

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/49641>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**The War on London:  
Defending the City From the War in the Air  
1932-1943.**

**By Lucy Allwright**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

Volume One of Two Volumes

University of Warwick, Department of history  
September 2011

## Contents

List of Figures		3
Abbreviations		5
Acknowledgements		6
Abstract		9
Introduction		10
<b>Part I</b>	<b>Imagining War In The Air</b>	<b>56</b>
1	Establishing Air Raid Precautions in Pre-War London. Government Approaches to ARP 1932-1939.	57
2	Alternative Visions of ARP: Structural Approaches to the Problem of Air Raids	105
<b>Part II</b>	<b>Reordering London for War in the Air</b>	<b>167</b>
3	ARP Recruitment: London Displayed	168
<b>Volume II</b>		<b>230</b>
4	ARP at War: the Development of ARP Services, 1939-1941.	233
<b>Part III</b>	<b>The Consequences of War in the Air: The Blitz on London.</b>	<b>305</b>
5	Dealing With Destruction: Representing and Narrating Blitzed London.	306
6	National Commemoration of the Blitz	368
Conclusion		417
Appendices		
A	Organisation of Controls in London	430
B	Numbers Employed in the National Civil Defence Services in Thousands	433
Bibliography		434

## Figures

Figure		Page
0.1.	ARP as a Symbol of the 'People's War.'	11
0.2	Map showing the 28 Metropolitan Borough Boundaries,	55
1.1.	Images highlighting ARP Techniques	86
1.2	Map of the London County Council Shoring and Demolition Service	95
1.3	How Civil Defence Worked	100
2.1.	Spanish Civil War Poster: If You Tolerate This then Your Children Will be Next	113
2.2.	The Dangers of Inadequate Shelters	117
2.3	Bombs Over Barcelona	118
2.4	The Evolution of the Shelter Idea	132
2.5	"Nationals'" Latest Crazy Notion – A Tin Hut for Every Backyard	135
2.6	Communicating a Military Problem: Visual Tropes of the Tecton scheme	137
2.7	Technical Clarification of the Impact of Bombs on City Space	141
2.8	The inadequacy of the trench shelter	144
2.9	Crush in a Trench Shelter	145
2.10	The use of Basements as Shelters	146-7
2.11	Keeping Order and Preventing Panic	149
2.12	Finsbury shelter. Final Design	150
2.13	Location of shelters in Finsbury	166
2.14	Final Design for the Tecton Shelter	153
2.15	Housing Problems	155
2.16	Satirical Attack on Sir John Anderson's Garden Shelter Plan	158
3.1	If War Should Come	181
3.2	An Area of National Display: the Location of the Royal Albert Hall	227
3.3	Supporting a Working Class Community: The Location of the Finsbury Town Hall and Health Centre	228
3.4	The LCC Jubilee	208
3.5	The LCC Help the Needy and the Young	212
3.6	Auxiliary Fire Service at Work	213
3.7	Spaces of Governance and Display	229
3.8	Journey from Buckingham Palace to Victoria Station	217
3.9	London takes the LCC to its Bosom	219



4.1	Mapping Civil Defence	237
4.2	Whole-time Volunteers for ARP General Services and Auxiliary Fire Services. London Region	241
4.3	ARP National Service Recruitment Posters	243
4.4	ARP National Service Recruitment Posters II	246
4.5	Joseph Lee's Air Raid Wardens	299
4.6	Numbers of RSD Personnel	268
4.7	Mapping Civil Defence in Urban Space	269
4.8	Maps of the London County Council Rescue Shoring and Demolition Service	300-301
4.9	Return Of Premises Occupied by RSD Service	272
4.10	Layout of the Capland Street ARP Depot	283
4.11	The Capland Street ARP depot	284
4.12	Great Portland Street ARP Depot	302-304
4.13	Location of the Great Portland Street ARP Depot	285
4.14	Entrances to the Great Portland Street ARP Depot	286
5.1	The East End	320
5.2	The Heroic East End	331
5.3	The Homeless of London	333
5.4	Post-raid trauma?	337
5.5	Extensive Bomb Damage to the Isle of Dogs.	347
5.6	Location of Bill and Vi's home	349
5.7	Bomb Damage to Cubitt Town	353
5.8	Bill's Photos of the Bomb Damage on the Isle of Dogs	365-67
6.1	A Stroke at the Heart	412
6.2	The City Burns	413
6.3	War's Greatest Picture	377
6.4	The Civil Defence Day Parade Route	382
6.5	The Civil Defence Day Parade Route II	414
6.6	The Heroic Civil Defender	385
6.7	Remembering the Coventry Blitz	387
6.8	Numbers for Civil Defence Day Parade	392
6.9	Battle of Britain Parade Route	415
6.10	The Devastation of the City	416

## Abbreviations

ABCA	Army Bureau of Current Affairs
AFS	Auxiliary Fire Service
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
ATO	Architects and Technicians Organisation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBC/WAC	BBC Written Archives Centre
CD	Civil Defence
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
CLP	County of London Plan
CPBG	Communist Party of Great Britain
GPO	General Post Office
HA	Hackney Archives
HCP	Hampstead Communist Party
HQ	Headquarters
ILHC	Islington Local History Collection
IHT	Island History Trust
IWM	Imperial War Museum
LCC	London County Council
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LDV	Local Defence Volunteers
MARS	Modern Architectural Research Group
MOA	Mass Observation Archive
MOL	Museum of London
MRC	University of Warwick Modern Records Centre
MTC	Mechanised Transport Corps
NFBTU	National Federation of Building Trade Unions
PPU	Peace Pledge Union
RAF	Royal Air Force
RSD	Rescue Shoring and Demolition Service
TH	Tower Hamlet's Library and Archives
TNA	The National Archives
V&A/RIBA	Victoria and Albert Museum, Royal Institute of British Architects Collections
WCA	Westminster City Archives
WDS	War Debris and Disposal Service
WEA	Workers' Education Association
WVS	Women's Voluntary Service

## Acknowledgements

Writing and research can be a lonely business, yet when it comes down to it, it is a collaborative effort. There are a number of people I need to thank. Mathew Thomson, the first and best lecturer I ever had and a wonderful supervisor; thank you for your guidance, tireless application of commas and apostrophes and insightful and excellent comments. Maxine Berg, for early guidance and supporting me in accessing ESRC funding. James Hinton whose research project on mass observation allowed me to spend three months reading diaries and sparked my interest in bombs on Britain. Rebecca Earle for a sympathetic smile and insightful mind; Sarah Hodges for sharing references. Colin Jones for support and advice. Kate Bradley for advice, support and humour. Brett Holman for a shared fascination with war in the air. I wish to thank the excellent staff at the London Metropolitan Archives for useful discussions, help with searches and excellent support. The staff at the British Library for help and support. Eve Hostettler at the Island History Trust for letting me route through cupboards and chats over cups of tea. Sarah at the Museum of London for guidance through their massive collections. Numerous staff at local archives for help and guidance. I wish to thank friends and colleagues who helped run and organize HistoryLab for two years and kept me sane in lonely hours of research. Tara Morton for sharing conference organization and a rather brilliant brain.

This PhD began three generations ago. It began with a granddad in the army and a grandma on the wartime London home front, with a grandfather putting together ships and a grandmother hating Thatcher in an effort to wind up the old man, and it began with a great aunt in an air raid shelter. All died

before the completion of this thesis but all contributed to its making. Through my luck of being born when half a century of help and support for the working classes and for women meant I could access the education and the freedom that my grandparents could not. Rent control until the 1970s gave some of them a chance to save a little and help a lot, others were able to find work and hope in the expanding state managed services that offered them secure pensions and access to healthcare. Some were born into poverty and they became just a little wealthier. Without their help both emotional and financial, I could never have accessed the opportunities set out for me to write this thesis. I thank them all for their contributions. Their daily struggles and the narratives of their lives located me in a present with knowledge of the past.

I thank my parents for their laughter and love. The former may not always be present but I am safe in the knowledge of the latter. For my mother, who is proud of me whatever I do and who 'doesn't believe in being unhappy': you gave me a love of words (both written and incessantly spoken). For my father for his wit and biting humour: your infectious enthusiasm for history tacitly guided me on this path. I thank my brother, so different to me but always there to remind me of other choices to be made and for following your dreams, you are more inspirational to me than you realise. To all three for a secure childhood and a happy home.

Thanks to Lulu, KT and Sam. Feline friends, offering watchful eyes from my study windowsill; your daily presentation of grotty toy mice raised morale and lifted my spirits.

Thank you Santigold, Laura Marling, Mumford and Sons, The Scratch Perverts, The Cinematic Orchestra, Diplo, Little Dragon, Cypress Hill, M.I.A., Amy

Winehouse, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Bjork, Radio 6 and Kirsty Young. I couldn't have got through without you all.

To my friends: the Avondale girls for your support; for Becca for your hilarity; for Katy for your laughter; the Glaselgirl for being there; Katiekat for your belief and encouragement; Bailes for being an inspiration, Hannah for your humour and your wisdom; Sam for your love; Fliss for your laughter; Guy for support during the last push (and your knowledge of pdf files); Zoe, a rediscovered old friend and a reminder support can come from unexpected places; Hannah and Alyson for fun and a shared love of history; the Warwick girls for being there at the start and your continued support to the end. Thank you to the Old Catton ladies, ever watchful and always caring. For Rose, for holding my hand, for making me laugh, for reminding me firmly the grass is not greener, for being ridiculous and the smartest person I know.

For good family, wonderful friends and for fighting for better lives for everyone.

## **Abstract**

During the 1930s the massive expansion of London and fears over the uncontrolled, unplanned modernity of the city coincided with fears over the ability of the new technology of the bomber and aerial warfare to decimate cities. This thesis explores the relationship between London as a governed, practiced and represented site, and aerial bombardment. It considers the impact of the new technology of aerial bombing on city space, by looking at the policies that emerged to deal with the consequences of bombardment, specifically through analysis of Air Raid Precautions. It follows these policies on a trajectory through to the actual bombing of the city and the public commemoration of that bombing in 1943.

The thesis explores the competing visions of city life opened up by the lens of aerial warfare, providing a cultural history of the defence of London. It considers how fears about how to protect the city from bombs offered the opportunity for political commentators, local authorities, architects, engineers and planners to voice their concerns about how to protect the urban population at war. Contained within these debates are particular visualisations of the population of London. The thesis thus considers social imaginations of London between 1932 and 1943. It suggests that ARP offered a means to present and articulate different ideas about how to govern and manage an urban population. It also reflects on how these ideas changed over time.

Ultimately it seeks to move between the universal and the particular, exploring how and why blitzed London came to stand for the nation during the war, and in so doing provided a collective consciousness for the nation at war. At the same time by interrogating the representations that made up that collective consciousness, I move to the particular, considering how representations of London under fire were mediated by local experiences and urban practices.

The thesis seeks to offer a nuanced account of London's modernity through showing the complexity of responses to the problem of managing and imagining a city under fire.

## Introduction.

The train was running along the embankment. A little below us you could see the roofs of the houses stretching on and on, the little red roofs where the bombs are going to drop...Funny how we keep thinking about bombs.<sup>1</sup>

In the novel *Coming Up for Air*, George Orwell articulates a scathing attack on modern life. The fat bored protagonist George Bowling seeks diversion from his suburban, commuter-led lifestyle and sinks into an imagined and nostalgic past. Yet, always on the edge of the protagonist's descent into the past is a jarring consequence of the present. As Bowling commutes to his suburban home, the train offers him a vision of London from above: he sees miles and miles of houses, 'stretching on and on like an enormous plain,' and onto these he imagines bombers shedding their loads: 'zoom, whizz, plonk! Houses going up in the air.'<sup>2</sup> This particular vision of the decimation of the city by bombers was ubiquitous in inter-war collective consciousness; in novels, broadcasts, parliamentary debates, architectural and planning documents, and aeronautical displays the bomber cast a shadow over the urban landscape.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis explores the relationship between London as a governed, practiced and represented site, and aerial bombardment. It considers the impact of the new technology of aerial bombing on city space, by looking at the policies that emerged to deal with the consequences of bombardment. Specifically, it involves analysis of Air Raid Precautions (ARP) and the wartime shift into civil defence. Historical understanding of ARP has often explored it as a part of the

---

<sup>1</sup> George Orwell, *Coming up for Air* (London, 2000), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Orwell, *Coming up*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> L.E.O. Charlton, *War Over England* (London, 1936).

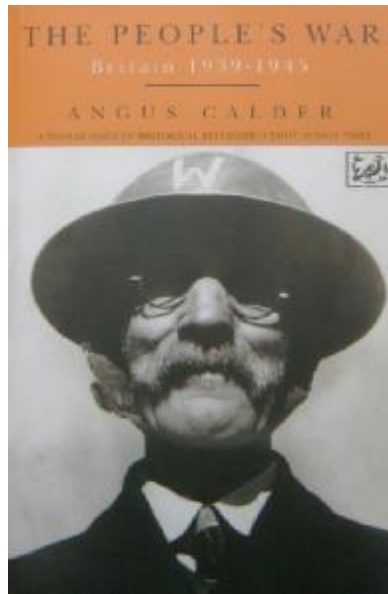


Figure 0.1. ARP as a symbol of the 'people's war,' cover image by Cecil Beaton of Mr. Dove, his gardeners father. Source: Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London, 1992).

social history of total war and its impact on 'the people' who lived through it.<sup>4</sup> Common experiences of ARP, the blitz, evacuation and conscription have been understood as creating a unity that facilitated the welfare state.<sup>5</sup> In this context ARP services have been used as shorthand symbols for the 'people's war.'

<sup>4</sup> Much work on the history of Civil Defence and ARP has been underpinned by Terence O'Brien's seminal official history of the subject: *A History of Civil Defence* (London, 1955). On the structures of Civil Defence and practical functioning of ARP during the war: Robin Woolven, 'Civil Defence in London 1935-1945' (PhD Thesis, King's College London 2002). More recent works have considered specific aspects and policies related to the subject: Joseph. S. Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy and its Critics in Britain before the Second World War,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 5 (1994), pp. 300-319; or have sought to place ARP and civil defence within a broader framework of wartime labour policy, exposing tensions over the specific working practices involved in ARP services: Amy Bell, *London Was Ours, Diaries and Memoirs of the London Blitz* (New York, 2008), chapter three; Helen Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line, Air Raids, Productivity and Wartime Culture, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2006). There is also a more colloquial literature about the experience of ARP and the bombardment of London: Mike Brown, *Put That Light Out! Britain's Civil Defence Services at War 1939-45* (London, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> R. M. Titmuss, *The Problems of Social Policy* (London, 1950); Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain, 1939-45* (London, 1969); Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991); Sonya Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003); James Cronin, 'The British State and the Structure of Political Opportunity,' *Journal of British Studies*, 27 (1988), pp. 199-231; Steven Fielding, "What did 'The People' Want? The Meaning of the 1945 General Election," *The Historical Journal*, 35, 3 (1992), pp. 623-693; Rodney Lowe, 'The Second World War, Consensus and the Welfare State', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1 (1990), pp. 152-182; Jose Harris, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War,' *Contemporary European History*, 1 (1992), pp. 17-35.



According to this account the conditions of bombardment prompted a moment in which citizens collectively came together to act against the impact of bombardment. Indeed, the cover image for Angus Calder's seminal work *The People's War*, is a Cecil Beaton photograph of an ARP warden (Figure 0.1).

I seek to situate ARP within a longer narrative of concerns about aerial bombardment, which predates the actual bombing of London, by looking at the ideas, agendas and plans for dealing with London under fire. This shifts analysis temporally, moving away from an examination of the consequences of bombing to considering how aerial bombardment and ARP were presented to the population prior to the Second World War. Looking at planning for bombing, rather than simply the response to bombing itself, offers a fresh perspective on the war and social change thesis and one that provides opportunities to reframe questions in terms of a warfare and not just a welfare paradigm.<sup>6</sup> This allows ARP to be contextualized in its own right.

ARP has a history of its own tied into military strategies, international political stances on bombardment, technological and urban planning strategies and modes of national and local governance. Rather than offering an institutional history of the subject, ARP is understood within the thesis as a set of policies that emerged in interwar Britain about the best way to protect the population from bombardment.<sup>7</sup> These policies contain ideas about how that population was imagined as a body of citizens. By better understanding how ARP strategy and policy evolved over a longer period of time we can make sense of its implementation within the wartime context and of the decisions made

---

<sup>6</sup> David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> For the creation of ARP Services, medical, rescue, warden, etc., and the institutionalization of those services see: O'Brien, *A History. On the structures of civil defence and practical functioning of ARP during the war: Woolven, Civil Defence in London.*

about how services should be structured, organized and established, and more widely how it was considered good citizens should act under conditions of bombardment.

With its focus on aerial bombardment the thesis inevitably intersects with histories of the Second World War. As figure 0.1 reveals, ARP has been particularly associated with the 'people's war': shorthand for the war as a moment of national unity. This view of a common unity is part of the conceptualization of war and social change that emerged in official histories of the war and peaked within Calder's *The People's War*.<sup>8</sup> The argument of this work is that the war facilitated social change, that it produced a more radical population open to welfare reform, and that it resulted in a more interventionist state. Penny Summerfield usefully summarises the picture of the war that emerged in historiography of the Second World War during the period from late 1945 to the late 1960s as characterized by two interlinked elements: the quasi-socialist measures the government introduced to mobilize the population for war; and the leftward-leaning response of the population so mobilized. Jose Harris describes this as the 'practical' measures and the 'moral' impact.<sup>9</sup> To clarify, the argument goes: the government imposed a series of measures on the population and provided a series of services to facilitate the war, this included the ARP, rationing, identification cards, nurseries, work regulation, canteens, medical care and insurance; the impact of commonly experienced state intervention created a national political consensus open to further state

---

<sup>8</sup> Titmuss, *The Problems*; Calder, *The People's War*.

<sup>9</sup> Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence, Men, Women and The Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 2-3; Jose Harris, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War,' *Contemporary European History*, 1 (1992), p. 17.

intervention and opportunities for class leveling; and as a result, the war paved the way for the welfare state.

Subsequently, the socio-political relationships that were perceived as emerging in wartime have been questioned: were 'the people' radicalized by war; did a national consensus emerge at the social, cultural and political levels?<sup>10</sup> At the same time, arguments about the relationship between social policy and social change have been broken down. The scope of the 'moral impact' of war has been questioned by exploring how welfare services emerged during the first half of the twentieth century as a part of national, local and municipal government and through charity and philanthropic bodies. In turn, case studies of the areas held to be key in instigating change, in particular the role of women in war, evacuation and child welfare services, have raised questions about the radical impact of war on social policy and cultural assumptions.<sup>11</sup> As it stands now, understandings of the Second World War home front are more nuanced and the focus has shifted particularly to the representation of this war and its role in popular memory and imagination.<sup>12</sup>

That recent turn to the cultural history of the Second World War provided a set of methodological issues to be explored within the thesis regarding how the

---

<sup>10</sup> Steven Fielding, 'What did 'The People' Want?: The Meaning of the 1945 General Election,' *The Historical Journal*, 35, 3 (1992), pp. 623-693; Rodney Lowe, 'The Second World War, Consensus and the Welfare State,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 1 (1990), pp. 152-182.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Humphreys, *Poor Relief and Charity, 1869-1945: the London Charity Organisation Society* (Basingstoke, 2001); Penny Summerfield, "'It did me good in lots of ways": British women in Transition from War to Peace', in Claire Duchén and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (eds), *When the War Was Over: Women, War, and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956* (London, 2000), pp. 13-28; Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* (London, 1987); Helen Fawcett and Rodney Lowe (eds), *Welfare Policy in Britain the Road from 1945* (Basingstoke, 1999); John Welshman, 'Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The Our Towns Report of 1943,' *The Historical Journal*, 42, 3 (1999), pp. 781-807; Jane Lewis, 'The Voluntary Sector in the Mixed Economy of Welfare', in David Gladstone (ed.), *Before Beveridge: Welfare Before the Welfare State* (London, 1999), pp. 10-17.

<sup>12</sup> Summerfield, *Contesting Home Defence*; Geoff Eley, 'Finding the People's War: Film, British Collective Memory, and World War II,' *The American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), pp. 818-838.

Second World War has been represented. Specifically focusing on the photography of the British home front, Stuart Hall argues that images played a crucial role in the construction of the 'people's war.' Central to Hall's analysis is an interrogation of the photo news magazine *Picture Post*. He argues that the use of photography within the magazine acted to tell 'profoundly human and startlingly honest stories' through the use of documentary style photography as it emerged in the 1930s. Hall argues that this mode of visual reporting dominated the representation of wartime Britain. The power of this mode of representing, he argues, rested on the truth claim that it offered an 'apparently untransformed...visual record of a specifically historical moment.' Through this 'social eye', the formerly invisible masses were made visible in the wartime reporting of 'their habits and action, their plight and condition.' Hall suggests this had political consequences, helping expose the common discomfort of the urban population.<sup>13</sup> This thesis then is underpinned by a methodological challenge to consider the representation of ARP and aerial bombardment. Aiming to test some of Hall's arguments about the changing nature of visual culture in this period and to expand that investigation out to a longer time period, considering who and what was envisioned through the lens of aerial bombardment across my period of analysis.<sup>14</sup>

In turn, new approaches suggest that while the war and social change thesis remains relevant there needs to be a reassessment of the meaning of the British state as a political entity and alongside this a need to consider the cultural and social history of the war not in the universal but the particular, locating

---

<sup>13</sup> Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 71-120.

<sup>14</sup> This is discussed further below.

experiences within local communities or regions.<sup>15</sup> I seek to take up the case of the former, by considering what ARP policy reveals about governance strategies, interrogating what ARP policy and its application brings to light about the functioning of the British state at this time. The debates that emerged over how to govern a population under the threat of war in the air reveal particular ideas about the function and role of government in society. Interrogating those debates offers a means to better grasp the structures of governance across the period and understand the perceived role of government in society. In turn, I seek to take up the challenge of the latter by considering how ARP and defence functioned within London, exploring local power structures and governance methods that filtered policy.

The focus on London also reflects a need to properly historicize the relationship between ideas around the development of the city and bombardment. A number of social histories of London have viewed the bombing of the city during the war as creating opportunities to improve the urban environment.<sup>16</sup> Frank Mort has recently shown how the dislocation caused by the bombardment of London opened the way for a flourishing of new imaginings of city life, embodied in ambitious plans to reorder London's physical

---

<sup>15</sup> See: David Edgerton, 'War, Reconstruction, and the Nationalisation of Britain, 1939-1951,' in Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch and David Feldman (eds), *Post-war reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949, Past and Present*, 210, Supplement 6, (2011), pp. 29-46; Brad Bevan, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working Class Men in Britain* (Manchester, 2005); Chris Sladen, 'Wartime Holidays and the Myth of the Blitz,' *Cultural and Social History*, 2 (2005), pp. 215-246. On the appropriation of space see, Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 163-169.

<sup>16</sup> Tatsuya Tsubaki, 'Planners and the Public: British Popular Opinion on Housing During the Second World War,' *Contemporary British History*, 14:1 (2000), pp. 81-9; Andrew Homer, 'Creating New Communities: The Role of the Neighbourhood Unit in Post-War British Planning,' *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), pp. 63-80; Ken Young, and Patricia Garside, *Metropolitan London: Politics and Urban Change 1837-1981*, (London, 1982); Peter Malpass, 'Wartime Planning for Post-War Housing in Britain: the Whitehall Debate, 1941-45,' *Planning Perspectives*, 18 (2003), 177-196; Mark Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersion in Post-War England* (Manchester, 1998).

and social environment.<sup>17</sup> The plans that emerged during the war confronted the problems posed by the destruction of much of the metropolitan core of the capital, including the City of London and the inner East End, by enemy bombing.<sup>18</sup>

However, while the actual physical decimation of London may have offered an opportunity for a reconsideration of the function, meaning and shape of the metropolis, the plans that emerged were developed by planners, architects and engineers who had been instrumental in planning for the consequences of bombardment prior to the war. J.H. Forshaw, the architect instrumental in the production of the *County of London Plan* (CLP), one of the wartime advisory planning documents produced by the London County Council (LCC) and analysed by Mort, helped to both construct and manage the London-wide ARP Rescue Service during the war.<sup>19</sup> I do not seek to suggest that one was the inevitable outcome of the other. Rather, I aim to draw attention to the way that the predicted aerial bombardment of London prior to the Second World War created a particular set of ideas and fears about the impact bombing would have on social life. These ideas and fears, in part, structured and shaped responses to the actual bombardment and the ways of understanding and dealing with its consequences.

1930s Britain was marked by a new cultural air-mindedness in which the aeroplane was an exciting new technology, yet it cast a shadow over the

---

<sup>17</sup> Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society* (London, 2010), p. 91.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (2004), p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, The War History of the Architects Department - Final draft 1945.

landscape.<sup>20</sup> The feared psychological impact of bombing as a means to break morale and cause panic in the population, coincided with concerns about the mass expansion of London. The sheer size of the city and the concentration of wealth and industry in this vast urban conglomeration had long made it a site of anxious modernity; London was both a marker of progress but also a space in which the impact of unchecked modernity was most visible. The poverty, the slums and the brutality of the modern city were mapped out in its social geography, marked particularly by divisions between a more affluent West End and a working-class East End.<sup>21</sup> Onto this uncertain site, it was feared, bombs would rain and the consequences would be disastrous: a complete breakdown of the city followed by the collapse of the nation.<sup>22</sup> The unchecked development of the aeroplane, it was feared, would decimate the unchecked development of London. Once the bombs did fall those same social divisions were brought to the attention of the nation, yet, their reporting was partial and limited by official restrictions on the representation of bombardment.

This thesis then considers London through the lens of aerial bombardment exploring how the need to deal with the threat of the bomber created competing visions of city life. The thesis begins in 1932, the year that Stanley Baldwin asserted in parliament: 'the bomber will always get through.'<sup>23</sup> It ends in 1943 with an exploration of the first national observance of the Battle of Britain to incorporate the civil defence services. Between those years I

---

<sup>20</sup> David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: An Essay on a Militant and Technological Nation* (Basingstoke, 1991), pp. 44-47; Brett Holman, *The Next War in the Air Civilian Fears of Strategic Bombardment in Britain, 1908-1941* (Phd Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2009); Uri Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber: the Fear of Air Attack and British Politics, 1932-1939* (London, 1980).

<sup>21</sup> Sally Alexander, 'A New Civilisation? London Surveyed 1928-1940,' *History Workshop Journal*, 64 (2007), pp. 297-320.

<sup>22</sup> Holman, *The Next War in the Air*, part one.

<sup>23</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 270 col. 632-3, 10 November 1932.

consider how the meanings of London changed in relationship to preparations for air war and the cultural constructions of readying and recruiting a population for that war. I outline the way in which the urban landscape of London was used by competing vested interests to put forward different solutions and ideas about dealing with the consequences of bombardment and how this turned London into an ideological battleground that continued to resonate as London became a physical battleground. I also consider the symbiosis between London as a lived space and London as a national metropolis, investigating how the communication of the bombardment of London complicates the story of the nation's experience of war. Ultimately the thesis shows how London came to stand for nation and the implications of this for understanding the personal consequences of bombardment for those who had lived under the shadow of the bomber.

### **Thesis Themes**

Across the thesis as a whole I interrogate a number of key themes that open up analysis of London as a governed, represented and practiced space. Firstly, I consider London as a governed space and the ideological tensions that emerged around the imposition of national policies at the local level. I suggest that ARP policies projected a particular concept of national citizenship, but that this was challenged at the local level by alternative concepts of the function of government, which were bound to the socio-technological methods that were necessary to deal with the consequences of raids. Secondly, I use ARP policies and representations of ARP as a way to consider particular social imaginations of



London during the 1930s and into the Second World War. In doing so, I aim to break down some of the hegemonic narratives that have dominated ideas about London at war by recasting representation as a process. Thirdly, I consider the relationship between representations of aerial bombardment, ARP and civil defenders and the space of London to suggest that urban practices may offer challenges to particular representations of urban life.

## **London and Governance**

### *Interwar London and London Government*

London is explored within the thesis as both a geographically bounded political space and a represented space. The former is articulated through maps, plans and policies that constructed ARP as a governance strategy. The latter is filtered through images and descriptions of the city as both a built environment and a populated space.<sup>24</sup> In considering ARP as a governance strategy I limited exploration to the politically defined County of London, the area covered by the LCC and the 28 metropolitan boroughs (Figure 0.2). This offered enough scope to consider the questions within the wider thesis about the imposition of national ARP within the local context. The decision to concentrate on inner London also reflects interwar concerns about bombing, which focused on concentration of people, political structures and wealth within this confined space. During the 1930s concerns about the impact of bombing became related to debates about the impact of the urban condition on the human body. In this

---

<sup>24</sup>Theoretical issues of representation are discussed in more detail below.

way ARP intersected with debates about the function of local authorities in managing and supporting their populations.<sup>25</sup>

London was marked by massive expansion during the interwar period.<sup>26</sup> Its growth rate was double that of the rest of the country, with Greater London's net population growing by 1,228,000 in 18 years. This was one-third the growth of the population of Great Britain as a whole. By 1939 more than one out of five of the people of England and Wales was a Londoner and in that year London reached a population of 8,615,000 people.<sup>27</sup> Inner London contained some 4.4 million people compacted into 117 square miles.<sup>28</sup> London's physical and demographic growth produced huge challenges, politically, socially and economically.

Inter-war London government was built in three tiers, with powers divided between the 28 metropolitan borough councils, the City, and the LCC (Figure 0.2). The LCC covered the area of the 28 councils and the City and had jurisdiction over some 117 square miles; it was composed of 126 councillors elected every three years.<sup>29</sup> The LCC coordinated London-wide services in the areas of transport, housing, and education and, from 1933 on, administered the Poor Law.<sup>30</sup> Borough councils acted as a counter-weight to the LCC. They dealt with more localized issues such as building regulation, libraries and washhouses. They also had the power to propose and oppose Bills and had greater

---

<sup>25</sup> This is discussed in chapter two. Andrew Saint, 'Spread the People': The LCC's Dispersal Policy, 1889-1965,' in Andrew Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People of London, the London County Council 1889-1965* (London, 1989), pp. 215-235; Alexander, 'A New Civilisation?', pp. 297-320.

<sup>26</sup> Jerry White, *London in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (London, 2008), p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> White, *London*, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander, 'A New Civilisation?', footnote 3, p. 315.

<sup>29</sup> Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (Harvard, 1994), p. 256.

<sup>30</sup> Gloria Clifton, 'Members and Officers of the London County Council, 1889-1965,' in Andrew Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People of London, the London County Council 1889-1965* (London, 1989), p. 9.

parliamentary powers than the LCC.<sup>31</sup> In political terms, the LCC 'dominated London's politics.' The interwar period marked the ascent of the Labour Party within the LCC.<sup>32</sup> From its inception in 1889, the LCC was often in tension with national policy because it was run on party political lines.<sup>33</sup> London government acted as a training ground for future national leaders as they explored the challenges posed by solving the municipal problems of overcrowding, health, education and infrastructure.<sup>34</sup>

The practical issues of governing and ordering London during this period of growth prompted new ways of thinking about and imagining the city. While London was still perceived as the heart of the British Empire, it was no longer the biggest or most important city in the world. New York ascended to this status during the 1920s. Older industries declined and London's economy shifted towards the service sector.<sup>35</sup> However, its sheer size meant that London provided a microcosm of national life. It was a city in which poverty and wealth were at their extremes and in which the means of governing, imagining and dealing with those problems were debated and tested through social surveys, policies and debates on town planning.<sup>36</sup> Those discussions about the governance of the city were both influenced by and symbiotically shaped by debates about aerial bombardment. The thesis seeks to illuminate and

---

<sup>31</sup> William A. Robson, *The Government and Misgovernment of London* (London, 1939), p. 93.

<sup>32</sup> Andrew Saint, 'Introduction,' in Andrew Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People of London, The London County Council 1889-1965* (London, 1989), p. xxi.

<sup>33</sup> Andrew Saint, 'Introduction,' pp. ix-xiv.

<sup>34</sup> Noreen Branson, *Poplarism 1919-1925: George Lansbury and the Councillors' Revolt* (London, 1979); Janine Booth, *Guilty and Proud of It! Poplar's Rebel Councillors and Guardians, 1919-25* (London, 2009); Gillian Rose, 'Imagining Poplar in the 1920s: Contested Concepts of Community,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 16 (1990), pp. 425-437; James Gillespie, 'Municipalism, Monopoly and Management: The Demise of Socialism in One Country, 1918-1933,' in Andrew Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People of London, The London County Council 1889-1965* (London, 1989), pp. 103-125.

<sup>35</sup> White, *London*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander, 'A New Civilisation?', pp. 297-320.

interrogate this relationship and in so doing offer new ways and tools for understanding London during this period.

*Governing the Modern City: Modernity and Citizenship*

ARP policies reveal particular assumptions about London as a site of anxious modernity. I use modernity here as a means to reflect on the publicly articulated fears about the massive expansion of London during this period and the ways in which the problems associated with those concerns became articulated through a narrative about development, progress and planning. Theoretically I relate this to Richard Dennis's discussions of urban modernity, which he uses in relation both to the way 'western' nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed 'urban growth, immigration, cultural diversity, and technological change on an unprecedented scale,' and to a particular experience of urban capitalism which impacted on the shape of the city and the lives of its inhabitants.<sup>37</sup> This provides a basis for contextualizing ARP and civil defence as solutions to the modern problem of the bomber. Responses to the problem of the bombardment were filtered by understandings about the meaning and nature of life in London. The systems established for dealing with the threat of war in the air were filtered through understandings about how to structure, manage and organize the London population.

I do not seek to articulate a coherent sense of modernity but, taking Lynda Nead's lead, understand modernity as: 'a set of processes and representations

---

<sup>37</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, introduction and chapter one; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change* (London, 1990), introduction.

that were engaged with their own historical conditions of existence.<sup>38</sup> The conditions of London's existence under the threat of war in the air were shaped by the assumptions both about the impact of the bomber on London and the expected responses of London's inhabitants. ARP then, marked out visions of how to live and organize life under those conditions.<sup>39</sup> Plans for ARP, like the plans for improvements in London's streets or housing, offered visions of, and assumptions about, life in the modern city, and so one illuminates the other. ARP plans expose ideas and fears about the modern urban condition and so offer a means to consider questions about how urban space was understood across my period.

Thus, I read ARP policies alongside other documents related to urban planning, inserting them into the story of the development of London. Sally Alexander has interrogated social surveys to explore interpretations of London's expansion during the interwar period. Specifically, she focuses on the London School of Economics' *New Survey of London Life and Labour* (NSL), the follow-up to Charles Booth's survey, and the government's Barlow Commission on the Geographical Distribution of the Industrial Population (1940). Alexander suggests that the surveys reveal a London marked by improved living and leisure conditions for labour, enabled by lower prices, higher wages and some security from poverty, manifest in community responsibility to provide relief to the unemployed. London is revealed as a site of experiments in living enabled

---

<sup>38</sup> Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People Streets and Images in Nineteenth Century London* (London, 2000), p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Lynda Nead's exploration of mid-Victorian modernity argues that modernity is not a grand historical narrative but, 'at any given time, modernity was a configuration of extremely diverse and unresolved historical processes,' in particular Nead calls for attention to be paid to the 'local elements that constitute modernity and to the tensions and irregularities that create modernity's conditions of existence,' see: *Victorian Babylon*, p. 5.

through effective government; the Labour dominated LCC and Labour Party MPs in working-class boroughs were offering hopes of improved living conditions through facilitating education and health-care programmes. On the other hand, by the late 1930s the size of London and the imbalances of wealth and power within the city had come to be viewed as a threat to the health and well being of London's population. Above all, it was feared that the concentration of wealth, power and people within the city could at any moment be wiped out by bombs. While these fears were never realized, planning documents produced during the war, such as the CLP, looked back at the interwar period with a sense of surprise that the congested and overcrowded communities of an unplanned London did not riot considering the misery and exhaustion produced by the unplanned city.<sup>40</sup>

The social surveys of the interwar period were articulated on the assumption of London at peace. The planning documents that followed in the early to late 1940s dealt with the consequences of war, building on the urban planning strategies that had emerged through London governance and planning during the first half of the twentieth century. I suggest that ARP policies can themselves be understood as planning documents, however they were not about building houses and hospitals but about mapping out the most appropriate ways to manage a population under air-raid conditions and outlining how that population could live within those plans. In taking this approach, the thesis aims to move on from a social history of London and civil defence to offer a cultural history of London and war in the air; considering what the imagined and actual

---

<sup>40</sup> Alexander, 'A New Civilisation?', pp. 296-320.

impact of the bombing of London reveals about how London was understood during this period.

Two theoretical positions structure my analysis of ARP plans. On the one hand, the thesis utilizes theories of governance and governmentality and the related field of spatial theory as a way of approaching ARP policy documents and the maps, plans and visual material that accompany them.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, I consider ARP as a fantasy of urban life that articulated particular ideas about life within the city.

The thesis considers ARP as a form of governance: an example of what Frank Mort defines as 'specific programs of government and strategies of rule.'<sup>42</sup> As a solution to bombardment, ARP offered strategies of governance: in regulation of behavior, and in the mobilization of the population. The steps people needed to take to protect themselves were expressed through handbooks, pamphlets, broadcasts, newsreels, on posters, in rallies, parades and displays. The technologies of the state sought to rally the population into action against air raids. This was expressed as a political action through the projection of the ideal citizen.

Brad Bevan defines citizenship as 'desirable patterns of behaviour in both public and private life which interlocked with the cultural norms of a burgeoning liberal democracy.'<sup>43</sup> Sonya Rose expands this to suggest that citizenship is a membership category defining who does and does not belong to a particular community, formally linked to the notion of rights that accrue to members, and the obligation they owe the state in return. She understands citizenship as it

---

<sup>41</sup> Nickolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom, Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1999); Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003), pp. 4-7.

<sup>42</sup> Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' p. 126.

<sup>43</sup> Bevan, *Leisure, Citizenship*, p. 7.

emerged in the Second World War as a 'moral or ethical practice deemed crucial for the nation's survival.'<sup>44</sup> Bevan has understood citizenship in the later 1930s as predicating and demanding social cohesiveness, and Rose articulates how British people participated in and experienced a new social solidarity which shaped their wartime experiences and offered new possibilities for social transformation.<sup>45</sup> The thesis provides an opportunity to test these arguments about the nature of citizenship in the period.

Like Bevan and Rose, I understand citizenship as a relational concept that acts to define membership of a particular community: in this instance an imagined national community at war. However, in the context of London, the notion of 'obligation' is complicated by competing ideas about the meaning of urban life and municipal citizenship. Relocating debates on citizenship to the 1930s and to the urban context challenges national accounts of citizenship, revealing how the citizen can be spatially located. In some parts of London, ARP offered a fantasy of urban life related to working-class rights and backed by technically informed municipal government. Here I use citizenship, not as an individual marker of participation in a liberal democracy, but as an ideological battleground around which particular ideas about the nature of the metropolis were debated.<sup>46</sup> This too marks the limits of ARP as a national governance strategy.

In analysis of the history of governance of London, the thesis also draws on theories of space. In the articulation of space I have found the Lefebvrian

---

<sup>44</sup> Rose, *Which People's War?*, pp. 15-20.

