwall, the Checklands, Fraser, Maver and Smyth.<sup>4</sup> The arguments made in this chapter will intersect with wider theoretical perspectives on housing, the home front and twentieth century politics in Scotland.

Throughout the chapter relevant comparisons are made between Glasgow and Birmingham. These cities shared a similar civic and political history and both hosted refugees through the War.<sup>5</sup> Where pertinent Glasgow's similarities and differences to Birmingham will be noted to contextualise and strengthen the arguments expressed in this and the proceeding chapters.

### **Glasgow prior to the Great War**

A broad empirical analysis of the socio-economic and political history of Glasgow will provide a historical context of the city on the eve of the Great War. Sydney Checkland has noted that Glasgow, "the second city of Empire," offers the best example of a British city "struggling with intractable urban problems."<sup>6</sup> Consideration of the challenges the city faced offers an informed perspective on how Glasgow would respond to refugees.

During the nineteenth century Glasgow expanded rapidly, industry attracted workers to

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<sup>4</sup> Callum Brown, "To be aglow with civic ardours:" the Godly Commonwealth in Glasgow, 1843-1914," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 26 (1996): 169-195; Ian Levitt, *Poverty & Welfare in Scotland 1890-1948*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988); Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States 1820-1920*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984); Olive Checkland and Margaret Lamb, *Health Care As Social History: The Glasgow Case*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982, XV; Irene Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. Hamish W. Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); James Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage and Sectarianism*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press: 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 34. Both cities, in the first half of the twentieth century claimed to be "Second cities of Empire." Furthermore, both cities had populations that reached over one million during the same period.

<sup>6</sup> Sydney Checkland, "British Urban Health in General and in a Single City," in *Health Care as Social History: The Glasgow Case*, ed. Olive Checkland, Margaret Lamb, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982): 170-189, 172.

the city's textile mills, forges, workshops and shipyards.<sup>7</sup> As industry developed, the city's population grew and the centre of the city moved from its historic heart near the Cathedral expanding south towards the River Clyde. Housing and trade annexed the surrounding burghs and land in the process. Between 1830 and 1912 the city's civic boundaries changed eleven times.<sup>8</sup> In this way Glasgow became, in S. Checkland's words, a "dislocated city" with multiple focal points.<sup>9</sup>

The economic opportunities created by Glasgow's industrialisation attracted migrants from across Scotland and beyond. Between 1831 and 1912 the city's population grew from 274,000 to 1 Million.<sup>10</sup> The poorest residents of the city lived in the slums which ran close to the city centre towards the east and across the River Clyde south into the Gorbals. Housing for the majority of Glasgow's residents were flats, often subdivided, in three or four storey tenements. The poor came to occupy single rooms within what had previously been sole occupancies for the middle classes earlier in the century.<sup>11</sup> As Edwin Chadwick, the English sanitary reformer, noted in a much cited description of the closes near Argyle Street, most slum housing lacked basic amenities:

We entered a dirty low passage like a house door, which led from the street through the first house to a square court immediately behind, which court, with the exception of a narrow path around it leading to another long passage through a second house, was occupied entirely as a dung receptacle of the most disgusting kind. Beyond this court the second passage led to a second square court, occupied in the same way by its dunghill... There were no privies or drains there, and the dungheaps received all the filth which the swarm of wretched inhabitants could give.<sup>12</sup>

Chadwick's descriptions detailed, vividly, the extent of squalor in the slums.

Conditions in tenement housing were worsened by overcrowding as the nineteenth century progressed. In Glasgow, however, tenants with irregular incomes had few housing options.<sup>13</sup> By 1911 estimates recorded that fifty-five percent of all tenement dwelling residents

<sup>7</sup> T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London: Fontana Press, 1986), 32.

<sup>8</sup> Graeme Morton, *Ourselves and Others Scotland: 1832-1914*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 89. The process of Glasgow's boundary expansion will be examined later in the study

<sup>9</sup> Sydney Checkland, "The British Industrial City as History: the Glasgow Case," *Urban Studies*, 34 no.1 (1964); 34-54, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Gibb, "Industrialisation and Demographic Change: A Case Study of Glasgow 1841-1914," in *Population and Society in Western European Port Cities 1650-1939*, ed. Richard, Lawton. Robert Lee. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 40; C.A. Oakley, *The Second City*, (Glasgow: Blackie & Sons, 1946), 242. Gibb reports that decennial censuses saw the city's population rise by 30-35% consistently until 1911.

<sup>11</sup> Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 28. Builders also constructed tenements of one and two roomed flats which became known as single-ends.

<sup>12</sup> Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population and on the Means of its Improvement*, (London: W Clowes & Sons, 1843), 13.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Rodger, "Crisis and Confrontation in Scottish Housing 1880-1914," in *Scottish Housing in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. Richard Rodger, (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1989), 25.



in Glasgow lived in premises consisting of one or two rooms.<sup>14</sup> This was a significantly higher percentage than in towns and cities south of the border.<sup>15</sup> Birmingham, for instance, although a “working class city” which like Glasgow had experienced tremendous population growth, did not experience the same severity in overcrowding.<sup>16</sup> The Glasgow City Assessors’ Department even devised “a person per room index” to measure the density of overcrowding across the city.<sup>17</sup> Demand for cheap housing, and the fixed cost of feus, however, discouraged investment in property and building by landlords.<sup>18</sup> The result was a proliferation of subdivided slum housing and the social and medical problems associated with it.

As Checkland has remarked “experts” were consistently “shocked” by the extent of ill health in Glasgow.<sup>19</sup> Overcrowding was the principal cause of disease in the city.<sup>20</sup> Deadly outbreaks of tuberculosis, typhus, smallpox and cholera were common in deprived districts. The city’s reputation as a byword for ill health was cemented when Glasgow had a short lived outbreak of bubonic plague in 1900.<sup>21</sup> Pollution and damp also contributed to the spread of respiratory illnesses.<sup>22</sup> Poor living conditions had an equally devastating effect on the offspring of the poor in Glasgow.<sup>23</sup> Rickets, stunted growth, hearing and visual impairments similarly affected a large number of children growing up in tenements.<sup>24</sup> Williamson explains that “poverty was at the root” of many medical problems.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the relationship of disease to deprivation, prevalent social attitudes of the nineteenth century regarded poverty a consequence of moral deficit. Smyth has noted the prevailing view of Scotland’s better classes was that the poor should be “reformed” and their “moral habits” changed.<sup>26</sup> Such opinions were entrenched even amongst philanthropists.<sup>27</sup> Laissez-faire economics and strict interpretations of Calvinism discouraged government

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>16</sup> Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 32; Ian Gazeley, Ian and Andrew T. Newell, “No Room to Live: Urban Overcrowding in Edwardian Britain,” *Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit*, No. 4209, (2007): 1-24, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Neil MacFarlane, “Hospitals, Housing and Tuberculosis in Glasgow 1911-1951,” *Social History of Medicine*, 2 no. 1 (1989): 59-85, 80.

<sup>18</sup> J.H. Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, (Glasgow: William Hodge & Company, 1901), 63.

<sup>19</sup> Olive Checkland, *Health Care as Social History*, XV.

<sup>20</sup> MacFarlane, “Hospitals,” 84.

<sup>21</sup> Clifford Williamson, “To Remove the Stigma of the Poor Law”: The comprehensive ideal and patient access to the Municipal hospital service in the city of Glasgow 1918-1939,” *History: the Journal of the Historical Association*, no. 99, (2014): 73-99, 84.

<sup>22</sup> Smout, *A Century*, 112.

<sup>23</sup> Williamson, “To Remove the Stigma,” 84.

<sup>24</sup> Rodger, “Crisis and Confrontation,” 29.

<sup>25</sup> Williamson, “To Remove the Stigma,” 84.

<sup>26</sup> James, J. Smyth, “The Power of Pathos: James Burn Rusell’s *Life in One Room* and the Creation of Council Housing,” *The Scottish Historical Review*, 98 no. 1 (2019): 103-127, 111; 112.

<sup>27</sup> Olive Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1980), 301.

intervention on behalf of the poor. In the conservative Scottish mind, the poor were impoverished by ignorance, alcoholism and self-indulgence.<sup>28</sup> O. Checkland has surmised that poverty was deemed the fault of the individual, rather than the “market.”<sup>29</sup> There was recognition of the need to provide some welfare, and the most destitute did receive help in the form of the poor law. Vernon asserts that the pace of industrial change and internal migration, rendered the pre-nineteenth century poor law system insufficient for life in urban centres.<sup>30</sup> The poor law in Scotland was reformed in 1845. Nevertheless, even after reform, the provision of welfare in many parts of Scotland, including Glasgow, remained inadequate. The majority of the poor relied upon the supplementary support offered by charitable and religious organisations such as the Charitable Organisation Society (COS) and the Dorcas Society.<sup>31</sup>

While life was evidently uncomfortable for the working classes in Glasgow’s slums, the benefits of employment in heavy industry were irrefutable. In Glasgow, during the nineteenth century, wages grew making the city a magnet for migration.<sup>32</sup> Writing in 1901 James Hamilton Muir noted: “Glasgow is never want for immigrants some seeking fortune, some learning, some (more simply) work...she sees them settle within her bounds, multiply and add daily to her greatness.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, Glasgow’s industries proved a considerable draw to men and women from across the British Isles, continental Europe and farther afield.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Glasgow and the nearby towns’ economies were dominated by a network of interconnected heavy industries.<sup>34</sup> The city was a manufacturing hub for ships, machinery and chemicals. This fed demand for coal and steel which sustained jobs throughout the counties of central Scotland. Manufacturing alone employed up to 360,000 people across Scotland by 1900, and much of this work centred around Glasgow.<sup>35</sup> Engineering was internationally significant and the Clyde area produced almost twenty percent of world shipping in 1913.<sup>36</sup> The largest industrial employers in the city;

<sup>28</sup> Michael, Fry. *A New Race of Men, Scotland 1815-1914*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2013), 167.

<sup>29</sup> Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, 301.

<sup>30</sup> James Vernon, *Distant Strangers: How Britain Became Modern*, (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 2014), 38. The poor law was first reformed in England in 1834, where outdoor relief was abolished and workhouses for the most destitute were increased.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1851-1951*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23; Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, 300. Poor law reform is considered in greater detail during the discussion of welfare.

<sup>32</sup> R.A. Cage, “The Standard of Living Debate: The Glasgow Case, 1800-1850,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 43, no. 1, (1983): 175-182, 182.

<sup>33</sup> Muir, *Glasgow*, 44. James Hamilton Muir was the pseudonym of three collaborators; Muirhead Bone, James Bone and Archibald Charteris, an artist, journalist and lawyer respectively.

<sup>34</sup> The industries of towns such as; Paisley, Rutherglen, Motherwell, Hamilton, Coatbridge, Clydebank, Kirkintilloch, Kilsyth centred around textiles, chemicals, steel or mining.

<sup>35</sup> Checkland, “The Glasgow Case,” 34.

<sup>36</sup> Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*, 87.

Beardmore's (steel), Fairfield and John Brown's (shipbuilders) were important in the economic and social life of the city, with each of these workshops employing up to 20,000 people at a time.<sup>37</sup> Glasgow's heavy industries were of crucial importance to industrial output during the War.

Glasgow attracted international investment in manufacturing partly because wages were lower in comparison to other cities in Britain.<sup>38</sup> The presence of international companies such as Singer Corporation, an American sewing machine manufacturer, evidenced Glasgow's reputation as a competitive city of production.<sup>39</sup> Employment practices in heavy industry favoured the employer. Work, in shipyards and workshops was often sub-contracted.<sup>40</sup> This style of piecemeal and short-term employment kept labour costs down and resulted in seasonal or casual employment for some.<sup>41</sup>

Temporary employment was particularly common in the semi and unskilled service and manufacturing occupations.<sup>42</sup> Workers in this group were vulnerable to long term unemployment during downturns.<sup>43</sup> As Smyth notes, unemployment amongst industrial workers could be as high as twenty percent during periods of recession.<sup>44</sup> This, argues Treble, "meant a perpetual struggle" for employees and their families.<sup>45</sup> While the growth of trade unions helped erode practices such as piecemeal contracts, employment for many industrial workers in the early twentieth century in Glasgow remained temporary.<sup>46</sup>

Electoral reform transformed Glasgow's political landscape in the nineteenth century. The Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 increasingly afforded the bourgeois and artisanal workers

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>38</sup> Trevor Royle, *The Flowers of the Forest: Scotland and the First World War*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 53; Rodger, *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, 32.

<sup>39</sup> Checkland, "The Glasgow Case," 36.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>41</sup> Trevor Griffiths, "Work, Leisure and Time in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," in *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1800 to 1900*, ed. Graeme Morton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 173.

<sup>42</sup> J.H. Treble, "The Seasonal Demand for Adult Labour in Glasgow, 1890-1914," *Social History*, 3 (1978), 58. Seasonal employment slumps particularly affected female workers.

<sup>43</sup> Treble, "The Seasonal Demand," 58. Glasgow experienced two major periods of unemployment in the years before the War, 1903-1905 and 1907-1910.

<sup>44</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage and Sectarianism*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press: 2000), 22. These figures were based upon a Glasgow Trades Council survey for 1908 during a manufacturing slump.

<sup>45</sup> Treble, "The Seasonal Demand," 58.

<sup>46</sup> Arthur McIvor, "Realities and Narratives of Paid Work: The Scottish Work Place," in *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland*. ed. Lynn Abrams, Callum Brown, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010): 103-130, 105. Trade Unionism across Scotland, developed more slowly than in England, as a result by 1900 only 10% of the Scottish workforce was unionised.

the franchise.<sup>47</sup> The Liberal Party benefitted substantially from the Reform Acts both at the municipal and parliamentary levels. Evangelical ideas of fraternity underpinned a belief in a civic gospel amongst urban supporters of the Liberals in cities such as Birmingham.<sup>48</sup> Aspinwall contends that “Liberalism” with “a large injection of Christian duty” made a powerful impact on Glasgow.<sup>49</sup> The values of the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church naturally aligned to that of the Liberal Party on account of the Party’s emphasis on individual liberty and a desire to tackle social problems.<sup>50</sup> The congregations of these churches grew as skilled workers and those involved in business joined in number.<sup>51</sup> These reformed churches embodied egalitarian principals and offered working class men aspirational respectability through temperance and involvement in charitable activity.<sup>52</sup>

The philanthropy of the reformed churches, Morton has argued, was a response to increasing secularism within the urban environment.<sup>53</sup> Religious observance and strict Sabbatarianism were in decline after the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843.<sup>54</sup> As Smout identifies, “on Sundays the whistles of trains and the rattles of trams became more persistent...commentators spoke of a drift from church.”<sup>55</sup> Checkland has countered these assertions, remarking that Glaswegian church goers were “imbued with an evangelical ethos” which naturally encouraged philanthropy.<sup>56</sup>

Stewart posits that presbyterian led social reform was part of a “new social theology” which emerged in response to the religious and political anxieties of the Edwardian Crisis.<sup>57</sup> The “Godly Commonwealth,” first envisaged by the influential clergyman and social reformer Thomas Chalmers earlier in the century, was refashioned to meet the needs of the poor in

<sup>47</sup> John. F. McCaffrey, “Political Issues and Developments,” in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. Hamish W. Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996): 186-227, 203. The 1867 & 1884 Reform Acts naturally benefitted the Liberals as newly enfranchised voters eagerly demonstrated their loyalty. Regardless, even after the 1832 Act only 1 in every 29 Glaswegians could vote.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Shapely, “Civic Pride and Redevelopment in the post-war British City,” *Urban History*, 39 no. 2 (2012): 310-328, 312.

<sup>49</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 155.

<sup>50</sup> I.G. Hutchison, “The Impact of the First World War on Scottish Politics,” in *Scotland and the First World War*, ed. C.M.M. Macdonald, E.W. McFarland, E.W. (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 46.

<sup>51</sup> William W. Knox, “Religion and the Scottish Labour Movement c. 1900-39,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23 (1988): 609-630, 614. The reformed churches membership came from those ‘out with the corridors of power’.

<sup>52</sup> Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*, 188.

<sup>53</sup> Graeme Morton, “Identity out of Place,” in *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland*, ed. Trevor Griffiths, Graeme Morton, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 264.

<sup>54</sup> William W. Knox, Alan McKinlay. “Crime Policing and Protest,” in *The History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1800 to 1900*, ed. Graeme Morton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh, University Press, 2010): 196-224, 208.

<sup>55</sup> Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*, 183.

<sup>56</sup> Olive Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, 313.

<sup>57</sup> John Stewart, “Christ’s kingdom in Scotland’: Scottish Presbyterianism, social reform, and the Edwardian crisis,” *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 no. 1 (2001): 1-22, 2; David Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis 1901-1914*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1996).

Scotland's urban metropolis in the early twentieth century.<sup>58</sup> A Christian social conscience was thus intrinsic to Glasgow's political culture and as Brown persuasively notes, this led to the development of a distinctive civic gospel which was the most "potent" and pioneering" in Britain.<sup>59</sup>

In the 1860s the Liberals rode the wave of popular enthusiasm for reform in Glasgow and other urban cities. As the century wore on, however, social, political and religious issues threatened to divide the Liberals' electoral base.<sup>60</sup> Gladstone's support for radical causes such as Home Rule and Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland played poorly with moderate Protestant voters in Scotland. Moreover, support for radical liberalism amongst local politicians such as John Moir, a campaigner for full male suffrage, was far from universal.<sup>61</sup> A growth in trade unionism and the increase in the Irish Catholic population, similarly provoked anxiety amongst the skilled workforce in Glasgow.<sup>62</sup>

By the 1880s, the artisanal class of the Free and the United Churches began to align themselves with the moderate Liberal Unionists. The national split in the Liberal Party, between Gladstone's Liberals and Chamberlain's Unionists, was pronounced in Glasgow. In the five general elections between 1892 to 1910, the Liberal vote was contested between the Liberal Unionists and the Liberals. As Table 1 indicates the Conservatives benefitted from the division, winning four seats in 1900.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Brown, "To be aglow with civic ardours," 169.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 194.

<sup>60</sup> McCaffrey, "Political Issues and Developments," 207.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>62</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 66; Most Catholics in the city remained disenfranchised in national and municipal elections.

<sup>63</sup> McCaffrey, "Political Issues and Developments," 207. Many of the wealthier classes of Glasgow's south and West, who had largely remained within the Old Kirk, provided support for the Conservatives.

Table 1. Glasgow's Parliamentary Results 1886-1914

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Bridgeton</b>	<b>Blackfriars &amp; Hutchesontown</b>	<b>Camlachie</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>St. Rollox</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>Tradeston</b>
<b>1892</b>	G.O. Trevelyan (L)	A.D. Provand (L)	A. Cross (LU)	J.G Baird (C)	J.M. Carmichael (L)	G. Cameron (L)	A.C. Cobrett (LU)
<b>1895</b>	G.O. Trevelyan (L)	A.D. Provand (L)	A. Cross (LU)	J.G Baird (C)	F.F. Begg (C)	J. Stirling- Maxwell (C)	A.C. Cobrett (LU)
<b>1900</b>	C.S. Dickson (C)	A.B. Law (C)	A. Cross (LU)	J.G Baird (C)	J. Wilson (LU)	J. Stirling- Maxwell (C)	A.C. Cobrett (LU)
<b>1906</b>	J.W. Cleland (L)	G.N. Barnes (Lab)	A. Cross (LU)	A.M. Torrance (L)	T.M. Wood (L)	H.A. Watt (L)	A.C. Cobrett (LU)
<b>1910</b>	J.W. Cleland (L)	G.N. Barnes (Lab)	H.J. Mackinder (U)	C.S. Dickson (U)	T.M. Wood (L)	H.A. Watt (L)	A.C. Cobrett (Ind. L)

Source: McCaffrey, "Political Issues and Developments," 207.

Table 2. Glasgow's Lord Provosts 1899-1920

Name	Party	Term
Sir Samuel Chisholm	Liberal	1899-1902
Sir John Ure Primrose	Conservative	1902-1905
Sir William Bilsland	Unaffiliated	1905-1908
Sir Archibald McInnes Shaw	Conservative	1908-1911
Sir Daniel Macaulay Stevenson	Liberal	1911-1914
Sir Thomas Dunlop	Conservative	1914-1917
Sir James Stewart	Unaffiliated	1917-1920

Source: Irene Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. Hamish W. Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996): 441-486, 475; Glasgow City Council, "Who are the previous Provosts of Glasgow? 1851-1951," <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/16556/Provosts-of-Glasgow>

By the turn of the twentieth century politics in Glasgow had begun to polarise. Table 2 reveals that political divisions were evident at the municipal level with no one party dominating, as parties shared the office of Lord Provost. The Irish question grew in importance to Glaswegians. According to McCaffrey, Glasgow differed from other large cities on the British mainland as politics did not divide primarily on class lines.<sup>64</sup> Religious, moral and financial questions instead influenced local politics, yet concerns that were common to other cities such as Birmingham also featured as a source of debate.<sup>65</sup> Taxation, the expansion of municipal services and temperance were all contested subjects in Glasgow.

By the end of the Victorian period the issue of local rates had become an important question for Glasgow's local politics. In the 1890s, William Smart remarked that rate payers had "become restive and not a little critical" of the Corporation's actions.<sup>66</sup> Rate payer associations such as the Citizens' Union increasingly challenged Glasgow Corporation's

<sup>64</sup> McCaffrey, "Political Issues," 207.

<sup>65</sup> Ian Cawood, "Life after Joe: Politics and War in the West Midlands, 1914–1918," *Midland History*, 42 no. 1, (2017): 92-117.

<sup>66</sup> Smart, "Glasgow," 198.

authority.<sup>67</sup> Municipal policies were not always popular with the working classes of the city either.<sup>68</sup> A referendum on licensing controls was rejected prior to the War in 1914.<sup>69</sup> As Aspinwall assesses, the “masses were neither sober nor Sabbatarians.”<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the temperance movement was extremely popular in Glasgow, attracting support largely from the Liberal supporting Presbyterian middle class as well as some involved in the Independent Labour Party (ILP).<sup>71</sup> The philosophy of temperance influenced councillors as well as doctors, philanthropists and teachers.<sup>72</sup>

By the early twentieth century both the enfranchised and disenfranchised working class citizens of Glasgow were drawn towards the Labour movement.<sup>73</sup> Prior to the First World War the constituency of Blackfriars and Hutchesontown had elected a Labour MP, George Barnes.<sup>74</sup> The ILP found success in Glasgow campaigning on a range of issues.<sup>75</sup> Smyth notes, however, that the “housing question” was most central to the ILP’s popularity in the city.<sup>76</sup> The party’s willingness to tackle high rents and unfair tenancies, as well as proposals for council housing in Glasgow made it popular with working class citizens.<sup>77</sup> The politicisation of these issues from 1911 onward helps explain the significance of the Rent Strikes during the War.<sup>78</sup> As will be shown in chapter 3, the housing of refugees entered into the discourse of the Rent Strikes. ILP politicians criticised the Corporation’s rapid accommodation of refugees, arguing that ordinary Glaswegians were not afforded the same luxuries.<sup>79</sup>

Understanding Glasgow’s industrial, economic and political development is essential to comprehend Glasgow Corporation’s role in relieving Belgian refugees. The significance of poverty, overcrowding and disease within Glasgow promoted a unique culture of humanitarian endeavour. Social reform and religious affairs also held significant influence over politics in

<sup>67</sup> Irene Maver, “Glasgow’s Civic Government,” in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. Hamish W. Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 441.

<sup>68</sup> Joan Smith. “Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool,” *History Workshop*, 17, no. 2, (1984): 32-56, 38.

<sup>69</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 110.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 108.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 107.

<sup>72</sup> W.N. Edwards, “The Teaching of Hygiene and Temperance in Schools and Colleges,” *The British Journal of Inebriety*, 5, (1908): 175-196, 191. Lessons regarding sobriety even formed part of the curriculum in the Glasgow School Board districts.

<sup>73</sup> Knox, “Religion and the Scottish Labour Movement,” 610.

<sup>74</sup> McCaffrey, “Political Issues and Developments,” 213. This small, poor constituency elected Barnes three times, first in 1906 and then twice at the two general elections of 1910.

<sup>75</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 54.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>77</sup> Smith, “Labour Tradition,” 38. While the ILP also campaigned on labour relations, housing was a particularly important issue in Glasgow.

<sup>78</sup> Joseph Melling, *Rent Strike: Peoples’ Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916*, (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1983), 59.

<sup>79</sup> “Catholic Socialist Notes,” *Forward*, October 31, 1914, 2.



the city. Having established these contexts, the development of Glasgow's welfare and municipal services can be discussed in greater detail with relation to Belgian refugees.

## **Welfare**

Fraser and Maver argue that Glasgow's welfare services provided extensive assistance to the vulnerable by the twentieth century.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, the expansion of welfare in Glasgow was a gradual process and it should be regarded as part of an overall change in attitudes towards the poor and state intervention during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As will be shown throughout the thesis, Glasgow Corporation utilised its existing welfare system and administrative bureaucracy to assist Belgian refugees during the War.<sup>81</sup>

By the 1850s, Britain had the highest per capita income in the world, yet by 1900 the country spent only 2.3% of GDP on public services.<sup>82</sup> Attitudes towards the poor may have softened by the end of the nineteenth century but the issue of government intervention remained contested. The provision of welfare, until the advent of the Liberal Reforms, 1906-1914, was regarded as primarily the responsibility of charities and local government.<sup>83</sup> As Gladstone has assessed, poverty was perceived to be the fault of the individual.<sup>84</sup>

Changing economic and social conditions for the urban poor in the 1830s prompted the introduction of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 in England.<sup>85</sup> In Scotland reform came later, in 1845. This was motivated by several factors which included: the Disruption of the Church of Scotland, the decentralised system of distribution and local events like the collapse of the Paisley textile industry.<sup>86</sup> William Alison, a physician and reformer, believed a new poor law was necessary in Scotland: "For the permanent relief of misery in the lower orders...and to secure an interest in the concerns of the poor throughout the whole community."<sup>87</sup> The formation of parochial boards replaced a parish based system of relief and while poorhouses

<sup>80</sup> Fraser, Maver, "Tackling the City's Problems," 404.

<sup>81</sup> Peter Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England during the Great War," PhD Dissertation, (McMaster University, 1977), 27. As Peter Cahalan has argued, the LGB's involvement in refugee relief should be considered illustrative of changing attitudes towards state intervention in Britain.

<sup>82</sup> Dauntton, *Wealth and Welfare*, 446.

<sup>83</sup> J.R. Hay, *The Origins of the Liberal Welfare Reforms 1906-1914*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1975), 26.

<sup>84</sup> David Gladstone, *The Twentieth Century Welfare State*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), 12.

<sup>85</sup> Dauntton, *Wealth and Welfare*, 447. The 1834 Act increased the number of workhouses, stopped outdoor relief and made conditions within the workhouse significantly harsher.

<sup>86</sup> John Stewart, "The Provision and Control of Medical Relief," in *Medicine, Law and Public Policy in Scotland: c. 1850-1990*, ed. Mark Freeman, Eleanor Gordon, Krista Maglen, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 12.

<sup>87</sup> William Alison, *Observations on the Management of the Poor in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Neil and Co, 1841), XV.

were established, Scotland maintained a tradition of outdoor relief.<sup>88</sup> In continuing outdoor relief the Scottish poor law was regarded as more benevolent than that of the English.<sup>89</sup> The new parochial allowance levied a tax to pay for the maintenance of the poor, both in the poorhouse and at home. Contributions were drawn directly from rate paying residents of towns. This, however, was far from popular even in charitable Glasgow. In 1867 up to 20,000 of the city's rate payers declined to contribute.<sup>90</sup> As Fraser and Maver observe, the pressure of rising costs associated with relief motivated court cases against able-bodied men and women in an attempt to dissuade others from claiming welfare.<sup>91</sup> While social attitudes concerning the poor did become more progressive, the issue of taxation and increased intervention provoked strong reactions from aggrieved citizens.

The expansion of poorhouses was significant to the development of healthcare provision in Glasgow. The 1845 Act required each poorhouse to employ a medical officer. Prior to the reform poorhouses, in Glasgow, served as hospitals with fever wings giving assistance to those who were ill.<sup>92</sup> The employment of medical officers in all Scottish poorhouses formalised this system. Within Scotland medical officers' responsibilities extended beyond the walls of the poorhouse, as they visited patients in their homes. By 1891 medical officers in Glasgow were making over 7,000 home visits and dispensing over 15,000 prescriptions.<sup>93</sup>

Nonetheless, there was recognition that the medical support offered by the poorhouses was not enough. Following the aftermath of several cholera and typhus epidemics in the city, the Health Department was formed in 1862.<sup>94</sup> This was led by Sir William Tennant Gairdner, professor of Medicine at the University of Glasgow, and expanded under Glasgow's first full-time Medical Officer for Health, James Burn Russell.<sup>95</sup> The Health Department evolved rapidly constructing hospitals, mental asylums and sanitary wash houses which all delivered services at public expense.<sup>96</sup> Levitt argues that Glasgow's welfare system became "integrated" as social

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, XV.

<sup>89</sup> Bernard Harris, "Parsimony and Pauperism: Poor Relief in England, Scotland and Wales in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 39 no. 1 (2019): 40-74, 74. The right of applicants to appeal decisions to some extent demonstrates this, however, the 'able bodied' were often disqualified from receiving relief. Harris has been cautious regarding the assertion that the Scots' Poor Law was more generous, arguing that it became broadly "more liberal on both sides of the border" in the twentieth century.

<sup>90</sup> Hamish W. Fraser, Irene Maver. "Tackling the Problems," in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. Hamish W. Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996): 394-440, 406.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 406.

<sup>92</sup> Stewart, "The Provision and Control of Medical Relief," 15.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>94</sup> Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 65.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>96</sup> Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," 424.

and medical services were combined to assist the poor.<sup>97</sup> This system informed how refugees were looked after by the Corporation. Belgian exiles in Glasgow were to benefit from the Corporation's extensive welfare and health provision. Refugees were accommodated in Corporation institutions, attended local schools, received financial assistance and were eligible for medical treatment in municipal hospitals.

Welfare provision fell short of meeting the needs of the majority of the poor. Even in Glasgow, where assistance was enhanced, services were "stretched."<sup>98</sup> Charity remained a necessity.<sup>99</sup> Prior to the First World War local government intervention did not negate the need for philanthropy.<sup>100</sup> Charity played a vital role, assisting the most destitute through soup kitchens, ragged schools, night shelters and maternal health services. These charitable initiatives were predominantly provided by religious congregations and philanthropic groups.<sup>101</sup> To an extent, Glasgow Corporation relied on these voluntarist ventures to provide for the most impoverished.<sup>102</sup> This public-voluntary partnership was important to the relief of Belgian refugees as Glasgow Corporation depended on charitable and religious groups to supplement the work of the council. Refugees would be accommodated in shelters run by the Salvation Army and the Saint Vincent De Paul Society, while organisations and institutions such as the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society and the universities would additionally make contributions towards relief.<sup>103</sup>

By 1909, there were calls from those working within the welfare system to provide forms of assistance that would prevent destitution.<sup>104</sup> A national Royal Commission was established to discuss reforming the poor law further.<sup>105</sup> In Scotland, a Church of Scotland report noted, it was increasingly necessary to provide "more humane and discriminating"

<sup>97</sup> Levitt, *Poverty & Welfare in Scotland*, 153.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

<sup>99</sup> David Sutton, "Charity Dispensaries, Medical Education and Domiciliary Medical Care for the Poor in Edinburgh and Glasgow, c.1870–1914," in *Medicine, Law and Public Policy in Scotland: c. 1850-1990*, ed. Mark Freeman, Eleanor Gordon, Krista Maglen, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 18.

<sup>100</sup> John Stewart, "The Injurious Measure": Scotland and the 1906 Education (Provision of Meals) Act," *The Scottish Historical Review*, 78, (1999): 74-96, 84.

<sup>101</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, "The Welfare State Within the State: The Saint Vincent De Paul Society in Glasgow, 1848-1920," *Studies in Church History*, 23, (1986); 445-459, 459.

<sup>102</sup> Olive Checkland, "Maternal and Child Welfare." in *Health Care as Social History*, ed. Olive Checkland, Margaret Lamb, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), 122. Successful initiatives were often absorbed into the Corporation's public services.

<sup>103</sup> Glasgow City Archives (Hereafter GCA), Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1–3; GCA, The Scottish Co-operative Whole Sale Society Minute Book, No 79, November 20, 1914, CWS-1/1/210.

<sup>104</sup> Levitt, *Poverty & Welfare in Scotland*, 104.

<sup>105</sup> Rex Pope, Alan Pratt and Bernard Hoyle, *Social Welfare in Britain 1995-1985*, (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 26.

treatment of poor law applicants.<sup>106</sup> Strict penal conditions in poorhouses and the stigma associated with them, led the Church of Scotland to conclude that “general poor houses should be abolished” and “in door assistance” should be given in specialised institutions.<sup>107</sup> Despite these recommendations, the majority continued to argue that the poor should rely on their relatives for relief in the first instance.<sup>108</sup> Philanthropic groups, such as the Scottish Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (SSPCC) and the Charitable Organisation Society (COS), were prominent in espousing such views.<sup>109</sup> These attitudes reveal that considerable opposition toward expanded provision of welfare remained.

The city’s intervention on behalf of the poor extended to housing as well. The social and medical problems that occurred within slum housing were regarded as a public and environmental nuisance. Tenements in overcrowded slums were insanitary and dangerous, vulnerable to collapse and fire. The Liberal Lord Provost Daniel Macaulay-Stevenson, 1911-1914, mused that Glasgow’s housing problems was because “when Scotland brought the tenement house from France she neglected to bring the concierge.”<sup>110</sup> Municipal intervention began in 1866, when the Town Council formed the City Improvement Trust which embarked on the ambitious task of tackling slum housing which plagued the city. Under the City Improvement Act the Council was given the power to buy up land under compulsory purchase and demolish dangerous housing.<sup>111</sup>

The introduction of the Improvement Act sought to better housing conditions for the working classes and prevent the outbreak of medical epidemics.<sup>112</sup> Cholera and typhus claimed the lives of thousands of Glaswegians, between the 1840s and 1860s, while Scarlet Fever and Measles proved similarly as deadly in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>113</sup> The trauma of these epidemics did much to motivate action that would mitigate the spread of disease. The Police Acts of 1850-

<sup>106</sup> GCA, General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, “Report on Poor Law Legislation to the General Assembly,” 1911, Parish of Glasgow Collection Prints Volume XXVII, T PAR, 1.15, 38.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 41. As the Church of Scotland’s report assessed: “Care should be taken that except in cases of urgent necessity relief shall not be granted where the applicant or his relatives liable to support him have means at their disposal to do so.”

<sup>109</sup> Ronald Johnston, “Charity that Heals”: The Scottish Labour Colony Association and Attitudes towards the Able-Unemployed in Glasgow, 1890-1914,” *Scottish Historical Review*, 77 (1998): 77-95, 75; Stewart, “The Injurious Measure,” 93.

<sup>110</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *Municipal Glasgow Its Evolution and Enterprises*, (Glasgow, Robert Anderson, 1914), 2.

<sup>111</sup> Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 63. It should be noted that these actions predate similar reforms made by Joseph Chamberlain during his time as Mayor of Birmingham in the 1870s.

<sup>112</sup> Maver, “Glasgow’s Civic Government,” 461.

<sup>113</sup> Charles Withers, “The Demographic History of the City 1831 – 1911,” in *Glasgow: Volume 11: 1830-1912*, ed. W. Hamish Fraser & Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 141. Quantifying exact figures for the numbers of Glaswegians killed by these diseases proves difficult.

1903 awarded Scottish Burghs further authority to deal with environmental hazards.<sup>114</sup> This legislation overlapped with the municipalisation of water in 1855 and the construction of the Loch Katrine reservoir in 1859.

The actions of the council in Glasgow mirrored those occurring across urban England.<sup>115</sup> Slum clearance was seen as an effective antidote to improve conditions for the most vulnerable by reducing disease. Efforts to redevelop housing were more extensive in Glasgow than in other cities. In Birmingham the council, under Joseph Chamberlain in the 1870s, funded an improvement scheme to demolish the most dangerous housing.<sup>116</sup> New accommodation, however, was never built as private investors did not forecast profits being made renting new houses to the poorest of the city's residents.<sup>117</sup>

In Glasgow, the civic government funded the demolition of slums as well as the construction of new housing. Demolition of the worst slum areas in Glasgow started in 1870, displacing 15,000.<sup>118</sup> The Glasgow Improvement Trust oversaw the creation of new areas of the city such as Alexandra Parade and Alexandra Park in the east of the city. Unemployed city tradesmen were specifically hired to build these districts.<sup>119</sup> The initial work of the Trust was hampered, however, by the demand for feus and the collapse of the City of Glasgow Bank in 1878.<sup>120</sup> Thus, relatively few houses were built before the city's banking crisis. Those developments that were started, like that in the Gorbals, took more than twenty years to complete.<sup>121</sup> The City Improvement Trust did succeed in developing a small number of houses in Anderston, Finnieston and the Gorbals between 1890-1895.<sup>122</sup> While the majority of these houses remained two or single roomed apartments, inbuilt furnishings such as beds, stoves and washing facilities introduced significant improvements.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Graeme Morton, *Ourselves and Others: Scotland 1832-1914*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 90.

<sup>115</sup> W. Hamish Fraser, Irene Maver, "The Social Problems of the City," in *Glasgow: Volume II*, ed. W. Hamish Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 356. Only 53 deaths were recorded from Cholera after an outbreak in 1866.

<sup>116</sup> Leslie Rosenthal, "Joseph Chamberlain and the Birmingham Town Council, 1865-1880," *Midland History*, 41 no. 1 (2016): 71-95, 73.

<sup>117</sup> Linda J. Jones, "Public Pursuit of Private Profit? Liberal Businessmen and Municipal Politics in Birmingham, 1865-1900," *Business History*, 25 no. 3 (1983): 240-259, 252; Alice Mah, "Moral judgements and employment policies in Birmingham (1870-1914): multiplying the categories and treatments of the "undeserving," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 29 no. 11 (2009): 575-586, 586. As Mah notes although the actions of Birmingham Corporation were progressive, they were predicated on free market principles.

<sup>118</sup> Matthew Withey, "The Glasgow City Improvement Trust: An analysis of its genesis, impact and legacy, and an inventory of its buildings," (PhD Dissertation, Saint Andrew's University, 2003), 10.

<sup>119</sup> Johnston, "Charity that Heals," 75.

<sup>120</sup> Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 63.

<sup>121</sup> Withey, "The Glasgow City Improvement Trust," 13.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 47.

Despite the construction of some council housing by the Trust, for the most part provision remained insufficient. Of the 100,000 new houses built in Glasgow, between 1873 and 1910, only a small number were council ventures.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, rents in Improvement Trust housing were often too expensive for those who wished to leave the slums. As O. Checkland notes Improvement Trust housing was allocated to the “respectable” working class employees of the Corporation and police force.<sup>125</sup> By 1900 the actions of the Trust and its principal supporter Samuel Chisholm, a United Presbyterian wholesaler and prohibitionist, increasingly provoked resistance from landlords, builders and publicans.<sup>126</sup> Their lobby, the Glasgow Landlords’ Association, campaigned to resist further actions by the Trust. These actions were compounded by inflation of land prices which placed considerable economic pressure on the Corporation.<sup>127</sup>

Glasgow Corporation’s experimentation with council housing was ultimately a failure. The housing market in Glasgow remained stretched, and most working-class Glaswegians continued to live in overcrowded, privately rented tenement flats. The occurrence of the Rent Strikes in 1915 illustrated a culmination in working class frustration towards exploitation by landlords and the limited housing options available in the city.<sup>128</sup> Glasgow’s population increased in 1914, as workers came to the city seeking employment opportunities in war production.<sup>129</sup> The arrival of tens of thousands of refugees placed additional pressure on the already strained housing market across the city, leading the Corporation to look to private citizens to accommodate refugees.

The City Improvement Trust was successful in constructing model lodging houses across the city to cater for the most economically vulnerable.<sup>130</sup> These institutions were to be used extensively by the Corporation to house refugees in the early days of relief. Model lodging facilities were the ideal emergency shelter for refugees. They provided a place to sleep and warm food, medicine and trained staff.<sup>131</sup> Lodging houses had separate accommodation for

<sup>124</sup> A.K. Cairncross, “The Glasgow Building Industry 1870-1914,” *Review of Economic Studies*, 2 (1934): 1-17, 2.

<sup>125</sup> Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, 295.

<sup>126</sup> Maver, “Glasgow’s Civic Government,” 421. New housing schemes were often designed so as pubs were not nearby.

<sup>127</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 158.

<sup>128</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 167.

<sup>129</sup> William W. Knox, W. A. McKinlay, “Work in Twentieth-Century Scotland,” in *The Working Life of the Scots*, ed. Mark Mulhern, John Beech, Elaine Thompson, (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), 54

<sup>130</sup> Fraser, Maver, “Tackling the City’s Problems,” 404. The establishment of model lodging houses were originally proposed by businessmen like John Blackie and James Lumsden as early as 1847.

<sup>131</sup> John Stewart, “The Provision and Control of Medical Relief,” in *Law and Public Policy in Scotland: c. 1850-1990*, ed. Mark Freeman, Eleanor Gordon, Krista Maglen, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 15.

male and female tenants as well as families.<sup>132</sup> They were created as the safe and sober alternative to the dangerous environment of shared private lodgings.<sup>133</sup> Private lodgings had long been seen as dens of inequity. Rev. David Watson, a Church of Scotland minister, found through his investigation of lodgings that they often harboured “mouchers” or “criminals” and in some cases doubled as “brothels.”<sup>134</sup>

Whilst the first lodging house, built by the Improvement Trust in 1871, for women was forced to close for a period on account of drunken disturbances, the later construction of over seven more lodging houses, which provided beds for over 2000 in later decades, indicates their demand.<sup>135</sup> In reformers’ eyes model lodging houses effectively dealt with the persistent problems of cyclical employment, pauperism and the scourge of prostitution. The commitment of the city fathers to tackle the scourge of homelessness through municipal initiative is further evidence of Brown’s assertion that the civic gospel in Glasgow was the most pronounced in Britain.<sup>136</sup>

Poverty, disease, homelessness and overcrowding were all considerable challenges in Glasgow. The introduction of the Liberal Reforms, 1906-1914, and the mooted changes to the poor law evidenced, however, a growing interest in the health and living conditions of the masses.<sup>137</sup> New Liberals advocated for the increased role of the state. Prominent amongst the New Liberals were figures involved with refugee relief such as WRC Committee member, Herbert Gladstone, and LGB President Herbert Samuel.<sup>138</sup> As Thompson argues, welfare reforms were introduced for a number of reasons some of which were influenced by feelings of imperial decline at the Fin de Siècle.<sup>139</sup> The election of radical Liberal MPs from urban constituencies, however, suggests that interest in social provision was motivated by genuine concern too. MPs such as Thomas Mackinnon Wood (Glasgow St. Rollox) and Joseph Chamberlain (Birmingham St. Pauls), brought greater understanding of the deprived

<sup>132</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *Municipal Glasgow*, 146.

<sup>133</sup> Private lodgings had been considered symptomatic of the moral decay and breakdown in family values which life in the urban environment created.

<sup>134</sup> Stuart A. I. Laidlaw, *Glasgow Common Lodging Houses and the People Living in Them*, (Glasgow: Health and Welfare Committee of the Corporation of Glasgow, 1956), 34; “Glasgow Lodging Houses – A Lurid Picture,” *Scotsman*, October 31, 1907, 10. Watson launched a campaign against vice in lodging houses, which led to stricter regimes and more religious oversight.

<sup>135</sup> Withey, “The Glasgow City Improvement Trust,” 19.

<sup>136</sup> Brown, “To be aglow with Civic ardours,” 194.

<sup>137</sup> Pope, Pratt & Hoyle, *Social Welfare*, 26.

<sup>138</sup> Malcolm Pearce and Geoffrey Stewart, *British Political History 1867-1990*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 192.

<sup>139</sup> George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England 1910-1914*, (New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1935); Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians The Remaking of British Society*, (London: Routledge, 1975), 184. The malnutrition and poor fitness of recruits during the Second Boer War had given particular impetus for such reform.

circumstances of Britain's slums and the obstacles faced by their inhabitants, as well as the economic limitations on local government.<sup>140</sup> The reform driven agenda of these politicians evidenced the national influence regional cities could have.

Glasgow's welfare services were developed in response to the social and medical problems which plagued the city. The persistence of poverty in Glasgow was the inevitable consequence of nineteenth century urbanisation and prevailing beliefs about market liberalism. The welfare services which were provided in Glasgow: council housing, lodging houses, poor law relief, hospitals and other facilities, were advanced. The provision of these services, at the public expense, evidences the inherent egalitarianism of Glasgow's politics. Glasgow's welfare provision, Maver and Fraser argue, was the most comprehensive in Scotland.<sup>141</sup> To Brown, the delivery of advanced welfare in the city further evidences the strength of the civic gospel in Glasgow.<sup>142</sup> Nevertheless, the persistence of poverty in Glasgow meant that the Corporation remained reliant on charitable and religious initiatives to assist the poor. Moreover, some disagreed with extending assistance. Rate payers' associations and landlords objected towards expensive municipal ventures.

Understanding the context in which Glasgow's welfare services developed is critical to appreciate the role played by the city in facilitating relief for refugees. Glasgow Corporation mobilised its administrative bureaucracy and welfare apparatus to benefit the 20,000 refugees who came to Scotland. These services would offer refugees financial assistance, medical help and shelter.

### **Municipal Services**

Discussing the city's provision of municipal services offers insight into why Glasgow Corporation decided to assist refugees. Considering the expansion of municipal services in Glasgow also reveals some of the factors which influenced the Corporation's decision making processes around refugee relief.

The municipal services provided in Glasgow reflected the city's civic identity. The city wished to be viewed as efficient, orderly and modern. At the root of this was a competitive desire for Glasgow to be regarded as the "Second City of Empire." By 1901 the city of Glasgow had total assets of £13.5 million and annual revenue of £ 2.5 million, making it one of the most

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<sup>140</sup> Hutchison, "The Impact of the First World War," 46. Similarly, these New Liberals were aware of the pressures exerted by welfare on local government's budgets.

<sup>141</sup> Fraser and Maver, "Tackling the Problems," 433.

<sup>142</sup> Brown, "To be aglow with Civic ardours," 194.



prosperous councils in Britain.<sup>143</sup> In 1895 Glasgow Town Council became the Corporation of the City of Glasgow. Incorporation reflected the city's growing sense of civic pride.<sup>144</sup> The urban historian Shapely notes that civic pride "found expression in municipal parks, galleries, museums, libraries and the magnificent town halls which themselves became a reflection of the vitality of the local council."<sup>145</sup> In rebranding itself a corporation, Glasgow emulated reforming English cities such as Birmingham and Liverpool.<sup>146</sup> Yet practical reasons also motivated Glasgow's decision to reform its council.

The expansion of Glasgow's services and its transformation into a corporation could be considered a reaction to the re-establishment of the Scottish Office in 1885 and growing calls for Scottish Home Rule. The Scottish Office sought to centralise authority by reducing the duplication of government responsibilities.<sup>147</sup> Levitt notes that the Scottish Office wished to bring uniformity to local government in Scotland through the creation of the board system.<sup>148</sup> For example, the Local Government Board for Scotland (LGBS) looked to standardise welfare and health across Scotland.<sup>149</sup> Despite the expansion of the Scottish Office and a proposed Scottish Home Rule Bill of 1914, the War's disruptive effects on administration ensured that Glasgow Corporation retained its position as Scotland's wealthiest and most influential local authority.<sup>150</sup> Jenkinson has argued that Glasgow Corporation's assistance towards refugees must be understood within this governmental context.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, Glasgow exercised authority for refugee affairs on behalf of Scotland at a time of increasing centralisation.<sup>152</sup>

Glasgow's description as the "second city of Empire" was because, by the end of the nineteenth century, Glasgow was considered "one of the world's great cities."<sup>153</sup> As J.H. Muir remarked in *Glasgow 1901*, "Glasgow is justly proud. She claims to be the Second City of the Empire as she is undoubtedly the first in Scotland for population, trade, industries and

<sup>143</sup> Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 46.

<sup>144</sup> Fry, *A New Race of Men*, 305; Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 154. The prominent Liberal lord provosts Samuel Chisolm and Daniel MacCaulay Stevenson had sought election to parliament, and both highlighted their track record of reform in their campaigns.

<sup>145</sup> Shapely, "Civic Pride," 312.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, 312.

<sup>147</sup> Graeme Morton, "Civil society, municipal government and the state: enshrinement, empowerment and legitimacy: Scotland, 1800–1929," *Urban History*, 25 no. 3, (1998); 348–367, 364.

<sup>148</sup> Ian Levitt, *The Scottish Office: Depression and Reconstruction 1919–1959*, (Edinburgh: Pillan & Wilson LTD, 1992), 55.

<sup>149</sup> Morton, "Civil Society," 364.

<sup>150</sup> Gill Plain, *Scotland and the First World War: Myth Memory and the Legacy of Bannockburn*, (Lewisburg: Maryland, Bucknell University Press, 2016), 12.

<sup>151</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Administering relief: Glasgow Corporation's support for Scotland's c. 20,000 Belgian refugees," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 171–191, 173.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 173.

<sup>153</sup> W. Hamish Fraser, Irene Maver, "Introduction: Let Glasgow Flourish," in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830 – 1912*, ed. W. Hamish Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 2.

wealth.”<sup>154</sup> The mantle of second city reflected a contemporary understanding of Scottish nationalism within the Union. This civic identity was reflected through Glasgow’s culture and the architecture of its civic buildings.

Glasgow’s municipal government received praise from visitors who singled out the achievements of Glasgow Corporation. Americans, such as Albert Shaw, spread the news of Glasgow Corporation’s accomplishments across the Atlantic. This academic highlighted what municipal government could achieve in a number of articles on the city and a book titled *Municipal Government in Great Britain*.<sup>155</sup> American admiration for Glasgow stemmed from recognition that the city was “Protestant, prosperous and progressive,” assesses Aspinwall.<sup>156</sup> Glasgow’s commitment to the values of egalitarianism, industry and temperance undoubtedly attracted civic America’s attention.

Glasgow Corporation’s leadership was commended by other commentators as well. The wisdom of the city fathers was deemed one of the city’s great strengths. Writing in the *Fortnightly Review*, English journalist, W.E. Garrett Fisher applauded the astuteness of Glasgow’s councillors: “Glasgow Town Council is composed of businessmen who apply the practicality of their life to municipal work.”<sup>157</sup> Industrialists, entrepreneurs and high ranking professionals dominated local politics.<sup>158</sup>

Glasgow’s councillors thus had considerable influence over the city and across Scotland. Many were keen to use their status in support of international causes. International humanitarian issues, including the abolition of slavery and anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia, were considered important concerns to Glasgow’s politicians.<sup>159</sup> These subjects motivated political speeches, acts of solidarity and charitable donations. Similarly, disasters such as the Ottawa Fire of 1900 and the Indian Famine of 1899-1900 saw Glasgow’s Lord Provost, Samuel Chisholm, establish “patriotic” funds to contribute to Imperial causes.<sup>160</sup> Aspinwall has argued, to Glasgow’s liberal minded and evangelical councillors, “international peace” was as important as “civic duty.”<sup>161</sup> Thus, it was the city’s politicians who took the leading role in

<sup>154</sup> Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 43.

<sup>155</sup> Albert Shaw, *Municipal Government in Great Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1907), 1. This work had five editions.

<sup>156</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 151.

<sup>157</sup> W.E. Garrett Fisher, “Glasgow: the Model Municipality,” *Fortnightly Review*, 57 (1895): 607-622, 608.

<sup>158</sup> Trainor, “The Elite,” 257.

<sup>159</sup> “The Slaveholders’ Money and the Free Church,” *Glasgow Herald* April 24, 1846, 3; “The Lord Provost of Glasgow,” *Glasgow Herald*, January 26, 1882, 4.

<sup>160</sup> “Patriotic Sports,” *Scottish Referee*, June 22, 1900, 2; “The Lord Provost’s Ottawa Fire Fund,” *Glasgow Herald*, 8 May 1900, 9.

<sup>161</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 154.

raising awareness of the Belgian refugees' plight. Councillors solicited large donations and made public appeals on behalf of refugee families. Local politicians even offered their own homes as accommodation to refugees. This included figures as distinguished as the former Lord Provost, Sir James Bell, 1892-1896.<sup>162</sup> Bell was just one of the city's office bearers to open his home to refugees in 1914.

Glasgow received significant praise for the municipal services it provided. Briggs, in agreement with Brown, observes although Birmingham claimed to be the best run city in Britain "Glasgow was far ahead of Birmingham in its civic policies."<sup>163</sup> The Town Council had begun the provision of utilities in 1855 when it municipalised water and constructed the Loch Katrine reservoir. Attempts by private enterprise to deliver services had been largely ineffectual in the past. In the case of water, private supplies were derided as "disgracefully foul."<sup>164</sup> The decision to municipalise water was two-fold, providing clean water improved living standards and drastically reduced outbreaks of cholera. It also ensured that an important service could be run efficiently and controlled by the city's council.

Providing effective public services was an egalitarian principle. As James Paton author of *Glasgow: Its Municipal Organisation and Administration* remarked in relation to the Corporation's control of water: "Water, like air, is an indispensable requisite of existence; like air it should be free to all; and so it is; and there is no private property in the element."<sup>165</sup> While trams were certainly less vital than clean water, similar arguments regarding public benefit surrounded their introduction into the city. The tram system was paid for by the Corporation's Common Good Fund and profits from the tramways were returned to this initiative.<sup>166</sup> Funds such as the Common Good Fund and the Lord Provost's Fund for the Relief of Distress, served to benefit the poor of the city and other deserving causes abroad.<sup>167</sup> Money from both funds was later used to make large donations towards Belgian refugees in Glasgow alongside other war charities.<sup>168</sup>

Between 1870 and 1900 utilities such as gas, electricity and telephones were all

<sup>162</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3. Bell housed 8 refugees at Montgreenan House in Ayrshire.

<sup>163</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 55.

<sup>164</sup> Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 46.

<sup>165</sup> James Bell & James Paton, *Glasgow: Its Municipal Organization and Administration* (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and sons, 1896), XXII.

<sup>166</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 158.

<sup>167</sup> "Glasgow Cup Competition," *Scottish Referee*, June 12, 1908, 2; "Glasgow Indian Famine Fund," *Glasgow Herald*, October 30, 1900, 3. Football matches were organised for the payment of grants to unemployed workers and almost £10,000 was donated to the Indian Famine Fund from Glasgow alone.

<sup>168</sup> GCA, *Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow*, November 1917- April 1918, April 5, 1917, C/13/52; Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 175.

municipalised.<sup>169</sup> The Corporation also extended its control and regulation to a wide range of other services. This included; abattoirs, dairies, markets and even ice-cream parlours.<sup>170</sup> By municipalising the distribution of key services the Corporation exerted pressure on the Burghs surrounding Glasgow, which had resisted annexation. Investment in innovations, including electricity and telephone lines, meant the city became indispensable in the sale and provision of these services.<sup>171</sup> As Pugh notes, smaller adjacent burghs delayed investing in infrastructure projects as they were expensive.<sup>172</sup> In the eyes of the city fathers, burgh residents naturally benefitted from Glasgow's transport links, parks and other services.<sup>173</sup>

The move to annex the burghs into "Greater Glasgow" was spearheaded by the town clerk, James D. Marwick.<sup>174</sup> Urban expansion and economic growth had meant that boundaries between Glasgow and the burghs became indistinguishable in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Yet, middle class residents of Pollokshields and other burghs were still reluctant to join the city, fearing high taxes. This served to alienate working class residents of the burghs and pushed them towards favouring annexation. Glasgow Corporation offered political incentives to working class burgh residents in the form of rates reductions and offers of municipal enfranchisement.<sup>175</sup>

The Corporation's efforts to woo burgh residents paid off. By 1891 Glasgow had expanded its boundaries to include Govanhill, Pollokshields, Maryhill and Hillhead. In 1912 the city annexed the three remaining independent burghs of Pollokshaws, Govan and Partick. The addition of these areas, in 1912, brought the city's population from roughly 700,000 to over one million.<sup>176</sup> The communities of Greater Glasgow played an important role assisting refugees, and Belgian families were accommodated throughout the city.

During the period of municipal development, the city expanded its provision of cultural and recreation services through the creation of public halls, parks, libraries, galleries, baths and museums. In the late nineteenth century Glasgow Corporation bought and constructed several large public buildings and parks as prestige projects.<sup>177</sup> Miel Groten has observed that public

<sup>169</sup> Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," 441.

<sup>170</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *Municipal Glasgow*, 53.

<sup>171</sup> Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," 441.

<sup>172</sup> Michael Pugh, "Centralisation has its drawbacks as well as its advantages": the surrounding burghs resistance to Glasgow's Municipal Expansion 1869-1912," *The Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 34, no 1. (2014): 40-66, 48.

<sup>173</sup> Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," 441.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, 441.

<sup>175</sup> Pugh, "Centralisation," 48.

<sup>176</sup> Oakley, *The Second City*, 276.

<sup>177</sup> These included the City Chambers, the People's Palace, Saint Andrew's Hall and the Kelvingrove Museum.

buildings such as the City Chambers symbolised the city's relationship with Britain and the Empire.<sup>178</sup> The neo-renaissance architecture of the City Chambers was intended to draw comparisons between Glasgow and the industrious, seafaring Italian republics of Venice and Genoa. Glasgow wished to be seen as a centre of commerce, knowledge and culture.

Public spaces for recreation and learning were designed to showcase the city's investment in all citizens. The creation of Kelvingrove Park, for instance, allowed the Corporation to preserve greenery and served as a suitable venue for the International Exhibition of 1888.<sup>179</sup> The municipal museum, the People's Palace, and Alexandra Park were specifically designed to benefit the poorer citizens of the east end.<sup>180</sup> Remarks by J.B. Russell, Glasgow's Medical Officer, reveal that investment in leisure sought to encourage a change in lifestyle and behaviour:

Where can the working man go to get a game of football or cricket? . . . It is sad to see the poorer lads lounging at close-mouths, when they ought to be developing their muscles and acquiring love of the outdoor sport, which is the best antidote to the temptations of the music hall, the dancing saloon and the dram shop.<sup>181</sup>

Physical and cultural recreation was regarded as a partial remedy to illness and immorality. The Corporation took the provision of leisure activities seriously, extending library and cultural services to Belgian refugees. The Corporation specifically purchased French and Dutch language periodicals for Belgians to read, and organised multiple concerts, outings, shows and films specifically for refugee audiences.<sup>182</sup>

The provision of services at the public expense, however, drew condemnation from radicals and conformists alike. James Moir, a "Stalwart" radical Liberal, argued amenities such as Kelvingrove Park did little to benefit the masses as its location primarily served the residents of the city's wealthier west end.<sup>183</sup> In Moir's eyes, working class citizens were unwelcome in the better areas of the city. To some extent, Moir was correct, the lives of the working class in Glasgow were strictly controlled by local laws and regulations.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, the introduction

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<sup>178</sup> Miel Groten, "Glasgow's New Town Hall: Imperialism, Nationalism and Civic Pride, 1877–1889," *Urban History*, (2020):1-19, 9.

<sup>179</sup> Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," 456.

<sup>180</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 154; Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 63. The provostships of Daniel Macaulay-Stevenson and Samuel Chisolm had sought to expand the provision of recreation and culture.

<sup>181</sup> J.B. Russell, *Life in One Room: Some Serious Considerations for the Citizens of Glasgow*, (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1888), 18.

<sup>182</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914–November 1914, C/13/51; GCA *Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow*, November 1916 – April 1917.

<sup>183</sup> Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," 470.

<sup>184</sup> Knox McKinlay, "Crime, Policing and Protest," 215. This included restrictions on playing football in the street and kite flying as well as outdoor drinking and gambling.

of services such as telephones and trams remained beyond the reach of most working people. To Moir and other “Stalwarts,” the municipal authority was not representing the interests of working people in Glasgow. This was in part because of the discriminatory property and wage qualifications which prevented many working class men voting in municipal and parliamentary elections.<sup>185</sup>

Nevertheless, radical opinions were influential on the council, the popularity of municipalism in the 1890s evidences this.<sup>186</sup> Both Lord Provosts Chisholm, 1899-1902, and Macaulay-Stevenson 1911-1914, received strong backing from municipal radicals.<sup>187</sup> This was reflected in the council’s policies and actions in these years. As Garrett Fisher wrote, “municipal collectivism” was responsible for “great things” in Glasgow.<sup>188</sup> Despite the expense of trams, electricity, gas and telephones their provision symbolised that the latest technology could be “put at the disposal of the public.”<sup>189</sup> The height of municipalism’s popularity came during Samuel Chisholm’s provostship (1899-1902) and culminated in an attempt to impose municipal control over the sale of alcohol. The failure of this scheme and proposed housing reforms led to Chisholm’s eventual defeat.<sup>190</sup> Temperance remained an influential but controversial force in Glasgow.<sup>191</sup>

The collectivist tendencies of Liberal urban councils generated opposition by the Edwardian period. The formation of pressure groups that represented middle class interests such as the Landlords’ Association, the Citizens’ Union and later the Rate Payers’ Association, evidenced dissatisfaction within the city amongst wealthy residents who objected to growing rates and the expansion of boundaries.<sup>192</sup> Rate payers across Britain, in the 1880s and 1890s, attempted to prevent increases in local taxation.<sup>193</sup> In Birmingham, the Landlords and Rate Payers’ Mutual Protection Association sought to curb municipal spending.<sup>194</sup> Organisations such as this, were comprised of landlords, publicans and business people and worked to hinder actions they believed to be socialist in principle.

<sup>185</sup> Maver, “Glasgow’s Civic Government,” 470.

<sup>186</sup> Fry, *A New Race of Men*, 305. Glasgow’s leading Liberal councilmen, despite being described as socialists by their contemporaries, are better regarded as wealthy and evangelical “paternalists.”

<sup>187</sup> McCaffrey, “Political Issues and Developments,” 212.

<sup>188</sup> Garrett Fisher, “Glasgow,” 621.

<sup>189</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 158.

<sup>190</sup> Maver, “Glasgow’s Civic Government,” 472; Smyth, “The Power of Pathos,” 120.

<sup>191</sup> Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 178. Alcohol was widely seen as the cause of misery, crime and vice across the city and the publican was regarded as both a “pariah” and “parasite.”

<sup>192</sup> Maver, “Glasgow’s Civic Government,” 473.

<sup>193</sup> Dauntton, *Wealth and Welfare*, 23.

<sup>194</sup> Jules Gehrke, “A Radical Endeavour: Joseph Chamberlain and the Emergence of Municipal Socialism in Birmingham,” *American Journal of Economics & Sociology*, 75 no. 1 (2016): 23-57, 38.

Rate payers begrudged taxation from local government, protested against unequal assessment and criticised generous welfare relief. Johnston argues that this led to a growing resentment against outdoor relief alongside other municipal benefits.<sup>195</sup> Even progressive health initiatives designed to benefit the most vulnerable, like the Glasgow Milk Depot for infants 1904-1910, were subject to financial scrutiny. This review resulted in the scheme's eventual withdrawal.<sup>196</sup> Opposition to expanding welfare was considerable amongst poor law guardians. Miss Mary Campbell reminded attendees at the Scottish Poor Law Conference of 1900 that she had "no lack of sympathy for those who required poor relief but. . . the poor rate payer should be remembered as well as the pauper."<sup>197</sup> Campbell argued that more benevolent treatment would risk "people escaping the obligation of looking after their parents or children."<sup>198</sup>

The reaction from Glasgow's rate payers towards the Corporation received national attention. The Citizens' Union warned of the economic risk that collectivists posed. In an article in *The Times* in 1902 the Citizens' Union criticised stalwarts' attempts at "municipalising everything."<sup>199</sup> Rate payers' organisations evidently caused the Corporation difficulty. Alexander Walker, the City Assessor and later secretary of the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee, outlined this in a speech during 1911:

Much dissatisfaction exists in regard to the present method of raising the money sufficient to meet the requirements of local authorities on account not only of the inequality in the amount of assessments placed on occupiers . . . but of the assessments being levied on yearly rent or value of lands.<sup>200</sup>

The Citizens' Union was particularly active in Glasgow before the War as it sought to prevent expansion of municipal services. It succeeded in preventing the introduction of free library services and courted the Burghs of Govan and Partick in an attempt to stop their annexation into Greater Glasgow in 1912.<sup>201</sup> Under the leadership of Arthur Kay, a wealthy industrialist, the Citizens' Union sued Glasgow Corporation in February 1914 "challenging certain payments made out of the common good fund," during the expansion of 1912.<sup>202</sup> The Citizens'

<sup>195</sup> Johnston, "Charity that Heals," 90.

<sup>196</sup> Angus H. Ferguson, Lawrence T. Weaver and Malcolm Nicolson, "The Glasgow Corporation Milk Depot 1904-1910 and its Role in Infant Welfare: An End or a Means?" *Social History of Medicine*, 19 (2006): 443-460, 454. The Glasgow Milk depot operated at a loss of almost £3000 in its first year. Ferguson, Weaver and Nicolson argue this was an important factor in the scheme's withdrawal.

