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Free Churchmen and the Twenty Years' Crisis

IT was E. H. Carr who coined the term "Twenty Years' Crisis" to describe the period between 1919 and 1939. The optimism of the "war to end war" soon faded as Europe was wracked by new tensions and conflicts. If the Great War had witnessed the defeat of the German bid for European hegemony, it had left fresh problems in its wake. The new states of Europe wrestled with the problems of nation-building. After their success in the civil war, the Bolsheviks consolidated their position in the Soviet Union. In Italy, Mussolini came to power and a new ideology "Fascism" had appeared. Despite the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, German aspirations remained uncertain. Britain and France were frequently at loggerheads on the question of reparations from Germany. The United States played little part in European affairs. British governments and people had to recognize that the absence of war did not mean tranquillity. The Irish Free State was established after a bitter struggle. The 1926 Imperial Conference recognized equality of status between Britain and the Dominions. Political activity in India began to gather pace. Japanese power in East Asia became steadily more apparent. Writing in 1918, J. H. Shakespeare dreaded lest "the Free Churches should maintain automatic movements and cries while with brain and heart, and even conscience, asleep, they march on through the wonderful new world, missing its golden harvests and deaf to its significant calls".[1] The golden harvests proved elusive, and Free Churchmen did not find the "wonderful new world" greatly to their taste.

"They all shared a Nonconformist origin" wrote A. L. Rowse in *All Souls and Appeasement* concerning Chamberlain, Simon, Hoare, Runciman, Wood and Brown, "and its characteristic self-righteousness —all the more intolerable in the palpably wrong".[2] Since 1961, with the release of Cabinet and other official papers, historians have tended to take a more sympathetic, though by no means uncritical, view of "appeasement". It is less common now for writers to take the view that Chamberlain and his colleagues were "palpably wrong". Perhaps the single most important factor contributing to this revision has been the growing awareness of the multiplicity of challenges confronting the British Empire in the nineteen-thirties. The predominating military advice was that if Britain should find itself simultaneously at war with Germany, Italy and Japan, its chances of success were slim. Yet, while a great deal has been written about "appeasement" over the last decade, the dyspeptic remarks quoted above have, on the whole, remained in lonely eminence, or been cited elsewhere as if they represented an accepted truth. I want to use the opportunity of this lecture to look a little more deeply into Free Church attitudes to international

affairs between the wars, particularly as events moved to a climax and war seemed imminent.

The relative absence of critical discussion of these matters is not surprising. Historians of international relations have not generally been interested in ecclesiastical opinion. Church historians have often discussed the attitude of churches on international questions without troubling to ask how they were manufactured, or what their influence might be. There is a wider problem. Historians as a whole may be prepared to grant that the "Free Church tradition" was still important in the life of England between the wars. It is not easy, however, to move from such an assertion to offering a judgment on how important that tradition was, particularly in the sphere of politics and public affairs. What generalizations can be made about Free Churchmen? There is the obvious point that while there were Free Churchmen there was no Free Church. There were Methodists (united after 1932), Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers and Unitarians—all more or less content to be described as "Free Churches", though with the relics of "Nonconformity" still present. Superimposed on these denominational bodies stood the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, augmented after 1919 by the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches. As Dr. Jordan pointed out, it was a vexed question, at least in the eyes of Church and State, whether it was the President of the former body or the Moderator of the latter who should be taken to represent "the Free Churches" on the occasions when it was necessary for this to happen.[3] The Presidency rotated around the denominations on an annual basis. Ministers filled the office (Quakers apart) as they did the Moderatorship, but the latter was held for two years. It would be a bold man, however, who asserted that either the President or the Moderator spoke invariably as the "voice of the Free Churches". While his name might appear alongside that of the Archbishop of Canterbury or Westminster, his status cannot be compared. While not discounting the level of "Free Church" activity on a local basis, I would suggest that "Free Church" opinion remained firmly denominational—if that is not a paradox. Denominational prominence led to Free Church eminence, not the other way round. When individuals combined rôles —as for example M. E. Aubrey did between 1936 and 1938 when he was both Free Church Moderator and Secretary of the Baptist Union —their position was strengthened. During such a juncture, Baptists might be expected to have more than usual interest in "Free Church" activity. It would be unwise to assume, however, that his standing among other denominations was particularly high. Even the most ardent enthusiasts for Free Church Union could not escape from a denominational label in Free Church Council circles. The officers were there because it was appropriate that their denomination should have its turn. This is not to suggest that divisions of opinion at the highest level on quasi-political questions in the Councils were denominational in character. It does mean, however, that while the Assembly meetings of the "Free Churches" could attract a Prime Minister, the political

effectiveness of any resolutions passed depended upon the denominational standing of those involved. It is in this sense that any attempt to equate the statements emanating from the National Council or its officers with the views of x number of Free Churchmen is misleading. It could be said, on the other hand, that there was in the *British Weekly* a supradenominational Free Church voice, but while that is true I suspect that its influence suffered because of its disembodied nature.