<sup>45</sup> Bevan, *Leisure, Citizenship*, p. 9; Rose, *Which People's War?* p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> On citizenship and identity, particular the wartime idea of 'active-citizenship' see: James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, 2010).



model a useful one for thinking about London as a modern city. Lefebvre defines space as produced through: 'representations of space,' or the conceptualization of space by scientists, planners and engineers, who articulate how space should be shaped. Secondly, Lefebvre defines space as produced through representational spaces, understood as directly lived by users and incorporating themes of imagination and appropriation. Finally, Lefebvre draws our attention to the role of spatial practices: how everyday practices build urban reality. Drawing on Lefebvre, the thesis examines the role of ARP as a new representation of the space of London, and in particular the roles of scientists, planners, engineers and architects within this process. It also examines the way that building projects, building regulation and other forms of governance became embedded in the routines of city life.<sup>47</sup> Within the thesis I use Lefebvre's model to help fit ARP into a wider story about the development of the modern city. Offering a way to approach ARP not simply as a solution to bombing but a solution to perceived problems associated with urban space.

Some of the most influential work on governmentality in the field of modern British history has focused on the technologies of power of the liberal state and its role in the production of liberal subjects. Patrick Joyce has suggested that we should understand nineteenth-century British cities in terms of strategies of governance that articulated particular ideas about the population of those cities: for instance, the sanitary city was marked out by new ideas about urban space and was brought into fruition by engineers who reshaped the

---

<sup>47</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), p. 4. Despite his critique of capitalism Lefebvre had a troubled relationship to Marxism and particularly to socialist politics see: Michael Kelly, 'Henri Lefebvre,' 'Obituary', *Radical Philosophy* (1992), available online: <[http://www.radicalphilosophy.com/default.asp?channel\\_id=2191&editorial\\_id=9838](http://www.radicalphilosophy.com/default.asp?channel_id=2191&editorial_id=9838)> (accessed February 20 2006).

experience of the city, which in turn impacted on the individuals within that city. Thus, Joyce suggests, the ability for running water to enter homes created new ideas about hygiene and individual health that impacted on the creation of the modern self.<sup>48</sup> In turn, Joyce considers how spaces of the city reveal particular ideas about behaviour: public parks and spaces of recreation marked out new ideas about appropriate forms of leisure. These spaces, Joyce suggests, articulated the subject by defining who could and could not access those spaces and so impacted on particular choices available to particular groups within the city.<sup>49</sup> His rendering of governance and the city does not understand space as a monolithic social order but rather considers social ordering as a fluid activity.<sup>50</sup> I use this model to consider how ARP sought to regulate the urban landscape so as to shape behaviour.

Yet, Lefebvre's model provides a method for challenging and interrogating those modes of 'modern' urban regulation. The interrogation of particular spaces within the thesis, for example ARP depots, rest on the assumption that London was given meaning through the processes outlined in Lefebvre's trichotomy. Representational spaces and urban practices offer a way of considering interaction with representations of space, exploring experiential aspects of inhabiting, working and moving through represented spaces. Thus, Lefebvre's model offers a means to interrogate the war and social change thesis by exploring the relationship between the citizen and the state at the level of encounters with the spaces of the state: ARP depots, air raid shelters, regulated streets and spaces of ARP recruitment.

---

<sup>48</sup> Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, pp. 14, 73.

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

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

This thesis then considers ARP as a governance strategy. In so doing it aims to take up the challenge discussed above to 'articulate the meaning of the British state as a political entity.' Rather than considering the structures of that state, it considers the strategies of rule that emerged from the state and how this impacted, or not, on the daily lives of its citizens: projecting particular ideas about life and social action within London. This too reveals change over time as changing responses to war in the air, and the management and organization of services to deal with that threat, physically displayed ideas about the function and role of government in society.

### **Representing London**

The thesis deals with a number of documents that represent or visualise London under bombardment including maps, plans, photographs and diagrams. It addresses a number of areas related to representation and the war in the air's impact on the urban landscape. Existing analysis of the visual themes and representations of the Second World War have explored representation to consider particular subjects or historiographical themes: gender, the Home Guard, and the people's war.<sup>51</sup> In these studies, visual sources have been considered as cultural products with implications for the generation of wider meaning. Within the thesis I build on and use these approaches to consider particular representations of ARP workers, considering how and why workers were visualised in a particular way and in turn what is left out of those particular visualisations. My approach aims to break down official representations of ARP

---

<sup>51</sup> Rose, *Which People's War?*; Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*; Hall, 'The Social Eye,' pp. 71-120.

workers by looking at how this related to wider public perceptions of those workers. I also aim to break down the visual association of ARP with the people's war (Figure 0.1) by considering how ARP was related to longer-term issues in London about labour, pay and workers rights.

Other historians and cultural theorists have considered visual sources as material objects. Here, images may be brokers of meaning, but those meanings are also shaped by underlying structures that go beyond the images themselves. This includes the way style, genre and ideology structure the physical attributes of the image and the rules and conventions of representation.<sup>52</sup> In this way, particular modes of representation have been understood to produce a 'period eye': a particular way of looking at things, a 'visuality' structured by dominant modes of visual representation within a given period.<sup>53</sup>

As discussed above in relationship to representation and space, I understand the visual material related to official forms of ARP as cultural brokers of urban regulation. However, the thesis seeks to avoid reducing London under bombardment to merely a set of hegemonic discourses on urban regulation.<sup>54</sup> In the choice of sources associated with ARP I investigate official plans but then explore how these were modified, challenged or contested at the

---

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, 'Introduction: Photographs as Objects,' in Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, *Photographs, Objects, Histories* (New York, 2005), p. 2; Peter Burke, 'Interrogating the Eye Witness,' *Cultural and Social History*, 7 (2010), p. 438; Lynda Nead, 'Animating the Everyday: London on Camera circa 1900,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (2004), pp. 65-90.

<sup>53</sup> The term 'period eye' is particularly associated with the work of Michael Baxendale, whose influential study of modes of representation in fifteenth-century Italy suggested a relationship between dominant ways of representing and picturing the world and cognitive processes: Michael Baxendale, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford, 1988), part II. See also the discussion on Stuart Hall above. On the idea of visuality as shaping ways of looking see: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 5-7; Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'The Right to Look,' *Critical Enquiry*, 37 (2011), pp. 476, 480.

<sup>54</sup> Frank Mort in particular is critical of this reading of the representation and visual culture within planning documents. Mort is critical of historical analysis that see technologies of urban order only as creators of urban regulation. See: 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' pp. 124-126.

local level. In this way, these sources do not offer one, overarching model of visuality, but are rather competing and often contradictory 'cultural forms through which the modern city was given meaning.'<sup>55</sup> In this context, I understand plans for ARP as offering a social imagination of the city. By imagination I do not mean the individual internalization of ideas but a 'social imagination,' related to the collective representation of specific ideas or policies and also presented through literary and other cultural forms. Theoretically my approach to sources is underpinned by Frank Mort's model for analysis of 1940s planning documents, like the CLP.

Mort suggests that analysis of planning documents have important cultural consequences that have not always been recognized by histories of urban planning. He argues that policy histories are typically grounded in a particular reading of urban planning, in which programs are judged against their enactment as actual schemes for the redevelopment of the city. However, as Mort points out, this ignores that planning documents generated a plethora of meanings about the metropolitan environment that were often disproportionate to their enactment as actual schemes.<sup>56</sup> Mort offers an approach for reading these documents, suggesting we need to consider both the representational and cultural traditions that generated their visual themes and the wider political and professional discussions about the future of London that framed them.

Mort suggests that representations within wartime planning documents produced a fantasy of urban life, not in the psychoanalytic sense but as a 'conscious construction of an imagined urban scene that was in excess of the

---

<sup>55</sup> Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' pp. 122-4.

socially possible or politically acceptable.' It is this idea of a social fantasy that I refer to in my use of imagination throughout the thesis, suggesting that visual representations have implications for wider collective consciousness. Mort argues that maps, diagrams and photos contained within 1940s planning documents imposed a diverse range of cultural and moral visions of the city through the ordering of space, perspective and urban functions.<sup>57</sup> The thesis similarly suggests that ARP plans, visions of ARP services and representations of the bombed urban landscape generated competing ideas about life within London.

Within my discussion of ARP plans and representations, I consider how discussions about protecting the city impacted on imagined life within the city. During the 1930s, debates about the impact of ARP as regulating social life heightened demands for disarmament. The predicted restrictions necessary to protect individuals in cities, articulated through ARP plans, were viewed as placing unbearable limits on daily life. In this way, ARP was used to project different ways of living within the city. I explore particular schemes for ARP, reveal particular fantasies of urban life and a competing visions of citizenship. More widely, the moral associations of ARP workers projected through visions of ideal behaviour offered those who signed up to services a new agency to see and be seen in the city and to subvert or challenge official policy.<sup>58</sup>

In summary, then visual sources offer a means for me to interrogate how ARP, defence and the actual bombing of the city were represented to the public.

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, pp. 124-126.

<sup>58</sup> On the city as a site of display: Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, p. 3 and Chapter five; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Translated by Stephen Rendall (London, 1988), pp. 91-130; Edmund White, *The Flaneur: A Stroll through the Paradoxes of Paris* (London 2001); David Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory - or How to Enjoy London': Guidebook representations of Imperial London,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), pp. 279-297.

Through comparison with other plans, visions and descriptions, I consider why particular representations were chosen and whether, or not, the wider public accepted these social imaginations. In turn, analysis of the representation of ARP supports those who have argued that visual culture could provide a powerful tool in structuring ways of seeing, and thus act as a tool of governance. However, the thesis reveals a range of representations that challenge assumptions about hegemonic visuality. Competing ideas and visions of London presented in ARP plans offered multiple new ways of imagining life in London. These complexities offer a more complicated narrative to the war and social change thesis.<sup>59</sup>

### **Memory and Envisioning the Past**

The final theme considered within the thesis explores how the bombing of London and the civil defence of the city has been remembered as a national event. Here I explore memory as an active process considering how the bombing of the city was translated as it occurred. My approach to memory incorporates and interacts with my wider consideration of representation within the thesis, particularly building on Hall's discussion of the Second World War creating the context for new social imaginations of the populations and a moment of national discovery of the working classes. Hall relates this particularly to the blitz, as a moment when people's everyday lives were brought to the public eye, particularly the lives of the urban working classes.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, analysis of representations of the blitz within the thesis reveals particular ways of visualising bombardment within a distinctly urban and working-class

---

<sup>59</sup> Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' pp. 150-151.

<sup>60</sup> Hall, 'The Social Eye.'

environment, which, I suggest, has formed a particular popular memory of wartime Britain.

The blitz has become worked and re-worked into stories of national wartime survival and fortitude. In this reworking, the narrative of the blitz, something only experienced in a select number towns and cities, has become the narrative of the nation.<sup>61</sup> Angus Calder has shown how the blitz was mythologised as a moment of national belonging in which the population under duress came together and collectively stood up to the war in the air and its consequences. It was onto the ordinary people that the myth was projected and the fortitude of London came to represent a national fortitude that would be generalized about across all bombed cities.<sup>62</sup> Calder suggests that the convoluted reality of Britain at war was rarified in the creation of the myth. On the one hand my concern to discuss representation of the bombing of London is an issue of methodology. While Calder uses an array of visual sources, his discussion of the myth is 'barthesian' and semiological, resting on the creation of myth through language not vision. I seek to redress this neglect, interrogating the visual culture of aerial bombardment and its role in the myth-making of the blitz. On the other hand, I aim to open up the discussion of visual sources and relate them to a wider history of the visual culture of London at war, specifically considering some of the visual symbols associated with London at war: the celebration of the heroic East End under bombardment and the survival of St Paul's Cathedral. I consider how, and why, these symbols came to create a particular collective

---

<sup>61</sup> Lucy Noakes questions the universalised narrative of the blitz when the bombing of London was really only concentrated on the East End and a few other boroughs: 'Making Histories: Experiencing the Blitz in London's Museums in the 1990s,' in Gordon Martel (ed.), *The World War Two Reader* (New York and London, 2004), p. 423.

<sup>62</sup> Calder, *The Myth*, p. 128.



consciousness about the bombing of London and in turn created wider meanings about national survival and sacrifice.<sup>63</sup>

In making sense of bombardment, we see a process of translation between public and private memory. Amy Bell has inserted individual narratives into this wartime culture. In an analysis of diaries and memoirs produced during and about the London blitz, Bell describes a relationship between the individual and the collective, suggesting that those who experienced the blitz used these narrative forms to articulate personal fortitude. Bell questions work that has assumed that collective memory is something that is imposed as a form of false consciousness and asserts: 'I do not believe that a myth, or a collective memory of the war exist separately from those who created it.'<sup>64</sup>

Bell is right to suggest that witnesses to the bombing of London did insert themselves into these narratives of heroic survival. However, I also seek to offer alternative readings to those narratives of survival. The thesis as a whole suggests that bombardment was an existential crisis, a direct threat to individual, national and social life. The final chapters of the thesis therefore consider the way in which the crisis of modernity, marked by the actual bombing of the city, was visually mediated. The fear, worries and concerns about how London would cope under the conditions of bombardment meant that the bombing of the city was carefully monitored, the communication of bombing in local and national press was overseen by the Ministry of Information, and limits were placed on what could be pictured to ensure that the more disturbing aspects of the bombed city were not shown.

---

<sup>63</sup> On the popular memory of the Second World War as a moment of shared sacrifice see: Lucy Noakes, *War and The British: Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London, 1998), pp. 1-15.

<sup>64</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, p. 6.

Amy Bell has shown that the propagandistic filming of the city was constrained by the ambiguous messages of the devastated city. At the height of blitz the chief censor required each panning shot of London to begin on undamaged building, conclude on undamaged building and not linger too long over damaged buildings. Bell suggests that scenes of devastation that Londoners saw as they travelled through the city seemed so unreal compared to the censored films of London.<sup>65</sup>

I consider how visual culture may have offered a framework to interpret the damaged city and provide a panoptic viewpoint of that city that has dominated popular memory of the Second World War. However, that framework interacted with located experiences and daily practices within the city. This offers a way to consider the city as a site of memory creation. I aim to show that the multiple and contested meanings of the symbols of the blitz have not been fully understood. Here I return to the spatial and use the ideas of Michel de Certeau. De Certeau moves from visualising the city from the aerial perspective to the located experiences of the city at the ground level: walkers and voyeurs reject the disciplined space of the city, transgressing boundaries, moving messily, infusing the city with memory and story.<sup>66</sup> The thesis similarly explores how the space of London was experienced and used by its inhabitants. I use de Certeau's ideas on walking to consider the relationship between visual and written accounts of London at the time and narratives and records of walking in the city. The model offers a means to move between collective experiences and

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, pp. 27-8.

<sup>66</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice*, pp. 91-110.

representations and the individual experiences. I aim to understand how one might create, challenge, support or modify the other.

The visualisation of war in the twentieth century has been bound up with national identity and collective memory.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, by locating analysis within the space of London, I suggest that there are multiple readings of visual culture generated by the conditions of bombardment. Here I utilise Lynda Nead's discussions of the images that came to represent nineteenth-century London. As discussed above, Nead defines London's modernity during this period as 'a set of processes that were engaged in an urgent and inventive dialogue with their own historical conditions of existence.'<sup>68</sup> The bombing of London forced reflexivity about the meaning and shape of the city and generated a plethora of images and responses. St Paul's Cathedral surviving the ravages of a firestorm that swept through the city in December 1940 has been articulated by Calder as a symbol of 'the heroism of the British under bombardment.'<sup>69</sup> Yet, exploring the representational practices that rendered this site symbolic, and breaking them down, offers scope for contesting those meanings. Images of the Cathedral rising above the flames cropped out the violence that surrounded it, representations were partial and those that visited the Cathedral after December 1940 would have encountered it at the heart of a decimated and confusing landscape that disturbed the visual culture of Britain's heroic survival.

Considering physical encounters with the decimated city also reveals the limits of visibility. Visual culture may have helped frame and give order to the bombed urban landscape but there were rival sets of practices within the city

---

<sup>67</sup> Nicola Cooper and Valerie Holman, 'War and Visual Culture since 1900,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), pp. 219-222.

<sup>68</sup> Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Calder, *The Myth*, p. 43.

that framed it in different ways. Thus, the thesis also seeks to consider the relationship between representations of London and urban practices, considering how walking the damaged landscape and personal photography may help to deconstruct wartime visuality and offer new ways of reading the symbols that came to represent the bombing of Britain.

## **Sources and Structure**

### *Sources*

In considering what aerial bombardment reveals about London during this period I have utilized a wide variety of material and sources. My concern to locate the war and social change thesis within the urban context and in relation to issues of governance and social order has meant that the thesis has drawn on official papers of national and local government related to ARP and civil defence. Sources included parliamentary debates and cabinet papers, from the National Archives, which were used to explore how policy decisions were made by central government. I also looked more specifically at papers relating to the regional governance of ARP and ARP in London, which are also held at the National Archives. At the local level, I explored how national policy was filtered by local authorities through a close reading of papers relating to ARP within the LCC papers. In turn, I explored ARP and civil defence holdings for local borough councils of Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Finsbury. The first two were selected because these held records of the experiences of managing services in some of the worst hit boroughs in London, the latter because of its well-publicised ARP scheme. In approaching these sources I wanted to both understand the

relationship between national policy and local authority and to cast fresh light on questions of governance and the nature of the state during this period.

Concentrating on the implementation of national policy at the local level offered a means to limit the thesis. I used these sources as a window into later 1930's and early 1940's ideas' about the meaning of both urban space and urban population. This material is able to illuminate how local and national authority systems, as well as checking and challenging one another, were both also limited by the practices and experiences of the inhabitants of the city themselves. The first four chapters consider contested meanings of defence and ARP. However, the contest is particularly within the public arena. This part of the thesis does not extensively use diary, autobiography, memoirs or oral history to consider how individuals or groups may have reacted to official policies and filtered and mediated them with their own experiences. The decision was taken to limit this kind of analysis because I wanted to understand the official frameworks that constructed meaning. I also felt that this kind of analysis was lacking for the period and wanted to provide a longer history of ARP, civil defence and aerial bombardment. My choice of sources was also directed by my interest in the meaning of the city as a socially imagined space.

With this focus on officially constructed and contested meanings of the city, a second set of sources were explored in an effort to understand how policies and ideas around aerial bombardment, and defence against this, were communicated to the population. The thesis interrogates a wealth of communicative material analyzing: broadcasts, newspapers, posters, recruitment rallies, ARP displays, exhibitions, city tours and parades. In the case of the BBC, analysis of papers related to broadcasts and programmes on the

subject reveals both the concerns about official meanings of ARP and also shows that the BBC attempted, prior to the war, to offer a balanced discussion of the impact of aerial bombardment through inviting speakers who could challenge official policy, particularly through discussions of the Spanish Civil War. In the context of wartime Britain, particularly communications on the blitz, I considered how the BBC worked with national government to help communicate particular ideas about the meaning of the blitz to the population, making the blitz into a media event with a wider impact on national collective consciousness. Indeed, in 1943, the government directed the scheduling of BBC programmes on the Battle of Britain in an effort to shift public perception of who and what was involved in protecting Britain from invasion in 1940 to 1941.

The focus on official communications, particularly visual communications, also stemmed from a concern to more fully interrogate the visual culture of aerial bombardment and the bombing of London. This builds, as discussed above, on the work of Stuart Hall. In my choice of sources I wanted to interrogate and test Hall's thesis, by considering the visual culture and representations of ARP and bombardment. Thus I looked at ARP posters, recruitment methods and ARP exhibitions. In the wartime context, particularly once bombardment began, I also considered a set of sources that visualised both the city and the civil defence services including: photographs, descriptions of bombardment and official and unofficial tours of bomb damage.

The first four chapters particularly focus on the contested meanings of London governance filtered through the changing meanings of ARP. The final two chapters explore how ARP was played out once bombs began to fall. I wanted to consider two things. Firstly, the thesis considers how the state actually

functioned at the local level during the blitz. Thus the first part of chapter four looks at official policies put in place to enable effective regional governance to deal with the bombs. In order to do so, it utilizes government papers on the London regional council's actions during the blitz and the LCC's papers.

However, I also wanted to consider how and why the blitz and the bombing of London came to be represented as national events. Here, two things influenced my searches for sources. Firstly, within *The Myth of the Blitz*, Calder refers to 'Battle of Britain Day,' the 15 September, the day in which the RAF succeeded in stopping daylight raids on London by taking out large numbers of aircraft. While Calder notes that the date was publically and popularly known and remembered, his focus on debunking the myth of Britain standing alone meant he offered little analysis of the public forms that remembrance took.<sup>70</sup> A cursory glance at the National Archives drew attention to the wide variety of national memorial days that were invented during the Second World War, including a 1942 celebration of 'Civil Defence Day.' This offered a way to consider the active creation of the popular memory of the defence of Britain as it was mediated in public. The second area, which is illuminating in relation to visual culture and memory, was interest in *Front Line*, HMSO's official history of the blitz.<sup>71</sup> The BBC used the book as 'the bible of civil defence' and its publication was intended to coincide with the first civil defence day.<sup>72</sup> The book has also been used within histories of the Second World War with little analysis

---

<sup>70</sup> Calder, *The Myth*, p. 33.

<sup>71</sup> HMSO, *Front Line*.

<sup>72</sup> BBC/WAC/R19/79/2, Letter from Betty Crawter, a public relations officer at the Ministry of Home Security to Cecil McGivern, BBC, regarding his programme, 'The Battle of Britain,' 24 August 1943.

of when or why it was produced.<sup>73</sup> Thus, I wanted to further explore the meaning and implications of these national events and how they had structured and impacted on the meanings of London under bombardment.

Opening up these official means of commemoration, the final chapters also utilized newspaper and magazine descriptions and depictions of the blitz on London. With censorship becoming an issue, I also wanted to consider the boundaries placed on what could be represented during the war. Thus I explored official guidelines on the photography of bomb damage. These chapters also moved on from earlier chapters by considering the limits of official policy not just at the level of governance but also as it was filtered by personal responses. Thus, I conducted a case study of the experience of one ARP worker on the Isle of Dogs, one of the worst hit areas in London, in an effort to explore how official policies may have structured personal experience but were also challenged or contested by them.

### *Structure*

The thesis is divided into three sections, each with two chapters that mark change over time. The first two chapters deal with the imagined consequences of bombardment and the set of policies put in place to deal with those consequences. Part two explores the reordering of London for war and section three considers the consequences of bombardment.

Chapter one offers a top-down approach to the issue of ARP, considering how ARP policies were socially and ideologically constructed and presented to

---

<sup>73</sup> Indeed Neil Matheson uses the book to discuss the visual culture of the period with little analysis of why it was produced: 'National Identity and the 'Melancholy Ruins': Cecil Beaton's Photographs of the London Blitz,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), p. 263. Angus Calder refers to the book in: *The Myth*, p. 128.



the population. The chapter aims to interrogate both the nature of the perceived threat of the war in the air and what dealing with that threat reveals about 1930s official constructions of citizenship. This broadly examines historical understandings of governance and citizenship discussed above.

This chapter reveals the contentious nature of ARP as it was politicized in relation to local, national and international tensions over the aeroplane as a technology of modern warfare. Using parliamentary debates and official communications of ARP to the population and the final plans for the national structure of ARP, the chapter sets up the official structure of ARP in London as a basis for the rest of the thesis.

The chapter suggests that a particular ARP policy developed in the interwar period that sought to protect individuals from bombardment through providing education in personal defence, population dispersal, and the establishment of ARP services. The chapter shows how these policies rested on an assumption that air war had the capacity to completely decimate a city, winning a war through a decisive knock-out blow. London, it was imagined, would crack under an air war and it was deemed necessary to move all unproductive bodies out of that space. Thus, ARP sought to impose a new governmentality on the population in an effort to prevent panic in air raids. At the same time it made assumptions about the nature of the city onto which those bombs would fall.

The chapter reveals that official strategies of ARP rested on citizens committing to certain modes of behaviour to help protect themselves within both their homes and communities. I suggest that government policy on ARP constructed a particular vision of citizenship in which citizens had a duty to

protect themselves from bombardment and in so doing took part in collective social action against an enemy other. This rendered ARP a national issue and incorporated local authorities into a national plan of defence.

Chapter two moves away from the top-down understanding of air warfare to look at how central policy was instigated at the local level. The chapter relocates those issues discussed in chapter one into the space of the city, considering the nature of the perceived threat to the city and interrogating the relationship between national and local government. It considers the multiple and contested meanings of ARP and defence as revealed in a case study of the London borough of Finsbury's plans for ARP. Through the employment of a radical architectural firm, Tecton, Finsbury developed a rival scheme to the government. Embodied within its scheme is a vision of planned urban life in which ARP is understood as another modern municipal problem, to be scientifically interrogated and solved.

Finsbury's ARP scheme viewed the problems posed by the modern city as something that can be dealt with by socially responsible elected bodies working with experts to find solutions. The strategies for dealing with air raids within this borough marked the creation of a socio-technological complex that related urban defence to urban planning. Through connecting ARP to discussions about housing, health and welfare, the Finsbury scheme offers a social imagination of London. In this way, ARP became a means to project an alternative idea about London governance and citizenship, related to the urban condition. This scheme however, conflicted with central government's ARP plans, which placed responsibility for protection of the population on the dutiful citizen who would either move to a safe area or, if needed within London, remain and educate

themselves in staying safe in air raids. In this way, national and local government conceived of solutions to the problems of bombardment in different ways, constructing competing notions of citizenship. ARP became an ideological battleground tied to urban space and the mediation between national and local agendas.

The Finsbury scheme was never enacted. However, through interrogating the visual themes of the war in the air, I suggest that a counter-visuality emerged to challenge official visions of London under fire. This builds on the ideas put forward by Frank Mort, discussed above. Mort considers the cultural consequences of planning documents rather than their enactment as actual schemes.<sup>74</sup> Thus, I consider the Finsbury scheme for ARP as a reactive response to central government demands for local authorities to establish ARP schemes, as a part of a history of urban planning exploring the background to the Tecton architects that established the scheme and as a part of a culture of urban display.

Thus, while the Tecton scheme was never enacted its visual themes resonated, offering new ways of imagining life in London. It offered an eclectic approach to improving the lot of the metropolis combining ideas on liberal paternalism of the state marked out by idealized community projects with private investment models, offering a highly local vision of ARP planning linked to an imagined national geography of defence.

Part one of the thesis offers a structural basis for the later chapters, providing an account of official policies. By locating those policies in the borough of Finsbury, I suggest ARP was a part of London's contested modernity

---

<sup>74</sup> Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' pp. 122-4.

consolidated around rival visions of the meaning of class, labour and citizenship and their relationship to the urban environment.

Part two of the thesis considers what ARP reveals about the wider meanings of London as both a governed, practiced and experienced space just prior to and during the first year of the war. This builds on historical arguments relating to governance, spatial theory and visual culture.

Chapter three interrogates the visual culture of recruitment and ARP. The effort to regulate the population to protect themselves from air raids was projected through representations of ideal citizens performing and conforming to good ARP practice. The thesis traces this in a visual culture that displayed the ideal actions of the citizen in the air raid. For example, I consider an ARP information film that illustrated ideal practices for those in a crowded London street during an air raid. ARP sought to regulate the way in which the city was used: removing citizens from the streets, monitoring the population's location and constructing local knowledge networks through ARP organizations. Within the film the congested modern city is visualised and brought to order through the instigation of good citizens working with ARP organizations.

However, I also aim to show the contested nature of London's landscape, challenging the idealized order presented by government ARP. Specifically through an interrogation of London's sites of modernity: town halls, county hall, the sites of learning and leisure around Kensington and the use of streets as a display spaces. I use ARP recruitment strategies of local authorities and national government to expose how the space of the city was imagined at this time and how the meaning of those spaces impacted on the meaning of defence.

Recruitment strategies rested on the ability to communicate clear messages and articulate uncontested meanings to potential volunteers. However, the spaces in which those messages were articulated to potential recruits could convolute meaning or offer opportunities to challenge official constructions. For example, one part of the chapter explores how Finsbury borough council representatives criticized a national recruitment rally held in the Royal Albert Hall to attack government ARP. Finsbury ARP wardens used their status as conforming national citizens to assert their right to be present within the space of the Hall and used this as a platform to demand alternative solutions to the problem of bombardment. Considering how and where recruitment strategies took place exposes the meanings and ideologies encoded in the city space.

Chapter four offers a general account of the establishment of ARP within London once war began. The fear of the war in the air that had shaped disputes about ARP and created rival visions of the city under fire was neutralized, to a degree, by the fact that the knock-out blow did not arrive. However, visions of the ideal ARP worker as a national hero that had emerged in pre-war recruitment campaigns made those workers open to criticism once war began. The ARP worker was viewed as being paid to do nothing and became an easy target for the press and public. In this way the visual culture of ARP became reinterpreted and developed new meanings. The chapter marks out these contested meanings of defence. Exploring, for example, the collective consciousness of ARP as it was projected on the figure of the ARP warden, constructed as a volunteer citizen.

Another part of the chapter looks at the problem of setting up the Rescue Service (RSD) in London. The latter were a paid service needed to clear up London. The projections of citizenship applied to the ARP volunteer, particularly the figure of the warden, were at odds with this paid service, recruited mainly from building personnel. RSD workers found themselves unable to access the cultural capital on offer from being volunteers, contested as it was by the public, and found themselves in an uncertain position as workers. The establishment of the RSD saw tensions over pay and discipline. The exploration of the LCC not only considers the decisions made by the LCC about how to govern and manage this service but also shows how this was mapped out in space. This offers a new approach to showing how the meaning of the state changed during this period. Looking at changes to the physical structures and spaces related to ARP physically marks out new meanings and policies and their interventions in daily life.

Analysis of ARP volunteers in this chapter concentrates on male ARP workers. My focus on men is in part due to the nature of the service explored, the RSD was a male-only service. It is also due, in part to the timescale and sources explored. I focus on representations of wardens, which in the period I explore, were predominantly representations of men. However, this is not to suggest that women did not play a large and important role in ARP. Indeed, huge numbers of women served in the ARP as wardens, fire watchers, as members of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) and in many other capacities (see appendix B).<sup>75</sup> This thesis forms does not reflect the whole of the ARP service

---

<sup>75</sup> Indeed, a number of historians have sought to show the importance of women to the various ARP services and have sought to reveal how and why women have been under-represented in the popular memory of these services, see: Penny Summerfield, "It did me good in lots of ways":

instead it considers the war in the air and its consequences. The RSD were chosen because they were directly related to the clearance and reordering of the city during and following air raids. This focus does not however, reflect the wider gender balance across ARP services. Chapter four instead aims to reveal the contested meanings of defence as projected onto male ARP workers and onto the spaces of the city that they worked within.

Chapter four also utilises Lefebvre's trichotomy by considering the limits of ARP as a mode of urban regulation. Representational spaces and urban practices offer a way of considering interaction with representations of space. The chapter explores ARP depots as representations of space: sites that embody particular understandings of the nature of the problem of bombardment and the kind of volunteers that should be within those spaces. However, by exploring practices within those spaces new meanings emerge, that suggest the depot was not a site of collective citizenship but a tense site, marked by issues about labour regulation and pay. I offer new ways of approaching of the meaning of British citizenship and in so doing challenge ideas about the war and social change thesis, considering the relation between citizen and state through the ARP depot, understood within the thesis as a space of the state.

Part three of the thesis considers the changing meaning of defence and the London landscape once bombs actually began to fall. Once the nature of the blitz on London became apparent, the fears over the breakdown of morale subsided. Yet, the chaos and dislocation within London remained a cause for

---

British women in Transition from War to Peace,' in Claire Duchon and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (eds), *When the War Was Over: Women, War, and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956* (London, 2000), pp. 13-28; Penny Summerfield, and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester, 2007); James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership and the Second World War: Continuities of Class* (Oxford, 2002).

concern, particularly within the contentious working-class boroughs of the East End. Chapter five considers how the bombing of London created a new set of spatial practices that sought to make the bombed city meaningful.<sup>76</sup>

The East End during the blitz came to represent the heroic fortitude of the working classes and, as Stuart Hall suggests, the bombing of the poorest sections of society was envisioned through realist modes of photography.<sup>77</sup> The bombing was also visualised through a cross-class appropriation of the East End, whereby members of the royal family, politicians and journalists came to witness the damage caused to the area. This witnessing by figures of authority gave legitimacy to accounts of the blitz on the East End, making the bombing meaningful by offering immediate solutions to the dislocation of bombardment and offering visions for the future of the area. In the translation of the bombing of the East End a set of social practices emerged to allow that bombing to be made meaningful.<sup>78</sup>

The chapter suggests that a wartime visuality emerged that constructed an idealized view of the East End. It considers the processes by which that visuality was constructed through walks, photographs and vivid descriptions of the impact and meaning of bombardment on that space. This visuality both offered a framework through which to encounter bombardment and provided a narrative for the future security of London. The bombing of the city was

---

<sup>76</sup> My views on the appropriation of space have been particularly influenced by Richard Dennis's recent work on 'representations' and 'productions' of London, particularly his discussion of the regulation of London's streets, which he suggests became bound to an exclusive social-geography that limited access to particular public spaces. He suggests that at certain times however, exclusive spaces were appropriated, for example during riots and protests or public parades and processions: Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, Chapters 4-5.

<sup>77</sup> Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 71-120.

<sup>78</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 3.



projected as a moment of rebirth, whereby the city would be rebuilt for the people who had suffered within. In this way, the socio-technological solutions that had related urban planning to ARP became the solutions for the consequences of bombing, enshrined in optimistic documents like the CLP.

The chapter reveals the processes whereby a localized experience – the bombing of the East End of London – had a wider cultural resonance; the reporting of the bombing made it into a national event and set the tone for later reports of bombing across the nation. These modes of representation were eventually condensed into an official history of the blitz on Britain produced by the government in 1942.<sup>79</sup>

However, the chapter then considers a set of rival practices, of unofficial tours, walks and photographs of bombed landscape. I use a case study of one walker to consider how individuals were able to subvert official visualisations of the East End by recording alternative readings and photographs of the damaged spaces around his home on the Isle of Dogs. I argue that the imagining of the East End as a site of heroic survival both gave a framework to the experience but was also a burden of representation that limited alternative readings of the landscape, specifically the recognition of the bombed city as a site of trauma and loss.<sup>80</sup>

Chapter six explores how the practices of walking and observing the bombed city that emerged during the first months of bombing changed into official parades and ceremonies that moved out of the East End and into the nationally meaningful space of the City. This considers the meaning of London

---

<sup>79</sup> HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942).

<sup>80</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 3.

as a national space. The chapter explores the public commemoration of the civil defence of Britain in 1942. The 1942 civil defence national memorial day is understood as an experiment in commemoration that recognized the blitz as a traumatic moment to be marked and memorialized. However, by 1943 this mode of commemoration had shifted into a more general commemoration of the blitz that incorporated the civil defence services into the commemoration of the Battle of Britain. The chapter demonstrates that by 1943 the anxious modernity of the London visualised through the lens of bombardment during the 1930s was no longer present. It also argues that the trauma of bombardment was no longer nationally recognized within the official visualisation of the city. Thus, a new modernity was facilitated through the official commemoration of the defence of Britain. In this process, older institutions, such as St Paul's Cathedral, incorporated newer institutions, such as the civil defence services and local authorities, in a new form of commemoration. This new commemoration offered a securer future whereby the future of London was imagined within a physical manifestation of its past, and this also tied civil defence to 'traditional' forms of pageantry centred on Whitehall and Buckingham Palace.

However, continuing with the theme of the city as a practiced place, I consider the relationship between the nationally imagined experience of the blitz on London and located meanings. Thus, I consider how St Paul's Cathedral was at once a symbol of national survival against the blitz and a site of commemoration, but also pock-marked, battered and bruised and surrounded by devastation the Cathedral was a symbol of the trauma and loss experienced by those who had lived under the conditions of bombardment.

This thesis therefore uses the war in the air as a lens on the history of London in the period. The set of representations and practices that emerged to deal with the threat of war in the air and its actual enactment reveal a London made of competing ideas about the modern urban condition and the bodies that circulated within. The London that emerged from that final bombardment was one that looked to the future with a carefully managed narrative of its past. By breaking down that vision this thesis seeks to explore how the city was a contested space, suggesting alternative readings of the London landscape under war in the air, as it was made by looking, walking, display, pageantry and the fantasies offered by ARP policies. This aims to contest narratives of ARP and bombardment that have related them to the people's war, opening up alternative readings related to urban practices. It also offers new readings of the visual culture of bombardment, suggesting the processes that rendered the city meaningful during the blitz and offering alternative readings of London. Finally through analysis of the structures of ARP and civil defence institutions it opens up the meaning of the British state looking at how governance functioned at the local level and exploring how and why this was a contested terrain.

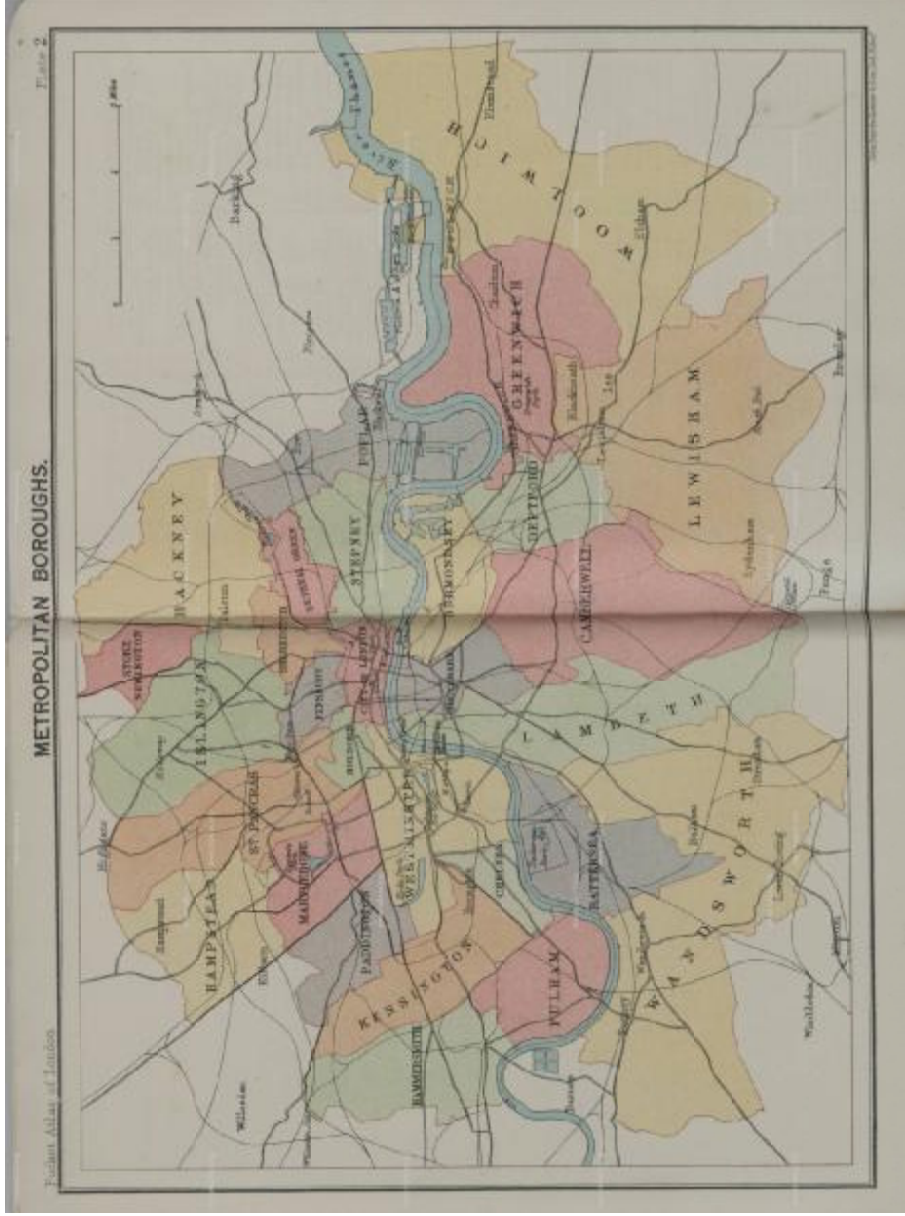


Figure 0.2., Map showing the 28 Metropolitan Borough Boundaries, *Bartholomews Pocket Atlas and Guide to London* (London, 1922), available online at [http://www.hipkiss.org/data/maps/bartholomews-pocket-atlas-and-guide-to-london\\_1922\\_metropolitan-boroughs\\_2000\\_1486\\_600.jpg](http://www.hipkiss.org/data/maps/bartholomews-pocket-atlas-and-guide-to-london_1922_metropolitan-boroughs_2000_1486_600.jpg) (accessed March 5 2011).