<sup>197</sup> "Poor Law Conference in Glasgow," *Glasgow Herald*, January 17, 1900, 3.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>199</sup> "Municipal Socialism," *The Times*, October 6, 1902, 10.

<sup>200</sup> GCA, *Burgh of Glasgow City Rating: a Published talk by Alexander Walker*, (Glasgow: Robert Andersen, 1911), 42, T PAR 1.15 .

<sup>201</sup> Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," 472.

<sup>202</sup> "Annexation Expenses," *Daily Record*, February 3, 1914, 3.

Union inspired concerned ratepayers in towns such as Motherwell to resist “luxuries” such as “public parks, washing houses” and baths unless they could be “self-supporting.”<sup>203</sup>

By the eve of the Great War, rate payers in Glasgow were a powerful force. As Smyth notes, the Citizens’ Union formed an “anti-socialist element” in Glasgow’s local politics, foreshadowing the polarisation of politics during the inter-war period.<sup>204</sup> Corporation “extravagances” were critiqued and local politicians who failed to heed rate payer concerns were punished at the polls.<sup>205</sup> The two Liberal Lord Provosts Samuel Chisholm and Daniel Macaulay Stevenson, both advocates of municipal radicalism, saw their popularity give way to fiscal conservatives.<sup>206</sup>

The provision of municipal services and their expense remained contested in Glasgow. This discourse entered into the wider political debate which surrounded refugee relief in Scotland. As will be shown in chapters two and three, refugees’ receipt of free Corporation services were queried, refugee hosts appealed to the Corporation for rate exemptions and refugees were pressurised to become self-supporting.<sup>207</sup>

### **Establishing the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee**

At a time when organised tax-payers and voters were pressurising their municipal government to exercise fiscal vigilance, Glasgow Corporation was tasked with the responsibility of assisting Belgian refugees. As the War consumed Westminster’s attention, authority for the relief of refugees was delegated to local government and charitable organisations.<sup>208</sup>

In the early days of the crisis, August to September 1914, it was the voluntary organisation the War Refugees Committee (WRC) which improvised the first emergency response to the refugees’ arrival in Britain. With the authority and active cooperation of the LGB, the WRC annexed public buildings and workhouses across London to accommodate refugees.<sup>209</sup> The overwhelming number of refugees arriving in London indicated to the public the strenuous logistical demands total war could create.<sup>210</sup> An extract from a medical journal, *The Hospital*, makes this apparent:

<sup>203</sup> “Mr McClaren’s Candidture,” *Motherwell Times*, October 26, 1906, 4.

<sup>204</sup> James Smyth, “Resisting Labour: Unionists, Liberals and Moderates in Glasgow between the Wars,” *The Historical Journal*, 46, no. 2, (2003): 375-401, 378.

<sup>205</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 53.

<sup>206</sup> Table 2.

<sup>207</sup> “Catholic Socialist Notes,” *Forward*, October 31, 1914, 2; “Belgian Refugees and House Rating,” *Dundee Courier*, October 21, 1914, 4.

<sup>208</sup> Levitt, *The Scottish Office 1919-1959*, 6.

<sup>209</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 12.

<sup>210</sup> Larry Zuckerman, *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 3.



The newspapers, the squads of recruits passing through the streets and the unusual frequency of uniforms in tubes and motor-omnibuses, give to the man in the street the romantic side of war; but if men wish to see something of its realism, to grasp what administrative problems it instantaneously creates there is a better way. That is to see refugees from Belgium now congregated at the Alexandra Palace. . . They are simply penniless men, women and children seeking refuge from a devastated country.<sup>211</sup>

The conversion of public spaces into reception centres temporarily allowed the WRC to meet the Belgian exiles' most basic needs. These arrangements, however, were not a sustainable solution.<sup>212</sup> Following the fall of Ostend on October 14, 1914 up to 1,000 refugees a day fled to Britain.<sup>213</sup> The pressure created by this influx led the dispersal of refugees to become a priority.

Glasgow Corporation was approached regarding the "temporary" reception of refugees by the LGBS on October 15, 1914.<sup>214</sup> Thomas Mackinnon Wood, Secretary of the LGBS, requested Glasgow and the surrounding Burghs of Rutherglen, Paisley, Motherwell, Milngavie, Kirkintilloch and Cambuslang contribute in accommodating 3,000 refugees.<sup>215</sup> Hurried preparations were then made as the first party of Belgians arrived over the weekend of October 16, on specially chartered trains directly from the port of Folkstone.<sup>216</sup> By October 18, the LGB had telegraphed an additional request to Glasgow Corporation and other Scottish burghs for assistance in housing more refugees.<sup>217</sup> Despite objections from councillors in both Glasgow and Rutherglen, that Scots were already doing their bit, thousands more refugees arrived from Holland through Kent ports on trains bound for Glasgow's Central Station.<sup>218</sup>

Enthusiasm for the War was pronounced in Glasgow. The city's status as one of the largest and most important manufacturing centres in Britain meant its contributions in both recruits and industrial production would be vital.<sup>219</sup> Up to 20,000 men volunteered to join the local regiment, the Highland Light Infantry in August 1914.<sup>220</sup> Local politicians contributed to

<sup>211</sup> "The Belgian Refugees at Alexandra Palace," *The Hospital*, September 26, 1914, 699.

<sup>212</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Refugees Welcome Here Caring for Belgian Refugees in Scotland during the First World War," *History Scotland*, May/June, (2018): 35-42, 36.

<sup>213</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Soon gone, long forgotten: uncovering British responses to Belgian refugees during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, (2016): 101-112, 105; Sally White, *Ordinary Heroes: The Story of Civilian Volunteers in the First World War*, (Stroud: Amberley, 2018), 20. Workhouses and centres for entertainment and exhibitions across London were requisitioned by the LGB as emergency accommodation.

<sup>214</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 174. This followed the defeat of Belgian forces at Ostend.

<sup>215</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914-November 1914, October 15, 1914, C/13/51.

<sup>216</sup> "The Belgian refugees," *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3; "Belgian Refugees in Lanark," *Carlisle and Lanark Gazette*, October 24, 1914, 4.

<sup>217</sup> GCA, Correspondence Telegram to Clerk Grey from Scottish Secretary, October 18, 1914, RU4/5/163.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> Peter Dewey, "The New Warfare and Economic Mobilisation," in *Britain and the First World War*, ed. John Turner, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 70. The popularity of recruitment, of course, was by no means exclusive to Glasgow.

<sup>220</sup> Royle, *Flowers of the Forest*, 15.

the War effort through recruitment. Young men were urged into uniform at organised lectures. Public spectacles such as illuminated trams, with military bands on board, served as a stirring enticement.<sup>221</sup> Lord Provost Thomas Dunlop alongside James Dalrymple, the Glasgow Corporation Tramways manager, actively promoted enlistment in this manner.<sup>222</sup> Local newspapers relayed this propaganda to the wider public. The front cover of the *Daily Record* for instance showed photographs of local army volunteers, in civilian clothing holding rifles, alongside images of grateful Belgian “pilgrims” who had fled to Glasgow.<sup>223</sup> The juxtaposition of these pictures, the soldier and the refugee, served to engender sympathy for refugees and encourage recruitment for the army.

Glasgow Corporation formed a sub-committee to manage Belgian affairs.<sup>224</sup> The LGB had instructed municipalities across Britain to form committees designed to relieve “distress” caused by the War.<sup>225</sup> With the onset of the refugee crisis these committees were transformed to assist refugees. The Glasgow subcommittee was comprised of an assortment of councillors and public servants from the Magistrates’ Committee.<sup>226</sup> The Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow reveal that the subcommittee initially believed their responsibilities would be limited to modest involvement in arranging the “housing” of some families, and providing “education” for children on a short-term basis.<sup>227</sup> As the sub-committee found however, Glasgow Corporation would oversee the administration and assistance of around 20,000 Belgian refugees who came to Scotland for the duration of the War. The assumption of this responsibility was not “predetermined,” notes Jenkinson. Rather Glasgow’s “national” authority for refugee affairs was acknowledged by the LGB following a visit by Corporation representatives to London in January 1915.<sup>228</sup> Glasgow Corporation thus became the Scottish Advisory Committee for Belgian Refugees, although it retained its municipal identity.<sup>229</sup>

Glasgow Corporation assumed national responsibility for refugees for several reasons. Principally, Glasgow was Scotland’s largest and most diversified municipality. As has been shown, Glasgow was experienced in the administration and delivery of welfare and health

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<sup>221</sup> Derek R. Young, “Voluntary Recruitment in Scotland 1914-1916,” PhD Dissertation, (University of Glasgow, 2001), 167.

<sup>222</sup> Oakley, *Second City*, 278.

<sup>223</sup> “Highland Light Infantry Get Ready for the Enemy: Belgian Refugees at Home in Glasgow,” *Daily Record*, October 24, 1914, 1.

<sup>224</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914-November 1914, C/13/51, October 21, 1914.

<sup>225</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 175.

<sup>226</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914-November 1914, October 21, 1914, C/13/51.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 174.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

services. Moreover the LGBS, although the government agency responsible for the care of the poor and sick in Scotland, was situated in Edinburgh rather than Glasgow.<sup>230</sup> Under the Aliens Act of 1914 and the further Aliens Restriction (Consolidation) Order, foreigners were prevented settling near the coast.<sup>231</sup> These areas were deemed prohibited and were therefore off limits to friendly and enemy aliens alike.<sup>232</sup> The implications of this meant that Scotland's cities on the east coast: Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen could not receive refugees. Glasgow and the surrounding satellite towns of west and central Scotland would thus host refugees.

While Glasgow's designation as national administrator for refugees was therefore primarily a pragmatic decision, the Corporation worked hard to paint the relief of refugees as an essential national duty. In the Scottish press hosting foreign exiles was portrayed as a collective obligation and a prestigious honour. Refugees were referred to endearingly as "guests of the nation."<sup>233</sup> The discourse of relief within Scotland took on a nationalistic character. Newspapers, for instance, instructed hosts "to discharge the traditional hospitality of the Scottish people" to Belgian refugees.<sup>234</sup> Similar sentiments were echoed by politicians who highlighted Glasgow's symbolic role as the nation's host city. An appeal by Lord Strathclyde, in the 1916 Glasgow Corporation publication *Belgian Refugees in Scotland*, evidences this clearly: "Glasgow and the neighbourhood of the West have been compelled to shoulder a very heavy burden. It is only right that every part of Scotland . . . should lend a helping hand and shoulder their share of the burden too."<sup>235</sup>

The patriotic tone of these petitions was no coincidence. As identified by Monger, British propaganda which referenced the defence of Belgium often invoked jingoism.<sup>236</sup> Thus, within Scottish appeals Scots' traditions of hospitality were amplified. Appeals, adverts and petitions used symbolic language, alluded to historical events and encompassed Scottish regalia. This reflected a popular Scottish unionist nationalism.<sup>237</sup> Just as Buck has shown in the

<sup>230</sup> Graeme Morton, "Scottish Rights and "Centralisation" in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Nations and Nationalism*, no. 2 (1996): 257-279, 264. As Morton notes the Local Government Board for Scotland was limited in its political and economic capacity.

<sup>231</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 174.

<sup>232</sup> John C Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918*, (Routledge, New York, 1986), 172; Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 174.

<sup>233</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Perth and Kinross-shire Advertiser*, January 29 1916, 4; "School Children Help Belgians," *Stirling Observer*, October 9, 1915, 4; "Dolls Fair for Belgian Refugees," November 2, 1914, 7.

<sup>234</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Perth and Kinross-shire Advertiser*, January 29, 1916, 4.

<sup>235</sup> Imperial War Museum Archive (Hereafter IWMA), Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *The Belgian Refugees in Scotland*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916), BEL 6 99/7, 9.

<sup>236</sup> David Monger, "Transcending the Nation: Domestic Propaganda and Supranational Patriotism in Britain, 1917-18," in *World War One Propaganda* ed. Troy Paddock (Leiden: Brill Books, 2014), 35.

<sup>237</sup> David Ditchburn, Catriona M. M. MacDonald, "Bannockburn, World War I and the Referendum," *Scottish Historical Review*, 237 (2014): 161-170, 169; Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland 1830-1860*, (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1999).

case of Ireland, Scotland looked to its own past to understand the experience of Belgium.<sup>238</sup> The nationalistic rhetoric of Corporation appeals ultimately sought to stimulate financial generosity for the committee's work amongst the general public beyond Glasgow. Enthusiasm towards assisting refugees had led to confusion in the early days of the War. Many Scots were disappointed to learn that they had donated to organisations, such as the Belgian Relief Fund, which assisted refugees in continental Europe rather than those hosted in Scotland. The overt nationalism present in Corporation appeals undoubtedly sought to provide a degree of officialdom to allay public concern. The Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee (GCBRC) additionally provided detailed financial statements of income to mitigate allegations of wasteful expenditure or embezzlement.<sup>239</sup> Committee literature, equally stressed that maintenance of refugees was deducted from donations rather than city rates.<sup>240</sup>

The GCBRC also sought to convey to the general public the scale and extent of relief undertaken by the city to motivate donations. A Corporation appeal noted 15,940 Belgian refugees were registered in Scotland by 1915 in 700-800 different homes.<sup>241</sup> The same publication detailed that Glasgow was playing a vital role in the network of relief, providing humanitarian assistance for the neediest Belgians displaced across Europe:

Thousands of refugees are at present grouped together in large concentration camps in Holland without any home comforts and their condition is most pitiable. . . Therefore, the Corporation Committee have agreed to relieve the pressure by making provision for the housing and maintenance of another 2000 refugees in Scotland.<sup>242</sup>

The public disclosure of this statistical information identifies the Corporation's commitment to transparency, while also highlighting the committee's overt need for charitable support.

Organising relief was a considerable task for the Corporation, refugees had to be housed, fed and provided with health care. Linguistic barriers and the challenge posed by separated families were equally problematic. The figure appointed to oversee the committee's work was City Assessor Alexander Walker.<sup>243</sup> Walker served as the Committee's secretary and treasurer.<sup>244</sup> He had a depth of experience organising and carrying out large-scale

<sup>238</sup> Buck observes that British propaganda in Ireland made direct allusions to Catholicism in Belgium and Ireland. Buck, "Come and Find Sanctuary," 193.

<sup>239</sup> IWMA, Corporation of the City of Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, *The Belgian Refugees in Scotland*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916) BEL 6 99/7, 5.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>241</sup> IWMA, Corporation of the City of Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, *Please Read This*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1915) BEL 99/10, 6.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>243</sup> GCA, Corporation of the City of Glasgow Assessor's Department, *Census Report 1911*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1911), D-CA12/1. Walker had trained under Sir James Marwick.

<sup>244</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 175.

administrative procedures. Walker oversaw the organisation of the 1901 and 1911 censuses in the city and supervised the annexations of 1912.<sup>245</sup> He additionally prepared legislation for implementation in Glasgow such as the Franchise and Registration Bill of 1912.<sup>246</sup>

Walker was the logical choice for leadership of the committee. As City Assessor, Walker held inside knowledge of the underused and available properties in the city.<sup>247</sup> Furthermore, he was adept in managing large sums of money. He was also close to prominent figures in business and politics. Land valuation appeals, for instance, illustrate that Walker was in direct correspondence with the city's elite, communicating with important organisations and individuals including: Beardmore Ltd, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell and William Weir.<sup>248</sup> Walker additionally cultivated links with social and political organisations such as the Freemasons, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Liberal Party and the temperance movement.<sup>249</sup>

While Walker's involvement was significant to the committee's success, elected representatives and other public servants also played their part. Unlike the relief committees established in Birmingham and elsewhere in England, Glasgow's was composed of local councillors and municipal employees.<sup>250</sup> These officials came from the Magistrates' Committee within the council. This powerful body of experienced councillors was appointed by Lord Provost Dunlop to oversee the Corporation's most important decisions entailing policing, welfare and finance, as well as a range of other matters.<sup>251</sup> The Committee had seventeen members in total, fifteen councillors appointed as Bailies as well as the Lord Provost

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>246</sup> "Glasgow Corporation and the Franchise Bill," *Scotsman*, December 28, 1912, 7. This act, if passed, would have given some women the vote.

<sup>247</sup> Michael Pacione, *Glasgow: The Socio-Spatial Development of the City*, (London: Routledge, 2015), 158. In 1914 there was an estimated 13,000 vacant properties across Glasgow.

<sup>248</sup> GCA, City of Glasgow Land Valuation Acts List of Appeals, 1911-1912 DCC 10-13; Glasgow University Archive (Hereafter GUA), Correspondence Alexander Walker to William Weir, March 3, 1915, DC 96 1/14. Beardmore Ltd was an important steel and engineering manufacturer. Sir John Stirling-Maxwell was the heir to the Pollok estate, University of Glasgow Chancellor and a Conservative MP. William Weir, later Viscount Weir, was an industrialist and director of G. and J. Weir. He held several important government positions through the First World War, including Director of Munitions for Glasgow.

<sup>249</sup> "Mr Alexander Walker Dead," *Scotsman*, November 21, 1945; "A Dry New Zealand," *The Herald*, January 27, 1911, 3. For instance in 1911 Walker shared a platform with William Chapple MP at a temperance conference in Stirling, where he extolled the virtues of sobriety.

<sup>250</sup> De Vuyst et al, "The Paradox of the Alien Citizens? Access, Control and Entitlements of Belgian Refugees During the First World War," *Journal of Refugee Studies*, (2020): 1-18; Rebecca Gill, "Brave little Belgium' arrives in Huddersfield ... voluntary action, local politics and the history of international relief work," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 132-150.

<sup>251</sup> "Street Collections in Glasgow," *Scotsman*, November 20, 1914, 7.

and the Chief Constable.<sup>252</sup> As numerous articles made apparent, the work of the Corporation's magistrates was integral to relief: "Yesterday evening a first contingent of forty-three Belgians arrived at Central Station from London. . . They were welcomed to the city by the Lord Provost, Bailie Stewart the Senior Magistrate, Bailie Ure, and other magistrates."<sup>253</sup> The formation of a welcome party by the Lord Provost and senior magistrates served to offer the refugees a symbolic municipal welcome to Glasgow. While not all the councillors within the Magistrates' Committee worked on behalf of the GCBRC, a number played an important role throughout the War.<sup>254</sup>

The Magistrates' Committee may have coordinated relief, however, they were reliant upon the assistance of an informal network of volunteers. Glasgow Corporation like the WRC received overwhelming support from those eager to assist. Grant has observed that the "spontaneous communities" that sprung up to assist refugees were "the driving force" of relief.<sup>255</sup> Railway workers, boy scouts, cab drivers and others all enlisted to help refugees disembark from trains at Glasgow Central Station before being taken on to the Saint Andrew's Hall. The use of Saint Andrew's Hall as a reception venue was important. The hall was considered a significant municipal concern, originally built in 1877 as a theatre, the Corporation purchased it and renovated it in 1890 in a spirit of "public mindedness."<sup>256</sup> The hall had already been annexed as a recruiting office by the Corporation by the time of the refugees' arrival.<sup>257</sup> Amongst the army of volunteers were some with particular skills, such as linguistics. For instance, Father Alphonsus Ooghe, a Belgian Catholic priest resident in Paisley, translated for refugees: "Father Ooghe addressed them extending a welcome in the name of the city and on their behalf thanked the Corporation and expressed their gratitude".<sup>258</sup> Ooghe proved essential in explaining the initial arrangements to the predominantly Dutch speaking refugees.<sup>259</sup> Other sympathetic citizens, however, provided more modest support in the form of donations. For instance, a "kind-hearted sales-woman" gave grapes and oranges for the new

<sup>252</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914 - November 1914, October 19, 1914, C/13/51. The Magistrates Committee in 1914 was composed of Lord Provost Dunlop, Chief Constable Stevenson and Bailies; Ure, Mason, Sloan, Barrie, McKechnie, Stark, Brown, Graham, Smith, Maclure, McConnell, Kennedy, Irwin, Davidson, Cairns and Kelly.

<sup>253</sup> "The Belgian Exiles," *Daily Record*, October 16, 1914, 6.

<sup>254</sup> More discussion of the Belgian Refugee Committee's membership will be provided in the next chapter.

<sup>255</sup> Peter Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 153.

<sup>256</sup> "The Re-opening of Saint Andrew's Hall," *The Herald*, October 8, 4, 1890.

<sup>257</sup> "Lord Kitchener's Army," *Daily Record*, October 2, 1914, 1. Adverts issued under the name of the Lord Provost encouraged Glaswegians to join the "Glasgow City Battalion" of the Highland Light Infantry (HLI).

<sup>258</sup> "The Belgian refugees," *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

arrivals.<sup>260</sup> The assistance of volunteers, lay and religious, was vital in augmenting the Corporation's relief of refugees.

Local press additionally raised awareness of the city's hospitality. The Corporation worked closely with newspapers to ensure that refugees received favourable coverage. This was particularly apparent in the articles carried by newspapers published in Glasgow.<sup>261</sup> Regular payments from the GCBRC's accounts to the *Herald* and *Daily Record* suggest that the Committee used financial incentives to ensure that local media broadcast appeals for donations.<sup>262</sup> This, however, led to criticism from socialists who contended that certain Glasgow newspapers were embezzling funds destined for refugees.<sup>263</sup>

As the War progressed the Corporation sought to keep the plight of the refugees in the public's imagination through the media. Glasgow's journalists responded with sympathetic portrayals of refugees and positive descriptions of the Corporation's endeavours to assist them. The initial arrival of refugees in Glasgow was described in dramatic terms: "The sight was one of profound interest and pathos . . . Many were in tears, forcibly recalling the axiom of German Militarism."<sup>264</sup>

The publication of the refugees' train arrival times and the invitation of photographers to attend, demonstrates that the Corporation wished to create a public spectacle.<sup>265</sup> Interested crowds came to watch the weary Belgian exiles leave their trains. They gathered around Central Station and the city centre welcoming the refugees: "As the victims of war passed this large company cheered . . . on emerging into Hope Street a crowd much denser was encountered. From many throats was cried "Long Live Belgium."<sup>266</sup> This description suggests that the refugees' dramatic arrival in Glasgow mirrored the one depicted at Folkestone in the painting by Franzoni.<sup>267</sup> Similar scenes were repeated elsewhere in Britain, the public came out to greet refugees in cities such as Birmingham but also in small towns such as Ross in Herefordshire.<sup>268</sup> Descriptions of "hearty welcomes" were accompanied with multiple images of the new

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>261</sup> These newspaper included The *Daily Record*, the *Evening Times*, the *Herald* and *Sunday Post*.

<sup>262</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugees Committee Cash Books, December 1915, D-CC/4/7. Payments of £29 were made to the *Daily Record* and The *Herald*.

<sup>263</sup> "The BRF Sings Dumb," *Forward*, May 22, 1915, 2. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

<sup>264</sup> "A Good Scotch Welcome," *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3.

<sup>265</sup> "Refugees from Distressed Belgium Find Hospitable Homes in the West of Scotland," *Daily Record*, October, 17 1914, 1; "The Belgian Exiles," *Daily Record*, 16 October 1914, 6.

<sup>266</sup> "Kind Policemen," *Daily Record*, October 17, 1914, 3.

<sup>267</sup> Tony Kushner, Katherine Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 39.

<sup>268</sup> "Welcome at Ross," *Western Mail*, October 2, 1914, 3; "Belgian Refugees," *Birmingham Daily Post*, October 3, 1914, 5. Even in the small town of Ross, Hereford, crowds turned out to welcome refugees, while Belgians arriving in Birmingham were described as "dulled with sorrow."

arrivals.<sup>269</sup> The *Daily Record* carried no fewer than seven front page photographs of refugee families who had come to Scotland on its October 17 issue.<sup>270</sup> The publication of photographic portraits of refugees served to engender a public sympathy for the refugees' plight and motivate financial generosity. The *Daily Record* in particular used photographs of elderly people and children on its front pages. These images were captioned with references to refugees' simultaneous distress and gratitude.<sup>271</sup>

Media sympathy, however, masked a patronising and xenophobic sentiment. To some, Belgian refugees were a novelty and their plight was a popular fad. As Delcercq has noted, for a period "everyone wanted their own Belgian."<sup>272</sup> The Glaswegian crowd's reaction to the refugees illustrates this excitement. Descriptions recounted an "unpleasant" and "disturbing feature" of interactions.<sup>273</sup> "Curiosity," it was alleged, created inappropriate behaviour.<sup>274</sup> Refugees were "mobbed" and "pestered" by youths for old coins.<sup>275</sup> Despite these scenes, newspapers stressed that initial exchanges between Belgians and Scots were predominantly positive.<sup>276</sup>

As the months wore on and new parties of refugees arrived in the city, the venue chosen to receive refugees was moved from the Saint Andrew's Hall. The Christian Institute was instead used because of its proximity to the committee's permanent office on Bothwell Street. The office at 62 Bothwell Street belonged to Reid Brothers Ltd, a wire rope manufacturer.<sup>277</sup> Joseph Reid, himself a Justice of the Peace, donated the use of his office to the Corporation.<sup>278</sup>

At the Christian Institute, newly arrived Belgians were registered and given a cooked breakfast as their accommodation was arranged. Mary Boyle, a volunteer matron with the Committee described the process:

They are all taken to the Christian Institute. . . Any matron whose house is not full goes to this breakfast to choose suitable guests for her Home... A clerk busies himself with

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>270</sup> "Refugees from Distressed Belgium Find Hospitable Homes in the West of Scotland," *Daily Record*, 17 October 1914, 1; "The Belgian Exiles," *Daily Record*, 16 October 1914, 6.

<sup>271</sup> "Highland Light Infantry Get Ready for the Enemy: Belgian Refugees at Home in Glasgow," *Daily Record*, October 24, 1914, 1; "Refugees from Distressed Belgium Find Hospitable Homes in the West of Scotland," *Daily Record*, October 16, 1914, 1.

<sup>272</sup> Christophe Declercq, "From Antwerp to Britain and back again: the language of the Belgian refugee in Britain during the First World War," in *Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory*, ed. Julian Walker, Christophe Declercq, (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 103.

<sup>273</sup> "The Belgian Refugees," *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>276</sup> "The Belgian Exiles," *Daily Record*, October 16, 1914, 6.

<sup>277</sup> *Glasgow Post Office Directory*, (Glasgow: Aird & Cogill, 1912), 1724.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 1724.



the list of refugees expected, occasionally asking one of the arrivals the number of his children or verifying a name.<sup>279</sup>

The office at Bothwell Street became one of four buildings within the city centre which would be solely dedicated to refugee affairs. The GCBRC's headquarters, the Belgian Relief Fund's office, the Belgian Consulate's office and the Belgian Clothing Depot formed a network of agencies in the city centre which refugees would regularly visit.<sup>280</sup> These offices were denoted on a map produced by Glasgow Corporation, shown in Appendix 1, designed to help the refugees negotiate the city. Printed in Dutch, French and English the Belgian Refugees' Map also identified the location of the City Chambers, the branches of the Union Bank of Scotland and the larger train stations.<sup>281</sup> The reproduction of maps and other publications, designed to help the refugees, illustrates the Corporation's efforts to help the refugees adjust to life in Glasgow.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a history of Glasgow's civic development to inform one of the thesis' broader questions; why did Glasgow Corporation undertake the national role of assisting Belgian refugees? This question has been explored through analysis of Glasgow's urban development, the expansion of welfare reform and the provision of municipal services in the city. Discussion of these areas has contextualised Glasgow's civic evolution through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and has shown that the GCBRC was established at a time of important social and political change for Glasgow.

By the early twentieth century Glasgow Corporation's powers were increasingly being assumed by the centralised authorities of the Scottish Office and the LGBS.<sup>282</sup> The extraordinary conditions on the home front, however, led to Glasgow's appointment as Scottish administrator for refugee affairs. The Aliens Restriction Act of 1914 limited where refugees could settle in Scotland.<sup>283</sup> Thus, only Glasgow and other central Scottish towns were eligible to receive refugees. Nevertheless, Glasgow's experience in delivering high quality public services meant that it was best positioned to manage the relief of refugees.

Glasgow Corporation provided advanced municipal services to its citizenry in the form

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<sup>279</sup> IWMA, Mary E Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, BEL 6100/5, (1918), 21.

<sup>280</sup> Edinburgh University Research Collections (Centre for Research Collections), Belgian Refugees Map, Glasgow Corporation, SAR COLL 80, (1914);1-2.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>282</sup> Morton, "Civil society," 363, 364.

<sup>283</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 174.

of housing, trams, electricity, gas and recreational opportunities. These amenities were designed to benefit all Glaswegians, with profits returned to the Corporation to further benefit the public. As Aspinwall has articulated, Glasgow Corporation's civic elite was committed to the value of egalitarianism.<sup>284</sup> This was influenced by a unique Christian social conscience which encouraged a concern for the poor and an interest in humanitarianism. This fostered the creation of, what Fraser and Maver determine as, a comprehensive system of welfare.<sup>285</sup> The distinctive civic gospel, described by Brown, was apparent in Glasgow Corporation's work to assist refugees.<sup>286</sup> Belgian refugees were the beneficiaries of Glasgow's political culture. Glasgow Corporation applied its civic apparatus to assist refugees and city councillors used their networks to raise funds and provide other forms of practical assistance for the exiled Belgians.

The management of the GCBRC by the experienced public servant Alexander Walker, and the involvement of the Magistrates, illustrates the significant effort Glasgow Corporation directed toward relief. Glasgow Corporation's progressive welfare bureaucracy was utilised to assist refugees. As Levitt has identified the city's welfare and medical system was "integrated" meaning it was capable of responding effectively to a humanitarian crisis.<sup>287</sup> This system was designed to cater for the most impoverished, dealing with the social evils of disease, overcrowding and poverty.

In discussing Glasgow's civic development in relation to Belgian refugees, it should be noted that the city's efforts to assist the poor and provide council services were at times unpopular. Organisations, such as the Citizens' Union, criticised expensive Corporation ventures such as housing, expanded medical assistance and improved leisure facilities. The wealthy middle and upper classes, their views of the poor jaded by contemporary ideas regarding morality's relationship to poverty, were unwilling to subsidise additional costs. The effective organisation of the rate payers' associations and their exercise of political influence meant that municipal radicalism within Glasgow was challenged.

The Corporation's perceived civic paternalism was resisted by the working classes too, the rejection of temperance reform within the city and the growth in support for the ILP evidence this.<sup>288</sup> Political debate over housing became important in the socialist criticism of refugees. They argued that overcrowding in Glasgow was worsened by the refugees, and critics

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<sup>284</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 154.

<sup>285</sup> Fraser, Maver, "Tackling the City's Problems," 404.

<sup>286</sup> Brown, "To be aglow with Civic ardours," 194.

<sup>287</sup> Levitt, *Poverty & Welfare in Scotland*, 153.

<sup>288</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 8.

questioned why refugees should receive free accommodation.

In assisting Belgian refugees Glasgow Corporation was under pressure to ensure that relief was seen as both cost effective and fair. Moreover, the question of city rates hung over debates about accommodating refugees. Glasgow Corporation embarked on an ambitious national fund raising appeal. This was necessary to ensure relief was truly a national endeavour and was driven by a desire to make assistance financially transparent.

Glasgow Corporation's appointment as national administrator for refugee affairs was nationally significant. The second city of Empire would shoulder a "heavy burden" on behalf of the whole nation.<sup>289</sup> As Jenkinson identifies, Glasgow Corporation "assumed powers which elsewhere remained in the hands of central government."<sup>290</sup> Both the civil emergency created by the War and Glasgow's experience providing welfare, however, warranted this decision. Therefore, assistance towards Belgian refugees in Glasgow was administered as a municipal concern.

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<sup>289</sup> IWMA, Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *The Belgian Refugees in Scotland*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916), BEL 6 99/7, 9.

<sup>290</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 186.

## Chapter Two

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### Relief in Scotland: Organising, Funding and Employing Belgian Refugees

Parents who are making their homes beautiful and gay for their own children this Christmas will naturally think of the little homeless ones who are guests of our nation, and we earnestly appeal to them to help us in our effort not only to raise a substantial sum of money but to bring our little Belgian friends pleasure at this season.<sup>1</sup>

Why doesn't Andrew Carnegie come forward with a flock of libraries for the starving Belgians?<sup>2</sup>

These letters from readers of Scottish newspapers, just two months apart, provide a vivid juxtaposition on the varying opinions Scots had of Belgians. While one evidences what Cahalan described as the “universal popularity of Belgians,” the other demonstrates that “goodwill” toward Belgians amongst Scots was not as widespread as some would suggest.<sup>3</sup> Such divergent opinions on refugees can be placed in context by considering how relief was carried out.

This chapter examines the organisation of refugee relief in Scotland. It discusses the three principal challenges which faced Glasgow Corporation in respect of administering relief, financing relief and organising refugees' employment. Analysis of these areas provides a detailed account of how humanitarian relief in Scotland evolved through the War. The chapter also examines the public perception of the Corporation's response to refugees. This is done to provide a wider context and understanding of the decision making processes of Glasgow Corporation. In discussing these issues, the operation of the refugee regime in Scotland is demonstrated.

The organisation and funding of relief, as well as the employment of refugees, have been selected as themes for discussion since considering these areas offers broad insight into how relief was delivered. These themes have been highlighted of central importance by scholars who have considered the history of refugees. As Gatrell has observed, humanitarian assistance toward the displaced shaped the “refugee regime,” the rules and norms which governed the life of the exile.<sup>4</sup> These regimes entailed voluntary organisations problematizing refugees and governments devolving authority. The question of who should look after the

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<sup>1</sup> “Letters to the Editor: Doll's fair for Belgian Children,” *Motherwell Times*, November 13, 1914, 6.

<sup>2</sup> “Day by Day,” *The Evening Telegraph and Post*, January 1, 1915, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England during the Great War,” PhD Dissertation, (McMaster University, 1977); 42, 321.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), 8.

displaced, who should pay for their hospitality and whether refugees should work were cited as common considerations in primary evidence and are also addressed in secondary literature.<sup>5</sup> These concerns intersect with wider historiographical questions regarding state intervention during the War. The influence of what Edgerton has termed the “warfare state” on refugees’ lives is discussed throughout this chapter.<sup>6</sup>

The evidence used to inform this chapter comes predominantly from the records of Glasgow Corporation and the other smaller local authorities which were responsible for refugees across central Scotland. The chapter makes use of various Local Government Board (LGB) reports and memoranda, as well as a number of relevant newspaper articles which discuss refugees. These sources provide insight into the decision making processes around relief and evidence where tensions arose. The subjects of administration, finance and employment are highlighted as significant in the source material examined. The records of the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee (GCBRC) indicate that issues such as registering refugees, arranging their employment and ensuring the financial sustainability of operations were debated regularly.

This chapter adopts a qualitative approach, drawing together archived material such as minute books, letters, reports and newspaper articles. Examining these sources has involved looking for patterns and discrepancies in the decisions made by the Corporation. Detailed examples are provided in support of the arguments made in this chapter. Relevant quantitative data is also considered, particularly in relation to the topics of refugee registration and the funding of relief. Many of the numeric records examined in preparation for this chapter, however, are incomplete or only partial in nature. They often provide information on specific time periods or locations. On account of this, the statistical information provided in this chapter is limited to examples which can be corroborated. Where appropriate this information is displayed in tables.

This chapter draws on comparative research conducted on the Birmingham War Refugees Committee (BWRC). This voluntary organisation operated in Birmingham between

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Introduction,” *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhanko, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Bailkin uses David Edgerton’s theory of the “warfare state” in discussing the state’s relationship with refugees. Bailkin argues that the emergency conditions of war dictated the treatment of refugees. Edgerton’s theory of the warfare state presupposes that the “state machine” was technocratic and directed towards bolstering the nation’s military even through welfare. While Edgerton charts the beginning of the warfare state from 1920, the level of state intervention during the First World War is suggestive that the warfare state came into being between 1914-1918. Jordanna Bailkin, *Unsettled Refugee Camps and the Making of Multicultural Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 10; David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain 1920-1970*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

1914 and 1919 and dealt with between 4,000 - 5,000 refugees who arrived in the city.<sup>7</sup> Birmingham serves as an excellent comparative example to Glasgow, as it hosted the third largest refugee population in Britain and was considered “one of the most important provincial committees” by the LGB.<sup>8</sup> As a similar sized city to Glasgow, Birmingham’s refugee relief work offers an appropriate contrast.<sup>9</sup>

The national volunteer organisation that assisted refugees, the War Refugees Committee, (WRC) undertook its work in the spirit of Victorian philanthropy.<sup>10</sup> Work on behalf of refugees appealed to a coalition of groups. Grant observes that refugees received special attention from an enthusiastic public, who were supportive of the War.<sup>11</sup> The WRC’s mission attracted the support of prominent aristocrats and politicians. The involvement of these figures shaped the WRC.<sup>12</sup> The philanthropic approach favoured by the WRC, however, was unsuited to a humanitarian emergency of this scale. The transition of authority for refugee affairs from the WRC to the LGB is illustrative, Cahalan asserts, of the wider debate about the augmented role of the British state in Edwardian society.<sup>13</sup>

Edgerton has argued that the state used welfare to mobilise citizens toward total war.<sup>14</sup> Although public spending on welfare declined during the War because of increased employment, Winter has convincingly argued that state intervention created “conditions which helped eliminate some of the worst features of urban poverty.”<sup>15</sup> Bailkin has significantly identified that it was the LGB, the department responsible for the poor, that dealt with Belgians rather than the Home Office, which traditionally dealt with overseas residents.<sup>16</sup> As a large foreign population, dependent upon assistance, “the guests of the nation” received attention

<sup>7</sup> Birmingham Wolfson Centre, (hereafter BWC), Belgian War Refugee Committee, Allocation Minute Book, May 1915 - July 1916, 17 May, 1916, MS 652/12.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government in the Reception and Care of the Belgian Refugees*, (HMSO, London, 1920), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Charles B. Fawcett, “Distribution of the Urban Population of Great Britain 1931,” *The Geographical Journal*, 79 no. 2 (1932): 100-113, 105. Birmingham’s population in 1911 was around 800,000. This figure rose to over 1 million following the 1931 census.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England During the Great War,” (PhD Dissertation, McMaster University, 1977), 33.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 27.

<sup>12</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>14</sup> Edgerton, *Warfare State*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Broadberry and Peter Howlett, “The United Kingdom During World War I: Business as Usual?” in *The Economics of World War I*, ed. Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 229; Jay, M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan: 1986), 140.

<sup>16</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 24.

from both the state and the public.<sup>17</sup> Belgian refugees were thus beneficiaries of the state's increased desire to assist through the War.

Gatrell, in his global study of displacement, notes that although during warfare central governments ultimately controlled how refugees were dealt with, authority was often delegated to individual organisations.<sup>18</sup> This removed central government, occupied with the broader war effort, from the responsibility of dealing with the day to day challenges associated with assisting refugees. Cahalan's work supports this, as it observes that government action on behalf of Belgian refugees was never universal, as no single department took complete responsibility for refugee affairs.<sup>19</sup> This created difficulties in relation to various issues, most importantly in terms of employment.<sup>20</sup> Regardless of LGB guidance, questions over who was responsible for refugees' medical costs or how refugee children should be educated were frequently raised by confused MPs representing constituent volunteers.<sup>21</sup>

While central government's decisions in relation to the Belgian refugees were important, over emphasising their significance obscures what occurred in the regions. Accounts of activity outside of London offer revealing insights into how assistance was delivered at a local level. Administration of refugee affairs in the provinces, however, was uneven. Despite WRC and LGB oversight, Cahalan has indicated that "different regulations prevailed at different times" as police, volunteers and local authorities struggled to follow ever changing guidance issued by the LGB on refugees.<sup>22</sup>

Hughes has noted that refugees were sent to "small towns and rural areas" in a "deliberate policy of dispersal."<sup>23</sup> The dispersal of smaller refugee populations of under 5,000 outside of London and Glasgow, was intended to ensure that refugee populations were manageable.<sup>24</sup> The distribution of refugee populations was not pre-planned. This decision was taken by central government to ease the pressure which had been placed on London burghs. The arrival of refugees in the regions, however, resulted in existing charitable and welfare systems being relied upon in the first instance to assist refugees. Buck notes, in the case of

<sup>17</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Perth and Kinross-shire Advertiser*, January 29, 1916, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), 26.

<sup>19</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 207.

<sup>21</sup> UK Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons Debates, Hansard, June 17, 1915, C.779; House of Commons Debates, June 17, 1915, C.818; House of Commons Debates, August 15, 1916, C.1656. Leif Jones, M.P. for Rushcliffe Nottinghamshire, made enquiries into who was responsible for those refugees sent to lunatic asylums.

<sup>22</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 369.

<sup>23</sup> Lorna M. Hughes, "Finding Belgian refugees in Cymru1914.org: using digital resources for uncovering the hidden histories of the First World War in Wales," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 210-231, 214.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 214.

Ireland, poorhouses were used to accommodate refugees.<sup>25</sup> Refugees were also settled in the countryside, on account of the prohibition placed on the residence of refugees in areas of military sensitivity by the Aliens Restriction Orders, issued by the Home Office under the 1914 Aliens Restriction Act. The implication of the Aliens Restriction Orders saw state bodies such as the police become responsible for registering and monitoring refugees.<sup>26</sup>

Gill observes that the dispersal of refugees allowed town councils to utilise “existing” welfare channels to assist small numbers of Belgians.<sup>27</sup> Even where settlement was urban, as in the case of West Riding in Yorkshire, refugees were spread across towns. In Huddersfield the town council, local business people, philanthropists and labour representatives came together to assist refugees.<sup>28</sup> Such mixed representation created a diverse committee from individuals with “competing interests.”<sup>29</sup> Birmingham’s refugee committee had an assorted membership too, representatives were made up of Catholic clergy, business people, councillors, prominent society women, doctors, Belgian expatriates and the city’s chief rabbi.<sup>30</sup> The membership of these urban committees differed from Glasgow’s. Their representatives came almost universally from the Corporation and the City Council.<sup>31</sup>

De Vuyst et al convincingly assert that hosting refugees in urban environments tested the limits of war time hospitality and created inconsistencies in relief.<sup>32</sup> They assess that in the case of Birmingham: “Belgian refugees had the same duties” as residents “but never received the same rights.”<sup>33</sup> Belgians could access welfare benefits but this attracted criticism. As Whiteside has observed, Britain’s economy through the War was unstable, the rising cost of food and rents evidence this.<sup>34</sup> Refugees, like working class Britons, were at the mercy of the fluctuating War economy.

Allegations of double standards and calls for native privilege followed where Belgians

<sup>25</sup> William Buck, “Come and Find Sanctuary in Eire” *The Experience of Ireland’s Refugees during the First World War*, *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, 2 (2016): 192-209, 196.

<sup>26</sup> John Torpey, “The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System,” in *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. Jane Caplan and John Torpey (Princeton University: Princeton, NJ, 2001), 252.

<sup>27</sup> Rebecca Gill, “Brave Little Belgium arrives in Huddersfield”. . . Voluntary Action, Local Politics and the History of International Relief Work,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 No. 2 (2016): 132-150, 133.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 141.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>30</sup> BWC, Belgian Refugee Committee, Executive Minute Book, November 30, 1914, MS 652M 14.

<sup>31</sup> Glasgow City Archives, (Hereafter GCA) Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 - April 1915, October 21, 1914, C/13/51. It should be noted that the Corporation’s principle Refugee Committee was composed of men only. The Huddersfield Committee was by comparison mixed.

<sup>32</sup> Jolien De Vuyst, et al, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizen? Access, Control and Entitlements of Belgian Refugees in Birmingham during the First World War,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, (2020): 1-18, 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> Noel Whiteside, “The British Population at War,” in *Britain and the First World War*, ed. John Turner, (London: Routledge, 1988), 91.



were granted local authority support. The outcome was often, as De Vuyst et al contend, an unreliable system of welfare for refugees.<sup>35</sup> Belgians were entitled to and received some welfare benefits, but not others on account of their alien status. This had a punitive effect on female refugees with husbands in the army. The payment of separation allowances was used to exclude female Belgians attempting to claim emergency assistance.<sup>36</sup>

The conundrum posed by refugees' friendly alien status lingered over the issue of employment. Cahalan explains that this was because the WRC had given little thought to the question of refugees' employment when humanitarian relief began in August 1914.<sup>37</sup> To the WRC, Cahalan argues, employment was a secondary concern as: "it seemed absurd to think about finding jobs for refugees when it was expected that many British workers would be without jobs themselves."<sup>38</sup> Despite trade union fears over the impact of a large alien workforce, the Hatch Committee sought to ensure wages were not undercut.<sup>39</sup> The Committee stipulated that refugees should be employed at standards rates and organised through labour exchanges.<sup>40</sup> The Hatch Committee also emphasised that Belgian labour should not "compete" with British workers.<sup>41</sup> Thus, labour exchanges could only arrange for the employment of Belgians in industries where there were shortages. The system inadvertently created unemployment amongst middleclass Belgians and created a perception of dependence amongst some of the Belgian bourgeois.

In spite of allegations of idleness, Laqua asserts that refugees made a significant "contribution to the British economy and allied war effort."<sup>42</sup> By April 1918, 57,000 Belgian refugees were registered as employed across Britain.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the War 65,000 refugees were placed in or found employment through the labour exchanges.<sup>44</sup> The reservation of trade unions over the presence of refugees in the economy were unfounded. Belgians were a needed labour force, instrumental in the manufacture of munitions. The Munitions of War Act 1915, temporarily diminished union authority and allowed for dilution, paving the way for the mass

<sup>35</sup> De Vuyst, et al, "The Paradox of the Alien Citizens?" 12.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 207.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>39</sup> The Hatch Committee was a parliamentary enquiry which assessed what the impact of employing Belgians would be.

<sup>40</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 215.

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 12.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Laqua, "Belgian exiles, the British and the Great War: the Birtley Belgians of Elisabethville," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 113-131, 114.

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the Work Undertaken by the British Government*, 87.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 12.

employment of tens of thousands of Belgians in munitions.<sup>45</sup>

The utility of Belgian refugees to the manufacture of munitions in Britain has led Heizmann to question whether assisting refugees was a strategic action rather than a humanitarian gesture.<sup>46</sup> Regardless of the intention, however, these actions allowed for the effective integration of alien labour. As Burk contends state regulation of production enacted significant changes across British industry.<sup>47</sup>

Restrictions on the movement of Belgians were in place throughout the War, as refugees fell victim to the growth in state control over migration. Torpey argues that in the early twentieth century the policing of borders became a key aspect of central government's responsibilities.<sup>48</sup> Refugees were, in the words of Bird, "screened" as aliens.<sup>49</sup> "Supervision," thus became a feature of the refugee regime.<sup>50</sup> Surveillance and restrictions created, according to Kushner, "miseries" for those confined to provincial towns.<sup>51</sup> Such regulation was complicated by the "mountain of police work" which monitoring refugees inevitably entailed.<sup>52</sup> Elliot assesses, that these actions allowed central government to mobilise refugees towards the War economy.<sup>53</sup> Taylor observes, however, that immigration legislation was not enforced effectively, indicating that refugees were able to evade restrictions.<sup>54</sup>

This historiographical analysis has identified some key themes which emerge from historians' discussion of the relief of Belgian refugees in Britain. The historiography notes, in particular, the multifaceted relationship of the state to the relief of refugees. While the "warfare state" was ultimately in control of refugee affairs, it distanced itself from everyday decision making by delegating authority.<sup>55</sup> The process of relief differed from region to region. The administration of refugees was devolved and consequentially inconsistent. Yet, patterns in the challenges local committees faced and the decisions they made are detectable. The secondary

<sup>45</sup> Maurice Kirby, "Industry, Agriculture and Trade Unions," in *The First World War in British History*, ed. Stephen Constantine, Maurice Kirby and Mary Rose, (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 54.

<sup>46</sup> Kristina Heizmann, "Guests of the Nation" or "Guestworkers?" "Belgian Refugees in Great Britain, 1914-1918," in *Glances into Fugitive Lives*, ed. Elizabeth Tietmeyer, (Berlin: Museum Europäischer Kulturen), 72.

<sup>47</sup> Kathleen Burk, "Introduction" in *War and the State: The Transformation of the British Government 1914-1919* ed. Kathleen Burk, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), 6.

<sup>48</sup> Torpey, "The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System," 252.

<sup>49</sup> John C Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918*, (London: Routledge, 1986), 40.

<sup>50</sup> Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 25.

<sup>51</sup> Tony Kushner, "Local Heroes: Belgian Refugees in Britain during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 18, no. 1 (1999): 1-28, 23.

<sup>52</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 357.

<sup>53</sup> Rosemary Elliot, "An Early Experiment in National Identity Cards: The Battle Over Registration in the First World War," *Twentieth Century British History*, 17, no. 2, (2006): 145-176, 175.

<sup>54</sup> Becky Taylor, "Immigration, Statecraft and Public Health: The 1920 Aliens Order, Medical Examinations and the Limitations of the State in England," *Social History of Medicine* 29, no. 3 (2016); 512-533, 514.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 26.

literature illustrates that the question of welfare entitlements for refugees and their employment were contested subjects.<sup>56</sup> The literature also suggests that refugees were able to circumvent restrictions, giving Belgians some individual autonomy.

### **Administrating Relief**

The exceptionalism of Glasgow Corporation's appointment as Scottish national administrator for refugee relief can be explained through decisions based on pragmatism and urgency. In the words of Jenkinson, relief in Glasgow was modelled "upon a recent history of peacetime municipal welfare policy."<sup>57</sup> Glasgow's effectiveness as a civic power, its economic capacity and its geography made it best placed to host refugees. Nevertheless, Glasgow faced similar challenges encountered by other committees.

Around 3,000 refugees arrived in Glasgow over the weekend of October 16, 1914.<sup>58</sup> The Scottish Office telegraphed Glasgow Corporation, requesting assistance with the dispersal of refugees, on October 15, giving the Corporation little time to make arrangements.<sup>59</sup> The haste of preparation is apparent in the Corporation's minute books and the advertisements for assistance made in local newspapers. The *Scotsman* reported although refugees were given a "cordial welcome," it was with "great difficulty" Belgians would be accommodated.<sup>60</sup> As the *Scotsman*'s report made apparent, relief in Glasgow would be on a significant scale:

Some three thousand refugees and wounded soldiers arrived at Dover yesterday from Belgium. . . Yesterday further arrivals were sent to Glasgow and other centres in Scotland; train loads going direct to the North. There were again many arrivals of refugees on Fishing smacks. Some of the people were from Bruges and stated that they left the town just as the Germans were entering. Many of the refugees had left so hurriedly that they were but partially clothed.<sup>61</sup>

In emphasising the number of Belgians, the report communicated the urgency of the crisis.

By early November 1914, the members of the Magistrates' Committee expressed a desire "that the whole" of relief work be "in the hands of the Corporation."<sup>62</sup> Glasgow

<sup>56</sup> De Vuyst, et al, "The Paradox of the Alien Citizens?" 12; Heizman, "Guests of the Nation," 72.

<sup>57</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Administering relief: Glasgow Corporation's support for Scotland's c. 20,000 Belgian refugees," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 171-191, 187.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 187.

<sup>59</sup> GCA, Rutherglen Refugee Committee, Telegraph, Scottish Office to Clerk Gray, October 15, 1914, RU4/5/163; East Dunbartonshire Archives, (hereafter EDA) Minutes of the Kirkintilloch Belgian Refugee Committee, October 19, 1914, BK 17/3/1/1. The Scottish Office promised to reimburse the contributing local authorities for the refugees' transport.

<sup>60</sup> "Arrival of Refugees in Glasgow," *Scotsman*, October 17, 1914, 7.

<sup>61</sup> "Further Arrivals at Dover," *Scotsman*, October 17, 1914, 7.

<sup>62</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 - April 1915, November 12, 1914, C/13/52.

Corporation articulated its authority over refugee affairs to the general public. Appeal publications issued by the Corporation emphasised this: “The reception, registration, providing of houses, and maintenance and the whole administrative work is by appointment of the government under the control of Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee.”<sup>63</sup>

Glasgow’s unique role was lauded by figures within the LGB such as John Howard Whitehouse, Liberal MP for Mid-Lanark. His remarks were noted in the Hatch Report: “J.H. Whitehouse had visited the urban centres with refugees and had stated that in many cases civic authorities’ role was minimal with the exception of Glasgow.”<sup>64</sup> This political recognition communicated the importance of Glasgow Corporation’s decision at a national level, identifying that the city occupied a distinct position.

The Corporation’s humanitarian actions were characterised as an extension of civic responsibility. Comments from the topical Glasgow magazine *The Bailie* in October 1914 make this apparent:

*The Bailie* has always been proud of his city but his pride swells to immeasurable proportions when he thinks of the noble way Glasgow has accepted and relieved the needs of the victims of German hooliganism. According to Bailie McMillan the city houses 3000 refugees. The citizens have responded to the call.<sup>65</sup>

Lionising the generosity of the city’s populace undoubtedly mobilised public goodwill toward the task of relief. A cartoon in the previous week’s *Bailie*, shown in Appendix 2, projected similar sentiments. Saint Mungo, the city’s patron saint, was depicted welcoming a Belgian family.<sup>66</sup> These media representations are illustrative of the “pioneering” civic gospel described by Brown.<sup>67</sup> As Aspinwall has further noted, there was “social demand” for “charitable activity,” in Glasgow.<sup>68</sup> Delivering humanitarian assistance thus showcased Glasgow’s political importance in a British context.

Like the WRC, the Corporation set out to meet the refugees’ most basic needs. The GCBRC oversaw the organisation of housing for families and the education of Belgian children

<sup>63</sup> Imperial War Museum Archive, (hereafter IWMA) Glasgow Corporation, *Please Read This*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1915) BEL 699/10, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Local Government Board, *First Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the President of the LGB to consider the and report on questions arising in Connection with the reception and employment of the Belgian Refugees in this Country*, (HMSO, London: 1914), 35.

<sup>65</sup> “Belgian Refugees,” *The Bailie*, October 28, 1914, 7.

<sup>66</sup> “Cartoon Supplement,” *The Bailie*, October 21, 1914, 7.

<sup>67</sup> Callum Brown, “To be aglow with civic ardours:” the Godly Commonwealth in Glasgow, 1843-1914,” *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 26 (1996): 169-195

<sup>68</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States 1820-1920*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), 55.

in the city.<sup>69</sup> This responsibility was considerable, 13,000 refugees arrived in the first seven months of the War.<sup>70</sup> Facilitating assistance to so many people, in such a short period of time, placed logistical demands on the Corporation. Accommodation provision, as the most immediate priority, meant the Corporation annexed available municipal and charitable institutions as reception centres.<sup>71</sup>

Newspaper appeals were important in eliciting financial and material donations from the public.<sup>72</sup> An appeal from the *Motherwell Times* in November 1914 outlined the necessity of “offers of temporary accommodation and maintenance.”<sup>73</sup> Generous donors were requested to provide one off contributions to the GCBRC. An appeal in the burgh of Rutherglen meanwhile saw the receipt of cheques between £10 to £40 from residents.<sup>74</sup> Newspapers publicised donations given by benefactors, which were forwarded on to the Glasgow Corporation.<sup>75</sup>

In assuming authority for refugee affairs in Scotland the Corporation became accountable for the registration of refugees in its care. Registration was instituted under the Aliens Restriction (Belgian Refugees) Order of November 1914.<sup>76</sup> Chair of the GCBRC, Alexander Walker, was directed by the LGB to assist with the provision of personal details of refugees in Corporation care. Walker came under pressure from the LGB to complete a Scottish register of refugees. This was to assist in the compilation of the Central Register of Belgian Refugees; a national record of all refugees in Britain, compiled by the Registrar General. Initial attempts at registering refugees by the WRC had been amateurish. The Belgian statistician de Jastrzebski noted that this work was carried out by “inexperienced persons” in “circumstances of unprecedented confusion.”<sup>77</sup>

<sup>69</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 - April 1915, November 6, 1914, C/13/52.

<sup>70</sup> IWMA, Glasgow Corporation, *Please Read This*, 1915, BEL 699/10, 2; GCA, *Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow*, November 1915-April 1916, January 4, 1916, C/13/52.

<sup>71</sup> “Arrival of Refugees in Glasgow,” *Scotsman*, October 17, 1914, 7; GCA, *Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow November, 1914 - April 1915*, October 21, 1914, C/13/52. The issue of accommodation will be given more attention in the following chapter.

<sup>72</sup> “Belgian Refugees Another Contingent for Glasgow,” *Daily Record*, December 2, 1914, 2; “Belgian Refugees in Need of Clothes,” *Fifeshire Advertiser*, November 28, 1914, 1.

<sup>73</sup> “Homes Wanted for Belgian Refugees,” *Motherwell Times*, November 20, 1914, 1.

<sup>74</sup> GCA, Rutherglen Refugees Committee, Letter to Clerk Gray, October 21, 1914, RU5/163; GCA, Rutherglen Refugees Committee, Letter to Clerk Gray, September 10, 1915, RU5/163.

<sup>75</sup> “Our Belgian relief fund,” *Glasgow Observer*, November 28, 1914, 4. Many of these donations were modest sums made by local entrepreneurs like Mr McConaghy of Blythswood Drive who donated £3.

<sup>76</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “Introduction – Soon gone, long forgotten: uncovering British responses to Belgian refugees during the First World War,” in *Belgian Refugees in First World War Britain*, ed. Jacqueline Jenkinson, (London: Routledge, 2018), 5,

<sup>77</sup> T. T. S. de Jastrzebski, “The Register of Belgian Refugees,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 78, no. 2, (1916): 133-158, 134. Jastrzebski further remarked that “information had to be extracted from dazed and

Walker was reliant on other Scottish local authorities to provide him with the required information regarding the refugees sent from Glasgow. He made the urgency of this request apparent in a letter to the Kirkintilloch Refugee committee, noting that, “several government departments are pressing me for statistics with regard to refugees.”<sup>78</sup>

The inaccurate data compiled by the WRC created misunderstanding and made long term planning in relation to refugees difficult.<sup>79</sup> The register was intended, in the words of its architects, to: “Undertake the compilation and maintenance of a Register of Belgian Refugees, with the primary object of ascertaining their numbers and of enabling the refugees to trace lost relatives and friends.”<sup>80</sup> Reunifying refugee families was a difficulty, as refugees were dispersed across Britain. Early attempts to do this had mostly been carried out by exile newspapers such as *Le Courier Belge*.<sup>81</sup> These efforts were simplistic, publishing names and addresses of Belgians resident in Britain. The decision to create the refugee register sought to formalise this process.

The creation of the register was not purely humanitarian, it was central to the operation of the refugee regime and exemplified the relationship of refugees to Edgerton’s “warfare state.”<sup>82</sup> As Torpey notes, the regulation of borders and migration became a central concern for governments in the twentieth century.<sup>83</sup> Belgian refugees, although friendly aliens, were still bound to register under the Aliens Restriction (Belgian Refugees) Order of November 1914.<sup>84</sup> Elliot perceives the registration of refugees and the creation of the Central Register as an act of surveillance.<sup>85</sup> As Walker’s reference to “several government departments” suggests, the Central Register had multiple purposes; one of which was to gather data, to ease logistical procedures for the government in the mobilisation of the refugee population towards the War economy.<sup>86</sup> The Register of Belgian Refugees compiled details of refugees’ names, ages, sex, occupation, and addresses in the United Kingdom.<sup>87</sup> This information provided the government

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bewildered persons of little education through the medium of interpreters . . . these records abounded in errors and omissions.”

<sup>78</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgian Refugee Committee, Letter to Belgian Refugees Committee, November 13, 1914. BK 17/3/1/1.

<sup>79</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 207.

<sup>80</sup> de Jastrzebski, “The Register of Belgian Refugees,” 133.

<sup>81</sup> *Le Courier Belge*, October 22, (1914), 4; “Nieuws in T’ Flaamsch Voor De Belgische Ontvluchten,” *Glasgow Observer*, October 17, 1914, 9.

<sup>82</sup> Edgerton, *Warfare State*, 12.

<sup>83</sup> Torpey, “The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System,” 263.

<sup>84</sup> Jenkinson, *Belgian Refugees*, 5.

<sup>85</sup> Elliot. “An Early Experiment in National Identity Cards,” 175.

<sup>86</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Letter to Belgian Refugees Committee, November 13, 1914, BK 17/3/1/1.

<sup>87</sup> de Jastrzebski, “The Register of Belgian Refugees,” 134.

with figures on which jobs refugees might fill, as well as how many were eligible for military service.

Prior to the national call for registration, GCBRC had already begun to collect details on refugees arriving in Scotland.<sup>88</sup> Walker's administrative expertise meant from the outset of the crisis he encouraged the GCBRC to gather information on arriving refugees.<sup>89</sup> The numerous forms created by the GCBRC exemplify how the council applied its bureaucracy to assist Belgians. Certificates of transfer, applications for assistance, medical booklets and treatment order forms reveal just some of the paperwork used by the Corporation to survey refugees.<sup>90</sup> Multi-layered carbon paper ensured duplicates could be filed or shared with the Committee and its partners.<sup>91</sup> Procedural consistency meant the refugee committee could carry out its work under the clear aegis of Glasgow Corporation.

In Birmingham, by comparison, the responsibility to register refugees fell on the voluntary committees and the "keepers of hotels, inns, boarding houses, or apartments" who let properties to the WRC.<sup>92</sup> Here volunteers and business people, rather than local government officials, were accountable for recording refugees' residence and threatened with fines for failing to give accurate details.<sup>93</sup> Reports in Birmingham's local press warning of stricter enforcement of the Aliens Restriction Order against refugees, suggest landlords may have not fulfilled their registration duties.<sup>94</sup>

The systematic and detailed approach taken by GCBRC toward registration earned it commendation from Ernest Hatch, chair of the LGB Committee on the employment of refugees. Hatch singled out the role played by Alexander Walker:

I would like to take this opportunity in congratulating you on the admirable compilation of information that has been made by you and your friends. It is almost perfect. I say that in addition to the register, in order to follow the refugee we have what we call a card index. This will contain the whole history of the refugee.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>88</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Letter to Belgian Refugees Committee, November 7, 1914, BK 17/3/1/1. This was to prevent "family groups" from being "broken up" or "separated" between accommodation.

<sup>89</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 175.

<sup>90</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Certificate of Transfer, 22 March 1915, BK 17/3/1/1; GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Applications for Assistance Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugees *Committee*, Undated, RU5/163; EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Medical Attendance and treatment Order Forms, Undated, BK 17/3/1/3/2.

<sup>91</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Certificate of Transfer, March 22, 1915, BK 17/3/1/1.

<sup>92</sup> BWC, Birmingham War Refugee Committee, Registration Form, 1915, MS 652/2/1-162.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> "A Renewed Warning to Belgians," *Birmingham Daily Post*, May 31, 1915.

<sup>95</sup> IWMA, *Local Government Board, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country*, (London: HMSO, 1915) BEL 1/21, 57.

Walker provided evidence to the Hatch Committee on the role played by the police in registering refugees.<sup>96</sup> The LGB exhibited anxiety about whether “spies” were amongst refugees.<sup>97</sup> Kushner and Knox have identified that Belgians found themselves under suspicion of espionage.<sup>98</sup> Spy fever fuelled sensationalist media reports which suggested that Germans might slip into Britain amongst the mass exile population.<sup>99</sup> These sentiments were widespread within the media. One Scottish *Sunday Post* report, for example, instructed readers that there was “no time for shedding sentimental tears over cultured aliens who possibly might be innocent” as “we cannot trust the alien.”<sup>100</sup>

Alexander Walker explained to the LGB that no spies had been detected amongst the party of exiles. In Scotland, however, there were instances of individuals pretending to be refugees.<sup>101</sup> This included within controlled areas, such as Aberdeen. The *Aberdeen Daily Journal* reported that J.J. Whittingham masqueraded as J.J. Vexrexden and took board and lodgings free from a local land lady who had pitied him.<sup>102</sup> The phenomenon of unscrupulous natives “masquerading” as refugees was recorded across Britain.<sup>103</sup> For some, being a refugee was seen as a passport to free lodging. This occurrence exemplifies Bailkin’s assertion that some among the local poor were envious of the treatment refugees received.<sup>104</sup>

Belgians’ “friendly alien” status did not prevent scrutiny by the authorities.<sup>105</sup> Personal dossiers on each refugee registered in Britain were kept by the police.<sup>106</sup> These files were “useful for the work of the War Office and the police,” allowing these authorities to track shirkers or those suspected of bigamy.<sup>107</sup> Glasgow Corporation, placed great emphasis on

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>98</sup> Tony Kushner and Katherine Knox, *Refugees in an age of Genocide* (London: Routledge, 2005), 48.

<sup>99</sup> David French, “Spy Fever in Britain, 1900-1915,” *The Historical Journal*, 21, no. 2 (1978): 355-370, 356; “Failed to Register as an Enemy Alien,” *Dundee Courier*, January 3, 1915, 2; “All about the German Spy Peril,” *Sunday Post*, October 25, 1914. While there were incidences of Germans posing as Belgian refugees these were most often by Germans already resident in the country who wished to avoid registering as enemy aliens.