Some related points must also be made at a denominational level. I need hardly elaborate on the fact that the internal structures of the various Free Churches differed considerably, particularly between Methodists and Baptists/Congregationalists. The resolution of a Baptist Union Council is not quite the same as the resolution of a Methodist Conference. The President of the Baptist Union has not quite the same aura as a President of Conference. When the historian seeks the "representative" expression of opinion concerning international affairs on the part of denominational hierarchies, he must be aware of these subtleties. In addition, it would be rash to assume that resolutions and statements drafted and passed at national level, filtered down through editorials and articles in the denominational press, do in fact represent "what Baptists think". People who sit on committees, attend assemblies and write to or for newspapers are unusual though not necessarily odd people. The historian seeks out the articulate and the identifiable "leader", but we ought to be rather more sceptical before we make assertions about the views of Free Churchmen as a whole.

There is one further point I should like to make before moving on to particular aspects. It would be unwise not to ponder on the relationship between minister and laity. If we go back only to the turn of the century, it is clear that many ministers felt an uncertainty about their rôle and status. There was an uneasy tension reflected in Silvester Horne's *Pulpit, Platform and Parliament.* If it was conceded that the gospel could not be confined to a narrowly religious sphere but had relevance to social, political and economic questions, then how far could or should the minister confine himself to the sphere of chapel life? To take an active as opposed to an exhortatory rôle seemed to involve the clear declaration of party allegiance. Before 1914, by and large, such activity could be acceptable in the context of a politically homogeneous chapel community. In South Bristol, for example, when some Liberal Free Churchmen felt that the services of thanksgiving for the election victory of 1906 were excessive, they were reminded that the bells of the parish church of Bedminster had been rung to celebrate the result of 1900. Such clear-cut partisanship did not dissolve overnight, but the unexpected impact of the Great War on the structure of British party politics meant that the Liberal alignment was less automatic. While a clear correlation continued to exist, it was not so clear and not so complete. For 1906 Professor Koss gives a total of 223 F.C. candidates (185 elected) of whom 191 were Liberal (157

elected), 20 Labour or Liberal-Labour (20 elected), and 9 Conservative (6 elected). In 1935, there were 146 candidates (65 elected): 90 Liberal (9 elected), 21 Liberal National (16 elected), 69 Labour (29 elected), and 12 Conservative (10 elected). In other words, in the new, though arguably rather special circumstances of the later thirties, Free Church M.P.s were roughly divided between the government and the opposition.[4]

It is dangerous to draw too precise a conclusion from this situation. The actual distribution of M.P.s in this parliament may well not be a very accurate measure of how the political allegiances of Free Churchmen (and even more of Free Churchwomen) actually were distributed. It may well underestimate the voting support given from the Free Churches to the National governments both in 1931 and 1935. Why had this extraordinary shift in party allegiance, or at least voting behaviour, taken place? In the first place, the specific grievances and inferiorities of Free Churchmen as such had very largely disappeared. In the second, Free Church voters came increasingly to vote in the confused and muddled way most people vote, that is to say mingling their class identification, economic interest and estimate of the qualities of the competing politicians. In this context, the marginal social and economic status of many Free Church congregations split the voting within the same chapel in different directions. In short, the political/social/ecclesiastical amalgam of pre-1914 Nonconformity was fast dissolving. In one sense, this development could be interpreted as the secularization of the politics of Free Churchmen. Politics could perhaps be seen as an autonomous sphere of activity with its own norms, pressures and compromises. It became increasingly more important to oppose or support "Socialism" than to show denominational solidarity at the polls. Given the requirements of party discipline, a political opponent was no less an opponent for being a member of the same denomination, or even of the same chapel. Alternatively, the process could be regarded as the de-politicization of religion. The tendency for many ministers to regard themselves as recruiting sergeants for a particular party and to conduct themselves as if they were politicians had certainly not been eliminated, but it was held in check. A situation was developing in which politicians could not mobilize a Free Church lobby behind a specific social and political programme nor could ministers manipulate a compact group of politicians for their objectives.[5]