## **Part I**

# **Imagining War In the Air**

## Chapter One

### Establishing Air Raid Precautions in Pre-War London. Government Approaches to ARP 1932-1939.

The speed of air attack, compared with the attack of an army, is as the speed of a motor car to that of a four-in-hand and in the next war you will find that any town which is within reach of an aerodrome can be bombed within the first five minutes of war from the air, to an extent which was inconceivable in the last war, and the question will be whose morale will be shattered quickest by that preliminary bombing? I think it is well also for the man in the street to realise that there is no power on earth that can protect him from being bombed. Whatever people may tell him, the bomber will always get through.<sup>1</sup>

the main mass of people are completely uninstructed on a subject which will vitally affect each one. That subject is the fearful menace of air power.<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction

In 1932 during a debate on disarmament Stanley Baldwin made a famous closing speech to the House of Commons in which he outlined his fears and concerns about attacks from the air. The speech was in response to a motion proposed by Clement Attlee for the British government to 'give clear and unequivocal support to an immediate, universal, and substantial reduction of armaments on the basis of equality of status for all nations'.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the debate there was general discussion of armaments, of the Locarno Treaty and a debate about the function of the League of Nations in preventing war, particularly in light of the Manchurian question and the invasion of the area by Japanese forces and the subsequent heavy bombing of Shanghai. In his summing

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 270 col. 632-3, 10 November 1932.

<sup>2</sup> L.E.O. Charlton, *War Over England* (London, 1936), p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 270 col. 525, 10 November 1932.

up Baldwin focused particularly on war in the air, famously stating: 'the bomber will always get through.'<sup>4</sup>

Immediately following the speech Sir Herbert Samuel, the recently departed Home Secretary questioned Baldwin's comments, asking what would happen if Baldwin's statement was followed to its logical conclusion. Herbert found himself:

obliged to take the earliest opportunity of expressing his strong disagreement with the doctrine advanced by Mr. Baldwin, who said that all demands to forbid the bombing of civil populations in war time, and all similar efforts, were merely a waste of time.<sup>5</sup>

Samuel was angered by Baldwin's assertion that in a time of war treaties would not be respected. He argued that without such treaties, 'the world would be reduced to utter despair of the possibility of ordered human progress.' He suggested that the League of Nations, as an international accountable body, was a means to ensure the will of public opinion to bring about peace was upheld through the formulation and enforcement of treaties.<sup>6</sup>

As the opening quotes reveal, 1930s British culture was increasingly 'air-minded.' New interest emerged around the exciting modern technology of aeroplanes, yet this was often couched in 'an awareness of the nation's aerial peril.'<sup>7</sup> These concerns and fears about the impact of modern technology allowed Baldwin's statement to take on a life of its own, becoming a benchmark in British

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, col. 633.

<sup>5</sup> 'Treaties to Limit War, Sir H. Samuel's Reply to Mr. Baldwin,' *The Times*, 12 November 1932, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Brett Holman for sending me a copy of his PhD thesis and for fruitful discussions of the topic and sources for the development of air warfare in the 1930s: 'The Next War in the Air Civilian Fears of Strategic Bombardment in Britain, 1908-1941,' (Phd Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2009), quote from p. 12.

discussions around the issues of aerial bombardment.<sup>8</sup> During the thirties Baldwin's phrase came to reflect assumptions about the nature of air warfare, specifically the assumption that the bomber would dominate future wars. Air as a dimension of war was to alter the understanding of warfare forever and with it the understanding of those cities that it was predicted would be its targets.<sup>9</sup>

The force of Baldwin's argument struck a chord, drawing on anxieties about national governments' powers to regulate air power at the international level.<sup>10</sup> In different ways Samuel and Baldwin were dealing with making sense of the impact of this destructive and modern technology on the modern world. Could these machines be held in check through treaties and sanctions, or would modern technological war completely reshape modern life? In turn, Samuel's fears over war in the air meaning the end of 'ordered human progress,' tapped into wider concerns about ability of nation-states to find ways to regulate a

---

<sup>8</sup> Ian Patterson gives a useful account of the resonance of this speech and the impact of air power on British social and cultural imagination in the interwar period: *Guernica and Total War* (London, 2007), pp 75-76. A cursory glance at *Hansard* reveals the way in which the speech was recycled over and over again in discussions of aerial warfare see, *Hansard*, vol. 275, col. 131, 27 February 1933; *Hansard*, vol. 276 col. 592, 23 March 1933; *Hansard*, vol. 283, col. 984, 29 November 1933; *Hansard*, vol. 93, col. 894, 23 July 1934; *Hansard*, vol. 286, col. 2140, 8 March 1934; *Hansard*, vol. 103 col. 224, 18 November 1936; the list goes on and generally the phrase is used regarding defence, the expansion of the airforce and in debates over international relations. As the 1930s went on this solidified around issues of national defence, security and ARP. The phrase continued to be cited in the post Second World War period in discussions about new types of aircraft, see for example, *Hansard*, vol. 485 col. 359, 06 March 1951; *Hansard*, vol. 183 col. 1317, 22 October 1953. The phrase was also quoted in debates over nuclear defence strategy, *Hansard*, vol. 577, col. 428, November 1957. The phrase shifted in meaning over the course of the Twentieth Century and into the Twenty-first. In 2002, for example, it was quoted in a debate on consumer protection policy in which the bomber always getting through was compared to fraudsters always getting through. The phrase by this point had become a by word for scaremongering and was used to suggest that this kind of language was placing a barrier on effective policy, *Hansard*, vol. 387, col. 36, 17 June 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Holman, 'The Next War in the Air.' On the development of air warfare and theories surrounding this see: David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: An Essay on a Militant and Technological Nation* (Basingstoke, 1991). On the limits of British defensive strategy and air power see: James S. Corum, 'The Spanish Civil War: Lessons Learned and Not Learned by the Great Powers,' *The Journal of Military History*, 62 (1998), pp. 313-334.

<sup>10</sup> On the role of air warfare and international politics see: Brett Holman, 'World Police for World Peace: British Internationalism and the Threat of a Knock-Out Blow from the Air, 1919-1945', *War in History*, 17 (2010), pp. 313-32.



technology with the potential to disrupt and breakdown the systems of governance that ordered those states.

By the mid-thirties, future wars were imagined as fast-paced affairs, marked by a speedy and destructive 'knock-out blow' facilitated by air power and new technical knowledge.<sup>11</sup> The old strategy of slow-paced attrition between rival armies was relegated to the rural landscapes of France, modern wars would be urban affairs reflecting the need to break civilian as well as military strength by striking at infrastructure, industry and morale.<sup>12</sup> This chapter considers the way in which aerial bombardment created a new way of understanding the nation and its population. I use the policies developed to deal with aerial bombardment to consider how this constructed a discourse, both visual and narrative, about how the population should act to protect themselves from war in the air.<sup>13</sup> Specifically, I interrogate passive defence policies particularly Air Raid Precaution (ARP) programmes.

Throughout the interwar period there was an outpouring of literary, military and governmental thinking on how to deal with a population under bombardment.<sup>14</sup> By 1938 ARP was constructed by the National Government Act

---

<sup>11</sup> On the knock-out blow see, Uri Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber: the Fear of Air attack and British politics, 1932-1939* (London, 1980). On the mid-1930s understanding of the knock-out blow see: Charlton, *War Over England*.

<sup>12</sup> Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins: Restoring the Countryside of Northern France after the Great War* (Exeter, 1996). While air power was imagined particularly in terms of its impact on urban space, this does not mean that the rural landscape was not fundamentally altered by total war. In the need for intensive agriculture and armaments production, both rural and urban landscapes were changed, as an AHRC funded project at the University of Bristol has recently shown: 'Militarized Landscapes in Twentieth-Century Britain, France and the United States,' <<http://www.bris.ac.uk/history/militarylandscapes/>> (accessed 12 February 2011).

<sup>13</sup> On visual culture see: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London, 1999); Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 71-120; Paul Rennie, 'Socialvision: Visual Culture and Social Democracy in Britain during World War II,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), pp. 243-60.

<sup>14</sup> On a discussion of literary responses to mass culture and bombardment see: John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London, 1992). On governance and London see: Robin Woolven, 'The London Experience of

as a counter to violence from the air. As C.W.G. Eady, the Deputy Secretary of State at the Home Office in Charge of Air-Raid Precautions, commented: 'Somehow or other you have to try and find a way of enabling the essential parts of the productive life of the country to go on, not necessarily during the minutes when air raids are actually passing, but under air raid conditions.'<sup>15</sup> However, the very need for ARP schemes was a politicized and contentious issue. Some viewed the instigation of schemes to help the population survive aerial bombardment as a marker of the failure of nation states and international politics to effectively bargain for peace: why have a scheme to protect instead of a scheme to prevent? ARP schemes had to be justified and appropriately presented and represented to the population.

The chapter is divided into four sections and offers a top-down analysis of ARP exploring the development of official policies around ARP. The first explores how ARP developed from the end of the First World War. It considers the problems of establishing domestic and international defence strategies to deal with the threat of war in the air and summarises how bombardment was planned for in the literal material sense, outlining ARP and defence strategies at national level.<sup>16</sup> This section takes a narrative structure, outlining how ARP

---

Regional Government 1938-45,' *London Journal*, 25 (2000), 59-78. On the impact of war on the civilian population see: Edgar Jones, Robin Woolven, Bill Durodie and Simon, Wessely, 'Civilian Morale During the Second World War: Responses to Air Raids Re-examined,' *Social History of Medicine*, 17:3 (2004), pp. 463-479; Robert Mackay, *Half the Battle, Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War* (New York, 2002); Helen Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line, Air Raids, Productivity and Wartime Culture, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2006); Amy Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945,' *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 153-175.

<sup>15</sup> W.G. Eady Esq, 'The Progress of Air-Raid Precautions,' *The RUSI Journal*, 84 (1939), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> David Feldman, 'Preface,' Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch and David Feldman (eds), *Post-war Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949, Past and Present*, 210, Supplement 6, (2011), p. 9; see also: 2003 Balzan Prize for European History since 1900, 'Reconstruction in the Immediate Aftermath of War. A Comparative Study of Europe, 1945-50,' <[http://www.balzan.org/en/prizewinners/eric-hobsbawm/research-project\\_20\\_94.html](http://www.balzan.org/en/prizewinners/eric-hobsbawm/research-project_20_94.html)> (accessed 12 February 2011).

policies emerged, how they were put in place and their outcomes. Section two considers how the National Government sought to communicate ideas around ARP to the population. It argues that the government used ARP to construct a specific narrative about British citizenship and British democracy that offered visions of collective belonging for all; one that comes close to a vision of a united 'people'. This section suggests ARP was a direct statement about social order and the function of the citizen within that order.

Sections three and four unpick narratives of common citizenship by considering how ARP was structured at the local level with the imposition of a national scheme on London. This raises questions to be considered in the rest of the thesis about the relationship between national constructions and local experiences of ARP and the governance strategies that sought to take aerial bombardment in hand. The chapter aims to understand London at war as both a governed and imagined space. The final section outlines the official structure of ARP in London considering it as a form of governmentality that sought to modify and mediate the behaviour of the population in preparation for aerial bombardment.<sup>17</sup> The chapter outlines the structure of ARP as it stood at the start of the Second World War to provide a context for the rest of the thesis.

Chapter one then, looks to reframe the rhetoric of citizenship and social responsibility, historically considered to be a wartime construct, in relation to an existing rather than a future (wartime) moral economy and to see where the government perceived that moral economy to be located: in the space of the city or the body of the citizen.

---

<sup>17</sup> On the discussion of governmentality see the main introduction to the thesis.

## 1.1. The Bomber Will Always Get Through. The Problem of Defending the Air

### *Active Defence and the International Regulation of the Aeroplane*

Plans for dealing with aerial bombardment began in Britain as early as 1924 with the establishment of the ARP Sub-Committee headed by Sir John Anderson. This was a secret branch of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID).<sup>18</sup> The First World War had shown the population on the British home front that they too were vulnerable to attack. Air raids from Zeppelins and later planes on the mainland of Britain killed some 1,414 people and wounded a further 3,416.<sup>19</sup> Bombs hit buildings and infrastructure, ripping apart housing and opening up gaping holes across London, particularly on the east side of the city where the Thames had acted as a guide to bombers viewing the city from the air.<sup>20</sup> In this context, the landscape of London shifted. Black out regulations were established, St James's Park lake was drained so that Buckingham Palace was hard to identify from the air, and the state introduced a series of air raid safety precautions.

The First World War saw war in the air become a reality.<sup>21</sup> The exciting technology of aviation showed its capacity for violence.<sup>22</sup> This resulted in two

---

<sup>18</sup> Mike Brown, *Put That Light Out! Britain's Civil Defence Services at War 1939-45* (London, 1999), p. 1; Terence O'Brien, *A History of Civil Defence* (London, 1955), p. 5. The National Archive website provides a useful summary of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID). The committee was 'established permanently for the first time in 1904 as the government body charged with organising Britain's defence and military preparations. Its staff always included the Prime Minister, the War Secretary, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army and the First Sea Lord. During the First World War, its duties were largely taken over by a War Council drawn from Cabinet members and it did not resume full operations until 1922,' TNA, glossary, <[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/glossary/glossary\\_c.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/glossary/glossary_c.htm)> (accessed 16 February 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Charlton, *War Over England*, p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-12.

<sup>21</sup> H.G. Wells, *The War in the Air* (London, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane*, p. 15.

things. On the one hand the expansion and technological development of the aeroplane as a weapon of war.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, a development of policies and strategies to deal with the consequences of that weapon. In 1925 the ARP sub-committee began to investigate what would happen if the country were subjected to another heavy and sustained air attack in order to 'frame recommendations as to how the protection of the civil population could best be organized under these conditions.'<sup>24</sup> This remained a secret committee throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s. The Committee provided general guidelines to be adapted to local contexts should there be a need for ARP planning to go into action.<sup>25</sup>

Baldwin's comments on the bomber always getting through provide a window into early 1930s debates on air attack and the role of the bomber in national and international defence.<sup>26</sup> Debates fell loosely onto two sides.<sup>27</sup> On the one side, active defence planning aimed to keep the raider out and protect nations and empires through aviation capacity, thus building an air force strong enough to protect from the threat of other air forces. Active defence largely rested on military strategy.<sup>28</sup> On the other, legislation and passive defence planning sought to regulate aviation and offer protection to the populations threatened by bombardment.

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> TNA/HO 144/20058, CID, Protection of Civilian Population in Case of Air Attack, July 1931; TNA/HO 45/14650B, Civil Defence: CID: Air-Raid Precautions in the Event of War, 1923-1932.

<sup>25</sup> TNA/CAB/24/234, Committee of Imperial Defence paper, Air-Raid Precautions, Suggested administrative organisation for Air Raids Precautions Services, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Holman, 'World Police for World Peace,' p. 313.

<sup>27</sup> For example David Fernbach, 'Tom Wintringham and Socialist Defense Strategy,' *History Workshop Journal*, 14, (1982), pp. 63-91.

<sup>28</sup> Major Oliver Stewart, 'The Battle of London,' *Air and Airways*, September 1931, pp. 187-188; 'Air Exercises Extended,' *The Times*, 24 July 1931, p. 11.

Debates on active defence reflected on-going military and state level discussions about armament, the role of the aeroplane in war, the size and shape of the RAF and theories of interception through the use of fighter planes, observation strategies and the development of radar.<sup>29</sup> British military strategy viewed planes as a means to gain a knock-out blow in the context of war. This strategy rested on defense through offensive capability.

### *ARP and Passive Defence*

If the raider could not be kept out then ARP functioned as a remedy. ARP or 'passive defence' formed the practical strategies put forward for a population to cope when the raider got through.<sup>30</sup> The functions of passive defence covered: air raid warnings; the prevention of damage, this included gas masks, air-raid shelters and the blackout; the repair of damage; the maintenance of essential services; and informing the public about the dangers of air attack and the precautionary measures.<sup>31</sup> ARP encompassed both services and the communication of services.

Scholarship on ARP, civil defence and defence against aerial bombardment during the Second World War has largely been based on Terence O'Brien's seminal official history on the subject.<sup>32</sup> O'Brien provides an excellent overview of the structure of ARP and how this changed during the Second World

---

<sup>29</sup> TNA/CAB/24/256, Re-orientation of the Air Defence System of Great Britain, 16 July 1935; Alexander Rose, 'Radar and Air Defence in the 1930s,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 9 (1998), pp. 219-245.

<sup>30</sup> Eady, 'The Progress,' p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out*, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> O'Brien, *A History of Civil Defence*.

War. He also gives a useful account of the context of fear of bombardment and of the military context in which ARP planning emerged in the interwar period.<sup>33</sup>

Joseph Meisel uses O'Brien's study to outline the three phases of ARP development in Britain. This provides a useful summary of the relationship between the uses of places in war and government methods of defence and protection. The first phase, from the end of the First World War to 1935, remained largely a government secret limited to committee rooms and a select number of officials. The period was marked by a general study of ARP and secret guidance to government departments with a particular focus on gas. In 1928, ARP was constrained by the Kellogg-Briand pact: 65 states met up in Paris to sign up to a ten year rule, renewable each year, which outlawed war as an instrument of policy and constrained all areas of military preparation including ARP.<sup>34</sup> However, in 1929 an ARP committee was established at ministerial level to oversee the development of ARP policy.<sup>35</sup>

The second phase, from 1935 to 1938, was marked by the rearmament of European powers and a growing threat of war with the bombing of Abyssinia by Italy and the expansion of ARP in Britain. The new ARP department planned a series of handbooks to cover various topics. The government presented ARP as an individual duty, advising householders of their own responsibilities in protecting themselves against blast and bomb splinters from a near miss. On the side of government responsibility this phase also marked the establishment of

---

<sup>33</sup> Uri Bialer, 'Elite Opinion and Defence Policy: Air Power Advocacy and British Rearmament during the 1930s,' *British Journal of International Studies*, 6 (1980), p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London, 2009), pp. xix, 181.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph S. Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy and its Critics in Britain before the Second World War,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 5.3 (1994), pp. 302-304.

plans for the set up of ARP services specifically gas, decontamination, medical, rescue and clearance services.

The third phase of ARP began with the 1938 Munich Crisis, which prompted the government to issue 38 million gas masks. O'Brien described this as a radical move in the relationship between state and society where the government invested large sums into the protection of the population.<sup>36</sup> However, the crisis also exposed the inadequacy of ARP planning. There was a demand by the Labour Party and the public for shelters to protect the population from bombs.<sup>37</sup> In response, Sir John Anderson, the newly appointed Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security, got his friend engineer William Patterson to design a shelter which the government supplied free to 2.5 million families to protect against splinters and blast effects.<sup>38</sup> By the end of 1938, ARP policy was becoming entrenched within the minds of the population through broadcasting, newspaper articles, practical demonstrations, exhibitions and staged air raids.<sup>39</sup>

O'Brien's study provides a useful overview of what ARP actually entailed: the practical planning for air raids and the services established to help the population at war. It also shows how ARP was in part reactive, and that as the international situation became more heated practical policies had to be put in place to protect the vulnerable civilian population. However, the work is limited in its interrogation of the political context of ARP planning, particularly as it evolved at the local level, and it does not wholly expose how contentious ARP

---

<sup>36</sup> Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy,' pp. 306-307.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 306-307.

<sup>38</sup> These were free to householders under National Health Insurance Acts or with annual income less than £250. After free distribution in February 1939, shelters could be purchased for £5: *ibid*, p. 307.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter three.



was prior to the war.<sup>40</sup> ARP did not sit comfortably with a late 1920s and early 1930s anti-war climate in which moves towards rearmament were viewed as politically dangerous.<sup>41</sup>

### *Criticism of War in the Air: ARP and the Mechanisms of Peace*

The imagined impact of bombardment on populations politicized aerial warfare. Some viewed the active defence strategy of expanding air forces as tantamount to war mongering.<sup>42</sup> In 1934 Tom Wintringham, the future strategist for the Home Guard and one of the founders of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), was highly critical of the expansion of the RAF. He questioned the term defence because in military terms it was understood that there was no way to completely defend the air: 'That is a lie. An air force cannot defend. And the British Air Force is not designed for defence...an air force cannot

---

<sup>40</sup> The HMSO series outlining the official history of the Second World War has long provided a useful narrative overview of official policy with regard to war and a large number of books were published in this series yet, the only work in this series to be scrutinized and questioned in detail is R.M. Titmuss's *The Problems of Social Policy* in part because this formed part of the war and social change narrative described in the introduction. Books in the series include: W. K. Hancock and M.M. Gowing, *British War Economy* (London, 1949); W.H.B. Court, *Coal* (London, 1951); M.M. Postan, *British War Production* (London, 1952); Eric Lyde Hargreaves and M.M. Gowing, *Civil Industry and Trade* (London, 1952); other topics included, food, administration, agriculture, contracts and finance, financial policy and shipping.

<sup>41</sup> For example on 21 July 1938 the Labour dominated Finsbury Borough Council took a stance that was against air armament and resolved to support the Borough of East Ham who had sent a communication to Finsbury's Town Clerk. East Ham had asked the Council to support a resolution adopted by that Council welcoming the declaration by the ex-foreign secretary in the House of Commons on 2 February that it is the Government's intention to re-open the question of air-armaments with other countries. They urged the 'Government to take the initiative along the lines of Article 35a, of the British Draft Convention of 1935 and propose to the Powers that they shall immediately devote themselves to the working out of the best possible schemes providing for the complete abolition of naval and military aircraft and effective supervision of civil aviation to prevent its misuse for military purposes; stating that nothing short of the abolition of the air weapon will afford reasonable security from the air menace; and calling upon the Government to put forward for public examination plans for the control of civil aviation against abuse so that when negotiations are re-opened on air disarmament there may be the possibility of an international agreement which will bring a real measure of security to the peoples of the world,' from: ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Vol. 39. Apr 1938 to Mar. 1939, 14. Air Armaments, p. 333; Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane*, p. 42; Bialer, 'Elite Opinion and Defence Policy,' pp. 32-51.

<sup>42</sup> Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber*.

defend London except by raiding and destroying all enemy aerodromes before the bombs are launched.<sup>43</sup> Wintringham was writing from a politicized perspective and used the war in the air as a tangible means to articulate his concerns over government policies as illustrated by his later comment that bombing 'and not defence – is the war plan of the British Imperialists.'<sup>44</sup> On 18 September 1935, the National Peace Council issued a statement criticizing the government's active defence plans. The statement considered the use of bomb and gas attacks on a civil population as a 'barbarous perversion of science and industry.' The British government was criticized for building up its air force and for planning attacks against nations that threatened them.<sup>45</sup>

The National Peace Council was not just critical of active defence strategies. They saw policies on passive defence as implicitly facilitating war: 'the adaptation of rooms to render them gastight but unprotected against explosive or incendiary bombs; the purchase of cheap gas-masks and the organization of casualty and rescue services – are grossly inadequate, though they are calculated to produce a dangerous illusion of security.'<sup>46</sup> The statement argued the only passive defence that could be technically successful would be the provision of armoured gas-proof shelters, closed-circuit oxygen masks and provision of gas-proof suits. This however was viewed as rendering living conditions unbearable.<sup>47</sup> Within the peace movement, ARP was not divorced from war but seen as central to it. Living under ARP meant living in the condition

---

<sup>43</sup>T.H. Wintringham, *Why the Royal Air Force is to be Doubled* (London, 1934), p. 5; for the other side to this argument and early 1930s defensive strategy see footnote 28.

<sup>44</sup> Wintringham, *Why the Royal Air Force*, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> 'Precaution for Air Raids: Government Scheme Criticized,' *The Times*, 18 September 1935, p. 15; see also chapter two.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

of war and thus the implicit failure of mechanisms of peace. For this group, the only successful passive defence was the avoidance of war altogether through successful policy and diplomacy making and the international regulation of the aeroplane.<sup>48</sup>

Critiques of active defence reached their zenith within arguments that called for the replacing of national air forces with an international air police system that also monitored civil aviation. In this way no one nation could conquer the air. This was not just an issue of a political minority; active defence was considered and debated across party lines and in the later 1930s came to create disunity within the British peace movement.<sup>49</sup> Defence strategies were closely entwined within moral debates on war, peace and security.<sup>50</sup>

The tensions over defence policies reflected both real and imagined fears about modern war decimating Britain. From the early 1930s those mechanisms of peace established after the Great War began to be tested. In 1931, the Japanese placed a large military presence in China to defend their assets in the country. The League of Nations failed to place any limits on Japanese aggression in the area. Japan took over large sections of Manchuria and in 1932 aurally

---

<sup>48</sup> Wintringham, *Why the Royal Air Force*.

<sup>49</sup> On 3 October 1938 a number of members of the National Peace Council issued a statement to *The Times* criticizing the failure of policy to prevent Hitler taking Czechoslovakia and pointing out their treatment by Hitler had not been met by retaliation but by 'concession of a kind never before made by any nation except as the result of utter military defeat.' This marked a turning point as, despite continued critique of government policy and past failings, a number of key figures of the international peace movement suggested that the decision to not defend Czechoslovakia 'has brought us within reach of a power which has hitherto openly scorned the very principles of morality and justice upon which Western civilization is founded,' 'The Sacrifices by Czechoslovakia: Effect on Western Civilization,' *The Times*, 3 October 1938, p. 19. On this subject see: Holman, 'World Police.' On literary imaginations of control of the air H.G. Wells's *The War in the Air* provides a useful and fascinating articulation of early twentieth-century imaginings of air power in which air ships are imagined as attempting to conquer the air in the way that formerly navies had conquered the sea: Wells, *The War in the Air*, see particularly Chapters 4-6 which imagine airship fleet strategy.

<sup>50</sup> This will be discussed further below.

bombed Shanghai, resulting in the deaths of large numbers of civilians.<sup>51</sup> The bombing of Shanghai brought the horrors of bombardment to the British public as it was illustrated in text, photograph and moving image.<sup>52</sup> The Manchurian crisis did more than test the structures of international relations; it reminded the world of the realities of war from the air and placed war on the horizon again.

At the same time, Germany was pushing for equality of status and questioning the failure of other nations to disarm. In 1935, following announcements by Germany of rearmament, an ARP Department was set up as a civil Department of the Home Office, under Wing Commander E.J. Hodsell, who had been secretary to the sub-committee since 1929.<sup>53</sup> The Department sought to encourage the establishment of local ARP schemes through the provision of information on ARP based on research of the subject. This body sent out circulars and information to local authorities and organized conferences and meetings to bring together experts on architecture, technology, military strategy and local governance.<sup>54</sup> ARP as a passive defence measure emerged into the public realm when the international context suggested that war from the air was a real possibility.

The development of ARP behind closed doors reflected a need to prevent alarm amongst the population, but also an awareness of the politically contentious nature of implementing such plans in the public eye. In 1938 C.W.G.

---

<sup>51</sup> Overy, *The Morbid Age*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>52</sup> Holman, *The Next War in the Air*, p. 73; "China. 'Is war ever worth it?' Hunger, pestilence & famine stalk in the wake of destruction & death - graphic pictures from Shanghai epitomise the horrors of war!" Shanghai, China. Various shots of damaged buildings in war torn Shanghai, British Pathé Newsreel, issue date 14 March 1932, available online <<http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=2877>> (Accessed 7 February 2011); 'Fighting in Shanghai: The Japanese Offensive at Chapei,' montage of images including aerial bombardment, *The Times*, 24 February 1932, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup> BBC/WAC/R42/4/1, *Some Principles of Protection in Air Raids*, p. 1; Brown, *Put That Light Out!* p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, *The War History of the Architects Department*, p. 1.

Eady, the Deputy Secretary of State at the Home Office in Charge of Air-Raid Precautions, gave a lecture to the Royal United Service Institute (RUSI). In introducing his theme he commented that when initially asked to give the lecture in the summer of 1938 he hoped it would provoke mild interest. However, he gave the lecture following the September Crisis and described ARP as a 'very insistent reality touching the lives and safety of the civil population of this country in a way which no one can dispute.'<sup>55</sup> The last point, 'no one can dispute,' hints at the tensions and concerns that emerged around ARP. If the government was seen to be imposing ARP on the population, a political statement was being made about the inevitability of war and thus the failure or lack of motivation of the government to prevent war.<sup>56</sup> ARP relied on the population engaging and accepting policies in a very practical way, complying with regulations over their households, educating themselves on what to do in a raid and, for some, volunteering as a member of a service. This meant the issue had to be carefully communicated to the nation and there was a careful avoidance of imposing ARP on a non-voluntary basis.

#### *ARP as an Issue of Local Government*

By the early 1930s ARP had become a deeply political issue bound up with tensions over international policy and diplomacy and military strategy related to aviation and national policies related to passive defence. The newsreels had dramatically illustrated the human consequences of war in the air providing tangible evidence of the impact of offensive bombardment strategies.

---

<sup>55</sup> Eady, 'The Progress,' p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> O'Brien, *A History of Civil Defence*, p. 56; Mike Brown, *Put That Light Out!*, p. 3.

The legislation and government communications on ARP illustrate how emotive and contentious the issue could be. In March 1933 the work of the ARP sub-committee became public. At this time the decision was made to devolve responsibility for ARP to local authorities. In this way, the national government side-stepped a potential political-fall. Rather than establishing ARP as a national policy the government made it a part of local government policy and service provision. Practically speaking it made sense to devolve ARP to local authorities whose remit of service provision meant they had a closer relationship to the daily lives of the population and governance mechanisms in place to implement ARP. Yet, localizing the issue was also a means to ideologically move ARP away from the contentious issues around rearmament being debated at national government level and the widespread anti-war feelings within the British population.

In July 1935 a circular was issued by the ARP Department to all local authorities and private companies, which set out measures necessary for the safeguarding of the civil population from attack by hostile aircraft and invited them to participate in the establishment of this machinery. This circular, along with the 1937 ARP Act, directly reveals the government's concerns and fears over how to communicate the contentious issue of ARP. The cabinet paper drafts of the circular further expose the way in which the subject intersected with debates around rearmament and defense strategy.

In the first draft of the circular, ARP was placed within the context of Europe and international relations. This reflected an ARP agenda that sought to avoid the equation of ARP with the breakdown of mechanisms of peace: 'the need for these measures in no way implies a risk of war in the near future; nor

does it imply any relaxation of effort on the part of His Majesty's Government to ensure the promotion and maintenance of peace by all means in their power.'<sup>57</sup> This remained in the final draft of the circular. However, there was a much stronger emphasis on the fact that the government renounced bombing with the addition of the statement: 'His Majesty's Government strongly repudiate the idea of attacks on the civil population by means of indiscriminate bombing. Provision must nevertheless be made to minimize the consequences of such attacks should they ever be delivered.'<sup>58</sup> ARP was presented as on the side of peace, bombardment on the side of an aggressor.

In the initial draft references were made to strategies taken to defend the country in the First World War, particularly familiarity with air raid warnings. These references were completely scrapped in the final circular. In the context of a growing anti-war backlash reference to this former war could prove problematic.<sup>59</sup> In turn, the final circular removed any emotive language around the actual strategies to be taken in protection. Thus, in the draft circular of the 24 May 1935 in reference to the police and the fire brigade the circular noted: 'heavy duties would fall upon the police,' and 'the fire brigade will need to be substantially strengthened if it is to be in a position to deal effectively with the results of heavy attacks from the air.'<sup>60</sup> In the final version the circular lost this

---

<sup>57</sup> TNA/CAB/24/255, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Four, issued to Cabinet, 24 May 1935, paragraph 2.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Five, Issued to Cabinet, 30 May 1935, paragraph 4.

<sup>59</sup> On the emergence of an anti-war backlash following the publication of a number of memoirs and books on the horrors of the First World War see: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford, 1975); Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: the First World War and English Culture* (London, 1990); George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2002).

<sup>60</sup> TNA/CAB/24/255, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Four, issued to Cabinet, 24 May 1935, paragraph 11 (d), (e).

emotive language and stated only that both services would need to be strengthened.<sup>61</sup>

The circular carefully constructed ARP in relationship to the presentation of Britain on the international stage. ARP was linked to the British citizen and political discourses on freedom, democracy and government responsibility. The idea of an ARP service, with a service culture had implicit links with militarism. In paragraph three of the circular it was asserted that these precautions were 'already taking place in the majority of European nations as well as by countries in other parts of the world,' the government was quick to show that this was not some unfair disciplinary measure enforced on the population. In turn, it was stated that: 'the necessity for such measures must be apparent, and the government would be neglecting their duty to the civil population – men, women, and children – if they failed to take these precautions.'<sup>62</sup> ARP joined the civil population to the war in a far more immediate way than in any previous war. The circular aimed to show on the one hand, that the government was aiming to prevent war at all costs, on the other they communicated that these actions were by no means extraordinary and were happening across the world.

The circular to local authorities was the first major public statement by the newly formed Home Office ARP department. Within it we see a specific communication of military understanding of aerial bombardment. This view articulated that an attack from the air could occur at any time, at speed and out of the blue: 'Developments in the air have made it possible for air attacks on a large scale to be delivered suddenly, on many parts of the country...it is

---

<sup>61</sup> TNA/CAB/24/255, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Five, Issued to Cabinet, 30 May 1935, paragraph 11 (d), (e).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, paragraph 3.



impossible to guarantee immunity from attack.’<sup>63</sup> In this communication ARP was an honest defence of defenceless citizens against a sudden and brutal attack. Neutral planning was underpinned by education as local authorities received information and handbooks on the impact of gas and bombs on populations.<sup>64</sup> Authorities were expected to begin establishing plans for defending their regions and individuals were expected to know how to protect themselves and their homes.<sup>65</sup>

### *Costs and Practicalities*

The devolution of ARP responsibility to local authorities was a contentious issue, particularly as no clear guidelines were given as to how the cost of ARP precautions would be covered or as to how local authorities were expected to implement schemes.<sup>66</sup> These tensions over practicalities remained while ARP stayed on a voluntary basis. It was not until the December of 1937, when the Air-Raid Precautions Act was passed, coming into force in January 1938, that ARP schemes became compulsory and funding guidelines were established.<sup>67</sup> The Act compelled local authorities to draw up ‘Air Raid General Precautions Schemes’ to submit to the Secretary of State. The schemes were to

---

<sup>63</sup> TNA/CAB/24/255, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Five, Issued to Cabinet, 30 May 1935, paragraph 3.

<sup>64</sup> The Cambridge Scientists’ Anti-War Group, *The Protection of the Public from Aerial Attack: A Critical Examination of the Recommendations put Forward by the Air-Raid Precautions Department of the Home Office* (London, 1937), pp. 9-11.

<sup>65</sup> TNA/CAB/24/255, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Five, Issued to Cabinet, 30 May 1935, appendix, summary actions to be taken by the government, local authorities, employers, householders and members of the public.

<sup>66</sup> Lloyd George, *Hansard*, vol. 319, col. 1285, 01 February 1937, the tensions around local and national government will be discussed in chapter two.

<sup>67</sup> However, there still remained uncertainties over expenditure as it was unclear what the Home Office considered as expenditure ranking for a grant, TNA/HO 207/115 – Letter to Under Secretary of State from the Metropolitan Boroughs’ Standing Joint Committee Air-raid precautions Act, 1937, Approval to Expenditure, 8 March 1938.

show how the local authority was making provision as to the arrangements to be made in their areas for the 'protection of persons and property from injury or damage in the event of hostile air attack, and as to the authorities and persons by whom such arrangements are to be carried out.'<sup>68</sup> This included the recruitment of wardens and setting up of posts, first aid schemes, emergency ambulance schemes, gas decontamination, rescue, repair and demolition services. Local authorities were responsible for making these services physically present in the establishment of first aid posts, gas and casualty clearing stations.<sup>69</sup>

The Act also set out the costs of ARP; once schemes were approved government grants would cover from 60 to 75 per cent of the scheme.<sup>70</sup> The Act marked a clear division between ARP as personal, the measures taken by individuals to protect themselves, and ARP as personnel, the recruitment, training and payment of defence services. In this way ARP became tied into a series of measures individuals could take to protect themselves and their homes. The services were eventually understood as civil defence services and not ARP services. However, the two were inextricably linked in the public minds by the lumping together of these measures as ARP, from the mid-1930s.

This Act marked ARP becoming compulsory and time was taken to appropriately articulate to the public how ARP functioned and their relation to it. In January 1938 *The Times* published an article on the subject, which stressed that ARP should be above party politics and political wrangling of any kind. The nation would be remade for defence, forming networks of local communities,

---

<sup>68</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Special (Air-Raid Precautions) Committee, 14 April 1938, p. 55.

<sup>69</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out!*, p. 4.

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

held together by common knowledge and information.<sup>71</sup> *The Times* informed its readers:

The country is starting on a vast experiment. The balance has to be found between central planning and leadership on the one hand, and local authority and individual effort on the other. There is a chance to show that a democratic nation is capable of creating the discipline for defence which other nations have imposed from above through party organizations, propaganda and uniforms...If democracy is to be defended, defence begins at home.<sup>72</sup>

Again we see an anxious concern to mediate the meaning of ARP.<sup>73</sup> This also reveals the way in which ARP was a political statement about democracy and citizenship. ARP became a means to celebrate democracy and the civic life of the nation through a constructed language of idealized personal defence. Through ARP the government and the citizen were presented as being in a symbiotic relationship in defence of the nation and its values. At the same time the lack of clear division between ARP measures and civil defence services would later politicize the issue and cause tensions and disputes in the system.<sup>74</sup> However, in communications of ARP the government sought to avoid any language of conflict.

## **1.2. Communicating ARP: Constructing the Ideal Citizen**

### *The BBC as the Mouthpiece for ARP Policy*

Both defining and communicating the meaning of ARP were of central concern to the government. The issue had to be put across in two ways. Practically speaking, ARP relied on volunteers and so communication on the

---

<sup>71</sup> *The Times*, 12 January 1938, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Richard Weight argues that a crucial formulaic of British national identity in this period was 'fairness' and an idea of freedom, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (Basingstoke, 2002).