<sup>100</sup> “All about the German Spy Peril,” *Sunday Post*, October 25, 1914, 5; Trevor Royle, *Flowers of the Forest*, (Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2006), 35. Accompanying pictures from the *Sunday Post*’s special report provided a sketch of German spies, male and female, preparing an attack on the Forth Bridge. As Royle notes the incident which motivated this sketch came from sentries on the Forth Road Bridge chasing workers carrying out the Ordnance Survey.

<sup>101</sup> IWMA, Local Government Board, *Minutes Of Evidence Taken Before the Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country*, (London: HMSO, 1915), BEL 1/21, 58.

<sup>102</sup> “Pretended Belgian Refugee in Aberdeen,” *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, February 12, 1915, 5.

<sup>103</sup> “Girl’s Amazing Career,” *Western Gazette*, May 4, 1915, 8. Marjorie Holland, 23, “posed” as a male refugee after returning to London from Canada in 1914.

<sup>104</sup> Baikin, *Unsettled*, 210. See Bailkin’s discussion of homeless Britons after the Second World War squatting in Polish refugee camps.

<sup>105</sup> Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians*, 40.

<sup>106</sup> Local Government Board, *Report on the Work undertaken by the British Government*, 78.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 78.



maintaining records and reminded smaller committees of this duty. One letter from Alexander Walker to the Kirkintilloch Refugee Committee outlines this:

It appears that a number of persons with whom refugees are residing are transferring the refugees to other persons without consent of this office and I am desired by the committee to intimate that no transfer of refugees is to take place without the previous consent of this office.<sup>108</sup>

Keeping track of refugees' movements was a challenge, especially as many refugees "steadfastly refused" to register.<sup>109</sup> Some parish councils, keen to avoid the extensive paperwork and cost associated with refugees, used this to their advantage. In instances where refugees were undocumented, burgh committees prevented refugees from accessing welfare entitlements. The minutes of the parish council of Dalziel, in Lanarkshire, discussed the case of an unnamed Belgian who was refused assistance with accommodation as he was not registered with police.<sup>110</sup>

The failure of some refugees to register led to firmer enforcement of the Aliens Orders by police and courts.<sup>111</sup> Refugees who fell afoul of these laws could be imprisoned.<sup>112</sup> Most often, however, the courts within Scotland were lenient towards infringements of aliens' legislation by Belgians.<sup>113</sup> For instance Mathilde Brugelmans, a forty-four year-old refugee from Brussels, was neither fined nor imprisoned for changing address without notifying the police in Stirling.<sup>114</sup> Similarly Susanne de Keghel, an eighteen year-old "nurse girl" in Dunblane, escaped a penalty for taking a trip to Callander Hydro without informing police.<sup>115</sup> Her lawyer noted that regulations, such as the Aliens Orders, were unfair and that they were "not intended to treat Belgians in this way."<sup>116</sup> In contrast enemy aliens were treated more harshly. Josephine Victorinne, a German divorcee charged with a similar offence, was by comparison fined 40s and threatened with imprisonment for her misdemeanour.<sup>117</sup>

Regardless of this enforcement of the Aliens Restriction Orders against refugees, a minority of Belgians continued to resist registering. This was down to a number of reasons.

<sup>108</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Letter to Belgian Refugees Committee, November 13, 1914, BK 17/3/1/1.

<sup>109</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 88.

<sup>110</sup> North Lanarkshire Archives, (hereafter NLA) Minutes of the Parish Council of Dalziel, October 31, 1916, UJ/1/49/026.

<sup>111</sup> Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien*, 40.

<sup>112</sup> National Records for Scotland, (hereafter NRS) Records of Glasgow's Prisoners, 1916-1919, May 19, 1916, HH 21/32/137.

<sup>113</sup> Taylor, "Immigration, Statecraft and Public Health," 514.

<sup>114</sup> "Belgian Refugee's Offence," *Stirling Saturday Observer*, October 30, 1915, 5.

<sup>115</sup> "Charge Against Belgian Refugee," *Perthshire Advertiser*, November 24, 1917, 3.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>117</sup> "Failed to Register as an Enemy Alien," *Dundee Courier*, January 3, 1916, 2.

Evading registration allowed some to avoid military service. Jean Francois Claerp, a refugee resident in Paisley, used another Belgian's passport in an attempt to go to Holland to avoid being drafted.<sup>118</sup> For others life exiled in a foreign country, offered the opportunity to engage in extra-marital affairs. Jules De Craene, a forty-three year-old refugee living in Perth, was described as eloping with an eighteen year-old girl to Glasgow.<sup>119</sup> De Craene who "admitted he was a married man with children" was fined and imprisoned for failing to register his change of address.<sup>120</sup>

Refugees tried to move to prohibited areas causing further irritation to the police. Charles Sarolea, the Belgian consul for Scotland and Professor of French at the University of Edinburgh, was responsible for encouraging Belgians to circumvent the Aliens Restriction Orders. Sarolea's actions led Edinburgh chief constable Roderick Ross to rebuke the Professor for "bringing refugees to Edinburgh" which he knew was "prohibited."<sup>121</sup> Saroléa continued to attempt to mediate on behalf of wealthy Belgians, informing Ross that the "better class" of refugees had the right "to spend the summer" in the city.<sup>122</sup> Despite promises of "introductions" for Belgians, both the police and GCBRC were resolute in opposing Sarolea.<sup>123</sup>

Determining who was a Belgian refugee, however, was complicated. Belgium, as an industrialising country like Scotland, had seen migrants from across Europe come to towns and cities. Caestecker notes that Belgium's shift towards economic liberalism in the latter half of the nineteenth century meant that the state saw an influx of migrants.<sup>124</sup> Amongst the 8,000 refugees named in the Glasgow register at least forty-seven refugees were dual nationals or residents of another country.<sup>125</sup> Table 3 illustrates where dual national refugees were from. Refugees with dual nationality found themselves under police suspicion. Felix Guillini, a sixteen year-old Belgian with an Italian passport, was imprisoned for failing to register as either a Belgian or an Italian alien in 1916.<sup>126</sup> A further ten Belgian refugees of Russian origin were sent back to London after arriving in Glasgow mistakenly in 1914.<sup>127</sup> The Blumstein family,

<sup>118</sup> "Belgian's Fraud with Passport," *Scotsman*, 1 June 1915, 6. Claerp and his accomplice Marcel Pere were only caught when a government censor intercepted Pere's passport which was returned from Holland in a letter.

<sup>119</sup> "Sequel to Perth Elopement," *Evening Telegraph*, January 11, 1916, 3.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. Despite Craene's evidently unsavoury behaviour no "moral" charges were brought against him.

<sup>121</sup> Centre for Research Collections Edinburgh University, (hereafter CRC) Correspondence of Charles Sarolea, Letter to Campell Gibson, December 10, 1914, SAR Coll 80.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Frank Caestecker, *Alien Policy in Belgium, 1830-1940 The Creation of Guest Workers, Refugees and Illegal Aliens*, (Oxford-New York, Berghahn Books, 2000), 22.

<sup>125</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1.

<sup>126</sup> NRS, Records of Glasgow's Prisoners 1916-1919, May 19, 1916, HH 21/32/137.

<sup>127</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1.

who were Jewish, were returned to London.<sup>128</sup> In Birmingham, determining the true nationality of refugees was also problematic. The local Birmingham War Refugees Committee, for instance, voiced concerns about Dutchmen who presented as Belgians to gain employment in the arms industry.<sup>129</sup>

Table 3. Nationalities and Countries of Residencies of Belgian Refugees in Scotland

Nationality or Residence	Russia	France	Germany	Canada	Belgian Congo	Italy	Greece	Norway	Switzerland	Brazil
Number	18	11	5	4	4	3	1	1	1	1

Source: GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1.

Although recording and maintaining documentation for the thousands to arrive in Glasgow was challenging, a greater difficulty was posed by the spread of disease amongst new arrivals. Alexander Walker noted this in his evidence to the Hatch Committee:

We had placed 45 women and children together in a house at Pollokshaws. They had only been in the house a little time when measles broke out. We promised to send the people to different homes but could not so until a clean bill of health was available. . . We had the same thing with regard to Scarlet fever.<sup>130</sup>

Refugees, weakened by travelling from the continent and living communally, were vulnerable to contagious diseases. Refugees arriving at the ports of Kent and Dover were not screened for symptoms of illness.<sup>131</sup> Inspections, however, for migrants had been in place for steerage class passengers since the 1905 Aliens Act.<sup>132</sup>

The victims of disease amongst the refugees were, often, the youngest. The Corporation recorded at least eighty-two infant deaths amongst refugees between 1914-1919.<sup>133</sup> Some infants succumbed to disease soon after arriving. For example, Magdalena Declerk died of measles on November 13, 1914.<sup>134</sup> Children too were also precariously at risk of disease.

<sup>128</sup> Local Government Board, *Report on the Work undertaken by the British Government*, 26. Jewish refugees were deemed the separate responsibility of the Jewish Refugee Committee.

<sup>129</sup> BWC, Birmingham Refugees Committee, Executive Committee Minutes, February 17, 1915, MS 652/14. The War Refugees Committee debated how to tackle this problem in Birmingham.

<sup>130</sup> IWMA, Local Government Board, *Minutes Of Evidence Taken Before the Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country*, (London: HMSO, 1915), BEL 1/21, 65.

<sup>131</sup> Local Government Board, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Jill Pellew, "The Home Office and the Aliens Act, 1905," *The Historical Journal*, 32 no 2. (1989): 369-385, 370. Pellew notes that inspectors were introduced in a bid to prevent the spread of trachoma.

<sup>133</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation, List of Belgian Refugees who Died in Scotland, 1914-1919, April 1919, D-CA12/1.

<sup>134</sup> Scotland's People (Hereafter SP), Death Certificate Magdalena Declerk, 644/1 958, November 13, 1914, District of Bridgeton in the Burgh of Glasgow.

Josephine Bada, aged thirteen, died on November 6, at Paisley of Rheumatism.<sup>135</sup> Disease also claimed the lives of the oldest refugees like Louis Van Malderen, seventy-seven, who succumbed to a viral infection soon after arriving in Scotland.<sup>136</sup> Table 4 provides further details of those refugees who died in Scotland.

Table 4. Age grouping of Belgian refugee dead recorded in Scotland

Infants	Children	Adults	Total
82	55	176	313

Source: GCA, Glasgow Corporation, List of Belgian Refugees who Died in Scotland, 1914-1919, April 1919 D-CA12/1.

In addition to caring for those with epidemic disease, the city's general medical services extended to Belgians. As S. Checkland has assessed, Glasgow had long struggled with the challenges associated with poor health, disease and mental illness.<sup>137</sup> The Corporation therefore administered medical assistance to refugees as part of its civic welfare concern. Sick infants, such as Magdalena Decklerk, were cared for at the Corporation's Belvidere fever hospital, while the infirm elderly like Louis Van Malderen were placed in charitable institutions such as St. Joseph's Home.<sup>138</sup>

The Corporation issued detailed guidance on the assistance of sick refugees. Alexander Walker outlined this to the Kirkintilloch Refugee Committee: "The medical gentlemen of the city have voluntarily offered their professional services free to the Belgian refugees and I enclose a book of prescriptions for use in case of sickness."<sup>139</sup> Medical booklets were issued to each Belgian refugee in Scotland. These were used to order prescriptions and record treatment.<sup>140</sup> The medical booklets instructed refugee hosts in the following manner: "In cases of illness among refugees persons in charge of such should apply to their own medical attendant

<sup>135</sup> SP, Death Certificate Josephine Bada, 573/1 1360, November 6, 1914, District of Paisley in the County of Renfrew.

<sup>136</sup> SP, Death Certificate Louis Van Malderen, 644/5 591, November 25, 1914, District of Garngadhill in the County of Lanark.

<sup>137</sup> Sydney Checkland, "British Urban Health in General and in a Single City," in *Health Care as Social History: The Glasgow Case*, ed. Olive Checkland and Margaret Lamb, (Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press: 1982), 172.

<sup>138</sup> SP, *Death Certificate Magdalena Declerk*, 644/1 958, November 13, 1914, District of Bridgeton in the Burgh of Glasgow; SP, *Death Certificate Louis Van Malderen*, 644/5 591, November 25, 1914, District of Garngadhill in the County of Lanark.

<sup>139</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Letter to Belgian Refugees Committee, November 13, 1914, BK 17/3/1/1.

<sup>140</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgians Refugee Committee, Corporation of Glasgow Belgian Refugees Medical and Attendance and treatment order forms, (1914) BK 17/3/1/3/2.

or to any general practitioner.”<sup>141</sup> Glasgow Corporation assisted in the payment of treatment, reimbursing doctors and hospitals.

Jenkinson and Verdier identify, that the Corporation also sought financial contributions towards the cost of treatment from the families of the sick.<sup>142</sup> This followed normal poor law procedures. Paying for the medical bills of refugees, particularly those with chronic conditions, was an additional burden for the Corporation. O. Checkland has highlighted that the “outbreak of the War caused an augmentation of pressures at every level” on welfare services across Glasgow.<sup>143</sup> The LGB for Scotland’s Report for 1915 exemplifies this: “The Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee committee were asked by the government to undertake the important work of organising hospitality for Belgian refugees in Scotland . . . Difficulties arose in the lunatic and consumptive cases.”<sup>144</sup> Across Britain provision for refugees who required medical attention was inconsistent. In Birmingham, sick refugees were given financial compensation from the WRC, whilst a Belgian doctor made home visits.<sup>145</sup> The issue of who was accountable for those refugees confined to asylums was raised in the House of Commons. Leif Jones, Liberal MP for Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire, questioned who should pay for refugees’ healthcare, signifying the national nature of this concern.<sup>146</sup> This issue remained problematic. The Ministry of Health 1920 Report identified “the care of the sick and insane refugees created problems of considerable magnitude.”<sup>147</sup>

A solution was, however, found. The LGB agreed to reimburse local authorities, including Glasgow Corporation: “Expenses are paid by us and we are refunded out of moneys in the hands of the English Local Government Board.”<sup>148</sup> This process was not limited to medical expenses. The LGB agreed to pay large sums towards the administrative costs incurred by the Corporation in respect of refugees.<sup>149</sup> This was detailed to include the wages of staff

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, Caroline Verdier, “War Trauma among Belgian Refugee women in Scotland in the First World War,” *Women’s History Review*, (2019): 1-16, 9. This was common procedure in Poor law cases for refugees confined to psychiatric institutions.

<sup>143</sup> Olive Checkland, “Maternal and Child Welfare,” in *Health Care as Social History: The Glasgow Case*, ed. Olive Checkland and Margaret Lamb, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), 128.

<sup>144</sup> Local Government Board, *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland. 1915*. (HMSO, Edinburgh, 1915), xxxii.

<sup>145</sup> BWC, Birmingham Belgian Refugees Committee, Executive Committee Minutes, January 27, 1915, MS 652/14; BWC, Birmingham Belgian Refugees Committee Correspondence, Letter from JH Lloyd, July 29, 1919, MS 642/3. In the case of, J. Cleassens’, a refugee who was terminally ill in 1919, his family was given a large grant to assist them until Cleassens passed away.

<sup>146</sup> UK Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons Debate, Hansard, June 17, 1915, C. C.779.

<sup>147</sup> Local Government Board, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 22. The care of refugees with mental illnesses was eventually centralised and refugees were sent to Colney Hatch Asylum in North London.

<sup>148</sup> Local Government Board, *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Local Government Board*, xxxii.

<sup>149</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the Work Undertaken by the British Government*, 44.

employed by the Corporation, as well as the other necessary expenses.<sup>150</sup> This support for local authorities was in keeping with central government financial assistance with other welfare initiatives. O. Checkland has identified that legislation such as the Notification of Births and (Extensions) Act 1915, allowed the Corporation to supplement maternal health initiatives through money refunded from central government.<sup>151</sup> State support for such schemes is regarded by Winter as helping to improve healthcare for the most vulnerable through the War.<sup>152</sup>

### **Funding Relief**

Turning to examine how the Corporation dealt with the financial aspects of relief, the changing role of the state during the War should first be considered. Winter has assessed that central government intervention illustrated “changed attitudes” toward welfare for the whole of society as the public welcomed the state’s support.<sup>153</sup> Pedersen furthers this argument, asserting that separation allowances contributed to an improvement in living standards for working class families of soldiers.<sup>154</sup> Refugees, however, did not always benefit from government support. In Birmingham, for instance, some Belgians were excluded from welfare assistance based on their receipt of separation allowances.<sup>155</sup>

The separation allowances paid to the dependents of Belgians soldiers in Britain, initially came from the Belgian Government. Cahalan notes at first “separation allowances were very low.”<sup>156</sup> As the war continued the LGB recognised the need to increase assistance “in view of all Belgium” had done “for the allies” and on account of the rising cost of living.<sup>157</sup> Guidance issued by the LGB in 1916 thus advised that separation allowances should match those paid to the families of British soldiers.<sup>158</sup> Paying separation allowances was problematic for Glasgow Corporation, the LGB expected committees to pay up front and then seek

<sup>150</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee Cash Books, 1916, D-CC 4/7/1. Regular contributions were made by the LGB on a monthly basis of between £100 - £300.

<sup>151</sup> O. Checkland, “Maternal and Child Welfare,” 122.

<sup>152</sup> Jay, M. Winter, “The Impact of the First World War on Civilian Health in Britain,” *The Economic History Review*, 30, no. 3, (1977): 487-507, 497.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, 498. As noted earlier this has been disputed.

<sup>154</sup> Susan Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War,” *The American Historical Review*, 95, no. 2. (1990): 983-1006, 1002.

<sup>155</sup> De Vuyst et al, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizens?” 12.

<sup>156</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 291. Cahalan argues that low separation allowances led Belgian women into employment quickly.

<sup>157</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government Refugees*, 107; Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War,” 985.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, 108. The rate of Separation Allowances for 1916 were as follows: Wife Only - 12/6, Wife and Child - 17/6, Wife and Two Children - 21/6, Wife and Three Children - 23/0, Motherless Child - 5/0.

reimbursement.<sup>159</sup> By the end of the War Glasgow Corporation found these payments a substantial expense. A letter from Alexander Walker to the Town Clerk of Motherwell indicates this:

My committee have made representations to the LGB regarding the burden of maintenance placed on my committee and on the local committees throughout Scotland in supplementing the allowance made by the Belgian government to the wives and dependents of Belgian soldiers in order to put them in the same position as the wives and dependents of British Soldiers.<sup>160</sup>

As with medical expenses, the LGB reimbursed the Corporation of these costs.<sup>161</sup> Walker insisted, however, that payment of additional sums towards allowances for Belgians should only be “given according to need and not be given to the refugees as a matter of right.”<sup>162</sup>

As identified by De Vuyst et al, refugees struggled to access welfare.<sup>163</sup> Appeal letters from Belgian dependents evidence that separation allowances were often unpaid. Mrs Roose, wife of Edward Roose a Belgian Officer, wrote to the Motherwell Town Clerk asking for assistance as she had not received any money for five months.<sup>164</sup> The alien status of refugees was used as a means to exclude them from accessing welfare.<sup>165</sup> LGB guidance on the payment of separation allowances to refugees was unclear. It implied that it was at the discretion of the individual committee to decide whether to pay refugee soldiers’ dependents. It advised the committees to exercise “great care” before granting assistance.<sup>166</sup> For Belgians living under the Corporation’s direct hospitality, a small percentage of the separation allowance was expected to be contributed toward living expenses. Receipts of the Rutherglen Committee reveal that regular contributions to their own living costs were made by Belgian women receiving separation allowances.<sup>167</sup> Contributions were expected for Belgians living under the care of the WRC in Birmingham too, those who failed to make payments were threatened with eviction from accommodation.<sup>168</sup>

Glasgow Corporation, however, provided Belgian refugees with forms of assistance

<sup>159</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government Refugees*, 106.

<sup>160</sup> NLA, Motherwell Burgh Council, Minutes & Correspondence of Motherwell Burgh Council, September 15, 1918, IJ/1/49/00/9/2.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> De Vuyst, Myers, Van Gorp, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizens?” 12.

<sup>164</sup> NLA, Motherwell Burgh Council, Minutes & Correspondence of Motherwell Burgh, March 10, 1918, IJ/1/49/00/9/2.

<sup>165</sup> De Vuyst, Myers, Van Gorp, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizens?” 12.

<sup>166</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government Refugees*, 106.

<sup>167</sup> GCA, Rutherglen Belgian Refugee Committee, Money Received from Belgian Refugees at Springhall June - August, August, 1917, RU 4/5/163. As will be shown this was the established practice across Scotland for Belgian refugees who were employed.

<sup>168</sup> BWC, Birmingham Belgian Refugees Committee, Allocation Minute Book, July 5, 1915, MS 652/13.

that ordinary citizens of the city might not receive. For example, most Scots at this time were not provided with direct support with accommodation.<sup>169</sup> Refugees were eligible for financial aid in the form of an emergency grant too. Applications for the *Request of Financial Aid* aided the poorest.<sup>170</sup> Although refugees were entitled to poor relief in Scotland, as Verdier and Jenkinson identify, few were awarded assistance on the basis of “destitution.”<sup>171</sup> This suggests that the provision of a specific grant for refugees, served as a discrete source of emergency welfare. This seemed generous, but this aid was given on a limited case by case basis.<sup>172</sup>

Criteria for the provision of grants resembled that for outdoor poor relief.<sup>173</sup> The same conditionality of welfare for the ordinary poor was applied to refugees. Hughes and Meek illustrate that Scots applicants for outdoor relief had to agree to an inspection, and judgements were made on the basis of the inspectors’ findings.<sup>174</sup> Similarly, refugees applying for grants were visited by members of GCBRC.<sup>175</sup> Just as with poor relief refugees could be refused assistance if they were deemed undeserving, if they had disposable income or if family members could assist them. The guidelines for assistance noted in particular that: “no grant should be given to any refugee until he has made a declaration as to whether he has any money in his possession or under his control and if so what is the amount of such money.”<sup>176</sup> Much like local residents applying for poor relief identified in Pedersen’s study of welfare and gender, refugee women seeking support were vulnerable to the moral judgements of those administering benefits.<sup>177</sup>

The process of applying for assistance and awaiting a decision could be frustrating. Those who were refused could become angry. This was apparent in the case of Leonard Slabbaert, who became violent with GCBRC staff following the rejection of his application at the Committee’s Office in June 1915.<sup>178</sup> The sight of refugees pleading at the GCBRC’s offices was not unusual. Accounts of “expostulating refugees” requesting “larger weekly allowances”

<sup>169</sup> GCA, Minutes of the School Board for Glasgow, 1914-1915, December 9, 1914 D-ED 1/1/1/18.

<sup>170</sup> GCA, Rutherglen Belgian Refugees Committee, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugees Committee Request for Financial Aid, 1914, RU 4/5/163.

<sup>171</sup> Jenkinson, Verdier, “War Trauma,” 8.

<sup>172</sup> GCA, Rutherglen Belgian Refugees Committee, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugees Committee Request for Financial Aid, 1914, RU 4/5/163.

<sup>173</sup> GCA, Glasgow City Poor Law Board, Applications, Case 51744, May 15, 1915, D-HEW 16/13/345.

<sup>174</sup> Annmarie Hughes and Jeff Meek, “State Regulation, Family Breakdown, and Lone Motherhood: The Hidden Costs of World War I in Scotland,” *Journal of Family History*, 39, no. 4 (2014): 364-387, 367.

<sup>175</sup> GCA, Glasgow City Poor Law Board, Applications, Case 51744, May 15 (1915) D-HEW 16/13/345.

<sup>176</sup> GCA, Rutherglen Belgian Refugees Committee, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugees Committee Request for Financial Aid, 1914, RU 4/5/163.

<sup>177</sup> Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War,” 996.

<sup>178</sup> “Belgian Refugee in Trouble at Glasgow,” *The Evening Telegraph and Post*, June 24, 1915, 3.



was common according to Mary Boyle, a GCBRC worker.<sup>179</sup>

The Corporation may have tried to exercise austerity in issuing grants to refugees, yet it did ensure that most vital services were provided for free. For instance, following several meetings with the Corporation, the School Board for Glasgow granted refugees fee waivers.<sup>180</sup> These ensured that refugee children, across the city, could attend both primary and secondary schools free of charge. The School Board also tried to ensure that where “possible” Belgian children were provided with books.<sup>181</sup>

In Glasgow, most Belgian children attended Catholic schools.<sup>182</sup> The Catholic Church exerted significant influence over education in Belgium. The Church’s provision of Catholic schooling in Scotland offered refugees continuity.<sup>183</sup> Catholic schools in Scotland, prior to 1918, were run as charities meaning students did not pay fees.<sup>184</sup> This ensured that schools run by the Corporation school board had fewer Belgian students, thus incurring fewer costs. Some school board institutions with Belgian children employed Belgian teachers. The Kent Road School employed a refugee, Edgar Klonhammer, as a teacher for Belgian students.<sup>185</sup>

The Corporation also paid for funerals and burials for those refugees that died. Smith identifies that in the late nineteenth century burial was a municipal concern, as local authorities regulated graveyards and took responsibility for burying the poor.<sup>186</sup> The Corporation paid for the burials of refugees throughout Glasgow, reimbursing undertakers James Henderson Ltd for the costs of the funeral.<sup>187</sup> Many refugees were buried in St. Peter’s Catholic Cemetery in Glasgow, with the Corporation paying for several plots to specifically bury Belgian refugees.<sup>188</sup> Some refugees, however, were buried in common ground. While these were mostly infants who had died, some adult refugees were buried there too.<sup>189</sup> Maria Johanna Pluym, aged thirty-seven, was buried on common ground at St. Peter’s in 1918 following her death from

<sup>179</sup> IWMA, Mary E Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, BEL 6100/5, 1918, 24.

<sup>180</sup> GCA, Minutes of the School Board for Glasgow, 1914-1915, December 9, 1914, D-ED 1/1/1/1/18.

<sup>181</sup> GCA, Minutes of the School Board for Glasgow, 1914-1915, March 23, 1915, D-ED 1/1/1/1/18.

<sup>182</sup> GCA, Garnethill Convent School, Log Book, 1904–1927, December 11, 1914, SR10/3/639/1; GCA, St. Conval’s RC School, Log Book, October 30, 1914, PA/2/86.

<sup>183</sup> Kieran D. Taylor, “The relief of Belgian refugees in the archdiocese of Glasgow during the First World War: ‘A Crusade of Christianity,’” *The Innes Review*, 69 no. 2 (2018): 147-164, 158.

<sup>184</sup> Stephen J. McKinney, “100 Years of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918,” *Pastoral Review* 14, (2018): 22-27, 23.

<sup>185</sup> GCA, Minutes of the school Board for Glasgow, 1914-1915, January 1915, D-ED 1/1/1/1/18.

<sup>186</sup> Michael Smith, “The Church of Scotland and the Funeral Industry in Nineteenth-century Edinburgh,” *The Scottish Historical Review*, 88, No. 1 (2009): 108-133, 132.

<sup>187</sup> GCA, Title Deeds of Belgian Relief Committee, December 13, 1915, D-CA 12. Despite St Peter’s being used as the principle cemetery for Belgian refugees who died in Scotland, refugees further from the city had to be buried closer to their temporary homes.

<sup>188</sup> GCA, List of Belgian Refugees Buried at St Peter’s Dalbeth, 1918, D-CA 12.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

peritonitis.<sup>190</sup>

The GCBRC, like the Birmingham WRC, was eager to reduce expenditure on refugees. The payment of allowances, grants, school fees and burial costs was a significant financial commitment. Cahalan has argued that as the War progressed, public donations for Belgian refugees declined, meaning many local committees struggled.<sup>191</sup> Jenkinson has countered this, however, noting that this was not the case in Scotland.<sup>192</sup> Sustained public donations by the Corporation succeeded in raising a total of £208,000 for refugees by the end of the War.<sup>193</sup>

Grant articulates that fund raising for Belgian refugees provided “the readiest opportunity for philanthropy” from the outset of the War.<sup>194</sup> Fundraising in Scotland took various forms, but public events were particularly popular. Flag days, concerts, shows, films and talks on behalf of refugees all generated financial and political support. A report in the *Citizen*, a newspaper from St. Andrews, exemplifies this:

St. Andrews students evidently mean to bear their full share of duty laid upon the Scottish Universities of supporting a hostel for Belgian refugees in Glasgow . . . they gave a highly successful musical and dramatic entertainment which must have demanded much hard work in its preparation. Their efforts were rewarded with a bumper house, and a considerable number of the public who wished to attend could not be admitted.<sup>195</sup>

The finale of this event and others culminated in the singing of “patriotic” songs.<sup>196</sup> Although this was entertainment, it had a social purpose.

The public’s enthusiasm towards refugees was capitalised on by those within the city’s entertainment industry. The *Entertainer*, a weekly newspaper for Glasgow’s cinemas and theatres, reported that: “Now is the time when good war topicals are appreciated by the public. When the *Looters of Liege* is shown at the Scenic on Monday Tues Wed house full boards should be expected.”<sup>197</sup> Other popular documentary films shown in Glasgow included: *Heroic Belgium* and *With the Belgian Army*, while the “The Belgian Boy Army,” a group of Belgian orphans who had “either a father or brother” killed in the War, also performed.<sup>198</sup> Public interest

<sup>190</sup> SP, Death Certificate Maria Johanna Pluym, 644/2 21, January 4, 1918, District of Dennistoun in the Burgh of Glasgow.

<sup>191</sup> Colin Holmes, *A Tolerant Country? Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities* (Routledge: New York, 1991), 25; Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 406. The process of LGB annexation over the WRC would appear to support this thesis.

<sup>192</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 185.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid*, 185.

<sup>194</sup> Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action*, 27.

<sup>195</sup> “Successful Dramatical and Musical Entertainment,” *The Citizen*, February 26, 1916, 5.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>197</sup> “The Scenic Paisley Road Toll,” *The Entertainer*, October 25, 1914, 3.

<sup>198</sup> “Grand Theatre,” *The Entertainer*, December 5, 1914, 4.

in this type of entertainment is demonstrative of the broader enthusiasm towards the War.

Public events generated publicity and raised money, however, most funds were raised through direct donation to the GCBRC. Glasgow Corporation, as national administrator, looked to the rest of Scotland to assist with relief. Many Scots had been disappointed to learn in October 1914 that Belgian refugees' settlement would be restricted, meaning that local philanthropic minded citizens would not be able to directly assist refugees. A letter from Belgian Vice Consul B.L. Nairn, in the *Dundee Courier*, illustrates this: "Having received a very large number of offers of hospitality for the Belgian Refugees in Dundee and district, I beg to make it known publicly that by the most recent order from the Home Office the whole of the East Coast is declared a prohibited area."<sup>199</sup> As appeals made by local refugee committees in regional newspapers made apparent, however, being "debarred as a prohibited area" from receiving refugees did not mean being unable to contribute.<sup>200</sup> A *Dundee Courier* columnist argued that this was all the more important as "Glasgow . . . cannot be expected alone to discharge this responsibility."<sup>201</sup>

In January 1915, Glasgow Corporation brought together 200 representatives of local authorities from across Scotland to consider how the regions could contribute.<sup>202</sup> This conference principally agreed that local authorities would raise funds that would be donated to the Corporation.<sup>203</sup> Most of this money was used to fund housing, supported directly by councils.<sup>204</sup> The Glasgow Bailies, who served the GCBRC: James Stewart, Thomas Irwin and James Davidson were dispatched to visit towns around Scotland to communicate this appeal directly to the inhabitants of these local authorities.<sup>205</sup> In decentralising the funding process Glasgow Corporation ensured relief income from local and national sources. This succeeded in maximising donations from all of Scotland. At the end of the War the GCBRC held £15,000 in its accounts.<sup>206</sup> In contrast Birmingham's WRC held just £1,400 in its accounts by 1917.<sup>207</sup> Regional contributions ensured a sustained source of income for the work of GCBRC for the War's duration.

<sup>199</sup> "Belgian War Refugees," *Dundee Courier*, October 27, 1914, 4.

<sup>200</sup> "Lord Provost's Appeal," *Aberdeen Evening Express*, April 16, 1915, 5.

<sup>201</sup> "Dundee's Responsibility for Belgian Refugees," *Dundee Courier*, March 18, 1915, 4.

<sup>202</sup> "The Relief of Distress – Belgian Refugees," *Scotsman*, January 29, 1915, 7. This conference also discussed the process of funding housing for refugees and generating employment.

<sup>203</sup> "Lord Provost's Appeal," *Aberdeen Evening Express*, April 16, 1915, 5.

<sup>204</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 177.

<sup>205</sup> "Support for Belgian Refugees," *Fife Free Press and Kirkcaldy Guardian*, April 10, 1915, 5.

<sup>206</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 185.

<sup>207</sup> WCB, Birmingham Refugees Committee, Finance Committee Minutes, January 1917, MS 652/1. Whilst there are limitations in comparing the local authority organised relief committee of Glasgow to the voluntary committee of Birmingham, the stark difference in revenue suggests that the GCBRC had greater success in raising funds.

Humanitarian assistance for refugees brought together a cross section of Scottish society, as Scotland's most important institutions were eager to contribute. The organisations assisting refugees were diverse and included: Liberal Associations, reformed churches, universities, the Catholic Church, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, trade unions, masonic lodges and women's groups.<sup>208</sup> As Gill has identified, humanitarian action unified groups with opposing religious and political views.<sup>209</sup> This can be seen in the case of the Birmingham WRC, where membership was diverse.<sup>210</sup> In Glasgow, subscription records note that trade unions and industrialists alike were willing to donate. For instance, the Lanarkshire County Miners' Union donated £186, whilst coal magnate and former Glasgow Lord Provost Sir James Bell gave £40.<sup>211</sup> Charitable football matches played by Old Firm rivals Celtic and Rangers illustrated that the common philanthropic spirit could transcend sporting rivalries.<sup>212</sup>

The varied cohort of donors reflects the desire many groups had to support refugees, it also demonstrates the Corporation's ties with an array of influential organisations. These organisations, like local authorities, played a role in augmenting the GCBRC's work. This will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4. GCBRC received large numbers of donations from individual philanthropic-minded citizens too. Action on behalf of refugees appealed to many who responded with regular subscriptions. Grant notes that refugees were by no means the only charitable cause that received popular attention, "comfort charities" and funds for Imperial troops were also well supported.<sup>213</sup> Belgian Refugees, however, received a special type of enthusiasm as their presence assisted in justifying the War.

Between the years 1915 and 1916 wealthy individuals made one off contributions to the GCBRC of £50-£300.<sup>214</sup> For instance, W.J. Chrystal of West George Street Glasgow, a businessperson specialising in chemicals donated £100.<sup>215</sup> Most contributions, however, were modest like Miss Boyd of Greenock who gave £6, or David Fullarton of Troon who gave £2.<sup>216</sup> Collection boxes placed in strategic locations all over Scotland, such as train stations and main

<sup>208</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee Cash Books, 1915 D-CC 4/7/1.

<sup>209</sup> Gill, "Brave Little Belgium," 141.

<sup>210</sup> WCB, Birmingham Refugees Committee, Executive Committee, November 30, 1914, MS 652M 14.

<sup>211</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee Cash Books, 1916 D-CC 4/7/1.

<sup>212</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1916 - April 1917, December 19, 1916, C/13/54.

<sup>213</sup> Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action*, 55.

<sup>214</sup> IWMA, The Corporation of Glasgow's Belgian Refugees Committee Subscriptions, October, 1916, BEL 6 99/6; IWM, BEL 669/1/0, 4-5; IWMA, Corporation of the City of Glasgow Belgian Refugees Committee, *The Belgian Refugees Scotland's National Appeal*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916), BEL 6 99/16, 7.

<sup>215</sup> IWMA, The Corporation of Glasgow's Belgian Refugees Committee Subscriptions, October, 1916, BEL 6 99/6; IWM, BEL 669/1/0, 5.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

streets, secured smaller donations of between 2-10 shillings.<sup>217</sup> Donations even came from members of the Scottish diaspora overseas. Mrs D.T. Inglis of Ottawa gave £3 while Miss C.I. Milne of Philadelphia donated £1.<sup>218</sup>

Fundraising for war charities was popular amongst middle class women. Assisting refugees, argues Watson, reinforced the Edwardian feminine ideal.<sup>219</sup> Unlike in most of the committees in England, women were not represented on the executive of the GCBRC.<sup>220</sup> A distinct ladies committee was instead formed. The founders appointed, “Mrs Irwin, Mrs Kennedy and Mrs Davidson,” were the wives of councillors Irwin, Kennedy and Davidson.<sup>221</sup> These socially concerned women supported their husbands’ work. The ladies committee oversaw fundraising initiatives like lace and needlework sales.<sup>222</sup> Much of this was manufactured in Corporation run, Belgian workrooms. These served as a source of employment for refugee women, as one advert for Belgian lace outlined: “By purchasing this dainty lace work you are giving employment to those sorely stricken women who were thrown out of work by the War.”<sup>223</sup> The production of needlework and lace celebrated the traditional crafts of Belgium, whilst also providing an attractive product for Scottish purchasers. Fundraising activities for Belgian refugees in Scotland were at times aimed at the female consumer with children. A doll’s fair organised by Ethel Cochrane Shanks of Jordanhill aimed to give a “Christmas shopping” opportunity “at ordinary prices” to assist “our little Belgian friends.”<sup>224</sup>

Despite generosity toward GCBRC appeals, fundraising inevitably brought challenges. Compassion fatigue set in as some began to resent the nation’s guests, and those raising money on their behalf.<sup>225</sup> Appeals for charitable donations were turned down as the War progressed. Letter writing members of the public declared that efforts to assist refugees were “overdone” and that “charity began at home.”<sup>226</sup> This changing mood, Pedersen argues, saw the charitable spirit of the British public cool.<sup>227</sup> A report in the *Falkirk Herald*, in April 1915, noted that the

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 16. Collection boxes were located in towns such as Dingwall, Beaully and Castle Douglas.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, 11/13. Additional funds were also received from Denmark and Cuba.

<sup>219</sup> Janet K. Watson, “Khaki Girls, VADs, and Tommy’s Sisters: Gender and Class in First World War Britain,” *The International History Review*, 19 no. 1 (1997): 32-51, 36.

<sup>220</sup> Gill, “Brave Little Belgium,” 141; GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 - April 1915, October 21, 1914, C/13/53.

<sup>221</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915- April 1916, January 4, 1916, C/13/52.

<sup>222</sup> “An Exhibition and Sale,” *Daily Record*, May 4, 1918, 2.

<sup>223</sup> “At Grieve’s,” *Fife Free Press & Kirkaldy Guardian*, August 14, 1915, 8.

<sup>224</sup> “Letters to the Editor: Dolls fair for Belgian Children,” *Motherwell Times*, November 13, 1914, 6. The fairs were complete with a concert, a competition and a visit from “popular nursery characters.”

<sup>225</sup> Christine Kinealy, *The Great Irish Famine: Impact, Ideology and Rebellion*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 52. Kinealy’s discussion of famine fatigue in relation to the Great Irish famine provides useful insights into compassion fatigue.

<sup>226</sup> “Town Notes,” *The Kilmarnock Herald*, July 26, 1916, 2.

<sup>227</sup> Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare and Citizenship,” 986.

Falkirk Town Council had allowed appeal letters to “lie on the table.”<sup>228</sup> The report further commented on this “unpleasant reflection” remarking that the local town council was in “unenviable isolation” in its refusal to assist the GCBRC.<sup>229</sup> Falkirk Town Council, however, were not the only organisation to decline to donate. A working men’s association in the mining village of Twechar also refused to assist refugees. It argued that Belgians in the area appeared adequately provided for.<sup>230</sup> Even city councillors exhibited hesitance toward issuing further GCBRC appeals. In one council debate the question of Belgians’ military service and employment was brought up:

For once Mr Turner seemed to carry the whole town council with him. It was over his suggestion that the Belgian Refugee business is being overdone, especially when Belgians of military age are being engaged by the Corporation when they decline to give employment to full bodied Britishers under the age of 35 years.<sup>231</sup>

Across Britain, refugees’ employment and recruitment was highlighted as a source of tension. To combat this, appeal literature stressed that refugees were deserving. A letter issued by the WRC in Birmingham highlighted that only deserving refugees who were “widowed, ill or infirm” required financial support in the city.<sup>232</sup>

To critics of relief, assisting refugees contradicted the treatment of the indigenous poor. Yet, the Corporation’s detractors conceded that the way in which relief was organised offered a model for the future assistance of the vulnerable. Bailkin argues that the treatment of refugees in twentieth century Britain has been influential in the formulation of domestic welfare policy.<sup>233</sup> In Kilmarnock, a United Free Church congregation considered what could be done for its “own” in light of the assistance given to Belgians.<sup>234</sup> Why the poor were placed “upon the mercy of the parish council,” when there were more humane alternatives was a powerful question and one which was seized upon by socialists.<sup>235</sup> When refugees left Glasgow in 1919 and accommodation donated to refugees was freed up, the GCBRC was “inundated” with appeals from Glaswegians seeking assistance with housing.<sup>236</sup>

Disgruntled citizens and disillusioned donors were not the only difficulty for the

<sup>228</sup> “United Free Presbytery and Belgian Refugees,” *Falkirk Herald*, April 10, 1915, 4.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>230</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Belgian Refugees Committee, Letter from Twechar Works, March 22, 1915, BK 17/3/1/1.

<sup>231</sup> “Belgian Refugees,” *The Bailie*, January 13, 1915, 9.

<sup>232</sup> BWC, Birmingham Refugees Committee, War Refugees Committee Appeal Letter, April, 1918, MS65/1.

<sup>233</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 201.

<sup>234</sup> “United Free Presbytery and Belgian Refugees,” *Falkirk Herald*, April 10, 1915, 4.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>236</sup> “Glasgow Town Council,” *Forward*, April 26, 1919, 4. *Forward*’s journalists noted this stressing that while vacant mansions, hostels and estates were “good enough” for “Belgians and Serbians” ordinary “Glasgow people” were excluded from receiving assistance with housing.

GCBRC. The numerous charities which existed in Scotland to raise funds for refugees meant that the GCBRC had to compete. While attempts were made to co-ordinate relief, most charities operated individually.<sup>237</sup> The GCBRC may have been the largest refugee charity in Scotland but the Belgian Relief Fund (BRF) also attracted support. The BRF sought to raise funds to assist displaced people within Belgium. Its chairman was the influential Patrick S. Dunn, a ship owner, Belgian Vice Consul and Chairman of the Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts.<sup>238</sup> Dr Charles Sarolea, Belgian Consul to Scotland was also involved with the BRF, lecturing on its behalf.<sup>239</sup>

Similarly worded newspaper appeals made by both the GCBRC and the BRF led to confusion amongst donors. Advertisements for both organisations even appeared on the same pages of newspapers.<sup>240</sup> A Corporation advert, for instance, announced: “Maintenance of Belgian Refugees, over 8,000 already received in Scotland and many more arrive daily.”<sup>241</sup> While the BRFs appeal stated: “Appeal for the starving millions in Belgium and also for funds to clothe the refugees coming into Scotland.”<sup>242</sup> Although the BRF did contribute some funds to Glasgow Corporation, this amount was negligible. Disagreement between the Corporation and the BRF resulted in a frank meeting on February 1, 1915.<sup>243</sup> During the meeting the Corporation asserted that: “the small amount being received by the Corporation executive committee from the Belgian Relief Fund for maintenance of refugees in Scotland is totally inadequate to meet the requirements.”<sup>244</sup> The relationship between the BRF and the Corporation was fraught. The BRF was accused of duping the public regarding donations. The Corporation’s territorialism in respect of securing funds is perhaps understandable.

The introduction of the War Charities Act, 1916, curbed embezzlement of charitable funds.<sup>245</sup> According to Grant, mounting media criticism of philanthropic appeals prior to the introduction of the act illustrated growing public intransigence toward charitable giving.<sup>246</sup> In

<sup>237</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 - April 1915, February 1, 1915, C/13/51; GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914 - November 1914, September 3, 1914, C/13/51. Glasgow Corporation had provided the BRF with a substantial grant of £2000 before refugees arrived in Scotland.

<sup>238</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow November 1914 - April 1915, February 1, 1915, C/13/51.

<sup>239</sup> “£170 From Dr Sarolea’s Lecture,” *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, November 16, 1914, 4; “Dr Charles Saroléato visit Aberdeen,” *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, May 12 1917, 2. Saroléa also raised money for his own “Relief and Reconstruction” appeal through his literary magazine *Everyman*.

<sup>240</sup> *The Daily Record*, April 2, 1914, 1.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>243</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 126; Percy Alden MP, a leading WRC member mediated. Alden, a campaigner of civil liberties and humanitarian issues went on to work on behalf of Save the Children and was later killed by a V1 Rocket in 1944.

<sup>244</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow November 1914 - April 1915, February 1, 1915, C/13/51.

<sup>245</sup> Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action*, 9.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid*, 134. Following the Act’s introduction only verified and registered charitable organisations were allowed to continue to raise money.

Scotland, *Forward* was foremost amongst the press in accusing the BRF of fraud. The socialist weekly called for a public “enquiry” into how money donated to the BRF was spent.<sup>247</sup> The newspaper alleged that the leading Glasgow papers, the *Herald* and the *Star* were colluding with the BRF in overcharging for advertising, then misappropriating the money.<sup>248</sup> *Forward* encouraged its readers to ensure that their local Co-operative did not donate to the BRF.<sup>249</sup> *Forward*, however, stopped short of alleging that the Corporation was involved.<sup>250</sup> *Forward* was not the only media outlet questioning where and how Belgian funds were spent. Robert Donald, of the Britain-wide *Daily Chronicle*, also cast doubt on the ways in which organisations spent money.<sup>251</sup> Professor Sarolea’s Relief and Reconstruction Fund, was singled out.<sup>252</sup> While the Charity Commission admonished Sarolea of any wrong doing, his poor management practices were criticised.<sup>253</sup> Alexander Walker critiqued Sarolea’s involvement with the BRF too, arguing that people “misunderstood” where their donations were going.<sup>254</sup> Despite later donations, of as much as £2,000 from Sarolea’s Relief and Reconstruction Fund to the GCBRC, the Corporation turned down further association with the professor after 1916.<sup>255</sup>

The Corporation also resisted the fundraising actions of the BRF. It insisted, for example, on charging the BRF for the rent of halls used by the group for fundraising and it declined permission for the BRF to carry-out public activities such as badge sales.<sup>256</sup> Despite this, an association between the BRF and Glasgow Corporation was maintained, as clothing donated to the Relief Fund was given to the refugees under the Corporation’s care. Yet GCBRC was public in its denouncement of the BRF:

Considerable dubiety exists in the public mind on account of the numerous appeals that have been issued all over the country for Belgian Relief Funds and it cannot be made

<sup>247</sup> “Belgian Relief Funds,” *Forward*, April 24 1915, 3.

<sup>248</sup> “The BRF Sings Dumb,” *Forward*, May 22, 1915, 2.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>250</sup> “Belgian Relief Funds,” *Forward*, April 24, 1915, 3. The article stated clearly: “It should be noted that this refers particularly to the BRF and not to the fund relieving Belgian Refugees in Scotland . . . which is under Corporation Control and of which Mr Walker the city Assessor is in charge.”

<sup>251</sup> Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action*, 104. Grant notes that Donald launched a thinly veiled criticism of Charles Sarolea and his fundraising efforts. The Relief & Reconstruction Fund which raised, £50,000, had no board or oversight.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid*, 104.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid*, 104.

<sup>254</sup> CRC, Correspondence of Charles Sarolea, Letter from Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee, December 5, 1914, SAR COLL 80.

<sup>255</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow November 1916 - April 1917, December 19, 1916, C/13/54; Sarolea’s further offers to speak on behalf of the GCBRC were turned down.

<sup>256</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow November 1914 - April 1915, October 9, 1914, C/13/51.



too plain that all such appeals are issued in aid of Belgians still in Belgium, and not on behalf of refugees in Scotland.<sup>257</sup>

Future Corporation appeals distinguished themselves as the official Scottish appeal and the endorsement of notable individuals helped legitimate this title.<sup>258</sup>

### Employing Refugees

The financial burden of assisting refugees was considerable, therefore encouraging refugees to take up employment was a priority for the Corporation. The question of employing refugees was, however, contentious. There was a recent history of xenophobic disturbances in the decades before the First World War, notably there had been violent Sinophobic incidents associated with the Seamen's Strike of 1911.<sup>259</sup> This led to concern within the LGB about the potential for violent action amongst trade unionists if Belgians were regarded as a cheap source of substitute labour. Robert Young, general Secretary of the Amalgamated Society for Engineers, explained that trade union reservations were based on a concern that Belgians would be given priority over local workers: ". . .if there were any slackening in employment our Belgian friends would be retained at the expense of the British worker."<sup>260</sup> Young's apprehensions regarding a downturn were based on pre-war experience. Treble has identified, there were several employment slumps followed by short periods of recovery for industrial workers prior to the War.<sup>261</sup> Yet the increase in manufacturing and wartime recruitment created labour shortages rather than unemployment.<sup>262</sup>

Belgian Consul, Charles Sarolea, argued that Belgian refugees were a vital resource to the war economy.<sup>263</sup> In a letter to the *Scotsman* Saroléastated:

I yesterday received a visit from the head of a famous Scottish firm. He informed me that this firm may have to close their works because the majority of their spinners had

<sup>257</sup> IWMA, Glasgow Corporation, *Please Read This*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1915) BEL 99/10, 7.

<sup>258</sup> IWMA, Glasgow Corporation, *The Belgian Refugees Scotland's National Appeal*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916), BEL 6 99/16, 9. A 1916 publication included statements of commendation from; Viscount Gladstone, the Archbishop of York, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Principle of Aberdeen University George Adam Smith

<sup>259</sup> Colin Holmes, *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society*, (London: Routledge, 1978), 23. In 1911 the National Seamen and Firemen's Union organised against Chinese labour, this led to attacks on Chinese businesses.

<sup>260</sup> IWMA, Local Government Board, *Minutes Of Evidence Taken Before Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country* (London: HMSO, 1915), BEL 1/21, 25.

<sup>261</sup> J.H. Treble, "The Seasonal Demand for Adult Labour in Glasgow 1890-1914," *Social History*, 3 no 1. (1978): 43-60, 44. The periods of 1901-1903 and 1907-1910 were particularly bad periods of unemployment for shipbuilders on the Clyde.

<sup>262</sup> Peter Dewey, "The New Warfare and Economic Mobilisation," in *Britain and the First World War* ed. John Turner, (London: Routledge, 1988), 74.

<sup>263</sup> "Belgian Refugees in Edinburgh District," *Scotsman*, October 26, 1914, 10.

to leave for the front. He would be too glad to engage a number of highly-skilled Belgian spinners who are present in this country.<sup>264</sup>

The organised and political labour movement in Glasgow remained sceptical about what role the Belgians would have. The ILP's council representative for Govan, Patrick Dollan, claimed before city councillors, in 1914, that the Corporation's employment of Belgian joiners in the construction of army huts adversely affected Scottish tradesmen.<sup>265</sup> Joiners were not the only trade unhappy with the Belgian presence, the Amalgamated Furnishings Trade Union complained that skilled Belgian craftsmen were limiting employment prospects in the city.<sup>266</sup> The Edinburgh District Trades Council voiced concerns regarding the employment of Belgians as painters too.<sup>267</sup> This was surprising as Belgians were forbidden from entering the Edinburgh area.

The Corporation response outlined that Belgian workmen were: “. . . employed only when home labour could not be obtained or when the Bloomin British working man . . . absolutely declined to do a fair day's work.”<sup>268</sup> Despite the Corporation's mockery of Dollan as “the longhaired man from Govan,” the GCBRC sought approval for the employment of Belgians from representatives of trade unions. Meetings were held between Alexander Walker and the radical Glasgow Trades Council (GTC) to iron out issues relating to Belgians' employment in December 1914.<sup>269</sup> Nationally, the LGB looked to solve the dilemma posed by the employment of refugees by arranging it in a manner which created the least friction. The Hatch Committee sought the opinions of trade unions prior to reaching a decision.<sup>270</sup> The Committee also enquired into the political make up of relief committees. This is apparent in a question posed to Alexander Walker by Sir T. H. Elliot in an interview for the committee: “Are any of your magistrates Working men. . . you know what I mean by working men I use that expression for want of a better one? They are members of what we call the Labour Party?”<sup>271</sup> Elliot wanted to guarantee that men “in receipt of weekly wages” had a say in refugee affairs.<sup>272</sup>

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, 10. Saroléawent on to quip that “if our forefathers had acted in the same way the Huguenot refugees from France they would not have founded many flourishing industries”.

<sup>265</sup> “A Nasty Knock,” *The Bailie*, November 18, 1914, 4.

<sup>266</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1915-November 1915, June 15, 1915, C/13/51.

<sup>267</sup> “Houses for Belgian Refugees: A Protest,” *Edinburgh Evening News*, September 15, 1915, 6. They claimed that this was contributing to the unemployment of those who earning a living in the building trades across Scotland.

<sup>268</sup> “A Nasty Knock,” *The Bailie*, November 18, 1914, 4.

<sup>269</sup> GCA, Minutes of Glasgow & District Trades Council, 1914-1917, December 9, 1914, TD 2020.

<sup>270</sup> IWMA, Local Government Board, *Minutes Of Evidence Taken Before the Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country*, (London: HMSO, 1915) BEL 1/21, 63.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 63.

The majority of city councillors came from a well-connected business elite.<sup>273</sup> Elliot was keen to ensure that the Corporation's Committee was "thoroughly representative of all . . . classes of people."<sup>274</sup> Alexander Walker's response highlighted the important role ILP councillor James Stewart, played as a member of the GCBRC.<sup>275</sup> Stewart was regarded as a committed progressive.<sup>276</sup>

The LGB's solution to the conundrum of how to employ Belgians was to arrange all work for refugees through the labour exchanges.<sup>277</sup> This guaranteed British workers priority for vacancies. Where British workers could not fill vacancies, Belgians were eligible. The collection of detailed information for the refugee register provided state authorities with thorough data on refugees' occupations.<sup>278</sup> This information was processed by the LGB and the labour exchanges, which categorised Belgians' occupations. More than one hundred separate categories were recorded.<sup>279</sup> The work of the Hatch Committee demonstrates what Burk describes as the wider "interventionist" approach taken by central government during the War to regulate industry.<sup>280</sup> The use of labour exchanges to facilitate employment was significant too. Gladstone observes that the labour exchange was a new phenomenon in Edwardian Britain, although they sought to relieve unemployment for the working classes they were mistrusted by trade unions.<sup>281</sup> The Corporation's decision to bring the Trades Council and the local labour exchanges together sought to address union reservations about association with the state.<sup>282</sup>

Finding employment for refugees was a priority for the GCBRC. Working refugees contributed their wages to their own upkeep. Labour exchanges assisted many refugees to find employment. A *Scotsman* article reported that by November 1916 over 2,500 refugees had found work in Glasgow.<sup>283</sup> This included refugees formerly occupied in distinguished

<sup>273</sup> Richard, H. Trainor. "The Elite," in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 234.

<sup>274</sup> IWMA, Local Government Board, *Minutes Of Evidence Taken Before the Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country*, (London: HMSO, 1915) BEL 1/21, 63.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 63. James Stewart had risen to prominence as a successful barber and champion of workers' rights in Glasgow. His place as a left-wing member of the committee was significant, his involvement served to ensure that the labour movement was seen to be endorsing relief.

<sup>276</sup> "Catholic Socialist Notes," *Forward*, February 26, 1916, 4; "Barbers' Champion," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, March 18, 1931, 8; "Appointment of Tribunal For Glasgow," *Daily Record*, February 11, 1916, 3. This is evident from his appointment, by the Lord Provost, to the Local Military Tribunal in 1916.

<sup>277</sup> Local Government Board, *First Report of the Departmental Committee*, 9.

<sup>278</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the Work undertaken by the British Government*, 87.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>280</sup> Burk, "Introduction," 6.

<sup>281</sup> David Gladstone, *The Twentieth Century Welfare State*, (Basingstoke: McMillan Press 1999), 13.

<sup>282</sup> GCA, Minutes of Glasgow & District Trades Council, 1914-1917, December 9, 1914, TD2020.

<sup>283</sup> "Belgian Exiles in a Friendly City," *Scotsman*, November 9, 1916, 4.

professions such as a “professor,” a “physician” and a “surgeon” who now worked “enthusiastically” as labourers and tramway inspectors.<sup>284</sup> The article stressed that these professionals were “no slackers” and that they had worked hard until their qualifications were accepted.<sup>285</sup> Despite such newspaper reports, Belgian professionals found considerable difficulty in finding work. As the Ministry of Health report on Belgian refugees published in 1920, acknowledged, the employment scheme devised by the Hatch Committee penalised the middle classes.<sup>286</sup> Many of those with professions were, as the report remarked, “not able or willing to adapt themselves to do work other than they were accustomed to.”<sup>287</sup>

In communities where there were large refugee populations, Belgians were employed in munition factories.<sup>288</sup> By Holmes’ estimates, 66% of Belgian men and 20% of Belgian women had permits to work in munitions by 1918.<sup>289</sup> Increasing demand for munitions, following the Shell Crisis led the government to expand the production of munitions and other war related industries, this was facilitated by the Munitions of War Act of 1915.<sup>290</sup> Dilution of labour was introduced and unskilled workers entered the factories. Whilst munition workers in Scotland were predominantly female, many of the men employed were refugees.<sup>291</sup>

In Glasgow, evidence suggests that munitions were an important source of employment for refugees. In total, around 1,600 Belgians were employed in munitions in Scotland during 1916.<sup>292</sup> Male and female refugees alike were occupied in manufacturing munitions, alongside their Scots colleagues. Marriages between workers at munitions factories were not uncommon, suggesting that relations between Scots and Belgians working alongside one another were positive.<sup>293</sup> Munitions workers entering factories were provided with training at Glasgow’s Royal Technical College and worked under a skilled supervisor.<sup>294</sup> The tough conditions and long hours associated with munitions work, however, was not suited to all refugees. The Munitions Tribunal tried three refugees, in 1916, for “slacking” and attempting to change job without permission.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>286</sup> Local Government Board, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 13.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>288</sup> Laqua, “Belgian exiles,” 114.

<sup>289</sup> Colin Holmes, *John Bull’s Island Immigration and British Society 1871-1971*, (London: Routledge 1988), 91.

<sup>290</sup> Kirby, “Industry, Agriculture and Trade Unions,” 54.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>292</sup> “Belgian Exiles in a Friendly City,” *Scotsman*, November 21, 1916, 4.

<sup>293</sup> SP, Marriage Certificate of Joseph Somers to Jeanne Van Steppen, 644/9 158, September 2, 1918, District of Milton in the Burgh of Glasgow; SP, Marriage Certificate of Louis Van Ginneken to Catherine Campell, 644/9 385, December 10, 1918, District of Milton in the Burgh of Glasgow.

<sup>294</sup> “Royal Technical College Glasgow,” *Daily Record*, September 24, 1915, 1.

<sup>295</sup> “Slacking Belgians,” *Daily Record*, June 2, 1916, 5.

Refugees were represented in other areas of heavy industry in Scotland, although mostly in moderate numbers. As Kirby notes, dilution removed the distinctions that had existed between skilled and unskilled workers.<sup>296</sup> Refugees were therefore employed in the largest steel and engineering works in Glasgow and beyond. For instance, at least ten refugees were employed in Beardmore's Parkhead forge, while at least thirty refugees worked at the Steel Company of Scotland in Hamilton.<sup>297</sup> Belgians worked at J & G Weir's Cathcart factory too, manufacturing boilers and machinery.<sup>298</sup> Belgians also took up employment in industries which had traditionally been closed to outsiders such as ship building.<sup>299</sup> The Belgian presence in the shipyards, however, was small and caused less friction than the employment of Americans who were accused of undercutting wages.<sup>300</sup>

Trade unions resisted integration of Belgians into the labour market in the initial months of the War. It could be argued that the considerable donations made toward refugee relief by trade unions, were economic incentives to ensure that Belgians were kept out of certain occupations such as mining, iron, textiles and printing.<sup>301</sup> Over time, however, unionised refugees were accepted. In 1915 the Amalgamated Society for Engineers offered unionised Belgian mechanics membership without a fee.<sup>302</sup> Furthermore, *Forward* ran several favourable articles on talks given by Belgian trade unionists.<sup>303</sup> Clydeside radicals focussed on working hours, wages and deskilling rather than foreign competition.<sup>304</sup> However, Jenkinson has noted that racism did creep into the rhetoric of Red Clydeside in the aftermath of the War.<sup>305</sup> The representation of only small numbers of refugees in heavy industries, beyond munitions, in Scotland is suggestive that refugees were likely not regarded a threat. In Birmingham, by

<sup>296</sup> Kirby, "Industry, Agriculture and Trade Unions," 56.

<sup>297</sup> "Ten Belgians in Employment," *Scotsman*, November 26, 1915, 6; "Passing Notes," *The Hamilton Advertiser*, January 30, 1915, 4.

<sup>298</sup> Glasgow University Archive (hereafter GUA), Correspondence of William Weir, Letter from Henry McLintock, May 13, 1915, UGD 96/1 40.

<sup>299</sup> SP, Marriage Certificate of Jean Adriaenssens to Maria Eyland, 644/9 158, May 13, 1918, District of Milton in the Burgh of Glasgow.

<sup>300</sup> GUA, Correspondence of William Weir, Letter from Henry Mellon, June 19, 1915 DC 96 1/41; Brian Ripley and John McHugh. *John Maclean*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 93. The employment of a small number of Americans in the shipyards was a source of tension. The letter to Weir from Mellon identifies that Scottish industrialists were attracted by the anti-union sentiments of some American workers. Mellon informed Weir that 60% of Boilermakers in America "ain't union."

<sup>301</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Belgian Refugee Committee Cash Books, 1915 D-CC 4/7/1; IWMA, Glasgow Corporation, Belgian Refugees Committee Subscriptions, October 1916, BEL 6 99/6, 3-6.

<sup>302</sup> "Trade Union Recognition of Belgian Mechanics," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, August 23, 1915, 7.

<sup>303</sup> "Catholic Socialist Notes," *Forward*, May 29, 1915, 3.

<sup>304</sup> Whiteside, "The British Population at War," 91.

<sup>305</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Black Sailors on Red Clydeside: Rioting, Reactionary Trade Unionism and Conflicting Notions of 'Britishness' Following the First World War," *Twentieth Century British History*, 19 no. 1, (2008); 29-60. Jenkinson has shown this through investigation of the Glasgow Race Disturbances of 1919. Industrial strife is considered a contributing factor in the racist attacks on African sailors in January 1919.

comparison, a number of refugees were employed in various heavy industries across the city from as early as 1914. This led to criticism that Belgians had come to Birmingham purely for work.<sup>306</sup>

In Scotland the Federation of Miners, however, continued to oppose the employment of Belgians. The Federation argued that this was principally a matter of “safety.”<sup>307</sup> Foreigners, they reasoned, could only be employed either “underground” or “over ground” if they spoke English.<sup>308</sup> The supposed apprehensions of the Federation, some argued, masked wider xenophobia toward Lithuanian miners.<sup>309</sup> A *Scotsman* article speculated:

The real ground of opposition is said to be this – that the Scottish miners fear that, if an exception were made in favour of Belgians, it would greatly weaken the case against the employment of Poles in the Lanarkshire pits, and in view of a concerted effort to secure the total exclusion of Poles after the War.<sup>310</sup>

Lithuanian mineworkers had been earlier used as strike breakers in the pits of Lanarkshire.<sup>311</sup>

The radical Lanarkshire County Miners’ Union on the other hand gave strong economic and political support to Lithuanian miners, campaigning to assist the dependents of those who had gone to Russia to fight.<sup>312</sup> Belgians were indeed the target of these discriminatory restrictions, they nevertheless entered the pits.<sup>313</sup> In Lanarkshire at least thirty refugees worked in the mines by 1915.<sup>314</sup> The employment of Belgians was unsurprising, coal was one of Belgium’s chief exports.<sup>315</sup> The renown of coal production in Belgium had led the *Bailie* to remark that many Scots had regarded Belgium before the War as “a glorified Lanarkshire with improved taste in horticulture.”<sup>316</sup>

Refugees also found work in non-industrial sectors of the economy. Taking evidence from E.J. Cheney, Assistant Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, the Hatch Committee heard

<sup>306</sup> BWC, Birmingham Refugees Committee, Employment Committee Minutes, January 1915, MS 652/15. A drafted letter criticised Belgians who had come to Birmingham as economic migrants for wasting committee funds. It should be noted that overall that the number of Belgians in Birmingham was much fewer than that in Glasgow.

<sup>307</sup> “Belgian Refugees,” *Falkirk Herald*, January 9, 1915, 2.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>309</sup> “Private Correspondence,” *Scotsman*, August 12, 1915, 6.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 6. The *Scotsman* erroneously described Lithuanians as Poles. Lithuanians had worked in the mines of Lanarkshire since the 1870s.