Perhaps all this is only an elaborate way of saying that as a pressure group the Free Churches were losing political significance. Yet one is tempted to ask whether, apart from the pursuit of specific objectives relevant to themselves as institutions, they had ever been politically as powerful as has often been supposed. The concept of a Free Church politician is not an easy one to define. It is used somewhat elastically to embrace men who were Free Churchmen by descent, by active conviction, by passive membership. A list which includes H. H. Asquith, Lloyd George, John Simon, Walter Runciman, Arthur Henderson,

Kingsley Wood and Ernest Brown makes the point. It may be that they had in common Dr. Rowse's sanctimonious self-righteousness, but this has not been frequently remarked on. Even within this small group the relationship between their "Free Churchmanship" and their political convictions and behaviour is by no means easy to discern. Lloyd George was universally described as a Welsh Nonconformist and he certainly cultivated Nonconformists sedulously at various points in his career, but was he a Christian?[6] Asquith and Simon both had impeccable Independent ancestry, but their own beliefs must be a matter for speculation. It has been unkindly suggested that Simon's interest in his Welsh Nonconformist ancestors only developed when he had to make it clear, as Foreign Secretary, that he was not a Jew. Both Asquith and Simon had early moved academically out of the ambience of Nonconformity. Although Runciman had been educated at Cambridge, however, he retained his Free Church connexions and continued to be an active Methodist. The same was true, from rather different backgrounds, of Arthur Henderson and Kingsley Wood. Ernest Brown, likewise, was very well known in Baptist circles, and accepted official positions within the denomination and the Free Churches generally. It should not be supposed, however, that only those who accepted office within their denominations were "active". The pressures of political life were such that many M.P.s who were Free Churchmen played little part in the national life of their denomination and attended public worship most irregularly.

Whatever conclusion we might come to about the ecclesiastical status and beliefs of the most well-known Free Churchmen of the inter-war period, it is clear that because of their divided political allegiance they could not act together as Free Churchmen. They owed their loyalty to their Cabinet colleagues and to their parties. They accepted collective responsibility for Cabinet decisions. The relationship of these leading figures to the churches from which they had sprung was therefore necessarily complex. Just as there was a delay before the numerical strength of the Free Churches in the country was reflected in the House of Commons in the early twentieth century, so there was a delay before their numerical decline was reflected in the Commons, and Free Churchmen were perhaps over-represented in Cabinets in the thirties. The political eminence of the men I have mentioned, however, was in their own right, not *qua* Free Churchmen. Their position in public life was a reflexion of pre-war rather than post-war realities. Even so, they were never in a majority in a Cabinet. The situation made them particularly powerless. Almost by definition, Dissenters had been outsiders, critical of "the Establishment", using that term in its broadest sense. If we move back into the nineteenth century, the problem of the transition from "outsider Dissenter" to "insider Dissenter" can be seen dramatically in the cases of John Bright and Joseph Chamberlain. The former's final gesture of resignation from the Cabinet in protest against the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 represented an acknowledgment of the fact that almost

as the "stage Dissenter" he could do nothing to reverse a decision upon which his colleagues had agreed. He reverted to a rôle of vocal powerlessness which was by no means uncongenial.[7] Chamberlain, on the other hand (admittedly not a Quaker), made his rather erratic transition to office by apparently accepting with relish the rules of *Realpolitik*.

In the inter-war period, the instinctive mood of most Free Churchmen was still ancestrally oppositional. Yet the Great War had been a vital watershed. Many Free Churchmen had wavered before supporting Britain's entry into the war in 1914. Once that support had been given, it could not be given half-heartedly. Mr. Clements' excellent article has illuminated Baptist attitudes.[8] The demand was for parity of respect for Free Churchmen (and particularly their ministers) and an equal sharing of the burden. The nature of the war meant that to some extent common suffering bound together different ecclesiastical traditions. Free Churchmen demanded recognition of their contribution by adequate representation on great occasions of state. They were not now an excluded and inferior minority. But, as I have suggested, acceptance could not eradicate the instinct of criticism, the impulse to petition and protest and at times appear indifferent to the problems presented by power and responsibility. The prophetic tradition could not be restrained, particularly in a denomination noted for its Old Testament scholarship.