<sup>74</sup> See Chapter two.

issue needed to build support for ARP services. Secondly, ARP needed to be communicated in a neutral way, side-stepping the tensions that had emerged over the issue throughout the 1930s. The government directly engaged with the population through the press and the BBC. Through these mediums they conveyed a notion of national citizenship and constructed ARP as a personal and social duty.

Discussions between the BBC and the government make clear how contentious the subject of ARP was when placed in a public arena. On the 26 January 1938 C.W.G. Eady wrote to John Reith the Director General of the BBC asking for a meeting to discuss ARP. In the letter Eady commented: 'One of our most difficult problems is the proper method to approach the public on this subject.'<sup>75</sup> Eady and the Department viewed ARP as a subject that required 'mass propaganda' and a 'whole technique of a kind of publicity which...has never been attempted before' in Britain.<sup>76</sup> Eady hoped for the BBC's advice on the matter in order to recruit the public into services and educate them on their own personal responsibilities.<sup>77</sup>

The BBC suggested there were two ways in which broadcasting could be used to publicise ARP. The government could rely on leaving interests to be aroused through reports of local events including blackouts, news items reporting the measures being taken and talks describing the effect of air action in other countries. These kinds of events had been covered by the BBC for some time and had proved popular with audiences. In the summer of 1937 the BBC covered ARP exercises on the south coast. It was felt that the 'accurate and

---

<sup>75</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/1, Letter to John Reith from W.G. Eady, 26 Jan 1938.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, Letter to C.G. Graves, BBC, from W.G. Eady, 29 January 1938.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

carefully prepared description was followed with some care by several million listeners,' and that, therefore, any descriptions of forthcoming exercises were 'of real value in keeping the whole matter in the public eye and perhaps coaching the public into what may one day have to be done.'<sup>78</sup> Secondly, they felt that they could challenge public attention by talks explicitly directed to this end by well-known British statesmen. They believed that the second option would have more impact if reinforced by the first. It was felt that these talks would be a novelty and therefore strike 'the popular imagination through their effect of surprise.' This would also bring home the immediacy of the problem and 'its nation-wide character.'<sup>79</sup>

Throughout 1938 the BBC ran with its idea of using British statesmen to give talks on particular areas of ARP. The talks covered topics including the London Fire Brigade; ARP and work; how ARP was moving on nationally and ARP in Barcelona. Speakers included Herbert Morrison, the leader of the London County Council (LCC), and the left-wing journalist J. Langdon-Davies, who had considerable knowledge of air raids through his experience of covering the Spanish Civil War.<sup>80</sup> The speakers were intended to give the official message on ARP, thus they had to present the right kind of image. For example, the BBC

---

<sup>78</sup> BBC/WAC/R 45/3, Letter to Admiral Air Edward R. Evans from the BBC News Editor, 7 October 1937. Local ARP initiatives and other schemes were regularly covered by the BBC and expanded on and illustrated in *The Listener* see; BBC/WAC/R 45/3/Recorded Programmes, Air-Raid Precautions 1937-41, this file contains a number examples of the BBC covering ARP events: On 29 September 1937, the BBC covered a Mock Air Raid in Wembley Stadium; in 1938 the BBC broadcast the sound of new electrical sirens to be used in the event of raids; in 1939 they visited steel production plants to describe the new steel shelters; they also covered the balloon barrage and blackout regulations. See also the coverage of ARP in *The Listener*, See 'More Air Raid Warden's Wanted,' *The Listener*, 13 April 1938, p. 784; 'Police War Reserve,' *The Listener*, 9 June 1938, pp. 1223-4; Herbert Morrison and Commander A. Firebrace, 'A.R.P.: Fire-Fighters for London,' *The Listener*, 30 June 1930, p. 1302.

<sup>79</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/1, BBC draft statement on the best method of publicizing through broadcasting the scheme of Air-Raid Precautions now being undertaken by the Government.

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter two.

hoped to recruit the former Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin to speak on the issue. However, there was some apprehension that the latter would 'press Stella, Lady Reading' on the BBC. The producer voiced that he did not welcome this, 'partly because she is a Jewess.' The producer recognized this was narrow minded but felt that they should 'only have Nordic people speaking on this.'<sup>81</sup> Despite Stella Issacs being a founder of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) and having close links to ARP, the BBC privately viewed her as contentious in the context of ARP as a national service. These concerns about who could represent ARP marked the way in which it was not just about practical protection but social imagination.<sup>82</sup> ARP became a space in which the meaning of home, city, citizen and nation became debated and discussed.

On 14 March 1938 the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, broadcast a talk to the nation under the title 'The Citizen and the Air Raid.' In this carefully worded broadcast Hoare outlined the reasons behind ARP and what the civil population of the country could do to counter an attack from the air. The broadcast outlined the structural aspects of ARP including: the devolution of plans to local authorities; the kinds of services authorities would make available; the responsibilities of individuals to protect themselves from gas; the role of businesses in protecting their employees and the importance of people staying calm and seeking shelter during a raid. More than this, Hoare sought to neutralize tensions over rearmament by situating ARP as a reactive measure:

---

<sup>81</sup>BBC/WAC/ R51/13/1, Internal Circulating Memo on people booked for ARP talks, 25 May 1938.

<sup>82</sup> Indeed, Llangdon-Davies was a controversial figure and after his talk on ARP it was decided that his opinions needed to be countered as it was feared they may have incited fear in the population, to do this another talk by Wing Commander Hodsell, former head of the Air-Raid Precautions Department in the Home Office, was planned: BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Final decisions on ARP talks, 8 April 1938.

threats to peace were produced from a dangerous other. Hoare stated that the amount of money being spent was awful but necessary: 'if there is to be no peace we must defend ourselves.' Faced with a situation out of their control it was the citizen who would be responsible for their own defence. Passive defence was not the onus of the government but the duty of the individual. Through ARP, the citizen and the government were complicit in defence strategy. According to official communication, both had to take steps to protect themselves and the country against the danger from above and beyond. Hoare set the government up as benign overseers, helping to educate a vulnerable citizenship into protecting themselves. The central tenet of ARP policy was 'having the largest number of people possible who know what to do for themselves.'<sup>83</sup>

Hoare's broadcast was punctuated throughout by a political rhetoric on the freedom to choose to participate. On the reason for devolving services to local authorities he commented: 'they are the elected representatives of the people; know their own people, they know their own area.' On first aid parties and posts: 'these are universal services whose existence will depend on volunteers coming forward.' More generally this freedom was set out as a central tenet of democracy:

we are giving the duty to elected authorities and we are relying upon the sense of responsibility of a free community. This is a great challenge to you. If you will not volunteer to take your part in any of these services, neither the government nor local authorities can have much real hope of creating this national service.<sup>84</sup>

This was not about centralized control of services but about individual responsibility: 'I can only put before you the choice of your duty. If you decide

---

<sup>83</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/1, Script for Samuel Hoare Broadcast, The Citizen and Air Raids, 5 March 1938.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

that you will take part in this great civilian service, then, as I have told you, I think you will have shown a readiness of preparation which may keep the peace.’<sup>85</sup>

Hoare expanded on his broadcast in a March 1938 edition of *The Listener*. In his article the structure of ARP was made much clearer. The Home Office was to be the central department, finding most of the money for local councils and offering technical knowledge. Next were the local councils who prepared the plans for their own areas, and were to recruit volunteers in their own districts. Around a million volunteers needed to be recruited, apart from in the fire brigade, ideally older men who could act as wardens or help in the first aid, rescue and decontamination services. Women were viewed as suited to first aid: ‘it is men, not machines, that make the life of the communal service...each of you must think tonight how you can best help your country in a moment of need.’<sup>86</sup> The article played on ideals of national identity and governmentality:

First, we must make the forces of peace so strong in the world that war will not be worthwhile. Secondly, we must prove to the world that our old system of voluntary service and local administration, that seems so inefficient and easy-going to foreigners who do not know us, can produce as efficient a system of defence as the most fully centralized government. Free men can give a better discipline, if they make up their minds, than anything produced by authority. Our methods may be slow in starting, and because they depend upon voluntary effort and local initiative they may be more difficult to organize. But it is because they are founded upon voluntary effort and local initiative that they are so deeply ingrained in our national life. And it is because they are the blood of our blood and bone of our bone and have been tested for centuries in the school of trial and crisis that with your individual help they will prove irresistible. It is in the days of difficulty rather the periods of easy going complacency that the nation shows its finest qualities. Let us show them today for the purposes of our own protection; let us show them still more for the purposes of peace throughout the world.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/1, Script for Samuel Hoare Broadcast.

<sup>86</sup> *The Listener*, 16 March 1938, pp. 553-4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*



Hoare presented a vision of British democratic principles tied up with social citizenship and bound into specific spatial location, specifically, sites of local administration. This aimed to encompass the citizen as an active participant in government choices by reminding the listener that they were 'free.'

While on the one hand ARP was about individual citizens helping themselves, on the other it was a set of services to help protect and police communities. In the case of the latter the voluntary principle was at the centre of ARP recruitment communications. The government's national service policy on ARP established the remits for ARP services. Local authorities were then responsible for ensuring that all services gave a clear outline on their personnel requirements and took responsibility for recruitment.<sup>88</sup> At the national level to ensure the correct kind of workers were available in 1938 the government established a series of reserved occupations. ARP was subsumed into a wartime labour policy, which sought to find the 'people for jobs, not to find jobs for people.'<sup>89</sup> This set up a specific understanding of the relationship between the government and employment in which needed useful citizens would fill specific wartime roles. ARP was seen as central to the first part of war 'when we may expect to defend ourselves against an intensive air attack with its crisis falling at the outset.' It was seen that the second and later stages of the war would make home defence less important and require manpower in the field.<sup>90</sup> ARP was

---

<sup>88</sup> TNA/HO 186/68, Preparations for National Service, Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal, copy sent out 4 November 1938.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, National Service, Cabinet Paper by the Lord Privy Seal.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

founded on a notion of free choice: people making a decision to help protect their local communities.<sup>91</sup>

Within *The Listener* article, Hoare's text was placed alongside a visual montage of images showing methods of ARP with specific reference to services established to deal with gas and individual responsibility in the household (Figure 1.1.). In the emotive language of the broadcast Hoare aimed to place ARP at the centre of national identity. The images however helped to construct an individual within the framework of a much broader language of national citizenship. The images can be understood in the context of the kind of photojournalism that became popular in the early to mid-twentieth century. They both act to illustrate the text and offer a visual statement in their own right.<sup>92</sup> Paul Rennie suggests that technologies of vision form a powerful link to the cognitive construction of identity. He argues the burgeoning and ever expanding visual culture of the twentieth century led to a new kind of visual intelligence amongst the population. With the advent of the Second World War the need for the mass production of images transformed their political meaning and impact; Rennie argues this created a powerful new collective visual identity for the British people.<sup>93</sup> The images in *The Listener* can be understood in this context. Yes, they reflect a propaganda need for the government to communicate ARP to the population, but they also offer powerful visual representations for individuals to take on. In turn their location in a widely circulated magazine has implications for how the viewer related their personal response to an imagined

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, Note on Compulsory National Service, 15 November 1938,

<sup>92</sup> On visual culture and photojournalism see: Hall, 'The Social Eye,' pp. 71-120.

<sup>93</sup> Rennie, 'Socialvision,' pp. 243-4.

collective response, facilitated through the shared act of viewing the same images of a deliberately constructed national obligation.<sup>94</sup>



Figure 1.1. Images highlighting ARP techniques, particularly those dealing with the threat from gas. Source: *The Listener*, 16 March 1938, pp. 552, 555-6.

The figure of the person in a gas mask putting out bombs with a simple stirrup pump made ARP seem both exciting and important, offering viewers the potential to participate in a nationally significant activity. The spectacle of the gas-masked figure on the cover image was tempered by a vision of an ordinary

<sup>94</sup> Rennie, 'Socialvision,' p. 246.

family in a gas proof room. This family stood for every family, an invitation to participate and protect. Indeed, the gas-masked citizen became a key way to communicate individual responsibility for ARP.<sup>95</sup> The images also helped readers translate government handbooks by contextualizing them alongside images of people acting out their advice. Visual communication in this context was about representing idealized actions for the reader to learn and, if an air raid occurred, to mirror. More widely, through showing the montage of advice guides on offer to householders the reader was presented with the knowledge that every person in the country was expected to participate. This created a situation in which the individual could imagine him or herself within a wider social collective

ARP as an individual responsibility was a central tenet of the representation of ARP right up to and into the first year of war. This theme dominated the way in which the BBC communicated ARP through *The Listener*. Communications shifted away from big emotive grand statements, like those put forward by Hoare, to individual advice to households about how to protect themselves. This was facilitated through the writing and broadcasts of the pioneering radio and newspaper handyman W.P. Matthew.<sup>96</sup> Matthew produced a number of articles explaining how to deal with ARP in the home. From the outbreak of war, Matthew wrote a column entitled 'The Amateur Handyman in Wartime.'<sup>97</sup> This located ARP within the private space of the home. In this way,

---

<sup>95</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>96</sup> Alongside Barry Bucknell, W.P. Matthew was a well-known BBC broadcaster associated with home improvements and handyman work, see: *The Light Programme*, 11 May 1950, available online, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/marriage/10517.shtml>> (accessed 5 March 2011); W.P. Matthew, *How to Be a Handyman* (London, 1939).

<sup>97</sup> W.P. Matthew, 'How to Protect Your Home in Wartime,' *The Listener*, 20 July 1939, p. 135; W.P. Matthew, 'ARP: Do you Know what to do?' *The Listener*, 7 September 1939, p. 463; W.P. Matthew,

ARP shifted from a national to the personal agenda. Matthew taught householders how to protect their homes, fix their shelters and get to safety in a raid. Again this positioned the individual as having agency over his or her own situation, but with the knowledge that these actions would aid everyone in a context of bombing. Individual actions were thus constructed as having social consequences.

Beyond actual instructions on precautions to be taken by the population, government communications of ARP aimed to neutralize the contentious nature of defence by linking services and actions into personal responsibility. Despite this effort criticisms were still leveled at the government that ARP produced a 'war mentality,' in which the public came to perceive war as inevitable.<sup>98</sup> In response to these concerns, the government sought to demonstrate that their commitment to ARP was a means to facilitate peace. Hoare commented:

no country would lightly attack an England that is prepared, and has made up its mind. If therefore, we prepare, we the civil population of the country, show that we are prepared, we may be doing something much greater than making our own preparations; we may be making a real contribution to the maintenance of peace.<sup>99</sup>

ARP was placed firmly within a rhetoric of public commitment to democracy, freedom and peace. Indeed, in a BBC broadcast on ARP in London Herbert

---

'The Amateur Handyman in Wartime,' *The Listener*, 21 September 1939, p. 582; W.P. Matthew, 'The Amateur Handyman in Wartime,' *The Listener*, 28 September 1939, p. 626; W.P. Matthew, 'The Amateur Handyman in Wartime,' *The Listener*, 26 October 1939, p. 819.

<sup>98</sup> MRC/MSS.292/883/1, West Ham Trades Council – Memo on ARP (Draft for Discussion), the memo noted that the ARP Act 'rejects the view that ARP will produce a war mentality.' The issues over whether ARP encouraged war were played out in three letters to *The Listener* in May 1938, two of which criticised ARP as encouraging war: F.J. Harris, Secretary, Oxford University Pacifist Association, 'Points from Letters, Professor Hilton on Air-Raid Precautions,' *The Listener*, 11 May 1938, p. 1026; P.A. Morgan, 'Points from Letters, Professor Hilton on Air-Raid Precautions,' response to letter in previous edition which viewed as left wing, *The Listener*, 18 May 1938, p. 1081; L.H. Callender, 'Points from Letters, Professor Hilton on Air-Raid Precautions,' *The Listener*, 25 May 1938, pp. 1133-34.

<sup>99</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/1, Script for Samuel Hoare Broadcast, The Citizen and Air Raids, 5 March 1938.

Morrison underlined Hoare's comments stating that the major way for citizens to take part in ARP was to:

urge and support policies which we believe will promote the security of Britain and all other countries, and the general peace and happiness of mankind. In so far as we all – every one of us – take seriously the thought of a community of peaceful nations, ready to deal justly, but able and willing to curb lawlessness and aggression – in so far as we talk and think and act in such a way to bring this most practical of all Air-Raid Precautions nearer to realization, we are doing our first duty as citizens.<sup>100</sup>

In turn, by establishing a successful ARP system in which the public fully participated, the 'menace from abroad' would not be as great and a fast, knock-out blow could not succeed.<sup>101</sup> Thus, ARP would act as a counter to violence from the air. As Eady commented: 'Somehow or other you have to try and find a way of enabling the essential parts of the productive life of the country to go on, not necessarily during the minutes when air raids are actually passing, but under air raid conditions.'<sup>102</sup> Thus, ARP ensured that the population could continue to work and crucially maintain war industries.

ARP formed part of debates about citizenship, democracy and individual freedom that emerged in a wider global context of concerns about international relations and new technological breakthroughs in air power. The government had to tread a fine line between protecting the population and being seen to promote peace. The assertion of the role of the individual in liaison with local government was not just a practical aim; it was also a means to neutralize concerns about a centralized military state. The communication of ARP through

---

<sup>100</sup> Herbert Morrison, 'London's Part in Air-Raid Precautions,' *The Listener*, 23 March 1938, pp. 627-8.

<sup>101</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/1, Note from illegible noting the Home Secretary's reasons for good ARP planning and communication.

<sup>102</sup> Eady 'The Progress,' p. 3.

visual imagery also created a context in which individuals could subsume themselves into a narrative of national belonging. The gas mask was at the centre of this; by looking after yourself you participated in the protection of the nation.

Late 1930's government rhetoric constructed an idealized citizenship for ARP. This was done through spoken and visual forms of communication in an attempt to recruit volunteers for local ARP services and to educate the population in their personal responsibility to protect themselves and their homes. Communications of ARP created new representations, specific to the ARP and a future wartime context, in which a national community could imagine themselves through common actions. However, the national scheme needed to function at the local level. In London, a city of overlapping authorities and party political conflicts the neutral message of a united citizenship was to prove problematic. In the next part we will look at the structure of London government and how ARP was set up and communicated to the citizens of the capital city.

### **1.3. ARP and London**

If we understand ARP as part of a military strategy to prevent the knock-out blow, the nation's capital was at the heart of defence, it was here that aerial bombing posed the largest threat. With this in mind the BBC decided to bring in Herbert Morrison, the leader of the LCC, to give a special talk on ARP in London because 'we understand it is in London that the problem is most urgent and most

difficult of solution.<sup>103</sup> The BBC was told to impress on the public that the matter was both urgent and of 'national, as distinct from party, interest.'<sup>104</sup>

Morrison outlined London as a particularly pressing concern because the people of London 'live at the centre of the nation's life' and so on them 'falls a greater measure of risk, and, therefore, of responsibility for cooperative effort on behalf of their homes and their fellow citizens.' In the context of London, the national rhetoric on the relationship between individual, ARP and the defence of the nation was problematic. Morrison perceived that Hoare's idealized citizens would be harder to recruit here because:

The very size of London and of its various parts makes for a certain remoteness as between the citizen and the various institutions through which he governs himself. The Londoner, perhaps more than most people, normally leaves the task of civic government to the bodies charged with their performance, and thinks little about them. Whether this is too casual an attitude, or a compliment as to the effective way in which civic government is carried on, perhaps it is not for me to say. But in any case Air-Raid Precautions are a matter which cannot be dealt with on this basis of aloofness.<sup>105</sup>

The government constructed ARP as a national citizenship service. However, the organization of this service fell to local government schemes. In London this was no easy undertaking. The Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) used London as a case study for considering appropriate forms of ARP administration and strategy. In 1932, the ARP-Subcommittee first discussed the potential administrative organization for ARP services in London. They suggested that a central administrative authority would need to be created as

---

<sup>103</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/1, BBC draft statement on the best method of publicizing through broadcasting the scheme of Air-Raid Precautions now being undertaken by the Government.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Herbert Morrison, 'London's Part in Air-Raid Precautions,' *The Listener*, 23 March 1938, pp. 627.



London lacked a ready-made organization to coordinate ARP and there was no one authority figure to link up services.<sup>106</sup>

Under the 1937 ARP Act, the Secretary of State proposed the division of duties between the metropolitan boroughs and the LCC. The latter was already in charge of a London wide fire service and under the Act was made responsible for expanding the service and for drawing up plans for what would be done in the event of war through the recruitment, training and payment of an auxiliary service.<sup>107</sup> The LCC was responsible for a number of hospital and medical services across London. Under the Act this duty was expanded and they were put in charge of the ambulance service.<sup>108</sup> The metropolitan boroughs were made responsible for organizing general schemes of protection including gas decontamination, warden training and posts, maintenance of essential services in collaboration with statutory undertakings, emergency road repairs, rescue, demolition and debris clearance.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the Act making it a requirement for local authorities to establish ARP plans, the 1938 Munich crisis revealed glaring inadequacies in London's ARP preparations. The crisis revealed a severe shortage of volunteers, a lack of buildings requisitioned for warden posts and clearing stations and a general lack of organization by many of the boroughs.<sup>110</sup> This in turn reflected the

---

<sup>106</sup> TNA/CAB/24/234, Air-Raid Precautions, suggested administrative organization, p. 2; HO 144/20058, CID, Protection of Civilian Population in Case of Air Attack, July 1931.

<sup>107</sup> The LCC's remit had grown throughout the first half of the twentieth century and debates and suggestions over its jurisdiction were prevalent during the 1930s see: John Mason, 'Partnership Denied: The London Labour Party on the LCC and the Decline of London Government, 1940-63,' in Andrew Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People of London, the London County Council 1889-1965* (London, 1989). pp. 251-268.

<sup>108</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Special (Air-Raid Precautions) Committee, 14 April 1938, to consider the A.R.P. Act 1937, report by the Town Clerk, p. 55.

<sup>109</sup> Charles Allen Newbery, *Wartime St Pancras: A London Borough Defends Itself*, Reproduced by the Camden History Society (London, 2006), pp. 12-14.

<sup>110</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out!*, p. 6.

uncertainties of ARP planning as regards to cost, the amount of work required and the best ways to provide protection to the population. R.H.R Tee, the irascible Hackney Town Clerk, wrote a report on Hackney's proposed ARP General Scheme. He stated that it would take two years to implement and that the expenditure was very tight. He felt that the Home Office had misgivings about the amount local authorities claimed that they needed and had failed to take into account the characteristics of districts, i.e. whether it was mainly industrial, residential or otherwise. In turn, many men were not bothering to volunteer, in part because they assumed if a war came they would be conscripted. There was also a concern in the report that the government had focused too much on gas protection.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, the Hampstead Communist Party issued a leaflet with proposals for ARP in which they criticized the government for failing to understand how local conditions would impact on ARP and for not setting out reasonable predictions of the cost of ARP to ratepayers.<sup>112</sup>

Local councils used the emotive issue of death from the air to express long-term tensions over London governance.<sup>113</sup> Political agendas came to dominate the issue as borough councils explored the best ways to protect and manage a population at war and sometimes found that their interests were in tension with those of national government.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> HA/1, 13 Jan 1938-18 Aug 1939 ARP Committee Minutes Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 1.

<sup>112</sup> Hampstead Communist Party Pamphlet, *A.R.P for Hampstead, Foreward by J.B.S. Haldane* (London, ca. 1938), pp. 10-11.

<sup>113</sup> This is discussed further in chapters three and four.

<sup>114</sup> See more detail of this in chapter 3 and Hampstead Communist Party Pamphlet, *A.R.P for Hampstead*, p. 4.

*The Final Scheme for ARP in London: Mapping a New Urban Order*

In the final scheme for ARP, local concerns were sidelined by the creation of a national system to administer ARP. Robin Woolven has shown that to deal with the inadequacy of local authority planning for ARP, and reflecting the administrative complexity of London, a third layer was added to London governance, which made London into a wider region to link up civil defence services.<sup>115</sup> To facilitate ARP, Britain was split into twelve regions, each controlled by a regional commissioner who mediated between local authorities and national government. The function of these commissioners was to 'coordinate at regional level plans for the welfare of the population and the restoration of all civil and industrial services after severe attack.'<sup>116</sup> In war, the London defence region was controlled through circulars sent out by the office of the London regional commissioners through the London regional council. These circulars were regulated by the Home Office.<sup>117</sup> The circulars acted as guides to operations by linking up the London group regions and the London county and borough councils with uniform standards for services and practice.<sup>118</sup>

The Lord Privy Seal Sir John Anderson was in charge of ARP as head of the Home Office, which in 1939 became the Ministry of Home Security. Anderson explained the role of regional commissioners as a contingency, to allow the county to continue to function even when communications were disrupted: in

---

<sup>115</sup> Robin Woolven, 'Pre-WWII Preparations,' in Tim Essex-Lopresti, *A Brief History of Civil Defence* (Derbyshire, 2005), p. 9; Woolven, 'The London Experience,' pp. 59-78.

<sup>116</sup> O'Brien, *A History Of Civil Defence*, p. 631.

<sup>117</sup> TNA/HO 186/473 Regional Organisation: Organisation of ARP services in London: review of expenditure and recruitment of paid personnel, 1939-1941.

<sup>118</sup> In order to gain an understanding of change over time in civil defence practices and understand the workings of regional governance during the Second World War I have looked at around 900 regional circulars covering war period most of these are held in files: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/03/17; LMA/LCC/CL/CD/03/18; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/15; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/16; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/17; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/18; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/19; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/20.

war they would liaise with central government but should communication be cut they would stand in for central government. The twelve regions inserted a national authority at the local level, however the commissioners were to have no executive duties in time of peace and were not to encroach 'whatever upon the powers of local authorities.'<sup>119</sup> Indeed, they were expected to acquaint themselves with the characteristics of their regions and with the local authorities in the regions.<sup>120</sup>



Figure 1.2. Map of the London County Council Shoring and Demolition Service, illustrating the grouping of the Metropolitan Boroughs into Groups. Source: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/100.

<sup>119</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 344, col. 1298-9, 1 March 1939; Woolven, 'The London Experience,' pp. 60, 62. For further description of the London Region see: Albert Lepawsky, 'The London Region: A Metropolitan Community Crisis,' *The American Journal of Sociology*, 46:6 (1941), pp. 826-834.

<sup>120</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 344, col. 1298-9, 1 March 1939.

It was understood that the whole scheme of civil defence rested on this reorganization of the nation.<sup>121</sup> The twelve regions were zoned so that safe areas could be identified and certain classes of people could be evacuated to them, including school children, young children and their mothers or carers, expectant mothers, 'blind persons and cripples.'<sup>122</sup> Thus, the regional organization was also bound to corporeality. The most useful bodies for the war effort, young adults and workers, remained in danger zones to maintain the productive life of the nation. Evacuation moved unproductive bodies to safety. This had a dual purpose of aiming to ease pressure on services and maintain morale, as vulnerable sections of the population were less likely to be hurt in a raid. Dispersal aimed eventually to make industrial production less condensed in industrial towns and cities by relocating factories and personal.<sup>123</sup> However, in 1938-39 the most productive bodies were often required to remain in the most dangerous areas.<sup>124</sup> London was deemed a major target and as such it was planned that the most vulnerable members of the population would be dispersed to safe areas. Only the citizens necessary for the productive life of the nation remained in areas deemed vulnerable attack from the air.

The London civil defence region of the United Kingdom formed region five of the national scheme. It covered roughly the same areas as the metropolitan police district, around 720 square miles, and in the time of war offered an administrative centre to coordinate authorities across the London region. In

---

<sup>121</sup> TNA/HLG 7/38, ARP Supplementary Estimates, Notes which the Minister of Health may use for his speech, Brief for Ministers Speech.

<sup>122</sup> TNA/HLG 7/122, Ministry of Health Evacuation Arrangements.

<sup>123</sup> TNA/AVIA 15/2330, Evacuation of Air-craft factories, dispersal of labour prior to an emergency.

<sup>124</sup> TNA/HLG 7/38, ARP Supplementary Estimates, Notes which the Minister of Health may use for his speech.

May 1939 the group organisation was announced to the public. *The Times* outlined the details: the London region 'because of its special needs' was to have three commissioners; Sir Ernest Gowers, who focused on administrative duties; Admiral Sir Edward Evans, who liaised with local authorities in the region, and an overseeing commissioner who would be appointed on the outbreak of war. Mr. Harold Scott was appointed the London regions chief administrator.<sup>125</sup>

Scott and the commissioners formed the London regional council. This had representatives from local authorities and in practice invited people from other appropriate bodies such as the police, public utility services and Women's Voluntary Service. A coordinating committee of executive officers was established in order to 'assist in the detailed work of the many services and authorities in the region.'<sup>126</sup> While the LCC had for some time offered an administrative unity to the County of London, the imposition of a regional authority unified London governance across a wider geographical space, linking all London councils and, in a time of crisis, having the power to override those councils. This would facilitate mutual assistance between boroughs and across London. The London region was divided into nine groups, five within the County of London, as illustrated by Figure 1.2, and four Groups for that part of the region outside the county of London. Groups 1 to 5 are shown above and in appendix A. Formerly discrete boroughs were integrated into groups to create administrative unity and to facilitate mutual assistance and a pooling of men and materials in the event of an air raid.

---

<sup>125</sup> 'Civil Defence of London, Regional Council Members, Grouping Organisation,' *The Times*, 9 May 1939, p. 19; Woolven, 'The London Experience,' p. 64. The names of the Regional Commissioners were announced to parliament in April 1939, *Hansard*, vol. 346, cols. 170-3, 18 April 1939.

<sup>126</sup> 'Civil Defence of London, Regional Council Members, Grouping Organisation,' *The Times*, 9 May 1939, p. 19; Sir John Anderson, *Hansard*, vol. 344, col. 1303, 1 March 1939.

During the summer of 1939, local authorities were asked to further prepare for war by establishing an emergency committee headed by an appointed ARP controller, these were usually town clerks, men with good local knowledge and understanding of their local area needs.<sup>127</sup> The coordinating committee allowed practical application of government civil defence policy.<sup>128</sup> The local ARP Controller supervised and organised the workings of local ARP services. Borough ARP was in turn coordinated at group level by the creation of group headquarters, each headed by representatives of the commissioners, usually civil servants or people seconded from the LCC.<sup>129</sup> Mike Brown argues that the controller was the central figure in local ARP organisation, responsible for coordinating services and co-operation between police and fire services usually via the head quarters or a combined control and report centre.<sup>130</sup>

In the context of expected bombardment the state needed to find ways to impose some sense of order on potentially disturbed urban space. The remapping of London for defence aimed to create a new level of administrative unity that could counter disruption. Regional governance was underpinned by these maps and diagrams that dispersed power at the local level, while feeding back information to the centre through the establishment of communication systems that linked up London boroughs and groups (Figure 1.2)

The final outlines for ARP services worked on the remapping of London for defence, linking up local and London wide services through communication. This facilitated a new imagining of the space of the city based on the movement

---

<sup>127</sup> Robin Woolven, 'Pre-WWII Preparations,' p. 9; Woolven, 'The London Experience,' p. 64.

<sup>128</sup> LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/1, London Regional Council and London Civil Defence Region Co-ordinating Committee-General Papers Sept 1938 - July 1939, p. 37.

<sup>129</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/100, Map of the London County Council Shoring and Demolition Service,

<sup>130</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out!*, p. 31.

of ARP services. The assumption that the bomber would get through underpinned the structure of ARP. The city under fire was a space of stasis: people were expected to take shelter and sit out bombardment. The movement of civil defence services enabled the stasis of the population, they would move to help and protect them, preventing the public from clogging the streets. As the bombs fell, it was planned that their impact would be reported and mapped out by the communication of incidents to a central point and the sending out of appropriate services to deal with them. Each group illustrated in figure 1.2 had a main control centre (Figure 1.3). The control would be the heart of dealing with raid incidents. Incidents were reported to them and in turn they would contact the appropriate parties to be sent to each incident.<sup>131</sup> Local controls reported to the regional headquarters to ensure that services were coordinated across London and reinforcements could be sent from region to region.<sup>132</sup> Blocked roads, damaged utilities, fires, hurt and trapped people would all be reported and marked on maps. In this way, as the city changed on the physical level it also changed on the representational level. In theory, this would prevent governance from breaking down as national authority became dispersed through regional authorities down to the local level through the monitoring and regulating of the damaged street space.<sup>133</sup>

The final plans for London civil defence, as illustrated by figure 1.2, created new authority relationships within the city. The structure was a means to coordinate resources and people in preparation for bombardment. Woolven

---

<sup>131</sup> HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), pp. 138-9.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>133</sup> On representation and power see: Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991).



argues that this model of organisation 'provided the coordination and leadership needed to prepare local ARP schemes and raise and train their ARP services.' Indeed, he rightly suggests that during the war years regional governance was highly successful at linking up local and central government and carrying out mutual assistance across London.<sup>134</sup>



Figure 1.3. How Civil Defence Worked, diagram showing how wardens' posts (W), Fire Stations (F), First Aid Depots (F.A.D) and Posts (F.A.D.), and Rescue Parties (R), were distributed evenly over an area. Source: HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), pp. 138-9.

The final layout restructured London government by imposing a new urban order based on connections between boroughs through services. To a degree this had an impact less on the people within London and more on those

<sup>134</sup> Woolven, 'The London Experience,' p. 75.

who were involved in its day to day running within political and local government institutions. However, the services needed to be peopled and the role of these services had to be communicated to those who were needed as volunteers. In this way, the restructuring of London for defence was about forming a contract between constructed urban order and citizenship. For London to function a deal had to be made with the population to remake the city for defence. Citizens were expected to help send away vulnerable bodies, to participate in renegotiating their personal space by conforming to wartime regulations, and enable the city to function by directly participating in ARP or at the very least ensuring those services had correct and accurate information about their location so as to help protect themselves in a raid.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the interwar period defence of any kind proved to be a problematic and contentious issue. New understandings of modern war and fast paced violent attacks from the air meant that it was believed that a future war could hit civilian, and particularly urban populations, without warning and with devastating consequences. British peoples' perception of the world and their place in it was renegotiated by the knowledge that the bomber would always get through. Frightening and violent bombardment proved an internationally contentious issue as politicians, thinkers and writers considered the function and the role of the sky in future wars.

Another shadow marred the landscape of the interwar period as discussions of the Great War made rearmament and talk of defence unwholesome or tantamount to warmongering. War, for many, was a grim or

silenced topic. In this context, defence from the aerial bombardment had to be communicated appropriately to show that aerial bombing was not deemed acceptable by the government. The imagined citizen offered a solution. Through voluntary service and idealized imaginings of British democracy, national citizenship offered a way to facilitate a collective responsibility against the threat of danger from without and above. The citizen prepared to engage with ARP was not a martyred soldier or a demotivated politician but a member of a community ready to help to protect themselves against an imagined violent other. Structurally this was facilitated in the later 1930s by the devolution of ARP to the local level, to authorities who knew local needs and local populations and who could draw up schemes to protect them. This was also a political statement about governance. ARP was not about a military state enforcing regulations but about sensible local strategies for protection. Indeed, the government argued that reasonable ARP policies could help to win peace by making a warfare based on the knock-out-blow impossible.

The final scheme for ARP divided it between personal responsibility to protect individuals and homes and civil defence services that would protect the community should war come. The latter was based on a reorganization of London into groups and structured through communication networks. In this way it was still the citizen that offered protection in a raid, countering bombs through recording their impact and helping to neutralize their consequences. The damaged city space of a future war was to be renegotiated through the bodies that moved through it, clearing the way, moving casualties, helping its victims. ARP was communicated as benevolent and sensible strategy for any nation to take. The peace movement equated air-raid conditions with air-raid

precaution conditions, both regulated the individual in an unbearable way and, it was feared, ARP schemes would produce a war mentality. The government was quick to counter this, aiming to show that ARP was the path to peace and offered morale-boosting security to the population.

The communication of ARP as a service was to differ to the actual imposition of ARP. Final schemes marked a remapping of the nation into regions and a classifying of locations and bodies as useful, or not, to some future war effort. In London a baffling array of services, councils, public utility systems and people had to be coordinated for any future civil defence to function. In theory this could mean the imposition of new modes of governmentality that remade and remapped London at war and subjected it to a more centralized control than ever before, despite the dispersal of power through a regional authority. London was a special case and, as Morrison had noted in his broadcast, its citizens were often removed from the processes of governance. The rhetoric of a national ARP service had to fit in with multiple scheme-making authorities and a city in which people defined themselves in a multitude of ways: by borough, by job, by class, by trade union membership, by ethnicity, by gender. A successful administrative system was placed on London to govern the population when war finally came. However, the final layout of ARP was by no means a simple and uncontested process and in particular the need for volunteers and a united citizenship was far easier to imagine than to create.

This chapter then, has offered a top-down approach to understanding ARP by showing how plans for ARP in London were constructed through a remapping of the nation into a system of regional governance. This made ARP a form of governmentality, which regulated the urban landscape and sought to

discipline those citizens that remained within the city. The democratic ARP service needed a disciplined and capable set of workers who could conform to, and accept their new identity. An appropriate means to describe and articulate the services to the public needed to be found. In the need for the right kind of citizen for ARP 'the people' had already been imagined. Yet, the map and diagram in figures 1.2 and 1.3 are not neutral objects. They reveal some hard fought decisions about the way in which ARP should function within London. Throughout the 1930s, conflicting views presented radical and critical alternatives to the government scheme. These debates are explored in further detail in chapter two.

## Chapter Two

### Alternative Visions of ARP: Structural Approaches to the Problem of Air Raids

#### Introduction

In the early 1930s aerial bombardment came to be understood as a distinctly urban phenomenon. The military strategy of the knockout blow and the development of aviation influenced the literary and cultural imaginations of bombardment throughout the period.<sup>1</sup> As the thirties progressed, imaginations of aerial bombardment were made into a reality as the Spanish Civil War revealed the impact of bombs on urban space. As the first ARP Act was being drafted, 4000 Basque children reached the shores of the UK and images of the horrors of the war and its impact on civilians were demonstrated to the public.<sup>2</sup> These emotive visions brought challenges to the communication of ARP as the impact of war from the air was starkly illustrated with photographs of destroyed houses, dead children, broken infrastructure and damaged cityscapes. These images visually educated the public and combined with the emerging constructions of ARP in books, pamphlets, broadcasts, articles and films to consolidate public understanding of the impact of bombs on the urban landscape.

Spain offered more than a reminder of the horrors of war, it provided a training ground in understanding the impact of war on urban space for architects, engineers, planners and writers, sometimes producing conflicting

---

<sup>1</sup> George Orwell, *Coming up for Air* (London, 2000), H.G. Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come* (London, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Stradling, *Your Children Will be Next: Bombing and Propaganda in the Spanish Civil War 1936-39* (Cardiff, 2008), pp. 20, 267-70; 'Both Sides of the Line, Impressions from Nationalist and Republican Spain during the Civil War,' *The Listener*, 16 June 1938, pp. 1277-79; J. Langdon-Davies, 'Bombs over Barcelona,' *The Listener*, 14 July 1938, Front Cover, pp. 58-61; John Langdon-Davies, *Air Raid: The Technique of Silent Approach High Explosive Panic* (London, 1938).

views and understandings of how air power would be used in future wars and its effect on the population.<sup>3</sup> Despite fear of war in the air being rooted in public and political life, when crisis came in 1938, plans for dealing with war on the home front were revealed as inadequate. Defence measures became a key political issue as local authorities and national government hastily sought to ensure ARP plans were established and progressing. The rhetoric of the BBC's 1938 broadcasts was shown to have had limited success, volunteer numbers were low and many boroughs did not have full ARP plans in place.<sup>4</sup>

The 1937 ARP Act called for local authorities to set up general schemes for ARP. In London, this largely fell to local councils. The 28 metropolitan borough councils were expected to produce schemes in liaison with the Home Office ARP department.<sup>5</sup> In 1938, local councils formed emergency committees and town clerks, district surveyors, architects and engineers considered programmes of passive defence within each borough.<sup>6</sup> The debates around the production of schemes reveal the schisms in the governance of the urban population as imagined under duress and the highly politicized nature of ARP.