<sup>311</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Colonial, Refugee and Allied Civilians After the First World War*, (Routledge, New York, 2020), 29.

<sup>312</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “The Impact of the First World War in Scotland on Migrant Lithuanians C. 1917-1921,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 31 no. 2 (2013): 171-188, 178.

<sup>313</sup> GCA, The Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society, Minute Book no. 79. 29 January, 1915.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> Dirk Luyten, “Post-War Economies (Belgium),” in *1914-1918 Online International Encyclopaedia of the First World War*, ed. Ute Daniel et al, (Berlin: Freie Universitat, 2014), [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/post-war\\_economies\\_belgium](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/post-war_economies_belgium) [Last Accessed 02/08/2019].

<sup>316</sup> “Men You Know: Emile Camaerts,” *The Bailie*, March 1, 1916, 3.

that refugees offered a solution to the shortage of agricultural workers in rural counties.<sup>317</sup> Belgians, it was thought, might replace seasonal Irish potato pickers and Scots lost to emigration.<sup>318</sup> Border villages around Teviotdale and Lockerbie received parties of Belgian refugees, who found employment as farm workers.<sup>319</sup> Regardless of the need, the majority of Belgians remained in the urban environment. Most rural locales in Scotland were out of bounds to refugees as they were prohibited areas. Furthermore, the reliance of farmers on traditional methods of recruitment meant labour exchanges were not provided with information on available vacancies.<sup>320</sup>

As the cost of living increased from 1914-1915, Belgians like their Scots colleagues exhibited frustration towards their pay and working conditions. Whiteside notes that steep increases in wartime rent and food prices hurt the working class hardest.<sup>321</sup> Whiteside's assertion contradicts Winter's thesis regarding the war improving living conditions for the poorest.<sup>322</sup> Belgians employed at Beardmore's appealed to the Glasgow Munitions Tribunal, requesting certificates of transfer as they felt that their wages were too low.<sup>323</sup> Refugees were not only vulnerable to changes in the market, unscrupulous employers also took advantage of them. At G & J Weir, for instance, refugees were paid a low rate of 25 shillings a week.<sup>324</sup> This led some such as William McLintock, a prominent Glasgow accountant and host to a refugee working at G & J Weir, to suggest that William Weir might be exploiting his Belgian workers.<sup>325</sup> Despite this allegation, other well-connected Scots approached Weir to gain employment for their Belgian guests.<sup>326</sup>

As Hughes notes, the Belgian government dispatched Socialist leader Emile Vandervelde, Minister of State, to inspect the working conditions of Belgians.<sup>327</sup> This was to guard against mistreatment of refugees. German propaganda alleged that refugees were little

<sup>317</sup> Local Government Board, *First Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the President of the LGB*, 22.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 22; 60.

<sup>319</sup> "Teviotdale Farmers Club," *Hawick Express & Advertiser*, February 5, 1915, 3; "Belgian Refugees," *Dumfries & Galloway Standard*, November 4, 1914, 2.

<sup>320</sup> Local Government Board, *First Report of the Departmental Committee*, 22.

<sup>321</sup> Whiteside, "The British Population at War," 90. Sharp rises in the cost of living resulted in sustained industrial action and the eventual introduction of rent controls and food subsidies.

<sup>322</sup> Winter, "The Impact of the First World War on Civilian Health," 497.

<sup>323</sup> "Ten Belgians in Employment," *Scotsman*, November 26, 1915, 6. Their request was refused, the court stated that "the firm had treated the applicants remarkably well."

<sup>324</sup> GUA, Correspondence of William Weir, Letter from Henry McLintock to William, May 12, 1915, UGD 96/1 40.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>326</sup> GUA, Correspondence, Letter from William Weir to Countess Glasgow, June 6, 1915 DC 96 1/41. Weir replied that he was unable to assist on account of "trade unions," he further remarked that he had received "about two thousand applications of a similar nature."

<sup>327</sup> Hughes, "Finding Belgian Refugees," 216.

more than indentured labourers in Britain.<sup>328</sup> The Belgian government and the LGB were eager to refute such assertions. Vandervelde was a well-known figure to the British left. He led the Belgian general strike of 1913 and favoured Belgian annexation of the Congo Free State from King Leopold in 1908.<sup>329</sup> When visiting England on holiday in 1912 Vandervelde was invited to an impromptu lunch held by the ILP in his honour.<sup>330</sup> His involvement in refugee affairs also counteracted socialist criticisms. Vandervelde visited Scotland twice between 1914-1915. First, inspecting conditions for refugees employed at the large Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society factory at Shieldhall in 1914, where he remarked that the conditions were “excellent.”<sup>331</sup> He then visited refugees in the direct care of the Corporation in 1915, where he “cordially thanked the Corporation and the people of Glasgow” for assisting his compatriots.<sup>332</sup>

Views on providing assistance for refugees amongst Scotland’s leftist circles varied. Radicals who strenuously opposed the War, however, directed hostility toward Belgians.<sup>333</sup> In November 1914, *Forward* contended that atrocity stories emerging from Belgium were lies. It complained that the “usual stories about two Belgian refugees with their hands cut off” were misinformation.<sup>334</sup> It argued that those who promoted this propaganda, including Emmeline Pankhurst, were “recruiting agents.”<sup>335</sup> It was the Belgian’s receipt of housing and welfare from the Corporation that was the primary focus of ILP criticism. John Wheatley, a prominent figure in the ILP, noted in *Forward*’s Catholic Socialist Notes column: “Very few of the wealthy people who are fondling the refugees as they would a family of kittens accept as a guarding principle in social life that every family should be comfortably housed.”<sup>336</sup> In highlighting the Corporation’s treatment of refugees, Wheatley derided liberal Glasgow’s indifference towards

<sup>328</sup> Claire O’Neill, “The Irish Home Front 1914-1918 with particular reference to the treatment of Belgian refugees, prisoners of war, enemy aliens and war casualties,” PhD Dissertation (National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2006), 84.

<sup>329</sup> Janet L. Polasky, “The Insider as Outsider: Emile Vandervelde and the Spanish Civil War,” *Revue Belge d’Histoire Contemporaine*, 18, (1987): 343-355. Some Belgian socialists favoured annexation of the Congo from King Leopold, arguing that Belgium could play a humanitarian role.

<sup>330</sup> “Great Struggle in Belgium,” *Labour Leader*, August 29, 1912, 355.

<sup>331</sup> GCA, The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Minute Book No 79, December 4, 1914, CWS-1/1/210.

<sup>332</sup> “Scottish Hospitality,” *Daily Record*, September 6, 1915, 3.

<sup>333</sup> “Miss Hobhouse says Louvain not Destroyed,” *Forward*, October 16, 1916, 3; This article described the “destruction of Louvain” as a “lie.”

<sup>334</sup> “How Atrocity Stories Keep Going,” *Forward*, November 7, 1914, 1. *Forward* published several articles by Arthur Ponsonby during the War on this theme.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>336</sup> “Catholic Socialist Notes,” *Forward*, October 24, 1914, 2; James, J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage and Sectarianism*, (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 68. Wheatley, a former miner and publican, came to prominence as a councillor for the Tollcross and Baillieston area. He was a leading figure within the Rent Strikes of 1915. Wheatley was the author of the weekly Catholic Socialist Notes column in *Forward*.



the city's destitute.<sup>337</sup> Wheatley did not mention, in his *Forward* column, the role played by his comrade James Stewart in the GCBRC.

The perception that refugees received favourable treatment from the Corporation was damaging to some among the organised left. In reality, however, assistance provided by the Corporation was tied to an expectation that refugees would make a financial contribution to their upkeep. Employed Belgians, like refugee women receiving separation allowances, were obliged to donate a percentage of their wage for their upkeep. Guidance on this matter was given directly to the GCBRC by the LGB in early 1915.<sup>338</sup> As the Ministry of Health's post-war report on Belgian refugees remarked: "It was the view of the Belgian Official Committee, that refugees who found employment in the ordinary industrial system should maintain themselves independently as soon as they were in a position to do so."<sup>339</sup> Whilst not all refugees' wages allowed them to be independent immediately, the LGB stipulated that those who were in employment should make a "substantial" contribution to their own "lodging."<sup>340</sup>

The Corporation drew up guidelines on how much employed refugees should give. Guidelines suggested that working refugees should pay "12s per week for each adult person" and "2s 6d for each juvenile" under Corporation care.<sup>341</sup> These resolutions encouraged refugees to "support themselves."<sup>342</sup> How far this was achieved is unclear. For example, the Birmingham WRC similarly set guidelines on how much refugees should contribute, however, it struggled to coerce Belgians to make adequate payments. The "third" of wages requested by the voluntary committee seemed onerous.<sup>343</sup>

In spite of the employment of refugees in heavy industries that were well paid, employed refugees were reluctant to make contributions to the cost of their care. This led the Kirkintilloch Committee to clarify expectations of refugees by translating a memorandum of understanding. This served to ensure that all employed refugees at Lennoxton understood that they had to hand over a portion of their wages to the committee.<sup>344</sup> For refugees who were

<sup>337</sup> "British Refugees Sad Scenes in Scotland," *Forward*, October 24, 1914, 1. This article recounted the misfortunes of destitute Boer War veterans and homeless women and children forced to live on the streets.

<sup>338</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914-April 1915, January 15, 1915, C/13/52.

<sup>339</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 13.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid*, 103.

<sup>341</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Resolutions on Accommodation for Belgian Refugees, August 26, 1915, 1, RU4/5/163.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>343</sup> BWC, *Belgian Executive Committee*, January 4, 1915, MS 652/14.

<sup>344</sup> EDA, Kirkintilloch Refugees Committee, Letter to Belgian Refugees at Lennoxton, February, 1915, BK 17/3/1/1.

unemployed, the Corporation expected them to seek work. Guidelines on employment stipulated that:

. . . refugees in Glasgow and neighbourhood who are not in employment should if required by the committee in charge of the home in which they reside report themselves at the Belgian registration offices at 266 St. Vincent street, Glasgow, or to the convener of the local committee, every morning except Saturday and Sunday between 10 and 11 o'clock or at such other hour as may be arranged until they get work.<sup>345</sup>

The act of reporting at the Corporation's office daily, illustrated that many refugees struggled to find work.<sup>346</sup> The barriers of language, cultural differences and unfamiliarity with local employment practices were hard to overcome.<sup>347</sup>

Professionals, the LGB admitted, were unsuited and sometimes unwilling to engage in industrial employment.<sup>348</sup> Corporation minutes report that a number of refugees "refused" all employment offered by the labour exchange.<sup>349</sup> For some, this was because of a fear that it might affect their ability to perform their original occupation. Edouard Dralants, a Belgian musician, decided to leave his job as a munitions worker as he felt such dangerous work might damage his hand.<sup>350</sup> In a letter written on Dralants' behalf, Charles Saroléa remarked that the musician was "accustomed to live in very comfortable circumstances."<sup>351</sup>

These bourgeois pretensions were not an anomaly. Mary Boyle described how a refugee in her care, who gave his occupation as an "intellectual," had to be "escorted" several times to the labour exchange.<sup>352</sup> Some Belgians in Birmingham too were reported to have a similarly dissatisfactory attitude towards work, giving up their employment as it was "too draughty," "not light enough" objected to the "smell" or it was "cold."<sup>353</sup> Through the efforts of GCBRC

<sup>345</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Resolutions on Accommodation for Belgian Refugees, August 26, 1915, 1, RU4/5/163,

<sup>346</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 12. Neither the LGB or the Corporation kept detailed figures on unemployed refugees, however, the need issue guidance on this matter and the anecdotal evidence would imply that this was a problem.

<sup>347</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 294.

<sup>348</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 12.

<sup>349</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914-April 1915, January 15, 1915, C/13/51.

<sup>350</sup> CRC, Correspondence of Charles Sarolea, *Letter to Alexander Walker*, February, 1916, SAR COLL 80.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid. Saroléareported that Dralants had been forced to live with Belgians of the "peasant class" who were "now living in better circumstances than they did before the war." Saroléa even pleaded for the Corporation to grant Dralants return fare "as he preferred to return to Brussels."

<sup>352</sup> IWMA, Mary E Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, BEL 6100/5, 1918, 22-23. As Boyle remarked this individual may have been able to "plan streets . . . but no-one pined to employ Belgians in that capacity."

<sup>353</sup> BWC, Birmingham Refugees Committee, Employment Committee Minutes, 4 January 1915, MS 652/15.

many refugees found work, but those refugees living in Corporation accommodation who did not were encouraged to move on.<sup>354</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored the operation of the “refugee regime” in Scotland through investigation of interrelated themes. The chapter has examined the administration and financing of relief, as well as the employment of refugees. These subjects have been considered through analysis of records and archives which reflect on the wartime decisions made by the Corporation. These sources have identified that organising assistance for refugees in Scotland was a multifaceted endeavour. As Gatrell has noted, administration, fundraising and employment were prescient concerns for all bodies charged with assisting refugees.<sup>355</sup> The issues which Glasgow Corporation wrestled with, had wider significance to the role of the state during the War.<sup>356</sup>

Glasgow’s role in delivering relief was exceptional. As Jenkinson has argued, the city’s pioneering efforts in terms of health and social care gave it an advantageous position as a civic authority to deliver assistance.<sup>357</sup> The assumption of national responsibility for refugees necessitated that Glasgow Corporation act as both a local government and a charity. This it did successfully, raising hundreds of thousands of pounds on behalf of refugees and administering this aid as a municipal concern.<sup>358</sup>

Donations came from a cross-section of Scottish society who gave willingly. The dual influences of humanitarian sympathy and patriotic enthusiasm identified by Gill motivated donations which helped sustain the Corporation’s work.<sup>359</sup> By appealing to the regions of Scotland, the Corporation harnessed nationwide interest ensuring that relieving refugees was a sustainable endeavour.<sup>360</sup> The GCBRC also co-opted important institutions and individuals to assist refugees. Their endowments illustrate Glasgow’s importance as a city and the Corporation’s influence as a local authority.

By comparison to other cities in Britain, Glasgow’s role as an administrator of relief for all of Scotland was distinctive. Refugees under the GCBRC’s care received welfare from

<sup>354</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation, Resolutions on Accommodation for Belgian Refugees, RU4/5/163, August 26, 1915, 1.

<sup>355</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 6.

<sup>356</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 10; Edgerton, *Warfare State*, 12.

<sup>357</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering relief,” 187.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid*, 185.

<sup>359</sup> Gill, “Brave Little Belgium,” 141.

<sup>360</sup> Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action*, 27.

one of Britain's most experienced civic authorities. The powerful municipal government offered refugees comprehensive assistance. Critics, particularly on the left, perceived the holistic welfare assistance given to refugees as more generous than that which ordinary Scots received. Belgians were assisted with accommodation, medical treatment, schooling, burial, emergency aid and employment. The provision of these services in Glasgow, supports Bailkin's assertion that welfare interventions toward refugees were generous and benefitted Belgians significantly.<sup>361</sup>

The assistance refugees received came, however, with conditions attached. As the War progressed and the economy changed, refugees became expensive to support.<sup>362</sup> The Corporation became partially liable for costs it had not envisaged. Supplementing separation allowances and paying for medical treatment, although reclaimable, were major expenses. Therefore, refugees had to prove their entitlement by gaining employment and making financial contributions. Central government and local authority guidelines dictated how refugees should behave. In this sense the systems which ministered to refugees resembled the existing system of welfare.

Yet, refugees were not simply dependent upon welfare. Refugees were important in supporting the War economy. Moreover, refugees provided for themselves through their own wages. Belgians became integrated into the Scottish workforce. They were employed within the heavy industries of munitions, mining, steel, engineering and ship building. Trade union hostility, apparent at the beginning of the War, faded gradually. To radicals on Clydeside, it was employers rather than aliens who were the greatest threat during the War.<sup>363</sup>

Despite trade union acquiescence to the employment of refugees, sections of the labour movement were restrained in their support. Refugees, in their eyes, were an unwanted source of competition. They believed the generous assistance provided by the local authority to refugees was hypocritical. Revelations of corruption amongst wealthy philanthropists involved in other relief initiatives led to mistrust toward the Corporation's work.

This perception was skewed. For refugees, life in exile meant living under a parallel system of rules and regulations to those encountered by the local population.<sup>364</sup> As Torpey contends, the growing state exercised authority over its borders and perceived all foreigners with suspicion.<sup>365</sup> The Aliens Restriction Orders, in particular, had severe implications for

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<sup>361</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 24.

<sup>362</sup> Whiteside, "The British Population at War," 91.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>364</sup> Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien*, 40.

<sup>365</sup> John Torpey, "The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System," 252.

refugees. The state recorded refugees' personal information and curtailed their movement. The Corporation carried out its responsibilities for registering refugees with efficiency, using its sophisticated bureaucracy to fulfil this obligation.

Yet as Taylor records there were limits to the state's ability to enforce legislation.<sup>366</sup> Despite the diligence of GCBRC in reporting infringements, aliens' legislation was enforced inconsistently in Scotland. For the duration of the War refugees circumvented restrictions and were treated lightly when caught. Nevertheless, the process of gathering data on the civilian refugee population furnished central government with important logistical information which assisted with the employment, recruitment and repatriation of refugees. Elliot's assertion that gathering data was a form of state surveillance which mobilised the population toward warfare is demonstrated visibly in the case of Glasgow Corporation and its treatment of Belgian refugees.<sup>367</sup>

Central government support for Glasgow Corporation during the First World War reflected the emergency conditions of the "warfare state," described by Edgerton.<sup>368</sup> Under the "refugee regime" the state contracted-out the decision making process around refugees.<sup>369</sup> This is apparent in the powers invested in Glasgow Corporation. In delegating authority, central government gave Glasgow Corporation the ability to provide an expansive but controlled system of welfare.<sup>370</sup> This arrangement benefitted Glasgow Corporation, as the LGB served as the financial guarantor of refugees. The Corporation deferred to the LGB's guidance on precarious issues, such as the provision of allowances and the arrangement of employment.

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<sup>366</sup> Taylor, "Immigration, Statecraft and Public Health," 514.

<sup>367</sup> Elliot, "An Early Experiment," 175.

<sup>368</sup> Edgerton, *Warfare State*, 12; Winter, "The Impact of the First World War on Civilian Health in Britain," 497.

<sup>369</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 26.

<sup>370</sup> Checkland, "Maternal and Child Welfare," 122.

### Chapter 3

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#### Scottish Hospitality: Accommodating Refugees

##### Belgian Refugees

Over 6000 refugees presently receiving hospitality in Scotland

Government departments appealing to Scotland to provide for thousands more.

Urgent need for funds and hospitality.

Also of

Empty or furnished houses rent free

Lodging and board at modified terms <sup>1</sup>

Now that the repatriation of the Belgian refugees is drawing to a close, I desire on behalf of his majesty's government to express to all who have taken part in helping these unfortunate victims of the war our warm appreciation. . . homes were found for them and their necessities relieved with singular speed and efficiency.<sup>2</sup>

As the two statements above indicate, Glasgow Corporation embarked on an ambitious plan to shelter refugees. Accommodating Belgian refugees was to be the most significant challenge to face Glasgow Corporation, yet housing remained the refugees' greatest need. The efforts of Glasgow Corporation were successful, however, garnering praise nationally from Prime Minister David Lloyd George at the end of the War.

This chapter discusses the accommodation of refugees in Scotland. It identifies three distinct housing options for refugees: shared accommodation, self-supported accommodation and private accommodation. Each of these accommodation options is examined in turn and is related to the thesis' wider purpose, investigating Glasgow Corporation's assistance of Belgian refugees.

The provision of shared accommodation for refugees is first considered. The role Glasgow Corporation, welfare institutions and businesses had in facilitating this shared accommodation is discussed. Belgian refugees' residence in private accommodation is next examined. The chapter also investigates evidence of self-supporting refugees and discusses the context and circumstances of their living arrangements. Finally, the provision of private housing is considered. The chapter focuses particularly on those who offered hospitality and their motivations for doing so.

The arrival of Belgian refugees in Scotland was an unprecedented humanitarian

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<sup>1</sup> University of Edinburgh Centre for Research Collections (hereafter CRC), Belgian Refugees Appeal Letter, Corporation of Glasgow, February 10, 1915, SAR COLL 80.

<sup>2</sup> "The Prime Minister's Letter," *Scotsman*, May 24, 1919, 8.

emergency which led to a fragmented response. In this sense the reception of refugees in Glasgow mirrored what occurred in other British cities.<sup>3</sup> Glasgow Corporation, like other local committees, relied on those resources that were available, such as welfare institutions, to initially house refugees.<sup>4</sup> Glasgow Corporation institutionalised care for refugees. The ideals of asylum and protection, however, conflicted with notions of economic prudence and native entitlement. Local politics inevitably influenced decision making around refugees. Accommodating refugees thus evoked difficult questions for Scottish society. Nevertheless, the hospitality of private citizens bolstered the official response to the relief of refugees. Scots, ordinary and influential, filled the gap meeting the demand. As the chapter highlights, Belgians were not entirely dependent upon the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee (GCBRC). For some accommodation was temporary and many refugees were itinerant.

This chapter breaks new ground in terms of its detailed consideration of the housing of Belgian refugees. While the issue of accommodation has not been ignored by historians, the dispersal of refugees around Britain and the localised systems of relief meant that arrangements for accommodation were inconsistent. These issues have made researching the accommodation of refugees challenging. References to Belgians' housing or their opinions on it have proved minimal in the archived material examined. This is part of a broader difficulty in researching the history of the displaced. As discussed in the introduction, in relation to Gatrell, the marginal status of migrants in the past has meant that finding evidence of refugees' presence within archived material proves difficult.<sup>5</sup> Ewence notes the additional obstacles that are presented by the circumstances of Belgian refugees' dispersal around Britain: "Refugee populations in the regions were spread thin, stayed for relatively short periods and left little physical trace and even as potentially newsworthy subject matter, paled into insignificance."<sup>6</sup>

The Glasgow Corporation Refugee Register has been vital in piecing together an account of Belgians' living arrangements.<sup>7</sup> Gatrell identifies that bureaucratic records such as

<sup>3</sup> Peter Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5; Tony Kushner, "Local Heroes: Belgian Refugees in Britain during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 18 no. 1 (1999): 1-28, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England during the First World War," PhD Dissertation (McMaster University, 1977), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Gatrell, "Population displacement in the Baltic region in the twentieth century: from 'refugee studies' to refugee history," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 38 no. 1 (2007): 43-60, 54; Jerome Elie, "Histories of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee & Forced Migration Studies*, ed. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, Nando Sigona, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 30.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Ewence, "Belgian Refugees in Cheshire: "Place" and the Invisibility of the Displaced," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 36 no. 3 (2018): 232-257, 251.

<sup>7</sup> Glasgow City Archives, (hereafter GCA) Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3. The registers provide the names, ages of up to 8,200 refugees who came to Scotland. Only the addresses of 3100 refugees in Scotland are listed.

the register, although organised from the top down, provide the “best prospect” for historians interested in refugees.<sup>8</sup> For example, Scottish addresses recorded in the register have been used to trace where and with whom Belgians lived. Names of individual refugees and hosts referred to in local newspapers, council records and private correspondence have been crosschecked. Research for this chapter has also involved comparison between the settlement of refugees in Scotland and the arrangements made across Britain and beyond during the First World War. In considering this wider context of humanitarian assistance, the chapter provides a nuanced account of refugee settlement.

Discussing the accommodation of Belgian refugees involves unpicking ideas about home, movement and attachment to place. The findings of this chapter are therefore pertinent to the wider historiography of migration, as it provides insight into the ordinary lives of migrants. As Holmes has articulated, foreigners’ presence in British society stimulated diverse “social reactions and responses.”<sup>9</sup> While the chapter traces refugees’ lives in Scotland through registers and administrative documents, quantitative data is limited. Refugees too often moved between multiple addresses. As such, detailed, reliable figures on where and how long refugees settled cannot be given. Instead, the chapter provides numerous qualitative examples to illustrate its arguments. The temporary nature of the settlement of refugees in Scotland, highlighted by Ewence, is thus referred to throughout the chapter.<sup>10</sup>

The accommodation of Belgian refugees has not been discussed in detail by scholars. Focus has tended to fall on the initial arrangements made for housing refugees. Cahalan contends that measures to house refugees at the beginning of the War were modelled on humanitarian responses to forerunning events, particularly; the arrival of Eastern European Jews to Great Britain and the planned relief of Loyalists during the Ulster Crisis.<sup>11</sup> He argues that the blueprint of “solutions” from peace time crises were borrowed during the War.<sup>12</sup> The influx of thousands of Belgian refugees, however, demanded a response on a scale previously unimagined.

Exhibition spaces such as Alexandra Palace and Earl’s Court served as ideal temporary shelters for refugees, functioning as staging posts until permanent accommodation was found.<sup>13</sup> The solution to finding lasting accommodation options, with the capacity to host refugees, was

<sup>8</sup> Gatrell, “Population displacement in the Baltic Region,” 55.

<sup>9</sup> Colin Holmes, *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ewence, “Belgian Refugees in Cheshire,” 251.

<sup>11</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 27.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the Work Undertaken by the British Government in the Reception and Care of the Belgian Refugees*, (London: HMSO, 1920), 7.



to disperse Belgians around Britain. This, according to Kushner, became a priority for the War Refugees Committee (WRC) under the surreptitious management of the Local Government Board (LGB). Increasing numbers of refugees arrived in London via the ports of Folkestone and Dover following the fall of Ostend in October 1914.<sup>14</sup>

Accommodating refugees en masse in institutions designed to cater for the poor and infirm offered the most obvious and immediate solution. This strategy mirrored the central WRC response of using exhibition centres. Several historians have discussed how local committees dealt with the housing issue prompted by dispersal. Jenkinson identifies that local relief committees across Britain commandeered: “workhouses, hostels for vagrants and asylums.”<sup>15</sup> Buck argues that these institutions held a “stigma” for Edwardian society.<sup>16</sup> As Bailkin identifies, public criticism of the settlement of refugees in workhouses led the LGB to take steps to move refugees to more permanent forms of accommodation.<sup>17</sup>

Historians maintain that after refugees were first assisted in welfare institutions they were either moved to shared accommodation or to private homes.<sup>18</sup> As Elliot has observed, however, refugees’ residence was continually monitored.<sup>19</sup> In some instances too, refugees remained in mass institutional settings such as “Earl’s Court Camp” or Elisabethville.<sup>20</sup> Camp life was far from popular with refugees. Laqua believes that the strict regime at Elisabethville resulted in a riot centred on the camp’s isolation and its lack of amenities.<sup>21</sup> The mass settlement of Belgians in refugee camps was the exception rather than the rule in Britain. The neutral Netherlands, by comparison, confined hundreds of thousands of refugees to euphemistically termed “Belgian villages” where conditions were harsh, as Amara has shown.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Tony Kushner, “Local Heroes: Belgian Refugees in Britain during the First World War,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 18 no. 1 (1999): 1-28, 5. The WRC started as an independent charitable organisation; however it later came under government control.

<sup>15</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “Soon gone, long forgotten: uncovering British responses to Belgian refugees during the First World War,” *Immigrants & Minorities* 34, no. 2 (2016): 101-112, 102.

<sup>16</sup> William Buck, “Come and find sanctuary in Eire. The experiences of Ireland’s Belgian refugees during the First World War,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 (2016): 192-209, 197.

<sup>17</sup> Jordanna Bailkin, *Unsettled: Refugee Camps and the Making of Multicultural Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 98.

<sup>18</sup> Jenkinson, “Soon gone, long forgotten,” 102.

<sup>19</sup> Rosemary Elliot, “An Early Experiment in National Identity Cards: The Battle Over Registration in the First World War,” *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 no. 2 (2006): 145-176, 150. Elliot notes that British citizens as well as refugees and enemy aliens were all subject to special measures of the state.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Laqua, “Belgian exiles, the British and the Great War: the Birtley Belgians of Elisabethville,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016): 113-131, 114; Ministry of Health, *Report*, 8. Poor, infirm and delinquent refugees were placed in the Earls Court Camp where working life resembled a labour colony.

<sup>21</sup> Laqua, “Belgian exiles,” 120.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Amara, “Belgian Refugees During the First World War,” in *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the First World War*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhanko, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 202.

Although refugees moved from welfare establishments into shared houses, evidence suggests that these properties retained an institutional character. Kushner, for example, observes that refugees in rural Hampshire lived under a careful system of rules and supervision by locals at Blackmoor House, while in Huddersfield accommodation was organised along semi-institutional lines too.<sup>23</sup> Gill illustrates that the local council, Huddersfield Corporation, turned over Royds Hall and other large properties to its local committee.<sup>24</sup> In Birmingham, the War Refugees Committee rented a vacant hotel to house initial arrivals at the Five Ways intersection.<sup>25</sup> The provision of humanitarian assistance thus resembled welfare, as Bailkin argues, this was on account of the LGB's responsibility for refugee affairs.<sup>26</sup>

Aside from within mass accommodation settings, refugees were hosted in large numbers with local Britons. Opening up homes was a clear expression of public sympathy for refugees. For the government, however, this gesture had another positive effect. Cahalan illustrates why: "Private hospitality had one manifest virtue, it saved the outlay of money and effort that a hostel entailed. . . hostels were backed by committees whereas private hosts could only call on their own resources."<sup>27</sup>

Across Britain refugees resided in the homes of those willing to accommodate them. Gill outlines that this generosity evidenced a sense of "philanthropy" as well as "paternalism" amongst the upper and middle classes.<sup>28</sup> The reception of refugees in private homes confirms Baughan's observation that the volunteers who assisted humanitarian campaigns saw their personal contribution as vital.<sup>29</sup> Hospitality was not only driven by charitable feeling, in some locations profit was the incentive. Cahalan observes that the thousands of refugees settled in Blackpool, and other seaside resorts, provided a steady income for hotel keepers.<sup>30</sup>

Opening one's home to strangers was not without challenges. Kushner believes that many of those who sheltered refugees were careful about whom they selected and potential guests were screened on their perceived respectability.<sup>31</sup> Scholars agree that class played an

<sup>23</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 15.

<sup>24</sup> Rebecca Gill, "Brave little Belgium" arrives in Huddersfield ... voluntary action, local politics and the history of international relief work," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 132-150, 139.

<sup>25</sup> Terry Carter, *Birmingham in the Great War: Mobilisation and Recruitment*, (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2016), 76.

<sup>26</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 179.

<sup>28</sup> Gill, "Brave Little Belgium," 139-140.

<sup>29</sup> Emily Baughan, "International Adoption and Anglo-American Internationalism 1918-1920," *Past and Present*, 239, no. 1 (2018), 181-217, 188.

<sup>30</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 193. Placing refugees with hotel keepers had its advantages, as in Cahalan's words they were used to "sharing quarters with other families and managing cantankerous guests."

<sup>31</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 15.

important role in deciding the arrangements of accommodation more generally. As Bailkin has shown in her study of refugee camps in twentieth century Britain, the social class of refugees was considered important by authorities and the public.<sup>32</sup> The allocation of private flats in London, for instance, saw refugees selected by “extremely complicated rules” which benefitted the wealthy.<sup>33</sup> Assistance based on “character” occurred elsewhere too, Gatrell alleges that such partiality was apparent in France and the Netherlands.<sup>34</sup> Similar social dynamics, around the accommodation of those of a different class, were visible during evacuation in the Second World War. As Stewart and Welshman observe, the “social question” was given much thought by evacuee hosts.<sup>35</sup>

The subject of class was not the only dilemma for local refugee committees. How to pay for accommodation for displaced people was also a major concern for both local committees and central government.<sup>36</sup> Where refugees would be housed was thus a critical feature of the refugee regime.<sup>37</sup> Gatrell argues that authorities pushed refugees towards employment and independence through restrictions modelled on the economics of “self-help.”<sup>38</sup> In some cases this worked successfully, Grant outlines that a refugee family in Barrow-in-Furness was able to buy and rent a property to local residents.<sup>39</sup> Yet as Hughes notes, in rural Llanfair, Wales, the local committee’s funds dwindled paying for expensive accommodation.<sup>40</sup> As Kushner concludes, obtaining “self-supporting refugees” was “a difficult matter.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 98.

<sup>33</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 198.

<sup>34</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5; Kushner, “Local Heroes,” 35.

<sup>35</sup> John Stewart and John Welshman, “The evacuation of children in wartime Scotland: culture, behaviour, and poverty,” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 26 no. 2 (2006): 100-120.

<sup>36</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Introduction,” *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhanko, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 5.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 50. This was far from popular and led to near unrest in the town.

<sup>40</sup> Lorna M Hughes, “Finding Belgian refugees in Cymru1914.org: using digital resources for uncovering the hidden histories of the First World War in Wales,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, (2016): 210-231, 221.

<sup>41</sup> Kushner. “Local Heroes,” 13.

## Shared Accommodation

Refugees came to Glasgow through Central Station. Initial arrivals were then moved to accommodation in welfare institutions, lodging houses and working men's hotels.<sup>42</sup> The use of municipal, charitable and private accommodation to house refugees illustrated the piecemeal response of Glasgow Corporation.

The city's welfare institutions were built in the late nineteenth century to cater for the most impoverished and vulnerable citizens of Glasgow. As a former medical officer for Glasgow Corporation noted, by 1900 three classes of people depended upon these services: "The decent citizens who could not keep themselves in their old age, the sick poor, and those who on account of their improvident or vicious character were not considered worthy of indoor relief."<sup>43</sup> Model lodgings and working men's hotels traditionally served as a safe and hygienic refuge for the itinerant and destitute.<sup>44</sup>

The large number of refugees arriving in the city meant that in some cases entire establishments were used to accommodate Belgians.<sup>45</sup> This was the case for institutions like the St. Mary's Industrial School which took in seventy refugees, and the Corporation's Family Home in the Salt Market which took in 118.<sup>46</sup> Table 5 indicates which institutions and residences were used as shared accommodation for Belgian refugees.

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<sup>42</sup> The standard of each of these institutions varied enormously, however, working men's hotels were often better than lodging houses.

<sup>43</sup> Stuart A. I. Laidlaw, *Glasgow Common Lodging Houses and the People Living in Them*, (Glasgow: Health and Welfare Committee of the Corporation of Glasgow, 1956), 31.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>45</sup> "The Belgian refugees," *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3.

<sup>46</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

Table 5. Corporation and charity run lodgings and institutions containing Belgian refugees

<b>Name of Institutions or Residence</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Refugees</b>
Rouken Glen House	Giffnock	516
Calderwood Estate	East Kilbride	208
Sick Children's Hospital	Scott Street	154
Family Home	Saint Andrews Street	118
Jordanhill Family Home	Anniesland	60
Salvation Army Home	Greendyke Street	60
Barshaw House	Paisley	45
Church of Scotland Home	Pollokshaws	44
Salvation Army Home	Charlotte Street	37
Cossar's Boys Home	High Street	34
Sailor's Home	Broomielaw	28
Rutland House	Govan	27
Church Army Home	Myrtle Street	21
Gordon House	Eaglesham	19
Polnoon Lodge	Eaglesham	18
Salvation Army Home	High Street	16
Woodlands House	Gareloch	12
Lennox Castle	Lennoxtown	10
Crow House	Paisley	10

Church of Scotland Home	Herbert Street	9
Crosspark House	Partick	4
Nursing Home	Cumberland Street	3
<b>Total</b>	1457	

Source: GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1–3.

Welfare institutions and lodging houses within Glasgow were designed to reduce disease and improve moral character. This was apparent in the bylaws of lodging facilities which promoted cleanliness and sobriety. Regulation enforced the registration of guests, for the purposes of tracing criminals and segregation of home by sex.<sup>47</sup> Model lodging houses in Glasgow provided their guests with greater privacy through the introduction of partitions and cubicles.<sup>48</sup> Some establishments, such as the St. Andrew's Family Home, were even purpose built to cater for widowed male workers, meaning each room could accommodate at least one adult and several children.<sup>49</sup> The rooms within this lodging house were generously fitted with large fireplaces, iron beds, stoves and bathrooms and communal facilities such as a kitchen, lounge and even a crèche.<sup>50</sup>

Institutions such as the Family Home, the Salvation Army Home and the Church of Scotland Home served as ideal temporary accommodation for refugee families. These lodging facilities provided beds, toilets, a canteen and trained staff, as well as access to basic medical care. These institutions were also located near the centre of Glasgow, easing logistical arrangements.<sup>51</sup> Appendix 3 illustrates the location of welfare institutions close to the city centre.

The Corporation's refugee registers record that initially 3,373 Belgians resided in institutions.<sup>52</sup> While contemporary newspapers made apparent that lodging houses were central to relief efforts, most reports made no reference as to what happened to those already residing

<sup>47</sup> Laidlaw, *Glasgow Common Lodging Houses*, 56.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>49</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *Municipal Glasgow Its Evolution and Enterprises*, (Glasgow: Robert Anderson, 1914), 53.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

<sup>51</sup> John Stewart, "The Provision and Control of Medical Relief," in *Law and Public Policy in Scotland: c. 1850-1990*, ed. Mark Freeman, Eleanor Gordon, Krista Maglen, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 15.

<sup>52</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1–3.

in these institutions. Contemporary documentation on Glasgow Corporation's model lodging facilities indicate, however, that up to twenty-three percent of beds in municipal lodging houses were unoccupied in 1914.<sup>53</sup> Mahood argues that the destitute were suspicious of welfare institutions and at times resentful toward charitable assistance.<sup>54</sup> Strict regimes within lodging houses and an insistence on temperance within them discouraged many from seeking shelter there.<sup>55</sup> Regardless of this unpopularity, sections of the city's poor remained reliant on these services and such accommodation was in plentiful demand. Approximately seventy-one common lodgings were registered in Glasgow during 1913 for instance.<sup>56</sup>

Glasgow had experienced a long term "famine" in housing stock during the early twentieth century.<sup>57</sup> Even before the War housing was a central political issue. Smyth argues that the actions of the Rent Strikers in 1915 evidence the deep seated tensions that existed over housing within the city.<sup>58</sup> The relief of refugees in institutions, designed to cater for the city's most impoverished, resulted in criticism from the Glasgow based left-wing weekly *Forward* throughout the War. The newspaper observed:

We cannot forget that homeless . . . ragged people are a regular feature of every city every day. Yet their presence evokes no general sympathy and the Corporation makes no provision for their needs. . . poverty must be dramatic to attract attention but British refugees need not apply.<sup>59</sup>

Socialists were outraged at the perceived hypocrisy of the Corporation. The middle class status of many refugees was an additional source of anger. A comment made in *Forward* during 1917 illustrates this: "When we hear of the "poor" Belgians whose property must be restored, don't let us imagine he is one of the refugees being maintained in Glasgow. The working Belgian, like the working class Briton has no property."<sup>60</sup> In spite of the contentiousness of providing Belgian refugees with accommodation, their residence in institutions was only partial.

<sup>53</sup> "The Belgian refugees," *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3; Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *Municipal Glasgow*, 54.

<sup>54</sup> Linda Mahood, "Family Ties: Lady Child Savers and Girls of the Streets 1850-1925," in *Out of Bounds Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945*, ed. Esther Breitenbach, Eleanor Gordon. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 178.

<sup>55</sup> J.R. Hay, *The Origins of the Liberal Welfare Reforms 1906-1914*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1975), 26; Michael Ignatieff, "State, Civil Society and Total Institutions: A Critique of Recent Social Histories of Punishment," *Crime and Justice*, 3 (1981): 153-192, 163.

<sup>56</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *Municipal Glasgow*, 259. Not all of these institutions were charitable, as profit could be made from providing lodgings and catering to working people within the city.

<sup>57</sup> James Smyth, "Rents, Peace, Votes: Working Class Women and Political Activity in the First World War," in *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945*, ed. Esther Breitenbach, Eleanor Gordon. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 178.

<sup>58</sup> Smyth, "Rents, Peace, Votes," 178.

<sup>59</sup> "Catholic Socialist Notes," *Forward*, October 31, 1914, 2.

<sup>60</sup> "Catholic Socialist Notes," *Forward*, September 15, 1917, 2.

Although Belgians were housed in Corporation owned facilities, the largest of the model lodging homes such as that on Portugal Street, which could house 450 people per night, were never used.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the Corporation utilised vacant public buildings, including the former Sick Children's Hospital on Scott Street.<sup>62</sup>

Cahalan observes that the War created a "strange phenomenon," the mass arrival of a foreign middle class.<sup>63</sup> The plight of a suddenly destitute bourgeois, forced to depend on institutions designed for the poor, generated sympathy. Father Octavius Claeys, a Belgian priest resident in Glasgow prior to the War, expressed his anxieties about what he regarded as the inappropriate treatment Belgian refugees were receiving in lodging houses. In an article in the Catholic weekly, the *Observer*, Claeys lamented that his country men and women had a "a horror of institutions, common meals and of common dormitories."<sup>64</sup> Claeys was eager to encourage his readers to accommodate Belgians privately.

Belgian aversion toward institutions perhaps came from the notoriety of infamous labour colonies in Belgium. Edwardian social reformer Seebohm Rowntree had drawn attention to Merxplas in 1910.<sup>65</sup> The criminal and destitute were sent to Merxplas, which was described as "the largest colony of mendicants" and "vagabonds" in the world.<sup>66</sup> Conditions at Merxplas were austere and the camp was filled with those deemed "physical degenerates," "intellectual inferiors," "moral delinquents" and recidivists.<sup>67</sup> The "horror" Claeys described was perhaps due to the harsh sentencing used for those charged with relative misdemeanours. For example, five American citizens, who were found to be drunk by police, were each confined to Merxplas for two years.<sup>68</sup>

The use of institutional accommodation was not universal in Scotland. The Corporation's Belgian Refugee register indicates many refugees moved from charitable or

<sup>61</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *Municipal Glasgow*, 54.

<sup>62</sup> Glasgow Health Board Archive (hereafter GHBA), *Minutes of the Sick Children's Hospital*, 1909-1914, YH1/2/5, 7; GCA, Valuation Roll 22, 1916-1917, Scott Street. The hospital had moved to purpose built premises in Yorkhill during 1913, this left the large building with several wards empty, meaning these could serve as makeshift dormitories for refugees.

<sup>63</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 81.

<sup>64</sup> "Glasgow's Belgian Refugees," *Glasgow Observer*, October 31, 1914, 12. The Catholic Church played a considerable role in hosting refugees throughout the War, acting as the refugees' spiritual guardians. Religious organisations' role in relief will be discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>65</sup> Seebohm Rowntree, *Land and Labour Lessons from Belgium*, (London, Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1910), 489. This labour colony could accommodate up to 5000 men and operated under military discipline with an armed guard. While it was primarily an agricultural venture the camp also operated a foundry, a wood shop, tailoring workshops, a tannery and a carpet manufacturing studio. In 1938 Merxplas served as an internment camp for Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany.

<sup>66</sup> A.F. Van Schelle, "A City of Vagabonds: The Largest Colony of Mendicants in the World, Merxplas, Belgium," *American Journal of Sociology*, 16 no. 1 (1910): 1-20.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 15-16.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 19.



Corporation lodging facilities to private residences or exclusively Belgian homes under GCBRC control between October 1914 and January 1915.<sup>69</sup> For instance twenty-eight male refugees originally registered at the Sailors' Home, in October 1914, were later moved to Rouken Glen House in Giffnock.<sup>70</sup> In this way the Corporation's initial decisions were similar to other local committees. LGB directives instructed local committees as early as October 1914 to separate refugees from regular inmates of workhouses.<sup>71</sup> Buck has acknowledged the association of refugees with poverty and welfare was problematic.<sup>72</sup> Jenkinson notes that GCBRC argued that the "cold" conditions of institutions were the primary reason that refugees should be moved from poorhouses and other institutions.<sup>73</sup> In Birmingham, by comparison, the local branch of the WRC sought to avoid housing refugees in hostels or work houses altogether. The local branch of the WRC felt it was "better" if "refugees could live with their families" in individual homes.<sup>74</sup>

Despite the transfer of many refugees to more permanent residence in private accommodation or to GCBRC homes, between 250-300 refugees stayed within various lodging houses beyond 1915.<sup>75</sup> In most cases these refugees were moved from one institution to another. This was the case for the three members of the Fontyn family who moved from the St. Vincent De Paul Shelter on Market Street to the Salvation Army Home on Charlotte Street.<sup>76</sup> This short move, of less than a mile, saw the Fontyns go from one east end lodging house to another. Families were also relocated, for example Joannes Baptista, his wife Rosilea and their eight year-old son Hendrick were one of at least five families to be moved.<sup>77</sup>

Analysis of the occupations of adult refugees moved to the Salvation Army Home indicate they were predominantly working class. They included a brick maker, a painter, a seaman and a labourer.<sup>78</sup> Francis Mielens, a "diamond worker" who was also housed in the St. Vincent De Paul shelter, on the other hand was later accommodated privately with Mr

<sup>69</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Administering Relief: Glasgow Corporation's Support for Scotland's c. 20,000 Belgian Refugees," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016): 171-191, 178.

<sup>70</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>71</sup> Imperial War Museum Archive (hereafter IWMA), Memo on Workhouses for Refugees, October 22, 1914, 1 BEL 1 2/5.

<sup>72</sup> Buck, "Come and find sanctuary," 197.

<sup>73</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 178.

<sup>74</sup> Birmingham Wolfson Centre (Hereafter BWC), Birmingham War Refugee Committee, Allocation Committee Minutes, December 9, 1914, MS 652.

<sup>75</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3. Assessing the exact number is a challenge as some refugees are registered at 2 or more addresses.

<sup>76</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

Donaldson of Dungoyne.<sup>79</sup> While a skilled job bias was not always a determining factor in the arrangement of private accommodation, analysis of the refugee register reveals that it was certainly present.

In addition to housing refugees in charitable and municipal institutions, the Corporation also provided refugees with accommodation in privately run facilities, such as temperance houses and working men's hotels.<sup>80</sup> Table 6 lists the number of refugees housed in private lodgings, while Appendices 3 and 4 denote the locations of some of these properties. Private lodgings were the most squalid and insalubrious accommodation option, working men's hotels and temperance houses on the other hand catered for more prosperous guests.<sup>81</sup> They attracted skilled and semi-skilled workers rather than the destitute. Here guests were accommodated in individual rooms rather than dormitories and they could buy cooked food.<sup>82</sup> At least 758 Belgian refugees were registered as accommodated at this type of institution within Glasgow and beyond.<sup>83</sup>

The institutions listed as hosting Belgian refugees were professionally run. These facilities would have offered refugees greater comfort.<sup>84</sup> For the Corporation however, the expense of maintaining refugees in private lodgings was costlier than the charitable and municipal lodging facilities. Several working men's hotels were owned by large organisations which suggested they generated considerable profit. This was the case for the Great Eastern Hotel, the Poplar Hotel and the White House.<sup>85</sup>

Despite the professionalism which underpinned working men's hotels and their requirement of certificates of good character, anecdotal evidence indicates that they retained a sleazy and violent reputation.<sup>86</sup> Criminals' addresses were often listed as working men's hotels and suicide was common within them.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, the emergency use of these facilities was not unusual. Just days prior to the arrival of the Belgians, the Poplar Hotel hosted 120

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> See Table 2.

<sup>81</sup> Tom Crook, "Accommodating the outcast: common lodging houses and the limits of urban governance in Victorian and Edwardian London," *Urban History*, 35 (2008), 416.

<sup>82</sup> Laidlaw, *Glasgow Common Lodging-Houses*, 77.

<sup>83</sup> See Table 2.

<sup>84</sup> Andrew Davidson, "Try the Alternative," the Built environment of the Temperance Movement," *Brewing History*, No. 123 (2006); 92-109, 102. As Davidson reports temperance hotels were well regarded as safe and hygienic.

<sup>85</sup> These lodging facilities were owned respectively by the Great Eastern Hotel Company LTD, the ACME Hotel Company and the Scottish Homes Company.

<sup>86</sup> Laidlaw, *Glasgow Common Lodging-Houses*, 258.

<sup>87</sup> "Twelve Months Hard Labour for Burglar," *Scotsman*, November 24, 1921, 10; "Suicide of Commercial Traveller," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, December 14, 1911, 5.

Russian reservists returning from Canada.<sup>88</sup> Thus, working men's hotels and lodging houses were requisitioned and used alongside other public spaces within Glasgow for wartime purposes.

Table 6. Private lodgings and working men's hotels hosting refugees

<b>Name of Hotel or Lodgings</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Refugees</b>
Poplar Hotel	Holm Street	206
Great Eastern Hotel	Duke Street	159
Atlantic Hotel	York Street	71
White House	Springburn	47
Girvan Hotel	Girvan	40
Balmoral Hotel	Sauchiehall Street	23
Neilson's Temperance Hotel	Ingram Street	7
Crow House	Paisley	7
Osborne Hotel	Sauchiehall Street	7
Club House	Partick	5
Grand Hotel	Gordon Street	5
Total	758	

Source: GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>88</sup> "Russians in Glasgow," *Daily Record*, October 13, 1914, 2.

Belgians were accommodated in a variety of institutions across Glasgow and beyond for at least some of the War. These procedures, to some extent, mirrored similar conditions in England and Ireland.<sup>89</sup> Utilising welfare institutions proved contentious in Glasgow on account of the politically sensitive nature of welfare and housing. Concern regarding refugees was inclined towards class bias, as refugees received favourable treatment based on their status.

As Jenkinson notes, the principal dilemma for the Corporation in arranging accommodation was the Aliens Restriction Act and the corresponding Aliens Restriction Orders.<sup>90</sup> This legislation prevented refugees from moving to towns or cities on the East Coast of Scotland, without express authority from officials to do so. This meant that Glasgow and the surrounding towns of central and western Scotland absorbed all refugees received, regardless of charitable enthusiasm towards Belgians in other cities.<sup>91</sup> Despite the regular media publication and GCBRC explanations of the constraints imposed by the Aliens Restriction Act, misplaced solutions on how to house refugees were given by the public in letters to newspapers. One letter to the *Scotsman* in October 1914 suggested “utilising season hotels and hydropathics” throughout the country for “the families of professional and middle-class Belgian Refugees.”<sup>92</sup> The holiday resorts of the Clyde and coast and the spa towns of the country were, however, off limits.

Notwithstanding the restrictions on where refugees could reside, evidence suggests that refugees managed to circumvent restrictions. Dr Charles Saroléa wrote a letter on behalf of a Madame Emile Dubbier to the Chief Constable of Edinburgh Roderick Ross providing a formal “introduction” which outlined Dubbier’s “means” to pay for her own accommodation.<sup>93</sup> Saroléa was rebuked, however, by Ross for encouraging wealthy Belgian refugees to take up residence in Edinburgh.<sup>94</sup> Yet as late as December 1914 Saroléa was still encouraging the “better class of Belgians” exiled around Britain and Europe to spend the “summer in Edinburgh.”<sup>95</sup>

Following GCBRC Secretary Alexander Walker’s visit to London in January 1915, to report before the Hatch Commission on the employment of refugees, it was agreed that towns

<sup>89</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 73; Buck, “Come and find sanctuary,” 197.

<sup>90</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 176.

<sup>91</sup> “Aberdeen and Belgian Refugees,” *Aberdeen Evening Express*, October 14, 1914, 3. From the outset of the War offers were made across Scotland to assist refugees with practical support of accommodation.

<sup>92</sup> “Belgian Refugees,” *Scotsman*, October 17, 1914, 6.

<sup>93</sup> Edinburgh University Research Collections (Hereafter CRC), Correspondence Charles Saroléa to Roderick Ross, SAR COLL 80, October 22, 1914.

<sup>94</sup> CRC, Correspondence Roderick Ross to Charles Sarolea, October 23, 1914, SAR COLL 80. Refugees could reside in prohibited areas with permission of the chief constable of the area.

<sup>95</sup> CRC, Correspondence Charles Saroléa to Campbell Gibson, December 15, 1914 SAR COLL 80.

and city councils throughout Scotland should be approached directly for funding refugees resident in Glasgow.<sup>96</sup> Under this scheme, refugees would be hosted in specially selected houses across Glasgow and Central Scotland. These were to be used as shared hostels and were named after the towns and organisations who sponsored them.

A conference with over 200 local authority representatives was held at the Glasgow City Chambers in January 1915 which explained these procedures.<sup>97</sup> In the months following the conference Bailies James Stewart, Thomas Irwin and James Davidson were dispatched across Scotland by the GCBRC to approach local councils and burghs for money.<sup>98</sup> Throughout 1915 the three councillors visited almost eighty different towns across Scotland to raise funds for refugees.<sup>99</sup> The GCBRC's representatives principally met with local councils for funding but also asked parish churches and educational institutions for assistance. The *Fife Free Press and Kirkcaldy Guardian* reported the rationale and purpose of these meetings:

The city of Glasgow was appointed a neutral distributing area for Scotland and the Corporation of Glasgow immediately and willingly undertook to provide hospitality for some 3000 of the Belgian population...The chief desire of the committee in charge of the fund in Glasgow was that there should be more centralisation than there had been in the past.<sup>100</sup>

Centralising funding guaranteed a sustainable income.

The GCBRC identified underused and vacant properties across the city and beyond as hostels, terming them "Belgian homes."<sup>101</sup> These were inspected by Bailies from the committees and chosen by size.<sup>102</sup> This is evident from the types of homes selected and their locations. Appendix 4 outlines the locations of Belgian homes in the west end of Glasgow and Table 7 notes their capacity. The Kirkcaldy Belgian Home, for instance, was located at Park Terrace East overlooking Kelvingrove Park in the prosperous West End.<sup>103</sup> This large town house had many bedrooms and several floors in which to accommodate refugees. It was owned by John S. Robertson, a prominent Glasgow lawyer, who resided in Lennoxton.<sup>104</sup> Several other homes of a similar size were utilised as Belgian hostels, close by in the Park Circus and Kelvinbridge areas of the west of Glasgow.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 177.

<sup>97</sup> "The Relief of Distress – Belgian Refugees," *Scotsman*, January 29, 1915, 7.

<sup>98</sup> "Support for Belgian Refugees," *Fife Free Press and Kirkcaldy Guardian*, April 10, 1915, 5.

<sup>99</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915 - April 1916, January 4, 1916, C1/3/54.

<sup>100</sup> "Support for Belgian Refugees," *Fife Free Press and Kirkcaldy Guardian*, April 10, 1915, 5.

<sup>101</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1915-November 1915, August 26, 1915, C/13/53.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> "Kirkcaldy Belgian Home," *Fife Free Press and Kirkcaldy Guardian*, September 11, 1915, 5.

<sup>104</sup> GCA, Valuation Rolls, 15, (1915-1916), Park Terrace East.

<sup>105</sup> "Opening of Dundee Home for Belgians," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, December 6, 1915, 2. See Table 3.

Table 7. Locations and capacities of Belgian Hostels

Home	Location	Capacity
Edinburgh	5 Park Gardens, Park Circus	40
Dundee	6 Park Gardens, Park Circus	50
Aberdeen	3 Park Terrace East	40
Scottish Universities Students Home	Lansdowne Crescent	20

Source: GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

The houses utilised as Belgian homes were very different from the model lodging facilities in which Belgians initially resided. They were set apart, not only by their size but their location in more affluent areas. The Belgian hostel at 52 Queen Mary Avenue, in the suburban Crosshill area, hosted up to forty refugees.<sup>106</sup> This large unoccupied property, owned by William Strang, a muslin manufacturer, was ideal to host multiple Belgian exiles.<sup>107</sup> Anecdotal evidence recounts the size and luxury of the properties used by refugees. Mary Boyle, a matron within a Belgian home, described the house where she worked as “immense” noting that it had a “suite of rooms” which included an “office” a “lounge” and even a “large marble bath.”<sup>108</sup>

Despite the grand nature of many properties, work had to be done to make them suitable for accommodation by families. The Corporation, and the other Scottish local authorities who committed to supporting homes, provided resources for furniture and bedding. Boyle suggested that little expense was spared:

Would you like to look in one of the bedrooms? White linoleum on the floor, with red or blue mats at every bedside and in front of the dressing table. Each bed covered with a white quilt and scarlet eiderdown, chintz moveable screens, or a curtain running down the rooms to ensure privacy, stained wood wardrobes made by Belgian carpenters, marble topped washing stands, rush chairs and white casement curtains.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup>GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>107</sup> GCA, Valuation Rolls 22, 1915-1916, Queen Mary Avenue.

<sup>108</sup> IWMA, Mary E. Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, BEL 6100/5, 6-7.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 17-18.

The provision of new furniture, flooring and bedding exemplifies the high standards of welfare in Belgian homes. The later use of Belgian labour in the manufacture of furniture and the painting of the homes indicates that the GCBRC was eager to co-opt Belgians into the process of contributing to their own relief.

There were perhaps perceived financial incentives in allowing these houses to be used as hostels. The *Dundee Courier* highlighted this, reporting that in 1914 Sir Horace Munro, secretary of the LGB for Scotland, stated that while occupied houses hosting refugees must pay rates, unoccupied houses hosting refugees could be exempted.<sup>110</sup> Rates exemptions occurred in some parts of England too. Gill reports that Huddersfield District Council operated a wide ranging system of exemptions for refugee hosts, albeit, with limited success.<sup>111</sup> Following Munro's comments, Glasgow Corporation received a volume of requests from hosts of refugees to be relieved of rates.

In the years before the War, Glasgow Corporation had increasing difficulty in collecting taxes. Alexander Walker outlined this during a speech in 1911:

Much dissatisfaction exists in regards to the present method of raising money sufficient to meet the requirements of local authorities . . . in Glasgow in recent years there has been a manifest and increasing tendency on the part of many rate payers to delay payment.<sup>112</sup>

The issue of rating was important to Glasgow's local politics. Guarantees of differentiated rates had been used as a political incentive to encourage the annexation of Govan and Partick in 1912.<sup>113</sup> The bulk of requests for rates exemptions in Glasgow, however, came mostly from the respectable working class tenant associations in the districts of Shettleston and Carntyne.<sup>114</sup> Such areas suffered from serious housing shortages.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, in these areas refugees were hosted privately in occupied homes. Shettleston had been one of the focal points of the Rent Strikes of 1915. The Rent Strikes saw the ILP's Housing and Women's committee organise against exploitative landlords and evictions.<sup>116</sup> Over 25,000 tenants refused to pay their rent resulting in the government passing the Rent Restriction Act which froze rents. In

<sup>110</sup> "Belgian Refugees and House Rating," *Dundee Courier*, October 21, 1914, 4.

<sup>111</sup> Gill, "Brave little Belgium," 140.

<sup>112</sup> GCA, *Burgh of Glasgow City Rating: a Published talk by Alexander Walker*, (Glasgow: Robert Andersen, 1911), 42, T PAR 1.15.

<sup>113</sup> Michael Pugh, "Centralisation has its draw backs as well as its advantages": The Surrounding Burghs' Resistance to Glasgow's Municipal Expansion c. 1869-1912," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 34 no. 1 (2014): 40-66, 58.

<sup>114</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 – April 1915, November 20, 1914, C1/3/52.

<sup>115</sup> James, J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage and Sectarianism*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press: 2000), 174.

<sup>116</sup> Joan Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool," *History Workshop*, 17 no. 1, (1984): 32-56, 42.

November 1914, refugee hosts in these areas requested assistance or exemption from municipal gas, electricity and water bills.<sup>117</sup>

Requests for financial relief on municipal taxes appear to have been dealt with inconsistently by Glasgow Corporation; with some appeals accepted and others declined.<sup>118</sup> For instance, Dr Greenlees, a doctor at the Western Infirmary and an officer in the Medical Corps was granted an exemption in 1915 at his unoccupied house at 6 Buckingham Terrace, Hillhead.<sup>119</sup> Generally, however, the Corporation erred on the side of caution and turned down most applications as the cost of maintaining refugees increased through the War.<sup>120</sup> Just as in Huddersfield, the incentive of rates exemptions was withdrawn.<sup>121</sup> The remaining requests in Glasgow were refused or ignored.<sup>122</sup>

Scottish Universities additionally operated their own Belgian home situated in a vacant mansion. The Scottish University Belgian Hostel Fund was formed by university staff and students who were concerned about refugees.<sup>123</sup> The Scottish Universities' Belgian Hostel was located at Lansdowne Crescent, a stone's throw from the University of Glasgow.<sup>124</sup> It was also close to the Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen Homes.<sup>125</sup> It was paid for by direct "subscriptions" from Scotland's four universities (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow and St. Andrews). Minimum contributions of 1s and 6d from each student was set by the Student Representative Council of Aberdeen University. These sums were supplemented by additional funds raised from concerts.<sup>126</sup> Aberdeen University students raised £41, 15s, while Professor George G. Ramsay, a classicist at the University of Glasgow, donated £10.<sup>127</sup> Sir George Adam Smith, Principal of Aberdeen University, formally opened the home in December 1915.<sup>128</sup>

Aside from Scottish local authorities and universities, Glasgow Corporation also relied on the assistance of central Scotland's wealthy elite to accommodate refugees. Alexander Walker's dual role as city assessor and coordinating figure in the 1901 and 1911 censuses, gave

<sup>117</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 – April 1915, November 20, 1914, C1/3/52.

<sup>118</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914 – April 1915, March 31, 1915, C1/3/52.

<sup>119</sup> "Glorious Deeds of Valour," *Daily Record*, February 20, 1915, 6.

<sup>120</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915 – April 1916, January 4, 1916, C1/3/54.

<sup>121</sup> Gill, "Brave little Belgium," 140.

<sup>122</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1914-April 1915, February 9, 1915, C/13/52.

<sup>123</sup> "Scottish Universities Belgian Hostel Fund," *Dundee Courier*, February 26, 1918, 2. Students engaged in a variety of ways to raise funds for refugees which included the performance of dramatic and musical shows.

<sup>124</sup> "Sir George Adam Smith," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, February 7, 1916, 1. See Table 3.

<sup>125</sup> "Opening of Dundee Home for Belgians," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, December 6, 1915, 2. See Table 3.

<sup>126</sup> "Students Hostel for Belgian Refugees," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, December 9, 1915, 4.

<sup>127</sup> IWMA, Lists of Subscriptions Sent to Glasgow Corporation Belgian Committee October, 1916, BEL6 99/6. This is an estimated £2,452 and £589 at today's value.

<sup>128</sup> "Students Hostel for Belgian Refugees," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, December 9, 1915, 4.



him unique insight into which of the city's larger properties were under occupied.<sup>129</sup> Although Glasgow suffered from long term overcrowding because of a shortage of housing, wealthier residents of the city resided in suburban districts. In the late nineteenth century, many of these property owners had moved in an attempt to avoid paying increasing municipal rates, leaving larger, older properties vacant.<sup>130</sup>

Table 8 outlines the individuals and companies who owned properties used to accommodate Belgian refugees. While only one of these homes was owned by the aristocracy, Pollok House, the rest were owned by high profile individuals and interests. For example, Robert Addie was a coal master in Lanarkshire and donated the use of Viewpark House while Dr Adam Paterson, a local philanthropist, provided Springhall House a large vacant mansion in the Burgh of Rutherglen to provide for refugees. Viewpark House in Uddingston had "5 large bedrooms" and had attracted media notoriety a few months earlier when the building was the target of Frances Gordon, a Suffragette, who broke into the house and attempted to burn it down.<sup>131</sup> Not all of the stately homes used were privately owned. Grand properties, such as Barshaw House, were already at public disposal in this case under the Corporation of Paisley.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> GCA, Corporation of the City of Glasgow Assessor's Department, Census Report 1911, D-CA12/1.

<sup>130</sup> Irene Maver, "Glasgow's Civic Government," in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. Hamish W. Fraser, Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 444.

<sup>131</sup> "Militant Suffragette at Glasgow," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, June 23, 1914, 3. In court Gordon cited her experiences of seeing "white slavery" in India as a contributing factor for her radical actions.

<sup>132</sup> Alistair G Tough, *Medical Archives of Glasgow and Paisley*, (Glasgow: Wellcome Unit, 1993), 40. This property was later a maternity hospital.

Table 8. Stately homes and mansions hosting refugees

<b>Name of Stately Home</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Owner</b>
Barshaw House	Paisley	Corporation of Paisley
Cartvale House	Paisley	Cartvale Chemical Company
Viewpark House	Uddingston	Robert Addie & Sons
Pollok House	Glasgow	Sir John Stirling-Maxwell
Springhall House	Rutherglen	Patterson Family
Ranfurly House	Bridge of Weir	ATJ Moffat

Source: GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, D-CA12/2/1-3, 1914.

Although donated Belgian homes were designed to offer the refugees more comfort than lodging houses, they were run as institutions. Belgian homes were supervised by matrons, had set menus, restrictions on smoking, curfews for guests and in some cases even guard dogs.<sup>133</sup> These arrangements differed significantly from Birmingham where refugees tended to be housed separately as families.<sup>134</sup> Elsewhere in England, Kushner and Gill have identified that regulation occurred in large houses used in Hampshire and Huddersfield respectively.<sup>135</sup> Arrangements in Scottish homes appear to have been more codified. Belgian homes within Scotland effectively operated as welfare institutions. The rules within them were modelled on the regimes of lodging houses and the homes themselves were subject to inspection, at various times, by figures within the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Ladies Committee.<sup>136</sup>

The institutionalisation of accommodation for Belgian refugees in Scotland must be understood in the wider social and economic context of the First World War. Control and

<sup>133</sup> GCA, Correspondence Report on the Hatch Commission, November 25, 1917, RU4/5/163; GCA, Correspondence, Letter to Clerk Gray from manager of Springhall, 1915, RU4/5/163; CRC, The Corporation of Glasgow Belgian Refugees Committee Poster, 1915, SAR COLL 80.