It is in this context that I want to consider Free Church attitudes to war and peace, since it seems to me that they can be clearly related to the changes and tensions that I have been describing. There had been a relatively small number of conscientious objectors in the First World War, and amongst those who had claimed to base their objection on religious convictions Nonconformists had been prominent.[9] I have discussed pacifism during the First World War at length elsewhere, and it would not be appropriate here to repeat my discussion in detail. However, by the end of the war it was possible for Free Churchmen, indeed all Christians, to come together in advocacy of a new international order. The balance of power would be destroyed, and a new League of Nations created. It would be wrong to suppose that Free Churchmen were the only prominent advocates of the League, but it was a cause—if not a crusade—which had a particular appeal, certainly in the twenties. The League of Nations Union, the main body which tried to influence public opinion in favour of the League, had the advantage of being, at least in theory, above party allegiance. The L.N.U. deliberately cultivated church opinion with a special committee called the Christian Organization Committee.[10] At its meeting in April 1924, for example, attended by M. E. Aubrey, T. G. Dunning and J. H. Rushbrooke, it was reported that 2,151 church congregations held corporate membership (though it was regretted that 517 were in arrears). There were but 354 Anglican Churches and 6 Roman Catholic. There were 195 Baptist corporate members. Lord Robert Cecil, not a notable friend of Nonconformity, was lavish in his praise

for the part the Free Churches played in its work.[11] The L.N.U. issued a series of *Preachers' Notes* and, as Dr. Waley comments in his book on British public opinion and the Abyssinian War, 1935-1936, "In general, the Union took it for granted, with success, that membership of a church or religious body was prima facie evidence of support for the League of Nations and for the ideas of disarmament and collective security, those uneasy twins".[12] This enthusiasm was readily reciprocated. A work like *Christianity and the League of Nations* by the Methodist, A. W. Harrison, is a very typical example of writing which reflected the assumption that the League of Nations was necessarily a symbol of progress and a body to be supported.[13] It was also very generally assumed that disarmament and peace were inseparably connected. Arthur Henderson's efforts both as Foreign Secretary and then as President of the World Disarmament Conference were very widely admired in the Free Churches, certainly by many who would not have voted Labour.

The advent of Hitler in Germany produced a new situation. In Free Church circles it began to bring out into the open the disagreements which had been covered over by general support for the League. It took time for these to be fully articulated, and Free Churchmen must have voted heavily for the Peace Ballot organized under the auspices of the League of Nations Union.[14] The strongest support came from some of the most Nonconformist areas of Wales where the whole operation must have been carried out on a chapel basis. The success of the Peace Ballot was indeed a major achievement, however much intellectual confusion it showed. The "betrayal" of the League by the Baldwin government and by Hoare in particular in the ensuing crisis was a bitter disappointment to most Free Churchmen. Geoffrey Shakespeare, for example, made known his intention of resigning his minor ministerial post if the terms of the Hoare-Laval pact were adopted.[15] The failure of Britain to "take a lead" on this occasion was "a staggering blow to the whole Peace system", as one of the publications of the Council of Action for Peace and Reconstruction subsequently put it.

Attention now naturally centred on Germany. It was perhaps amongst the Free Churches that the question of its future objectives and the appropriate response led to most soul-searching. It was to Germany that leading Free Church scholars had traditionally gone to complete their theological education. Some had formed life-long friendships arising out of their residence. It is not therefore surprising that in the middle thirties there was a widespread feeling that German grievances against the Treaty of Versailles were to some extent justified. When Dr. F. W. Norwood, Baptist minister of the City Temple, rejoiced on hearing of the German militarization of the Rhineland in 1935, this was not a bizarre reaction.[16] It was a reflection of the view that there could be no lasting peace with Germany while she remained shackled to the terms of an unfair *Diktat*. Peace with Germany was still desirable and achievable. There was a willingness to make allow-

ances for German conduct and to accept guilt for failure to disarm completely after 1918 or for taking German colonies. Phrases were not infrequently used which suggested that Hitler and his régime were the supreme creation of the Treaty of Versailles. A French Protestant correspondent wrote on 10th December, 1937, very critically of this tendency in British Free Church circles in particular. "A great many sincere Christians," he concluded, "while they admit that the Treaty which ended such a tremendous war was still war-like, are not at all willing to consent to see Versailles described as 'a terrific denial of Christian principles'."[17] His correspondent was Mrs. Dorothy Buxton, who had become a Quaker and was deeply concerned about the plight of Christians under the Nazi régime.[18] Here was another dilemma. Insofar as adequate information was available on a confused and varied situation, Nazi policy was ominous and suggested to some that the régime was of such a character that talk of territorial revision in the interests of peace was quite misguided.