---

<sup>3</sup> James S. Corum, 'The Spanish Civil War: Lessons Learned and Not Learned by the Great Powers,' *The Journal of Military History*, 62 (1998), pp. 313-334; Joseph S. Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy and its Critics in Britain before the Second World War,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 5 (1994), pp. 300-19; Tom Buchanan, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain, War, Loss and Memory* (Eastbourne, 2007); George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia and Looking Back on the Spanish War* (London, 1966), Langdon-Davies, *Air Raid*; MRC/MSS.78/BT/4/3/1, Printed Circular, 'Prepare now to protect the people: appeal for donations,' National Air Raid Precautions Coordinating Committee (NARPPC) 1938.

<sup>4</sup> 'London Prepares Air Raid Precautions: Taken During the Crisis,' *Illustrated London News*, 8 October 1938, p. 641. The services were still not up to full strength in December 1940 when national government were looking for ways to cut numbers of ARP personnel, on this see: TNA/HO 186/473, Letter from Ernest Gowers, Chairman of the London Civil Defence Region to George Gater, Clerk of the LCC and seen by C.W.G. Eady, the Deputy Secretary of State at the Home Office in Charge of Air Raid Precautions, regarding the number of recruits in the civil defence services, 20 January 1940.

<sup>5</sup> For the layout of groups 1-5, see: figure 1.2 and appendix A.

<sup>6</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Vol. 38. April 1937-Mar 1938, Appointment of Special Committees, Air Raid Precautions, 18 November 1937, p. 597; HA/1, 13 Jan 1938-18 Aug 1939 ARP Committee Minutes vols. 1 and 2.

This was to consolidate around the theme of structural protection and working-class rights.

The chapter considers three interconnected areas. Firstly, the way in which the Spanish Civil War provided an emotional and technological framework for discussions on bombardment and explores how British encounters with the war shaped criticisms of official ARP policies. Secondly, how technical knowledge of the impact of bombs was subsumed into debates about ARP and offered competing ideas about urban life. Thirdly, how ARP fitted in with debates about the relationship between the working classes and urban space, particularly exploring how ARP was visually and rhetorically tied into a language of workers' rights. The three areas are connected through a consideration of visual culture, both actual images and the use of vividly visual language that offered a particular social imagination of ARP, bombardment and city space.

I use a case study of the metropolitan borough of Finsbury's ARP scheme as a window into debates on ARP within a local setting. Finsbury took the step of employing the radical architectural group Tecton to design its scheme. Tecton was an architectural organization formed by Berthold Lubetkin with a number of other radical modernist architects.<sup>7</sup> Analysis of the scheme opens up ways of considering the relationship between urban order and social life. Tecton's scheme established a particular visualisation of urban life that offered an alternative construction to the government's idea of ARP as a form of national citizenship. Rather than promoting ARP as an individual duty the scheme set out a plan for structural ARP that was part of the borough council's wider agenda to

---

<sup>7</sup> John Allan, Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40675>> (Accessed, 1 March 2011); Berthold Lubetkin, Entry in 'Designing Modern Britain - Design Museum Exhibition,' <<http://designmuseum.org/design/berthold-lubetkin>> (accessed 1 March 2011).



support and aid the predominantly working-class population of the borough. In this way ARP became tied up with ideas on service provision as a means to improve the health and welfare of workers.

The council shifted ARP from a national and patriotic duty to a social service by demanding that the government fund deep bombproof shelters. The scheme moved ARP away from defence embodied in citizen services to protection offered by physical structures. Under the national scheme the citizen was understood as a useful and capable citizen-soldier-worker. Finsbury offered a rival vision of citizenship whereby the citizen was a protected worker propped up by a proto-welfare state.

Finsbury was chosen both because there are detailed records of its ARP plans and because the scheme had a wide resonance due to the controversial nature of the proposals put forward. Despite the fact that the scheme was never actually completed, it had a wide cultural resonance: the plan was one of the most widely known ARP schemes in London.<sup>8</sup> A well-publicized and highly attended exhibition showed off the final designs in Finsbury Town Hall. The materials from this were loaned to other boroughs and reported on in the local and national news.<sup>9</sup> The report on the scheme was expanded into a book, which aimed at a wide audience.<sup>10</sup>

Joseph Meisel has explored the Finsbury scheme in an analysis of pre-war shelter policy. He argues that Finsbury politicized ARP by offering its population a social commitment to improve its lives through linking ARP to wider municipal

---

<sup>8</sup> On the cultural impact of planning documents see: Frank Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (2004), pp. 124-126. Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy,' pp. 311-13.

<sup>9</sup> Chapter three explores the exhibition in more detail.

<sup>10</sup> Tecton Architects, *Planned A.R.P.* (London, 1939).

social policy. Finsbury's agenda contrasted markedly with the government's agenda on ARP.<sup>11</sup> I support Meisel's findings with further research that has incorporated new sources, including Finsbury borough council's minutes and press responses to the scheme.<sup>12</sup> As Meisel suggests the Tecton scheme demonstrates a social commitment to the inhabitants of Finsbury. It also reveals a modernist, planned agenda based on scientific principles to improve the health and welfare of the population. The fact that the government never backed the scheme with funding that would allow it to be carried out also supports the assessment that this was a political issue.<sup>13</sup>

I expand on Meisel's analysis in order to consider the process of politicization, particularly through exploration of the images and representations within the scheme, something Meisel did not look at in detail. The images contained within the Tecton scheme offer a radical re-imagination of urban order that contrasts markedly with the government scheme for a dispersed population and citizen defence services. I break down Meisel's distinction of pre-war and wartime by suggesting that while the shelters may never have been built the visual themes incorporated with the plan had a longer resonance that would consolidate within the war.<sup>14</sup> I suggest that the need to implement schemes in the urban context linked ARP into an older set of imaginations of the urban condition tied to slum clearance and concerns about the impact of unchecked modernity on the population.

---

<sup>11</sup> Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy,' pp. 300-319.

<sup>12</sup> Despite arguing that this was a political issue, Meisel did not look at Finsbury Borough Council's Minutes, relying instead on the RIBA collection at the V&A. In this way Meisel failed to fully understand the political context of the scheme and to grasp how it was linked to a more comprehensive scheme for ARP in Finsbury that incorporated both national and local agendas.

<sup>13</sup> V&A/RIBA/LUB/11/1/15, The Berthold Lubetkin papers; *Hansard*, 2 March 1939, vol. 344, col. 1581.

<sup>14</sup> Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' pp. 120-152.

Chapter two is framed, theoretically and methodologically, using the model provided by Frank Mort in his exploration of town planning in London during and following the Second World War. I use Mort's methodology to interrogate both the representational and cultural traditions that generated the Finsbury plan and consider the wider political and professional discussions around ARP. I seek to explore imaginations of urban space prior to the Second World War recontextualising Mort's analysis of plans for London within a longer history.<sup>15</sup> The chapter reveals that the standardized and regulated schemes for ARP established by central government were not easy to project onto an urban space whose population had been constructed and imagined in radically different ways.

While the scheme never came to fruition the visualisations within, alongside wider critiques of government ARP plans, created a visual culture of protest. A visual vocabulary developed that utilized urban destruction in relationship to imaginations of working-class life.<sup>16</sup> This chapter aims to consider how the rhetoric of citizenship evolved in a local context and to reframe the rhetoric of citizenship and social responsibility in relation to an existing rather than a future (wartime) moral economy that consolidated around the moral rights of a population threatened by bombardment.

---

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of Mort see the general introduction. This deals particularly with his discussions of town planning, see: Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' pp. 124-126; Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of a Permissive Society* (London, 2010), Chapter three.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Burke, 'Interrogating the Eye Witness,' *Cultural and Social History*, 7 (2010), pp. 435-444.

## 2.1. ARP After Spain: High Explosives, Deep Shelters and Visions of the Damaged Urban Landscape

The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 and was the first major European conflict since the 1914-18 war. The war offered parallels with the political and ideological tensions across Europe, divided as it was between fascism and left wing anarchists and communists.<sup>17</sup> Spain mirrored ideological tensions within British society and offered a space to consider the impact of war on an urban population. The war provided a resonant visual culture of the impact of bombs on city space and a case study of defence and protection methods against aerial bombardment.

Richard Overy argues that the ubiquity of reports on Spain and the horrific images produced in the wake of the bombing of Guernica in 1937 had an important role in shaping British arguments for peace. Overy posits that the central division brought to a head by the war was between those who continued to favour non-violence and those who argued that a readiness to use war was the only way to save the existing world or build a new one.<sup>18</sup> As discussed in chapter one, for some people, government promotion of ARP was inimical to the promotion of peace. However, Spain offered an opportunity to rethink ARP on different lines to those presented within government ARP plans. In Spain ARP services, in the hands of people's militia, formed a core of the Republican ideal.<sup>19</sup> Rather than simply building a citizen army to deal with the consequences of bombs, Spain had shown those who visited its bombed cities new physical ways

---

<sup>17</sup> Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age, Britain Between the Wars* (London, 2009), pp. 338-9; Buchanan, *The Impact*, pp 175-80; Corum, 'The Spanish Civil War,' pp. 313-334.

<sup>18</sup> Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p. 337.

<sup>19</sup> On militia and experiences of people's armies see, Orwell, *Homage*; Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 40-45.

to defend and protect its inhabitants. It also offered a wealth of visual comparison between London and Spanish cities, particularly Barcelona. The war acted as a training ground for British scientists, military theorists, writers, architects and engineers to witness and analyse the impact of war on the modern city.

*Challenges to Official ARP: Images of Destruction and the Right to Structural Protection*

The Marxist scientist J.B.S. Haldane became a spokesperson for ARP on scientific lines. He demanded the scientific education of the public to prevent panic and facilitate understanding over the impact of aerial bombardment.<sup>20</sup> Haldane called for planned systems of protection for the population backed by scientific research and based on the lessons of the bombing of Barcelona and Spain.<sup>21</sup>

Haldane had been to Spain prior to the war and supported the communists there. During the war, he and his family supported the British men and women who went out to fight.<sup>22</sup> He provided a vocal commentary on ARP, publishing his own book on the subject and debating the issue within the left-wing press.<sup>23</sup> Haldane used the same rhetoric as the government, but framed it in a subtly different way, suggesting that: 'the government is entirely right in

---

<sup>20</sup> Brett Holman, 'The Next War in the Air Civilian Fears of Strategic Bombardment in Britain, 1908-1941,' (Phd Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2009). p. 62.

<sup>21</sup> J.B.S. Haldane, *A.R.P.* (London, 1938); MRC/MSS.292/883/1, London Trades Council Leaflet, *Protection of Civil Population in Case of Air Raids, The most vital part of Air Raid Precautions* (February, 1938); MRC/MSS.292/883/1, International Peace Campaign Science Commission. ARP Coordinating Committee, A suggested scheme for ARP.

<sup>22</sup> Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p. 191, and on the International Brigades and Spain more generally: pp. 319-334.

<sup>23</sup> Haldane, *A.R.P.*; In a London Trades Council Leaflet, Haldane used his knowledge of bombing and deep shelters in Madrid to call for large underground shelters, MRC/MSS.292/883/1, *Protection of Civil Population in Case of Air Raids, The most vital part of Air Raid Precautions* (February, 1938), p. 8.

saying that the importance of calm and courage is immense...but mass heroism cannot be made to order. People will only remain calm and brave under such a trial if they are absolutely sure they are dying for something worthwhile.<sup>24</sup> He argued that in any future war, the participation of the British people would depend on them feeling that no one was profiting from the war. Spain offered a new morality of war, and this allowed a shift from the disillusionment that many felt following the First World War. This was particularly the case around the issue of bombardment.

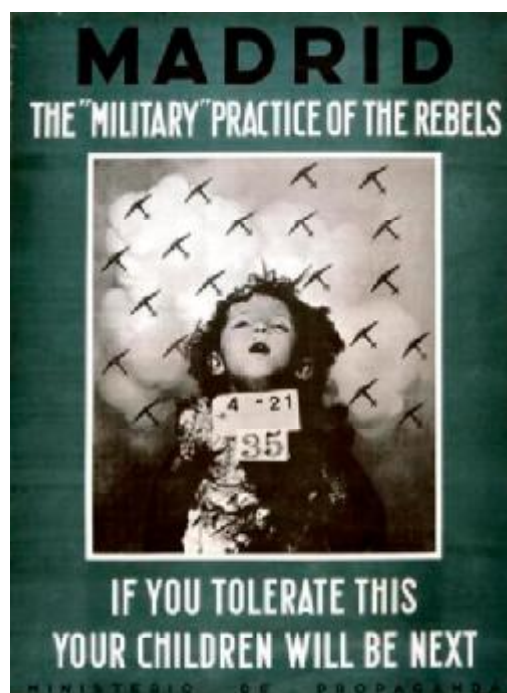


Figure 2.1. Spanish Civil War Poster issued by the Republicans as a warning to the population of lengths the fascists were prepared to go to win the war. Source: Imperial War Museum Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, IWM:PST 8661, <http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73198&sos=3> (accessed 1 April 2011).

Spain became a rallying point for left-wing concerns around ARP, as a number of vocal commentators brought home visions and descriptions of

---

<sup>24</sup> Haldane, *A.R.P.*, pp. 63-4.

bombardment to the British public. In so doing they communicated demands about the rights of the population to be protected from war in the air. This was not just about people participating in protecting their own country but also about the government of that country participating in the protection of its citizens. This shifted the debate away from preventing war in the air, to protection from war in the air.

In his 1938 book, *ARP*, Haldane used the air raids on Spain as an emotive rallying point: 'I have seen children killed in an air raid, and I think that a frightful responsibility rests on those who expose British children to such a death...As I believe the lessons of the Spanish civil war are quite literally matters of life and death to the British Public, I have no option but to write this book.' He suggested that 'nothing short of a great national movement on non-party lines will force the government to protect the people from the real and terrible danger that awaits them.'<sup>25</sup>

Robert Stradling argues that the horror of the war from the air was consolidated in a Republican propaganda poster showing a child killed by aerial bombardment that was issued at the end of 1936 and which followed on from a number of similar images of dead children that flooded the communist party newspapers in Great Britain, France and the USA (Figure 2.1).<sup>26</sup> The poster was issued as Franco's forces closed in on Madrid and was translated into a number of languages in an effort to rally international support for the Republican cause. Stradling argues this poster marked a new departure in the field of visual propaganda combining the 'most moving of these child death-masks with the

---

<sup>25</sup> Haldane, *A.R.P.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>26</sup> Stradling, *Your Children*, p. 7.

dreadful aspect of the sky filled with German Junkers Bombers.<sup>27</sup> The anonymous killing of innocent civilians through high explosive bombs demonstrated the horrendous consequences of war for an unprotected population. Those who had previously been opposed to war now had a moral justification for ARP, as the bombing of Spain became allied to an uncontrollable, morally defunct enemy other. The image of the dead child demanded that action be taken to protect British children from a similar attack: if you do not prepare then you're children will be next.<sup>28</sup>

Images like those discussed by Stradling helped to underline Haldane's major critique of the government ARP plans: their focus on gas instead of high explosive and incendiary bombs. Preparations for gas attacks were at the centre of government ARP plans, as discussed in chapter one, the government used the gas mask as visual shorthand for ARP preparations (Figure 1.1, 2.5). Within these plans the government suggested houses offered adequate protection from bombs: families could remain inside their homes while ARP services cleared and decontaminated the streets. Haldane argued that that this offered no real protection as bombs could literally blow homes apart. Haldane used his experience of witnessing the effects of high explosive bombs in Spain to suggest that the government ARP had completely failed to understand the impact of bombs and so offered the population no real protection.

Haldane politicized the issue, working with the Hampstead Communist Party (HCP) to produce a critique of government ARP. He suggested that even within government circles there was an understanding of the danger of bombs

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 8.



but that this was not translating into ARP practice.<sup>29</sup> Haldane was particularly critical of government plans to offer steel garden shelters and to use basement struts to protect homes from bombs. The pamphlet noted that, 'in Spain it has been made illegal to use basements in this way, because they have proved to be death traps.'<sup>30</sup> The steel shelters (Figure 2.2) were viewed with alarm as failing to protect from a direct hit or from rubble blown from surrounding buildings. The pamphlet argued that 'If the horrors that we read about ever come to London, and we are left to meet them with flimsy gas masks, with Anderson's steel "dog kennels" buried under houses which have been blown down, or with trenches 6ft deep in water, it will be too late then to make demands.'<sup>31</sup> Indeed, the minimal protection offered by trenches was deemed as ridiculous because the government offered one trench design specification, with no recognition of soil type (Figure 2.4).<sup>32</sup> The example of the bombing provided a tangible evidence to critique the inadequacy of government ARP plans. This created a visual culture of protest consolidated around images of destruction, which gave moral weight to demands for structural protection for the population.

Indeed, Haldane came up with a scheme for the protection of the population using deep underground tunnels, based on a similar scheme in Barcelona. Mr. Skinner, an engineer who visited Barcelona, informed Haldane that there was shelter for about 240,000 people in brick lined tunnels: these were 'quick to

---

<sup>29</sup> In evidence Haldane cited a comment from Mr. Simmons, the Chairman of the Conservative Parliamentary ARP Committee, who had visited Barcelona and been convinced that: 'high explosive bombs are the greatest danger to be faced in raids,' Hampstead Communist Party Pamphlet, *A.R.P for Hampstead, Foreword by J.B.S. Haldane* (London, ca. 1938), p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Hampstead, *A.R.P for Hampstead*, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

build, cheap and offered high levels of protection.’<sup>33</sup> In this way, visitors to Spain were also offered solutions to dealing with bombs, using efficient, cheap and practiced methods.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 2.2. The Dangers of Inadequate Shelters. Source: Hampstead Communist Party *Pamphlet, A.R.P for Hampstead, Foreword by J.B.S. Haldane* (London, ca. 1938), p. 4.

### *Spain and the British Public*

The impact of air raids on Spain was not just the preserve of expert analysis. The raids were communicated to the public through text, image and spoken word. On 14 July 1938 *The Listener* ran with a cover story by John Langdon-Davies entitled ‘Bombs over Barcelona’ (Figure 2.3). The article described an air raid on the city on 17 March 1938. Langdon-Davies used the raid to illustrate ARP in the city, utilizing the official minute-to-minute logs kept by the Air Defence of Barcelona.<sup>35</sup> The precautions taken against bombardment were on a par with those being planned in Britain and had proved completely inadequate. The raids described are nightmarish experiences in which the population under fire was forced to crowd into packed Metro stations and

---

<sup>33</sup> Haldane, *A.R.P.*, pp. 164-5.

<sup>34</sup> In this way Haldane’s solutions to ARP fitted in with a wider set of debates about the function of design in the modern world. Herbert Read, *Art and Industry: The Principles of Industrial Design* (London, 1934); Walter Dorwin Teague, *Design This Day: The Technique of Order in the Machine Age* (London, 1946).

<sup>35</sup> John Langdon-Davies, ‘A.R.P.: Bombs Over Barcelona,’ p. 60.

shelters with no space to even sit. Hospitals quickly filled and streets remained blocked by rubble for days on end.<sup>36</sup>



Figure 2.3. Clockwise from Left: 'Bombs Over Barcelona;' 'One High Explosive bomb was responsible for the damage shown here;' Debris must be removed slowly by passing from hand to hand since there may be victims buried underneath. Source: *The Listener*, 14 July 1938, front cover, pp. 60-61.

Langdon-Davies compared the bombing of Barcelona directly to the possible bombing of London, offering a critical voice to government ARP plans, which predicted that bombing tactics would rest on a knock-out blow. In the dense city space of London it would not be the 'destruction of objects but of morale that ARP needed to plan for.'<sup>37</sup> Langdon-Davies was recruited to speak about the issue on the BBC and was vocal in his support for deep underground

<sup>36</sup> Langdon-Davies, 'A.R.P.: Bombs Over Barcelona,' p. 61. The reports in *The Listener* were expanded on by Langdon-Davies in a book on the subject: *Air Raid*.

<sup>37</sup> Langdon-Davies, *Air Raid*, pp. 22-26.

shelters as a means to protect the population and prevent panic in big cities, particularly London.<sup>38</sup>

Langdon-Davies argued that an initial lack of planning almost broke Barcelona. His book on air raids suggested that the raids on Spain showed the predictions made by the government in early 1930s about the knock-out blow decimating urban space and winning wars, were wrong. He argued that the actions of Italy and Germany over Barcelona on 16, 17 and 18 March 1938 'allow an analysis of what happens when an air fleet attacks a large population congregated in a city.'<sup>39</sup> He further suggested that 'the manoeuvres were intended to solve a technical problem' and were a practice for a future war. He suggested that these air-raid practices had resulted in 'a technical revolution, and...it now becomes necessary for the defence to devise new means of neutralizing the improvement.' Hoare's statement that ARP could neutralize the effect of aerial bombardment simply did not hold up when applied to the Spanish context. The ARP manuals on gas proof rooms and concrete protection that were being produced by the British government were pointless in the face of the new bombardment strategies used in these raids. The raids showed that the major strategy of air war in cities was the use of high explosive bombs, destroying buildings, infrastructure and morale. Raids would not be one-off and

---

<sup>38</sup> The BBC understood that Langdon-Davies was a communist and so was 'not an apologist for the government.' In this way his opinion offered a critical and useful balance to official lines on ARP, indeed they felt the National Programme was a good place to mention his letter to *The Times* in which he called for the construction of deep, bomb proof shelters which was, 'the only thing worth doing' in Barcelona: BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A/Talks, file contains details and commentary on a talk by Langdon-Davies on air raids in Barcelona on 6 July 1938; John Langdon-Davies, 'Bombs Dropped Before Alarm. "Silent Approach: in Barcelona Raids,' *The Times*, 7 July 1938, p. 7. George Orwell felt Langdon-Davies had failed to accurately represent the war, particularly the divisions in the left and the labeling of anarchists and the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (P.O.U.M.) as Trotskyites: *Homage*, pp. 160-163.

<sup>39</sup> Langdon-Davies, *Air Raid*, p. 12.

conclusively destructive but relentless and long term, blocking streets, damaging homes, creating congestion and disorder.<sup>40</sup>

The experience of the bombing of Spain created a broad consensus that government plans for ARP were completely inadequate for the protection of major cities. These concerns consolidated around the National Air Raid Precautions Coordinating Committee (NARPCC), a left-wing organization established by a 'number of scientists, doctors, architects and other technicians' and under the chairmanship of J.B.S. Haldane. Like Langdon-Davies the committee asked why the government was still relying on 'respirators and gas proof rooms for protection,' when it was clear that in a war, it was high-explosive bombs that threatened cities.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the ARP gas mask became a satirical means to communicate the failure of the national government to offer effective protection from bombing (Figures 2.5, 2.16).

Thus, the Spanish Civil War revealed glaring inadequacies in ARP planning. Firstly, it provided evidence to critique official understanding of how war in the air would work. Air warfare would not come from huge squadrons creating a knock-out blow, but from relentless and degrading raids by smaller squadrons that would slowly eat away at a city and the morale of the population.<sup>42</sup> Secondly, it offered a new vision of European cities, as broken, damaged entities. Images of the bombed landscape of Barcelona, like those presented in *The Listener*, showed citizens subsumed by seas of endless rubble

---

<sup>40</sup> Langdon-Davies, *Air Raid*, pp. 13-15. Haldane similarly criticized the government handbooks, which offered no protection from high explosives and incendiaries and focused largely on the impact of gas, in: *A.R.P.*, pp. 87-100.

<sup>41</sup> MRC/MSS/78/BT/4/3/1, NARPCC, Printed Circular: 'Prepare how to protect the people: appeal for donations,' (1939).

<sup>42</sup> James S. Corum argues that despite revealing much about air power strategy the Spanish Civil War was not interrogated by the British Military who failed to understand the use of air strategies in war, particularly its use in transport and providing tactical cover for the infantry: 'The Spanish Civil War,' pp. 313-334.

and a the city that was smashed, congested and confused. Thirdly, the image of the broken city offered the basis for a social critique of government schemes for protecting the population from bombs. The focus on gas meant a failure to plan fully for the destructive threat of high explosive bombs. The latter allowed a critical and technically informed left to move away from criticism of the government based on its international relations policies, to a critique based on the rights of the population to be adequately protected. The visually emotive decimation of Spain underpinned demands for radical alternatives to government schemes, facilitated through technical knowledge and enabled through a coalition of scientists and planners.

## **2.2. The Finsbury Scheme for ARP: Lubetkin, Tecton and Modernist Architecture as a Social Responsibility**

### *Demands for Structural Protection*

In 1938 the London metropolitan borough of Finsbury utilized the experiences of bombardment in Spain to mount an attack on the government's plans to protect the civil population from aerial bombardment. They employed a radical architectural firm, Tecton, to draw up plans for the defence of the borough. This firm produced a report that offered evidence-based policies for ARP protection legitimated by knowledge of the bombing of Spain. Tecton had close links with radical thinkers on architecture, engineering, health and welfare. Tecton had observed raids in Spain to come to conclusions about the best way to support and protect urban populations. Indeed, the Mr. Skinner referred to by

J.B.S. Haldane was one of the Tecton architects.<sup>43</sup> Skinner's experience of Spain gave authority to the scheme. As *The Star* noted: 'one of the principles of the firm doing the work studied ARP in Barcelona recently. He was in an air raid.'<sup>44</sup> Spain was cited in the introduction to the Tecton Report both to give it legitimacy and as proof of the need for appropriate passive defence measures.<sup>45</sup> The group both offered technical solutions to the issues faced by the borough and created a new visual culture of protest based on the predicted outcomes of bombs on London as revealed in the parallels of Spain.

The borough of Finsbury was situated in North London and bordered the boroughs of Islington, Shoreditch, the City of London, Holborn and St Pancras (Figure 0.2). The borough formed part of group 3 under the new London region ARP groupings (Figure 1.2). Finsbury was a predominantly poor working-class area. The Labour party dominated the borough, reflecting the boroughs demographics. Industrial buildings squeezed the borough, including tobacco factories, distilleries, breweries and warehousing. Space in the borough was at a premium and the housing stock was poor and dominated by slums and overcrowding. Housing and planning were overriding issues in local politics.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout 1938, and in accordance with the ARP Act, the borough council began setting up a structure for ARP. This included the establishment of

---

<sup>43</sup> John Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin: Architecture and the Tradition of Progress* (London, 1992), p. 354; John Allan, Obituary: Francis Skinner, 17 January 1998, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/obituary-francis-skinner-1139173.html>> (accessed 1 March 2011).

<sup>44</sup> V&A/RIBA/LUB/24/6, *The Star*, 15 October 1938, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 806.

<sup>46</sup> For a useful overview of the Borough see, David Green, *Finsbury: Past, Present & Future*, Report for EC1 New Deal for Communities (May 2009); David Green and Eoin Dunne, *Public Housing Pioneers*, both available online at One History, EC1 in the making, <<http://www.ec1history.co.uk/articles.html>> (accessed 11 March 2011).

an ARP Committee under the chairmanship of Alderman H. Riley, the Mayor of Finsbury, and the formation of a number of other committees to deal with specific areas of ARP. These covered medical services, a warden sub-committee and an ARP works committee. The latter acted as an umbrella for a number of areas including the clearance of debris; decontamination of public highways; repair of public highways, streets, public spaces and sewers and coordination between the authorities; protection of premises for ARP and lighting restrictions.<sup>47</sup> However, as with the rest of the country, it was not until the Munich crisis that the seriousness of ARP really hit home. With the threat of war becoming a reality, there was intense concern about Germany's ability to bomb Britain and a fear that air raids could occur at any moment.<sup>48</sup>

In the wake of the 1938 crisis, the inadequacy of government preparations for ARP became clear, particularly regarding the structural protection of the population from air raids. Images of the destruction meted out on Spanish cities haunted London and, following government advice, local authorities began hastily digging trenches to provide some measure of protection from bombs. Finsbury followed suit, searching for appropriate open spaces to dig trenches to protect its inhabitants from bombs. However, it became clear that within the dense urban spaces, trenches could offer little protection for the majority of the population. Calls for adequate protection were politicized: Labour called for the government to provide shelters that could withstand a direct hit and the Liberal party deplored the state of ARP.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions), Committee, 14 April 1938, p. 58.

<sup>48</sup> Gerald Lee, "I See Dead People": Air-Raid Phobia and Britain's Behavior in the Munich Crisis', *Security Studies*, 13 (2004), pp. 230-272.

<sup>49</sup> Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy,' pp. 306-07.



At a meeting of the Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee on 4 October 1938, Alderman Harold Riley expressed his concern over whether the trench system provided adequate protection from bombs. The critique of the trench system was part of a wider concern over structural protection. In response to government demands for boroughs to find existing spaces to use as shelters, Riley initiated a survey of suitable business premises. He found the result to be troubling, just as Haldane had discovered in Spain, the survey found that it appeared larger buildings could be a positive danger to those sheltering in them. With this in mind, the council commissioned a prompt survey of all basements within the borough and a consideration of the character of the borough with a view to the 'construction of underground shelters on scientific lines calculated to afford protection to the maximum number of persons in an emergency.' Finsbury employed Tecton to undertake the research.<sup>50</sup>

### *Tecton and Finsbury*

Tecton was an architectural organization formed by Berthold Lubetkin with a number of other radical modernist architects.<sup>51</sup> Lubetkin's ideas were founded on the position that architecture had a social responsibility and that government intervention was the best means to achieve this. He was influenced both by his formative years in Russia, where he witnessed revolution and social change, and by his training and travel in both Russia and Europe, funded by the

---

<sup>50</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 806; ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 6 October 1938, pp. 414-16.

<sup>51</sup> John Allan, Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40675>> (Accessed, 1 March 2011); Berthold Lubetkin, Entry in 'Designing Modern Britain.'

soviet commissariat of education and international workers aid.<sup>52</sup> Unlike many of his British counterparts, Lubetkin witnessed the trials of revolution first hand and felt that art and architecture offered an alternative way to educate and aid populations, in contrast to the violent upheavals of his homeland.<sup>53</sup> John Allen situates Lubetkin's work and designs within the context of a wider 1930s spectrum of analytical and agitational activity. Allen reads Lubetkin's ideas alongside those of radical and modernist thinkers such as Julian Huxley, Patrick Abercrombie, Seebohm Rowntree, H.G. Wells and Eleanor Rathbone.<sup>54</sup>

Lubetkin had links to the Modern Architectural Research Group (MARS) and from 1934 on with the Architects and Technicians Organisation (ATO). The former focused on vocational aims and issues within the architectural profession, particularly the rights of workers. The latter had a broadly political stance and attracted people from beyond the architectural profession.<sup>55</sup> ATO focused on progressive housing and planning, particularly working-class housing, and was critical of the government for failing to offer cheap, good quality housing to workers and for allowing private enterprise to use housing as an outlet for investment. ATO expressed these concerns through design, lobbying and exhibitions, demanding local government intervention into the housing issue, backed by state subsidy. Tecton was built on these principles, with the

---

<sup>52</sup> Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, p. 38.

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

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313-315; Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (London, 2004). For a discussion of some of these thinkers see: Overy, *The Morbid Age*. This can also be understood within the context on the politics of housing and slum clearance and the demands for a planned London see: Ken Young and Patricia Garside, *Metropolitan London: Politics and Urban Change 1837-1981*, (London, 1982); Kevin Morgan, 'The Problem of the Epoch? Labour and Housing, 1918-51,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 16:3 (2005), pp. 227-255.

<sup>55</sup> ATO was not just an architectural organization, it attracted people from the Cooperative Workers Society, Miners Welfare Committee, staff at local authorities, engineers, quantity surveyors, clerks of works, construction workers, economists including Michael Shapiro, academics and some of the Cambridge scientists including Bernal and Haldane, see: Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, p. 322.

assumption that the architect should be an activist expert, utilizing modern design combined with modernist planning to improve the lives, health and welfare of the population.<sup>56</sup>

Tecton's relationship with Finsbury began in 1935 and was consolidated with the commissioning of the Finsbury Health Centre. The centre became a model London public health centre, aimed at improving the health and welfare of the Finsbury population. This was the first time a political client with a political constituency was employed long term by a metropolitan borough and reflected a modernist aspiration to turn architecture into a planned social service.<sup>57</sup> It was in Finsbury that Lubetkin's aspirations could become a reality as he set to solving real social problems in this densely populated working-class borough.<sup>58</sup> The Mayor of the borough, Alderman Harold Riley, worked with Lubetkin to develop a social vision for Finsbury. This included slum clearance, the building of new civic squares, gardens, housing schemes and social amenities, including libraries, public baths and day nurseries.<sup>59</sup> Tecton was not just an obscure left-wing architectural firm but had captured popular imaginations with work using reinforced concrete to create modern designs for the penguin house and gorilla enclosure at London Zoo.<sup>60</sup> The employment of Tecton marked a trend that emerged during the 1930s of the pairing of private companies with public schemes to produce new and innovative design.<sup>61</sup> The employment of this group

---

<sup>56</sup> Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, pp. 322-329.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 329, 333-4.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 330-349.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 349.

<sup>60</sup> Berthold Lubetkin, Entry in 'Designing Modern Britain.'

<sup>61</sup> This is exemplified in the funding of documentaries by the gas company to promote themselves but also to reveal the plight of many of the working-class population, see for example: *Housing Problems*, documentary Film, produced by Arthur Elton and E.H. Anstey for the British Commercial Gas Association (1935), available online, BFI Inview <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6212>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

for ARP planning sent a clear message to the Conservative dominated national government about the political agenda of Finsbury to protect its population through modern and useful design.<sup>62</sup>

*The Politicisation of ARP: The Tecton Scheme for Finsbury*

In the heightened tension of the 1938 crisis Finsbury council was able to use ARP planning as a means to critique the government and put forward new ways of imagining society. The scheme was never just a local issue. It linked into wider debates about the relationship between governance and expertise, using the press as a mouthpiece. On 15 October 1938, the left-wing paper *The Star* reported: 'London borough calls experts to tackle A.R.P. Planning Shelters on a scientific basis. Vital Statistics to Ensure Safety and Prevent Waste.' The article continued:

Finsbury, one of London's boroughs with a day population of about 200,000 and a night population of about 60,000, is following an entirely new plan of A.R.P. by putting the whole of its organization in the hands of a firm of West End Architects – Specialists on the subject...First municipal authority in England to allow experts to handle its protection entirely.<sup>63</sup>

The government had called for local authorities to establish ARP schemes to set up services to deal with the impact of bombardment and to recruit volunteers and workers for these services. Finsbury expanded on this remit by aiming to produce a scheme based on 'borough data to protect the whole population.' The population was to be sheltered from bombs, not mobilized to deal with their impact. *The Star* was impressed by the way in which the proposals rested on detailed research of the borough including, 'house-to-house

---

<sup>62</sup> Read, *Art and Industry*.

<sup>63</sup> V&A/RIBA/LUB/24/6, *The Star*, 15 October 1938, p. 6.

research to get exact data.' In this way, planning would be based on precise knowledge and 'once the figures are found, the number of shelters required can be judged.'<sup>64</sup>

In December 1938, Tecton produced an interim report of its survey of the borough. The report included a series of maps indicating the contours, geological strata and underground water in the borough, as well as the sewers, electrical conduits, water and gas mains, tunnels and telephone trunk lines. These geographical and infrastructural maps were set alongside maps showing the demography of the borough in relation to the built environment by mapping the nature and height of the buildings and the distribution and density of the night and day population. With this technical knowledge in mind, Tecton reported they were of the opinion that the only satisfactory method of dealing with the problem of protection in the borough was by the provision of large underground shelters, capable of accommodating the whole of the population. In turn, these were not wasted spaces but would be used as underground car parks and storage warehouses in peacetime (Figures 2.6 and 2.14).

This plan was to be the basis of Finsbury's ARP scheme, fulfilling the ARP Act requirements. It was also a means to stimulate interest in ARP and formed part of the borough's publicity drive by being at the heart of an ARP week and recruitment drive centred on an exhibition of Tecton's Scheme in the Town Hall.<sup>65</sup> The exhibition would also work as a celebration of local politics and achievements. Herbert Morrison the leader of the London County Council (LCC)

---

<sup>64</sup> V&A/RIBA/LUB/24/6, *The Star*, 15 October 1938, p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 23 December 1938, pp. 662-3. The exhibition is discussed in chapter three.

was recruited to commence proceedings at a celebratory opening ceremony.<sup>66</sup> Finsbury's ARP plans were a public statement about the function of local government. The plans offered a fantasy of modern urban life in which a well run local government with good personal knowledge of the local population could utilize scientific planning and architecture to improve the quality of life of the population, more specifically that of the working-class population.<sup>67</sup>

On 1 February 1939, the final design for the structural protection was reported to the Finsbury borough council. It was drawn up in collaboration between Tecton, A.L. Downey, the borough engineer who undertook the survey of basements, and O.N. Arup, a civil engineer with links to Lubetkin's firm and known for his use of reinforced concrete in construction.<sup>68</sup> The design contained text, aerial photography of the borough, maps, cartoons of the impact of bombardment and technical drawings of the proposed shelter design.

The report emerged from government requirements for local authorities to find appropriate basements to use as public shelters. Once structural engineers began analysis it became apparent that there was no clear scientific measure for assessing the suitability and safety of structures to protect from aerial attack.<sup>69</sup> Concern about government failure to give clear information about the impact of bombs on structures was at the centre of the Finsbury scheme, reflecting the borough's demands for good scientific knowledge to be the basis of any urban planning. Unlike other European countries, the British government

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 29 December 1938, p. 664.

<sup>67</sup> On the term fantasy see, Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' pp. 120-152.

<sup>68</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, pp. 805-846; Allan, Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

<sup>69</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 805; ILHC/Finsbury ARP/L3.163, Home Office's Air Raid Precautions Department, *Memorandum No. 10 Provision of Air Raid Shelters in Basements* (London, 1939).

did not release any publications 'dealing with the penetrative and explosive effects of the aerial bomb and the measures necessary to give protection against them.'<sup>70</sup> Building on the interwar growth in fears about bombardment and the genuinely felt threat from the air and fear of air power the report drew attention to the contemporary examples of the bombing of Spain, Abyssinia and China as well as German military theory that discussed the use of bombing in war.