<sup>134</sup> WCB, Correspondence of the War Refugee Committee, W.A. Higgins to War Refugee Committee, June 9, 1919, MS 642/3.

<sup>135</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 14; Gill, "Brave little Belgium," 139.

<sup>136</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915 - April 1916, January 4, 1916, C1/3/54.

“surveillance,” Elliot argues, were inevitable consequence of total War’s impact on the home front.<sup>137</sup> The imposition of legislation and bureaucratic controls upon refugees, particularly in relation to freedom of movement and work, emphasises the dependency of refugees on their host states. As Gatrell argues the refugee regime governed the life of the exile.<sup>138</sup>

As early as 1915 GCBRC recognised it would have to curb expenditure.<sup>139</sup> Despite the financial generosity of the general public to Corporation appeals, charity alone could not be relied on. By 1915 the administrative costs of the GCBRC were being reimbursed by the LGB.<sup>140</sup> Yet all these other costs, including accommodation continued to be met. These overheads included payment of the salaries of employees of the committee, welfare payments to Belgian dependents and refunding the “costs of the maintenance of sick and insane refugees.”<sup>141</sup> The level of financial support provided by the GCBRC meant promoting self-sufficiency amongst refugees was a priority.

Resolutions dealing with financial procedures, accommodation and allowances were introduced to wean refugees off support.<sup>142</sup> The guidelines, adopted by the Committee in August 1915, were firm.<sup>143</sup> Importantly, resolutions set out: “That refugees should as far as possible support themselves out of any money they have or out of any money they receive as wages or otherwise.”<sup>144</sup> The resolutions also insisted that Belgians should live communally, if relying on Corporation funds: “That small houses should not be provided for refugees so long as there is accommodation available in Belgian Homes, except where a refugee is prepared to pay a sum of at least £2 10s for the hire of furniture.”<sup>145</sup> The resolutions also dictated what Belgians should eat:

That the menu in the Belgian Homes should be as far as possible uniform for the same class of refugees:

- (a) Breakfast - Porridge and milk, bread and butter and coffee ;
- (b) Dinner – Soup, meat, vegetables and potatoes ;
- (c) Tea – Coffee, bread and butter ;

<sup>137</sup> Elliot, “An Early Experiment in National Identity Cards,” 150.

<sup>138</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

<sup>139</sup> GCA, Correspondence Glasgow Corporation Committee to Rutherglen Refugee Committee January 11, 1915, RU4/5/163.

<sup>140</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the Work Undertaken*, 44.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 44. The total cost of this expenditure was over £25,000.

<sup>142</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1917 – April 1918, February 19, 1918, C/1/3/57.

<sup>143</sup> GCA, Resolutions on Accommodation, August 25, 1915, 1, RU4/5/163.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

(d) Supper – Coffee, bread and butter and cheese or jam or marmalade.<sup>146</sup>

The menu may have been monotonous, however refugees in the care of the Corporation ate better than most working-class Glaswegians.<sup>147</sup>

Regardless of the Belgians' diet, the intentions behind these strict resolutions were clear, Belgians should be encouraged to contribute to their own assistance. In this sense attitudes towards the assistance of Belgians differed little than those towards the poor. The ideology of "self-help," was apparent in the workings of the refugee regime in Scotland.<sup>148</sup> Matrons of Belgian homes had a vital role in promoting self-sufficiency amongst refugees. Evidence suggests that the Committee met and corresponded regularly with the matrons discussing the provision of food, fuel, and expenses.<sup>149</sup> Matrons had discretion over which Belgians they would house. Mary Boyle, described the method of choosing guests when visiting a party of newly arrived refugees:

You have no idea how difficult it is to tell the character of foreigners when they are eating poached eggs. I sometimes think any other food would be easier - - but poached eggs . . . Meanwhile one scans faces, is there anyone likely to be comparatively amiable, clean with a desire to do more than idle away the days?<sup>150</sup>

Boyle's remarks reveal that her selection was based on refugees' appearance and behaviour. As Boyle alludes, choosing an unsuitable guest might rupture the delicate harmony of the Belgian home. Such feelings were by no means unusual. As Kushner articulates in relation to interactions in rural Hampshire, many British hosts came to resent their Belgian guests' habits.<sup>151</sup> In Birmingham too, the local WRC had to step in to mediate between hosts and refugees. Moreover, in the case of a number of properties rented on behalf of refugees, aggrieved hosts approached the WRC to pay for damages to "cornices," which were "completely destroyed," doors which had come "off hinges" and a broken "wicket fence."<sup>152</sup>

The role of the matron was crucial in the operation of Glasgow Corporation's Belgian homes. They were the lynchpin in the relief operation, working as a direct link between refugees and GCBRC. Not only did they resolve disputes but in some instances, they found

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>147</sup> Graham MacSporran, "Glasgow and the Great War," PhD Dissertation (University of Stirling, 2018) 86. The menu indicates the refugees received more nutritious foods such as meat and vegetables, these were all too often absent from the working class diet.

<sup>148</sup> Gatrell, "Introduction," 5.

<sup>149</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1917-April 1918, February 19, 1918, C1/3/58.

<sup>150</sup> IWMA, Mary E Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, 21, BEL 6100/5.

<sup>151</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 11.

<sup>152</sup> WCB, Correspondence of the Birmingham War Refugee Committee, W.A. Higgins to Birmingham War Refugee Committee, June 9, 1919, MS 642/3.

refugees employment.<sup>153</sup> The requirement for refugees to seek employment was stipulated in Resolution 3 by the committee: “Refugees in Glasgow and neighbourhood who are not in employment should, if required...report themselves at the Belgian Registration Office.”<sup>154</sup> Employed refugees were pushed to find accommodation independently. Alexander Walker, for instance, asked sanitary inspector Weir of Rutherglen to encourage working refugees to find private lets to reduce expenditure.<sup>155</sup> In Paisley too, refugees resident in Barshaw House were soon moved to private accommodation across the town as the building became too expensive to maintain.<sup>156</sup> Such actions mirrored the moves of Dutch authorities who, according to Amara, applied a policy of “sweet pressure” when relocating refugees to camps.<sup>157</sup>

Similar coercion strategies were employed by the Corporation when dealing with single Belgian men, whom they wished to encourage to join the army. Rouken Glen Park and its adjacent mansion house were partitioned for the exclusive use of 514 refugees in late 1914.<sup>158</sup> As families left to take up residence in homes around Glasgow, Rouken Glen was turned into a male only institution.<sup>159</sup> Corporation minutes indicate that those men eligible to fight for Belgium, were isolated there and “drilled” by French and Dutch speaking instructors for the remainder of 1914, in a deliberate attempt to push refugees into the armed forces.<sup>160</sup> It is likely that this pressure eventually paid off, by May 1915 Rouken Glen was being used by the Highland Light Infantry for accommodation.<sup>161</sup> Young male Belgians, such as Jules Slos a twenty-three year-old railway worker, were reported in the Refugee Register as having “left for London” on “military service.”<sup>162</sup>

The provision of housing to refugees by the municipality proved divisive. Detractors alleged that designating homes for refugees placed a greater strain upon the existing network of welfare and relief in Glasgow. For example, Reverend Cleland, the Church of Scotland’s Glasgow lodging houses chaplain, wrote to the Corporation in 1916 requesting councillors amend bylaws which prevented homeless young men under the age of eighteen entering

<sup>153</sup> IWMA, Mary E. Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, 23, BEL 6100/5.

<sup>154</sup> GCA, Resolutions on Accommodation August 26, 1915,1, RU4/5/163.

<sup>155</sup> GCA, Correspondence Alexander Walker to William Weir, March 3, 1915, RU4/5/163.

<sup>156</sup> GCA, Strathclyde Education Pack, Minutes of Paisley Relief Committee, December 3, 1915 PA/2/86.

<sup>157</sup> Amara, “Belgian Refugees during the First World War,” 204.

<sup>158</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914-November 1914, October 19, 1914, C/13/51.

<sup>159</sup> “Belgian Refugees Arrangements in Glasgow,” *Scotsman*, November 3, 1914, 6.

<sup>160</sup> IWMA, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country, (London: HMSO, 1915), 63, BEL 1/21.

<sup>161</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow April 1915-November 1915, May 5, 1915, C/13/52.

<sup>162</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1–3.

lodgings without a guardian.<sup>163</sup> Cleland referred, in particular, to the Cossar Lads Home on High Street which had been annexed for use by refugee families. Cleland outlined that “bylaws which prevented sons under the age of eighteen” residing in lodging houses meant that Belgians resident in the Cossar Lads homes displaced young, homeless Glaswegians.<sup>164</sup>

It was not only the religious who felt this way, socialist councillors similarly argued that there was a double standard in the Corporation’s treatment of the poor, as the Belgian homes scheme drew criticism. ILP councillor John Wheatley enquired at one council meeting in 1916, what effect the 10,000 Belgians in the city were having on housing stock for the working classes.<sup>165</sup> This question came less than two weeks after a large meeting was held by the Scottish National Conference on the Housing Question at the Scottish Co-operative’s headquarters.<sup>166</sup> Sensitivities over Corporation housing remained apparent in the years following the Rent Strikes. In 1919 municipal assistance toward the housing of Belgian refugees continued to provoke left wing criticism. *Forward* reported on a proposal to house destitute Scots in vacant mansions in wealthy Kingsborough Gardens in Hyndland. This proposal was derailed, however, by councillors and local residents.<sup>167</sup> The newspaper observed that while the “big house patriots” of Hyndland were happy to have “Belgians and Serbians” as their “neighbours” they refused to have “their own Glasgow people” because they perceived them as not “good enough.”<sup>168</sup> The article went on to recount a case where one homeless veteran and his family unsuccessfully appealed to the offices of GCBRC for assistance with housing.<sup>169</sup> Alexander Walker recorded the office of GCBRC being inundated with requests from the needy, at the end of the War, hoping the Corporation would house them too.

Disputes over the funding of accommodation for Belgians emerged between Glasgow Corporation and the burghs sponsoring Belgian homes. For instance, the Buckie Relief Committee refused to pay for the furnishing of a hostel in Glasgow which they were billed for in February 1916. This resulted in irate exchanges between Alexander Walker and the Buckie Town Clerk, McNaughton, being published in the Aberdeen press.<sup>170</sup> McNaughton wrote:

<sup>163</sup> “The Assemblies - Church of Scotland,” *Scotsman*, May 30, 1912, 10; GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915 – April 1916, January 25, 1916, C/13/56.

<sup>164</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915 – April 1916, January 26, 1916, C/13/56.

<sup>165</sup> Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 180; “Belgian Refugees and Housing,” *Herald*, January 21, 1916, 11.

<sup>166</sup> “Policy of Interest-Free Dwellings,” *Scotsman*, January 4, 1916, 9; The meeting on housing brought together ILP members, trade unionists, Co-operative members and medical professionals such as Dr A.K. Chalmer’s, the city’s chief medical officer.

<sup>167</sup> “Glasgow Town Council,” *Forward*, April 26, 1919, 4.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>170</sup> “Buckie Belgian Home in Glasgow,” *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, February 25, 1916, 6.

I note that you charge as debits the whole charges of furnishings and fittings and grants to refugees and other charges. My committee however did not accept responsibility for these debits. What they undertook to do was to raise money voluntarily to help upkeep a particular home in Glasgow.<sup>171</sup>

Such public displays of tension suggest that geographically distant town councils, such as Buckie, were unhappy with the expectation from Glasgow Corporation that they would bankroll the wider costs of relief. Closer to Glasgow too, those councils hosting refugees such as Rutherglen began to feel the burden. Some of the town's reformed churches, which had given generously in 1914, turned down later appeals for assistance.<sup>172</sup> The accounts of the GCBRC indicate that even the largest Belgian homes sponsored by the Dundee, Edinburgh and Aberdeen local authorities received regular financial support from Glasgow Corporation.<sup>173</sup> This points to an overestimation of what local authorities could fundraise and contribute. Checkland has identified that the War put significant strain on public services in Scotland.<sup>174</sup> This, combined with a feeling of resentment against Glasgow's centralised and authoritative approach amongst some local authorities, led to declining income.

Although conditions for refugees in Belgian homes were on the whole better than they were in model lodging facilities, some refugees became disenchanted with their treatment. Mary Boyle recounted multiple incidences of arguments and hostility between refugees in her care.<sup>175</sup> Linguistic differences between French and Dutch speakers and petty jealousies seem to have been the root of these conflicts. Boyle's descriptions suggest that the strain of exile also played its part. These experiences were by no means unique to Scotland. Both Kushner and Laqua provide evidence of Belgians in exile objecting to their living arrangements resulting in depression and violence.<sup>176</sup>

The stress of communal life amplified domestic problems amongst refugees, resulting in incidences of gender based violence and deteriorating mental health. Mary Boyle recounted how a refugee, nicknamed "Wooly," attempted to push his wife out of a window during a domestic argument which escalated.<sup>177</sup> Upon reporting this to figures within the Committee,

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>172</sup> GCA, Correspondence Clerk Gray from Ministers in Rutherglen, June 30, 1915, RU4/5/163, 30 June 1915.

<sup>173</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915 April 1916, January 4, 1916, C1/3/54, January (1916); Jenkinson, "Administering Relief," 178.

<sup>174</sup> Olive Checkland, "Maternal and Child Welfare" in *Health Care as Social History: The Glasgow Case*, ed. Olive Checkland and Margaret Lamb, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), 172

<sup>175</sup> IWMA, Mary E Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, 121, BEL 6100/5.

<sup>176</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 11; Daniel Laqua, "Belgian exiles," 114.

<sup>177</sup> IWMA, Mary E. Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, 74, BEL 6100/5.

Boyle was met with indifference, and informed that it was lucky “Wooly” did not succeed as “the city” was “short of street sweepers.”<sup>178</sup>

The occurrence of domestic violence, however, cannot be regarded as purely a reaction to institutionalisation. There is plenty of evidence that suggests many refugees were grateful for the hospitality they received. This was apparent in public celebrations of Belgian identity and cultural exchange. For example, the planting of a tree in Barshaw Park, for King Albert’s fortieth birthday in 1915, allowed refugees in Paisley to express their gratitude.<sup>179</sup> As Camille Berck, a former hotel keeper from Liège and refugee community leader articulated at the event:

We shall never forget how we have been welcomed here...The proverbial Scottish hospitality has not lost its old reputation and Scottish kindness is not a vain word. We ask them to believe that we are not ungrateful, and that we shall never forget them...we shall tell our children that the people of the British Isles came to help their parents in distress during this monstrous war.<sup>180</sup>

Berck’s speech identifies the dual feelings of patriotism and solidarity many Belgians felt during their exile. Berck’s praise for Paisley’s generosity and the gesture of the tree planting ceremony, conveys an example of a Belgian manifestation of public gratitude.

### **Self-Supported and Private Accommodation**

As Ewence has articulated, Belgian refugees were sojourners rather than settlers.<sup>181</sup> The temporary nature of Belgian refugees’ existence in Britain is supported by Manz and Panayi. They identify that the repatriation process at the end of the War led “virtually all” Belgians to “return home after 1918.”<sup>182</sup> By 1920 fewer than 12,000 Belgians lived in Britain, compared to the c. 250,000 who had come during the War.<sup>183</sup> This limited permanent settlement means the bulk of evidence of Belgians’ existence in Britain is composed of administrative records, such as registers and newspaper reports between 1914-1918. These records indicate that over time Belgian homes closed and refugees relocated elsewhere or returned to Belgium. While there were certainly refugees in Glasgow and beyond who found accommodation privately,

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>179</sup> GCA, Strathclyde Education Pack, “Belgian King’s Birthday – Celebrations at Paisley,” *Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette*, April 10, 1915, 76, PA/2/86.

<sup>180</sup> GCA, Strathclyde Education Pack, “Tree-Planting Ceremony at Barshaw,” *Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette*, April 17, 1915, 78, PA/2/86.

<sup>181</sup> Hannah Ewence, “Bridging the Gap between ‘War’ and ‘Peace,’ The Case of Belgian Refugees,” in *Minorities and the First World War*, ed. Hannah Ewence and Tim Grady, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 91.

<sup>182</sup> Stefan Manz and Panikos Panayi, “Refugees and Cultural Transfer to Britain: An Introduction,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 30 no. 3, (2012): 122-151, 127; Ewence, “Bridging the Gap,” 91.

<sup>183</sup> Ewence, “Bridging the Gap,” 91.



tracing those who did or quantifying their number proves hard.

What can be traced are efforts by Glasgow Corporation to encourage employed Belgians to move to rented accommodation.<sup>184</sup> During the Committee's 1915 fundraising tour Bailie James Stewart drew attention to this policy, arguing that Belgians who found work in "a few months would be self-supporting."<sup>185</sup> The introduction of bureaucratic resolutions on allowances and wage contributions in September 1915, further indicate attempts to encourage refugees to become more independent.<sup>186</sup>

Some refugees found work quickly in well-paying industries including; mining, steel and private enterprise. A number of Belgians who had taken up residence at the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society's Calderwood Estate, for instance, found work "in the pits" nearby and went to live in rented accommodation soon after.<sup>187</sup> Belgian "workmen" in Birmingham employed in heavy industry were similarly encouraged to move on after finding employment in the city's heavy industries.<sup>188</sup> Other refugees living in Scotland, with means, were able to afford accommodation from their arrival. Charles Saroléahighlighted this in a letter to Alexander Walker, enquiring where his nephew Alphonse Boni, might find "decent rooms" in Glasgow.<sup>189</sup>

Whilst this indicates that employed Belgians found accommodation privately, it does not illustrate where Belgians stayed or the type of accommodation they lived in. More tangible evidence of Belgians' presence is found by looking at specific types of records. For example, marriage records indicate the private addresses of refugees in Glasgow. The marriage certificates of Belgian munitions workers, living in the city, suggest that refugees found homes in slum areas close to the city centre such as Cowcaddens.<sup>190</sup> Similarly the prison records of a Belgian accused of contravening the Aliens Restriction Orders, Henri Hendirckx, reveals his family also lived in Cowcaddens.<sup>191</sup> Cowcaddens, in the north west of the city, was one of the most deprived areas and as a result one of the most affordable. This area, on the city centre's

<sup>184</sup> GCA, Correspondence Alexander Walker to William Weir, March 3, 1915, RU4/5/163.

<sup>185</sup> "Belgian Refugees in Scotland," *Arbroath Herald and Advertiser*, May 7, 1915, 5.

<sup>186</sup> GCA, Strathclyde Education Pack, Allowances and Assistance Resolutions September 24, 1915, PA/2/86.

<sup>187</sup> GCA, The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Minute Book, No 79, January 29, 1915, CWS-1/1/210.

<sup>188</sup> BWC, Birmingham War Refugee Committee, Executive Committee Minutes, November 30, 1914, M 652/14.

<sup>189</sup> CRC, Correspondence Charles Saroléato Alexander Walker, May 27, 1915, SAR COLL 80.

<sup>190</sup> Scotland's People (hereafter SP), Marriage Certificate of Jean Adriaenssens to Maria Eyland, May 13, 1918, District of Milton in the Burgh of Glasgow, 644/9 158; SP, Marriage Certificate of Felix Maurisse to Irene Aerts, May 31, 1918, District of Milton in the Burgh of Glasgow, 644/9 169; SP, Marriage Certificate of Joseph Somers to Jeanne Van Steppen, September 2, 1918, District of Milton in the Burgh of Glasgow, 644/9 158.

<sup>191</sup> National Records for Scotland (hereafter NRS), Records of Glasgow's Prisoners 1916-1919, May 19, 1916, HH 21/32/137.

periphery, was singled out by welfare and health inspectors as severely overcrowded.<sup>192</sup>

Poor law applications for Belgians indicate that refugees were forced into cheap accommodation by their circumstances. Joseph Van Oosterwyck, a fifty-six year-old cabman afflicted by a hernia, rented an apartment at the cost of 4s and 6d a week at 234 Albert Street, Pollokshields.<sup>193</sup> Van Oosterwyck's application reveals he was unemployed for almost sixteen months and "partially destitute" before he came to the attention of the poor law board.<sup>194</sup> Another poor law applicant Arthur Schramme, a gas works employee, rented a one room flat on London Road in the overcrowded east end, was forced to apply for relief after becoming too ill with rheumatism to work.<sup>195</sup> The poor law applications of these refugees point to an itinerant existence dependent upon casual labour and welfare. Van Oosterwyck lived in Dumfries before coming to Glasgow, and Schramme previously resided in Govan and then the mining town of New Cumnock, Ayrshire.<sup>196</sup> While tracing refugees' residence this way provides only snippets of information, it reveals that those who sought assistance from the poor law were already living in cheap accommodation in the poorest areas.

Melling has identified renting accommodation in urban Scotland was difficult for working class Scots; forcible eviction in poor areas remained common until the War.<sup>197</sup> Belgians looking for private accommodation faced additional barriers. Language difficulties, unscrupulous landlords and the challenge of finding pre-furnished flats all limited Belgians' ability to live independently. Yet, those employed Belgians or those with a family member in the military would have been in receipt of stable income from the separation allowance. Rather than contribute disposable income to their own collective relief, many refugees may have preferred to live independently.

Although a number of Belgians residing in Scotland lived independently, many refugees remained reliant on local support. Belgians, however, could not be accommodated suitably in institutions alone. Glasgow Corporation, like other committees in England had therefore to rely on the goodwill of its citizenry to absorb the remaining Belgian populace.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Olive Checkland, "Maternal and Child Welfare," in *Health Care as Social History: The Glasgow Case*, ed. Olive Checkland and Margaret Lamb, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), 124. Here infant mortality was at its highest.

<sup>193</sup> GCA, Glasgow City Poor Law Board Applications, Case 55899, September 5, 1916 D -HEW 16/13/372.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> GCA, Glasgow City Poor Law Board Applications, Case 53138, November 4, 1915 D -HEW 16/13/355.

<sup>196</sup> GCA, Glasgow City Poor Law Board Applications, Case 55899, September 5, 1916, D -HEW16/13/372; GCA, Glasgow City Poor Law Board Applications, Case 53138, November 4, 1915, D -HEW16/13/355.

<sup>197</sup> Joseph Melling, *Rent Strikes Peoples' Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916*, (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1983), 10.

<sup>198</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 179.

Accommodating refugees privately was a form of charity integral to the wider relief effort, as an article in the *Daily Record* illustrated:

One of the most touching acts of kindness which were performed during the weekend was by a Partick widow. This lady occupied a house of three apartments, and touched by the pathetic conditions of the poor Belgians she gave up her house, completely furnished, as it stood and with the very fires in the grates blazing a hearty welcome to the refugees. Now a complete family of eight persons are living comfortably.<sup>199</sup>

Glasgow and the surrounding burghs' relief committees relied on the benevolence of those who had space to host families. Advertisements in local press such as the *Motherwell Times* stressed the need to accommodate refugees in residents' homes, appealing for those who could spare room to help relieve the overcrowding of refugees already in the town: "As the Belgian Refugees sent to Motherwell and for whom the Town Council have undertaken to find accommodation, are still overcrowded, the Provost and Magistrates appeal . . . to offers of accommodation for small families of refugees."<sup>200</sup> This request for assistance appeared just below several advertisements for films with anti-German subjects such as *A German Spy in South Africa* and *The Enemy in Our Midst*.<sup>201</sup> The juxtaposition of these adverts undoubtedly stoked anger towards Germans while motivating sympathy towards the Belgians.

Similar appeals for private accommodation were recorded elsewhere too, a letter to the *Observer* urged Catholics to assist: "Sir I notice in your September 12<sup>th</sup> Edition you had an appeal to the Catholics of Scotland to adopt Belgian Children. I think it is a matter for every Catholic family."<sup>202</sup> Whether this statement was inserted by the Committee is unclear. Across Scotland, however, letters to newspaper editors evidenced that citizens were outraged with German actions and were willing to offer up their homes.

Many of those who provided hospitality to refugees had the room and income to do so. Hosts were frequently middle class or upper class. They included business people, professionals, academics, doctors, and ministers of religion. Their motivations were diverse, but encompassed feelings of patriotism, internationalism and religious duty. As both Gill and Baughan have shown, those who assisted refugees acted out of a paternalistic sense of duty.<sup>203</sup> In Scotland they included distinguished figures such as the aristocrat Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, a former University of Glasgow Chancellor and Conservative MP. Maxwell hosted

<sup>199</sup> "The Belgian Refugees," *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3.

<sup>200</sup> "Homes Wanted for Belgian Refugees," *Motherwell Times*, November 20, 1914, 1.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>202</sup> "Letters," *Glasgow Observer*, September 26, 1914, 2.

<sup>203</sup> Gill, "Brave Little Belgium," 139-140; Baughan, "International Adoption," 188.

fourteen refugees at his Pollok House estate.<sup>204</sup> Correspondence between Arthur Peeters, a twenty-one year-old refugee who lived on the Pollok estate, and Stirling-Maxwell suggests that the Baron of Pollokshaws took a keen interest in those families he took in, using his correspondence with Peeters to practise his French.<sup>205</sup> Similar kindness was offered by Sir Henry Jones, a renowned professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow who hosted refugees at his Kames home in Argyll.<sup>206</sup>

Some families who took in Belgian refugees were prominent in local industry, like that of the Muir family who lived in Bothwell, Lanarkshire. Robert Anstruth Muir was the managing director of the Carfin-based United Collieries Ltd.<sup>207</sup> Muir and his wife Elizabeth took in four members of the Dentener family into their large home. As the *Hamilton Advertiser* reported, the Muirs were one of only two families in Bothwell who took in refugees.<sup>208</sup> Muir's obituary noted he "was never inclined" towards "public life," yet displayed his benevolent nature through the generosity of his actions towards refugees.<sup>209</sup>

The efforts of industrial and mining towns in Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire were significant in supporting the work of the Glasgow Corporation. Refugees were housed in the homes of small business owners in Cambuslang, Milngavie, Motherwell, Paisley and Rutherglen. Charles Flannagan, a Cambuslang Pawnbroker, was one of many middle class businessmen, who was willing to offer up his home. He was typical of the sort of individual who offered accommodation to refugees. He was engaged in private enterprise, owning a shop and letting several flats.<sup>210</sup> Flannagan housed three members of the Ryckx family from Ostend.<sup>211</sup> As an active member of his local community Flannagan served on the school board and fundraised for good causes including the local school for the "handicapped."<sup>212</sup>

Business people and professionals within Glasgow also hosted refugees. For instance John McCrae and his wife, owners of R & J McCrae a retailer of quilt covers, took in three members of the Van De Sande family.<sup>213</sup> The McCraes' company was listed as worth £50,000, and their residence in an exclusive town house in Lilybank Terrace in the west end, suggests

<sup>204</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>205</sup> GCA, Correspondence Arthur Peeters to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, June 10, 1915, T-PM 122/1/31. Peeters described in French his visit to London and thanked Stirling-Maxwell for his hospitality at the Pollok estate.

<sup>206</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>207</sup> "Bothwell Notes," *Hamilton Advertiser*, February 6, 1915, 5.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. Fourteen refugees were maintained by the Burgh at Huntly Lodge.

<sup>209</sup> "Bothwell Notes," *Hamilton Advertiser*, February 6, 1915, 5.

<sup>210</sup> SP, Valuation Roll, Charles Flannagan, Lanark County 1915, VR010700306-/13.

<sup>211</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3, 1914.

<sup>212</sup> "Cambuslang School Board," *Hamilton Herald and Lanarkshire Weekly News*, April 6, 1910, 3.

<sup>213</sup> "Fire in Glasgow," *Evening Telegraph and Post*, October 22, 1915, 1.

there was likely plenty of space to host sisters Caroline and Anna and their mother Jeanne.<sup>214</sup>

Glasgow's influential medical community displayed a commitment towards accommodating refugees too, suggesting sympathy among professionals as well as the mercantile.<sup>215</sup> At least eleven medics across Scotland took in refugees.<sup>216</sup> This included Dr. William R. Jack, a virologist at Glasgow Royal Infirmary who had worked at universities in Berlin, Vienna and Paris.<sup>217</sup> Jack hosted seven refugees at his Derby Street home.<sup>218</sup> Another medical professional who hosted refugees was Dr. John Fergus, an Ophthalmic Surgeon, who had previously campaigned on behalf of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.<sup>219</sup> Fergus opened his home to a chemist, his wife and a soldier, taking them in after they resided in the empty wards of the Sick Children's Hospital.<sup>220</sup> Fergus likely met his guests in assisting the Corporation in their work at the Sick Children's Hospital. Another important medical host was Dr. Annie McCrorie, who hosted six members of the Boudot family.<sup>221</sup>

City councillors too housed refugees, acting out of a sense of civic duty. One of these hosts was Bailie Nicol. Nicol had earned his living owning lodging houses in the Gallowgate, in the east of the city, and was active within the Church of Scotland and the Bridgeton Liberal Association.<sup>222</sup> Nicol hosted two men: Louis Wyms, a customs officer, and Louis Armand Vrancken, a book keeper.<sup>223</sup> These educated men shared a similar social standing to Nicol, suggesting that some hosts sought to accommodate their Belgian peers.

While correlating a link between those with Liberal sympathies and those who supported refugees is not difficult, it should be noted that it was not only Liberal councillors who hosted refugees in Scotland. The Corporation's register indicates that the Labour councillor, and later MP, James Stewart hosted a refugee family. Three members of the Van der Poorten family were registered as under Stewart and his wife's care.<sup>224</sup> The occupation and social status of Stewart's guests corresponded with his socialist credentials. Arthur Van Der

<sup>214</sup> "New Scottish Companies," *The Courier*, May 28, 1910, 8; GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3. The Van de Sandes appear to have been involved in the manufacture of hats and corsets when living in Antwerp.

<sup>215</sup> A. H. Ferguson, L. T. Weaver, M. Nicolson, "The Glasgow Corporation Milk Depot 1904-1910 and its Role in Infant Welfare: An End or a Means?" *Social History of Medicine*, 19 No. 3 (2006); 443-460, 456.

<sup>216</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>217</sup> *The Medical Directory* (London: Post Office, 1914), 1387. Jack was the author of several works on virology.

<sup>218</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>219</sup> "Women's Suffrage," *Scotsman*, February 6, 1914, 11.

<sup>220</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>221</sup> *The Medical Directory*, 1181; GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>222</sup> "Death of Glasgow Ex-Bailie," *Dundee Courier*, June 16, 1925, 7; "Obituary Glasgow Ex-Bailie," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, June 16, 1925, 8.

<sup>223</sup> *Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees*, D-CA12/2/1-3, (1914).

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

Poorten was a tin plater, a skilled industrial trade, and Malines his hometown was a hub for metalworking.<sup>225</sup>

Nicol and James Stewart were the only two Glasgow councillors who opened their homes to refugees, although across the Corporation many other public servants took in Belgians. The Corporation registers indicate that Firemaster Waddell, Sanitary Inspector Love and Captain O’Sullivan of the Board of Trade all hosted Belgian families.<sup>226</sup> Alexander Walker and his wife Mary also housed refugees. Perhaps seeking to lead by example, the Walkers housed four Belgians, Pierre Demaeseneer, a sixty-five year-old soldier, and his three daughters Mathilda, Emilie and Elisa. This family lived for several months at the Walker’s home in Hyndland, before moving to stay with Dr. Robert Buchanan in the rural village of Killearn.<sup>227</sup> Walker was passionate about his commitment to Belgian exiles and this was evident in his personal dealings. He served as “father of the bride” to Belgian refugee Joanna Buelens, giving her away when she married Roy MacGregor Drummond in 1919.<sup>228</sup>

The backgrounds of Belgian guests accommodated by Scots, indicates that selection by class was carried out by private hosts in Glasgow. The screening of refugee guests was not unique to Glasgow, however, it appears that occupation was used to assess “character.”<sup>229</sup> The social question therefore held considerable importance in the relief of refugees.<sup>230</sup>

Endeavour to assist refugees also came from religious communities. The plight of Belgium captured the attention of all major religious denominations during the outbreak of the War as the leaders of the Anglican, reformed, Catholic and Jewish faiths within Britain appealed jointly for funds.<sup>231</sup> Ecumenical and interfaith action in aid of refugees was not new, it had earlier been employed to raise awareness of humanitarian crises such as anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia during the 1880s.<sup>232</sup>

Unity amongst the reformed Protestant denominations on political matters, however, was rare in Scotland. Although the Church of Scotland provided some financial, material and political assistance to Belgian refugees, the United Free Church’s (UF Church) support was

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> SP, Marriage Certificate Joanna Buelens Roy MacGregor, District of Hillhead Glasgow, August 21, 1919, 644/12 300. Walker acted in this capacity as Buelens’ father was dead.

<sup>229</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5; Kushner, “Local Heroes,” 35.

<sup>230</sup> John Stewart and John Welshman, “The evacuation of children in wartime Scotland culture, behaviour, and poverty,” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 26 no. 2 (2006): 100-120.

<sup>231</sup> CRC, Belgium’s Christmas Appeal Letter, National Committee for Relief in Belgium, December 1914, SAR COLL 73. The appeal was endorsed by the Archbishop of Canterbury Davidson, The Church of Scotland’s Moderator Nichol, Cardinal Bourne, Chief Rabbi Hertz and the Leader of the Free Church of Scotland.

<sup>232</sup> “Persecution of the Jews in Russia,” *Times*, February 2, 1882, 4.

more significant.<sup>233</sup> In particular, UF pastors took in refugee families. This included the leaders of congregations in Hillhead, Govan, Mount Florida, Dumbreck in Glasgow, plus those in Kilmarnock in Ayrshire and Dalbeattie in Dumfries.<sup>234</sup> This practical support augmented active fundraising efforts within UF Churches across Scotland.<sup>235</sup> Ministry within the UF Church emphasised Christian social responsibility and missionary activity. The work of ministers in hosting refugee families underlined this. UF ministers, such as Reverend George Lowe of Mount Florida and Reverend Arthur Herbert Gray of Kinning Park, acted as contemporary good Samaritans taking in homeless foreign strangers.<sup>236</sup>

Support for refugees also came from the smaller religious communities within the city. This included a growing Pentecostal congregation, which witnessed their evangelical faith through charity. Reverend George Sharp of the Wesley Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, in Parkhead, hosted nine refugees in his family home in Westbourne Gardens, Hyndland.<sup>237</sup> The nine members of the La Page family later moved in with another wealthy member of the congregation, George Fraser, a public works contractor who lived in Pollokshaws.<sup>238</sup> Evangelical support for Belgian refugees was well received by the minority of non-Catholic Belgians who according to the *Scotsman*, resented the Catholic Church's paternalistic approach to their care.<sup>239</sup>

In spite of newspaper criticism of the role of the Catholic Church in providing support, parish priests were the cornerstone in the decentralised network of Catholic relief. The Catholic Church housed almost 1,117 refugees across the Archdiocese of Glasgow.<sup>240</sup> A notable contribution to this work came from Father Kelly, of St Patrick's in Dumbarton. Kelly was responsible for accommodating up to 243 refugees with members of his congregation.<sup>241</sup> Fathers Ooghe and Mullen similarly arranged accommodation for over 200 refugees with

<sup>233</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3. Reverend Baird, a Church of Scotland Minister, living near Kelvingrove Park housed seven members of the Meerenhout family at his flat.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> "St Paul's United Free Church," *Dundee Courier*, October 26, 1914, 3; "Belgian Refugees at Cumbernauld," *Falkirk Herald*, June 19, 1915, 1.

<sup>236</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>237</sup> "Welsey Pentecostal Church," *Perthshire Advertiser*, January 19, 1916, 5; GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>238</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3. *Glasgow Post Office Directory*, 259; "Newmains Vs Blairhill," *Scottish Referee*, July 8, 1912, 4. Fraser himself was also a reverend within the church and a keen amateur cricket player.

<sup>239</sup> "Non-Catholic Belgians," *Scotsman*, April 4, 1916, 4. Religious discussions between Scottish Protestants and Belgian refugees were decried as "proselytizing" by "Romish" journalists.

<sup>240</sup> Kieran Taylor, "The Relief of Belgian Refugees in the Archdiocese of Glasgow," *A crusade of Christianity*," *Innes Review*, 69 no. 2 (2018): 147-164, 163.

<sup>241</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

Catholics throughout their parishes in Glasgow and in Paisley.<sup>242</sup> In some cases local Catholics took in refugees while their own sons were away at the front. This was the case for the McCallion family of Dumbarton and the McCuskers of Glasgow.<sup>243</sup> Empty bedrooms and separation allowances gave many families additional space and income, and the dual influences of the parish priest's authority and religious solidarity undoubtedly motivated Catholics to open their homes.<sup>244</sup>

Glasgow's small Jewish community also extended its hospitality to those Jewish Belgian refugees who arrived in Scotland. The great majority of Belgian Jews were assisted directly by the large Jewish community in London which directed its own organisation, the Jewish War Refugees Committee.<sup>245</sup> Cahalan states that this organisation was the most cohesive out of any of the other bodies in arranging relief for refugees in England.<sup>246</sup> While most Belgian Jews were received into homes and institutions in London, a small number stayed in Glasgow during the War. Glasgow's Jewish community's origins were predominantly Eastern European and many of its members had themselves been refugees forced to flee anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia during the 1880s and early 1900s.<sup>247</sup>

Some of the Jewish community of Belgium's roots were similarly Eastern European. The outbreak of the First World War made these Jews "twice migrants."<sup>248</sup> Jewish Belgians' otherness was stressed as their "Russian subject status" was highlighted in the Corporation registers. This was the case for the Blumstein family, who arrived in Glasgow and were later returned to London to be supported directly by the Russian embassy.<sup>249</sup> Some Russian born Jews, with Belgian passports, stayed in Scotland. This number included Gwiewitch Hirsch, a turner, Tovia Rodal, a jeweller, Joseph Somers, a vanman, and Rachael Kopman, a wigmaker.<sup>250</sup> These individuals found shelter with Glasgow's *Shul* (congregation) and likely received support through the informal networks of the synagogue, *Yeshiva* (religious school)

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> "Et cætera," *The Tablet*, December 9, 1916, 16; "Et cætera," *Tablet*, August 10, 1918, 24.

<sup>244</sup> Taylor, "The Relief of Belgian Refugees," 163.

<sup>245</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 11.

<sup>246</sup> Cahalan, "The Relief of Belgian Refugees," 143.

<sup>247</sup> Harvey L. Kaplan, *The Gorbals Jewish Community in 1901*, (Glasgow: The Scottish Jewish Archive Centre, 2006), 4. Kaplan identifies that there was a small number of Belgian born Jews residing in Glasgow before the First World War.

<sup>248</sup> David Vital, *A People Apart*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 304; Parminder Bhachu, *Twice Migrants*, (Sydney: Law Book Co of Australasia, 1985).

<sup>249</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>250</sup> Scottish Jewish Archives (Hereafter SJA), The Scottish Jewish Genealogical Database, Search "Somers," May 28, 2018; SJA, The Scottish Jewish Genealogical Database, Search "Kopman," May 28, 2018, Kopman and Somers stayed in Glasgow after the War.



and Zionist associations.<sup>251</sup> Young Jewish Belgian refugees were also cared for in the community's Getrude Jacobson Orphanage.<sup>252</sup>

Not everyone who opened their homes to refugees was motivated by charity. As Cahalan has identified housing refugees offered some an opportunity for additional income.<sup>253</sup> The reception of refugees in tenement flats in the poorest districts of Glasgow such as Maryhill, Shettleston and the Gorbals suggests that there may have been some economic incentive to do so.<sup>254</sup> James Cassidy, a postman, his wife and sister hosted three members of the Vanpeborgh family in their three room property on Crown Street in the Gorbals for a short period in 1914.<sup>255</sup> Their accommodation, as was the case for many Belgians, was not permanent and later the family moved to Brampton House Convent, Langside.<sup>256</sup> Why the Vandeporghs moved can only be speculated, however, their residence with the Cassidy family suggests there may have been some expectation to contribute financially.

As identified earlier, relief from rates was an enticement for some to assist refugees living in Glasgow. Requests for exemptions were also made to neighbouring parish and burgh authorities. These local councils were more lenient than Glasgow Corporation. This is evident in the case of Cadder Parish Council which granted Captain Stirling a relief of rates for lodging refugees at his cottage near Bishopbriggs.<sup>257</sup> In making their decision Cadder Parish Council acknowledged the ambiguous guidance given by the LGB on the subject: "The Local Government Board replied that in a case where a local committee was entered as tenants they were administering a charity and they could not advise Parish Councils to grant exemption, although they might do so on their own responsibility."<sup>258</sup> Similar leniency was shown by Lenzie Parish Council which agreed to grant a "self-supporting" Belgian family exemption from some rates.<sup>259</sup> Whilst Kushner has noted that there were relatively few refugees who were "self-supporting," those who were deemed independent were rewarded by those authorities responsible for them.<sup>260</sup>

Aside from staying in family homes, some Belgians relied upon private lodgings.

<sup>251</sup> Kenneth E. Collins, *Scotland's Jews*, (Blantyre: Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, 2007), 22.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

<sup>253</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 179.

<sup>254</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>255</sup> SP, Valuation Roll for the Royal Burgh of Glasgow, Survey Book 700, Municipal Ward 19, Parish of Govan, 1915-1916, VR01020293-/76.

<sup>256</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>257</sup> "Rating of Premises Occupied By Belgians," *Kirkintilloch Herald*, February 9, 1916, 4.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>259</sup> "Rates on Refugees' House," *Kirkintilloch Herald*, January 10, 1917, 7.

<sup>260</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 13.

Private lodging was common across Britain during the early twentieth century as enterprising property owners and tenants with extra room offered bed and board to workers.<sup>261</sup> As Meek identifies, lodging was most often offered by widowed, divorced or older women.<sup>262</sup> This gave single women a stable income and provided cheap accommodation for working class men, particularly those who were unmarried, divorced or migrants.<sup>263</sup> Private lodging was therefore a convenient solution for housing refugees who had travelled to Britain.<sup>264</sup> The *Jedburgh Gazette* noted in the case of Brixton, in London, a “scheme” had developed where British male tenants “enlisted into the army” were replaced by “Belgian refugees” who were “distributed” amongst landladies by the borough council.<sup>265</sup> Refugee lodgers in many ways resembled their British counterparts, they were single men of working age. Frederick Cross’ case illustrates this. Cross was a twenty-six year-old clerk from Antwerp who went to live with Jane Mortimer an older single resident of a tenement in Holmhead Street in Langside.<sup>266</sup>

In some areas of Scotland relief committees directly supported lodgers. In Lenzie at least one Belgian lodger was housed in the town, while families were accommodated at Blair Villa.<sup>267</sup> The relationship between lodger and proprietor was often fraught and, in some instances, Belgians were exploited. This included cases where refugees were taken advantage of by other Belgians. Mrs Doornert, a Belgian landlady, stole £20 Mr Seger had given her for safe keeping in Helensburgh in 1917.<sup>268</sup> Such cases identify that refugees were disadvantaged by their financial insecurity and dependence upon others.

## Conclusion

The chapter has explored the accommodation of Belgian refugees in Scotland. It has outlined through careful analysis of archived records the administrative, financial and political challenges Glasgow Corporation faced in settling a large refugee population. It has been shown that the provision of housing to foreigners was an intensely political concern. It has also been demonstrated that systems of welfare influenced how accommodation was organised. The

<sup>261</sup> Jeffrey Meek, “Boarding and lodging practices in early twentieth-century Scotland,” *Continuity and Change*, 31 no. 1 (2016): 79-100, 79.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

<sup>263</sup> “Dundee Landlady and Alien Lodgers,” *Dundee Courier*, January 13, 1916, 2; “The Wrong Name,” *Daily Record*, October 22, 1917, 3.

<sup>264</sup> “Belgian’s Last Curse,” *Dundee Courier*, August 20, 1914, 3. Petri de Lafaille, a single Belgian lodger living in Liverpool, committed suicide in his accommodation soon after arriving in Britain.

<sup>265</sup> “Refugees to Replace Lodgers,” *Jedburgh Gazette*, March 3, 1916, 3.

<sup>266</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Registers of Belgian Refugees, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3; GCA, Valuation Roll for the Royal Burgh of Glasgow, 1912-1913, 320, 47.

<sup>267</sup> “Belgian Refugees,” *Kirkintilloch Herald*, April 5, 1916, 2. Blair Villa was the home of Leonard Gow, a shipping magnate and art collector.

<sup>268</sup> “Belgian Lodger Sues his Landlady,” *Sunday Post*, January 28, 1918, 2.

research discussed in this chapter provides a wider understanding of the public response to the settlement of migrants in Britain during the twentieth century.<sup>269</sup> The precarious position embodied by Belgian migrants, highlighted by Ewence, has been explored.<sup>270</sup> The findings of this chapter offer relevant and applicable perspectives on how historians may best use administrative records to find refugees' voice within the archives.<sup>271</sup>

The GCBRC's housing strategy developed out of necessity. The division of housing for refugees between shared, private and self-supported, reflects the evolving nature of the emergency. The historiography discussed has identified that Glasgow Corporation's approach to accommodating refugees followed a similar pattern to other authorities elsewhere in Britain.<sup>272</sup> What was distinctive, however, was the Corporation's national role. In this capacity the Corporation drew upon the assistance offered by a broad coalition of groups and individuals.

Shared housing, in institutional settings, offered a clear answer to the humanitarian crisis. Glasgow's progressive facilities for the homeless were put to use to assist destitute Belgians. These public institutions offered temporary shelter, catering services and medical expertise to several thousand people. Located close to the heart of Glasgow, situating refugees in such institutions temporarily made logistical arrangements simpler. Accommodating refugees in shelters designed for the urban poor, however, was far from a perfect solution and this policy inevitably drew criticism in Glasgow and was unpopular with refugees.<sup>273</sup>

The Belgian homes scheme was devised, therefore, as a long term housing strategy. Refugees were hosted in large vacant properties, mostly in wealthy suburbs. These were sponsored by local authorities throughout Scotland to ensure the whole nation participated in relief. The added incentive of rates exemption for those who donated their second properties to relief, made the Belgian homes scheme all the more appealing. While similar schemes were found elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, the Corporation's homes operated as formalised institutions.<sup>274</sup> Life for refugees in these homes was dictated by rules and refugees were monitored.<sup>275</sup> Such measures evidence the institutionalisation of accommodation for Belgians in Scotland. Although conditions in homes were strict, they were by no means prisons and life

<sup>269</sup> Holmes, *Immigrants and Minorities*, 18.

<sup>270</sup> Ewence, "Belgian Refugees in Cheshire," 251.

<sup>271</sup> Gatrell, "Population displacement in the Baltic region," 55.

<sup>272</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 27.

<sup>273</sup> Buck, "Come and find sanctuary in Eire," 16.

<sup>274</sup> Kushner, "Local Heroes," 15.

<sup>275</sup> Elliot, "An Early Experiment," 188.

in hostels differed significantly from life in Dutch refugee camps.<sup>276</sup>

Institutionalised accommodation was a component of the refugee regime operated by GCRBC.<sup>277</sup> As Gatrell has noted, in common with the treatment of refugees elsewhere, self-help amongst refugees was encouraged.<sup>278</sup> Evidence suggests that in Glasgow this policy was partially successful, with some refugees finding employment and private accommodation. Self-supporting refugees embodied a transient existence in Scotland and the chapter has highlighted that refugees still faced considerable barriers entering the housing market.

Private hospitality provided the most significant pillar of support in accommodating refugees. The personal contribution of refugee hosts enabled the work of GCBRC. Private hospitality was not a strategy distinct to Scotland, it was the initial solution to relief envisaged by the WRC.<sup>279</sup> It was, however, a pragmatic and economic answer to a complex problem.<sup>280</sup> The GCBRC drew on the goodwill of Scots. The philanthropic sentiments of Scottish hosts correspond with the findings of Baughan and Gill, who have carried out similar case studies.<sup>281</sup> Contributors to relief were thus inspired by a mix of patriotism, sympathy and religious belief.

The social question in relation to refugees was considered important by authorities and by the public.<sup>282</sup> Refugees entered Scots' homes as guests, although, careful selection occurred. Edwardian preoccupation with social class and character were exemplified in public and private dealings with refugees, as hosts sought refugees like themselves. Nevertheless, humanitarian feeling exerted considerable influence over those who hosted refugees. This is apparent from the generosity shown by the diverse range of individuals who offered up their homes.

Financial incentives also played their part too. The relief of rates for vacant properties undoubtedly promoted largesse from Glasgow's elite. Similarly, relieving rates in smaller burghs was an additional benefit. The residence of refugees with working class families and their admission into private lodgings suggests that receiving refugees offered some material gain.

Housing and its provision were much debated political concerns in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow where years of under investment had created endemic overcrowding.<sup>283</sup>

<sup>276</sup> Amara, "Belgian Refugees during the First World War," 204.

<sup>277</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

<sup>278</sup> Gatrell, "Introduction," 5.

<sup>279</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 27.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid*, 179.

<sup>281</sup> Baughan, "International Adoption," 188; Gill, "Brave Little Belgium," 139-140.

<sup>282</sup> Bailkin, "Unsettled," 98.

<sup>283</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 66.

The Rent Strikes of 1915 illustrated the febrile context of Glasgow's political situation. The settlement of refugees, in an overcrowded city, inevitably drew criticism. Like the other agencies charged with dealing with refugees globally, Glasgow Corporation had to contend with the precarious concerns of economics and accountability.<sup>284</sup> Thus, the residence of a dependent foreign population in a time of War proved divisive. Yet, the Belgian cause also built consensus. Support for the humanitarian gesture of asylum was widespread, sustained and brought together a range of interests.

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<sup>284</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

## Chapter 4

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### Humanitarian Partnership: Voluntarism and Relief

“If Christ came today it would be surely amongst the Belgians.”<sup>1</sup>

John Buyers Black, a United Free (UF) Church elder, made the above declaration when he proposed a mission to proselytize Belgian refugees. The UF Church was one of the many groups which offered practical aid to Belgian refugees. To those within the UF Church, inspired with missionary zeal, Belgian refugees were the perfect audience to hear an evangelical gospel.

The UF was one of the important organisations and institutions across Scotland which lent their support to Glasgow Corporation. These groups provided Belgian refugees with vital assistance and enabled the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee (GCRBC) to carry out its work. Consideration of the relationship between local government and the third sector provides insight into the membership and influence of religious groups, charities and institutions in early twentieth century Scotland.

The chapter reveals the motivations of the individuals and organisations which assisted the GCBRC. It also ascertains the ideologies and involvement of the third sector to aspects of the First World War. The political, religious and economic dimensions of voluntary assistance for refugees are discussed in detail. The tensions and disagreements which emerged between parties are additionally considered. Non-state organisations played a crucial role in enabling Glasgow Corporation to relieve refugees. Glasgow Corporation drew upon voluntary support, as established welfare protocols necessitated co-operation between local government and charity. The humanitarian emergency of refugees' arrival in Scottish society galvanised ordinary people to assist GCBRC. Humanitarian feeling was extensive and manifested itself in direct financial and voluntary assistance. Scots were inspired to do this by diverse feelings which reached across the divided social, political and religious spectrum of Edwardian Britain.

The source material examined in exploring this topic has evidenced that Glasgow Corporation received assistance from a range of organisations. Archived materials reveal that Glasgow Corporation solicited substantial financial and voluntary support from some of Scotland's most important organisations. Quantitative and qualitative data is utilised to illustrate this. The material examined has included numerous financial records such as lists of

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<sup>1</sup> Glasgow City Archives (Hereafter GCA), United Free Church Office Bearers Union and Minute Book, February 24, 1916, CH 3/7/80/1.

donations, appeal literature and cash books. These records identify who and what organisations made donations. The names and backgrounds of donors have been gleaned from analysis of minute books, newspaper articles, letters and council records.

The chapter begins by revisiting relevant historiographical debates on voluntary support for refugee relief. It then provides an overview of the diverse number of associations which assisted Belgian refugees living in Scotland. The array of clubs, fraternities, businesses, women's organisations and other societies which assisted Glasgow Corporation represented a cross section of the Scottish population. These groups had pre-existing relationships with Glasgow Corporation and this was influential in securing support. Much of the support these organisations lent was financial and donations towards the GCBRC evidenced overwhelming popular approval toward refugees.

The chapter offers a series of case studies which demonstrate how three different organisations provided assistance. The contributions made to relief by Scottish universities, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS) and the Catholic Church are examined in detail. These organisations have been selected on account of the substantial and sustained financial and practical assistance they offered. Each represented a very different group of Scots and the contributions of these organisations lent further credence to GCBRC's claims to be working on behalf of the Scottish nation.

The case studies reveal the role external agencies played in augmenting the work of Glasgow Corporation. The involvement of influential educational, co-operative and religious organisations in relief, illustrates how welfare assistance for refugees involved collaboration between local government and third parties.<sup>2</sup> The case studies examined explore the motivations of these diverse groups. It is determined that the Catholic Church's contribution was the most significant in assisting Glasgow Corporation. The Church encouraged its clergy and congregants to assist Belgians, inspired by beliefs regarding religious kinship and solidarity.

### **Charity, Voluntarism and Welfare**

As this chapter explores the relationship between Glasgow Corporation and those organisations it worked closely with, it is prudent to consider the principal academic opinions on the relationship of the third sector to the state with regard to Belgian refugees. Historiographical

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<sup>2</sup> Magali Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society in Great Britain during the First World War," *Journal of Family History*, 27 no 1 (2002): 235-272; 269.

debate on the support for Belgian refugees provided by the London-based, but nationwide, charitable organisation the War Refugees Committee (WRC) is pertinent. Historians disagree on the WRC's effectiveness. As a charitable organisation, established by well-connected volunteers, Cahalan contends that the WRC provided an effective first response to the immediate need of refugees arriving in Britain.<sup>3</sup> As a voluntary organisation it was free from the bureaucratic constraints of the state and was staffed by an enthusiastic army of volunteers. To Cahalan, the WRC mounted a successful humanitarian mission to assist refugees. The British government's hesitance in providing relief made the contribution of the third sector vital.

The WRC's work, however, has been criticised. It has been alleged that socially conservative beliefs influenced decision making. Grant observes that the WRC adopted a "top down" approach toward its work.<sup>4</sup> This was unsurprising, charitable organisations were bastions of the privileged. Daunton notes that charities were a "meeting ground" for the middle classes.<sup>5</sup> Watson argues that middle class women, in particular, were noted for volunteering.<sup>6</sup> During the War wealthy female volunteers swelled the ranks of charitable groups on the home front.<sup>7</sup> Assisting deserving causes such as the wounded, soldiers' families, sick infants as well as refugees, appealed to many women from privileged backgrounds.

Charities reinforced laissez faire understandings of poverty. Although the efforts of the WRC have been declared successful by Cahalan, Storr argues that the organisation's effectiveness was hindered by the values of its membership.<sup>8</sup> Such attitudes saw voluntary refugee committees determine Belgians' treatment upon their social class or demeanour. Official literature which documented the care of refugees by the LGB illustrates that favourable treatment of upper class refugees continued under the state.<sup>9</sup>

The role of the volunteer, Baughan determines, was central to the work of humanitarian

<sup>3</sup> Peter Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England during the Great War," PhD Dissertation, (McMaster University, 1977), 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Grant, "Mobilizing charity: non-uniformed voluntary action during the First World War," PhD Dissertation (City University London, 2012), 162.

<sup>5</sup> Martin J. Daunton, "Payment and Participation: Welfare and State-Formation in Britain 1900-1951," *Past & Present*, no. 150 1 (1996): 169-216, 188.

<sup>6</sup> Janet K. Watson, "Khaki Girls, VADs, and Tommy's Sisters: Gender and Class in First World War Britain," *The International History Review*, 19 no. 1 (1997): 32-51, 36.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 36.

<sup>8</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 309; Katharine Storr, *Excluded from the Record: Women Refugees and Relief*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 112.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government in the Reception and Care of the Belgian Refugees*, (HMSO, London, 1920), 17. Wealthier refugees, in some circumstances, were given access to flats rather than shared accommodation.



organisations during this period.<sup>10</sup> Holmes argues that the WRC's campaign represented the last great philanthropic campaign of the Edwardian period.<sup>11</sup> The WRC was volunteer led and driven by a popular sense of good will towards Belgian exiles. Volunteers, Grant notes, were "spontaneously" drawn toward the WRC and its work.<sup>12</sup>

The volunteers who carried out the day to day work of the WRC were motivated by a mixture of personal, political and religious sentiments. Gill has shown, in the case of Huddersfield's Belgian refugee committee, that a diverse group of volunteers sought to assist exiles.<sup>13</sup> The Huddersfield relief committee counted amongst its members; socialists, Liberals and entrepreneurs.<sup>14</sup> Gill elaborates that these volunteers were inspired by a combination of patriotic and internationalist beliefs.<sup>15</sup> A similarly diverse group of individuals and interests were involved with the WRC in Birmingham. This included a number of local councillors and aldermen, as well as Belgian expatriates, religious leaders and the lifelong philanthropist, Elizabeth Cadbury.<sup>16</sup> Differing political and social views converged around the cause of Belgian refugees.

The approach taken by the WRC was unsuitable for the scale of relief required. The financial and logistical challenges which the WRC encountered, meant that central government had to step in to support the charity.<sup>17</sup> Kushner has indicated that annexation of authority by the state was a *fait accompli*.<sup>18</sup> Refugee relief involved decision making around the movement and welfare of refugees. As Torpey assesses, these concerns were too important to escape the attention of the expanding War state.<sup>19</sup>

Charity supplemented the work of local government in early twentieth century Britain. As Daunton observes, a "mixed economy" of welfare existed.<sup>20</sup> This system, long used in Glasgow, was based on shared public and charitable endeavour, argues Gente.<sup>21</sup> Cooperation

<sup>10</sup> Emily Baughan, "International Adoption and Anglo-American Internationalism 1918-1920," *Past and Present*, 239, no. 1 (2018), 181.

<sup>11</sup> Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island Immigration and British Society 1871-1971*, (London: Routledge, 1988), 102.

<sup>12</sup> Grant, "Mobilizing charity," 162.

<sup>13</sup> Rebecca Gill, "Brave little Belgium' arrives in Huddersfield ... voluntary action, local politics and the history of international relief work," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 132-150, 144.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 137.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 144.

<sup>16</sup> Wolfson Centre Birmingham (Hereafter WCB), Correspondence of Birmingham War Refugee Committee, H. Hyson to Elizabeth Cadbury, June 23, 1918, MS 642/3.

<sup>17</sup> Grant, "Mobilizing charity," 162.

<sup>18</sup> Tony Kushner, "Local Heroes: Belgian refugees in Britain during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 18 no. 1 (1999): 1-28, 7.

<sup>19</sup> John Torpey, "The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System," in *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. Jane Caplan and John Torpey (Princeton University: Princeton, NJ, 2001), 256.

<sup>20</sup> Daunton, "Payment and Participation," 172.

<sup>21</sup> Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society," 269.

in relation to welfare served to assist the least fortunate. Contemporary opinion, however, divided the poor into two groups. Philanthropists were charged with the responsibility of looking “after the deserving” while “government officials” were tasked with the object of caring of for the “undeserving.”<sup>22</sup> Charities argued that they, rather than the over-burdened taxpayer, offered the best response to the poor.<sup>23</sup>

As central government intervened in more ways than it had before, during the First World War, it relied upon proxies to carry out its work.<sup>24</sup> Philanthropic groups such as the Charity Organization Society (COS) and the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Families Association (SSFA) played a pivotal role administering welfare on behalf of the state to vulnerable groups.<sup>25</sup> Assistance, however, came with conditions. Pedersen has shown that the middle class female volunteers of voluntary organisations, assisting the poor, approached their work with contemporary “social prejudice.”<sup>26</sup>

In the case of Belgian refugees, government relied on the WRC as well as a myriad of other specialist organisations.<sup>27</sup> Gatrell notes that European states “devolved responsibility” for refugee affairs to voluntary agencies.<sup>28</sup> In the eyes of the government it was “expedient” to leave problems centred on the family to charities which knew how best to deal with such issues.<sup>29</sup> De Vuyst et al identify that the state and the voluntary sector had a pre-existing “symbiotic relationship.”<sup>30</sup> In spite of the state’s eventual annexation of the WRC, relief remained contracted out in England, Wales and Ireland to voluntary committees. These committees held significant responsibility, simultaneously directing government funds and implementing legislation. It was often volunteers, rather than civil servants, who “facilitated” government intervention.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 309.

<sup>23</sup> Ronald Johnston, “Charity that Heals”: The Scottish Labour Colony Association and Attitudes towards the Able-Unemployed in Glasgow 1890-1914,” *Scottish Historical Review*, 77 no. 1 (1998): 77-95, 77. This perhaps explains Glaswegians resistance to pay poor rates.

<sup>24</sup> Gente, “Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society,” 263.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 269.

<sup>26</sup> Susan Pedersen, “Gender Welfare and Citizenship During the Great War,” *The American Historical Review*, 95, no. 4 (1990): 983-1006, 993. Although critical of the approach taken by such volunteers Pedersen identifies a “feminist tint” in the “woman to woman” visits that took place.

<sup>27</sup> Catholic Social Guild, *How to help the Belgian Refugees*, (London: Catholic Social Guild, 1916), 2-16. This included the Belgian Relief Committee, the Jewish Refugees Committee, the Belgian Lawyers’ Aid Committee, the Belgian Artists Committee, the Wounded Allies Relief Committee, the Belgian News Fund, the Voluntary Association for the Employment and Repatriation of Belgians, and the Home for Belgian Unmarried Mothers.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Introduction,” in *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhanko (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 5.

<sup>29</sup> De Vuyst, Myers, Van Gorp, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizen? Access, Control and Entitlements of Belgian Refugees During the First World War,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, (2020): 1-18, 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> De Vuyst, Myers, Van Gorp, “The Paradox of the Alien Citizen?” 8.

Exploring the delivery of humanitarian relief in Glasgow has revealed that charitable and voluntary assistance bolstered the Corporation's work. The model of cooperative welfare described by Gente had long been in operation in the city.<sup>32</sup> The "social prejudice," recorded by Pedersen, associated with charitable assistance was also apparent in the work of the volunteers who assisted refugees in Glasgow.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, different interests, which were sometimes opposed, coalesced around the cause of refugees. Sources of support extended well beyond the middle class, particularly women, who Daunton and Watson regard as integral to charitable and humanitarian campaigns.<sup>34</sup> Sympathy for refugees was engendered by humanitarian and patriotic beliefs, as described by Gill.<sup>35</sup> These values were important to contemporary Scottish society and work on behalf of Belgian refugees appealed to Scots' political and religious identities.

### **Glasgow Corporation and its Partners**

In spite of Glasgow Corporation's significant efforts to assist Belgian refugees through the extensive provision of welfare services, the municipality did not carry out relief entirely on its own.<sup>36</sup> Glasgow Corporation relied on individuals and charities initially to accommodate refugees. The operation of what Checkland describes as the "market" system of welfare in Glasgow was beneficial in organising relief.<sup>37</sup> Gente notes that urban areas relied on public-voluntary partnerships to meet the needs of the poor and reduce taxation.<sup>38</sup> As has already been shown in the discussion of accommodation, support for refugees in Scotland was cosmopolitan.

Glasgow's business community was renowned for its generosity.<sup>39</sup> Glasgow's business elite took a strong interest in philanthropy, these figures were the pioneers of the city's civic gospel.<sup>40</sup> Many of Glasgow's successful had risen through the ranks of trade or clerical service,

<sup>32</sup> Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society," 269.

<sup>33</sup> Pedersen, "Gender Welfare and Citizenship," 993.

<sup>34</sup> Daunton, "Payment and Participation," 188; Watson, "Khaki Girls, VADs, and Tommy's Sisters," 36.

<sup>35</sup> Gill, "Brave little Belgium," 144.

<sup>36</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, "Administering Relief: Glasgow Corporation's Support for Scotland's c. 20,000 Belgian refugees," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016): 171-191, 186.

<sup>37</sup> Olive Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1980), 2. Checkland notes, that successful charitable initiatives were sometimes annexed by Glasgow Corporation.

<sup>38</sup> Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society," 269.

<sup>39</sup> Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, 313.