I have discussed the reactions of British Christians to the plight of Martin Niemöller elsewhere, but it may be of particular interest to bring to light some information on the attitude of M. E. Aubrey at this juncture.[19] Having consulted with Dr. Rushbrooke, in March 1937 he wrote that he did not feel able to sign a letter to *The Times* drawing attention to the death of Dr. Weissler. He considered that "it might simply be an irritant to the persecuting party in Germany . . ." and might make things worse.[20] In a "strictly confidential" letter later in the month he revealed that plans were afoot for a possible visit to Germany as Moderator "to represent the interest of our Free Churches, and in that way to give some sort of encouragement to those who are putting up a fight for freedom". Now of course—though this is by the way—many of the most distinguished leaders of the Confessing Church denied that they were doing anything of the kind. He continued that he was doubtful of the wisdom of a visit. "It is rather difficult" he wrote "to persuade Germans that as individuals we cherish friendly sentiments toward their nation while at the same time we are critical of the actions of rulers for whom they have a regard that is almost akin to admiration. Hitlerism at the moment seems to have a vogue in Germany that it is virtually a religion, and I do not want to do anything, even in my small way, which would stir up passion."[21] In early April it was in fact decided not to make a visit. He decided instead to write to the German Ambassador "expressing the friendship of our Free Churches to the German people, for we all are children of the Reformation that had its birth in Germany . . .". He intended to add that the treatment of certain sections of Christians in Germany "not only means suffering to our brethren over there but is making more difficult the task of those of us who are working for peace and friendship . . .".[22] Later in the month, after reading an article by Barth published in the *British Weekly* which stated that "freedom" was not the issue, he commented "Though I do not think he has the whole truth, because I am by no means a Barthian, I think

there is some value in the reminder that freedom has come not by talking about it but through courageous advocacy and proclamation of Christian truth, and that it will be gained by men who wish to declare the Gospel rather than by those who simply want freedom".[23] As the months passed, he became more alarmed and depressed. "The Government there" he wrote early in July "at the moment seems to be in so strong a position that they can do what they like . . .".[24] He was quite clear that public opinion in Britain could do little.

There was, of course, a complication, particularly for Baptists and Methodists. Aubrey discussed it in a letter of 13th October, 1937. Some of the protests of the Evangelical and the Confessional Church had a grave weakness. "They never even suggest renouncing their position as a Church given a special status by the State or having taxes collected by the State on its behalf." The situation was very unsatisfactory from a Free Church standpoint, but he and others were trying to minimize it by "Concentrating upon the fact that all this business is due to a desire on the part of a large section of the Nazi authorities to suppress the inconvenient beliefs and teaching of Christianity. In their Gospel we stand by them and shall continue to do so".[25] By and large neither German Baptists nor Methodists found themselves in conflict with the State. Kingsley Lloyd, then a Methodist minister in New Southgate, complained a little later that "The compromising attitude of the Free Churches in Germany has its baneful reaction on the opinion of many Free Church people here . . . I am always coming across Baptists and Methodists who say their co-religionists 'are quite free to carry on their work', which I fear is only too true but does not reflect much credit on their conception of the work they are called to do".[26]

In one way, the struggle in Germany was quite encouraging. "It is quite clear" Aubrey wrote in June 1938 "that a rebirth of Christian faith and life is taking place in Germany, under all the clouds, and we shall see the fruit of this one day." In a later passage in the same letter he wrote that the whole international situation was "so difficult and perplexing, and it seems impossible to know what will come out of it. If only our country could get on better terms with Germany diplomatically, I think we should be able to bring real pressure to bear, but at the moment things are not promising."[27] Here was the dilemma felt acutely by many Free Churchmen. It was wrong to believe that war with Germany was inevitable, but what were the grounds for supposing that Britain could "get on better terms"—except by making dangerous concessions? Aubrey was writing some months after the Austrian Anschluss, and the problem was one which preoccupied the Cabinet. Chamberlain and his colleagues were not blind or indifferent to the fate of churchmen and others inside Germany. Aubrey and others certainly had private conversations with Eden while he was still Foreign Secretary. Yet the internal behaviour of the Nazis did not constitute grounds for refusing to negotiate with them. It was necessary to try to discover precisely what were German objectives. If there

could be "peaceful change" which brought about an European order which the Germans freely accepted then a real and lasting peace might be achieved. Chamberlain was a man of peace, but he was not a pacifist. Britain was not in a condition to fight, in any case, and it was hoped that the more time there was the greater would be the state of preparedness.