Within the report, Tecton outlined that its initial survey had two aims: firstly, to 'determine the location of shelters;' and secondly to examine 'the effect of bombs and the structural measures which can be taken to counteract them in order to' provide 'as near as possible' a 'complete immunity from high explosive bombs as could be achieved.'<sup>71</sup> Tecton feared that strategic bombing would severely damage the congested community of Finsbury and argued that the only way to prevent public panic was to gain full confidence in schemes of protection.<sup>72</sup> This would check disillusionment and facilitate the growth in technical knowledge around the subject to limit the 'squandering of national resources which is bound to result from hasty and ill-considered measures.'<sup>73</sup>

In a broadcast to the nation in March 1938, Samuel Hoare had informed listeners that ARP was about voluntary service facilitated by local

---

<sup>70</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 811; In May 1939 the journal *Architectural Design and Construction* produced a supplement on ARP and noted that 'designers have been hampered throughout by the absence of official data, F.E. Towndrow (ed.), 'The Case for Deep Shelters, With Particular Reference to the Finsbury Scheme, designed by TECTON,' *Special A.R.P. Supplement of Architectural Design and Construction*, 9 (1939), pp. 22-23.

<sup>71</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, pp. 805-6.

<sup>72</sup> On definitions of strategic bombing see, Robert A. Page, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Cornell, 1996).

<sup>73</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 805

administration. This rhetoric aimed to place ARP in the hands of citizens; offering them a choice in the defence of their nation. Local government would facilitate the services for such schemes. Hoare's stance on the issue reflected concerns over international discussions about facilitating peace. For Hoare the population could not be forced to act but should act naturally to defend themselves. He suggested of ARP services that:

...it is because they are founded upon voluntary effort and local initiative that they are so deeply ingrained in our national life. And it is because they are the blood of our blood and bone of our bone and have been tested for centuries in the school of trial and crisis that with your individual help they will prove irresistible. It is in the days of difficulty rather the periods of easy going complacency that the nation shows its finest qualities. Let us show them today for the purposes of our own protection; let us show them still more for the purposes of peace throughout the world.<sup>74</sup>

Hoare had thus utilized a language of national identity and heritage in an attempt to rally the population to act in defence of themselves.

On the other hand, Tecton offered an alternative vision to that of the government. Tecton's vision emphasized the responsibility of an elected body to use all means at its disposal to create a better, safer society through progressive forms of science and technology. Spain had created a culture in which the nation could view the problems of modern war on a European stage. The high explosive bomb became a symbol of this kind of war, indiscriminately threatening the lives of those in its path. Tecton, with its long record of offering modern solutions to modern urban problems set out to do the same with the problem of modern war. In so doing they offered a new 'socialvision' for London based on a socio-

---

<sup>74</sup> *The Listener*, 16 March 1938, pp. 553-4.



technological complex of local democracy working to offer technically backed solutions to modern urban problems.

### 2.3. The Tecton Plan as Social Vision

#### *The Shelter Question*

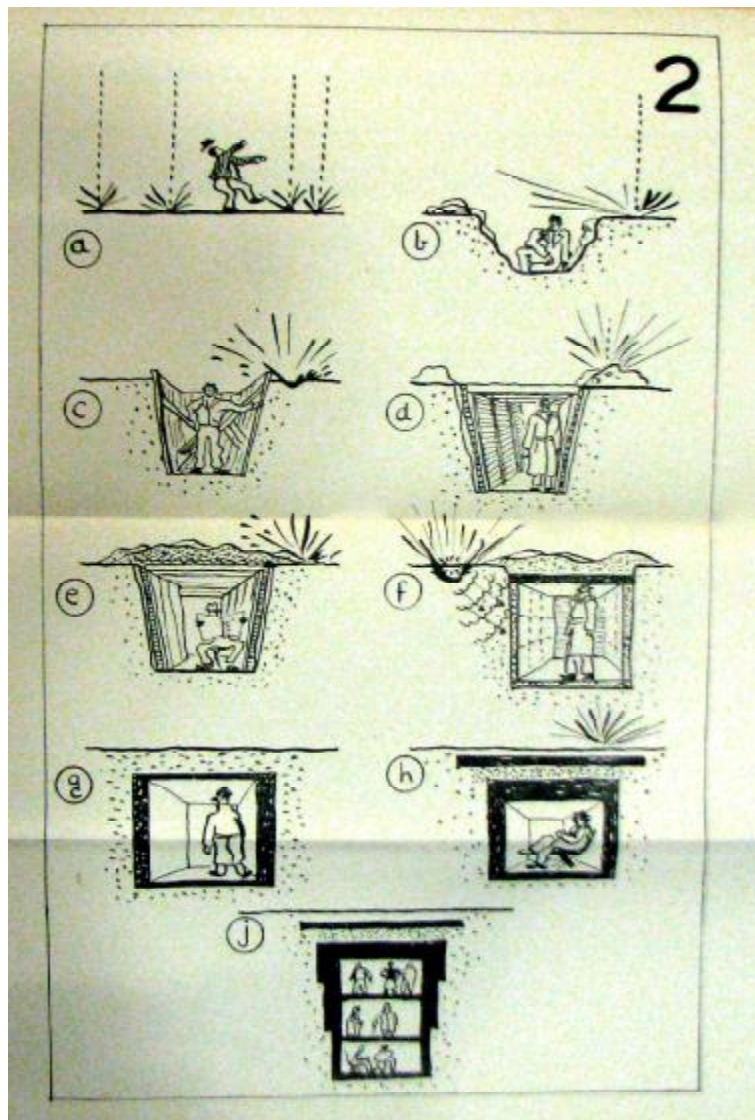


Figure 2.4. The evolution of the shelter idea. Source: ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 815.

The Tecton plan understood structural ARP as a local issue based on the nature of the area to be protected. It attacked government policies for protection as ludicrous for the conditions of the congested borough. Tecton's scheme for structural defence was based on the use of urban planning and design in relationship to military knowledge. Thus, the design of trench shelters came in for particular criticism as being copied from the 1914-1918 war 'lock, stock and barrel' and then placed in 'the very different conditions of the congested town of 1938' (Figure 2.4).<sup>75</sup> The Tecton scheme was highly localized, yet made nationally relevant demands for the government to provide accurate information on the impact of high explosive bombs, so that local authorities could make informed decisions about how to protect their populations.

Tecton was not alone in using the danger of bombs to critique the government, as the cartoon from the Hampstead pamphlet shows (Figure 2.2). The steel Anderson shelter was presented by its critics as primitive and inadequate; thus it became an ideal symbol with which to visually attack ARP. The Tecton report scathingly noted how the shelters were dubbed dog kennels by the public.<sup>76</sup> The report asked whether, in light of knowledge of high-explosive bombs' impact on urban space, anyone would accept the steel shelters offered by the government from early 1939. Indeed, in February 1939, following the release of the Tecton report, the attack on the Anderson shelter became

---

<sup>75</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 807.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, pp. 807-8. In March 1939 the Evening Standard criticized the failure of the government to adequately deal with ARP and the shelter problem asking who would find 'psychological comfort in Sir John's substitutes for shelters popularly known as 'dog kennels,' *Evening Standard*, 20 March 1939, p. 6.

widespread. The fragile steel shelters developed a kind of ‘intervisuality,’ a recycled shorthand for government incompetence (Figures 2.2, 2.5, 2.16).<sup>77</sup>

The concern over shelters was prevalent in broadcast journalism. The BBC sought to find ways to prevent panic in the population over the shelter issue, looking to get a speaker to explain what exactly garden shelters could protect them from and to communicate calm in an atmosphere described at the start of the Munich crisis as ‘electrical.’<sup>78</sup> Into 1939, the BBC attempted to monitor the population’s understanding of ARP. Recognising persistent fears over the threat of bombs, the BBC planned to have a talk on the relationship between casualty rates and bombardment as it was perceived ‘this was the strongest line of defence both physically and psychologically.’<sup>79</sup> However, despite a growing realization that the public needed to be educated on bombardment and types of bombs, the BBC struggled to run a story on steel shelters and their production, as they could not discuss how effective they were. In the end, the BBC focused on the manufacture and circulation of the shelters, avoiding any discussion of their resistance.<sup>80</sup> It was this last issue that made shelters easy targets for a wider critique of ARP measures.

Coinciding with the release of the Tecton Report to the Home Office, *The Finsbury Citizen* newspaper ran a cartoon attacking the government’s steel shelter plan (Figure 2.5). The cartoon suggested that all the shelters were good for were fowl houses. The image emphasizes the deficient standard of the

---

<sup>77</sup> Burke, ‘Interrogating the Eye Witness,’ p. 435.

<sup>78</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Letter from Major Ernest Mathews offering to speak on the shelter issue, 27 September 1938.

<sup>79</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/3, File 2B, Internal Circulating Memo, Recruitment of Professor Cave-Brown-Cave to give a talk on bombs, 22 April 1939.

<sup>80</sup> BBC/WAC/R 45/3, Letter from the Press Officer, ARP Department, 17 January 1939 and Letter to Richard Dimpleby from Press Officer, ARP Department, 2 February 1939.

shelter, with its flimsy material and poor craftsmanship. To the right, a gas mask has been dumped in a bin, a reminder of the failure of the government to plan adequately for high explosives with its insistent focus on gas. The caption reminds the viewer that despite the lessons of Barcelona, where only deep shelters proved adequate, our 'rulers' have decided that every 'poor' household deserves a steel hut to dump in its back garden.<sup>81</sup> The image was framed in classed terms: the 'rulers,' not the 'people,' have decided how to protect the population. In this way, a visual language of protest emerged using common themes to act as a social critique of ARP plans. Barcelona, the gas mask, the flimsy shelter, the trench, were symbols of a government unprepared to protect the population.



Figure 2.5. “Nationals” Latest Crazy Notion – A Tin Hut for Every Backyard. Source: *The Finsbury Citizen*, No. 83, February 1939, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> “Nationals” Latest Crazy Notion – A Tin Hut for Every Backyard, *The Finsbury Citizen*, No. 83, February 1939, p. 3.

### *Military Intelligence and Urban Planning*

Tecton used its experiences of working in the densely packed borough of Finsbury to set out an alternative future for the area. Its modernist agenda was set against the backward looking symbols of the government: the trenches from the First World War, the primitive steel shelters, the gas mask. This was a very different means of using history to that presented by the government, particularly Hoare's comments on ARP in 1938, which had situated ARP as part of a long history of local voluntary service, tried and tested for centuries.<sup>82</sup> In contrast, Tecton saw history as a means of measuring progress. Well-planned city space marked the ascent of man to an improved, ordered society. In this way, Tecton was offering not only a rival scheme, but also a different understanding of London. Richard Dennis argues that the modern city during this period can be understood in terms of rationalism: a search for spatial and economic order and efficiency, embodied in planning, zoning and regulation.<sup>83</sup> The visions of London offered by Tecton were a part of this modern rationalism, the problem of bombing, just like social problems, could be solved through appropriate technology and planning.

Analysing the Tecton scheme reveals a modernist imagination of the city engendered through military technical knowledge. The scheme was communicated through emotive illustrations and cartoons combined with detailed and complex visual communication of solutions to the threat of bombardment. These visual themes reveal a new military visual language. Those who read Tecton's book, attended its exhibition, or accessed its ARP plans as

---

<sup>82</sup> *The Listener*, 16 March 1938, pp. 553-4.

<sup>83</sup> Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 2.

they were presented in multiple London and national newspapers, encountered complex technical and social arguments that linked military-scientific knowledge to local democratic principles.<sup>84</sup>

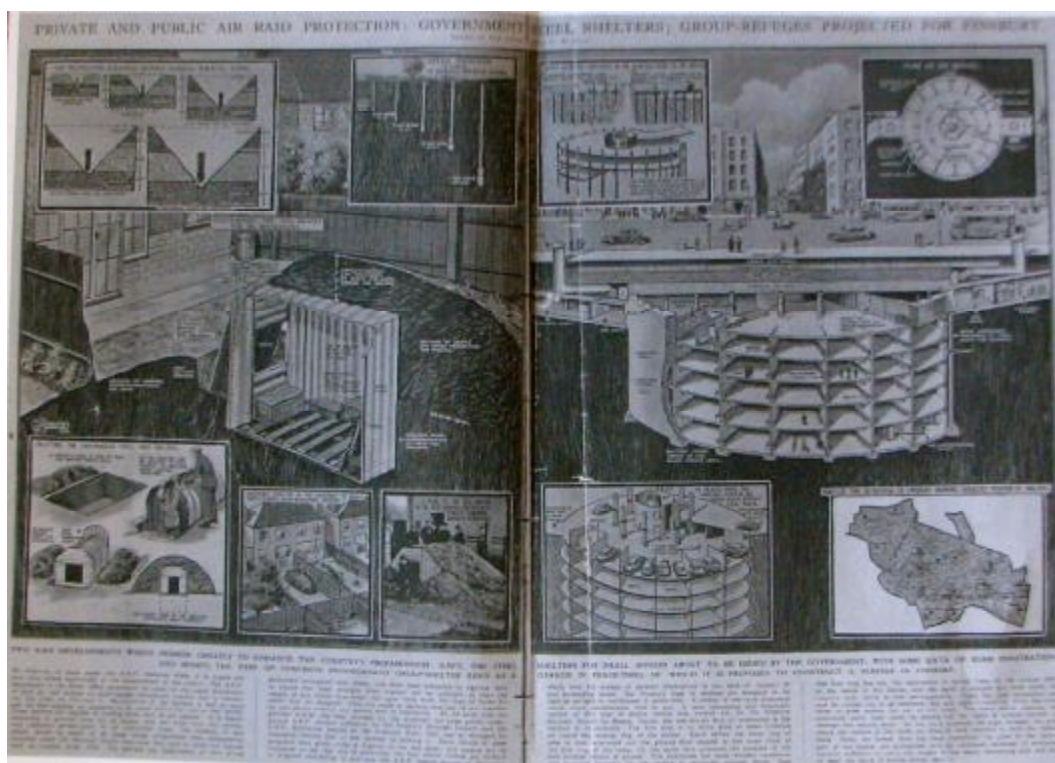


Figure 2.6. Communicating a military problem: visual tropes of the Tecton scheme. Source: 'Private and Public Air Raid Protection,' *Illustrated London News*, 28 April 1939, pp. 6-7.

Tecton's plans can be understood as part of a new visual culture, in which modernist principles and scientific arguments on bombardment were made accessible to the population through a radical visual communication that linked image and text both alone and in juxtaposition.<sup>85</sup> There are parallels here with Paul Rennie's analysis of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs's (ABCA) wartime communications to soldiers. The ABCA aimed to motivate soldiers to accept discipline by providing them with a social, political and military context to the

<sup>84</sup> Paul Rennie, 'Socialvision: Visual Culture and Social Democracy in Britain during World War II,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), pp. 243-60.

<sup>85</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'The Right to Look,' *Critical Inquiry*, 37 (2011), p. 479.

war. Rennie interrogates the ABCA conflict maps, which gave information about battles and retreats to soldiers. On the one side of the maps soldiers were informed about the nature of the battle, on the other, the contributions to the war of the allies were displayed with information about who those allies were. Rennie suggests that the visual material produced had a key role in developing political intelligence amongst the troops, who were taught to read this complex material, some for the first time. The presentation of material in the Tecton scheme has parallels with those maps, juxtaposing, for example, technical knowledge of the impact of bombs on the urban landscape with urban planning agendas (Figures 2.6-2.7.).

However, in the case of Tecton this was not a moment of wartime national belonging but a means to critique official ARP policy and present a rival vision for London. As shown in figure 2.6, the *Illustrated London News* refers to different shelter types as 'private and public,' articulating the location of shelters and who had access to them: one was in a private garden, the other a public space. However, these were both publically funded schemes that articulated alternative ideas, both about the most appropriate forms of protection and the responsibility of the state in providing that.

In turn, the visualisation of London within the Tecton scheme offered a vision of London as a space of anxious modernity.<sup>86</sup> Dominant within the scheme is a particular representation of London, specifically a ubiquitous visualisation of working-class people and a contextualized social imagination of this group within a distinctly urban landscape, expressly the terraced street. The

---

<sup>86</sup> See general intro and: Sally Alexander, 'A New Civilisation? London Surveyed 1928-1940,' *History Workshop Journal*, 64 (2007), pp. 297-320.

knowledge of the nature of the lives within this landscape is related to ARP, suggesting official ARP policies have failed to understand the nature of living conditions for the working classes of London. Thus, the scheme both communicated new technical knowledge about bombardment and offered a visualisation of the conditions of working-class life. In this way the scheme casts a 'social eye' over Finsbury, exposing the congested undignified reality of the urban condition to viewers. The scheme then offered solutions to those problems by presenting a new 'socialvision' for Finsbury: the socio-technological complex of urban planning.<sup>87</sup>

#### *Visual Communication in the Tecton Scheme*

Figure 2.7 shows how Tecton conveyed technical information on bombardment through simple visual communication. The images within the exhibition and final book visually consolidated a number of issues that arose during the 1930s: concerns over the order of urban space, airmindedness amongst the population and fears about bombardment that emerged from the bombing of Barcelona and Spanish cities. This was communicated through a series of commissioned cartoons produced by Gordon Cullen. The images did not display calm volunteers doing their bit in the face of bombardment but sought to show the violent impact of bombs and the panic that could occur in a population faced with inadequate protection.<sup>88</sup> The images exploited these fears to imagine the impact of raids on a Finsbury only protected by the government's ARP

---

<sup>87</sup> Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 71-120.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Mackay, *Half the Battle, Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War* (New York, 2002), introduction; Helen Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line, Air Raids, Productivity and Wartime Culture, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2006); Amy Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945,' *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 153-175.



outline. The visual culture of protest that emerged utilized specific urban spaces to link up bombardment with an imagined streetscape incorporating houses, flats, pedestrians, open spaces and transport. The unconscious spaces that ordered people's daily lives were made visible, utilized in a visual drama of collapse and disorder.<sup>89</sup>

Figure 2.7 shows the impact of different kinds of bombs on the urban landscape. The images articulate both the new military visual intelligence that underpinned the Tecton scheme and its relationship to urban order. By this stage, the government had released information on types of bombs, so the cartoons emphasized the impact of those bombs on the streetscape.<sup>90</sup> In this way, the damage caused by a particular bomb becomes the visual shorthand for its type. The first image reveals the breakup of urban order under bombardment. The gas bomb infects the street, insidiously disrespecting boundaries as the gas creeps into surrounding buildings, ignoring the border between public and private life. The percussion bomb throws bodies in the air, brutally deregulating the street. Thus, the ordering of the urban environment is exposed through its decimation.

---

<sup>89</sup> On the idea of practiced spaces and the unconscious and conscious construction of cities see: Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*. Erving Goffman, writes on ideas of frontstage and backstage in terms of social behaviour, arguably the city worked in similar ways in terms of the visible and the invisible city: *The Presentation of The Self in Everyday Life* (Harmondsworth, 1971); see also Stephen Graham (ed.), *Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructure Fails* (New York and Oxford, 2010).

<sup>90</sup> Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, p. 17.

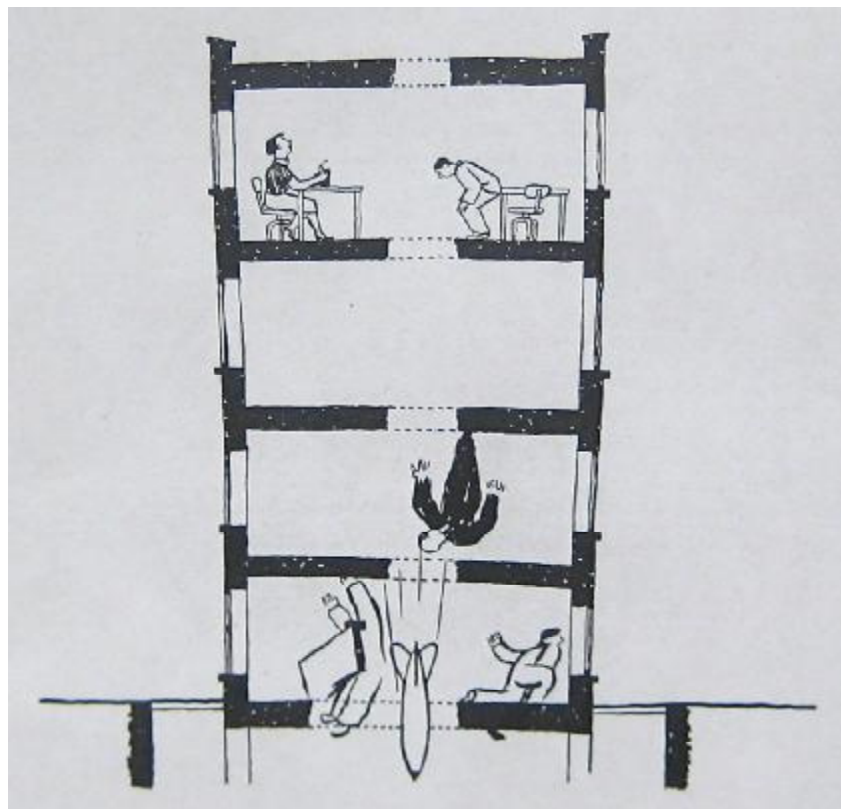
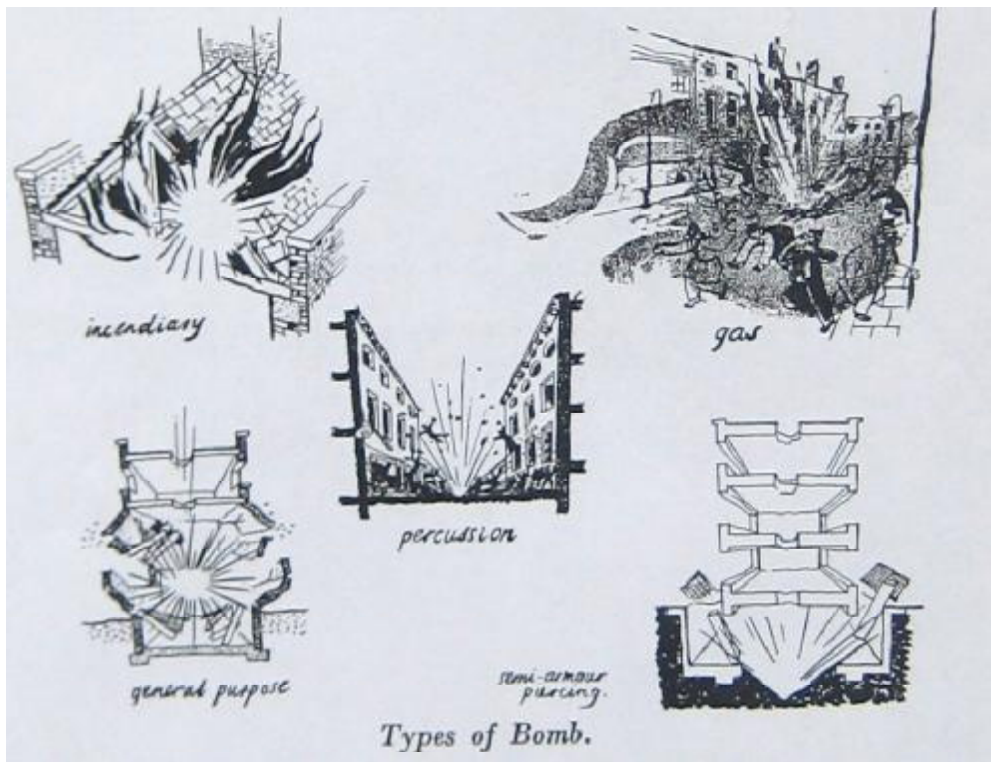


Figure 2.7. Technical clarification of the impact of bombs on city space. Source: Tecton Architects, *Planned A.R.P.* (London, 1939), pp. 17, 19.

In the second image a semi-armour piercing bomb is shown to full effect. The bomb penetrates a building and falls through to the basement. Those in the building are going about their daily activities and simply look on in surprise, one man falls, presumably to his death, while another person is made unrecognizable – a subtle reminder of the violent relationship between the bomb and human body – and another runs in fear before the inevitable explosion to follow.<sup>91</sup> The reader knows the explosion will come because of the preceding images that inform them what these kinds of bombs can do. Both images renegotiate the relationship between the built urban environment and the urban landscape, challenging the security and privacy of the buildings as bodies are literally thrown from and into the damaged spaces. There is an implicit politicised critique; it is the suited figure and not the other office workers that plummets to his death. The cartoon appears neutral, simply explaining the impact of the bombs, however, by placing the suffering of the victims at its heart the artist makes the government complicit in the bombardment by failing to understand the experience of life in the modern city and offer appropriate forms of protection.

Tecton consolidated the visual culture of protest by demonstrating the impact of bombs on government shelter proposals. Figure 2.8 offers a visual critique of the government's scheme for trenches showing how they would function in practice in urban space. The text of the book informed its readers that due to the nature of the congested borough the government scheme would make it:

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

...necessary to scatter trenches in small isolated groups throughout a district, wherever room can be found for them any systematic arrangement for control and so on is extremely difficult, if not impossible. For example, the eventuality of one trench being stormed by a panic stricken mass of people for whom there is no room in it, while another just around the corner is half-empty cannot be forestalled, and there is no means whereby the warden in charge (assuming there is to be such a person) can ascertain that there is accommodation close at hand, and so direct the public to it.<sup>92</sup>

This reflected concerns about the ability to police a population under duress and rested assumptions about the nature of the street in the context of bombardment.<sup>93</sup> The shelters in the image are placed at the end of each street, following the government's model that assumed that inhabitants of the houses would use the shelters at the end of their own streets.<sup>94</sup> However, Tecton suggested that streets were in fact unpredictable spaces, locations of housing but also of businesses and workplaces, and used for transport, walking, shopping, socializing and even play. Indeed, the daytime population of Finsbury grew by up to three times compared to its nighttime population. In this situation, Tecton viewed a series of small, dispersed shelters as impractical.<sup>95</sup> The uniformity of the housing in idealised streets did not reflect the uniformity of housing or of people in reality. Tecton thus highlighted a contrast to official maps and plans in which services would deal with incidents in an orderly manner, being able to enter streets cleared of people to access damaged sites.

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>93</sup> One of the major concerns by central government was that the population would panic in a situation of bombardment and in the longer run this would break morale, thus making the population incapable of continuing to function under the conditions of war, see: Mackay, *Half the Battle*.

<sup>94</sup> This was in line with the government's dispersal policy where shelters would be closely located to people's homes, ideally in their homes or back gardens, see: R. Cotterell Butler, 'War-Time Building Practice: "The Dispersal Theory,"' *The Builder*, 160 (7 February, 1941), pp. 149-151; R. Cotterell Butler, 'War-Time Building Practice: "The Dispersal Theory"-continued,' *The Builder*, 160 (14 February 1939), pp. 173-175.

<sup>95</sup> Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, pp. 97-102. On disordered streets see: Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, Chapter 5.

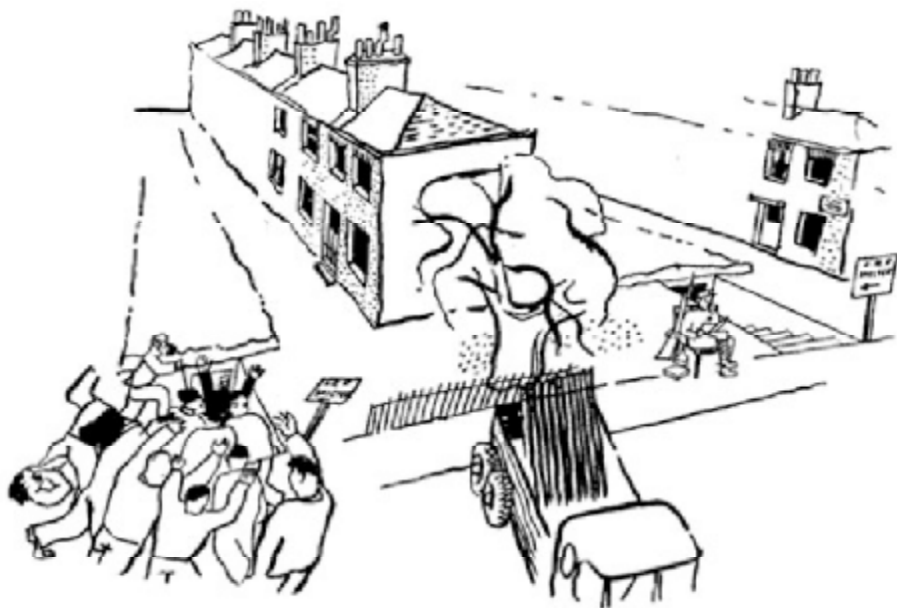


Figure 2.8. The inadequacy of the trench shelter. Source: Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, p. 35.

In Figure 2.9 people run to a shelter to escape a raid. One woman has fainted in its packed confines as a mass of people crowd together. A man holds on to her limp body and stares wide eyed at his neighbour. This is closely linked to observations in Barcelona where Langdon-Davies remarked that in the panic of a raid there was no room to even sit in shelters.<sup>96</sup> A warden tries to stop further entry as people throw themselves into the shelter. In the foreground men glance back at the viewer as if the thing they are running from is behind the observer, perhaps a squadron of planes approaches. This situates the viewers within the scene and makes them more than passive spectators: it is their lives in danger too. The landscape behind is ruined, buildings are collapsed offering no protection, the ground is barren and scarred. The people are an uncontrolled mass, no match for the one uniformed citizen to hold in check. The book further noted that 'altogether the control of the entrances to trenches presents a very

---

<sup>96</sup> John Langdon-Davies, 'A.R.P.: Bombs Over Barcelona,' p. 61.

complicated problem,' particularly as the government recommended only 3.5 square feet per person.<sup>97</sup> These people are not controlled by some social responsibility to protect each other but by fear.

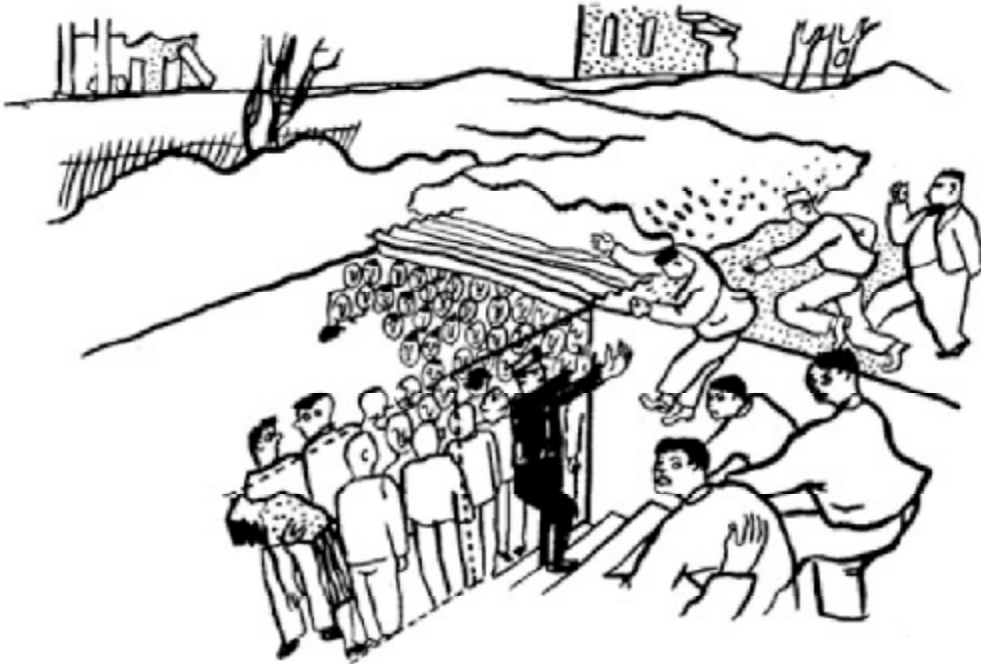


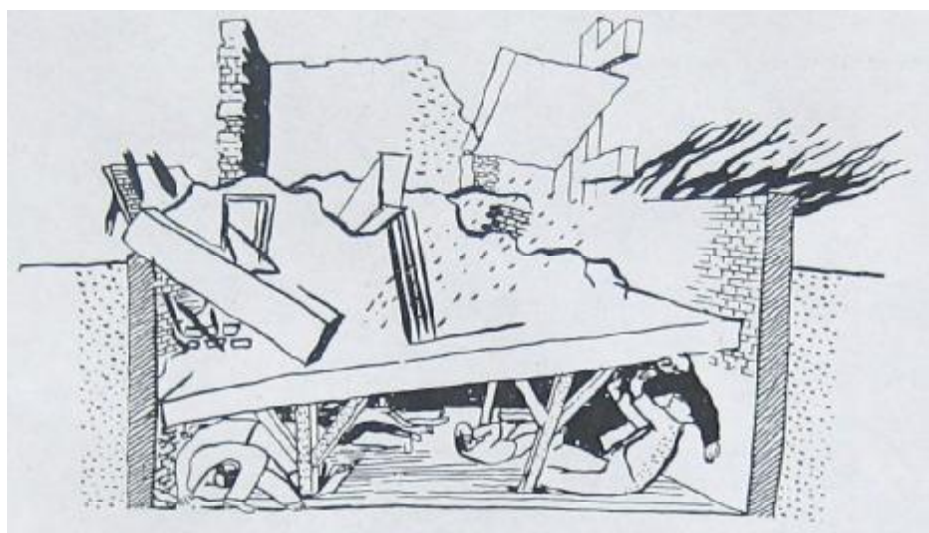
Figure 2.9. Crush in a trench shelter. Source: Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, p. 36.

Figure 2.10 shifts bombardment from the wider streetscape of the city to the internal space of a basement, either in a house or a workplace shelter. The image shows the effect of bombs on strutted basement shelters. In the first image a raid is occurring in the background. The mass of planes echoes the dreadful sky filled with aircraft of figure 2.1. In the foreground people are shown trapped in a poorly planned basement shelter, the escape route blocked by fire. Above them a fire sucks the oxygen and life out of the building and those sheltering slowly suffocate.<sup>98</sup> The suffering of the victims is emphasized, as each

<sup>97</sup> Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 52.

figure stands alone in their own pain. The central figure grips onto the basement strut that offers no protection from the fire above. The people around him grip the wall, covering their faces or laying slumped and possibly dying, their former shelter now a hellish prison. This underground horror parallels Picasso's Guernica, revealing the personal anguish of the victims of a modernity out of their control, at once offering an image of the reality of aerial bombardment and constructing a counter-visuality of protest against its outcomes.<sup>99</sup>



---

<sup>99</sup> Mirzoeff, 'The Right to Look,' p. 477.

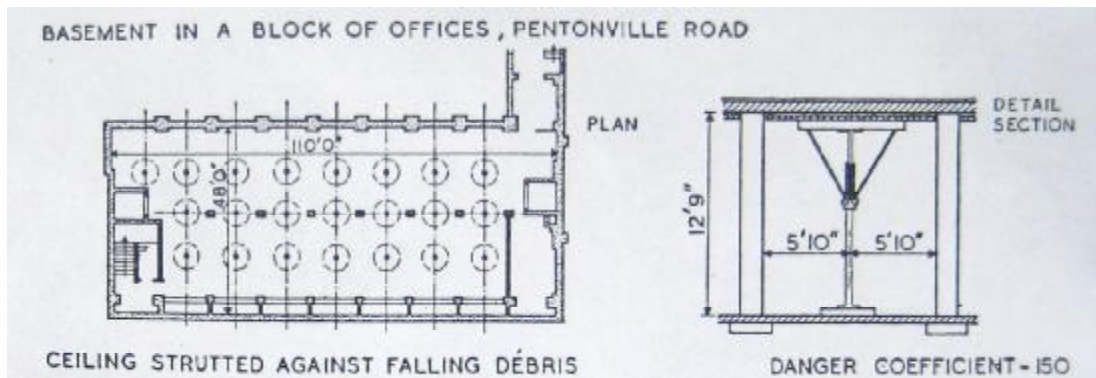


Figure 2.10. The use of basements as shelters. Source: Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, pp. 55, 52, 54.

In the second cartoon the strutted basement cannot stand up to the weight of the collapsed building above and the struts sink into the basement floor, crushing the contorted figures of the inhabitants below. The accompanying text reminds the reader that this is not some horrific imagined fiction: the bombing of Barcelona had shown that large blocks of masonry were likely to fall bringing a concentrated load to bear on the strutting ceilings of basements. The struts will either be driven into the floor or break under the load.<sup>100</sup> The book elaborated on the text commenting: ‘the basement strutting system is, to say the least unscientific; and if those who shelter in such places escape with their lives it will be due to provenance rather than to the precautions they have taken.’<sup>101</sup>

However, the book did not rest wholly on emotive images to construct its argument. Cullen’s drawings were situated alongside diagrams like the final image in figure 2.10. Here there is an attempt to assess the risks of strutted basements by establishing a danger co-efficient. The struts are calculated to be able to withstand falling masonry. However, even then, the experience in Spain

<sup>100</sup> Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 52, 54.



had shown that often if a building above collapses the time it takes to dig people out and the lack of air may mean trapped people suffocate. Basements were also complex spaces themselves often containing water and gas pipes, electricity cables and boxes, which could pose a further threat to trapped inhabitants.<sup>102</sup> Thus, even with civil defence services ready for raids, not all the victims could be helped. Tecton showed existing buildings lacked appropriate measures of protection for the inhabitants of Finsbury. In this way, they constructed a counter-narrative to the secure narratives of historical certainty presented by the government.

Although offering technical solutions specifically to the borough of Finsbury, Tecton linked its scheme to national ARP. Tecton suggested the function of local authorities in relationship to the wider city and the nation by offering a national geography of defence. Like government ARP, the report divided the country into zones of greater and lesser danger. However, rather than moving certain people to less dangerous areas, Tecton demanded that each zone required a standard of protection. On this basis, shelters could be provided to suit such local conditions as 'density of population, sites available, nature of soil, local materials and so on.'<sup>103</sup> The plans as outlined offered a scheme of structural protection giving the highest protection from casualty possible based on the assumption that London would be hit by indiscriminate bombing and the population would have around ten minutes of warning to get to a shelter.

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, pp. 55-56.

<sup>103</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 809.

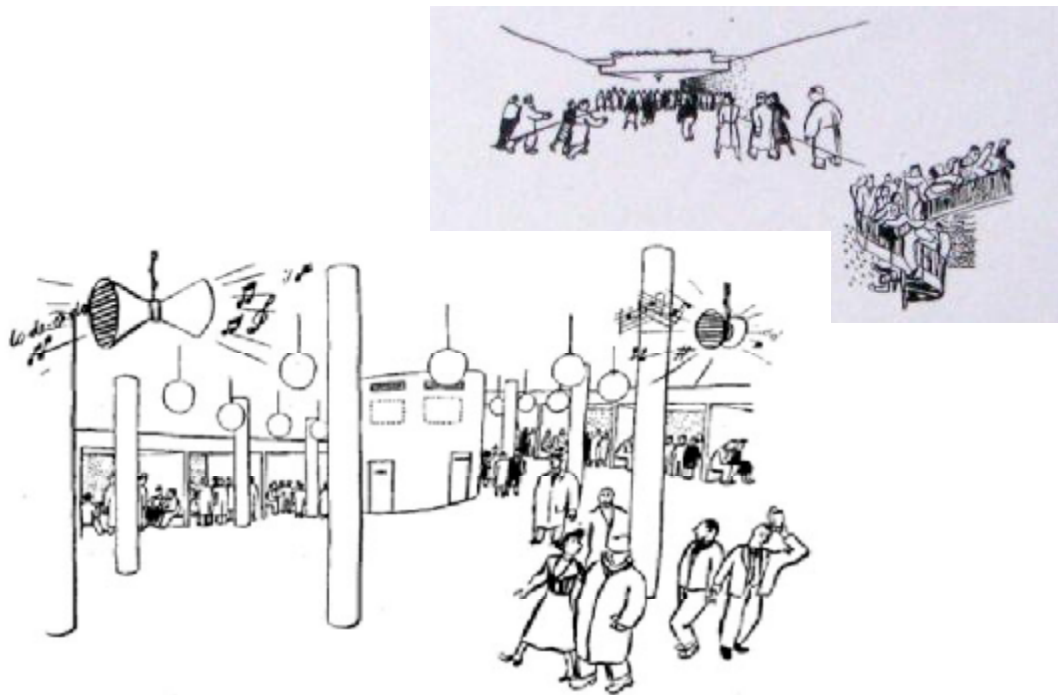


Figure 2.11. Keeping order and preventing panic: the final shelter design. Source: Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, pp. 78-79, 85.