<sup>40</sup> Richard, H. Trainor. "The Elite," in *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, ed. W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 234; Callum Brown, "To be aglow with civic ardours': the Godly Commonwealth in Glasgow, 1843-1914," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 26 (1996): 169-195.

started businesses and amassed fortunes.<sup>41</sup> This gave them the time and influence to pursue local politics.<sup>42</sup> Charitable giving by the well-off was expected. Aspinwall remarks that there was a “social demand” in Glasgow that the wealthy redistribute their fortune.<sup>43</sup> With high status came a number of other responsibilities. These might include; service as a church elder, membership of a guild and knowledge of the craft.<sup>44</sup>

There was an unsurprising overlap in membership of the council, institutions and local charities in Glasgow.<sup>45</sup> The resumés of three local notables, who hosted Belgian refugees, exemplify this correlation. Alexander Walker, city assessor and secretary of the GCRBC, had ties to organisations such as the Liberal Party, the YMCA and the temperance movement.<sup>46</sup> Walker was the quintessential politically connected and socially concerned Glaswegian. He participated in a range of local craft incorporations such as the Incorporation of Cordiners and the Incorporation of Bonnetmakers and Dyers.<sup>47</sup> Walker was also the patron of charities such as the National Sabbath School Union and the Glasgow Angus and Mearns Benevolent Society.<sup>48</sup> These groups brought together like-minded individuals who wished to use their status, influence and wealth to benefit others. Former Lord Provost Sir James Bell, 1892-1896, was also involved in an array of similar religious, cultural and charitable organisations. These included; the United Presbyterian Church, the Natural History Society, the Hunterian Museum, the board of Gartloch Asylum and the COS.<sup>49</sup> Leonard Gow, a shipping magnate, served the city in a similar manner. Gow, although not a councillor, was a board member of a number of the most important associations in the city including the Western Infirmary, the Merchant’s

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<sup>41</sup> R. Guerrerio Wilson, “Office Workers, Business Elites and the Disappearance of the “Ladder of Success” in Edwardian Glasgow,” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 19 no. 1 (1999): 55-75, 59. As Wilson notes the Scottish Clerical Association actively encouraged members to pursue this career path and provided financial assistance to do so.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

<sup>43</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), 155.

<sup>44</sup> Harry Lumsden, *History of the Hammermen of Glasgow: A Study Typical of Scottish Craft Life and Organisation*, (Paisley: Alexander Gardiner, 1912), 335. The guilds of the city’s Trades House were organisations filled with economically successful and politically influential businessmen and professionals. Lists from 1912 revealed an overrepresentation of doctors, lawyers, engineers, shipbuilders and business owners.

<sup>45</sup> Trainor, “The Elite,” 234.

<sup>46</sup> “Mr Alexander Walker Dead,” *Scotsman*, November 21, 1945, 4; “A Dry New Zealand,” *Herald*, January 27, 1911, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Ronald Johnston, *Clydeside Capital, 1870-1920: A Social History of Employers*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 80.

<sup>48</sup> “Mr Alexander Walker Dead,” *Scotsman*, November 21, 1945, 4. The Incorporations were the ancient guilds of the Trades House which acted as philanthropic organisations donating money to various causes.

<sup>49</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3; “Dennistoun U.P. Church Bazaar,” *Glasgow Evening Post*, Saturday 21, 1893, 7; “Local Notes,” *Glasgow Evening Post*, November 27, 1893, 2; “Gartloch Asylum,” November 9, 1892, *Glasgow Herald*, “Select Committee on Distress,” *Glasgow Herald*, May 8, 1895, 11.

House, the National Bible Society and the COS.<sup>50</sup>

The participation of Glasgow's successful and wealthy in many of the same organisations evidences the strength of commercial and political links across the city. The role played by these overwhelmingly male notables in accommodating refugees suggests that these privileged individuals were dedicated to assisting the unfortunate.

Endeavour to assist the poor, however, was not limited to the city's elite. Contacts and networks were forged and reinforced through a strong associational culture that existed across wider society in urban Scotland. Trainor notes that clubs and societies were spaces beyond the kirk where leisure and philanthropic activity could be pursued.<sup>51</sup> Participation in associational life offered opportunities for social mobility. Clubs fostered partnerships and encouraged business. Friendly societies, for example, gave the skilled working class access to financial credit to pursue business ventures, while masonic lodges provided opportunities for the middle class to expand networks.<sup>52</sup>

An array of clubs, societies and fraternal organisations raised money for the GCBRC. Analysis of Tables 9 and 10 reveal that many similar organisations which donated to Belgian refugees, made previous contributions to other humanitarian causes in the early twentieth century. Disasters, crises and conflicts such as the Ottawa Fire, the Indian Famine and the Boer War were all the source of intense humanitarian interest in Glasgow. Atrocities, hunger and injustice overseas increasingly mattered to Scots from the late nineteenth century. The commitment of such a range of groups toward these causes is confirmation of what Aspinwall identifies as a distinctive culture of philanthropy in urban Scotland.<sup>53</sup> Table 9 illustrates that churches, co-operatives, employee associations and fraternities were all inspired to pledge financial support for global emergencies. Table 10 indicates support for Belgian refugees in Scotland followed this established pattern.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Kirkintilloch Herald*, April 5, 1916, 2; Trainor, "The Elite," 234.

<sup>51</sup> Trainor, "The Elite," 289.

<sup>52</sup> Christopher, J Prom, "Friendly Society Discipline and Charity in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England," *Historian*, 72 no. 4 (2010):888-908, 892; David Stevenson, "Four Hundred Years of Freemasonry in Scotland," *Scottish Historical Review*, 90 no. 2 (2011): 280-295, 282.

<sup>53</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 155.

<sup>54</sup> Christopher French, "The Good Life in Victorian and Edwardian Surbiton: Creating a Suburban Community Before 1914," *Family & Community History*, 14 no. 2, (2011): 105-120, 114. As French notes different societies and clubs appealed to different groups. Tennis clubs and dramatic societies for instance were more often spaces for the wealthy and educated middle class.

Table 9. A sample of contributors to three charitable causes in Glasgow during 1900

<b>The Indian Famine Fund</b>	Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society	United Collieries Ltd	Queens Park Free Church	The Incorporation of Hammer Men
<b>The Ottawa Fire Fund</b>	Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society	Anchor Line Shipping	Archbishop Eyre on behalf of Glasgow Catholic Cathedral	Incorporation of Maltmen
<b>South Africa War Fund</b>	Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society	Caledonian Railway Company	Cambuslang Free Church	Glasgow Association of Pawn Brokers

Source: Source: "The Famine in India," *The Glasgow Herald*, May 12, 1900, 4; "Fire in Ottawa," *The Glasgow Herald*, May 12, 1900, 1; "Glasgow Herald Shilling Fund," *The Glasgow Herald*, January 3, 1900, 4

Table 10. A sample of contributors to the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Fund 1915

<b>Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Fund</b>	Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society	Glasgow Corporation Water Department	Ladies of Ibrox United Free Church	Lady Members of the Northern Art Club Aberdeen
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Source: "The Corporation of Glasgow," *Scotsman*, March 8 1915, 1.

A report from the *Falkirk Herald*, in 1914, provides further detail of the diversity in support for refugees that was seen in Scotland:

As briefly reported in last Saturday's issue a relief fund on behalf of Belgian refugees was inaugurated in Bonnybridge . . . The meeting was attended by the Loyal 'James Smith' Lodge of Ancient Shepherds; 'William Cochrane Memorial Tent' I.O.R; 'Vale of Bonny I.O.R; 'Sir William Wallace' Lodge of Oddfellows; Lodge Dolphin No. 911 Freemasons; Ancient Order of Hibernians United Irish League; Iron Fitters Union; Brickworkers and Gasfitters Union; Central Moulders Union; National Union of Railwaymen; Bowling Club; Tennis Club and the Musical Association.<sup>55</sup>

As the article notes an assortment of groups came together to assist Belgian refugees. These organisations encompassed a mixed demographic: male and female, working class and middle class, Catholic and Protestant and teetotallers. Although not all organisations in Bonnybridge

<sup>55</sup> "Belgian Relief Fund," *Falkirk Herald*, October 31, 1914, 6.

pledged to donate the same amount, the presence of a range of groups illustrates that sympathy for refugees could cut across the fractious social and religious divide in Scotland.

Of the fraternal societies which made contributions to refugees in Scotland, the Freemasons were important. Public subscription lists show that various Masonic lodges were involved in making contributions to causes such as the Indian Famine Fund and the South Africa War Fund.<sup>56</sup> Minutes of the 102<sup>nd</sup> St. Mark's Masonic Lodge in Dennistoun, in the east of Glasgow, indicate that members donated at least £2 to Belgian refugees in one week in November 1914.<sup>57</sup> A benefit concert organised by the Lodge of St. Michael in Tayport meanwhile raised a larger sum of £20.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the Masonic Halls in the centre of Glasgow were put at the disposal of the Corporation to host meetings which raised funds for Belgian refugees in March 1915.<sup>59</sup> Alexander Walker's membership of the Freemasons may have been important in securing use of this hall for free. Walker was described as an "enthusiastic Freemason."<sup>60</sup> His participation in Freemasonry was perhaps the reason that this semi-secret organisation was so forthcoming with donations.

Donations from masonic lodges toward refugees were, for the most part, modest. As Stevenson has identified, although masonic lodges gave to charity regularly, periodic disputes emerged when brethren felt they had been too generous.<sup>61</sup> At times, masonic lodges declined to support the GCBRC. A report from the *Bellshill Speaker* reveals that the local St. John's Lodge refused to assist an appeal made by Glasgow Corporation to support the housing of refugees in March 1915.<sup>62</sup>

Other organisations made more sustained contributions towards refugees. Friendly societies gave generously to the GCBRC. As Prom has observed, in spite of their mutualist values, such organisations were known for making significant charitable contributions to all sorts of causes.<sup>63</sup> Thus, important occupational friendly societies such as the Postal & Telegraph Workers Association and the Educational Institute of Scotland's *Teacher's War*

<sup>56</sup> "The Famine in India," *Glasgow Herald*, May 12, 1900, 4; "Glasgow Herald Shilling Fund," *Glasgow Herald*, January 3, 1900, 4. The Masonic Lodge in Hamilton and the Star Masonic Lodge in Thornhill made donations to these two causes for example.

<sup>57</sup> GCA, Minutes of St. Mark's Lodge 102, November 1914, TD1497/1/9.

<sup>58</sup> "Under the Auspices," *Dundee Courier*, April 3, 1915, 3.

<sup>59</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Daily Record*, March 10, 1915, 3.

<sup>60</sup> George Eyre-Todd, *Who's who in Glasgow in 1909: A Biographical Dictionary of Nearly Five Hundred Living Glasgow Citizens and of Notable Citizens who Have Died Since 1st January*, (Glasgow: Cowan & Gray, 1909), 210.

<sup>61</sup> Stevenson, "Four Hundred Years of Freemasonry," 282.

<sup>62</sup> "Masonic Notes," *Bellshill Speaker*, March 12, 1915, 2.

<sup>63</sup> Prom, "Friendly Society Discipline," 892.

*Fund* made large donations to the GCBRC.<sup>64</sup>

Financial assistance was also provided by the employees of workshops and offices across Glasgow.<sup>65</sup> A list of donations made to the GCBRC, published on the front page of the *Scotsman* in March 1915, listed twenty different businesses around central Scotland whose employees had contributed.<sup>66</sup> These donations came from workers in heavy industries such as engineering, shipbuilding and chemicals with donations ranging from £2-£40.<sup>67</sup> The workers from some of Glasgow's largest and best known employers gave generously. This included; Anchor Line Shipping, Templeton & Son carpet manufacturers and J. & J. White Chemicals.<sup>68</sup> Those contributing were predominantly the skilled working class, although clerical workers and managers gave too.<sup>69</sup> Whilst newspapers fail to document how individual workplaces raised funds, it may be assumed that methods employed by other organisations such as whip-rounds, sports competitions and lectures were used.<sup>70</sup> The participation of working class employees in this type of activity was not unusual. Much of working class men's leisure centred on the workplace.<sup>71</sup> As Griffiths notes, those employed in skilled heavy industries were known to socialise together.<sup>72</sup> This type of fund raising may have had a competitive element, in keeping with the workshop's masculine emphasis on performance.<sup>73</sup> Substantial sums were raised amongst the employees of the city's various municipal departments. A list of donations published in the *Scotsman* from 1915 identifies that the Gas Department, the Collection Department and the Water Department raised respective amounts of £10, £16 and £35.<sup>74</sup> A donation list for 1916 meanwhile reveals, that employees of the Corporation Tramways donated £150.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>64</sup> IWMA, List of Further Subscriptions, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee, October 1916, IWMA, 3-8. The Educational Institute of Scotland created its own fund the *Scottish Teacher's War Relief Fund*. This alone raised £100 in 1916.

<sup>65</sup> Table 10 reveals the diversity amongst these organisations, illustrating that donations were made by employees working in collieries, shipping, railways and the Corporation itself.

<sup>66</sup> "The Corporation of Glasgow," *Scotsman*, March 8, 1915, 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>68</sup> IWMA, List of Further Subscriptions, *Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee*, October 1916, BEL 699/6, 3-8.

<sup>69</sup> "The Corporation of Glasgow," *Scotsman*, March 8, 1915, 1. Contributions by "office staff" were, however, noted as separate donations.

<sup>70</sup> "The Corporation of Glasgow," *Scotsman*, March 8, 1915, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Guerrerio Wilson, "Office Workers," 59.

<sup>72</sup> Trevor Griffiths, "Work Leisure and Time in the Nineteenth Century," in *A History of Life in Nineteenth Century Scotland: 1800-1900*, ed. Trevor Griffiths and Graeme Morton, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 171. Employee associations were mostly informal bodies and did not engage in trade unionism.

<sup>73</sup> Hilary Young, "Being a Man: Everyday Masculinities," in *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1900-2000*, ed. Lynn Abrams & Callum Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 139.

<sup>74</sup> "The Corporation of Glasgow," *Scotsman*, March 8, 1915, 1.

<sup>75</sup> "List of Further Subscriptions," Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee, October 1916, IWMA, 3-8.



Pennell observes that workers were put under considerable social “pressure” by their employers to join the War effort.<sup>76</sup> For example the Glasgow Corporation Tramways Department, under the leadership of James Dalrymple, received renown in September 1914 as 1,000 of its employees formed the first battalion of the local regiment the Highland Light Infantry.<sup>77</sup> It is possible that the workers of Glasgow’s largest employers came under similar pressure from their “superiors” to make donations.<sup>78</sup> Whilst determining this proves difficult, it should be noted that employee contributions were an important source of revenue for the GCBRC. Between June - October 1916 contributions by employees made up 12% of all donations received.<sup>79</sup>

Donations were also made to the GCBRC by trade unions. The Lanarkshire County Miners’ Union donated over £600 in 1916.<sup>80</sup> While this substantial donation attracted little media attention, it was noted publicly in appeal literature.<sup>81</sup> The generous contribution from Lanarkshire miners was in contrast to the pronouncements made by the rival Federation of Mine Workers regarding the employment of Belgians.<sup>82</sup>

The Federation of Mine Workers took a nativist stance, opposing the employment of foreign labour in pits. The Lanarkshire County Miners’ Union were by comparison more progressive, advocating on behalf of Lithuanian miners in Lanarkshire conscripted into the Russian army.<sup>83</sup> The Lanarkshire County Miners’ Union made no public statements about Belgian refugees, however, there was a political relationship between union secretary Joseph Sullivan and GCBRC member and labour councillor James Stewart. Sullivan and Stewart served together on the Scottish National Housing Council, representing the views of tenants for the districts of Lanarkshire and Glasgow before the Scottish Office.<sup>84</sup>

The donations of friendly societies, employees and trade unions reveal that there was a distinct working class contribution made toward the relief of Belgian refugees. Recognition of this contribution is significant, it challenges the principal assumptions made by Cahalan that

<sup>76</sup> Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 160.

<sup>77</sup> “Glasgow Tramwaymen’s Battalion,” *Scotsman*, September 8, 1914, 7; Moving Image Archive, National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), “Response of Glasgow Tramway Men to the Country’s Call to Arms,” September 7, 1914.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 160.

<sup>79</sup> IWMA, List of Further Subscriptions, *Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee*, October 1916, 3-8.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>82</sup> “Belgian Refugees,” *Falkirk Herald*, January 9, 1915, 2.

<sup>83</sup> “Lithuanian Miners in Scotland,” *Dundee Courier*, August 4, 1917, 3.

<sup>84</sup> “The Housing Problem,” *North-East Lanark Gazette*, March 30, 1917, 2. Sullivan was later MP for North Lanarkshire between 1923-1924 and later MP for Bothwell between 1926-1931.

refugees were a bourgeois interest because they were deemed “deserving.”<sup>85</sup> The working class, as much as the middle class, were willing to assist refugees. The involvement of working class organisations, in the assistance of refugees, counters Daunton’s assertion that charity was the pursuit of the middle class.<sup>86</sup> Overall, however, working class communities remained hesitant toward refugees. Grant has identified that refugees were more than often perceived as a “threat” to employment and housing.<sup>87</sup>

Sympathy for refugees cut across political divisions. In Glasgow, evidence suggests that the local branches of opposing parties made generous donations toward appeals. A subscription list from March 1915 reveals that both the Govan Liberal Association and its rival, the Govan Unionist Association, pledged £15 each.<sup>88</sup> Bi-partisan fundraising efforts like that in Govan were sporadic, yet this gesture reveals that shared political endeavour in aid of refugees did occur.

Grant has shown that volunteers were instinctively drawn to the humanitarian task of assisting refugees.<sup>89</sup> As Gill further notes, this appealed to a broad church of organisations and individuals throughout urban settings, such as Huddersfield.<sup>90</sup> In Birmingham, those from various political and religious backgrounds came together. The Birmingham War Refugees Committee was composed of figures such as Elizabeth Cadbury, a prominent Quaker and Liberal, as well as committed Conservatives such as Sir John Charles Holder, heir to the Holder brewing fortune.<sup>91</sup>

Advocates on behalf of refugees argued that the need to assist transcended the fraught political divisions of Edwardian Britain. A meeting of the Bathgate Women’s Liberal Association in October 1914 exemplifies this:

Miss S.B. Miller was present and spoke to the members on measures that might be taken to assist in the relief of the expatriated Belgians. Although liberal women she said had suspended political work in the meantime they were going to maintain their identity. The War was a war in which they were not only fighting for their honour and to meet honourable obligations to Belgium, they were also fighting for their own homes and Britain’s very existence. . . . Everywhere the women must be fired with a high-souled patriotism. Their fathers had fought and died for liberty and the sons and daughters of Britain must stand for principles which were guarantee of freedom to the human race.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees,” 503.

<sup>86</sup> Daunton, “Payment and Participation,” 172.

<sup>87</sup> Peter Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity*, (Routledge: New York, 2014), 56.

<sup>88</sup> “The Corporation of Glasgow,” *Scotsman*, March 8, 1915, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Grant, “Mobilizing charity,” 162.

<sup>90</sup> Gill, “Brave little Belgium,” 144.

<sup>91</sup> “Refugees in Birmingham,” *Evening Despatch*, September 5, 1914, 3; “Homes for Refugees,” *Evening Despatch*, October 2, 1914, 3.

<sup>92</sup> “Women’s Liberal Association,” *Linlithgowshire Gazette*, October 23, 1914, 3.

Miss Miller portrayed the relief of refugees as both a patriotic and a humanitarian task, equating “liberty” and “freedom” as synonymous with contemporary British values. Miller’s speech echoed British propaganda which depicted the War as a battle for democratic civilisation.<sup>93</sup> Such rhetoric had an overt appeal to the politically and religiously idealistic.

The support for refugees by Miller and the Bathgate Women’s Liberal Association is worth further scrutiny. Miller’s attitude typifies the sense of responsibility middle class, female volunteers exhibited through War work. It offers insight into the motivations of those who carried out work on behalf of refugees. Miller’s allusion to the campaign for women’s suffrage, infers that the question of the franchise was an influence on women engaged in wartime work.<sup>94</sup> As Smith identifies, women involved in the suffrage movement regarded the War “as an opportunity for women to prove themselves worthy of the vote by their contributions to the war effort and general running of the country.”<sup>95</sup>

Various women’s organisations were involved in refugee relief throughout Scotland. This included suffrage organisations such as the Women’s Freedom League but also associations which represented the more traditional sphere of women, such as the Women’s Bible Class of St. Andrews Parish Church.<sup>96</sup> The most active women’s organisation, however, was the GCBRC’s Ladies Committee. This group, comprised predominantly of city councillors’ wives, were involved in fundraising and carrying out occasional visits to refugees’ homes.<sup>97</sup> Although GCBRC received sustained interest and assistance from a variety of women’s organisations other charities, such as the Scottish Women’s Hospital for Foreign Service (SWHFS), were better supported by the suffrage movement. Public subscriptions to the SWHFS from September 1915 reveal that various suffrage organisations contributed funds and volunteers to medical missions in France and Serbia.<sup>98</sup> This mirrors the support of

<sup>93</sup> “Women’s Liberal Association,” *Linlithgowshire Gazette*, October 23, 1914, 3; David Monger. “Transcending the Nation: Domestic Propaganda and Supranational Patriotism in Britain 1917–18,” in *World War One Propaganda* ed. Troy Paddock (Leiden: Brill Books, 2014), 35.

<sup>94</sup> “Women’s Liberal Association,” *Linlithgowshire Gazette*, October 23, 1914, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Angela, K. Smith, “The Pankhursts and the War: Suffrage Magazines and First World War Propaganda,” *Women’s History Review*, 12, no. 1 (2003), 111.

<sup>96</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee Cash Books, 1915, D-CC 4/7/1; “Belgian Relief Fund,” *Scotsman*, March 11, 1915, 1.

<sup>97</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1915- April 1916, January 4, 1916, C/13/52. As noted in Chapter 2 the Ladies Committee’s fundraising efforts served celebrated the traditional craftwork of Belgian women and provided an outlet for the Scottish female consumer.

<sup>98</sup> “Our Allies Appeal to Scotland,” *Scotsman*, September 8, 1915, 1. For instance Local branches of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and the Church League for Women’s Suffrage made generous contributions. The suffrage movement’s strong support for the SWH was in part because of the influential role played by NUWSS campaigner Elsie Inglis in the work of the hospitals.

Bathgate's Women's Liberal Association and of the radical Women's Freedom League for Belgian refugees.

The involvement of suffrage supporting volunteers, like S.B. Miller and the Women's Freedom League, counters Storr's claim that female volunteers who assisted refugees were, mostly socially conservative and "devoted to Empire."<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, other women who carried out War work on behalf of refugees, included those who directly opposed the extension of the franchise.<sup>100</sup> Violet Markham of the National Relief Fund and the WRC's founding member Lady Lugard, were two such individuals.<sup>101</sup>

Making an overall comment on the social or political opinions of female volunteers who assisted GCBRC proves difficult. The example of Mary E. Boyle illustrates this. Boyle, an educated, multi-lingual, upper middle class, volunteer matron was motivated to assist refugees out of humanitarian beliefs.<sup>102</sup> Boyle described, in detail, the compassion she had for the children in her care. Moreover, she demonstrated sympathy towards internationalism, wishing a peaceful end to the War.<sup>103</sup> Yet Boyle was reactionary too. Despite having travelled extensively across Europe, Boyle argued that Belgian intelligence and "morality" were "lower" than the average Briton as they did not belong to the "dominant race".<sup>104</sup> Boyle's opinions were simultaneously progressive and xenophobic.<sup>105</sup> As Pedersen notes, beliefs regarding class, race and morality, which are today contradictory, guided the work of some female volunteers in organisations like the COS and the SSFA.<sup>106</sup> Like Boyle, these volunteers administered relief on behalf of local and central government.

Sympathy for refugees was a phenomenon which captivated public attention. The work of GCBRC motivated gestures of charity from organisations, political groups and individuals. These varied parties, through their donations, enabled the GCBRC to carry out its work. Assisting those displaced by international conflict had an overt appeal to Glaswegians who,

<sup>99</sup> Storr, *Excluded from the Record*, 35.

<sup>100</sup> Watson, "Khaki Girls," 36.

<sup>101</sup> Storr, *Excluded from the Record*, 35.

<sup>102</sup> Alan Saville, "Mary Boyle 1881-1975: The Abbe Breuil's Faithful Fellow Worker," *Ancient Lives*, ed. Fraser Hunter and Alison Sheridan (Sidestone Press: Lieden, 2016): 127-150, 128. Boyle later became an accomplished poet, translator and archaeologist. She worked closely with the Jesuit archaeologist Abbé Breuil, accompanying him on travels around Europe and Southern Africa and Europe. Boyle was raised in the Free Kirk, and her relationship with Breuil created some discord with her family. Alan Saville notes that Boyle and Breuil's work was heavily criticised for attempting to explain South African cave art as the work of an ancient white race.

<sup>103</sup> IWMA, Mary E. Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, 1918, BEL 6100/5; 73; 22.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 77.

<sup>105</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society*, (London: Routledge, 1975), 168. As Thompson has observed contradictory thinking was common amongst the bourgeoisie of Edwardian Briton.

<sup>106</sup> Pedersen, "Gender Welfare and Citizenship," 993.

Aspinwall argues, were inclined toward humanitarianism. In the case studies which make up the remainder of this chapter, cooperation between Glasgow Corporation and some of Scotland's most important institutions is explored in greater detail. This discussion reveals the co-operative approach adopted by the GCBRC and its partners.<sup>107</sup>

### **Case Study 1 The Scottish Universities**

Scottish universities augmented relief work and lent an intellectual and spiritual authority to GCBRC's mission. Scottish universities were politically important and wealthy, their involvement in assisting refugees was nationally significant. Students and staff of Scotland's four universities: Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews came together to assist Belgian refugees.

Finlay demonstrates that the university system contributed to the development of Scottish identity in the two centuries after union.<sup>108</sup> Universities preserved Scotland's "distinctiveness" alongside the Kirk and Scots law.<sup>109</sup> University staff were leading lights in the Scottish Enlightenment and were at the forefront of scientific and medical discovery. It has been argued, however, that Scottish Universities stagnated in the first part of the nineteenth century. Davie has asserted that the "egregiously" poor performance of Scots students in the Indian Civil Service examination "precipitated an educational crisis" in the nation.<sup>110</sup> This argument has been critiqued by scholars, such as Limond, who have noted that there was a Britain wide demand for educational reform.<sup>111</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Scottish universities were some of the most influential and wealthy institutions in the nation. This was partially on account of a large annual grant given by central government from 1889 onwards.<sup>112</sup> Morton determines that government grants were transformative for Scotland's universities.<sup>113</sup> They supported ancient institutions, which had long educated students in an

<sup>107</sup> Gente, "Family Ideology," 269.

<sup>108</sup> Richard, J. Finlay, "The Rise and Fall of Popular Imperialism in Scotland 1850-1950," *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 113 no. 1 (1997): 13-21, 14.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>110</sup> George E. Davie. *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 42.

<sup>111</sup> David Limond, "An Educational Crisis in Scotland" The Democratic Intellect Revisited," *Scottish Educational Review*, 36 no. 1 (2004): 58-65, 59.

<sup>112</sup> Paul L. Robertson, "The Finances of the University of Glasgow before 1914," *History of Education Quarterly*, 16 no. 4 (1976): 449-478, 449. Scottish universities received £42,000 per year, more than twelve times the level of state funding that English universities received.

<sup>113</sup> Graeme Morton, "Identity out of Place," in *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland*, ed. Trevor Griffiths & Graeme Morton, (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2010), 261. This followed the University Commission of 1889.

archaic “general education,” to convert themselves into centres of subject specific learning to suit the industrial and economic needs of a modern Scotland.<sup>114</sup>

Scottish universities and their students made considerable donations to the GCBRC. These were directed through the Scottish Universities Students’ Belgian Hostel Fund.<sup>115</sup> As noted in chapter three, these donations were significant enough for Scottish students to sponsor a hostel for twenty refugees in the west end of Glasgow from 1915 until the end of the War.<sup>116</sup> In assuming financial responsibility for the accommodation of Belgians, Scottish universities demonstrated a considerable commitment to refugees. Students provided a level of funding equivalent to that given by some local authorities. Aberdeen University for instance provided £41 between June to October 1916.<sup>117</sup> This was just less than the amounts given by provincial burghs such as Alloa, Tayport and Bonnyrigg during the same period.<sup>118</sup> This was a considerable feat, since Scotland’s student population was comprised of just 6,000 students around 1914.<sup>119</sup> Aberdeen’s Student Representative Council, requested a donation of 1s and 6d per term from each student in December 1915.<sup>120</sup> The contribution of Scottish universities was thus significant and underlined GCBRC’s national mission.

While funds were raised through direct subscription, greater amounts were generated through student led entertainment. A report in the *Aberdeen Evening Express* outlined that students of Marischal and King’s Colleges, Aberdeen, raised £20 through musical recitals.<sup>121</sup> Concerts in aid of the Hostel Fund appear to have been a regular feature of life on Scottish campuses. An advertisement for one evening performance at St. Andrews University in January 1918, announced “great attractions” which included “solos,” “recitations,” “quartets” and “dancing.”<sup>122</sup> Student led events were, however, not always popular, perhaps an indication of war fatigue. A description of a “poorly attended” event in February 1918 in the *Dundee Courier* attests to this.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>115</sup> “Scottish Universities Belgian Hostel Fund,” *Dundee Courier*, February 26, 1918, 2.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>117</sup> IWMA, List of Further Subscriptions, *Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee*, October 1916, 3-4.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>119</sup> T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950*, (London: William Collins 1986), 224. Alloa’s population was by comparison was around 17,000. The number of students would have been additionally greatly reduced by voluntary recruitment.

<sup>120</sup> “Students Hostel for Belgian Refugees,” *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, December 9, 1915, 4.

<sup>121</sup> “Students and Belgian Refugees,” *Aberdeen Evening Express*, June 20, 1916, 6.

<sup>122</sup> “Hostel for Belgian Refugees - A Grand Concert,” *St. Andrews Citizen*, January 12, 1918, 1.

<sup>123</sup> “Scottish Universities Belgian Hostel Fund,” *Dundee Courier*, February 25, 1918, 2.

Winter argues that universities and their student bodies followed the general trend of “public opinion” in Britain supporting the War.<sup>124</sup> As institutions, universities were traditionally aligned with the establishment.<sup>125</sup> Scottish universities, for instance, held their own parliamentary seats and from 1885-1918 these were dominated by Conservatives.<sup>126</sup> As Finlay notes, universities “transmitted” the virtues of imperialism and the opportunities offered to students in the colonies.<sup>127</sup> When War broke out Scottish universities provided recruits readily.<sup>128</sup> Students demonstrated patriotism in other ways too. Glasgow University undergraduates eagerly volunteered to work in heavy industry during the Munitions Crisis of 1915. This, according to industrialist William Weir, was in a bid to disrupt trade union action.<sup>129</sup> The willingness of Scottish students to assist Belgian refugees should be regarded as motivated by patriotic wartime feeling.

The academics of Scotland’s universities were influential in supporting the War. These figures represented an intellectual elite who had risen through ministry in the kirk and service in the professions. These individuals had strong ties to the state and business. Senior academics lent moral support to the War, and by extension the work of the GCBRC. The Reverend Sir George Adam Smith, principal of Aberdeen University, served as chair of the Belgian Hostel Fund. Smith, a renowned theologian and committed progressive, was a central influence on the socially concerned UF Church.<sup>130</sup> GCBRC appeal literature quoted Smith amongst its “appreciations of prominent men” in 1916.<sup>131</sup> Smith articulated that it was up to Glasgow to “discharge the traditional hospitality of the Scottish people” on the whole nation’s behalf.<sup>132</sup> Smith’s pronouncement gave the Corporation a spiritual endorsement. Smith’s comments appeared alongside other well-known political and religious figures. These included elder

<sup>124</sup> Winter, “Oxford and the First World War,” 7.

<sup>125</sup> John, A. Taylor, *The Impact of the War on British Universities*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 223.

<sup>126</sup> Frederick, W.S. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results: 1885-1918*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan: 1974), 576. The four universities had two seats which were divided between Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities and St. Andrews and Edinburgh Universities.

<sup>127</sup> C.A. Oakley, *The Second City*, (Glasgow: Blackie & Sons, 1914), 276; Finlay, “The Rise and Fall of Popular Imperialism,” 17. Political gestures, such as honorary degrees encouraged support for the Empire. Glasgow University, for instance, conferred Lord Roberts with an honorary degree in 1913.

<sup>128</sup> Trevor Royle, *Flowers of the Forest: Scotland and the First World War*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn LTD, 2006), 18. Aberdeen University, for instance, had trained territorial soldiers since 1908 as part of the Gordon Highlanders U Company.

<sup>129</sup> University of Glasgow Archives (hereafter UGA) Correspondence, William Weir to R.A. Duff, May 12, 1915, 96/140, Taylor, *The Impact of the War*, 264. As Weir explained to the Glasgow University Appointments Committee, “the chief difficulty” was not with the “volunteer class” who were willing to work in munitions rather it was “trade union restrictions” which kept volunteers out.

<sup>130</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Who's who in Glasgow in 1909*, 194.

<sup>131</sup> IWMA, Glasgow Corporation, *The Belgian Refugees in Scotland*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916) BEL99/7, 8.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

statesmen such as: Viscount Herbert Gladstone, former Home Secretary and committee member of the WRC, the Archbishop of York as well as writer and justice advocate Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Smith's backing for the GCBRC was part of a wider personal campaign of diplomacy and involvement in war propaganda. Between 1917-1918 Smith completed a 119-day tour in America, here he lectured on the "moral aims" of the War."<sup>133</sup> Smith regarded the War as necessary but was careful to denounce anti-German propaganda.<sup>134</sup>

The role played by Scottish universities in assisting refugees was not unique. Declerq has shown that staff and students at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge made similar efforts.<sup>135</sup> Cambridge University, for example, formed a department for Belgian professors and provided lectures to Belgian students. At Oxford under the invitation of Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine, Belgian academics and their families were brought to Britain.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, the entirety of the accommodation for Ruskin Hall, was given to accommodate fifty refugees.<sup>137</sup>

Academics felt strongly about their duty to assist refugees. Winter assesses that the destruction of culturally important sites in Belgium stirred strong emotions amongst intellectuals.<sup>138</sup> In particular, the reported murder of the Vice-Rector of Louvain University and the destruction of its library incensed many.<sup>139</sup> Derez has noted that German destruction of Louvain was culturally symbolic: "Leuven became a symbol, a jab at the conscience of the world, a martyred town in an occupied country."<sup>140</sup> These actions were treated as evidence of German barbarism. Fire erased priceless cultural heritage such as the medieval university hall, the eighteenth century library and St. Peter's Church, which contained Dieric Bout's famous *Last Supper* triptych.<sup>141</sup> Scottish newspapers encouraged readers to empathise with Belgians. The *Aberdeen Press and Journal* asked "Scotsmen" to consider how they would "feel if St. Andrews had been swept away?"<sup>142</sup> The destruction of "Belgium's Oxford" was regarded as a

<sup>133</sup> "Sir George Adam Smith – 20,000 Mile Tour Through America," *Aberdeen Evening Express*, September 11, 1918, 2.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. Reporting on his tour in America for instance he noted the "cordial" reception he had received in cities with large German populations like St. Louis.

<sup>135</sup> Christophe Declerq, "Belgian Refugees in Britain 1914-1919," in *I Died in Hell - (They Called it Passchendaele)*, ed. Luc Devoldere and Sophie De Schepdrijver, (Rekkem: Ons Erfdeel, 2014), 60.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 60. Osler is best known for being one of the four doctors who founded John Hopkins hospital.

<sup>137</sup> J.M. Winter, "Oxford and the First World War," in *The History of the University of Oxford Volume VIII: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Brian Harrison and Trevor Henry Aston, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 7.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>139</sup> "Germany's Honour on Trial," *Daily Record*, August 30, 1914, 3.

<sup>140</sup> Mark Derez, "The War Experience of an Academic Community," in *The First World War Experienced* ed. Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle, (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 618.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 618.

<sup>142</sup> "A World Loss," *Aberdeen Press & Journal*, September 1, 1914, 3.



crime against humanity, prompting actions of solidarity from academics and Scottish universities.<sup>143</sup> The libraries of Aberdeen and St. Andrews universities, as well as the Glasgow Corporation Libraries Department, donated several hundred works in a bid to restore the library.<sup>144</sup>

Glasgow University academics were foremost in offering assistance to refugees in the form of accommodation. In spite of Glasgow University's association with Imperialism and its election of Conservative parliamentary candidates, its academics had embraced liberalism. As Robertson has shown, the University of Glasgow pioneered a number of progressive reforms in the nineteenth century: allowing women to enter, expanding the range of subjects taught and attracting a small percentage of working class students through an egalitarian admissions policy.<sup>145</sup>

Like city councillors, public servants and doctors, Glasgow's academics offered up their homes as accommodation for refugees. Sir Henry Jones, the eminent Welsh professor of moral philosophy, hosted twenty-five refugees.<sup>146</sup> Jones and his family gave over much of their Kames mansion in Argyll to the refugees. Jones, like Reverend Smith, was a reformer, advocating on behalf of liberal causes such as the expansion of further education in Wales.<sup>147</sup> His own experiences of poverty during childhood had led him to campaign for education.<sup>148</sup> His generosity toward refugees was borne from his reformist sympathies. The involvement of academics in this practical capacity is illustrative of Baughan's thesis regarding the centrality of the volunteer to humanitarianism.<sup>149</sup>

Another refugee host, employed at the University of Glasgow, was international lawyer Archibald Hamilton Charteris. Charteris took in Constantine Vannaverbeck and her family after they moved between several properties in Glasgow.<sup>150</sup> Vannaverbeck and her eldest daughter's occupations were recorded as domestic servants. It is likely that the Vannaverbecks

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>144</sup> "Louvain University Library," *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, November 30, 1917, 3; "St. Andrews University to Assist the University of Louvain," *Scotsman*, November 11, 1914, 11; GCA, *Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow*, April 1915- November 1915, May 19, 1915, C/13/52.

<sup>145</sup> P.L. Robertson, "The Development of an Urban University 1860-1914," *History of Education Quarterly*, 30 no. 1 (1990), 49-55 Robert Anderson, "Edinburgh University, Schools and the Civil Service in the Early Twentieth Century," *History of Education*, 42 no. 4, (2013): 444-459. Despite these progressive changes overall Scottish universities remained bastions of the privileged.

<sup>146</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>147</sup> Thomas Jones, *Old Memories: Sir Henry Jones*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton LTD, 1923), 179. Jones was instrumental in proposing legislation such as the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 154.

<sup>149</sup> Baughan, "International Adoption," 181.

<sup>150</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3. Constantine and her eldest daughter's occupations were recorded as charwomen.

worked in this capacity at Charteris' home, West Balgray House. Charteris was active in progressive causes and later went on to become influential in the League of Nations Union during the inter-war period.<sup>151</sup> Charteris demonstrated a lifelong personal commitment to assisting refugees. In his later role as Professor of International Law in Sydney, Charteris lobbied the Australian government to accept more Jewish refugees from Central Europe. Furthermore, Charteris represented Egon Kisch, an Austrian Jewish critic of the Nazi regime, who was refused entry into Australia in 1934.<sup>152</sup>

It was perhaps the association of Scottish university staff with European academic peers which led them to be so receptive to the Corporation's mission to assist Belgian refugees. Universities were cosmopolitan institutions and students, and staff came to Scotland from across Europe and beyond. Many Scottish academics had spent time studying and lecturing in Europe. Those involved in the study of medicine and religion had particularly close ties to Germany.<sup>153</sup> During the War, groups usually associated with academic exchange such as the Franco-Scottish Society received a new impetus, raising funds for War charities. The Franco-Scottish Society brought prominent speakers such as Antoine Borboux, secretary of the Belgian Chamber of Deputies, to lecture at Scottish universities on topics like *Les Allies et la Guerre*.<sup>154</sup>

Borboux's visits were given newspaper coverage, providing Scots with the opportunity to find out more about Belgium and its people. In Aberdeen, Borboux recounted to the public "the systematic destruction" of Belgium's economy.<sup>155</sup> The *Scotsman* meanwhile covered a more light-hearted article by Borboux on Belgium's royal family.<sup>156</sup> Borboux later described his visit to Scotland in *A Book of Belgium's Gratitude*, a propaganda work which reinforced Belgian appreciation of British hospitality. The politician noted the importance of Scottish universities in facilitating his visit and praised the "sympathy" and "modesty" of the nation's learned professors.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>151</sup> "Scottish Professor in Sydney," *Scotsman*, October 11, 1940, 4. Training in Glasgow and in Europe, he worked in Glasgow prior to moving to become chair of law at the University of Sydney.

<sup>152</sup> Douglas Hasall, "Professor AH Charteris and the study of International Law in Australia," *The Australian Year Book of International Law*, 175 no. 1 (1997): 1-32. Charteris petitioned the High Court of Australia on Kisch's behalf.

<sup>153</sup> Stefan Manz, "Negotiating Ethnicity, Class and Gender: German Associational Culture in Glasgow: 1864-1914," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 31 no. 2 (2013): 146-170, 150. Scottish universities had strong links with German institutions in particular and attracted a number of German professors.

<sup>154</sup> "Franco-Scottish Society," *Edinburgh Evening News*, December 16, 1914, 1.

<sup>155</sup> "Why Belgium Resisted Germany," *Aberdeen Press & Journal*, December 18, 1914, 7.

<sup>156</sup> "The King of Belgians," *Scotsman*, December 23, 1914, 4. King Albert's virtues and his commitment to "democracy" were emphasised.

<sup>157</sup> Antoine Borboux, "En Ecosse," translation H.J.C. Grierson, in *A Book of Belgium's Gratitude*, ed. Émile Cammaerts, Henri Davignon and William John Locke (London: John Lane, 1916), 303.

The most vocal advocate for Belgian refugees in Scotland was Edinburgh University's Professor of French and Belgian Consul, Charles Sarolea. Bowd has identified that throughout his life Saroléa used his "energy, wealth and contacts" to attempt to solve "geopolitical" problems.<sup>158</sup> As illustrated in previous chapters, however, Sarolea's interference with the work of the GCBRC, and his involvement with the Belgian Relief Fund (BRF) created animosity between him and the Corporation.<sup>159</sup> Yet Saroléa was committed to assisting his fellow country people. He utilised his academic position and editorship of the cultural journal *Everyman* to ensure that the "sacrifices and suffering" of Belgium were known to the world.<sup>160</sup>

Saroléa was not the only Belgian expatriate academic to assist refugees. Dr Fabrice Polderman, a professor of French at the University of Birmingham, played an active role in the humanitarian relief of Belgians in the Midlands. He assisted with the funding and direction of a Belgian school in Birmingham.<sup>161</sup> Sarolea's efforts to assist refugees, however, were more political. Saroléa campaigned to improve conditions for Belgians by lecturing across Britain, writing letters to newspapers and appealing to politicians.<sup>162</sup> In one pamphlet Saroléa articulated what he felt was the degrading treatment Belgians suffered at the hands of the state and charity in Britain:

You tell me that we have done enough for the Belgians, and that you do not see your way to send any further assistance. The British people certainly have done magnificently, and no one realises this better than myself who have been one of the official channels of their generosity. . . I am equally ready to concede that many even of the best Belgian refugees have been demoralised by exile, pauperized by indiscriminate charity, humiliated by police supervision. I grant that it is very difficult to recognise in those poor people the honoured guests of the British nation or the representatives of a breed of heroes. But when all is said, I submit that grievous injustice is done to the mass of Belgian refugees<sup>163</sup>

Saroléa wanted refugees to be treated with greater humanity. Saroléa complained to authorities regarding the discriminatory restrictions which Belgians were subject to.<sup>164</sup> Sarolea's

<sup>158</sup> Gavin Bowd, "Scotland for Franco: Charles Saroléa and The Red Duchess," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 31 no. 2 (2011), 196.

<sup>159</sup> Centre for Research Collections Edinburgh, (hereafter CRC), Correspondence of Charles Sarolea, Letter from Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee, December 5, 1914, SAR COLL 80.

<sup>160</sup> CRC, Correspondence of Charles Sarolea, "An Open letter to the Rt Hon Sir Robert Borden PM of the Dominion of Canada," undated, SAR COLL 209.

<sup>161</sup> WCB, Correspondence of Birmingham Belgian Refugee Committee, Letter to Dr Polderman, May 3, 1919 MS 642/3; Francis Mus, "The Image of Belgian Literature in Belgian Avant-Garde Periodicals," in *Crossing Cultures Nineteenth-Century Anglophone Literature in the Low Countries*, ed. Tom Toremans and Walter Verschuere, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), 115.

<sup>162</sup> "Belgian Relief Fund Concert in the Central Hall," *Scotsman*, October 22, 1914, 4.

<sup>163</sup> CRC, Charles Sarolea, *An open letter to an English Correspondent on the Belgian Situation*, May 29, 1914, ESC, SAR COLL 209, 1-3.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

sensitivity to the position of the refugee came from the numerous petitions he received from Belgians, mostly of the upper classes or intellectuals, who found themselves without a means to make a living.<sup>165</sup> Sarolea advocated for these declassed Belgians, with limited success.

Sarolea's opinions were not always popular.<sup>166</sup> During a lecture in October 1917, Sarolea stoked controversy when he compared the culture of German militarism to Lutheranism. Sarolea likened the Kaiser, "a political anarchist," to Martin Luther a "religious anarchist."<sup>167</sup> Similar sentiments had earlier been made by the *Glasgow Observer*. Sarolea contended that Germany had shattered European peace just as Luther had broken up the "united" Roman Catholic Church.<sup>168</sup> Sarolea's association of the Vatican with democracy was contentious in the eyes of many Scots. Senior Protestant church officials such as William A. Curtis, Professor of Biblical Criticism at the New College, castigated Sarolea.<sup>169</sup> The previously good relations between Scottish Presbyterian, and German Protestant ministers was a sensitive subject. The Scottish Reformation Society called for Sarolea's resignation and the United Free Church attacked him for "grotesquely misrepresenting" history.<sup>170</sup> Sarolea angered Presbyterian intellectuals with his exaggeration, prompting vehement anti-Catholic sentiment.<sup>171</sup> Sarolea, no stranger to controversy or self-publicity, perhaps sought to provoke debate with his speech. Nevertheless, in equating the Kaiser with Luther, Sarolea alienated Presbyterian organisations and intellectuals broadly sympathetic to the plight of Belgium.

As this case study has illustrated, Scottish universities played a notable role in assisting the work of the GCBRC. The provision of a hostel for refugees by Scottish universities demonstrated clearly how the GCBRC depended upon institutional partners to carry out relief.<sup>172</sup> The support of Scottish universities also emphasised the national nature of the GCBRC's work.

Scottish universities encouraged their students to demonstrate a patriotic enthusiasm for the War.<sup>173</sup> Universities were institutions which celebrated Imperialism. Students and staff

<sup>165</sup> CRC, Correspondence of Charles Sarolea, Letter from HH Cook, February 6 1915, ESC, SAR COLL 80.

<sup>166</sup> Samantha T. Johnson, "A Good European and a Sincere Racist: the Life and Work of Professor Charles Sarolea," PhD Thesis (University of Keele, 2001), 28.

<sup>167</sup> "Dr Sarolea on Luther," *Scotsman*, October 11, 1917, 4.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>170</sup> "The United Free Church assembly and the Luther Quarter Centenary," *Scotsman*, October 12, 1917, 4; "Protest Against Dr Sarolea's Attack on Luther," *Scotsman*, November 14, 1917, 4.

<sup>171</sup> "The United Free Church assembly and the Luther Quarter Centenary," *Scotsman*, October 12, 1917, 4. Reverend Charles Salmond, author of anti-Catholic works such as *Vaticanism*, and the *Romanising Movement in the Church of England*, denounced Sarolea.

<sup>172</sup> Gatrell, "Introduction," 5.

<sup>173</sup> Royle, *Flowers of the Forest*, 18; Taylor, *The Impact of the War*, 223.

of Scottish universities thus embraced participation in the War effort. The assistance of refugees was deemed an effective contribution to the War. The involvement of reform minded academics in the work of GCBRC was important. The moral status of academics emphasised the significance of the collective endeavour to support Belgian refugees. Many intellectuals, it seems, were motivated by deeply held liberal beliefs.

### **Case Study 2 The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society**

The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS) played a significant role in assisting the GCBRC. The SCWS was the largest and most successful co-operative organisation in Scotland. Formed in 1868, the SCWS brought together a range of individual co-operatives.<sup>174</sup> By the early twentieth century, the SCWS provided daily groceries to more than half the population of Scotland.<sup>175</sup> The SCWS owned, in addition to shops; farms, slaughterhouses and fishing boats.<sup>176</sup> It also ventured into the provision of education, insurance and banking, and attempted to make profits through overseas agricultural ventures in Ireland, Ceylon and West Africa.<sup>177</sup>

By 1914 over 3 million people across Britain were members of a co-operative.<sup>178</sup> Co-operatives appealed to the working classes. They offered an ethical means to achieve a financial reward. MacDonald contends that the economic and social achievements of the SCWS, as a working class organisation, “eclipsed” that of both trade unions and the Labour Party in Scotland.<sup>179</sup> The SCWS was therefore an important and influential Scottish organisation. In numeric terms, membership of the SCWS was greater than that of the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC). In 1914 the SCWS had a membership of 405,000, by comparison the strength of the STUC was just over half of this.<sup>180</sup>

Gurney has convincingly argued that the successful diversification of co-operatives meant they outgrew the mutualist principles upon which they were founded.<sup>181</sup> The SCWS’ economic success presented a significant challenge to private enterprise. In 1908 the SCWS’

<sup>174</sup> Julia Bohlman, “Education without toil: The Commissioned Film at the 1928 National Co-operative Exhibition in Glasgow Scotland,” *Film History*, 30 no. 3 (2018): 146-170, 152.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, 153

<sup>176</sup> Catriona, M. M. Macdonald, “A Different Commonwealth: The Co-operative Movement in Scotland,” in *The Co-operative Model in Practice: International Perspectives*, ed. Diarmuid McDonnell and Elizabeth MacKnight, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University, 2012), 5.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>178</sup> Peter Gurney, *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England 1970-1930*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 20.

<sup>179</sup> Macdonald, “A Different Commonwealth,” 5.

<sup>180</sup> William Kenefick, *Red Scotland: The Rise of the Radical Left, C. 1872-1932*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 11; Macdonald, “A Different Commonwealth,” 11. STUC membership in 1914 was 225,000.

<sup>181</sup> Gurney, *Co-operative Culture*, 20.

overall trade was over £7.5 million.<sup>182</sup> The economic achievements of the co-operative movement in Scotland was symbolised by the construction of a grand office and warehouse complex at 95 Morrison Street, in the Tradeston area of Glasgow, south of the River Clyde.<sup>183</sup> This investment was accompanied by the development of a state of the art factory site, in Shieldhall, alongside the purchase of a 1,000 acre agricultural estate at Calderwood in Lanarkshire.<sup>184</sup>

The SCWS had strong ties to Glasgow Corporation. In 1897 the Fleshers Association of Glasgow had attempted a boycott of SCWS butchers and grocers, as a means to reduce the Co-operative's influence over trade in the city. The town council came out in support of the SCWS and passed by laws to prevent discrimination.<sup>185</sup> The move to oppose the SCWS was part of a wider "trade war" which occurred across Britain as private business, organised under the Scottish Traders Defence Association (STDA) tried to see off the threat of co-operatives.<sup>186</sup>

Swift has drawn attention to the "ambiguous relationship" between the co-operative movement and the Labour Party" in Britain before the First World War.<sup>187</sup> Consideration of the SCWS reinforces this uncertainty. In spite of the later association between the co-operative movement and the left, the SCWS was not a bastion of radicalism. As James Flanagan, author of an official history of the SCWS, stated the co-operative movement in Scotland had long prided itself of being "comprised of people of all political creeds."<sup>188</sup> The leadership of the SCWS held political views more closely associated with Liberalism rather than socialism. Senior figures within the SCWS were most often older males who worshipped in the UF Church.<sup>189</sup> Nevertheless, the War saw the co-operative movement transition into more direct involvement with the Labour Party. The exacerbation of "profiteering" during the War led co-operative members to see political representation as a logical step.<sup>190</sup> As Phillipou contends,

<sup>182</sup> James Flanagan, *Wholesale co-operation in Scotland, the Fruits of Fifty Years' Efforts 1868-1918*, (Glasgow, SCWS, 1920), 196.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 153. The design of this building was originally proposed for the Glasgow City Chambers. This design came, however, second in the tender bid.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 181, 128.

<sup>185</sup> Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland*, 154.

<sup>186</sup> Paul. S. Phillipou, "Mutually Hostile Parties? The co-operative movement in Perth and its relationship with the Labour movement 1871-1918," *Scottish Labour History*, 51, No. 1 (2016): 60-75, 73.

<sup>187</sup> David Swift, *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 185.

<sup>188</sup> Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland*, 200. The decision of Paisley's SCWS to affiliate itself officially with the ILP was fiercely contested.

<sup>189</sup> Macdonald, "A Different Commonwealth," 12.

<sup>190</sup> Swift, *For Class and Country*, 188.

this was motivated by the SCWS' "self-interest" as political representation brought greater influence.<sup>191</sup>

The SCWS was heavily involved in refugee relief in Scotland. The co-operative, as a movement across Britain, was sympathetic toward the cause of Belgian refugees. As Gill has recorded, the Co-operative Society in Huddersfield made donations and offered the local refugee committee discounts on the purchase of goods.<sup>192</sup> Like the friendly societies and mutualist associations, the SCWS was well known for making gestures of solidarity toward causes it was politically sympathetic to.<sup>193</sup> During the Miners' Strike of 1912 the SCWS donated £5,000 for the "relief of distress," as well as lowering the price of bread.<sup>194</sup> Co-operatives, by their very nature, were organisations that favoured solidarity. Table 9 reveals the diverse range of causes the SCWS gave to in the years prior to the War. Even through the War, the SCWS continued to donate provisions directly to co-operatives and charities in Belgium and France. In one instance a consignment of potatoes was sent to Belgium to relieve starvation, this was part of a wider £500 donation to the *Relief of the Belgian People* campaign.<sup>195</sup>

The SCWS was an internationalist movement and its 1913 Aberdeen conference saw the organisation adopt a policy of neutrality toward international conflict.<sup>196</sup> Even as tensions grew in the months before the War the SCWS remained committed to pacifism. The SCWS held influence over other co-operative organisations overseas too. In 1913 the SCWS hosted the International Co-operative Alliance Conference in Glasgow, one of the largest ever held. Delegates were sent from twenty-six nations, this included representations from Germany and Austria-Hungary.<sup>197</sup> Speeches at this conference made plain the SCWS' commitment to the international "commonwealth" of workers, which although separated by "race language and religion," always "stood as one people."<sup>198</sup>

In spite of this commitment to non-violence and solidarity, the SCWS came out in support of the War, like many other working class organisations. From Britain's declaration of War, in August 1914, the SCWS offered unwavering "patriotic support."<sup>199</sup> Almost 2,000 of

<sup>191</sup> Phillipou, "Mutually Hostile Parties?" 73.

<sup>192</sup> Gill, "Brave Little Belgium," 139.

<sup>193</sup> Flanagan, *Wholesale co-operation in Scotland*, 177.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>195</sup> GCA, *The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Minute Book No 83*, January 29, 1915, CWS-1/1/214.

<sup>196</sup> Swift, *For Class and Country*, 185.

<sup>197</sup> "Co-operators in Glasgow," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, August 26, 1913, 5.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>199</sup> Macdonald, "A Different Commonwealth," 13.

the SCWS' employees served in the armed forces.<sup>200</sup> Important figures within the SCWS were prominent in contributing to the War effort. For instance George N. Barnes, a leading figure within the movement and ILP MP for Glasgow, entered the War Cabinet in 1917. Robert Stewart, SCWS president, was appointed to a senior position in the Glasgow Food Control Committee.<sup>201</sup> The SCWS' support for the War, however, did little to damage its reputation as a working class organisation at a time of overwhelming patriotism.<sup>202</sup>

The efforts of the SCWS to relieve refugees were influenced by a blend of internationalist and patriotic ideals. The SCWS offered Belgian refugees accommodation at its Calderwood estate, a large farm property. The Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Register recorded 212 refugees as resident at the Calderwood estate between 1914-1915.<sup>203</sup> Although the SCWS lacked experience in providing welfare, its successful expansion into the fields of farming, banking and manufacturing illustrated that it was capable of dealing with both new and complex challenges. In hosting refugees at Calderwood, the SCWS carried out relief on behalf of Glasgow Corporation. Although this was an unusual partnership in the collaborative welfare model which the city operated, the assistance offered by the SCWS was important.<sup>204</sup>

The SCWS' desire to host refugees at Calderwood was not purely humanitarian. The Calderwood estate had been purchased by the SCWS in 1904 for the sum of £35,000 from the Maxwell family.<sup>205</sup> The purchase of the estate included a castle.<sup>206</sup> The estate, however, was a problematic investment and overall the venture was not a commercial success. Land reclamation, testing crops and coal boring meant the SCWS' "experiment was costly."<sup>207</sup> A permanent suitable use for the castle could not be found.<sup>208</sup> In the years prior to the War, parts of the estate were given over to the public as leisure ground and the castle was vacant, having served briefly as a museum. The vacant Calderwood Castle and the underused estate thus became accommodation for Belgian refugees.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>201</sup> "Food Control Committee," *Daily Record*, September 1, 1917, 4; Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland*, 470.

<sup>202</sup> "The S.C.W.S and the War," *Forward*, February 5, 1921, 3; Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland*, 220. A favourable piece in *Forward* for example during 1921, remembered how Scottish Co-operatives resisted war-profiteering by private enterprise in their refusal to raise prices. A 1920 publication had noted however that "the greatest injury the War did" was "the injury to the propagation to the international ideals of co-operation."

<sup>203</sup> GCA, *Registers of Belgian Refugees*, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

<sup>204</sup> Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society," 263.

<sup>205</sup> James Kinloch, John Butt, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society*, (Co-operative Wholesale Society, 1981), 258.

<sup>206</sup> Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland*, 180-181.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 181.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 181. The castle was considered for many uses including a "convalescent home," an official residence for the president of the SCWS.

<sup>209</sup> GCA, *Registers of Belgian Refugees*, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.



To host refugees the castle was fitted with dormitories, bunk beds and sitting rooms.<sup>210</sup> The SCWS spent over £200 renovating the castle while local co-operatives across Scotland donated clothing.<sup>211</sup> Although the Co-operative's renovation of the castle was considered generous, the society ensured that Belgian refugees made use of the existing dining and kitchen facilities, originally fitted for visiting parties of picnickers.<sup>212</sup>

The castle may have been considered a convenient place to accommodate refugees by the SCWS, however, Calderwood was remote. An article printed in the *Glasgow Observer* noted that, in spite of the "picturesque scenes," the road to the nearest town was "long."<sup>213</sup> The *Hamilton Advertiser* reported that Belgian refugees were reliant upon locals from the nearby village of East Kilbride to provide provisions.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore the reported visit of a Catholic priest, in a Co-operative owned car, to say mass every two weeks indicates that Calderwood was inaccessible from nearby settlements.<sup>215</sup> Some refugees at Calderwood became employed in steel or coal and found housing in surrounding towns such as Blantyre and Hamilton.<sup>216</sup> As families of refugees left in early 1915, the SCWS came under pressure from the GCBRC to replace them.<sup>217</sup>

It remains unclear whether any refugees were ever employed on the working farmland at Calderwood. Refugees, residing on the estate, would have been an ideal work force, especially as there was a shortage of agricultural workers. As MacDonald asserts, regardless of the SCWS' ethical principles, many decisions it took in the interest of economics.<sup>218</sup> Employing Belgian refugees at Calderwood may have offered a financial opportunity. The employment of Belgians in agricultural work was not unusual. Elsewhere in Scotland refugees filled positions on private farms.<sup>219</sup> Of the two hundred refugees, resident at the castle, a significant number recorded unskilled occupations such as "labourer" or "servant."<sup>220</sup> The SCWS made use of Belgian labour elsewhere too. For instance, Belgian refugees were employed at the SCWS' Shieldhall factory complex, on the River Clyde. This sprawling factory

<sup>210</sup> "Belgian Refugees at Calderwood Castle," *Hamilton Advertiser*, October 24, 1914, 5.

<sup>211</sup> "An Interesting Belgian Community," *Glasgow Observer*, December 5, 1914, 2.

<sup>212</sup> "Belgian Refugees at Calderwood Castle," *Hamilton Advertiser*, October 24, 1914, 5.

<sup>213</sup> "An Interesting Belgian Community," *Glasgow Observer*, December 5, 1914, 2.

<sup>214</sup> "East Kilbride Notes," November 21, 1914, 6.

<sup>215</sup> Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland*, 225.

<sup>216</sup> "Passing Notes," *Hamilton Advertiser*, January 30, 1915, 4. Belgian refugees were recorded as working for the Steel Company of Scotland at Hallside, while other Belgians were recorded as finding working in unnamed pits in Blantyre and Hamilton.

<sup>217</sup> GCA, The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Minute Book No. 79, January 1, 1915, CWS-1/1/210.

<sup>218</sup> Macdonald, "A Different Commonwealth," 9.

<sup>219</sup> "Teviotdale Farmers Club," *Hawick Express & Advertiser*, February 5, 1915, 3; "Belgian Refugees," *Dumfries & Galloway Standard*, November 4, 1914, 2.

<sup>220</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

and warehouse manufactured and stored a range of garments and food stuffs on behalf of the SCWS.<sup>221</sup> This was one of the many businesses employing Belgian workers visited by Emile Vandervelde, Belgian Minister of State, in December 1914.<sup>222</sup>

The SCWS was eager in discharging its responsibility for refugees. For the first years of the War the SCWS paid the entire costs of food and furnishings for refugees at Calderwood. It also provided periodic entertainment in the form of outings and “treats” for refugees.<sup>223</sup> Under this arrangement, Glasgow Corporation only covered incidental fees incurred from the expenses of medical treatment or funerals.<sup>224</sup> While conditions were basic at Calderwood, the Co-operative ensured that safety checks were performed on the castle. For instance, Glasgow’s Firemaster was dispatched to assess the suitability and safety of the building after refugees arrived.<sup>225</sup> Despite the initial agreement between Glasgow Corporation and the Co-operative, regarding the maintenance of refugees, by 1916 a financial dispute had occurred. Minutes record that Bailie Davidson was called before the Co-operative’s executive committee to discuss the need to provide greater financial assistance to refugees at Calderwood.<sup>226</sup> Following this, the GCBRC took over the cost of maintaining refugees at Calderwood in 1917. Regardless of this tension, for most of the War, the partnership between GCBRC and the SCWS operated smoothly.

In the years after the War, the residence of refugees at Calderwood was romanticised by the SCWS. In a volume published for the SCWS’ fiftieth anniversary in 1920 it was stated that Calderwood:

. . . was not exactly home to them but they did feel a sense of restfulness when they approached the castle for the first time by the stately avenue and their eyes drank in the beauty of the glen and the glories of the wooded slopes, the surging Calder, and the wonderful charms of the estate. The Belgian guests were well fed and all their material wants attended to.<sup>227</sup>

The donation of Calderwood was portrayed as an act of sincere generosity by the SCWS. In many ways the SCWS’ opinions of refugees were predicated on paternalism rather than mutualism. Refugees living at Calderwood were portrayed as childlike. Co-operative staff who

<sup>221</sup> Flanagan, *Wholesale co-operation in Scotland*, 181.

<sup>222</sup> GCA, The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Minute Book No. 79, December 4, 1914, CWS-1/1/210; “Visit of M Vandervelde,” *Daily Record*, December 4, 1914, 2.

<sup>223</sup> “Belgian Refugees,” *Hamilton Advertiser*, October 24, 1914; The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Minute Book No 83, January 7, 1916, CWS-1/1/214.

<sup>224</sup> GCA, *Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow*, November 1914 – April 1915, January 15, 1915, C/13/51. The Corporation agreed to pay for the funeral of a refugee who died soon after arriving at Calderwood.

<sup>225</sup> GCA, The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Minute Book No. 79, November 11, 1914, CWS-1/1/210.

<sup>226</sup> GCA, *Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow*, November 1916 - April 1917, December 19, 1916, C/13/52.

<sup>227</sup> Flanagan, *Wholesale co-operation in Scotland*, 225.

volunteered to assist Belgians were said to have “mothered” refugees.<sup>228</sup> Such attitudes resembled those recorded by Pedersen of middle class COS volunteers who worked with the poor.<sup>229</sup>

The SCWS, the largest working class organisation in Scotland, offered practical assistance to GCBRC. In hosting over 200 Belgians at Calderwood the SCWS undertook a new venture, providing welfare on Glasgow Corporation’s behalf. This arrangement demonstrates Gatrell’s documentation of authorities’ willingness to delegate responsibility for refugee affairs to the third sector.<sup>230</sup> Assisting refugees was an act which demonstrated the SCWS’ internationalist principals as well as its contribution to the War. This occurred, as Swift observes, at an important time of political transition for the co-operative movement.<sup>231</sup> The SCWS guaranteed housing and income for hundreds of refugees. This lessened, for a period, the financial burden on Glasgow Corporation.

### **Case Study 3 The Catholic Church**

The Catholic Church’s part in refugee relief was more significant than either the Scottish universities or the SCWS. This reflected improving relations between the hitherto marginalised Catholic Church and local government in Scotland, as well as Catholic anxieties regarding conversion of Belgian refugees by presbyterian missions.