Although many Free Churchmen found it hard to forgive the Prime Minister's previous and present scepticism about the League of Nations, this policy of "appeasement", so defined, was given broad support. The Free Church members of the Cabinet could see no alternative. As Secretary of State for Air after May 1938 the Methodist, Kingsley Wood, occupied a very crucial office. Ernest Brown, as Minister of Labour, did not dissent from government policy. Yet, as the prospect of war drew nearer, so the minority of absolute pacifists within each Free Church denomination grew more determined and more vocal. In addition to the interdenominational Fellowship of Reconciliation, each denomination had its own pacifist body. These varied in their activity. In January 1937 the Presbyterian Pacifist Group reported a membership of 131, and its chairman added "Most members of the Church, however, have never so much as heard of the Group owing largely to the modest reticence of pacifist ministers who keep it a secret even from their own congregations". The Methodist Peace Fellowship and the Christian Pacifist Crusade (Congregational) were much more active. The secretary of the Baptist Pacifist Fellowship reported a very good year in January 1937 with the membership doubling.[28] At the time of the Baptist Union Assembly meetings held in Manchester in April, the total membership was nearly 500. Approximately 150 of these were ministers. The publication of the Report of the Special Committee Appointed by the Council of the Baptist Union to Consider the Attitude of the Denomination to War, was, however, a disappointment to them. The document recognized the integrity of the pacifist position, but it did not endorse it. The Secretary of the Baptist Pacifist Fellowship, the Rev. W. H. Haden, submitted the document to critical study in an article in *Reconciliation,* and there was considerable controversy in the denominational press.[29] In December 1937 it issued a reply so that Baptists were able to examine the arguments put forward by both sides. The debate continued until the outbreak of war—and beyond. In January 1939 it was reported that the membership had reached 1,024 and on the eve of war stood at 1,288.[30] This, of course, represented a small percentage of the total membership of the denomination, but I suspect that the proportion of ministerial pacifists in relation to the ministerial body was higher. The most well-known figure to espouse this cause was perhaps the Rev. H. Ingli James, then minister at Queen's Road, Coventry. However, the intellectual traffic was not all one way. Dr. Hugh Martin, then at the S.C.M. Press, was one of those whose analysis of the issues at stake in a future conflict led them to abandon a former pacifism. The

writings of Reinhold Niebuhr whom, with difficulty, Martin published, began to make an impact.

In his perhaps not altogether reliable recollection, Arthur Porritt of *The Christian World* records a meeting with T. R. Glover, J. C. Carlile and Ernest Brown at Folkestone at the height of the Munich crisis.[31] Glover, it seems, was most concerned about the British Empire and feared, with some justice, that if war should come, it might strain —even snap—relations with his beloved Canada. He did not see, however, why his sons "should fight and die to keep three million Sudeten Germans under Czecho-Slovak rule". Ernest Brown in Cabinet had been a firm supporter of the Prime Minister's decision to fly to Berchtesgaden, and subsequently upheld the Munich agreement. In the Cabinet meeting held on the critical afternoon of 25th September, 1938, he gave his opinion that "the time had not come to abandon efforts to obtain peace by negotiation".[32] These comments reflect a different set of considerations from those we have just been discussing. The relief which attended the Munich agreement, at least initially, was widespread in the Free Churches. There were few who shared the reaction of Duff Cooper and Winston Churchill. It was, after all, a Methodist, Lord Runciman, who had been summoned by the Prime Minister to investigate the situation on the ground in Czechoslovakia. There was a gratitude for the apparent "Peace in our Time" which could unite pacifists and non-pacifists. Yet, by early 1939 following Hitler's march into Prague, it seemed increasingly that war had been postponed not avoided. The majority of Free Churchmen now came to feel that Britain would be justified in going to war. They were prepared to accept conscription. Throughout the late spring and summer of 1939, however, most pacifists remained highly critical of any attempt to give British policy any semblance of moral authority. Accepting the influential "have" and "have-not" dichotomy, an editorial in *Reconciliation* in May 1939 declared "Those who are holding on to empire by force must share the blame with those who are taking empire by the same method".