The scheme offered a means to deal with the unsettling impact of bombardment. A *Reynolds News* article commented that ‘the noise, the suspense and the lack of sleep’ were the worst things and not ‘material damage.’ The ‘waiting in the dark, the inability to move about the streets, all these inflamed peoples imaginations and wore down their nerves.’ The article suggested that ARP must not just be about ‘business as usual:’ ‘what defence must do is devise a quite new way of living so that a city like London does not cease to function in a time of war.’ It asked ‘how are we able to keep a city on the move and able to move in the face of such a threat.’<sup>104</sup> This was at the radical heart of Tecton’s scheme. ARP in the Tecton scheme were a part of the challenges of modernity and living in the modern environment, they offered solutions to congested and

<sup>104</sup> *Reynolds News*, 10 July 1938, p. 10, copy in: V&A/RIBA, The Berthold Lubetkin papers, Press-cuttings (looseleaf) on Lubetkin and works by Lubetkin, Tecton and Skinner Bailey & Lubetkin 1929-1990, 24\6 Air raid shelters, for Finsbury Borough Council, by Tecton. 1938-1940.

confused urban space with rationally planned, integrated and mapped systems to improve the lives of the inhabitants of Finsbury.<sup>105</sup>

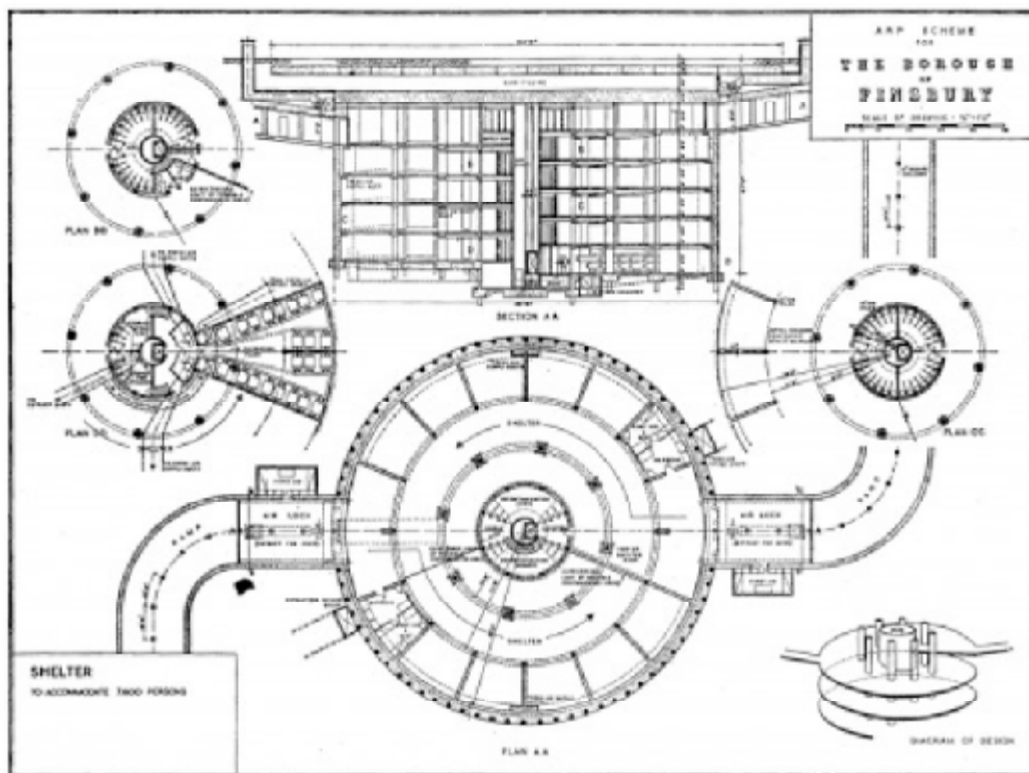


Figure 2.12. Finsbury shelter, final design. Source: ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 329

Tecton's final scheme for ARP was based on an assessment of existing shelter plans and measuring them against a 'danger volume' based on predictions of the impact of bombs. Each shelter type was interrogated: surface, trench, basement, tunnel, and diagrams provided to illustrate their safety (Figure 2.4). The report and the book that followed felt that by measuring shelters on the basis of safety, "short-term" measures of protection such as surface shelters and basements should not be considered as they could only accommodate a fraction of the Finsbury population. Cullen's drawings helped to illustrate the layout and

<sup>105</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, p. 1.

building of the shelters. As a critical perspective, his cartoons pitched the disorder of unplanned ARP and poor shelters against the orderliness of carefully designed shelters. Figure 2.11 shows how the easy ramps prevent congestion and panic in contrast to packed staircases and the trench entrances of figures 2.8 and 2.9. Tecton designed the shelter with a slow gradient that wound around a central pillar. Here, planning and technology offer modern solutions to social disorder.

The final design was for circular multi-storey bombproof underground shelters that could accommodate between 7600 and 12600 people (Figures 2.12. 2.14).<sup>106</sup> Their size would mean shelters could accommodate first aid stations, decontamination areas and a ventilation system in case of gas and sanitary provision. At the base of the shelter, tunnels would provide emergency exits to other shelters in case of damage or overcrowding. The whole shelter was to be covered by a sandwich roof consisting of earth covering a concrete slab, beneath which would be a deep layer of sand resting on top of a thick concrete roof. This sandwich of different materials would absorb the shock of direct hits, while the circular shape would help resist the impact of shock waves and ground movement.<sup>107</sup> The basis of the scheme was a rational distribution of shelters in relation to the density of the population so that all those in Finsbury could reach shelter within the warning time (Figure 2.13). This differed markedly from the government scheme, which reorganized the city around defence services. Tecton organized Finsbury around protection, offering a practical social geography of defence and understood ARP as a problem of physical urban order.

---

<sup>106</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 827.

<sup>107</sup> Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, pp. 72-94.

The Tecton scheme emerged at a time when insecurity around bombardment was at its height, materializing in the context of the Munich crisis and entering the public eye in early 1939 it was part of a struggle for agency over urban space and the visualisation of urban space under bombardment. The scheme used a military problem - the bomb, to articulate a social issue – urban planning. Attacks on inadequate defence from bombing offered viewers a new moral authority, a social imagination about the rights of urban inhabitants to be protected and demand protection. The scheme cast a social-eye over Finsbury, exposing the impact of bombs on this densely packed urban landscape and in so doing articulating wider problems of the modern urban conditions. It also gave a technical education to those who encountered the scheme, juxtaposing visual sources with detailed technical assessments. In this way Tecton offered a fantasy of modern London, a ‘socialvision’ of a planned city, based on local knowledge and communicated as a part of a national geography of defence.

#### **2.4. Envisioning Social Class: ARP, Housing and Workers’ Rights**

##### *Tecton and Urban Planning*

Tecton’s demands for the protection of the population under bombardment fed into wider arguments about class and urban working-class rights. The Tecton shelters were incorporated into plans for new housing estates in the borough, soon to be built to accommodate people from slum clearance areas. The shelter issue and ARP had a direct correlation with Finsbury council’s agenda to support its working-class inhabitants and to provide an urban space

that facilitated an improved quality of life.<sup>108</sup> This integrated the scheme into an existing housing debate.

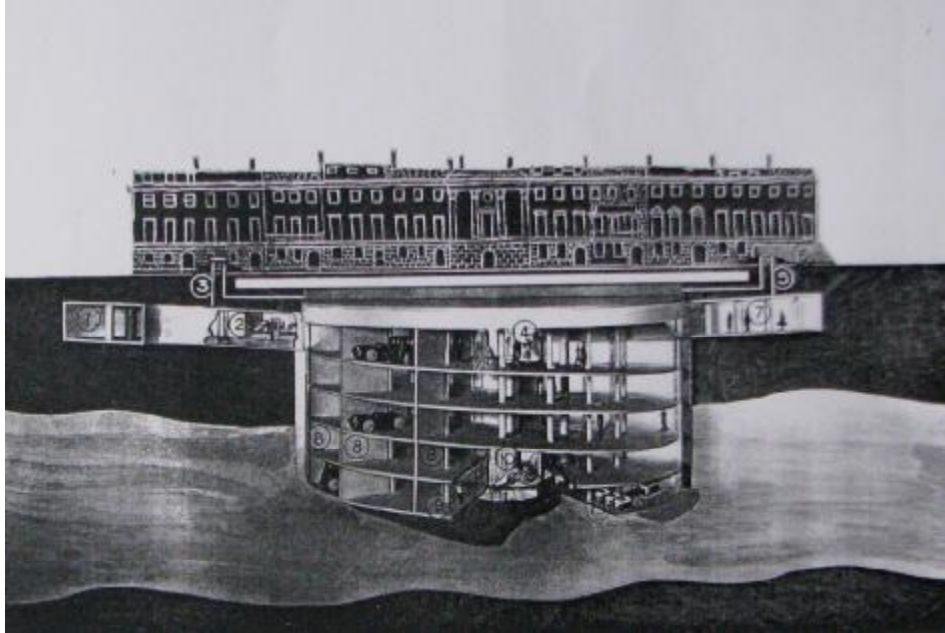


Figure 2.14. The final design for the Tecton shelter and its relationship to the street above. Key: 1. Entrance Ramp 2) Air-lock and first aid post 3) Air extract (peacetime) or intake (wartime) 4) Lift for Garage use in peacetime 5) Air intake (in wartime for use in emergency use only) 6) Entrance to ramp from Street 7) Ramp 8) Baffle walls 9) Storage space 10) Lift motor 11) Water sump 12) Ventilation fans and water pump 13) Maginot line poison-gas filters. Source: Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, p. 81.

Linking the scheme to the housing debate served the purpose of connecting ARP to Finsbury's wider social agenda. Making that link was also a means to help the 'non-technical man' to make sense of the proposals. In relating ARP to the emotive issues around suitable and fair housing, Tecton found a tangible way to communicate the cost of shelters and their value for money to a wider public. A public who has already been exposed to debates on housing as a social right in the interwar period through the press, films, exhibitions and

---

<sup>108</sup> This had close links with the Tecton's agenda and also the agendas of other working-class dominated London boroughs, see, David Matless, 'Appropriate Geography: Patrick Abercrombie and the Energy of the World,' *Journal of Design History*, 6 (1993), pp. 167-178; James Simie (ed.), *Planning London* (London, 1994); Peter Malpass, *Housing and the Welfare State: The Development of Housing in Britain* (Basingstoke, 2005).

during local government elections.<sup>109</sup> Tecton argued that good quality and safe shelters were possible to build and that this was a political choice as much as an economic issue, just as housing had been since the First World War.

The report related the standards of protection in shelters to the standards arrived at by local authorities on housing and slum clearance:

Nobody would have suggested building thousands of ill-planned, ill-lit, ill-ventilated, cheap houses and thus rebuilding old slums. Effort was directed on providing accommodation as was considered essential for decent human needs with the largest amounts of amenities that the nation could afford...Only after standards had been established and general agreement reached upon then could the programme enter on its execution stage.<sup>110</sup>

The description is innately a visual one, the slum conjured up a range of images of poverty that had emerged in nineteenth-century newspapers, photographs and illustrated journals. This visual culture of poverty was developed further in the social campaigns of the twentieth century with the accompanying documentaries, photographs and literature (Figure 2.15).<sup>111</sup> ARP would work on the same principle as slum-clearance plans, offering carefully designed, well-built, solid shelters for the whole population at a reasonable price. These in turn would improve the quality of life of that population. This moved the issue of ARP

---

<sup>109</sup> For example the New Homes for Old Exhibition held at Olympia see, Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, p. 316; *Housing Problems*, documentary Film, produced by Arthur Elton and E.H. Anstey for the British Commercial Gas Association (1935), BFI Inview

<<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6212>> (Accessed 10 October 2009); *Housing Progress*, information film by Mathew Nathan produced for The Housing Centre (London, 1935), available online, BFI Inview <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6216>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

<sup>110</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 809.

<sup>111</sup> Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Oxford, 2006); Katherine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working Classes in London 1918-1979* (Manchester, 2009); Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, 'Refabricating the Imperial Image of the Isle of Dogs: Modernist Design, British State Exhibitions and Colonial Policy 1924-1951,' *Architectural History*, 49 (2006), p. 319.

on from the contentious issues around bombardment and tied into wider political choices around domestic governance and urban order.



Figure 2.15 Housing Problems. Source: *Housing Problems*, documentary Film, produced by Arthur Elton and E.H. Anstey for the British Commercial Gas Association (1935), available online, BFI Inview: <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6212>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

Situating ARP alongside arguments over slum clearance connected the issue to wider concerns about the impact of the industrial city on the human body and mind.<sup>112</sup> Earlier visions of overcrowded slums and the congested city were relocated into overcrowded air raid shelters (Figures 2.9, 2.10). In 1935, the British Commercial Gas Association released the documentary film *Housing Problems*. This featured images and voices from the slums of Stepney in East London and the solutions to these offered by modern architectural design. Figure

---

<sup>112</sup>Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, Chapter 5.



2.15 shows a series of stills from the film. From the top, clockwise, the first image is a still taken from the opening pan of the film showing the slums of Stepney and the dense, crowded, back to back housing with no space or air. The voice over at this point is provided by the Chairman of Stepney Housing, who informs the viewer that:

The problem of the slum faces us because in the early days rows upon rows of ugly, badly designed houses were hastily put up to provide accommodation for the ever increasing army of workers which poured in from the country to the towns.

The second image shows a narrow alley where a factory has been built right up against housing. The final still is from a pan over the roofs of slum houses and illustrates the overcrowding, congestion and lack of planning in Stepney. The images of people in the film are either from a distance or face-on interviews. They show a working-class population at the mercy of its environment, unable to lead clean, safe, happy lives.<sup>113</sup>

The Tecton survey has parallels with the film, demonstrating how irrelevant government ARP plans were to the deeply congested borough of Finsbury. The packed, poorly built housing would stand no chance against the destruction of the bombs. The images above have parallels with Cullen's cartoons and the aerial photography of the borough in the plan. The shelter question and the housing question became one as the dystopian unplanned landscape of the slum was imagined under bombardment. These frightening images contrasted with the security and space of a planned future. Housing was part of a wider consideration of the health and welfare of the working population. The scheme utilized the urban landscape as a visual signifier to link the spectator into a series

---

<sup>113</sup> On observations of the working-classes see, Nick Hubble, *Mass Observation and Everyday Life: Culture, History Theory* (Basingstoke, 2006); Michael Eaton, 'Humphrey Jennings,' in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 328-329.

of older images on both aerial bombardment and its impact on city spaces and on congested working-class urban living conditions.<sup>114</sup>

Situating the ARP debate within an older debate on housing was in turn bound to specific politicised agenda that envisioned the citizen in a different way to national government. The Finsbury scheme constructed the citizen as a worker as opposed to a citizen volunteer. In turn, the scheme did not just seek to protect the population, it sought to stimulate work within the borough. The critique of the trench system was not just based on its failure to protect, it was also about the inefficiency of the use of labour in this context as:

The disorganization which is bound to result from small gangs of men working at innumerable points scattered throughout the district, the difficulty of supervision and the waste of labour, are all very serious factors.<sup>115</sup>

The use of reinforced concrete and modern techniques, devised by Arup for the huge 70 to 80 foot cylinders required to make the shelter, meant the shelters could largely be built by unskilled labour.<sup>116</sup> This moved the issue away from ARP and into a long-running debate about labour, class and resources.

The view that the government was wasting money formed part of a wider political critique of access to resources.<sup>117</sup> The Labour Research Department was a trade union organization that sought to 'undertake research and inquiry into all problems which concern the workers and their organizations.' One aspect of the department's research in the later 1930s was to look at access to

---

<sup>114</sup> Burke, 'Interrogating the Eye Witness,' p. 438.

<sup>115</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 319.

<sup>116</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 39, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 1 February 1939, Appendix, Report to Finsbury Borough Council from Messrs. Tecton, Architects, p. 319; Tecton's book reported around 60 per cent unskilled, Tecton, *Planned A.R.P.*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>117</sup> Hampstead, *A.R.P for Hampstead*.

materials for building shelters. In 1940, they challenged the government failure to break monopolies on the production of cement, which was limiting access to materials crucial for the protection of the population.<sup>118</sup> Tecton was part of this wider political debate about the role of the government in improving the health and wellbeing of the population. By looking to the ARP Act to fund the borough in building secure, safe and socially useful shelters, Finsbury council was not just offering protection but a social vision of the role of government in society. The Tecton scheme suggested that government had a responsibility to citizens to provide them with safe and secure living conditions facilitated through appropriate urban orders and enabled by access to materials. Tecton also demanded that citizens should be entitled to engage in these programmes not as disciplined citizens but as free workers.

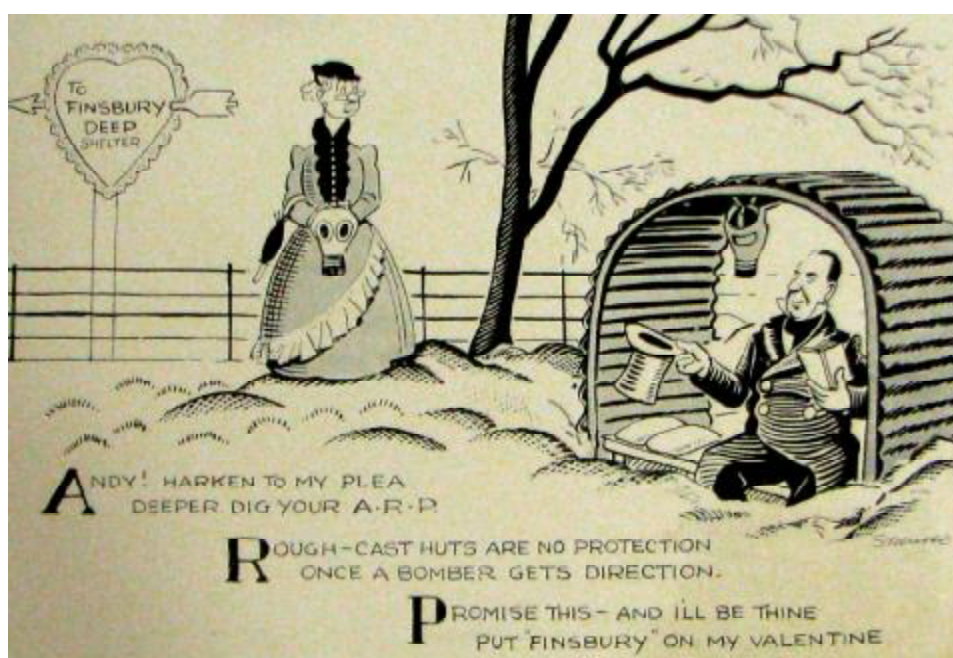


Figure 2.16. Satirical attack on Sir John Anderson's garden shelter plans. Source: *The Daily Express*, 13 February 1939, Copy of image in ILHC, Manuscript Collection Finsbury ARP.

<sup>118</sup> MRC/MSS.78/BT/5/1/4, Pamphlet, 'Break the Cement Ring,' National Air Raid Precautions Coordinating Committee, Labour Research Department.

The citizen in the Tecton scheme was not a national citizen participating in the defence of his or her nation but a protected worker. This differed to the central government construction of ARP as a participatory citizen service that overrode class divisions.<sup>119</sup> The Tecton scheme instead articulated ARP as a worker's right. Through this elevation of the rights of workers Tecton offered a tangible social critique of the government scheme.<sup>120</sup>

Indeed, although never enacted, Finsbury's scheme had a wider cultural resonance that consolidated around a critique of the national government. Following the highly publicized and successful Tecton ARP exhibition, held in February 1939, the *Daily Express* printed a mock satirical cartoon about the failure of the government 'tin huts' to provide adequate protection from bombers (Figure 2.16). Inside the garden shelter 'Andy' represents the figure of John Anderson the Lord Privy Seal and Minister in charge of ARP and the initiator of the garden shelter scheme. A gas mask hanging from the roof of the hut is a reminder of the government's focus on gas instead of high explosives and incendiaries. The poem, which spells out 'ARP' and the heart containing the words 'to Finsbury Deep Shelter,' are an attack on the political standing of the government and the Minister who has failed to provide protection from the threat of 'bombers.'<sup>121</sup> The image, too, plays on the class themes of the Tecton scheme. 'Andy' doffs his top hat to the well-dressed woman; her plea hints at both the failure and the foolishness of the top-hatted ruling classes to protect not only the population but also themselves. The class theme was continued in an article in the *Evening Standard* in March 1939, which questioned Anderson's

---

<sup>119</sup> Rennie, 'Socialvision,' p. 253.

<sup>120</sup> This is explored further in chapter three.

<sup>121</sup> *The Daily Express*, 13 February 1939, Copy of image in ILHC, Manuscript Collection Finsbury ARP.

ability to work out plans for London ARP when he had 'eventually reached his present position in Whitehall via Bengal,' a hint that the population were being treated not as citizens but as colonial subjects.<sup>122</sup>

### *ARP and Work*

Work was central to the government plan for ARP. The population at war needed to be a productive and efficient one, capable of continuing with work under duress. To carry on working was to beat the enemy.<sup>123</sup> It was feared that bombing in the urban context would break the will to work as the civilian population became worn down.<sup>124</sup> To counter this threat the government placed ARP and protection within a wider agenda of national service. Should war come they needed to develop a system to deal with vast numbers of people to maintain a war machine. ARP aimed to support the population during the early days of war, when it was assumed a sudden and vicious attack would come from the air.<sup>125</sup> However, that population had to be flexible and mobile, ready to support the war machine as necessary. This was not simply an issue of structural protection but of labour control, hence the focus on dispersal of the least necessary members of the population.<sup>126</sup> The government countered the demands for deep shelters by suggesting that a direct hit on a shelter could kill large numbers of people thus substantially lowering morale and by arguing that

---

<sup>122</sup> *Evening Standard*, 20 March 1939, p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line*.

<sup>124</sup> As Kenneth Hewitt argues that 'warfare intends the disorganization of enemy space, in: 'Place Annihilation: Area Bombing and the Fate of Urban Places, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 73:2 (1983), p. 261.

<sup>125</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Response to circular from Regional Commissioner's Observation, 27 September 1939.

<sup>126</sup> Indeed, once the war began and into 1940 the need for labour in other areas of war production and for the services meant the government looked to cut ARP numbers down considerably: TNA/186/473, Regional Organisation, Organisation ARP Services in London Region: review of expenditure and recruitment of paid personnel, 1939-1941.

the deep shelter might produce a defeatist mentality. There was a concern that, through deep-shelter policies, feelings of 'despair, hopelessness and impossibilism' would emerge in the civil population, crippling people's ability to work. It was feared this would encourage a deep-shelter mentality, where the population became paralyzed troglodytes.<sup>127</sup>

In contrast, the Tecton scheme asserted that good morale would be maintained through adequate protection. They sought to protect the local population and to facilitate works programmes around these schemes. In this way Tecton's solution to ARP was not to create a new wartime active citizen but to protect an existing worker-citizen. This version of citizenship was based on a modernist vision of social order and class-based participatory movements. ARP would both protect and employ the worker, ensuring communities like Finsbury could continue to function under war in the air.<sup>128</sup> The Tecton scheme saw deep shelters as a way to minimize fears and aid morale by giving the population a sense of collective security.

By August 1939, when preliminary work began on the first shelter in Busaco Street, the Finsbury Town Clerk reported that it was a condition of all the council's ARP contracts, including the contract for the construction of Busaco Street shelter, that not less than 90 per cent of local unskilled labour should be employed upon the works.<sup>129</sup> This relationship between labour and ARP subsumed ARP within a traditional narrative of workers rights. Under the

---

<sup>127</sup> *Hansard*, Vol. 344, Cols. 1306, 1317, 01 March 1939; A critique of this view emerged in the debate over the 1939 Civil Defence Bill, *Hansard*, Vol. 345, Col. 2854, 05 April 1939; Lord Horder, 'The Modern Troglodyte,' *The Lancet*, 19 April 1941, pp. 499-502.

<sup>128</sup> The relationship between unemployment and ARP was debated in February 1939, *Hansard*, vol. 343, cols. 1945-2061, 16 February 1939.

<sup>129</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 40, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 11 August 1939, p. 339.

government plans the household, the workplace and the street through surface shelter, provided ARP protection.<sup>130</sup> The Tecton scheme opened up the idea of local state responsibility for the working population and community protection through large works programmes, which would both stimulate the local economy and offer full protection to the whole population of the borough.<sup>131</sup> In this way Tecton offered a socio-technological solution to the threat of war in the air related to a political construction of the worker-citizen.

## **Conclusion**

The Spanish Civil War resituated debates on warfare and bombardment. The violence inflicted on the civilian population and the brutal images that emerged offered a new visuality that placed the victim at the heart of defence and protection strategies. In this way, the tensions discussed in Chapter one over ARP as a potential cause of war were sidestepped and an emphasis on air raid precautions shifted towards one of air raid protection. Central in discrediting a strategy of precaution was a set of visual markers: gas masks, the blasting apart of urban space, the flimsy shelter and the useless trench. Spain had consolidated the modernity of air warfare, and thus the technology of war in the air needed to be met with new technological defence.

The borough of Finsbury offers a case study of a shift in urban governance strategies in later 1930s London. The employment of the radical architectural firm Tecton offered a different fantasy of urban life to that suggested by central

---

<sup>130</sup> Home Office Air Raid Precautions Department, *Memorandum No. 10 Provision of Air Raid Shelters in Basements* (London, 1939).

<sup>131</sup> The function of ARP as a public work was debated in the architectural and civil engineering press throughout the 1930s, see for example H. B. Bryant, 'Public works aspect of air-raid protection,' *Builder* (30 October 1936), p. 827.

government. During the 1930s, the firm had proved themselves by offering modern solutions to public health and welfare in Finsbury as well as capturing the public imagination with popular public commissions at London zoo. Tecton and Lubetkin had linked up to both the MARS and ATO groups, culturally situating themselves amongst modernist thinkers that understood architecture and engineering as having a social responsibility. By employing Tecton, Finsbury moved away from the government idea of ARP as a part of a national system that ordered labour, to situating it as based on technically informed community responsibility. The scientific underpinning filled in the government's silences, linking the population directly to the forces of bombardment and aiming to show the impact of bombs on physical structures and urban space.

In their scheme of protection, Tecton and Finsbury established a new 'socialvision' for the borough, referred to here as an ARP socio-technological complex. Understood as the local state taking social responsibility for the challenges of the modern city through the formation of relationships with technical experts in the fields of urban planning, architecture and engineering. Finsbury's 'socialvision' consolidated around plans for the structural protection of the population. The violence of bombardment exemplified by Spain was imagined as enacted on the new metal air-raid shelters and congested working-class housing and streets with devastating results. This created a 'counter-visuality' to the civil defence plans imagined by the government. Tecton suggested that the government's shelter plans not only failed to scientifically deal with bombs, but also failed scientifically to interrogate urban life. A common visual culture of protest emerged that located the violence of war in the urban streetscape and the communities of people within that space. These



people were offered scientific and modern solutions to the plight of bombardment and offered a visual education in military techniques. The demands of war in the air prompted the development of a military visual language in which military-scientific knowledge was tied to local democratic principles. The visually articulated threat to Finsbury constructed a visual culture that was to remain throughout the war as a part of a new visualisation of the working classes.<sup>132</sup>

Within the scheme, these new visions were consolidated around the issue of labour, moving ARP away from a vision of communal national citizenship to the rights of the working classes. This was enabled through the class-based critique of figures like Sir John Anderson who seemed to represent an out-of-touch elite ruling class. Instead, ARP was tied into the issue of fair and adequate housing; shelters were linked to the rights of the worker to have safe, secure and healthy lives. Housing gave a social narrative to the shelter issue. Later in the war when questions of reconstruction emerged, the rebuilding of London utilized the same themes.<sup>133</sup> Understanding the relationship between ARP and class within the scheme also exposes that government decisions were not just political ones. They were based on economic concerns about the need to appropriately allocate labour. Once the war began the government focused on industrial needs. In terms of structural protection, this situated ARP as a part of morale and not as a social right.<sup>134</sup> In contrast, Tecton's scheme was deeply rooted within the borough of Finsbury; this reflected an assumption about the

---

<sup>132</sup> The visualisation of the working classes is discussed further in chapter five.

<sup>133</sup> J. H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *County of London Plan: prepared for the London County Council* (London, 1943).

<sup>134</sup> TNA/ HO 186/473, Memorandum to Regional Commissioners on ARP Department Circular No. 275/1939.

function of the local state in improving the welfare of its population. This saw governance as tied to located populations and the needs of a specifically spatially located group.<sup>135</sup> Chapter three will interrogate further the relationship between visual culture and space in the construction of this new wartime social vision.

---

<sup>135</sup> However, it was not these local government perspectives that guided policy on air-warfare and the lessons of Spain were often ignored, in part because some considered this comparison inappropriate. Tom Buchanan, suggests that British stereotypes of the Spanish as lazy and inefficient impacted on how far some at the level of policy and military strategy accepted the lessons of Spain, in: *The Impact*.

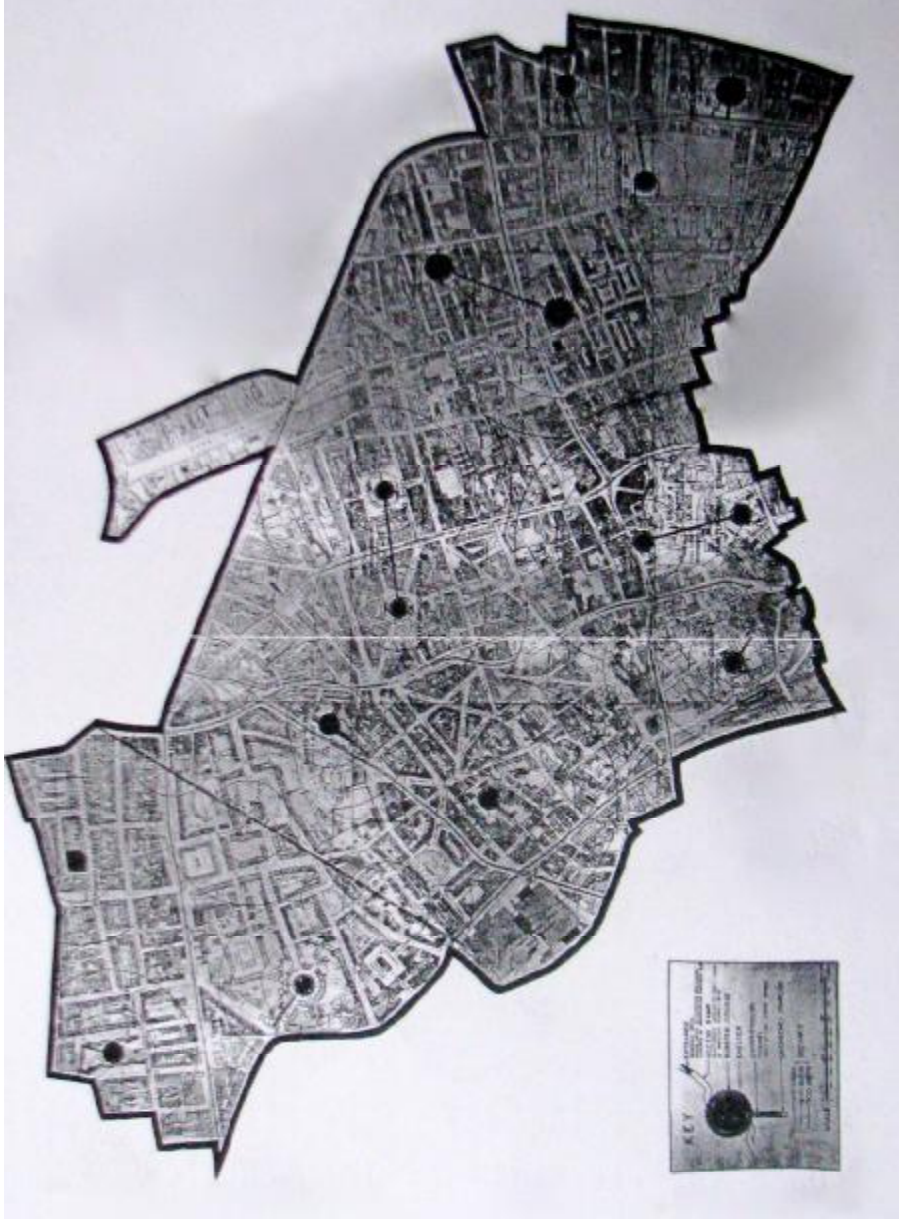


Figure 2.13. Location of shelters in Finsbury, mapped in relationship to population density; location of pipes, tubes, cables; location of water, railway lines, roads and buildings, and according to the physical make up of the Borough in terms of soil, clay and gradients. Source: Tecton Architects, *Planned A.R.P.* (London, 1939), p. 11.

## **Part II**

# **Reordering London for War In The Air**

## Chapter Three

### ARP Recruitment: London Displayed

#### Introduction

From 6 to 13 February 1939 the metropolitan borough of Finsbury's scheme for ARP was displayed in an impressive and popular exhibition held in Finsbury Town Hall. The exhibition both showed off Finsbury's scheme for structural protection and aimed to recruit volunteers for the borough's ARP services. While the Tecton exhibition attracted wide publicity, Finsbury was not the only borough to use display as a form of recruitment. Other boroughs organized impressive displays of ARP services to both educate the public and attract volunteers. The central government used the impressive backdrop of the Royal Albert Hall to launch a national recruitment campaign and to give thanks to those who had already offered their services.

This chapter considers the methods employed by national and local government to attract volunteers to ARP services; those services that would provide support, information and rescue people should war in the air arrive. It explores how recruitment methods both offered different visions of the civil defence of the city and, through use of the city as a display space, illuminates particular ideas about later 1930s London. I use the term display to think about the way in which urban space itself was displayed and the way in which meanings associated with specific areas of the city situated meaning for recruitment events.<sup>1</sup> The chapter puts the lens not on the critical voices that

---

<sup>1</sup> Much has been written on the city as a site of display: Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005), Chapter 7, Shopping is a place to go; Claire Walsh, 'Social Meaning and Social Space in the Shopping Galleries of Early Modern London,' in John Benson, Laura Ugolini, (eds), *A Nation of Shopkeepers: Retailing in Britain, 1550-2000* (London, 2002), pp. 52-79; Richard Dennis *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of*

constructed rival visions of urban life, as discussed in Chapters one and two, but on the multiple meanings of the city on offer to the London population, as envisioned by recruitment.

The London of the late 1930s encompassed a spectrum of modernity. Institutionally, certain buildings symbolized its bureaucratic, ordering ethos, for example the London County Council (LCC) building on Southbank.<sup>2</sup> More widely, there was an ongoing modernization and rational organization of city space demonstrated both over and underground by the order of sewers, bridges, railways, electricity, gas and water.<sup>3</sup> This was marked by governance methods in which democratic institutions rationalized public services. The modernity of the city was literally mapped out by a concept of progressive governance that sought to improve the health and welfare of its citizens, for example, by buildings like the Finsbury Health Centre; new social housing agendas, put forward by the likes of ATO, Lubetkin and progressive local borough councils; and finally bureaucratic sites like the LCC and local town halls.

Chapter two has shown how the defence of London was called into question by those left-wing critiques that saw the government as failing in its job to rationally plan for London's future. This was a debate both about London governance and London's progress. The modern, technological progress of society and culture could be destroyed by the mechanical outcomes of that modernity. Yet, paradoxically this could lead to further human progress.

---

*Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 151-163; Edmund White, *The Flâneur* (London, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> This is discussed in more detail below.

<sup>3</sup> This is particularly exemplified by the 1931 Harry Beck tube map which was based on a rational visual order of the topology of the railway and not the city space above, see: Janin Hadlaw, 'The London Underground Map: Imagining Modern Time and Space', *Design Issues*, 19 (2003), pp. 25-35; also on rational infrastructure see, Matthew Gandy, 'Rethinking Urban Metabolism: Water, Space and the Modern City', *City*, 8 (2004), pp. 363-379.

Technical and social innovation meant that at the centre of modernity was 'creative destruction,' the collapse of the old and the replacement with the new.<sup>4</sup>

The Tecton scheme aimed to deal with the paradox of modernity set out by bombardment. Its shelters offered new ways of living tied into progressive housing estates. ARP however, had to deal with a far broader potential for London-wide destruction and so government ARP offered a model for the organization of society based on the bodies of citizens and London-wide communication networks; the modernity of the active citizen not the space of London. Yet, the meaning of both the citizen and the city were unstable and contested. The constructed citizen's body in the government scheme was divorced from spatial context, this was contradicted by the located citizen of the Finsbury scheme whose body was tied into a healthy, nurturing urban environment.<sup>5</sup>

The chapter situates ARP within a wider urban milieu, considering how recruitment campaigns functioned within different areas of the city. By analyzing campaigns within these different areas the chapter reveals how a set of meanings about London's modernity were built into the urban landscape. The chapter also considers how the threat of bombardment and the demand for ARP volunteers changed the meaning of those areas.

ARP recruitment strategies needed to find ways to appeal to a broad population to encourage volunteers.<sup>6</sup> While individual services needed specific skill sets, they broadly fell under the title ARP and as such a set of ideas about

---

<sup>4</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change* (London, 1990), p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> This builds on arguments made by Dennis about the invention of the modern street: *Cities in Modernity*, Chapter five.

<sup>6</sup> TNA/HO 186/68, DRAFT, Cabinet, National Service, Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal, November 1938, esp. first stage proposals, pp. 3-4.

what ARP meant needed to be communicated. The landscape of London was used to facilitate recruitment, utilizing the themes of history, modernity and power.<sup>7</sup> I compare four case studies of ARP: the recruitment of volunteers through the spectacle of air raids in the streetscape; the Finsbury Tecton exhibition; a national recruitment rally in the Royal Albert Hall and the LCC Jubilee Exhibition of 1939.

The chapter has a specific focus on the spaces of recruitment display: town halls, streets and different areas of London. It considers how space situated specific points of view about ARP, the role of London in the nation and the position of the citizen in this context. I open up the last chapter's consideration of visual culture to reflect on how this may be 'located' spatially and the implications of this for how we read and make sense of the visual culture of London as an imagined space of bombardment. Space here is understood as having an active role in facilitating the cultural and social meaning of ARP.<sup>8</sup> As Richard Dennis argues, space is not simply a container in which modern life is played, but rather the 'ways we conceptualise and operationalise space are products of political, economic social and cultural processes.'<sup>9</sup> By being enacted in particular spaces of the city, recruitment campaigns both reveal the particular meanings of those spaces and in turn modify them, adding another layer of cultural meaning. I suggest that ARP recruitment both exposed older ideas of

---

<sup>7</sup> The three themes are taken from David Gilbert's analysis of London guidebooks. Gilbert explores how London was represented to tourists in the later nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. He suggests there were three elements in how London was understood from the mid-nineteenth century. Firstly, the city was understood as a site of longevity in which pre-modern sites were displayed as visible connections with an established and sometimes ancient civilization. Secondly it was a site of modernity, spectacle and movement. Finally London was constructed as a site of unity and power, a central place in the nation and an imperial metropolis. See: David Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory - or How to Enjoy London': Guidebook representations of Imperial London,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), pp. 279-297.