The role of the Catholic Church in the relief of Belgian refugees in Great Britain and Ireland has tended to be regarded by historians in simplistic terms. The Catholic Church is regarded by some as like any other Christian group who offered charitable assistance. Cahalan, for instance, downplays the status of Catholics as a minority, remarking that Catholics assisted the WRC in a variety of ways and that overall Catholics held a “reputation” for “cohesion.”<sup>232</sup> Declerq and Baker make passing reference to the involvement of Catholics in relief too, noting that Belgians attended local Catholic churches in Richmond.<sup>233</sup> Other historians have made little or no mention of the Church or Catholicism, disregarding its significance to Belgian

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>229</sup> Gente, “Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society,” 263.

<sup>230</sup> Gatrell, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>231</sup> Swift, *For Class and Country*, 188

<sup>232</sup> Cahalan, “The Relief of Refugees in England,” 38, 150. Cahalan’s comments ignore the extent of discrimination and inequality that Catholics faced across Britain in the early twentieth century.

<sup>233</sup> Christophe Declerq and Helen Baker, “The Pelabon Munitions works and the Belgian village on the Thames: community and forgetfulness in outer-metropolitan suburbs,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 151-170, 158.

identity. Only Buck, in discussing the relief of refugees in Ireland, gives consideration to the importance of Catholicism.<sup>234</sup>

Catholicism was an important facet of Belgian identity which generated interest from British hosts.<sup>235</sup> Catholicism was a minority religion in Britain, yet it commanded considerable influence amongst the faithful. By 1914 around half a million Catholics lived in Scotland.<sup>236</sup> Catholics represented more than 10% of Scotland's population.<sup>237</sup> The Catholic Church and its congregations oversaw a range of services for the laity in the form of welfare institutions, schools and associations.<sup>238</sup> The Catholics of Scotland were predominantly urban, Irish and impoverished.<sup>239</sup> As Aspinwall has outlined "decentralised" services operated by the Church provided a much needed "safety net" for the community.<sup>240</sup>

While attitudes towards Catholics in Scotland varied, sectarian discrimination and mistrust were common. Such views were predicated by high rates of poverty amongst Catholics, in the slums of Glasgow Catholics comprised 20% of the population.<sup>241</sup> Despite deprivation, Catholics were underrepresented in poorhouses.<sup>242</sup> Instead Catholics looked to their own community to provide assistance, relying upon the voluntary welfare services offered by the Church in the form of homeless shelters, orphanages, reformatories, elderly homes and industrial schools. The Church, in offering these services, provided social and spiritual protection to the poorest and avoided the threat of losing congregants to "souperism." "Souperism" was the phenomenon of Protestant groups converting Catholics through the provision of food.<sup>243</sup>

In spite of its minority status, the Catholic Church was a constituent part in what Daunton has called the "mixed economy" of welfare in urban Britain.<sup>244</sup> It was experienced in delivering voluntarist welfare assistance, the kind which Glasgow Corporation required to

<sup>234</sup> William Buck, "Come and Find Sanctuary in Eire" The Experience of Ireland's Refugees during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, 2 (2016): 192-209, 197.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*, 206.

<sup>236</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, "The Welfare State within the State: The Saint Vincent de Paul Society in Glasgow, 1848-1920," *Studies in Church History*, 23 no. 1 (1986): 445-459, 450.

<sup>237</sup> Graeme Morton, *Ourselves and Others: Scotland 1832-1914*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 56. The estimated population of Scotland in 1914 was 4.8 million people.

<sup>238</sup> Aspinwall, "The Welfare State," 450.

<sup>239</sup> It should be noted that sizable communities of Italian and Lithuanian Catholics also lived in Scotland by this point.

<sup>240</sup> Aspinwall, "The Welfare State," 450.

<sup>241</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, "The Catholic Minority Experience in Scotland: the poorhouse view 1850-1914," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 31 no. 1 (2013): 127-145, 129.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, 132.

<sup>243</sup> Aspinwall, "The Welfare State," 450. The phrase was associated with the Great Famine. Initiatives where Catholics were encouraged to convert to receive charity were considered souperism. These occurred across Britain and Ireland.

<sup>244</sup> Daunton, "Payment and Participation," 172.

assist refugees. The Church took a leading role in accommodating refugees. The Belgian Refugee Register makes this apparent. At least 1,117 of the 8,800 refugees were hosted in Catholic institutions or parishes across Scotland.<sup>245</sup> This was the largest share of refugees assisted by any one group in Scotland. Table 11 reveals where refugees were accommodated by the Church.

Table 11. Roman Catholic institutions and parishes registered accommodating Belgian refugees

<b>Name of Priest or Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Refugees</b>
Father Kelly	St Patrick's Dumbarton	234
Father Ooghe	St Mirin's Paisley	176
Dr Mullen	St Patrick's Anderston	143
Convent of the Good Shepard Magdalen Home	Dalbeth	124
St. Mary's Industrial School	Calton	71
Canon M'Nairney	St Peter's Partick	64
Little Sisters of the Poor Convent	Garnethill	38
St. Vincent De Paul Home	Calton	38
Convent of Helpers	Langside	30
Franciscan Convent	Saltcoats	22
Canon Hughes	Bridgeton	19
St. Andrew's Cathedral	Broomielaw	15
St. Peter's	Hyndland	14

<sup>245</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3, 1914.

Father Le Grue	Sauchiehall Street	11
Father Daly	St. Paul's Shettleston	10
Notre Dame Convent	Dowanhill	10
Dean Davidson	Paisley	9
Nazareth Home	Paisley	9
Dr Flood	St. Joseph's Glenboig	9
Canon Montgomery	Rutherglen	9
Nazareth House	Cardonald	6
Sisters of Mercy	Wemyss Bay	6
Father Daly	St. Joseph's Milngavie	6
Father M'Allister	Paisley	6
St. Mary's Home	Barrhead	1
<b>Total</b>	1117	

Source: GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, D-CA12/2/1-3, (1914).

Just as the Corporation utilised model lodging facilities to assist refugees, the Catholic Church used its available accommodation. Catholic services augmented the work done by the Corporation.<sup>246</sup> Institutions designed to assist the indigent, the young and the vulnerable such as the St. Vincent De Paul Home, the St. Mary's Industrial School and the Convent of the Good Shepherd Magdalen Home were transformed into reception centres for refugees.<sup>247</sup>

The accommodation of refugees in Catholic institutions in Glasgow was significant. It suggests orchestrated co-operation between the Archdiocese of Glasgow and the Corporation. In spite of the way in which Catholic institutions bolstered welfare in Glasgow, direct collaboration between local government and the Church was rare. The Catholic Church in

<sup>246</sup> Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, 2.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

Scotland largely isolated itself from involvement with the secular state.<sup>248</sup> Most Catholics in Scotland had limited political rights prior to 1918, on account of the property qualification linked franchise.<sup>249</sup> Moreover, as Brown observes, anti-Catholic sentiment was prevalent in Scotland, as even reformists regarded Catholics as an “obstacle” to “social progress.”<sup>250</sup>

Nevertheless, as O’Hagan and Davis have shown “rapprochement,” between the Roman Catholic Church and the Scottish establishment had begun to occur in the early twentieth century.<sup>251</sup> The election of Roman Catholic clergy to school boards in the years before the War, was important in beginning this political engagement.<sup>252</sup> The partnership between Church and state culminated in the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act, bringing Catholic Schools under the state system and guaranteeing their religious character.<sup>253</sup>

From the outset Catholic involvement in assisting refugees was recognised publicly by Glasgow Corporation as well as wider society. When refugees arrived in October 1914 press reports mentioned the work of nuns and priests who had formed reception parties. As the *Daily Record* reported: “In all about 900 arrived at Central Station on Saturday morning by two special trains. Among others waiting on the platform were . . . Father Ooghe a Belgian priest from Paisley, and about a dozen sisters from the convent of Notre Dame, Dowanhill.”<sup>254</sup> The *Scotsman* similarly reported on the presence of clergy. It noted that as refugees arrived, priests “translated” for Corporation officials.<sup>255</sup> The linguistic skills of the clergy, familiar with French and Dutch, were in high demand.

The role of the Catholic clergy in relief was extensive. Archbishop John Maguire was invited to publicised fundraising meetings, alongside other Christian leaders, held by Glasgow Corporation at the city chambers in 1916.<sup>256</sup> Maguire, one of the most influential members of the Catholic hierarchy in Britain, was keen to ensure that the Church sought to advocate on behalf of Belgian refugees. Maguire oversaw Catholic relief effort across Scotland. He directed

<sup>248</sup> Francis J. O’Hagan, Robert A. Davis, “Forging the compact of church and state in the development of Catholic education in late nineteenth-century Scotland,” *Innes Review*, 58 no. 1 (2007): 72-94, 81.

<sup>249</sup> James Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage and Sectarianism*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press: 2000), 66.

<sup>250</sup> Stewart J Brown, “Outside the Covenant” The Scottish Presbyterian Churches and Irish Immigration, 1922-1938,” *Innes Review*, 42 (1991): 19-45, 21.

<sup>251</sup> O’Hagan and Davis, “Forging the Compact of Church and State,” 80.

<sup>252</sup> Tom Gallagher, *Glasgow, the Uneasy Peace: Religious Tension in Modern Scotland, 1819-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 59.

<sup>253</sup> Stephen J. McKinney, James C. Conroy, “The Continued Existence of State-Funded Catholic Schools in Scotland,” *Comparative Education*, 51 no. 1 (2014): 105-117, 109. The act widened prospects for Catholics giving them greater opportunities. The Act, however, was met with significant opposition before and after its passing and became a central feature of sectarian inter-War politics.

<sup>254</sup> “A Good Scottish Welcome,” *Daily Record*, October 19, 1914, 3.

<sup>255</sup> “Arrival of Refugees in Glasgow,” *Scotsman*, October 17, 1914, 7.

<sup>256</sup> IWMA, Glasgow Corporation, *The Belgian Refugees in Scotland*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916), 6.

the Archdiocese's Catholic schools to open their doors to refugee children. Belgian children thus enrolled in Catholic schools across the city, joining the 50,000 other students the Archdiocese was responsible for educating.<sup>257</sup> Belgian children in schools, such as Garnethill Convent, were even instructed by Belgian nuns.<sup>258</sup>

While Archbishop Maguire's oversight was important, the bulk of work carried out in relation to refugees in Scotland was done by Belgian expatriate priests. As the Church expanded in Scotland from the mid-nineteenth century, congregations with European roots such as the Jesuits, the Marists and the Passionists came to urban centres bringing European priests with them.<sup>259</sup> These priests joined Scots and Irish colleagues, becoming well respected figures in the generally deprived communities they served.<sup>260</sup> The arrival of refugees, however, saw the duties of Belgian priests expand and their profiles raised. Priests, including Father Alphonsus Ooghe of Paisley, became integral to the initial organisation of accommodation for refugees.<sup>261</sup> As the war progressed Ooghe assumed a role within the Paisley Relief Committee, acting as a liaison between the committee and refugees.<sup>262</sup> Father Van Hecke of St Aloysius, in the mining town of Wishaw, similarly engaged with the local relief committees in Lanarkshire to assist refugees.<sup>263</sup>

Van Hecke used his position as a well-known local figure to generate public interest and financial generosity through lectures at local theatres.<sup>264</sup> In one speech at the *Empire*, Van Hecke celebrated both the Catholicism of Belgium and its religious diversity:

Catholicism was looked upon as the religion of the race [of Belgium]. Nevertheless, every religion, no matter of what origin was free to exercise its work in the country under the protection of the Government. (Applause) – the priest was paid, the Protestant minister was paid, the Jewish Rabbi was paid.<sup>265</sup>

In praising the religious tolerance of the Belgian constitution, Van Hecke sought to persuade Presbyterian Scots to help their Catholic Belgian guests. Father Octavius Claeys, professor of theology at St. Peter's Seminary, Bearsden, acted in a similarly public role on behalf of refugees. Claeys provided numerous articles on Belgium for the Catholic newspaper the

<sup>257</sup> GCA, St Conval's RC School Log Book, October 30, 1914, PA/2/86; Sheridan Gilley, "Catholics and Socialists in Scotland 1900–1930," in *The Irish in Britain 1815–1939*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London: Pinter, 1989), 215.

<sup>258</sup> Glasgow Archdiocese Archive (hereafter GAA), Correspondence, Letter from Sisters of the Belgian Community to Archbishop John Maguire, February 17, 1916, GC487.

<sup>259</sup> Aspinwall, "The Welfare State Within the State," 459.

<sup>260</sup> Gilley, "Catholics and socialists," 217.

<sup>261</sup> "Belgians arrive in Paisley," *Paisley & Renfrewshire Gazette*, October 24, 1914, 2.

<sup>262</sup> "Departure of Belgian Refugees," *Paisley & Renfrewshire Gazette*, December 19, 1918, 3.

<sup>263</sup> "The Belgian Refugees," *Bellshill Speaker*, September 24, 1915, 1.

<sup>264</sup> "How Belgium Saved Europe," *Motherwell Times*, January 22, 1915, 2.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid*, 2.



*Glasgow Observer*.<sup>266</sup> This included a Dutch language section for refugees titled *Nieuws in T' Vlaamsch Voor De Belgische Ontvluchten*.<sup>267</sup>

Despite the public relationship between the Catholic Church and Glasgow Corporation in the relief of refugees, Catholics were not represented on the GCBRC.<sup>268</sup> The absence of Catholics from the board of GCBRC, however, was unlikely to have been an act of prejudice. The GCBRC also lacked representation from other important institutional partners such as universities or the SCWS. The status of Catholicism at this time in Scotland, however, meant it was less likely that key figures in the Corporation would have had a direct association with the Church, its congregants or its societies. Increasingly, however, ILP councillors such as Patrick Dollan and John Wheatley were from Roman Catholic backgrounds.<sup>269</sup> By contrast in England, the clergy were afforded an important position on relief committees. This was perhaps an appreciation of the influence which the Catholic Church held in Belgium.<sup>270</sup> In Birmingham, for example, the Sisters of St. Anne's Convent in Camphill were represented on the local WRC.<sup>271</sup>

The extensive assistance given by the Catholic Church toward Belgian refugees was not surprising. Snape observes that the War provided a rallying cry for Catholics across the British Empire who were urged to join up by their bishops.<sup>272</sup> Additionally, Belgium was ruled by the Catholic Party from 1884 to 1914 and the country was regarded as a bulwark against anti-clericalism.<sup>273</sup> To the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Britain, Germany was a totalitarian enemy. Prussian militarism had devastated Belgium and confirmed the Church's

<sup>266</sup> "German barbarities in Belgium," *The Glasgow Observer*, September 26, 1914, 2; "Able-bodied Belgian Refugees," *The Glasgow Observer*, March 5, 1915, 2; "Belgian Refugees at Croy," *Kilsyth Chronicle*, January 1, 1915, 4.

<sup>267</sup> "Nieuws in T' Vlaamsch Voor De Belgische Ontvluchten," *The Glasgow Observer*, October 17, 1914, 9.

<sup>268</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, April 1914 - November 1914, October 19, 1914, C/13/51.

<sup>269</sup> Gerry, C. Gunnin, *John Wheatley, Catholic Socialism and Irish Labour in the West of Scotland 1906-1924*, (New York: Routledge, 1987), 3. As Gunnin points out, Wheatley's endeavour to promote a "Catholic socialism" frequently brought him into conflict with some members of the clergy and conservative Catholics.

<sup>270</sup> WCB, Belgian Refugee Committee, Executive Minute Book, November 30, 1914, MS 652M 14; Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 48. The Birmingham committee and the senior committee of the WRC contained members of the Catholic clergy.

<sup>271</sup> "Entertaining the Belgians," *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, July 31, 1915, 3.

<sup>272</sup> Michael Snape, "British Catholicism and the British Army in the First World War," *British Catholic History* 26 (2002): 314-358, 323. British Catholics had achieved a growing and significant role in the armed forces through the nineteenth century.

<sup>273</sup> Martin Conway, "Building the Christian city: Catholics and politics in inter-war Francophone Belgium," *Past and Present*, 128 no. 1 (1990): 117-151, 120.

suspicious of modern Germany and its *Kulturkampf*.<sup>274</sup> The Church in Britain was thus affirmably behind the War.<sup>275</sup> Remarks made by Archbishop Maguire in 1915 exemplify this:

For it is paganism we have to fight, with its characteristic disregard of human life and property, of law and justice, of honesty and truth, of childhood and womanhood, of art and learning ... is it exaggeration, then, to call the fight a crusade? It is Christianity against paganism, the Cross and its civilization against the Crescent and its barbarism.<sup>276</sup>

Maguire's pronouncement against Germany and its Ottoman axis ally was passionate, echoing other War Propaganda.

The enthusiasm of the British Catholic hierarchy toward the War, however, went beyond just defending Belgium. Senior figures within the Church, and within the Irish Parliamentary Party, looked upon the War as an opportunity for Catholics to improve their status across the British Empire.<sup>277</sup> The traditional fear of Catholic disloyalty and fealty to the Papacy, could be set aside through the demonstration of military sacrifice.<sup>278</sup>

For most Scottish Catholics, the first months of the War were principally about defending Belgium. The influential *Observer* clearly defined the relationship of Belgian refugees to the British War effort. Readers were informed of the "slaughter of . . . women and children" while the most shocking atrocities were deemed "unprintable."<sup>279</sup> Violence against the clergy was also highlighted to compel the reader to support the War. Tangible historical links between Scotland, Ireland and Belgium were also discussed. Father Claeys, in his role as a columnist for the *Observer*, even made reference to Counter Reformation figures such as John Ogilvie and Ninian Winzet's visits to Belgium.<sup>280</sup> Catholics were reminded that Belgium

<sup>274</sup> Elaine McFarland, "How the Irish paid their debt": Irish Catholics in Scotland and voluntary enlistment August 1914–July 1915," *Scottish Historical Review* 82 no. 2 (2003): 269–70; George Elley, *From Unification to Nazism Rethinking the German Past* (Winchester MA, 1986), 217. The *Kulturkampf* had sown a deep mistrust of the German state amongst some Catholics.

<sup>275</sup> John F. Pollard, "The papacy in two world wars: Benedict XV and Pius XII compared," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 2 (2001): 83-96, 85. Internationally the Church was divided on the War. Pope Benedict XV had insisted on the Church's neutrality. Many Irish clergy were, however, sympathetic to Austria-Hungary.

<sup>276</sup> "The Bishops and the War," *The Tablet*, March 6, 1915, 2; Kieran D. Taylor, "The relief of Belgian refugees in the archdiocese of Glasgow during the First World War: "A Crusade of Christianity," *Innes Review*, 69, no. 2 (2018): 147-164, 150. This source is quoted in the aforementioned article.

<sup>277</sup> McFarland, "How the Irish paid their debt," 284. Cardinal Bourne and John Redmond appeared to perceive the War in this way.

<sup>278</sup> Snape, "British Catholicism," 321. The impact of the Easter Rising in 1916 derailed this process as the attempted revolution in Dublin reinforced long term anti-Catholic suspicions.

<sup>279</sup> "More German Atrocities," *The Glasgow Observer*, October 19, 1914, 2. The *Observer* prior to the War was sympathetic towards Austria-Hungary

<sup>280</sup> "Scotland and Louvain," *The Glasgow Observer*, September 26, 1914, 2.

had afforded asylum to the clergy during “the dark days of the penal times” and that during the Flight of the Earls, Leuven had been a stopover.<sup>281</sup>

By October 1914 up to 8,000 Roman Catholics from Glasgow had joined the colours.<sup>282</sup> As McFarland notes, however, “overlapping” political identities divided the Catholic community.<sup>283</sup> Irish nationalism was a powerful force in Scotland. While moderate Home Rule supporting organisations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) were popular, there was considerable support for more radical political groups such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood and *Sinn Féin*.<sup>284</sup> Nevertheless, as Snape identifies, the Catholic Church appealed to a dual Scottish-Irish identity amongst Catholics in its exhortations in relation to the War.<sup>285</sup> Archbishop Maguire instructed congregants to recognise that Scotland and Ireland shared ancient bonds:

We are proud of all of them, but we may be forgiven for being most of all proud of those who are of our own blood—Scotch and Irish. Ireland, civilized even in Pagan times, was converted by St. Patrick, born within what are now the bounds of this diocese. . . Our young men are worthy of their ancestry. We see in them repeated the bravery and stead-fastness of the Irish and the Scots of former days.<sup>286</sup>

The Archbishop called upon his flock to see their participation in the War as in keeping with the tradition of distinguished Scots and Irish service in the army in previous conflicts.<sup>287</sup>

The plight of a small, Catholic, nation invaded by a larger imperial power thus resonated with the Irish in Scotland. In financial terms Catholic generosity toward refugees was significant. The largest single contribution made to the GCRBC appeal, in the first months of relief, was given by the AOH.<sup>288</sup> An Irish Flag Day brought in £1,500.<sup>289</sup> The second largest donation, £1,000, made to the same GCBRC appeal came from the *Glasgow Observer*'s Belgian Refugee Fund.<sup>290</sup> A subscription list from the *Observer* in November 1914, indicates that contributions were drawn from various sources. This included jumble sales, concerts and

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>282</sup> McFarland, “How the Irish Paid their Debt,” 261.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>284</sup> Shaun Kavanagh, “Home Rule, Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Movement in Greenock,” in *Scotland and the Easter Rising*, ed. Kirsty Lusk and Willy Maley, (Edinburgh, Luath Press, 2016), 97; Thomas Tormey, “Scotland’s Easter Rising Veterans and the Irish Revolution,” *Studi Irlandesi*, 9 no. 1, (2019): 271-302, 275. Twenty-two Irish Scots played a prominent role in the Easter Rising. During the subsequent Irish War of Independence a Scottish Brigade of the IRA was formed. Moreover, by 1919 there were seventy-five branches of *Sinn Fein* operating in Scotland.

<sup>285</sup> Snape, “British Catholicism and the British Army,” 321.

<sup>286</sup> “Bishops and the War,” *The Tablet*, March 6, 1915, 26.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>288</sup> “The Corporation of Glasgow,” *Scotsman*, March 8, 1915, 1.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 1.

football matches.<sup>291</sup> Funds came from a range of Catholic organisations such as the St. Vincent De Paul society and the women's division of the AOH.<sup>292</sup> Celtic Football Club, with its strong links to the Marist Brothers and Ireland also contributed.<sup>293</sup> Thus Catholics, in spite of their economic position, made substantial donations towards the Corporation's efforts to assist refugees.

The scale of Roman Catholic involvement, demonstrated by housing refugees and making large financial donations, evidences that the Church played a distinctive role in assisting refugees. The Church regarded itself as the refugees' spiritual and moral guardian. This message of guardianship was disseminated by both the clergy and the Catholic media. A Catholic publisher, the Catholic Social Guild, even published a guide entitled *How to Help the Belgian Refugees* instructing Catholics of their duties. It suggested that allowing Belgians to worship in a Catholic setting was a form of vital support to the exiles. The publication emphasised that only British Catholics understood the refugees' "spiritual needs."<sup>294</sup> The Catholic Social Guild also outlined:

The importance and delicacy of the religious question make it all the more necessary for Catholics to be represented on relief committees. There may actually be cases in which it is necessary to explain to our kind countrymen (who may be accustomed to frequent Catholic Churches abroad) that Belgian Refugees may only go to their own churches here. It has sometimes happened that our guests in their simplicity and ignorance of religious conditions in this country. . . have attended non-Catholic places of worship.<sup>295</sup>

The Catholic Social Guild was based in London and the gentle tone of its concerns reflected the good relations between English Catholics and their Protestant compatriots.<sup>296</sup> The *Glasgow Observer* adopted a more sectarian attitude in relation to Catholic duties to refugees. It warned that Belgians were at risk of conversion and discrimination by wider Protestant society.<sup>297</sup>

These concerns, in the eyes of the Catholic community, were well founded.<sup>298</sup> As Smyth has noted, Scottish Catholics contended with disadvantages which provoked anxiety such as

<sup>291</sup> "Belgian Refugee Fund," *The Glasgow Observer*, November 25, 1914, 3.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>294</sup> Catholic Social Guild, *How to Help Belgian Refugees*, (London: Catholic Social Guild 1916), 4-5.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>296</sup> Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees," 155.

<sup>297</sup> "Proselytizing Belgian Refugees," *The Glasgow Observer*, July 1, 1916, 2.

<sup>298</sup> Gallagher, *The Uneasy Peace*, 31. As noted earlier destitute Catholics in Scotland were frequently the targets of Protestant missionaries.

occupational precarity, poor schooling and discrimination.<sup>299</sup> Refugees in Scotland were not immune to anti-Catholicism either. An opinion column in the *Motherwell Times* noted that some potential hosts in the town of Motherwell had “changed their minds” upon learning that Belgians were “practically all Catholic.”<sup>300</sup> Anti-Catholic prejudice of this sort, however, was not a salient feature of the rhetoric which surrounded relief.

Nevertheless, attempts were made to convert refugees by the United Free Church. The UF Church’s missionary activity, at home and abroad, courted controversy. Prior to the War, the UF Church had launched a campaign to convert Jews living in Glasgow. A Glasgow Jewish Mission operated in the deprived Gorbals district and offered Jewish children after school lessons, with the hope of encouraging boys and girls to convert.<sup>301</sup> The UF Church saw few problems in this work, even when it brought “conflict” with “official Jews” from the local synagogues.<sup>302</sup> The Church’s magazine encouraged readers to perceive refugees, like Jews, as ripe for conversion.

The UF Church recognised, however, that the majority of Belgians were Catholic and praised the “Romish Churches. . . for looking after their own Belgian people.”<sup>303</sup> Yet it disputed Catholic claims to spiritual guardianship over all refugees. It believed that the division of Belgium’s politics between Catholic, Liberal and Socialist parties provided it with the right and the duty to evangelise amongst secularists.<sup>304</sup> As John Buyers Black, one of the UF Church’s Office bearers, contended, most Belgians may have been baptised Catholics but a substantial number did not attend mass.<sup>305</sup> Buyers Black used anecdotal evidence and Belgian election figures to support his argument. Extrapolating from these Black argued, that of the estimated 20,000 Belgians at least 4,500 might be suitable for conversion.<sup>306</sup> His figures, based on votes for non-Catholic political parties, were however exaggerated. Rowntree’s report on social and political developments in Belgium in 1910 noted that despite the growing success of secular parties, most Belgians remained Catholic.<sup>307</sup> Nevertheless, refugees under UF Church care in the parish of St. Matthew’s on Glasgow’s Bath Street, close to the GCBRC’s

<sup>299</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 128.

<sup>300</sup> “How the World Wags,” *Motherwell Times*, October 23, 1914, 5.

<sup>301</sup> “Glasgow Jewish Mission,” *The Record of the Home and Foreign Missionary Work of the United Free Church of Scotland*, January, 1915, 24.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>303</sup> “Our First Flemish School,” *The Record of the Home and Foreign Missionary Work of the United Free Church of Scotland*, January, 1916, 59.

<sup>304</sup> GCA, United Free Church Office Bearers Union and Minute Book, February 24, 1916, CH 3/7/80/1.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> Seebohm Rowntree, *Land and Labour Lessons from Belgium*, (London, Macmillan and Co LTD, 1910), 477. Only 20,000 Belgians were recorded as belonging to a reformed church.

Offices, did attend services.<sup>308</sup> Of the nine families cared for by the parish, it was reported that eight attended the Kirk regularly while only one “remained Romish.”<sup>309</sup> The children of these converts were said to have “never seen a bible before” and had “to be taught how to pray.”<sup>310</sup>

In spite of the close relationship between Glasgow Corporation and the UF Church, proselytization of refugees drew criticism. The UF Church denied that it pressed for the “conversion of Roman Catholics.”<sup>311</sup> Despite this, Bailie Davidson of GCBRC visited a meeting at St. Matthew’s and urged the UF Church to “leave the religious question alone” amongst refugees.<sup>312</sup> It appears Davidson’s request was granted as UF Church minutes and media made little other reference to Belgian refugees beyond 1916. A subsequent request by John Buyers Black to provide Christmas presents to 400 refugees in December 1916 was turned down.<sup>313</sup>

The role of the Catholic Church in assisting GCBRC in the relief of refugees was significant and must be understood against the wider question of Catholic responses to the War. The Catholic Church opened its existing welfare services and schools to refugees. This was a vital form of aid offered by a religious minority, which was experienced in assisting the poor and destitute. Use of these services to accommodate and educate Belgian refugees eased the burden on Glasgow Corporation. The clergy lent important political and logistical support toward Belgian refugees too. This gave Scottish Catholics a distinctive and active role to play in the war effort and resulted in substantial financial generosity toward refugees from Catholic sources.

The Catholic Church’s hierarchy and laity regarded themselves as responsible for safeguarding the welfare and morality of refugees living in Scotland. This stemmed from anxiety regarding proselytization amongst poor Catholics as well as the wider discrimination that the Catholic community faced. The collaboration between the GCBRC and the Archdiocese of Glasgow in assisting refugees, provides evidence of a “rapprochement” between the Church and the state in Scotland.<sup>314</sup> The significance of this should not be

<sup>308</sup> “Our First Flemish School,” *The Record of the Home and Foreign Missionary Work of the United Free Church of Scotland*, January, 1916, 59.

<sup>309</sup> GCA, United Free Church Office Bearers Union and Minute Book, February 24, 1916, CH 3/7/80/1.

<sup>310</sup> “Our First Flemish School,” *The Record of the Home and Foreign Missionary Work of the United Free Church of Scotland*, January, 1916, 59.

<sup>311</sup> “Non-Catholic Belgians in Glasgow,” *Scotsman*, April 4, 1916, 4.

<sup>312</sup> GCA, United Free Church Office Bearers Union and Minute Book, February 24, 1916, CH 3/7/80/1.

<sup>313</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1916 – April 1917, December 19, 1916, C/13/52.

<sup>314</sup> O’Hagan, Davis, “Forging the Compact of Church and State,” 80.

underestimated, particularly as it occurred in the years leading up to the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918.

### **Conclusion**

Belgian refugees in Scotland were provided with relief by both local government and autonomous organisations. These bodies played a fundamental role in refugee relief, assisting refugees in agreement with the Corporation. The motives of the organisations which offered support for Belgian refugees were varied. Nevertheless, practical assistance was galvanised by a mix of ideological, patriotic and religious influences. This led to implications for the Belgian refugees in these organisations' care, creating tensions between Glasgow Corporation and those societies it relied on.

Councillors and Corporation employees used their networks to encourage donations. The close knit nature of Glasgow's commercial and political community facilitated this. Donations from civic, fraternal and occupational societies, representing a cross section of Scottish society, demonstrated a unique civic humanitarianism. Assisting refugees did not just carry on the tradition of internationalist work in Glasgow, articulated by Aspinwall, it provided momentum for the city to make a distinctive contribution to the unprecedented humanitarian emergency which the arrival of Belgians in Scotland presented.<sup>315</sup>

Therefore shared endeavour, on behalf of refugees, brought together a range of individuals from all walks of life. While this has been recorded by Gill, as a feature of relief in urban Huddersfield, this study reveals that support was even more diverse than previously thought.<sup>316</sup> Internationalist Liberals, patriotic Unionists, devout Catholics, committed Suffragists and evangelical Protestants did not just give financially but they dedicated their time to assist the GCBRC.<sup>317</sup> The broad church of support for refugees even drew backing from the working classes and their representative organisations. This counters the assumptions of Storr, Watson and Daunton, that refugees were predominantly the beneficiaries of a mostly socially conservative, female, middle class.<sup>318</sup> As Grant argues, men and women across the social, political and religious spectrum were "spontaneously" drawn towards the cause of Belgium's displaced.<sup>319</sup>

<sup>315</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 155.

<sup>316</sup> Gill, "Brave little Belgium," 144.

<sup>317</sup> Baughan, "International Adoption," 181.

<sup>318</sup> Storr, *Excluded from the Record*, 35; Watson, "Khaki Girls," 36; Daunton, "Payment and Participation," 188.

<sup>319</sup> Grant, "Mobilizing charity," 162.

GCBRC received assistance from some of Scotland's most important institutions. This strengthened GCBRC's claims to act on behalf of the nation. In working with influential institutions Glasgow Corporation formed temporary welfare partnerships founded upon need. The examples discussed in this chapter evidence that these organisations assisted GCBRC considerably. The case of Glasgow is illustrative of the devolution of authority over refugee affairs, theorised by Gatrell.<sup>320</sup> Like the LGB, Glasgow Corporation delegated responsibility. Therefore, Scottish universities, the SCWS and the Catholic Church all played a vital role accommodating refugees. Organisations such as the universities and the SCWS were, however, inexperienced in the provision of welfare. Yet their work lessened the overall operational and financial burden on GCBRC.

The organisations discussed, in the case studies, brought a range of expertise to relief. Moreover, each organisation approached relief with distinct motives. Scottish universities were supportive of the War. Assisting refugees was part of a wider patriotic enthusiasm that gripped universities. Academics, such as Sir George Adam Smith, offered an influential and moral voice to the GCBRC's campaign. Liberal academics outraged by German atrocities offered solidarity to refugees, hosting them in their own homes. For the most part, however, assistance from academics was disparate and centred around the actions of individuals.

The SCWS, Scotland's largest working-class organisation provided funding, accommodation and jobs for refugees.<sup>321</sup> This was in keeping with the organisation's ethical and internationalist traditions. Yet it also demonstrated the SCWS' support for the War at a time of important political transition for the labour movement. The provision of welfare assistance of this type was a new venture for the SCWS. Assisting refugees at the remote, underused and expensive Calderwood estate, may have offered the SCWS a shrewd opportunity.

The Catholic Church was the institution which offered the greatest financial and logistical support to GCBRC. As a diversified provider of welfare, it was best equipped to lend support.<sup>322</sup> The Church's motivations for assisting refugees, however, were complex. By the turn of the twentieth century the Catholic Church in Britain was increasingly willing to engage with the state.<sup>323</sup> Catholics were mindful of the threat that evangelical groups posed to the conversion of refugees too. Moreover, Catholics sought a better place in society and the War

<sup>320</sup> Gatrell, "Introduction," 5.

<sup>321</sup> Macdonald, "A Different Commonwealth," 5.

<sup>322</sup> Aspinwall, "The Welfare State within the State," 450.

<sup>323</sup> O'Hagan, Davis, "Forging the Compact of Church and State," 80.



was seen as an opportunity to do this.<sup>324</sup> Principally, however, the Church assisted refugees because Belgium was a Catholic country. The Catholic hierarchy was outraged by the invasion of Belgium. Conflict, it was felt, was necessary to restore peace. Therefore, the Church mobilised its clergy, congregants and its services to assist refugees.

The attitudes of the many volunteers who assisted Belgians were defined by the paternalistic prejudices of the Edwardian era. Despite the collective generosity of much of Scottish society, refugees were looked upon by most parties as a responsibility to be managed. In this sense they resembled the native poor.<sup>325</sup> As Pedersen has identified, the morality of the needy was questioned by volunteers.<sup>326</sup> This was apparent in the opinions of those who volunteered on behalf of refugees. The views of those who worked for the GCBRC and its partners resembled the volunteers of the War Refugees Committee, the Charity Organisation Society and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association. This was true of the spectrum of relief givers, from wealthy female volunteers like Mary Boyle, to working class organisations like the SCWS. Even to the Catholic Church, Belgian refugees were regarded as spiritual property to be protected.

This chapter has offered insight into how the third sector assisted Glasgow Corporation in the relief of refugees. In doing so it has revealed the relationship of voluntarist groups to, not just the assistance of Belgian refugees but the First World War more broadly. It is evident that Glasgow Corporation, although in charge of relief, was unable to carry out the entirety of this work alone. The "co-operative" approach, described by Gente, was in operation within Glasgow throughout the War.<sup>327</sup> Collaboration between local government and institutional partners facilitated effective humanitarian aid, as GCBRC drew upon the established system of welfare, to respond to an unprecedented humanitarian emergency.

The support of the third sector did not just supplement the work of Glasgow Corporation, the funds raised by these organisations allowed relief to take place. In exploring the role of non-state organisations in supporting the GCBRC, the chapter has evidenced that the relief of refugees was more popular than previously thought. The broad church of support that Glasgow Corporation received was significant. It encompassed Scotland's most important organisations and institutions, which represented a cross section of Scottish society.

<sup>324</sup> Snape, "British Catholicism," 321.

<sup>325</sup> Watson, "Khaki Girls, VADs, and Tommy's Sisters," 36.

<sup>326</sup> Pedersen, "Gender Welfare and Citizenship," 993.

<sup>327</sup> Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, 2; Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society," 269.

## Conclusion

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The old couple seemed to be exceedingly grateful for what their British friends had done for them. They had some vicissitudes in London but since coming to Scotland had been well cared for. And the lady of the house assured our representative that it was a pleasure to have them . . . “As nice, cleanly, dacent folk” she said, “ae ever I kent” And Mrs Clement “wid gie a haun wi’ the washin’ in spitte o’ mie”.<sup>1</sup>

The anonymous “lady of the house” who had taken in the Clements, an elderly Belgian couple, conveyed an ordinary contentment with her new guests. Whilst her comments are twee and likely exaggerated, they offer a distinctively working class perspective on how Scots viewed Belgian refugees in 1914. Newspaper reports, like the one above, stressed refugees’ gratitude, hard work and respect for their Scottish hosts. These media accounts sold the campaign to assist refugees to the Scottish public. Even as Belgians were repatriated, their work ethic and honesty were reinforced by newspapers. An account from the *Sunday Post* illustrates this. WA Gibson, a refugee host, remarked favourably on the example of his guest, Charles Liebens, as he bid farewell to Belgians leaving Central Station:

Much has been said against the Belgians . . . but here is a case of an expert engineer whose first anxiety, when he arrived in this country, was to find work. I was able to get him started at Messrs Weir’s at Cathcart and all the time he was there he never lost a single hour.<sup>2</sup>

Liebens’ story, Gibson argued, typified the Belgian experience. Yet as Gibson’s allusion to criticism suggests, Belgian refugees were at times targets of xenophobia and indifference. Belgian refugees, as a migrant community, inhabited a precarious position in British society during the First World War.

The research explored in this thesis provides insight into the experience of one refugee community’s sojourn to Scotland, in doing so it expands understandings of historical migration to Britain. The relief of refugees by Glasgow Corporation during the First World War is a narrative of shared humanitarian endeavour which offers important examples of cultural interaction, diversity and solidarity.<sup>3</sup> This thesis has examined the workings of the “refugee

<sup>1</sup> “Belgium Refugees in Motherwell,” *Motherwell Times*, October 23, 1914, 5.

<sup>2</sup> “Belgian Refugees Depart,” *Sunday Post*, December 22, 1918, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Colin Holmes, *John Bull’s Island Immigration and British Society 1871-1971*, (London: Routledge, 1988), 199.

regime,” as theorised by Gatrell.<sup>4</sup> It has explored how bureaucracy, surveillance and administrative procedures affected the life of the foreigner in Britain. In considering the case of Belgian refugees, the study has contributed to the wider historiography of twentieth century Britain, informing perspectives on the Great War and the development of social welfare.

### **Methodology**

This thesis has demonstrated the ambitious efforts made by Glasgow Corporation to relieve refugees and the public responses that this humanitarian campaign generated. Through four chapters, the role of the British Empire’s Second City in relieving the suffering of the Belgian refugees has been retold.

The findings of this thesis have been informed by the Glasgow Corporation Refugee Register. This unique source, although characteristic of the bureaucratic records which deal with displaced people, allows us to understand how the “refugee regime” was administered.<sup>5</sup> The inclusion of information such as addresses and occupations within the register have been central to the findings of this study. Examination of these details have illustrated many individual stories of trauma and displacement. They have also shown the strength of humanitarian feeling in Scotland, revealing the progressive actions of Glasgow Corporation alongside charitable Scots. The scale and detail of the register, alongside the related records of the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee (GCBRC), have enabled the study to trace the life of the Belgian refugee in exile in a way which has not been done before.

Whilst the register is an excellent historical source, primarily relevant to the history of Britain, it holds wider significance to refugee studies. It demonstrates how local government, acting on behalf of the centralised state, expertly gathered and administered data on a large alien community. The register is thus a consequence of changing immigration policy in early twentieth century Britain.

### **Chapter Summary**

Glasgow alone, was best positioned to assist the c. 20,000 refugees who came to Scotland. This city, with its pronounced civic gospel and its progressive health and welfare administration, mobilised municipal services to assist refugees.<sup>6</sup> The pervasive urban problems the city

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Population displacement in the Baltic region in the twentieth century: from ‘refugee studies’ to refugee history,” *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 38 no. 1 (2007): 43-60, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Callum Brown, “To be aglow with civic ardours’: the Godly Commonwealth in Glasgow, 1843-1914,” *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 26 (1996): 169.

contended with gave it the unique capability to meet the challenge which the emergency of the refugees' arrival presented.

The GCBRC co-ordinated relief on behalf of Scotland. The committee organised, administered and fund raised to support the refugees in its care. As national authority for refugees, GCBRC was responsible for feeding and accommodating refugees. Under the Aliens Restriction Act 1914, Glasgow Corporation was liable for ensuring Belgians complied with immigration restrictions. The Local Government Board (LGB), as the central government agency backing relief, required this surveillance.

The GCBRC attracted financial support from a diverse group of interests. Enthusiastic individuals, motivated by a mixture of political and religious influences pledged their support to assist those displaced by the German invasion. These individuals regarded their personal contribution to refugee relief as vital.<sup>7</sup> Arrangements to assist Belgians were, however, predicated on established welfare protocols and laissez-faire practices were implemented to encourage refugees to be self-supporting. This put refugees at the mercy of GCBRC institutions and their representatives. Belgians found work, though with assistance from Glasgow Corporation and refugees became important to the city's wartime industries.

The most significant challenge for Glasgow Corporation was housing refugees. Welfare institutions, hospitals and stately homes were transformed into emergency accommodation for thousands. The city's institutions served as ideal temporary accommodation. Empty mansions were donated by the wealthy too. These properties were integral to the operation of the refugee homes scheme, which was sponsored by local authorities and other organisations across Scotland. This approach dealt with the conundrum posed by the Alien Restriction Act and its limitations on geographic settlement.

Glasgow remained, however, an overcrowded city with an endemic housing shortage and additional solutions were needed to house refugees. The voluntary accommodation of refugees in private homes was therefore an important pillar of support for Glasgow Corporation. Those individuals who opened their homes enabled Glasgow Corporation to carry out relief. This practical form of charity, whilst not unique to Scotland, was extensive and well organised. Reliant upon volunteers' spare rooms and generosity, this strategy saw refugees housed in somewhere between 700-800 homes across central Scotland.<sup>8</sup> As the War progressed

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<sup>7</sup> Emily Baughan, "International Adoption and Anglo-American Internationalism 1918-1920," *Past and Present*, 239, no. 1 (2018), 181-217, 188.

<sup>8</sup> Imperial War Museum Archive, Corporation of the City of Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, *Please Read This*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1915) BEL 99/10, 6.

refugees found housing independently. Evidence suggests, however, that this was often in the poorest areas of the city. As Ewence's work has shown, Belgian refugees lived an itinerant existence in Britain.<sup>9</sup> Refugees, like other migrants, were at the mercy of job insecurity and exploitation.

The work of the GCRBC depended upon the assistance of others and Belgian refugees benefitted from the British public's enthusiasm for the War. A range of organisations, representing a spectrum of Scottish society, participated in relief. Despite Glasgow Corporation's provision of extensive municipal services, the city relied on co-operative partnership with charities.<sup>10</sup> The councillors and employees of Glasgow Corporation drew on their diffuse networks to assist with relief. A myriad of clubs, societies and employee associations gave generously. Scotland's largest institutions also contributed to relief. Organisations such as the Scottish universities, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS) and the Catholic Church hosted refugees and fund raised on their behalf. These groups were drawn toward relief work by varying ideological and religious convictions.

### Commentary

As the thesis has demonstrated, Belgian refugees were at the forefront of one of the largest international humanitarian campaigns of the twentieth century. Belgian refugees, "the guests of the nation," were warmly welcomed by Scots.<sup>11</sup> To ordinary Britons refugees represented, what one contemporary journalist called, "all the sufferings connected to the war."<sup>12</sup> As Laqua has observed, refugees were the unfortunate by-product of German military aggression.<sup>13</sup> The defence of Belgium's freedom and protection of the innocent refugee, symbolised why conflict with Germany was necessary. The cause of Gallant Little Belgium motivated overwhelming public support in Britain.<sup>14</sup> This was despite the international condemnation that Belgium faced in the decade before the First World War, on account of atrocities in the Congo.

Assisting c.20,000 refugees was a "heavy burden" for Glasgow Corporation.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Hannah Ewence, "Belgian Refugees in Cheshire: "Place" and the Invisibility of the Displaced," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 36 no. 3 (2018): 232-257, 251.

<sup>10</sup> Magali Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society in Great Britain during the First World War," *Journal of Family History*, 27 no 1 (2002): 235-272; 269; Olive Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1980), 269.

<sup>11</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Perth and Kinross-shire Advertiser*, January 29 1916, 4.

<sup>12</sup> "How the World Wags," *Motherwell Times*, October 23, 1914, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Laqua, "Belgian exiles, the British and the Great War: the Birtley Belgians of Elisabethville". *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 113-131.

<sup>14</sup> Colin Holmes, *A Tolerant Country? Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities in Britain*, (London, Routledge: 1991), 25.

<sup>15</sup> Imperial War Museum Archive, Corporation of the City of Glasgow, *The Belgian Refugees in Scotland*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1916), BEL 6 99/7, 9.

Nevertheless the citizens of the second city of Empire undertook this mission imbued with a sense of civic and national pride. Belgian exiles, living in Scotland, were the focus of an unprecedented humanitarian enthusiasm. Local authorities, institutions, charities, churches, volunteers and workers all contributed toward the GCBRC. The diverse coalition that Glasgow Corporation assembled offered time, money and resources. The contribution of ordinary citizens, who opened their homes to accommodate Belgians, alleviated pressure on the Corporation.

It is evident that the example of Glasgow challenges the assumptions made by Cahalan, Kushner and Pedersen, that charitable enthusiasm diminished in the later years of the War.<sup>16</sup> While concerns were raised by individuals and interests about the assistance of Belgian refugees being “overdone,” public sympathy for refugees in Scotland was broad and sustained.<sup>17</sup> Between 1914-1918 Glasgow Corporation and its partners raised over £360,000, a figure equivalent to £22.3 million today.<sup>18</sup> The scale of this generosity won Glasgow Corporation recognition and renown. David Lloyd George remarked that the campaign in Scotland was a “great act of humanity” at a time when the “energies of mankind” had been “devoted to destruction.”<sup>19</sup> Albert I, King of the Belgians, similarly commended Glasgow and its citizens for their hospitality too.<sup>20</sup> Alexander Walker even received public recognition, being awarded a CBE in 1919.<sup>21</sup>

Glasgow, as Scotland’s foremost metropolis, was the best placed municipality to handle the complexity of so large a humanitarian crisis. The emergency brought about by the exodus of refugees from Belgium meant that the powers associated with central government were invested in Glasgow Corporation by the Local Government Board.<sup>22</sup> As Jenkinson has argued, this devolution was unique to Scotland and came at a time of growing political reform.<sup>23</sup>

The Belgian case demonstrates Torpey’s assertion that, by the early twentieth century,

<sup>16</sup> Peter Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England During the Great War,” PhD Dissertation, (McMaster University, 1977), 501; Tony Kushner, “Local Heroes: Belgian refugees in Britain during the First World War,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 18 no. 1 (1999): 1-28, 7; Susan Pedersen, “Gender, Welfare and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War,” *The American Historical Review*, 95, No. 2. (1990): 983-1006, 1222.

<sup>17</sup> “Town Notes,” *The Kilmarnock Herald*, July 26, 1916, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “Administering Relief: Glasgow Corporation’s support for c.20,000 refugees,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016):171-191, 178.

<sup>19</sup> “The Belgian Refugees,” *Scotsman*, May 24, 1919, 8.

<sup>20</sup> “Belgian’s Goodbye,” *Daily Record*, December, 14, 1918, 2.

<sup>21</sup> “Mr Alexander Walker Dead,” *Scotsman*, November 21, 1945, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Introduction,” in *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhanko (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 5.

<sup>23</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “Administering Relief,” 178.

immigration had become a pressing issue for governments.<sup>24</sup> By assuming national authority, Glasgow Corporation became responsible for the enforcement of immigration measures. The stipulations of the 1914 Aliens Restriction Act were harsh. They “screened” and monitored refugees, restricted their movement and required their registration.<sup>25</sup> As Elliot has shown, government measures requiring refugees to register were part of wider strategic policy during the War.<sup>26</sup> The collection and processing of statistical information on Belgians demonstrated the relationship of refugees to the “warfare state,” theorised by Edgerton.<sup>27</sup>

Across Europe responsibility for refugee affairs was delegated, as governments became occupied with the broader war effort.<sup>28</sup> Central government support for Glasgow Corporation during the First World War reflected how state intervention in British society was changing. The devolution of central government responsibility allowed Glasgow to provide a controlled but expansive system of welfare to refugees.<sup>29</sup> This was a unique arrangement, which differentiated the assistance provided in Glasgow from the support given in other cities such as Birmingham.

Moves toward increased intervention on behalf of the poor had been made in the years before the War.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the First World War saw central government increase the financial support given to local authorities. The impact of government intervention on society during the First World War has been well debated, most notably by Winter, yet the novelty and effect of this support should not be underestimated.<sup>31</sup> Increased state funding did not transform the provision of benefits, rather it was part of a gradual process of the centralised state taking an increased role in social welfare.

The Glasgow case, therefore, exemplifies Bailkin’s assertion that state assistance

<sup>24</sup> John Torpey, “The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System,” in *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. Jane Caplan and John Torpey (Princeton University: Princeton, NJ, 2001), 256.

<sup>25</sup> John C. Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918*, (London: Routledge, 1986), 40.

<sup>26</sup> Rosemary Elliot, “An early experiment in national identity cards: the battle over registration in the First World War,” *Twentieth-Century British History*, 17 no. 2 (2006):145-176, 146.

<sup>27</sup> Jordanna Bailkin, *Unsettled Refugee Camps and the Making of Multicultural Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 10; David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain 1920-1970*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Gatrell, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>29</sup> Olive Checkland, “Maternal and Child Welfare,” in *Health Care As Social History: The Glasgow Case*, edited by Olive Checkland and Margaret Lamb, (Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press: 1982), 122, 117-131.

<sup>30</sup> Rex Pope, Alan Pratt and Bernard Hoyle, *Social Welfare in Britain 1995-1985*, (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 26. this was apparent in the welfare reforms of 1906-1914 and the proposed amendments made to the poor law.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Broadberry and Peter Howlett, “The United Kingdom During World War I: Business as Usual?” in *The Economics of World War I*, ed. Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 229; Jay, M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan: 1986), 140.

toward refugees in Britain involved experimentation in the provision of social welfare.<sup>32</sup> The Belgian Refugees who came to Scotland benefitted from a form of welfare that was new and unique. This went beyond what most poor Glaswegians were entitled to, or what refugees living elsewhere received.

By successfully mobilising large sections of Scottish society, the GCBRC was able to provide ambitious welfare assistance. Belgian refugees were declared Scotland's "guests" and traditions of hospitality were reinforced through appeals, newspaper articles and pageantry.<sup>33</sup> Scotland and Belgium's similarities were emphasised and historic cultural interactions were celebrated. The invasion of a small nation state resonated with those familiar with Scotland's past. Rhetoric and insignia associated with Scotland's history gave appeals a nationalistic character. This nationalism reinforced, not only Glasgow Corporation's position as the official charity for refugees but it also emphasised the collective effort of the Scottish people. At the heart of the GCBRC's work lay a Unionist Nationalism present in everyday Scottish life.<sup>34</sup>

As ILP councillor James Stewart remarked, Glasgow Corporation's mission to assist Belgian refugees was "national."<sup>35</sup> The decision to make the assistance of Belgian exiles a nationwide undertaking was pragmatic. By harnessing the enthusiasm of the Scottish regions Glasgow Corporation diversified the source of charitable donations, making relief financially sustainable for the duration of the War. Cities, towns, and villages unable to host refugees demonstrated their compassion with sincerity, donating tens of thousands of pounds.

Scottish institutions, businesses, charities and churches participated in relief, buoying up the work of GCBRC. This collaborative provision of assistance followed an established pattern in Scotland.<sup>36</sup> In contributing to relief, these organisations illustrated their influence within Scottish society. These groups represented not just, as assumed by Cahalan, Storr and Daunton, the middle classes but the working classes too.<sup>37</sup> The personal contribution of the working class to GCBRC was considerable and is worthy of note. It demands that the long held

<sup>32</sup> Jordanna Bailkin, *Unsettled: Refugee Camps and the Making of Multicultural Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 201.

<sup>33</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Perth and Kinross-shire Advertiser*, January 29, 1916, 4.

<sup>34</sup> David Ditchburn, Catriona M. M. MacDonald, "Bannockburn, World War I and the Referendum," *Scottish Historical Review*, 237 (2014), 169; Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland 1830-1860*, (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> "Glasgow Bearing its Share of Burden," *The Bailie*, March 10, 1914, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Magali Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization Society in Great Britain during the First World War," *Journal of Family History*, 27 no 1 (2002): 235-272; 269.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 309; Katharine Storr, *Excluded from the Record: Women Refugees and Relief*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 112; Martin J. Daunton, "Payment and Participation: Welfare and State-Formation in Britain 1900-1951," *Past & Present*, no. 150 1 (1996): 169-216, 188.



assumption, that charity was the pursuit of the middle classes is reassessed.

Influential figures within Glasgow Corporation, such as Alexander Walker, utilised their various social networks to draw support. Groups representing diverse sections of the Scottish population gave time and money. Those with sometimes opposing views were even motivated to assist Belgians. Internationalists and patriots alike treated Belgians as a deserving cause. This was linked to the wider public feeling toward the War as a whole. Such political unity was rare for the Edwardian period and surprising considering the polarisation of Glasgow's politics in the interwar period.<sup>38</sup>

The bi-partisanship, identified by Gill, was more significant in Scotland than in England.<sup>39</sup> Nationalism was a factor in this, as evidenced by the participation of Scotland's most important institutions in relief. Yet the Scottish Universities, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS) and the Catholic Church were also guided by their own motives. The contribution of these organisations, alongside smaller local authorities, was integral to the success of the GCBRC. It allowed the municipality to claim to exercise authority on behalf of Scotland.

The refugee emergency came at a time of political and economic change for Scotland. The growing capacity of the Scottish Office threatened Glasgow's autonomy. Prior to the War restless rate payers had tested the limits of municipalism, as critics had bemoaned the provision of "halls," and "pleasure grounds" by the public purse.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, radicals claimed that the city's "glories" were "unknown" to the poor.<sup>41</sup>

Glasgow Corporation made Belgian refugees charges of the city and provided them with a comprehensive system of social welfare. This was a progressive experiment in the provision of benefits. The assistance given to refugees, however, was paternalistic.<sup>42</sup> Refugees resided in the buildings used to accommodate the sick, destitute and vulnerable and Belgian homes were modelled on institutions. Regulations and procedures aimed to make refugees, like the native applicants of the poor law, "self-supporting."<sup>43</sup> The institutionalisation of care for Belgian refugees meant it was inevitable that contemporary thinking regarding "self-help" entered the discourse of relief.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> James Smyth, "Resisting Labour: Unionists, Liberals and Moderates in Glasgow between the Wars," *The Historical Journal*, 46, no. 2, (2003): 375-401, 378.

<sup>39</sup> Rebecca Gill, "Brave little Belgium' arrives in Huddersfield ... voluntary action, local politics and the history of international relief work," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34, no. 2 (2016): 132-150.

<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Taylor, "Municipal Glasgow," *The North American Review*, March 15, 1907, 590-603.

<sup>41</sup> James Hamilton Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, (Glasgow: William Hodge and Company), 21.

<sup>42</sup> Magali Gente, "Family Ideology and the Charity Organization," 269.

<sup>43</sup> "Belgian Refugees in Scotland," *Arbroath Herald and Advertiser*, May 7, 1915, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 5.

The residence of the displaced in institutions alarmed some. These figures felt that such settings were unsuitable for refugees of the better class. Belgian expatriates, such as Father Claeys and Charles Sarolea, drew attention to this. They noted the “horror” and revulsion Belgians felt towards the poorhouse.<sup>45</sup> The notoriety of labour colonies such as Merxplas in Belgium and the associated stigma attached to contemporary welfare settings in Britain were to blame. Alternative solutions to hosting refugees, such as private hospitality were considered more humane.

The “social question” loomed large in the discourse of refugee relief.<sup>46</sup> Determining the “character of foreigners” was a preoccupation for refugee hosts.<sup>47</sup> Concern over the class of refugee guests prefigured similar anxieties that were expressed by hosts of evacuees during the Second World War.<sup>48</sup> The screening of refugees’ social class was a Britain wide phenomenon, which was tacitly encouraged by the War Refugees Committee (WRC) and the LGB.<sup>49</sup> Pedersen’s study of voluntarism supports this, such behaviour was rooted in Edwardian social convention and reflected in the opinions of middle class volunteers.<sup>50</sup>

As this study has evidenced, however, the careful selection of refugees was not only about reinforcing classism. Other social groupings featured in the decision making process, as occupation and faith were considered important. The Scots who offered hospitality sought guests who were like themselves. The backgrounds of the guests and their hosts, discussed throughout this thesis, indicate that personal experience and a desire to show solidarity were influences.

Social status, however, also concerned Belgian refugees. Those who came to Britain were not only exiled and alienated but also declassed. The records and private correspondence discussed, evidence that the bourgeoisie of Belgium felt they deserved better treatment on more favourable terms. Anecdotes indicate that some Belgian professionals shunned work they felt demeaned their status or skills. Similar sentiments were recorded elsewhere in Britain and in reports published after the War. The abrupt lowering of social status, a phenomenon more closely associated with later refugee movements, was widespread and apparent in the relief of

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<sup>45</sup> “Glasgow’s Belgian Refugees,” *Glasgow Observer*, October 31, 1914, 12.

<sup>46</sup> John Stewart and John Welshman, “The evacuation of children in wartime Scotland: culture, behaviour, and poverty,” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 26 no. 2 (2006): 100-120.

<sup>47</sup> Imperial War Museum Archive (hereafter IWMA), Mary E. Boyle Correspondence, Glasgow Belgian Refugee Committee, Women War and Society, 21, BEL 6100/5.

<sup>48</sup> John Stewart and John Welshman, “The evacuation of children in wartime Scotland,” 120.

<sup>49</sup> Bailkin, *Unsettled*, 98.

<sup>50</sup> Susan Pedersen, “Gender Welfare and Citizenship During the Great War,” *The American Historical Review*, 95, no. 4 (1990): 983-1006, 993.

Belgians.<sup>51</sup>

Media accounts and official appeals indicate that this was an issue which created tension. To offset criticism that Belgians were workshy, employment amongst refugees was exaggerated.<sup>52</sup> Belgians did, of course, find work in industries across central Scotland. Refugees were employed in manufacturing, munitions and agriculture as well as highly regulated trades such as steel, shipbuilding, carpentry and furnishing. Belgians even found work in the collieries, despite objections from the Scottish Federation of Miners.<sup>53</sup> The concerns raised by trade unionists, during the course of the Hatch Committee in 1914, that refugees would benefit at the “expense of the British worker” were unsubstantiated.<sup>54</sup> Recruitment and increased manufacturing resulted in Belgians assisting with the demand for labour.

Regardless of the objection from some socialists toward refugees’ residence in Scotland, anti-Belgian xenophobia never became an important feature of the political discourse of Red Clydeside. Indeed, aid for refugees from the working classes in Scotland was pronounced. Analysis of donations made to GCBRC reveal that skilled working class men gave generously.<sup>55</sup> Donations came from employees of workshops and factories as well as from some trade unions.

Nevertheless, support for refugees from the working classes was primarily financial rather than political. The working class were historically cautious towards foreigners and refugees were regarded as a “threat” in competition for housing.<sup>56</sup> The arrival of tens of thousands of refugees had an adverse effect on the already squeezed housing market of Glasgow. The criticism levelled at Glasgow Corporation from ILP figures, such as John Wheatley continually, centred on the “housing question.”<sup>57</sup> Few socialists, other than ILP councillor James Stewart, were willing to give political support to Belgian refugees. The patrons of the GCBRC were regularly rebuked by the socialist weekly *Forward* for hypocrisy and snobbery towards the city’s poor.

Socialist criticism of the GCBRC asserted that the treatment refugees received was

<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth Staudlis, “The Resettlement of Displaced Persons in the United Kingdom,” *Population Studies: A Journal of Demography*, 5 (1952): 207-237, 16.

<sup>52</sup> “Belgian Exiles in a Friendly City,” *Scotsman*, November 9, 1916, 4.

<sup>53</sup> “Private Correspondence,” *Scotsman*, August 12, 1915, 6.

<sup>54</sup> IWMA, Local Government Board, *Minutes Of Evidence Taken Before Department Committee Re Reception And Employment Of Belgian Refugees In The Country* (London: HMSO, 1915), BEL 1/21, 25.

<sup>55</sup> Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England,” 309; Storr, *Excluded from the Record*: 112.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity*, (Routledge: New York, 2014), 56.

<sup>57</sup> “Policy of Interest-Free Dwellings,” *Scotsman*, January 4, 1916, 9.

more favourable than that of the native poor. “The big house patriots,” who assisted “Belgian and Serbians,” were repulsed by “Glasgow people.”<sup>58</sup> The truth in these sentiments stirred strong emotions and encouraged introspection. Some questioned how the poor could be better provided for after the War.<sup>59</sup> Idealists saw the assistance of Belgian refugees as a model for how to remake Scottish society. Alexander Walker flirted with these ideas, but discussions of housing homeless veterans in former Belgian homes came to little. In 1920 the remaining GCBRC funds were simply redistributed to hospitals and other local charities.<sup>60</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

Glasgow’s response toward Belgian refugees offers insight into the city’s civic identity. By assisting the victims of conflict Glasgow demonstrated a commitment to global humanitarianism. War, injustice, famine and disasters had all motivated successive waves of collective action in the city. The establishment and work of the GCBRC, however, represented a culmination in this humanitarian sentiment.<sup>61</sup>

This study has shown that Belgium inspired Britons for the duration of the War. In the minds of the British public, refugees embodied the War’s objectives.<sup>62</sup> Assisting the displaced was part of the broad patriotism which the War generated. Volunteering as a matron, donating towards flag days or hosting refugees were all forms of war work. Thus, the defence of Belgium and the protection of its refugees were central not just to propaganda but the aims of the War itself.

The relief of refugees in Glasgow was unique as the city delivered aid to refugees with limited intervention from central government. This was unlike the voluntarist assistance shown toward refugees elsewhere in Britain. The leadership of GCBRC under Alexander Walker, a temperate, liberal leaning Presbyterian, ensured that refugees benefitted from the city’s extensive and advanced welfare administration. This served to meet refugees needs for the War’s duration.

Glasgow’s contribution to the relief of refugees, projected the city’s political values to Britain, the Empire and beyond. By 1914 Glasgow was as synonymous with progress as much

<sup>58</sup> “Glasgow Town Council,” *Forward*, April 26, 1919, 4.

<sup>59</sup> “Town Notes,” *Kilmarnock Herald*, July 26, 1916, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Glasgow City Archives, (Hereafter GCA) Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, November 1919 - April 1920, 28 January, 1920, C/13/52.

<sup>61</sup> “Cartoon Supplement,” *The Bailie*, December 2, 1914, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Laqua, “Belgian exiles, the British and the Great War,” 131.

as it was poverty.<sup>63</sup> The civic gospel, associated with the nineteenth century, had a profound impact on Glasgow's politics which lasted into the twentieth century. Liberalism, evangelical Christianity and temperance predominated in the city. Egalitarianism and "social democracy," values Aspinwall assesses as uniquely Glaswegian, were the prized ideals of the metropolis.<sup>64</sup> Local politicians were encouraged by these principles to promote innovation, change and concern for the worst off.

Belgians in Scotland received comprehensive support which was unrivalled in its efficiency and generosity. In providing refugees with social welfare Glasgow Corporation went beyond just delivering aid, the municipality acted on behalf of central government. While this was an act of humanitarianism it was also an exercise in state control. Refugees were monitored, policed and their personal data collected. Gathering this information allowed Glasgow Corporation and the LGB to make complex decisions regarding refugees' employment, military service and receipt of benefits. The conditions of total war dictated that foreigners were supervised, and their freedoms curtailed.