An editorial in June was strongly critical of the guarantee to Poland and the moral bankruptcy that it represented. "Leaders of the Opposition", it commented sadly, "as well as leaders of the Church and of the Free Churches (if there is any difference nowadays), seem to rival each other in giving the Government their unreserved support." The remark made in parenthesis, though intended ironically, was substantially true! Most Free Churchmen saw no alternative but for the twenty years' crisis to end in another war.

NOTES

This lecture was delivered at the annual meeting of the Baptist Historical Society, 24th April, 1978.

[1] J. H. Shakespeare, *The Churches at the Cross-Roads* (London, 1918), p. 211.

[2] A. L. Rowse, *All Souls and Appeasement* (London, 1961), p. 19.

[3] E. K. H. Jordan, *Free Church Unity* (London, 1956), p. 223.

[4] S. Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (London, 1975),

pp. 227-36. See also W. C. Miller, "The Religious Alignment at English Elections between 1918 and 1970", *Political Studies*, XXV (1977), pp. 227-51.

[5] S. Koss, "Lloyd George and Nonconformity: the last rally", *English Historical Review*, LXXXIX (1974), pp. 77-108.

[6] W. R. P. George, *The Making of Lloyd George* (London, 1976). M. G. Fry, *Lloyd George and Foreign Policy*, I (London, 1977), pp. 21-23.

[7] K. G. Robbins, *John Bright* (London, 1978), explores this tension.

[8] K. W. Clements, "Baptists and the outbreak of the First World War", *Baptist Quarterly*, XXVI (1975), pp. 74-92.

[9] K. G. Robbins, *The Abolition of War: The British Peace Movement 1914-1919* (Cardiff, 1976).

[10] Minutes of the Christian Organization Committee in the Lothian MS., Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.

[11] In an address to the National Free Church Council in 1924 cited in Jordan, *Free Church Unity*, p. 181.

[12] D. Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War 1935-1936* (London, 1975), p. 93.

[13] A. W. Harrison, *Christianity and the League of Nations* (London, 1928).

[14] Dame Adelaide Livingstone, *The Peace Ballot* (London, 1935), pp. 55-8

[15] Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War 1935-1936*, p. 64.

[16] Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics*, p. 217.

[17] A. Monod to D. Buxton, 10th December, 1937 (in author's possession).

[18] K. G. Robbins, "Church and Politics: Dorothy Buxton and the German Church Struggle" in *Church, Society and Politics*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1975), pp. 419-33.

[19] K. G. Robbins, "Martin Niemöller, the German Church Struggle and English Opinion", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XXI (1970), pp. 149-70.

[20] M. E. Aubrey to D. Buxton, 2nd March, 1937 (in author's possession).

[21] M. E. Aubrey to D. Buxton, 24th March, 1937 (in author's possession).

[22] M. E. Aubrey to D. Buxton, 5th April, 1937 (in author's possession).

[23] M. E. Aubrey to D. Buxton, 23rd April, 1937 (in author's possession).

[24] M. E. Aubrey to D. Buxton, 2nd July, 1937 (in author's possession).

[25] M. E. Aubrey to D. Buxton, 13th October, 1937 (in author's possession).

[26] A. K. Lloyd to D. Buxton, 18th November, 1938 (in author's possession).

[27] M. E. Aubrey to D. Buxton, 13th June, 1938 (in author's possession).

[28] *Reconciliation*, January 1937.

[29] *Reconciliation*, June 1937, "Baptist Union and War".

[30] *Reconciliation*, January 1939.

[31] A. Porritt, *More and More of Memories* (London, 1947), pp. 169-70. K. G. Robbins, *Munich 1938* (London, 1968).

[32] Cabinet Minutes, 25th September, 1938.

K. G. ROBBINS.

BROOMHAUGH BAPTIST BURIAL GROUND

The burial ground at Broomhaugh in the parish of Bywell, St. Andrew, Northumberland, lies behind the Methodist (formerly Baptist) chapel in the centre of the village. Mr. D. Mason has transcribed the surviving memorial inscriptions and a copy of his list may be seen at the Library of the Baptist Union. The inscriptions range in date from 1752 to 1966 and record the deaths of over 80 persons with one or other of the following surnames: Angus, Batey, Chaundy, Carthorn, Horwood, Hutchinson, Johnson, Marshall, McLean, Slater, Smith, Usher, Wood.