The end of the War was a turning point in the regulation of immigration by the state. The relief of refugees, while a successful and generous campaign predicated on liberal ideas, was followed by the introduction of protectionist policies which limited future migration and fostered hostility. By 1919 the laissez-faire values of Britain's "ancestors," who had long offered "refuge to the oppressed," were rejected.<sup>65</sup> Proponents of tighter controls over foreigners such as MPs Ernest Wild and Horatio Bottomley, argued in the House of Commons during debates on the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act in 1919 that "cosmopolitanism" and the "enormous alien colony" which Britain was home to had "contributed to the causes of the War."<sup>66</sup> Britain was to be no longer the "dumping ground of the world's refugees."<sup>67</sup>

The sojourn of Belgian refugees was nevertheless a unique humanitarian moment in British history which remains unparalleled. The Glasgow case serves as a detailed study of the "refugee regime," identified by Gatrell, at a regional level.<sup>68</sup> It illustrates the vital effort made by one city on a nation's behalf. It contributes to the broader history of the First World War and Britain in the twentieth century, illustrating how extensive government intervention and public support was provided to a foreign-born population. The study concludes that Belgian

<sup>63</sup> Olive Checkland and Margaret Lamb, "Preface," *Healthcare As Social History: The Glasgow Case*, (Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1982), XV.

<sup>64</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), XV.

<sup>65</sup> "Britain for the British," *Dundee Courier*, April 16, 1919, 4.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Gatrell, *Making of the Modern Refugee*, 8.

refugees were “guests” of the Scottish nation and recipients of a new form of humanitarian solidarity.

The work of GCBRC prefigured numerous campaigns for social justice during the long twentieth century. The Spanish Civil War, Nazi persecution, Apartheid, political repression in Latin America and conflict in the Balkans motivated continued philanthropic efforts in Glasgow. Scots’ contributions to these diverse international causes in the last hundred years were important. Actions of support and solidarity emulated aspects of the campaign to assist Belgian refugees. The broad movement to support refugees in contemporary Scotland, evidences a continued sympathy amongst Scots for victims of conflict and oppression. Although the relief of Belgian refugees has been lost from the collective memory of Scotland, its legacy lives on.

## Epilogue

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The prospect for Belgians is doubly dark. Comparatively few, who have been on munitions over here, have made provisions for the unemployment that may befall them and even when they return home the chance of remunerative work in a country stripped of machinery are not glowing.<sup>1</sup>

Although he may not be remembered by many people in the town Mr J. De Vries, a Belgian refugee during the last War, still retains pleasant memories of his stay in Wishaw. An accomplished pianist he acted as conductor of the Picture House Orchestra. . . After the War he returned to his native country and at long last he has found the opportunity of reciprocating the kindness shown to him during his refugee days. In Antwerp it has been his great delight to meet several service men from Wishaw and district, one of whom tells in a letter home of sight seeing tours.<sup>2</sup>

Josef De Vries came to Wishaw, an industrial Lanarkshire town, in his mid-twenties.<sup>3</sup> By the time he repaid his gratitude to the servicemen he met from Wishaw in 1945 he was almost fifty-five. The prospects for returning refugees at the end of the Great War were bleak, as the *Daily Record* speculated in December 1918 the destruction and collapse of industry in Belgium meant that unemployment was a certainty upon return. Yet the account of Josef De Vries suggests that the formerly displaced were able to rebuild their lives, even as the carnage of the Second World War unfolded.

This thesis has expanded understandings of the relief of Belgian refugees in Britain. The epilogue is now used to discuss a number of closely related themes which have emerged from the research, but which could not be examined elsewhere. These related themes lay beyond the scope of the principal arguments made, yet these subjects remain pertinent to the field of refugee studies and the wider significance of this thesis. The epilogue thus examines four interrelated themes; the repatriation of Belgian refugees from Scotland, the disbursement of the remaining funds of the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugee Committee (GCBRC), efforts to memorialise refugee relief and the continuing legacy of the effort to assist Belgian refugees in Scotland beyond the First World War.

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<sup>1</sup> "Bad for Belgians," *Daily Record*, December 12, 1918, 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Belgian Remembers," *Motherwell Times*, July 5, 1945, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Glasgow City Archives, (hereafter GCA) Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3.

## Repatriation

The anecdote of Josef De Vries provides rare insight into the fortunes of a refugee sheltered in Scotland who returned to Belgium. The partial and incomplete nature of much of the archived material relating to Belgian refugees means that accounts which deal with the return of refugees to Belgium, or their continued interaction with hosts, are incredibly rare. Ewence has referred to the events which followed the repatriation of refugees as a “twilight zone,” between war and peace.<sup>4</sup> The process of repatriation remains poorly understood. The aftermath of the First World War for Belgium was a period of “turmoil” and transition” for Belgian society.<sup>5</sup> Returning refugees encountered a country which had been ravaged by War, occupation and hunger.

Nevertheless, Belgian returnees were sent on their way by the same enthusiastic volunteers who had gathered to greet them in 1914. The *Herald* noted that Belgians departing Queen Street station were bid farewell by the GCBRC, councillors and the Lord Provost.<sup>6</sup> From December 1918 onwards a steady flow of refugees left Scotland.<sup>7</sup> The departure of refugees was accompanied by concerts organised by various local committees.<sup>8</sup> In Paisley, the local refugee committee held a large farewell party for refugees the evening before their departure.<sup>9</sup> Dancing, speeches and renditions of the national anthems of Britain and Belgium were all features of these ceremonial goodbyes. Across Britain, in towns and cities which hosted refugees, these scenes were repeated.<sup>10</sup> These celebratory send-offs were accompanied by photographs, in some instances formal photographic portraits were even commissioned.<sup>11</sup> Appendix 5 shows a photograph of the GCBRC and refugees aboard the S.S. Khyber, the transport ship which took refugees back to Belgium from Hull in December 1918. The men of the committee and their wives appear standing on the front deck, while refugees appear in the foreground with their faces mostly obscured.

By the Spring of 1919 fewer than five hundred refugees remained in Scotland.<sup>12</sup> The plan to repatriate refugees had been long in the making. From as early as August 1916 the Local Government Board (LGB) began to discuss the process, establishing a committee chaired

<sup>4</sup> Hannha Ewence, “Bridging the Gap between “War and “Peace,” The Case of Belgian Refugees,” in *Minorities and the First World War*, ed. Hannah Ewence. Tim Grady, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 92.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>6</sup> “Repatriation of Belgian Refugees,” *Glasgow Herald*, December 14, 1918, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “Administering Relief: Glasgow Corporation’s Support for Scotland’s C. 20,000 Belgian Refugees,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 34 no. 2 (2016); 171-191, 185.

<sup>8</sup> “Departure of Belgians for Antwerp,” *Daily Record*, December 16, 1918, 14.

<sup>9</sup> “Departure of Belgian Refugees from Paisley,” *Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette*, December 14, 1918, 3.

<sup>10</sup> “Off For Home,” *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 17 January, 1919, 3; “District News,” *Western Mail*, January 10, 1919, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>12</sup> “Repatriation Almost Completed,” *Scotsman*, April 2, 1919, 6.



by civil servants and appointees from the Belgian government.<sup>13</sup> The primary recommendations made were to begin repatriation “as early as possible” and to ensure that the return of “working-class refugees” was prioritised, to discourage “labour difficulties.”<sup>14</sup> The harshness of these measures was tempered with the provision of unemployment benefits to male refugees, employed in munitions, who were given access to 7s a week until their departure.<sup>15</sup> Female Belgian refugees employed in munitions did not receive the same advantage. Central government remained resolute regarding the need to return refugees “in large batches.”<sup>16</sup> In repatriating refugees the British government accepted responsibility for paying for refugees’ transportation, permitting each adult refugee to take 300lbs of luggage, including bedding and foodstuffs.<sup>17</sup> The Belgian government arranged the opening of hostels and accommodation centres within Belgium which were used to prepare refugees for their onward journey.<sup>18</sup> These staging posts resembled the temporary reception centre established at the Alexandra Palace for refugees.

In a bid to ensure refugees could properly assist themselves after arriving in Belgium, GCBRC offered to provide financial grants to departing Belgians. These payments were intended to allow refugees to rebuild their lives upon arriving back in their devastated country. This offer suggests that GCBRC held an appreciation of the hardship that Belgium was facing. The effects of several harsh winters and the Spanish Flu pandemic had already begun to set in across Europe by the end of 1918.<sup>19</sup> Alexander Walker and Bailie Irwin had made a visit to the Belgian front in December 1917, making it likely that they were aware of the difficulties that refugees would encounter after the War.<sup>20</sup> The Belgian government, however, discouraged the payment of grants arguing that those returning with large sums from overseas might create “difficulties.”<sup>21</sup> It was evident that the Belgian government wished to avoid refugees becoming victims of crime or a source of tension. As Ewence has identified, in post war Belgium, friction was apparent between the “home stayers” and those who sought exile abroad.<sup>22</sup> These

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<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Health, Report on the work undertaken by the British Government in the Reception and Care of the Belgian Refugees, (HMSO, London, 1920), 39. The Belgian government appointed Coulier Du Mulder, Senator for Termonde, and Monsiuer Standaert, Deputy for Bruges, to plan the repatriation.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 39. 300lbs is around 136kg

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Osborne Humphries, “Paths of Infection: The First World War and the Origins of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic,” *War in History*, 21 no. 1 (2013): 55-81.

<sup>20</sup> “Glasgow Visitors to Belgian Front,” *Scotsman*, December 10, 1917, 4.

<sup>21</sup> “Belgian Refugees in Scotland,” *Scotsman*, April 11, 1919, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Ewence, “Bridging the Gap,” 104.

“divergent” experiences meant returnees faced “stigma” and resentment.<sup>23</sup>

Belgium after the War was a nation in ruins, the chaos of the First World War had destabilised the social fabric of the country. The deportation of Belgian civilians, the use of forced labour, alongside the sabotage of industry inflicted a considerable toll.<sup>24</sup> Yet the use of work battalions and deportations, although considered violations of international law, were not treated as war crimes.<sup>25</sup> The impact of these atrocities, Conway argues, meant that many came to regard Belgium’s experience of the War as that of an occupied territory, rather than as a combatant nation.<sup>26</sup> The collective trauma of deportation, separation and mass exile led to profound feelings of “disassociation” within Belgian society during the interwar period.<sup>27</sup>

In the official British rhetoric there was little discussion of the hardship that Belgians would face returning home, rather the continued presence of Belgian refugees was treated as a source of potential social unrest.<sup>28</sup> The expense of supporting Belgian refugees was also highlighted by the LGB.<sup>29</sup> These factors necessitated, to the many local committees responsible for Belgians, why refugees had to be repatriated quickly. Repatriation was illustrative of the changing attitudes of central government toward immigration. The Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act of 1919 made the controls set by the 1914 Aliens Act permanent.<sup>30</sup> War time policy would now guide peacetime legislation. Sentiments of prejudice became more pervasive in politics and public life as unemployment fed xenophobic hostility. “Britain for the British” became regarded as the answer to the “aliens question” by some.<sup>31</sup>

Supposition that aliens might become the source of labour disputes and hostility were proven during the seaport riots of 1919. Black, Indian, Arab and Chinese workers were targeted by communities resentful of immigrants. The “angry crowd” of ex-servicemen and workers

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>24</sup> Tammy, M. Proctor, “Belgian Civilians and the First World War,” *The Journal of Belgian History*, 35 no. 4 (2005): 542-572; Mark Spoerer, “The mortality of Allied prisoners of war and Belgian civilian deportees in German custody during the First World War: A reappraisal of the effects of forced labour,” *Population Studies*, 60, no. 2 (2006): 121-136; Jens Thiel, “Between Recruitment and Forced Labour: The Radicalisation of German labour policy in occupied Belgium and Northern France,” *First World War Studies*, 41 no. 3 (2013): 39-50.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Marc Segesser, “The Punishment of War Crimes Committed against Prisoners of War, Deportees and Refugees during and after the First World War,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, 26 no. 1 (2006): 134-156, 137.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Conway, “The Extreme Right in Inter-War Francophone Belgium: Explanations of a Failure,” *European History Quarterly*, 26, no. 4 (1996): 267-292, 269.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 280.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 37.

<sup>29</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Colonial, Refugee and Allied Civilians After the First World War*, (Routledge: Abingdon, 2020), 123.

<sup>30</sup> Jenkinson, *Colonial, Refugee and Allied Civilians*, 182.

<sup>31</sup> “Over 10,000 Aliens in Glasgow,” *Motherwell Times*, July 1918, 7; “Interned German Released and Work Found For Him,” *Sunday Post*, December, 22, 1918, 2; “Britain for the British,” *Dundee Courier*, April 16, 1919, 4.

turned on their fellow British subjects in the aftermath of the War as febrile tensions mounted.<sup>32</sup> In Glasgow, these “race disturbances” preceded the larger Bloody Friday Riot of January 1919 by only a week.<sup>33</sup> While the Bloody Friday Riot centred on the issue of working hours, it was “interconnected” to the race disturbances as both centred on employment.<sup>34</sup> In spite of the presence of Belgians in Glasgow and their work in industries hard hit by the end of the War, refugees avoided becoming the source of violent protest. The well-publicised departures of Belgian refugees mitigated against such a backlash. The British government was not the only group who wished to repatriate refugees quickly. The Belgian government also sought to have its citizenry return promptly to assist in the process of reconstruction.<sup>35</sup> Many Belgian exiles additionally expressed a firm desire to go back to their homes. All through the War, tens of thousands of refugees had left Britain to return to Belgium on military service, for work or to be reunited with family.<sup>36</sup> As Cahalan identifies, this was frequently at the dismay of their British hosts.<sup>37</sup> While exact figures of the number of refugees present in Britain in November 1918 are difficult to ascertain, the Ministry of Health report of 1920 calculated around 120,000.<sup>38</sup> Refugees conveyed an enthusiasm for their return, voicing feelings of homesickness, gratitude or optimism. A Madame Biname, interviewed at Queen Street Station in Glasgow prior to her departure from the city, informed the *Sunday Post* that she “liked the people of Scotland very much” but was “glad at the prospect of returning.” The *Herald* similarly described the “joy” refugees expressed at the thought of going home.<sup>39</sup> Newspapers communicated these sentiments as well as carrying stories of “romance,” friendship and thrift amongst refugees.<sup>40</sup>

Some refugees resisted repatriation and refused to register with authorities.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, government threats of withdrawal of assistance persuaded most to agree to return. Those refugees who remained were forced into destitution as access to employment and

<sup>32</sup> Jon Lawrence, “Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 75 no. 3 (2003):557-589, 566.

<sup>33</sup> Jacqueline Jenkinson, “Black Sailors on Red Clydeside: Rioting, Reactionary Trade Unionism and Conflicting Notions of ‘Britishness’ Following the First World War,” *Twentieth Century British History*, 19 no. 1 (2008): 29-60, 59.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>35</sup> Jenkinson, *Colonial, Refugee and Allied Civilians*, 152.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Cahalan, “The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England During the Great War,” PhD Dissertation, (McMaster University, 1977), 204.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Health, *Report on the work undertaken by the British Government*, 38.

<sup>39</sup> “Belgian Refugees Depart,” *Sunday Post*, December 22, 1918, 2; “Repatriation of Belgian Refugees,” *Glasgow Herald*, December 14, 1918, 7.

<sup>40</sup> “Belgian Refugees Depart,” *Sunday Post*, December 22, 1918, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ewence, “Bridging the Gap,” 99.

welfare dried up. Some who were left behind like nineteen year-old John Lenaerts, whose family had returned to Antwerp, attempted to claim poor relief.<sup>42</sup> By 1921 fewer than 10,000 Belgians remained in Britain.<sup>43</sup>

### **Allocating Funds and Memorial**

The momentous efforts of Glasgow Corporation may have been recognised nationally and internationally but the relief of refugees gradually disappeared from public memory.<sup>44</sup> In the years after the War, newspapers carried occasional and trivial references to Belgian refugees, such as the adopted refugee “girl” who inherited a fortune from Lord Stevenson or Robert Var De Vreyde, a Belgian bank employee, who revisited Kirkintilloch and donated £1 to the War memorial fund.<sup>45</sup> For the most part, however, the narrative of Belgian refugees faded into obscurity.

Evidence of refugees’ presence in Scotland was apparent within the records of the city assessor who oversaw relief. Alexander Walker’s record keeping provided clear evidence of the scale of support. Birth and death certificates offer a telling account of the Belgians’ existence in Scotland. At the final conference of the GCBRC, at Glasgow City Chambers in 1919, Alexander Walker celebrated the fact that over 600 children had been born in Scotland to Belgian mothers between 1914-1919, and that there were 221 marriages.<sup>46</sup> These marriages did not just occur between men and women within the Belgian community, unions of Scots women to Belgian men were also represented. While at first these relationships were the source of official alarm, over time these marriages were accepted and treated as evidence of an enduring relationship between Britain and Belgium.<sup>47</sup> The *Sunday Post* even mused that those refugees with Scottish wives were returning with “big souvenirs.”<sup>48</sup>

The celebratory mood projected by newspapers in relation to repatriation was dampened by remembrance of the many deaths that had occurred in exile. In the final week of the War a sombre procession of refugees walked to St. Kentigern’s cemetery, in the north west of the city, to commemorate those who had died in Scotland.<sup>49</sup> At least 315 Belgian refugees

<sup>42</sup> GCA, Glasgow City Poor Law Board Applications, Case 68955, June 13, 1920, D-HEW 16/13/460.

<sup>43</sup> Colin Holmes, *John Bull’s Island Immigration and British Society 1871-1971*, (London: Routledge, 1988), 101.

<sup>44</sup> “Belgian’s Goodbye,” *Daily Record*, December, 14, 1918, 2; “The Belgian Refugees,” *Scotsman*, May 24, 1919, 8; “Mr Alexander Walker Dead,” *Scotsman*, November 21, 1945, 4.

<sup>45</sup> “Girl Refugee Left a Fortune,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, November 9, 1926, 1; “A Belgian’s Gratitude,” *Milngavie and Bearsden Herald*, October 27, 1922, 5.

<sup>46</sup> “Scotland and the Belgian Refugees,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, April 10, 1919, 5.

<sup>47</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow November 1917- April 1918, February 2 1918, C/13/53.

<sup>48</sup> “Belgian Refugees Depart,” *Sunday Post*, December 22, 1918, 2.

<sup>49</sup> “Tribute to Dead Belgian,” *Daily Record*, November 4, 1918, 12.

passed away between 1914-1919, with bodies buried across fifty-five graveyards throughout central Scotland.<sup>50</sup> Exile thus exacted a heavy toll on Belgian families. The Thoons, a family of nine from Ostend, suffered more than most, losing two members during their time in Glasgow. Mother, Eugenia; fifty-five, and daughter Augusta; thirty-three, succumbed to an aneurysm and fever respectively.<sup>51</sup> This mother and daughter passed away in less than a year of one another.<sup>52</sup>

The number of deaths in Scotland led the GCBRC to draw up plans for a memorial to Belgian refugees to be built at St. Peter's Cemetery, in the east of the city.<sup>53</sup> This graveyard was the resting place of the majority of Belgian refugees who died in Scotland. GCBRC commissioned a drawing of a memorial stone, this is shown in Appendix 6. The proposed stone was a raised grey monument which featured heraldic symbols emblematic of Belgium such as the *Leo Belgicus* and a sword. Appendix 7 shows plans of where the memorial would be placed in the cemetery. It was decided that the Belgian stone would face opposite the lairs where Belgians had been buried. The monument was intended to serve as a permanent memorial to the many refugees who lay buried in unmarked graves across Scotland, as well as those buried in St. Peter's. Despite the creation of these plans and discussion of the memorial as far back as 1916, the stone was never laid.<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere small memorials to refugees who passed away were left. In Kirkintilloch, the local relief committee contributed toward a single headstone to mark the graves of three Belgians who were buried in the Old Aisle cemetery. The headstone, shown in Appendix 8, commemorated the lives of Eugene Van der Plaitzen, Joannes Pas and Kamilli Verkammen.

While the archives do not reveal the reason why the large memorial first proposed was not built, the events surrounding how the GCBRC fund was wound up may provide some explanation. Following the beginning of the repatriations, the GCBRC invited those organisations who had subscribed large sums, such as the Lanarkshire County Miners' Union, to provide their views on how to spend the remaining funds.<sup>55</sup> The balance of the GCBRC account as of April 1919 was around £15,000, a substantial sum equivalent to almost half a

<sup>50</sup> Glasgow City Archive (Hereafter GCA), List of Belgian Refugees Registered with the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Refugees Committee who Died in Scotland 1914-1919, April 1919, D-CA12/1.

<sup>51</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3; GCA, List of Belgian Refugees who Died in Scotland, 1919, D-CA12/1.

<sup>52</sup> GCA, Registers of Belgian Refugees, Glasgow Corporation, 1914, D-CA12/2/1-3; Scotland's People, Birth Certificate, Ferdinanda Thoon, June 5, 1915, Burgh of Camlachie, 6/442 1089.

<sup>53</sup> Glasgow City Archive, List of Belgian Refugees who Died in Scotland, 1919, D-CA12/1.

<sup>54</sup> GCA, Correspondence Alexander Walker to Paisley Refugee Committee, January 16, 1916, D-CA 12.

<sup>55</sup> "Lanarkshire Miner's Benevolence," *Motherwell Times*, February 6, 1920, 4.

million pounds today.<sup>56</sup> While the suggestion that grants be provided to refugees was rejected, other proposals from contributors were suggested. Several schemes through which the sojourn of Belgian refugees in Scotland might be commemorated were given. Herbert Samuel, by 1919 no longer an MP, proposed the creation of a “centre” in Brussels which would serve to promote future British and Belgian relations.<sup>57</sup> Samuel stressed that this initiative would have a “Scottish character,” and act as a fitting tribute to the work of the GCBRC.<sup>58</sup> Others, such as the GCBRC’s own Bailie Irwin, suggested the creation of a permanent Scottish hostel in Brussels and a Belgian hostel in Glasgow to facilitate continuing cultural exchange between the nations.<sup>59</sup>

Stakeholders eventually agreed to leave the decision of how to distribute the remaining funds to Glasgow Corporation.<sup>60</sup> In spite of the creative proposals made, GCBRC resolved to disburse the remaining funds to Glasgow’s largest hospitals. Thus, £15,000 was distributed between the Royal Infirmary, the Victoria Infirmary, the Western Infirmary and the Royal Sick Children’s Hospital.<sup>61</sup> Whilst this was not the ambitious attempt at strengthening diplomatic relations between Belgium and Britain that some may envisaged, this charitable donation was in keeping with the civic tradition of benevolence which had led to the establishment of the GCBRC.<sup>62</sup>

The reallocation of the funds to local causes was emblematic of wider recognition that the assistance of refugees offered lessons on how to assist the poor. In the aftermath of the War those involved in local authorities, charitable bodies and churches held up the example of the campaign to assist Belgian refugees as an answer to the problem of homelessness in the urban environment. In Glasgow, the offices of the GCBRC were inundated with requests from ex-servicemen with families who thought that they might receive temporary accommodation in former refugee hostels.<sup>63</sup> This led to a proposal by Glasgow Corporation’s Housing Committee to purchase four vacant mansions in the wealthy suburb of Hyndland to relieve the “housing famine.”<sup>64</sup> In Falkirk too, Reverend Munro of the Church Union Committee urged his fellow members to “continue” their “good work” by housing “homeless Scots” like they had

<sup>56</sup> “Scotland and the Belgian Refugees,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, April 10, 1919, 5.

<sup>57</sup> “Belgian Refugees in Scotland,” *Scotsman* April 11, 1919, 4.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Lanarkshire Miner’s Benevolence, *Motherwell Times*, February 6, 1920, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), XV.

<sup>63</sup> “Glasgow Town Council,” *Forward* April 26, 1919, 4.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

refugees.<sup>65</sup> Munro highlighted that many “worthy citizens of Falkirk” had “no home whatsoever.”<sup>66</sup> In Motherwell efforts to assist the local poor with housing saw the cottages once leased to Belgian refugees, provided to local “underprivileged” families under the poor law system.<sup>67</sup>

In spite of calls to provide emergency accommodation to the homeless, detractors alleged that existing avenues of support remained the answer.<sup>68</sup> Proposals to assist the poor, in the same manner refugees had been assisted, led to frequent objections from landlords and others with interests in housing. As Finlay identifies, the interwar period was characterised by increasing demands from ratepayers eager to reduce costs associated with the poor law and municipal services.<sup>69</sup> It was perhaps no coincidence that as the war ended and calls were made to improve housing, the Glasgow Housing and Property Owners’ Association (GHPOA) was founded. This “reactionary” group, Damer notes, objected to new municipal housing ventures.<sup>70</sup> This inherent conservatism likened the GHPOA to organisations established earlier, such as the Citizens’ Union. Through the interwar years the GHPOA influenced decision making within the anti-labour coalition of Unionists and Moderates which controlled the council.<sup>71</sup> While the Addison Act, (Housing, Town Planning Act of 1919) brought needed municipal housing developments to the city, notably in Riddrie and Mossbank, housing schemes like Hamiltonhill, built for the residents of slums in 1923, contained fewer rooms and quickly became overcrowded.<sup>72</sup> The anti-municipal activism of the GHPOA evidenced continued support amongst Glasgow’s wealthier classes for groups which opposed reform.

Yet Scottish Labour politicians, elected to Westminster, implemented policies which counteracted the influence of reactionaries. The Housing (Financial Provisions) Act of 1924, introduced under the first MacDonald Ministry, sought to address the many challenges associated with building municipal housing.<sup>73</sup> The Act, proposed by John Wheatley, MP for Glasgow Shettleston, provided central government funds for local authorities to build

<sup>65</sup> “Church Union Committee” *Falkirk Herald*, January 10, 1920, 6.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> “How the World Wags,” *Motherwell Times*, August 5, 1920, 5.

<sup>68</sup> “Church Union Committee” *Falkirk Herald*, January 10, 1920, 6.

<sup>69</sup> Richard J. Finlay, “The Interwar Crisis: The Failure of Extremism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, edited by T.M. Devine and Jenny Wormald, (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2012): 569-584, 576.

<sup>70</sup> Sean Damer, “Engineers of the Human Machine”: The Social Practice of Council Housing Management in Glasgow, 1895-1939,” *Urban Studies*, 37 no. 1 (2000): 2007-2026.

<sup>71</sup> James Smyth, “Resisting Labour: Unionists, Liberals and Moderates in Glasgow between the Wars,” *The Historical Journal*, 46, no. 2, (2003): 375-401, 378.

<sup>72</sup> Damer, “Engineers of the human machine,” 2017.

<sup>73</sup> Ian S. Wood, *John Wheatley*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 142.

affordable housing for workers.<sup>74</sup> This act saw over a quarter of a million council houses built by 1927, and ensured employment for tens of thousands of construction workers.<sup>75</sup>

### **The Legacy of Refugee Relief in Scotland**

The campaign to assist Belgian refugees through the First World War was the beginning of a new chapter in Scotland's relationship with international humanitarianism. Throughout the twentieth century portions of Scottish society from different backgrounds endeavoured to assist victims of social injustice, war and persecution. This growing international awareness and concern was evident through campaigns which mobilised ordinary people and civil society.

While Baughan contends that internationalism reinforced patriotic support for imperialism within Britain during the interwar years, within Scotland interest in humanitarianism charted a different course.<sup>76</sup> Global events, beyond the Empire, were regarded as deeply emotive to Scots. The Spanish Civil War, for example, saw Scots participate as fighters and medical volunteers.<sup>77</sup> Although those who joined the International Brigades were largely supporters of the ILP and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), there was a wider movement across Scotland to aid civilians affected by the War which was supported by prominent Liberals and Unionists.<sup>78</sup> Backing for the British Aid Spain movement was considerable in Scotland, as was enthusiasm for the distinctive Scottish Ambulance Unit. The latter humanitarian organisation was the initiative of Glasgow's former Liberal Lord Provost Daniel Macaulay Stevenson.<sup>79</sup> This organisation gained financial support from Scots around the country and the first Ambulance Unit campaign generated over £20,000 from "public subscription," as well as twenty volunteers from across the country.<sup>80</sup> In spite of the Civil War being a politically divisive issue, generating opposition from Catholics and Conservatives, the work of the Ambulance Unit was supported by Glasgow Corporation. The Unit was even given a send-off by the Lord Provost and a crowd of well-wishers from outside the City Chambers in

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>76</sup> Emily Baughan, "Every Citizen of Empire is Implored to Save the Children!" Empire, internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in inter-war Britain" *Historical Research*, 86, 231,(2016): 116–137.

<sup>77</sup> Daniel Gray, *Homage to Caledonia: Scotland and the Spanish Civil War*, (Edinburgh, Luath Press, 2008), 26. Scots composed almost 20% of the 2,400 from Britain who joined the International Brigades.

<sup>78</sup> Gavin Bowd, "Scotland for Franco: Charles SaroléaV. The Red Duchess," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 31 no. 2 (2011): 195-219, 199.

<sup>79</sup> Gray, *Homage to Caledonia*, 140.

<sup>80</sup> "Scottish Ambulance Unit Leaves for Dover," *Scotsman*, September 21, 1936, 10; "Scottish Ambulance Unit for Spain," *Scotsman*, September, 16, 1936, 13. This included Glasgow Corporation employees such as Thomas Watters, a Corporation bus driver.



September 1936.<sup>81</sup>

Causes like the Spanish Civil War captivated Scots' attention and motivated voluntary responses. The ideological nature of Spain's conflict generated public sympathy, largely for the Republicans.<sup>82</sup> As the popularity of the Labour Party grew in Scotland, internationalist interest became associated with the left. The principles of solidarity saw socialists campaign on issues relating to a number of causes tied to international justice. The Empire Exhibition of 1938, held in Glasgow, was met with a rival counter exhibition organised by the ILP which promised to show an account of the British Empire with the "lid off."<sup>83</sup> After 1945 the scale of international activism grew as Labour became the predominant force in urban Scotland. Exiles, diplomats and revolutionaries were frequently invited to Scotland by socialists and trade unionists to raise awareness of the issues their nations faced.<sup>84</sup> This action strengthened support for high profile solidarity campaigns and boycotts in countries within the global south such as Cuba, Palestine and Chile from the 1960s onward.<sup>85</sup>

Internationalism was by no means the preserve of Scotland's left. The Church of Scotland was also prominent in raising questions relating to social justice and conflict, particularly in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. The influence of the Church of Scotland, as a missionary movement, meant its interventions were important.<sup>86</sup> From 1941 onwards there was a growing campaign within the Kirk to promote "self-governance" for colonies, which stood in opposition to official British policy.<sup>87</sup> The Kirk's advocacy of independence for Britain's African colonies emerged from renewed theological discussion regarding Biblical teaching.<sup>88</sup> Following the incorporation of Nyasaland into the Federation of Rhodesia in 1953, the Church of Scotland launched a special committee to investigate conditions in colonies and to advocate for transition to independence.<sup>89</sup> After Malawian and Zambian independence, the Church of Scotland focussed on the issue of minority rule in Rhodesia and South Africa, as

<sup>81</sup> "Scottish Ambulance Unit Leaves for Dover," *Scotsman*, September 21, 1936, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Fraser Raeburn, "Fae nae hair tae grey hair they answered the call": International Brigade Volunteers from the West Central Belt of Scotland in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 35, no. 1 (2015): 92–114, 93.

<sup>83</sup> Sarah Britton, "Come and See the Empire by the All Red Route!': Anti-Imperialism and Exhibitions in Interwar Britain," *History Workshop Journal*, 69 no 1. (2010): 68–89, 78.

<sup>84</sup> "Caribbean Paradise or Communist Dictatorship," *Perthshire Advertiser*, 5 January, 1993, 4; "Lord Provost of Dundee Welcomes PLO Official," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, June, 30, 1980, 22.

<sup>85</sup> "Congress Urged Condemn Chile Match," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, April, 21, 1977, 13; "Comment on Chile," *Aberdeen Evening Express*, May 24, 1975, 14.

<sup>86</sup> Christopher Fevre, 'Scottish Exceptionalism?' Trade Unions and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1976–1994," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 45, no. 3, (2019): 525–542, 531.

<sup>87</sup> J.H. Proctor, "The Church of Scotland and British Colonialism in Africa," *Journal of Church and State*, 29 no. 3, (1987): 475–493, 479.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 479.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 478.

well as the sale of British weapons to Nigeria during the Biafran War.<sup>90</sup> The Kirk's public denouncement of British foreign policy lent moral and spiritual authority to the freedom movements it supported.

Perhaps the longest and best supported social justice campaign in Scotland, during the latter half of the twentieth century, was against apartheid. Although the Anti-Apartheid Movement was global and found support across Britain, Fevre argues that Scotland's contribution to the campaign was "exceptional."<sup>91</sup> From the 1950s onwards Christian denominations throughout Scotland raised awareness of apartheid.<sup>92</sup> Extensions to apartheid within higher education in 1959 saw Scottish students launch a similarly sustained protest movement against representatives of South Africa.<sup>93</sup> The Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC), however, was the main vehicle of the anti-apartheid campaign. In 1976 the STUC oversaw the formation of a distinct Scottish Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.<sup>94</sup> Glasgow City Council, the successor of the Corporation, additionally played a prominent role in the anti-apartheid campaign. Glasgow was the first city in the world to award Nelson Mandela freedom of the city. In 1986 it also renamed the location of the South African Consulate, from St George's Place to Nelson Mandela Place in protest.<sup>95</sup> Mandela's visit to Glasgow in 1993, to receive the Freedom of the City at the Glasgow City Chambers, served to recognise the contribution of both Glasgow and Scotland to the international Anti-Apartheid Movement.<sup>96</sup>

International activism was by no means specific to Scotland, the spread of the counter-culture phenomenon in the 1960s saw a surge in interest in global affairs across Western states. Yet within Scotland there was a unique character to social justice movements which carried on the tradition of promoting "international peace" through local politics.<sup>97</sup> Justice, solidarity and freedom were regarded as national values and Scots wished to make notable contributions to

<sup>90</sup> Proctor, "The Church of Scotland," 479; "Arms to Nigeria: Government's Policy is Church's Shame," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, May 24, 1968, 9.

<sup>91</sup> Fevre, "Scottish Exceptionalism?" 529.

<sup>92</sup> Fevre, "Scottish Exceptionalism?" 531; "Apartheid Problem in South Africa," *Fifeshire Advertiser*, March 3, 1956, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Christabel Gurney, "A Great Cause": The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, June 1959-March 1960," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26 no 1. (2000): 123-144, 132.

<sup>94</sup> Fevre, "Scottish Exceptionalism?" 531. This organisation was behind large demonstrations such as that at Glasgow Green in June 1988 where 30,000 people gathered, as well as the Freedom March to London in the same year.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 541.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 533. In addressing a crowd of 10,000 Mandela remarked: "While we were physically denied our freedom in the country of our birth, a city 6,000 miles away, and as renowned as Glasgow, refused to accept the legitimacy of the apartheid system, and declared us to be free."

<sup>97</sup> Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*, 151.

these global issues. Visits from international representatives and dignitaries such as Mandela were recognition of Scotland's relationship with the wider world.

Scotland continued to receive refugees and volunteers continued to assist them beyond the First World War. Advocates for later movements of refugees cited the work of GCBRC as inspiration. Through the interwar years, when support for internationalism reached its zenith, campaigners urged fellow Scots to renew their commitment to humanitarianism through support for exiles arriving in Scotland.<sup>98</sup> Those who advocated on behalf of refugees from Spain and Germany invoked the memories of Autumn 1914. As one correspondent for the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* put in May 1937, "what we did for Belgian refugees we could do for the suffering Basque children. We are in a better position to help and carrying on helping."<sup>99</sup> Similar statements were made in the same newspaper in December 1938 after *Kristallnacht*: "I venture to remind the communities of what was done for Belgian refugees in Scotland during the War years...What was done for the Belgians could now be done for the suffering men women and children bereft of everything."<sup>100</sup> These declarations evidenced the "overflowing sympathy" that Scots felt for victims of war and persecution.<sup>101</sup> The assistance provided to Basque children, or those escaping Europe prior to the Second World War, was never on the same scale as that provided to Belgians in Scotland.

Nonetheless, some similarities to the relief of Belgians were detectable particularly in relation to accommodation. Interwar refugees in Scotland were housed privately or had their stay sponsored by private organisations, charities and churches. Following the bombing of Guernica in 1937, residents of Dundee and St. Andrews supported the efforts of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJCSR), offering a large home to refugee children escaping the conflict.<sup>102</sup> Local trade unionists additionally funded this initiative giving twenty-four children accommodation at Mall Park House, in the town of Montrose on the east coast.<sup>103</sup>

While actions to assist Basque children were modest, more considerable support was given to *Kindertransport* refugees. Kushner has likened the reception of the *Kindertransport* to that of the Belgian refugees, on account of his humanitarian campaign being supported by

<sup>98</sup> Paul Rich, "Reinventing Peace: David Davies, Alfred Zimmern and Liberal Internationalism in Interwar Britain," *International Relations*, 16 no. 1 (2002): 117–133.

<sup>99</sup> "Here and There," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, May 1, 1937, 2.

<sup>100</sup> "Belgian Refugees," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, December 9, 1938, 5.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>102</sup> Kevin Myers, "History Migration and Childhood: Basque Refugee Children in 1930s Britain," *Family and Community History*, 3 no. 2 (2000): 147–157, 152.

<sup>103</sup> "Scotland's forgotten Spanish Civil War refugee colony," *Scotsman*, June 8, 2016, <https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/scotlands-forgotten-spanish-civil-war-refugee-colony-1474851> [Last Accessed January 12 2021].

central government as well as an array of charitable organisations.<sup>104</sup> Like Belgian refugees *Kindertransport* arrivals in Scotland were housed with private hosts and at large residential facilities like Polton House and Whittinghame Farm school.<sup>105</sup> Within Scotland, these children and young people were assisted by the native Jewish community as well as other organisations including the Scottish Christian Council for Refugees.<sup>106</sup>

The outbreak of the Second World War saw a proliferation in voluntary organisations established to assist refugees. While some of these groups were the direct initiative of the Jewish community, societies such as the Glasgow Scottish Refugee Centre, established in 1941, assisted refugees from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds.<sup>107</sup> The most important organisation established to assist refugees, the Scottish National Council for Refugees (SNCR) had a Jewish leadership but attracted the support of influential patrons from across the nation.<sup>108</sup> The first meeting of the SNCR was held at Glasgow City Chambers in 1939 and was attended by the Lord Provosts from all of Scotland's cities.<sup>109</sup> The SNCR initially set out to assist Jewish refugees escape Europe prior to the Second World War. Over time, however, its work expanded and it assisted many non-Jews leave displacement camps in Germany. By 1951 the SNCR had settled over 6000 refugees in Scotland.<sup>110</sup> However, some emigrated soon after arriving, the first three parties of Czech refugees who came to Glasgow left promptly for Canada.<sup>111</sup> The unexpected departure of Czech refugees led Glasgow's Lord Provost, Patrick Dollan, to propose that future parties of refugees be dispersed to the Highlands where their "peculiar suitability to rural industry and agriculture" could be put to best use.<sup>112</sup>

The reception of Polish servicemen during and after the Second World War resembled the campaign to assist Belgian refugees in some ways. The invasion of Poland and its relationship to British entry into the Second World War gave the affair evident similarities. Through the War a popular movement was established in Scotland to offer assistance to Polish

<sup>104</sup> Tony Kushner, *The Battle of Britishness: Migrant Journeys 1685 to the Present Day*, (Manchester University Press, 2012), 120.

<sup>105</sup> Frances Williams, "Migration after the Kindertransport: The Scottish Legacy?" in *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives*, edited by Andrea Hammel, Bea Lewkowicz, (New York: Brill, 2012), 60. Williams estimates that some 800 refugees came to Scotland as part of the Kindertransport.

<sup>106</sup> "Refugee Fund," *Broughty Ferry Guide and Advertiser*, February, 11, 1939, 9.

<sup>107</sup> Benjamin Braber, "Open Windows: Jewish Refugee Artists in Scotland during the Twentieth Century," *Immigrants & Minorities*, 30 no. 3, (2012): 171–189.

<sup>108</sup> "Scotland & Refugees," *The Jewish Echo*, July 7, 1939, 9.

<sup>109</sup> "Settlement of Czechs in Highlands Suggested," *Scotsman*, June 2, 1939, 16.

<sup>110</sup> "Scottish National Council for Refugees," *Fife Free Press & Kirkcaldy Guardian*, May 28 1955, 3; "Scottish Committee Formed," *Falkirk Herald*, January 17, 1951, 8.

<sup>111</sup> "Settlement of Czechs in Highlands Suggested," *Scotsman*, June 2, 1939, 16.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 16. Dollan's proposal was less about the skills of Czech refugees than the growing labour shortage in the Highlands.

soldiers and their families. The Scottish-Polish Society, established in 1941, was the main organisation which helped. The Scottish-Polish society provided material welfare to Poles in Scotland, however, it also offered opportunities for entertainment and cultural interaction between Polish soldiers and Scottish hosts.<sup>113</sup> With the help of journalists within the diaspora, such as Jadwiga Harasowska, the society published several newspapers from an office in Hope Street in Glasgow.<sup>114</sup>

By 1945 the Scottish-Polish Society had fifty branches, appearing in every town and village where Polish soldiers or refugees were present.<sup>115</sup> Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as smaller towns such as St. Andrews, Falkirk, Peebles and Biggar all had significant Polish populations on account of the stationing of Polish troops there. Senior figures from the exiled government, including General Władysław Sikorski and President Władysław Raczkiewicz, visited Polish troops and refugees in these areas throughout the War.<sup>116</sup>

Glasgow's Lord Provost, Patrick Dollan, was instrumental in campaigning to raise awareness of the Poles' plight and the work of the Scottish-Polish Society.<sup>117</sup> Dollan's work continued Glasgow Corporation's official involvement with refugee affairs. Like his predecessors during the First World War, Dollan praised the bravery of Poland and highlighted its national appreciation of Scottish culture, such as the poetry of Robert Burns. Poland's history, as a small nation subsumed by its larger neighbours, made Burnsian themes such as liberty resonate.<sup>118</sup>

Dollan as a young ILP councillor had been one of the most vocal opponents of the reception of Belgian refugees.<sup>119</sup> As Lord Provost, however, Dollan threw his full support behind Poland and encouraged Glaswegians to "invite Poles into their homes."<sup>120</sup> In a bid to generate support for Poles amongst the working class, the Lord Provost addressed many audiences in the industrial and mining towns of central Scotland.<sup>121</sup> As Kernberg notes, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was reluctant to accept the integration of Poles into the workforce at the end of the War; anxiety remained about the impact of alien labour.<sup>122</sup> Dollan

<sup>113</sup> Thomas Kernberg, "The Polish Community in Scotland," PhD Dissertation (University of Glasgow, 1990), 96.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 242. This press published the *Wiadomości Polskie* (Polish News) and later the bilingual *Ogniwo Przyjaźni* (The Clasp of Friendship).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>116</sup> "Sir Patrick Dollan on the Warsaw Rising," *Fife Free Press & Kirkaldy Guardian*, September 2, 1944, 3; "Polish Fund" *Scotsman*, March, 13, 1940, 2.

<sup>117</sup> "Gallant Poles," *Falkirk Herald*, September 16, 1944, 4.

<sup>118</sup> "Urgent need for aid for Polish Refugees," *Scotsman*, January 24, 1940, 10.

<sup>119</sup> "A Nasty Knock," *The Bailie*, November 18, 1914, 4.

<sup>120</sup> Kernberg, "The Polish Community in Scotland," 92.

<sup>121</sup> "Sir Patrick Dollan on the Warsaw Rising," *Fife Free Press & Kirkaldy Guardian*, September 2, 1944.

<sup>122</sup> Kernberg, "The Polish Community in Scotland," 245.

confronted the TUC several times about the conditions which Poles faced if they returned.<sup>123</sup> Labour shortages in coal and agriculture during the harsh winter of 1947, and the passing of the Polish Resettlement Act, saw the TUC acquiesce and Poles were eventually accepted into industry.<sup>124</sup>

In the years after the War refugees from across Central and Eastern Europe were settled in Britain. Under the European Volunteer Workers (EVW) initiative, workers from Europe took up work in agriculture and industry in Fife, the North East and the Borders regions of Scotland.<sup>125</sup> Workers from Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary and the Czechoslovakia were all reported to have filled vacancies across Scotland by 1950.<sup>126</sup> Although many had come from displacement and prisoner of war camps, these refugees were termed “workers” in public discourse and their invitation to Britain was deemed an economic necessity.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, there was public awareness of the trauma that the displaced had endured. A report by the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* on a visit of EVWs to a Jute Mill in Dundee alluded to this:

At the Eagle Jute Mills the party of ten included Estonian, Polish, Ukranian and Yugoslav women. Interpreter for the group was Olga Jurgens, a blonde of 29, whose home is Tallin. Olga endured great hardship during the war years . . . she was sent by the Germans as a clerk to a town 300 miles from her home. When the Russians reoccupied the country in 1944 she had to go to Berlin. She has heard that her father is dead but her mother and sisters are still in Tallin.<sup>128</sup>

While most displaced people came to Britain as workers, some were assisted for purely humanitarian reasons. In Wishaw, Lanarkshire, a former Red Cross worker established a permanent settlement for refugees. Muriel Gofton opened the Cala Sona Home, meaning happy haven in Gaelic, to assist refugees still residing in displacement camps in 1959.<sup>129</sup> Cala Sona operated until 1979 and saw refugees arrive from Ukraine, Latvia, Yugoslavia and Poland.<sup>130</sup> Although the first resident to arrive at Cala Sona was a former Yugoslav diplomat, educated at Oxford, for the most part refugees received were single women separated from their families.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>125</sup> J.A. Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 72.

<sup>126</sup> “An Interesting Study of Continental Types,” *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, February 19, 1948, 4; “Arrival of Displaced Persons,” *Fraserburgh Herald and North Counties Advertiser*, September 30, 1947, 3.

<sup>127</sup> “An Interesting Study of Continental Types,” *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, February 19, 1948, 4.

<sup>128</sup> “D.P.s Visit Jute Mills,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, December 24, 1947, 1.

<sup>129</sup> “First Family Reach Their Happy Haven,” *Wishaw Press*, January 23, 1959, 8.

<sup>130</sup> “Serge’s Smile and Sad Story Could Bring Help to the Handicapped,” *Wishaw Press*, June 9, 1978, 12.

<sup>131</sup> “Cala Sona has room to house the Disabled,” *Wishaw Press*, January 25, 1980, 3, To ensure refugees were “self supporting” there was even a chip shop and a haberdashery operated by the home.

As refugees moved on, the house was turned into a community centre and residential home for the disabled.<sup>132</sup>

Cala Sona was typical of later Scottish efforts to assist refugees between 1950-1990. Most of these initiatives were small in scale and the effort of local individuals and organisations responding to global events. For example, the Scottish National Council for Refugees oversaw the arrival of around 500 refugees from Hungary in 1956.<sup>133</sup> Through the 1970s and 1980s smaller groups of refugees from Chile and Vietnam were accepted and local authorities and voluntary groups played a prominent role housing and supporting families.<sup>134</sup> By the middle of the 1980s, the Scottish Refugee Council had become the principal organisation assisting refugees in Scotland. It was prominent in organising the resettlement of 320 Kosovan refugees in 1999 in Glasgow, Paisley and Edinburgh.<sup>135</sup>

The most significant influx of refugees to Scotland, however, was in the new millennium as the passing of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) saw refugees dispersed to cities across the UK, notably Glasgow.<sup>136</sup> This policy brought 10,000 refugees to Glasgow in its first few years and saw them accommodated in council housing, mostly in deprived areas of the north and east of the city.<sup>137</sup> While refugees arriving in Glasgow experienced racist violence and local resentment, the Immigration and Asylum Act also fostered partnerships between social services and community groups, easing the integration of refugees into Scottish society.<sup>138</sup>

### **Closing Statement**

In considering the delivery of humanitarian assistance to refugees in Scotland, the thesis has offered insight into historical attitudes toward the refugee in Britain. The findings of this thesis may be peripheral to the contemporary debate concerning national identity and attitudes towards migration. Nevertheless this historical reflection, on a lesser known instance of population displacement, has provided an example of an enthusiastic campaign to assist

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>133</sup> "500 Hungarians for Scotland," *Aberdeen Evening Express*, December 8, 1956, 16.

<sup>134</sup> "Chilean Refugees are Enjoying Life in Wishaw," *Wishaw Press*, May 27, 1977, 13; "First Boat People Due in North this Month," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, April 19, 1980.

<sup>135</sup> "Scots to Ponder Refugees Plight," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, June 23, 1999, 16; "Refugees Prepare for a Traumatic Return," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, August, 5, 1999, 5. This resettlement was part of a global humanitarian evacuation plan organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>136</sup> Karen Wren, "Building Bridges: Local responses to the Resettlement of Asylum Seekers in Glasgow," (Glasgow: Scottish Centre for Social Justice, 2004),1.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 23.

refugees. Consideration of a historic migration narrative in Britain is important, at a time when anti-migrant sentiments are on the rise globally. The exit of Britain from the European Union has coincided with the harsher enforcement of immigration legislation and tougher policing of Britain's borders.<sup>139</sup> Britain's reputation as a safe haven for refugees seems to have waned in recent years as outward expressions of British and English nationalism have become more xenophobic.<sup>140</sup>

By contrast, it is argued that contemporary Scottish identity has embraced diversity.<sup>141</sup> Scottish political culture welcomes migrants and celebrates the diversity that they bring to society. Although this is closely associated with the Scottish National Party (SNP) and their pursuit of independence, this is more than just hyperbole. Scotland has taken a fifth of Syrian refugees resettled in Britain since 2015.<sup>142</sup> Integration policies, such as the Scottish Government's *New Scots* strategy, seek to empower refugees and encourage them to self-identify as Scottish.<sup>143</sup> Such political messages suggest that Scotland is an open and multicultural society.

Yet, Scotland remains one of the most ethnically homogenous states in Europe.<sup>144</sup> Historically it has been a country of emigration rather than immigration.<sup>145</sup> Claims of tolerance are tempered by sociologists who argue that the rhetoric of political parties and civil society is removed from the everyday reality of Scotland's ethnic minorities, many of whom still face racism and mistrust.<sup>146</sup> Such arguments undermine the narrative of Scottish exceptionalism which have arisen in recent years.<sup>147</sup>

This thesis has shown that historical endeavour to assist Belgian refugees garnered the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>140</sup> Tony Kushner. *Remembering Refugees Then and Now*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 29; Gareth Mulvey, "Social Citizenship, Social Policy and Refugee Integration: a Case of Policy Divergence in Scotland?" *Journal of Social Policy*, 47(01), (2017): 161–178, 161.

<sup>141</sup> Eve Hepburn, Michael Rosie, "Immigration, Nationalism and Politics in Scotland," in *The Politics of Immigration in Multilevel States*, ed. Eve Hepburn and Ricard Zapata-Barrero, (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2014), 241-260; 248; T.C. Smout, "Perspectives on Scottish Identity," *Scottish Affairs* 6, No. 1 (1994), 101-113; 103.

<sup>142</sup> Angus Howarth, "Scotland takes twice UK average of refugees," *Scotsman*, 23 September (2019), 2.

<sup>143</sup> Scottish Government, *New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy*, (Scottish Government: Edinburgh, 2018), 10.

<sup>144</sup> Georgina Sturge, *Migration Statistics Briefing Paper*, (House of Commons Library Research: London, 2019), 17; Scottish Government, "Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion," *Scotland's Census*, (2018) [www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnicity-identity-language-and-religion](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnicity-identity-language-and-religion) [Last Accessed January 2021], Only 4% of Scotland's population is of BAME background. This information relates to the 2011 Census.

<sup>145</sup> T.M. Devine and Angela McCarthy, "Introduction," in *New Scots: Scotland's Immigrant Communities since 1945*, ed. T.M. Devine and Angela McCarthy (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2018), 5.

<sup>146</sup> Nasar, Meer. "Looking up in Scotland? Multinationalism, Multiculturalism and Political Elites" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38 no. 9 (2015): 1477–1496, 1492.

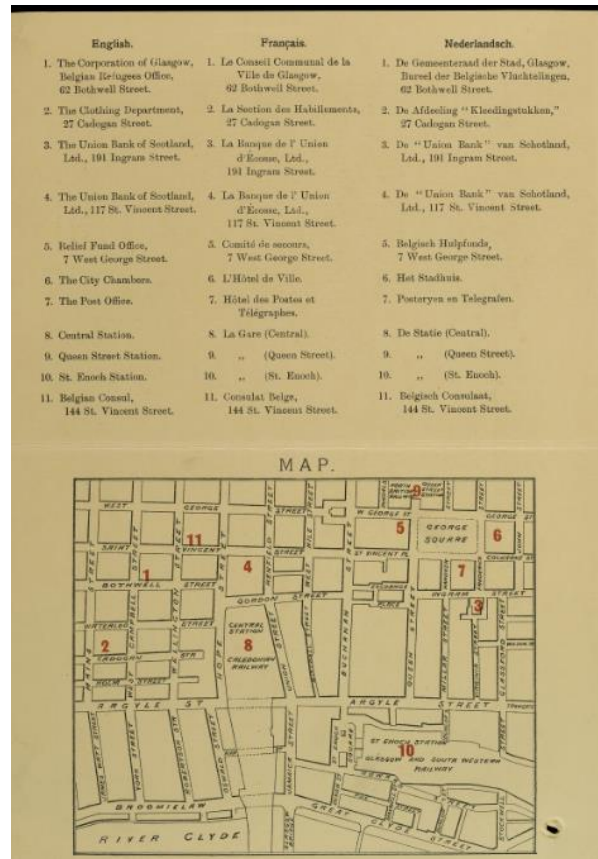
<sup>147</sup> Neil Davidson, Satnam Virdee, "Introduction" *No Problem Here: Racism in Scotland* ed. Neil Davidson, (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2018).



popular good will of the Scottish nation for the War's duration. While this narrative of asylum faded from the collective memory of Scotland as the twentieth century wore on, traces of its legacy endure in Scottish political culture. The repatriation of refugees to Belgium, following the end of the First World War, did not mark the end of Scotland's relationship with humanitarianism but the beginning of a new enthusiasm for international social justice.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Map produced by Glasgow Corporation for Belgian refugees



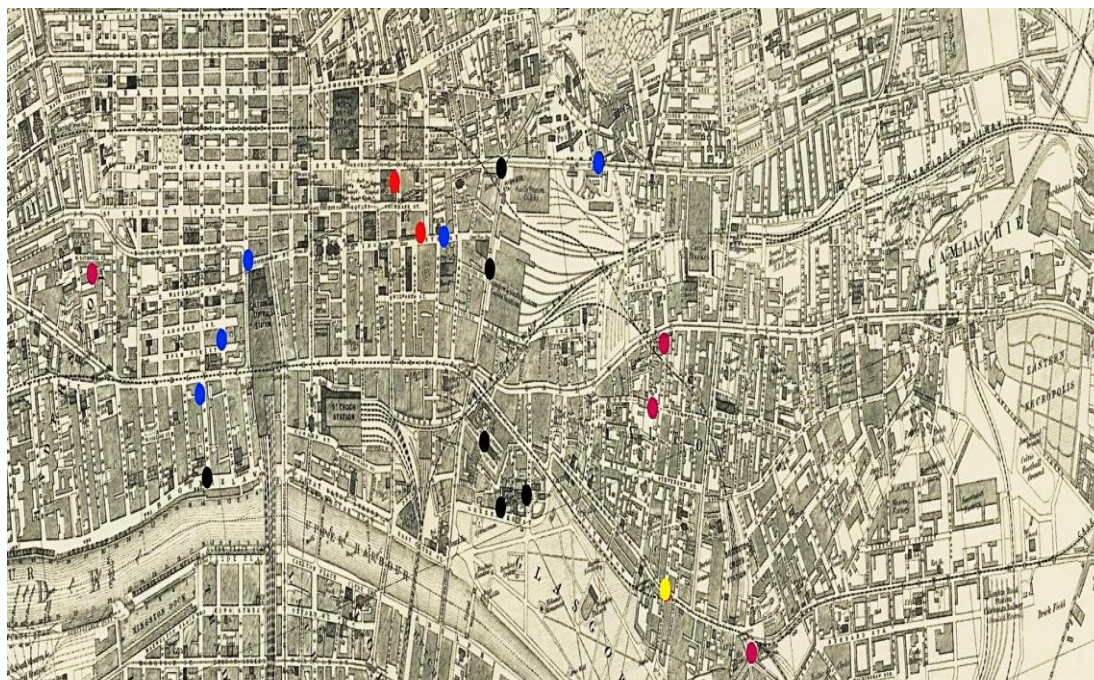
Source: CRC, Belgian Refugees' Map, Glasgow Corporation, SAR COLL 80, (1914);1-2.

## Appendix 2. Cartoon of St Mungo greeting Belgian Refugees









Source: "Cartoon Supplement", *The Bailie*, October 21, 1914, 1.

Appendix 3. Map of Glasgow illustrating location of Belgian Refugee accommodation in city centre and east end

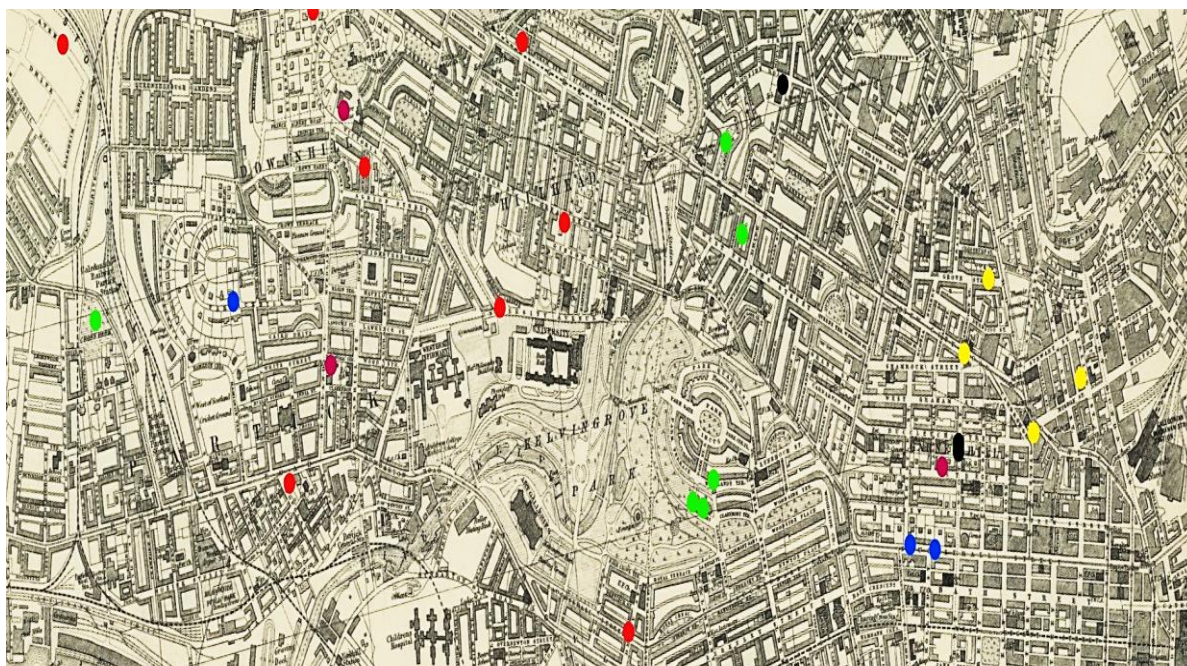


Source: NLS, New Plan of Glasgow with Suburbs from Ordnance and Actual Surveys Constructed for the Post Office Directory, John Bartholomew & Co. Ltd. 1914-1915, 109707860.

Key to Map:

	Institution		GCBRC Refugee Home		Private Accommodation
	Working Men's Hotel		Catholic Institution or Parish		Self-Supporting

Appendix 4. Map of Glasgow illustrating location of Belgian Refugee accommodation in the west end of the city



Source: NLS, New Plan of Glasgow with Suburbs from Ordnance and Actual Surveys Constructed for the Post Office Directory, John Bartholomew & Co. Ltd. 1914-1915, 109707860.

Key to Map:

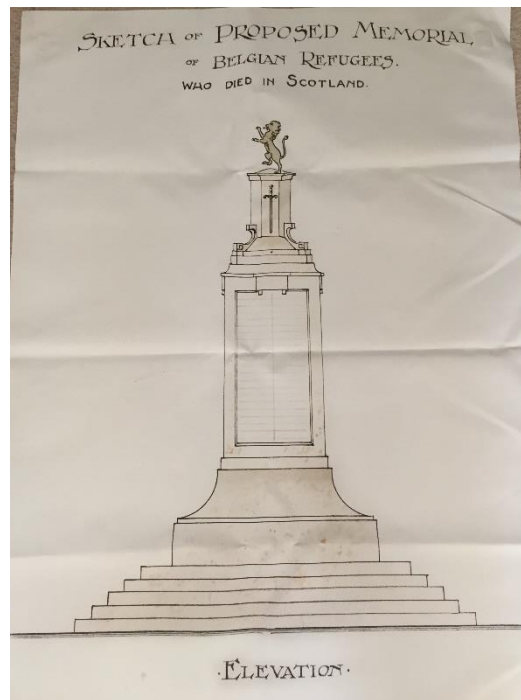
●	Institution	●	GCBRC Refugee Home	●	Private Accommodation
●	Working Men's Hotel	●	Catholic Institution or Parish	●	Self-Supporting

Appendix 5. Photograph of refugees and GCBRC aboard the S.S. Khyber, December 14, 1918



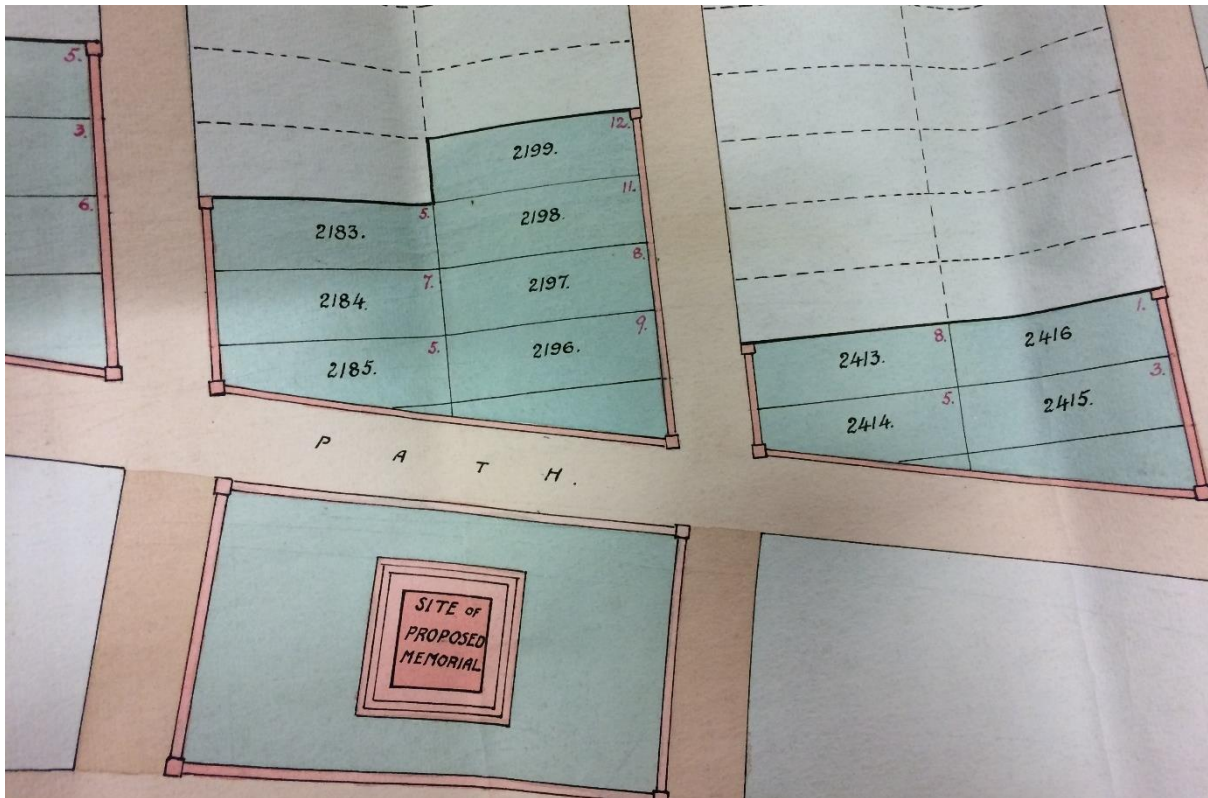
Source: Glasgow City Archive, Photograph of Refugees and GCBRC aboard the S.S. Khyber, December 14, 1918, G6/1/122/6143.

## Appendix 6. Sketch of Proposed Belgian Memorial



Source: Glasgow City Archive, Sketch of Proposed Belgian Memorial, Undated, DC-A12/1.

## Appendix 7. Proposed Location of Belgian Memorial



Source: Glasgow City Archive, Proposed Belgian Memorial, Undated, DC-A12/1.



Appendix 8. Memorial stone in Kirkintilloch Auld Aisle Cemetery



Source: East Dunbartonshire Archive, Photograph of Belgian headstone Auld Aisle Cemetery Kirkintilloch, 2017.

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