<sup>8</sup> Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson, Sandy W. Nairne, *Thinking About Exhibitions* (London, 1996).  
<sup>9</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, p. 1.



London and offered new visions of the city, sometimes visions that contested existing spatial orders.<sup>10</sup>

The first part of the chapter considers how ARP sought to modify the use of streets within an air raid. Exploring air raid practice exercises, that were used as recruitment displays, this section outlines how ARP sought to regulate the London landscape; imposing a particular vision of order within the urban space.<sup>11</sup> The second parts look specifically at spaces of recruitment interrogating particular institutional sites.<sup>12</sup> This limits analysis to official forms of regulation offered by national and local government.<sup>13</sup> I explore how recruitment became a subject through which the tensions over London's modernity were played out. The chapter builds on the competing visions of ARP in chapters one and two and considers how those visions of ARP imparted by local and national government were related to particular spaces within the city. In so doing it aims to expose the social and cultural meanings rooted within those spaces.

---

<sup>10</sup> Greenberg, Ferguson, Nairne, *Thinking About Exhibitions*.

<sup>11</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*.

<sup>12</sup> Harvey, *The Conditions*, pp. 18, 37; Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York and London, 1998), pp. 11, 162.

<sup>13</sup> The thesis could have been widened to incorporate other ways in which ARP ordered the city. For example I do not look at the relief units established by the pacifists including the Friends Ambulance Unit or Friends Relief Service, the movements of these services could have imbued the city with other meanings. Nor do I look at the gender implications of ARP, for example that being a warden may have offered women a new legitimacy to be in the city at night. See: Richard A. Rempel, 'The Dilemmas of British Pacifists During World War II,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 50 (1978), pp. 1213-1229. A useful account of the pacifists and roles for people on the home front who did not conform to the government agenda is provided by: Vera Brittain, *Wartime Chronicle: Vera Brittain's Diary 1939-1945*, edited by Alan Bishop and Y. Alexandra Bennett (London, 1989).

### **3.1. Recruiting the Ideal Citizen: Spectacle and Urban Order**

ARP had two key roles: to educate the public so that they were prepared for raids and to enlist large numbers to volunteer for services. Here I focus on the latter. The government set recruitment in motion in a number of ways. Nationally they used the BBC as a mouthpiece and created handbooks and educational films that were sent to householders and local authorities. At the local level, it was encouraged throughout 1938 and 1939 with focused recruitment weeks and popular displays of services in action. This reveals two separate but interconnected methods for recruitment. The first used talks, writing and images to construct an imagined and idealized national citizen, the volunteer. The second recontextualised ARP into the local setting in order to locate the national citizen volunteer within local services. The volunteer was both national citizen and protecting his or her own home.<sup>14</sup> This led to a shift in how London was imagined as a functioning space in war: it was to be protected as part of a national defence strategy, but by 'located' citizens, recruited through a sense of attachment to the area in which they lived.

Prior to the protests that emerged over structural ARP, some London boroughs looked to using modernity in a different way to the modernist solutions of the Tecton architects. Chapter one demonstrated the official fears over the predicted impact of war in the air and Chapter two revealed how Spain had shown the horrors of bombardment and war's impact on a vulnerable population: modernity at its worst. Yet, this ran parallel with another strain of interest in airpower. While the city may have been marred by the threat of the

---

<sup>14</sup>This is explored further in chapter four.

bomber, the aeroplane itself had connotations as exciting and thrilling.<sup>15</sup> Thus, conversely to the threat of the bomber, some ARP recruitment schemes used the modernity of war in the air to appeal to the cultural demands of the urban masses: the excitement, the movement and the speed of airpower offered a thrilling visual spectacle to the onlooker.<sup>16</sup> In this alternative model of recruitment, potential volunteers were engaged through the visual drama of air raids. These appeals used an exiting network of urban cultural and entertainment sites: cinemas, clubs, theatres and the display spaces of the street and buildings. Advertising and images could also be incorporated into the urban milieu through the imposition of a specific perspective onto the physical fabric of urban space, through for example, targeted poster campaigns.

For instance, between 7 June and 2 July 1938 the Metropolitan Borough of Hackney organized a week-long recruitment drive that culminated in an exhibition in the town hall. This included advertisements, streamers, leaflets, slides at the Hackney Empire and posters in cinemas.<sup>17</sup> In this way, the council sought to incorporate ARP education within the social lives of its population, by making it both part of the leisure routine of its inhabitants and offering exhilarating demonstrations.

The appeal of ARP through spectacle culminated in the staging of air raids and examples of services in action within metropolitan boroughs. This built on cultural knowledge of air power as it emerged in the 1930s.<sup>18</sup> The development

---

<sup>15</sup> David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: An Essay on a Militant and Technological Nation* (Basingstoke, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> Judith Barry, 'Dissenting Spaces,' in Greenberg, Ferguson and Nairne, *Thinking About Exhibitions*, pp. 310-11.

<sup>17</sup> HA/1, Hackney ARP Committee Minutes, 20 May 1938, Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> David Enrico Omissi, 'The Hendon Air Pageant, 1920-37,' in John M. Mackenzie, *Popular Imperialism and the Military 1850-1950* (Manchester, 1992), pp. 198-220; Brett Holman, *The Next*

of the RAF and its position in public life was facilitated through the invention of traditions, uniforms, ranks, and the annual Hendon Air Display, which attracted huge crowds to watch aerobatics and displays of national power and strength.<sup>19</sup> ARP displays that played on this drama sought to both recruit volunteers and minimize fear of war in the air within the population by showing successful services in action.

In May 1938, the Metropolitan Borough of Kensington organized a demonstration of its ARP plans on a vacant site of land on the south side of Kensington High Street. The Borough used the LCC's ambulance and fire service as well as some 2,500 Kensington volunteers and various professional institutions and public bodies. The event culminated in the blowing up and firing of a building and the putting out of the fire by crews. The exercise was deemed dangerous and daring as blowing up a building was 'a matter not to be taken lightly, especially in a fairly congested neighbourhood.'<sup>20</sup> The spectacle allowed observers to view the danger, movement and excitement of the modern city.<sup>21</sup> The event located ARP in the streetscape, revealing the potential devastating impact of bombs and encouraging local people to protect their communities.

During 1938, the West London metropolitan borough of Paddington staged three successful ARP practices. These were the first practice exercises to be held in London and reflected the government's continued agenda to expand

---

War in the Air Civilian Fears of Strategic Bombardment in Britain, 1908-1941,' (PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Omissi, 'The Hendon Air Pageant,' 198-220, L.E.O. Charlton used the air display as a means to imagine the impact of bombing on the population in, *War Over England* (London, 1936); more generally on the invention of tradition see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).

<sup>20</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/274, Letter from C.C.B. Morris, Chief Officer, London Fire Brigade to the General Purposes (A.R.P. Sub-Committee), regarding the 'demonstration of ARP Services in Kensington,' 17 May 1938.

<sup>21</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 280.

recruitment.<sup>22</sup> The exercise offered an opportunity 'of being able to explore the response of a large and populous district in central London to exercises which in a garrison town might be taken as a matter of course.'<sup>23</sup> Paddington had begun to form its ARP organization in 1935. Following the Home Secretary's Broadcast on ARP in 1938 the services had a flurry of volunteers. The practice exercises allowed volunteers to have a chance to perform their duties while at the same time creating publicity to further expand the scheme.

Those in charge of ARP within the borough suggested that after three years of experience of ARP in Paddington the general public were increasingly interested in ARP and had acquired excellent and enthusiastic volunteers and wardens.<sup>24</sup> It was felt that the success of the scheme was enabled by the education of the population within their own homes and neighbourhoods:

...at one time wardens were apt to be regarded as, possibly, well meaning, certainly well paid, and probably interfering officials; they are now welcomed and appreciated as being helpful neighbours freely giving their time in an effort to be of service to their friends. In this measure a very large measure of credit is due to the special ARP sections of the Scouts and Church Lads Brigade for the opportunity now given to members of these organizations to take into their own houses, wear, and explain the use of the Civilian Duty and ordinary Civilian Respirators has gone far to getting their nature and purpose generally known. So many who might be disinclined to go to a public lecture or even spare a few moments when a warden calls are not in the least likely to be unwilling to listen to a youthful and enthusiastic demonstrator in their own circle.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A Talks.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Report on the third Practice Exercise in Paddington, by E.W. Thorn Bannister, ARP Organiser, Paddington, 12 July 1938.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid; also, 'Paddington's Air Raid Test a Great Success,' *The Paddington Mercury and West London Star*, 1 April 1938, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Report on the third Practice Exercise in Paddington, by E.W. Thorn Bannister, ARP Organiser, Paddington, 12 July 1938.

In turn, ARP was institutionalized in Paddington through the acquisition of a twelve-roomed house, No. 10 Park Place Villas, by the public-spirited action of the Paddington Estate in giving its free use for an extended period.<sup>26</sup>

Paddington had followed the government agenda and set up a scheme for defence based on wardens, first aid posts, report and control centres. The reports on the exercise reveal the way in which the London landscape was reordered for defence. Structurally, Paddington was divided into twelve defence areas each containing sets of ARP services. For the first exercise, six episodes were enacted in six of the twelve areas. The areas worked in a similar manner to the layout of ARP shown in Figure 1.3. Each had an area warden's post, which acted as the area's headquarters (HQ). In nine cases, this was combined with a first aid post, and in five a cleansing station. The areas contained up to 22 separate wardens' posts manned by 4 wardens, giving the required establishment of 276 posts for the whole borough and an ultimate compliment of 1104 wardens. The posts were also under the control of the area warden. The senior area warden from the borough control room oversaw area HQs. His reports directed operations on the ground and ensured that the right numbers were sent to incidents to deal with them.<sup>27</sup> Here we see how the governance structures would maintain order in a raid through the collection of information and intelligence dispersed through an area via the ARP services.

The first exercise had a number of aims. It worked as a practice for those in the service, as a show for official spectators to look at how ARP functioned at the ground level, and it provided the press with reports of the service to

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Report on Air Raid Practice in Paddington on the 16 February 1938, by E.W. Thorn Bannister, ARP Organiser, Paddington, 22 February 1938.

encourage further public participation. The official spectators included the Mayor of Paddington and representatives from national government. It thus acted as a display of democratic power and offered a sense of pageantry and leadership for those involved. The exercise showed those running the services areas that were not working. This helped to consolidate the service, clarifying the crucial need for ARP workers to be easily indentified during raids with clear uniform markings. The practice particularly focused on communication, putting wardens in charge of incidents to prevent an overlap of services and because it was the wardens that had ‘intimate knowledge of the locality.’<sup>28</sup> The warden was seen as the key person in the system and it was felt that wardens should constantly patrol their area, that posts should always be manned and that as many “runners” as possible should be available.<sup>29</sup>

As a practice exercise this proved useful to Paddington in testing services. However, as a piece of spectacle for recruitment it had less success, *The Times* noted that ‘there was no “black-out,” no aeroplanes were overhead, no searchlights were used or guns fired, and in the absence of any more spectacular features than a few fireworks the demonstration attracted little attention on the part of the public.’<sup>30</sup> With this in mind, the later practice raids were more spectacular. A practice on 30 March 1939, aimed to give practice to those who had worked for more than a year in a ‘somewhat dull routine of being trained and organized, to visualise what in an actual emergency they might be called

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Press Reports on Previous Practice Exercises held in Paddington, “Times” – 17<sup>th</sup> February 1938.

upon to do.<sup>31</sup> Ten scenarios were set up in order to correct mistakes of the first exercise.

Somewhat contradicting *The Times* assessment that the public had shown no interest, one of the major problems of the first practice was that unofficial spectators had proved a nuisance by clogging streets with cars.<sup>32</sup> Indeed the public had got in the way on a number of occasions. E.W. Thorn, the ARP organizer in the borough, felt that this was due to the leakage of information in the press, which meant crowds assembled 'at every point mentioned while the police on duty were not in sufficient force to cope with them.'<sup>33</sup> This congestion was a major concern for the government as it intersected with worries about how to control the population in an actual air raid. It was feared that people might gather in the streets or unsafe areas during a raid and that crowds would incite panic and rumour, breaking down morale and creating chaos.<sup>34</sup> Government ARP thus aimed to disperse the population into small units rather than gather people in mass shelters or buildings. It was feared that this could not only create panic, but mean mass death in the context of a direct hit.<sup>35</sup>

The government thus viewed ARP as a form of population management, a means to deal with panic, by offering up-to-date information and by the policing

---

<sup>31</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Report on Air Raid Practice in Paddington on the 30 March 1938, by E.W. Thorn Bannister, ARP Organiser, Paddington 22 February 1938.

<sup>32</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Report on Air Raid Practice in Paddington on the 16 February 1938, by E.W. Thorn Bannister, ARP Organiser, Paddington 22 February 1938.

<sup>33</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Report on Air Raid Practice in Paddington on the 30 March 1938, by E.W. Thorn Bannister, ARP Organiser, Paddington 22 February 1938.

<sup>34</sup> Edgar Jones, Robin Woolven, Bill Durodie and Simon Wessely, 'Civilian Morale During the Second World War: Responses to Air Raids Re-examined,' *Social History of Medicine*, 17:3 (2004), pp. 463-479; Robert Mackay, *Half the Battle, Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War* (New York, 2002), introduction; Helen Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line, Air Raids, Productivity and Wartime Culture, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2006); Amy Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945,' *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 153-175.

<sup>35</sup> R. Cotterell Butler, 'War-Time Building Practice: "The Dispersal Theory,"' *The Builder*, 160 (7 February, 1941), pp. 149-151; R. Cotterell Butler, 'War-Time Building Practice: "The Dispersal Theory"- continued,' *The Builder*, 160 (14 February 1939), pp. 173-175.



of incidents to ensure that there was some control over the streets. The chaotic raid would be controlled through the ordering of the landscape by uniformed bodies and local knowledge in the form of wardens recruited from the local area. In this way the streets and houses under threat from the air would be held in check by the calm security offered by the citizens' army of ARP. These citizens would negotiate and search the damaged landscape for survivors of raids, helping victims and reordering the broken city to allow traffic and people to continue to flow, unheeded through safe spaces. Despite being practice raids, the congestion created by the non-uniformed spectators was a reminder that the regulation of a street in a raid was not a definite certainty and that regulatory visions of social order could not be relied upon to translate into behaviour.<sup>36</sup>

The government's scheme rested on urban space functioning in a highly structured and coordinated way. In September 1939 the General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit released *If War Should Come*, an educational film to be shown in 2000 theatres across the UK with instructions as to what to do if Britain went to war.<sup>37</sup> The information film used a montage technique showing British people fulfilling ARP instructions and had an informative voiceover. Like other ARP information, the film emphasized that no one wanted war, however British democracy would triumph if it did become a necessity.

The film's use of urban space reflected government concerns and objectives. The opening shot is of a crowded London street (Figure 3.1 top left). This is a mass crowd, lacking in distinguishing features. The hats of the crowd, often a sign of class, are mixed: flat caps, bowlers, trilbies and top hats. A top-

---

<sup>36</sup> On the relationship between regulation and practice see, Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Translated by Stephen Rendall (London, 1988).

<sup>37</sup> Katy McGahan, 'If war should come,' Curator (Non-Fiction), BFI National Archive, Commentary, BFI Inview: <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6220>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

hatted man provides the one incongruous note to the shot, swinging his umbrella as he strides into shot with a lack of observance for the unspoken rules of the street. The majority of the pedestrians respect the order of the urban scene, with most not walking into the road but waiting patiently as a policeman regulates the street. The modern 'roar' of the city is shown to have order; this mass of people can be relied upon to respect the hidden organization of the city.<sup>38</sup>

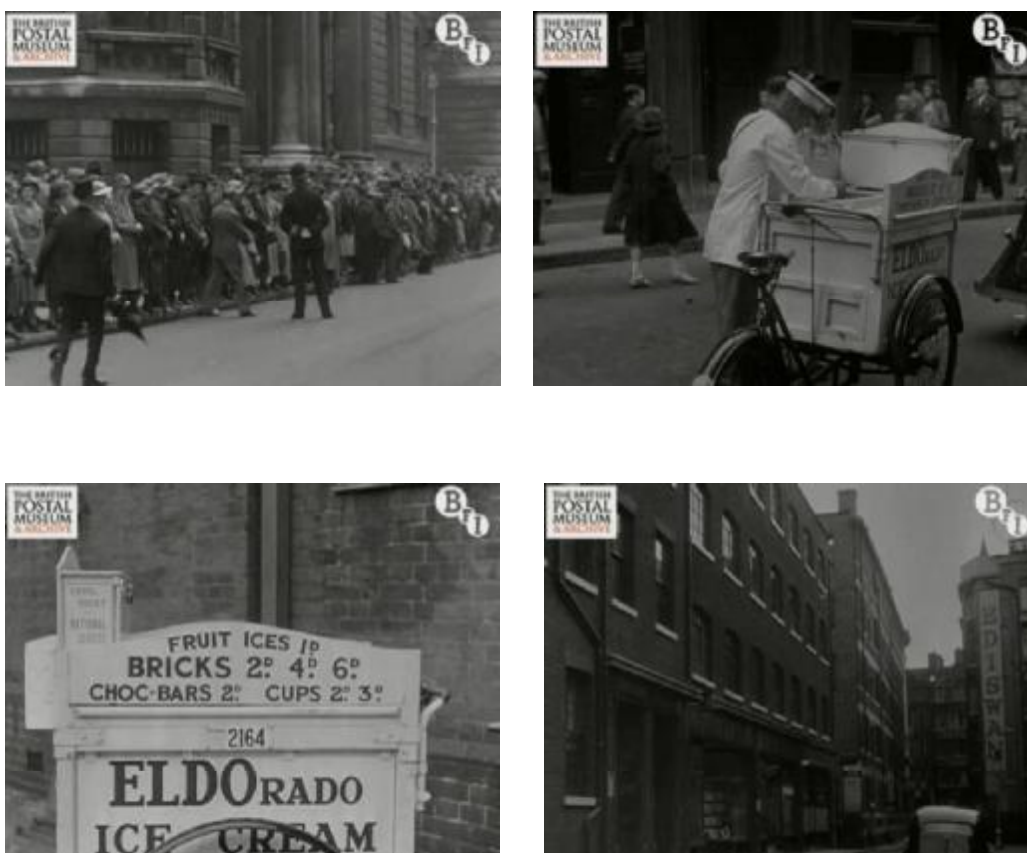


Figure 3.1. Educating the public in defence. Source: *If War Should Come* produced by the G.P.O. Film Unit for the Home Office (1939), BFI Inview: <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6220>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* plays over the top of the opening crowd scene, emphasizing the spectacle and movement of the urban prospect yet offering a sense of triumph to people's ordered behaviour in what could be a site

<sup>38</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 281; Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, Chapter 6.

of disorder. The music too is a celebration of heroism, a reminder that civilians will need to be able, active participants in war. This underlines the wider theme of the film, which elevates ARP actions and workers; police and uniformed workers are shown with the voiceover: 'not everyone will be in the fighting forces but all will have a vital part to play.' The heroic citizens are exemplified when an air-raid siren warning is demonstrated. A montage of shots shows people at work and leisure in the streets (Figure 3.1 top right). When the siren sounds, all take shelter in their houses, steel garden shelters or protected buildings. The busy streets are shown as empty spaces. An ice cream seller, who had formerly been trading in a busy street, has abandoned his livelihood to seek safety (bottom left). A shopping street is cleared of all people, opening up the streets for the ARP services (bottom right). In this way, ARP in its ideal form was an embodied practice and a social contract. In the former individual citizens would regulate themselves to free up urban space for services. With regard to the latter, ARP services would then act to help, aid and support conforming citizens. The film offered an ideal vision of behaviour under the conditions of a raid. The citizen was expected to rationally and responsibly use the street to ensure that ARP services could act efficiently.<sup>39</sup>

Yet, the Paddington exercise revealed that people could not be relied upon to conform to the way in which ARP sought to regulate the street. While this was a practice and not a real raid, it demonstrated some of the difficulties of urban order: congested streets, spectators, people in the wrong place and

---

<sup>39</sup>Richard Dennis discusses the invention of the modern street as a regulated, ordered space in: *Cities in Modernity*, Chapter 5.

confusion over who was in each service and thus a limiting of their legitimacy to be present in a street during a raid.

While the first practice had demonstrated the limits of ARP to regulate the urban landscape, the second and the third practices, the latter held on 11 July 1938, were more exciting than the first. The March practice offered a 'spectacular rescue of a number of dummies, representing wounded citizens from the upper floor of a building...supposed to have been partially destroyed by a bomb.' The display included the lowering of bodies out of a window and the carrying of boy-scout 'victims' out of a fire escape.<sup>40</sup>

The *Evening News* described the Paddington exercises and ARP in Paddington more generally as being the most complete of any London borough. The paper noted that the exercise on 11 July revealed that this borough's careful preparations would 'minimise the havoc that a swift enemy air raid would do to life and property.' It was felt the exercise had shown the 'systematic and mechanical methods used to meet such an emergency.'<sup>41</sup> The paper noted that the practice was staged so as to appear that death from the skies 'had struck suddenly and horribly.' The raid used the spectacle of aerial bombardment, reminiscent of Hendon, within the city in an attempt to understand its impact on a population. Houses were demolished, mock casualties and pavements were splashed with "mustard gas," innocent householders 'suffered from the effects of phosgene gas', people were "trapped" in wrecked buildings and "bombs" burst on 'roofs and in the open streets, water and electric mains were "damaged" and

---

<sup>40</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Press Reports on Previous Practice Exercises held in Paddington, "Times" – 31<sup>st</sup> March 1938.

<sup>41</sup> BBC/WAC/R51/13/2A, Press Reports on Previous Practice Exercises held in Paddington, "Evening News," 12<sup>th</sup> July 1938.

there were “casualties by the dozen from an unexpected attack.”<sup>42</sup> In this way the drama of the raid was brought directly to the streets and homes of the people in the Borough. The *Standard* described this as ‘a wonderful demonstration of what patriotic Londoners are doing to prepare for what might turn this fair city into a shambles.’<sup>43</sup> The streets became an exhibition space in which ARP workers performed their roles in enabling London to continue to function under bombardment, using modern methods and techniques to combat the bomb.

ARP was brought to a personal level and into the home by the use of local organizations, such as the scouts. Through the use of such intermediaries, the government pursued its agenda of making the home and the householder the first location for education on air raids.<sup>44</sup> Lying behind this was an aim not just of safety but also to disperse the population into small units and hereby avoid panic.

By the summer of 1939, ARP practices were viewed as a key way to keep the population educated in ARP and to retain confidence in the ability of good local ARP services to minimise the ‘havoc’ of air raids by keeping order on the ground through communication.<sup>45</sup> In this way, even if the physical city broke down and was damaged, ruined and congested, it could continue to function in the organized bodies of ARP workers.

A volunteer spirit was at the centre of the national scheme. The use of the volunteer role model aimed to limit concerns over belligerence and contain ARP

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> The desire to prevent panic and to facilitate a sense of security through the location of people in raids had a socio-medical construct in which group behaviour had been analysed to try and predict the impact of raids on groups and individuals: John Rickman, ‘Panic and Air Raid Precautions,’ *The Lancet*, 4 June 1938, pp. 1291-1295.

<sup>45</sup> TNA/HO 207/9, Region No 5 (London): Air Raids, Air Raid Precautions, Bombs and Training: Daylight exercise by civil defence services for education of public and volunteers on 19 June 1939 – Chelsea.

within a narrative of social order. Indeed, in a rally in St Pancras, Lady Stewart, O.B.E., in an appeal for local volunteers commented: 'this country is going through the most testing time it has ever met in its whole history. It is a call to courage, backbone and a sense of duty. It is a call to us without compulsion, to produce all the volunteers we need and a finer spirit than in the dictator countries, where these services are carried out compulsorily.'<sup>46</sup>

Government recruitment schemes rested on a volunteer ethos, stimulated by thrilling spectacles that offered a heroic status to the ARP worker, who could demonstrate their patriotism and modernity through participation.<sup>47</sup> The Paddington practice exercises conformed to the government calls for recruitment by showing off its services and looking to recruit new members. However, the exercises also revealed the limits of ARP within the urban landscape. The idealized social contract between citizen and government could not be relied on in practice; not all were prepared to follow the urban regulation of ARP.

Despite targeted recruitment weeks in local boroughs, broadcasts, pamphlets sent to householders and spectacular displays, in the London context a large number of volunteers were never recruited prior to the war. This suggests the limits of recruitment ideology to penetrate London. Arguably this was in part because of the located nature of ARP within communities. The next section explores these issues by comparing two 'located' ARP displays.

---

<sup>46</sup> 'A.R.P. Rally,' *Paddington News*, 1 April 1939, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Representations of ARP workers are discussed further in chapter four.

### 3.2. Local Versus National Identity: The Finsbury Town Hall and the Royal Albert Hall as Display Spaces

Recruitment rested on the creation of a set of ideas about what ARP meant in the national context and the filtering of this to suit local conditions. Structurally this utilized local authorities to establish and administer the schemes. This section moves on from local recruitment drives, to consider ARP recruitment as a part of a longer history of urban display.<sup>48</sup> I consider the way in which specific spaces were chosen to facilitate recruitment and in so doing created particular visualisations of London and ARP. I compare the contentious Finsbury exhibition with an ARP rally in the Royal Albert Hall. These spaces ideologically situated ARP, the former as a modern fight against a modern war, the latter as a new citizens' service subsumed into a national history through the invention of tradition. The spaces alone offer a window into understanding how London was constructed at this time, for example the Royal Albert Hall had close ties with London as a space of remembrance and commemoration through the annual British Legion festival of remembrance. The use of the hall for national recruitment demonstrates how the space of the hall was understood in 1939 and how the threat of war in the air impacted on the meaning of that space. Comparing the rally with Finsbury's exhibition, and the meeting of the two perspectives on ARP within in the display space of the Albert Hall, exposes how symbolic meanings of space are by no means static, they can change over time and an official concept may be subverted and appropriated for other ends.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure* in Chapter 7; Walsh, 'Social Meaning and Social Space in the Shopping Galleries of Early Modern London', pp. 52-79; Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 151-163; Edmund White, *The Flâneur* (London, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 163-165.

### *The Finsbury Exhibition*

The exhibition of Finsbury's plans ran from 6 to 13 February 1939 and attracted a total of 6795 people. It was funded by the council at the cost of around £400 and was so successful, both locally and nationally, that it was prolonged.<sup>50</sup> The *New Statesman and the Nation* praised Finsbury council for employing of Tecton noting: 'this borough...invited one of the most brilliant of our younger firms of architects to tackle ARP as a problem of modern architectural and engineering technique.'<sup>51</sup> The article reflected on the fact that Tecton 'instead of trudging along the routine of traditional defence...has treated ARP as a new architectural and social problem.' The exhibition gave the reporter not only a sense of 'keen excitement but relief from impotent fear.' It was praised as a brilliant piece of 'popular education,' explaining the issue with the 'aid of a series of plans and humorous cartoons.'<sup>52</sup>

During the interwar period, European great exhibitions began using scale models and panoramas to display the city they were hosted in.<sup>53</sup> The models were not neutral representations but mediated the meaning of the city, for example at the British Empire Exhibition in 1924, a model of old London Bridge was placed next to the Burmese Pavilion, demonstrating London's imperial

---

<sup>50</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 20 February 1939, p. 920; ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 29 December 1938, p. 684; Six other Boroughs decided to follow Finsbury's lead and offered their support for the scheme as well as making requests to borrow the exhibits to display in their own Boroughs, Alderman Riley, 'FINSBURY LEADS BOROUGH ON A.R.P.', *The Finsbury Citizen*, No. 84, March 1939.

<sup>51</sup> Its success was not just the preserve of Labour, the right-wing *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* published images of a smiling Herbert Morrison in front of model Tecton shelters with a detailed outline of the scheme, *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 7 February 1939, p. 12, copy in: V&A/RIBA/LUB/24/6.

<sup>52</sup> 'London Diary,' *The New Statesman and the Nation*, 11 February 1939, copy in: V&A/RIBA/LUB/24/6.

<sup>53</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 293.



reach.<sup>54</sup> The Tecton exhibition built on established exhibition techniques to present the city as a modern space in which the spectator became an active participant.<sup>55</sup>

The models in the Tecton exhibition had two functions. They offered a tangible means to display the underground shelters so that the viewer could understand their construction and layout. But secondly, they displayed modernity in a way that actively involved the public. The viewer was taken on a journey through the imagined space of Finsbury at war: subsuming both the imagined city and the exhibition participant into a carefully planned, measured system of social order and implicitly not the wasteful, ad hoc and inefficient system proposed by the government.

The Tecton plans formed the centre of the exhibition, which was the focal point of a recruitment week for ARP services. In this way, Finsbury council conformed with government demands for ARP recruitment and the organization of events to facilitate this, while at the same time subverting that agenda through the display of radical alternatives to official structural protection. The traditional display space of the town hall thus became a dissenting space for those who visited.<sup>56</sup>

The exhibition included scale models, images and text to bring home the reality of bombardment to the population as well as large versions of the charts and maps made during the survey of the borough.<sup>57</sup> This built on Lubetkins'

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 293.

<sup>55</sup> Fitting with David Gilbert's description of London as a site of modernity: *ibid*, p. 281.

<sup>56</sup> On the subversion of exhibition spaces see: Barry, 'Dissenting Spaces,' pp 307-12; Sandy Nairne, 'The Institutionalization of Dissent,' in Greenberg, Ferguson and Nairne, *Thinking About Exhibitions*, pp. 387-410.

<sup>57</sup> V&A/RIBA/LUB/3/5/1, Press Release, Alderman Riley, Editorial on Finsbury ARP scheme.

experience of organizing exhibitions of working-class housing.<sup>58</sup> The exhibition formed the centre of Tecton's 'socialvision' for Finsbury. It was more than a trade display. It opened up ARP education to all and offered an ideal of modern urban identity and a projection of the future of London.<sup>59</sup> This formed a radical challenge both to other display and recruitment weeks that utilized the spectacle of air raids, and to the government's own recruitment strategy that rested on the construction of an imagined wartime patriotism. In very different ways Tecton and the government sought to show the population that proper planning of services would minimize casualties and ensure quick and safe rescue.<sup>60</sup>

### *The National Recruitment Rally*

On 25 January 1939, the national government began a 'defence drive' to build up a civilian army of 1,800,000 people, by distributing some 20,000,000 copies of a National Service Handbook to the population. The government subsumed ARP within a wider drive for national service, sidestepping the social scientific agenda put forward by radical London boroughs and the Communist Party. The handbook outlined the potential roles available for volunteers including nursing

---

<sup>58</sup> In April 1934 the Tecton architects had been the major creators of an exhibition organized by the MARS group, this was a study of Bethnal Green housing. The exhibition looked at the development of Bethnal Green and how it turned into a slum. Like Cullen's cartoons the layout of exhibits offered a narrative of order to chaos and, with the intervention of architecture and planning, a potential for order again in the future. The exhibition showed well planned funded housing based on the amount working families could afford to spend on rent, John Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin: Architecture and the Tradition of Progress* (London, 1992), pp. 316-7.

<sup>59</sup> This ideal was prevalent in this period and is particularly associated with the Workers' Education Association (WEA), an organization that aimed to bring university level education to the population and offered tutorials, summer schools, exhibitions and many other educational opportunities. The WEA was supported by trade unions trade councils, co-operatives, political groups (mostly Labour, some Liberal) adult schools, churches and chapels. This summary was taken from Jonathan Rose, 'The Workers in the Workers' Educational Association, 1903-1950,' *Albion*, 21 (1989), pp. 592-3. Thanks to Denise Gonyo for fruitful discussions about the function of exhibitions and their relationship to urban life, modernity and national identity: Denise Gonyo, 'Visions of India,' paper presented at the Historylab Seminar at the IHR, 17 March 2011.

<sup>60</sup> See above.

work for woman and work for men within the Voluntary Reserve, Territorial Army, Civil Air Guard, Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS), Red Cross and as ARP wardens.<sup>61</sup> In London, the national drive was launched with a patriotic rally at the Royal Albert Hall, the day before the handbook was released. The rally was presided over by the Lord Mayor of London and included speeches from Sir John Anderson, the Civil Defence Minister; Mr. Ernest Brown, Minister of Labour; the Leader of the LCC, Herbert Morrison, and the Chairman of the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee.<sup>62</sup> It was concluded with the handing out of pennons to Borough ARP wardens and with the singing of patriotic songs. The location of the Royal Albert Hall offered an historical backdrop to the rally, a national and public display space in which traditional recruitment methods of military spectacle and rousing speeches aimed to create unity.<sup>63</sup> However, the pageantry was carefully mediated in an attempt to construct a particular kind of national unity. The Albert Hall had long been a space allocated to the celebration of national success and for the staging of shows of British strength and industrial power. Figure 3.2 shows the location of the hall in relation to its surrounding area. It was tied into a museum, art and science complex located in South Kensington and was funded, in part, through the Great Exhibition of 1851, as well as acting as a memorial to Prince Albert and more widely the successes of the Victorian age.<sup>64</sup> The public space chosen for the rally and the situating of

---

<sup>61</sup> 'Citizen Army of 1,800,000,' *The Daily Mirror*, 25 January 1939, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> ILHC, Manuscript Collection – Finsbury A.R.P/ Finsbury – Civil Defence, local correspondence, Letter from Arnold James, Finsbury Town Clerk and ARP Officer to Finsbury Borough Council, 11 January 1939,

<sup>63</sup> Omissi, 'The Hendon Air Pageant, 1920-37,' p. 198; Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, 'Refabricating the Imperial Image of the Isle of Dogs: Modernist Design, British State Exhibitions and Colonial Policy 1924-1951,' *Architectural History*, 49 (2006), pp 317-348.

<sup>64</sup> For a history of the hall see, John Richard Thackrah, *The Royal Albert Hall* (Lavenham, 1983).

civil defence as a national service moved ARP away from localized protection to national protection.

The Albert Hall had close associations with the construction of the 'idea' of London. David Gilbert argues that the Great Exhibition of 1851 invented the modern tourist industry in London as guidebooks were produced on a mass scale to mark the event.<sup>65</sup> The exhibition situated Hyde Park and the Kensington area as a site of national ceremonial spectacle. The hall was originally called 'The Hall of the Art and Sciences,' however Victoria added the prefix 'Royal Albert' so that the space became a national memorial to her husband. This tied an old world and the new, exposing a connection between the older city as a seat of government and power and the new wealthy London of capital, trade and science.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the stress on trade and science within the exhibition constructed the area as a site of modernity through displays of commerce, industry and national production. Kensington became a site for national and imperial display and spectacle into the twentieth century and up to the Second World War. However, Gilbert argues that during and after the war guidebooks constructed London in a more muted and insular way.<sup>67</sup> This muting of national symbolism is apparent outside of the guidebook in the physical fabric of the city. The Albert Hall shifted in its symbolic meaning during the interwar period as it became the locus for the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance, held to mark Armistice Day and the memory of those who had lost their lives in the

---

<sup>65</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 293.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 281; Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven, 1999).

<sup>67</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 284.

Great War.<sup>68</sup> This linked the hall into a wider commemorative parade route in which the London landscape became a site of national mourning and memory.<sup>69</sup>

The muting of London as an imperial metropolis and a shift to a more insular national space is visible in the ARP rally. The language of patriotism was contained by a language of national obligation that ensured that military overtones were tied into the concept of national citizenship and not military duty. The government was careful to refer to the recruits as a 'citizen army,' and avoided any language of belligerence. This was also clear in comments in the National Service Handbook: 'The Desire of all of us is to live at peace with our neighbours. But to ensure peace we must be strong. The country needs your service.'<sup>70</sup> In the space of the hall, national service was presented as part of a British history and identity based on the facilitation of peace through morally backed strength. The hall legitimized this view of recruitment, acting as a reminder of the power and strength of Britain in another age and the fruits of that power exemplified in the exhibition and education spaces alongside the hall (Figure 3.2).

The rally too marks a shift in the conception of the role of Britain at an international level. In 1851 the Great Exhibition was a marker of economic, industrial and political power attained through imperialist expansion.<sup>71</sup> The recruitment rally repositioned Britishness as about freedom and democracy through the rights of the population to protect themselves. It was feared that

---

<sup>68</sup> James G. Mansell, 'Musical Modernity and Contested Commemoration at the Festival of Remembrance, 1923–1927,' *The Historical Journal*, 52 (2009), pp. 433–454; Venetia Newall, 'Armistice Day: Folk Tradition in an English Festival of Remembrance,' *Folklore*, 87, 2 (1976), pp. 226–229.

<sup>69</sup> Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>70</sup> 'Citizen Army of 1,800,000,' *The Daily Mirror*, 25 January 1939, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Windsor Liscombe, 'Refabricating the Imperial Image,' p. 322.

ARP would be viewed as tantamount to warmongering. Indeed, in a speech to the Leamington Rotary Club on the issue of ARP, Anthony Eden commented:

...the charge of war mongering is one that ought never to be heard in this country. There are no individuals here and no political parties who want war. To pretend otherwise is to make national unity more difficult...I pleaded last autumn that as a nation we should make a further attempt to sink our party differences and agree on a foreign policy upon which the nation could unite...I still regret that has not happened...There was never more need for disinterested service.<sup>72</sup>

Eden uses the rhetoric of national unity as a means to communicate political neutrality. Similarly, the rally sought to place nation above politics, symbolically embodied in the royal national space of the Albert Hall.

The rally was originally planned for October 1938 as a meeting to stimulate ARP in London, however it was postponed by the Munich crisis.<sup>73</sup> It was rescheduled for January 1939 and at this point there was a fundamental shift in the government's agenda. The focus of the rally was chiefly a gathering of ARP volunteers from all boroughs. However, the remit was expanded to include all voluntary defence services in London and was aimed at enrolling more members in the National Services.<sup>74</sup> The night before the rally, the Prime Minister broadcast to the nation announcing the scheme to promote recruitment to national voluntary service and the handbook to be sent to householders. The war in the air was placed at the centre of his call, uniting the nation in a common threat:

Modern war is not like the wars of the past. The development of air forces has deprived us of our old island security, and in our case...the civilians would be the victims of attack...if we wish to protect our civilian

---

<sup>72</sup> 'Rough weather ahead: Eden,' *The Daily Express*, 25 January 1939, p. 15.

<sup>73</sup> TNA/MEPO 2/3754, Request by the Home Office for the Services of the Police Band for the meeting to stimulate ARP recruiting, August 1938.

<sup>74</sup> TNA/HO 45/18214, Rally invitation to Lord Mayor of London, from the Home Office ARP department, 6 January 1939.

population in time of war we must do so in time of peace. More than that we must train it in peace, for there will be no time to train after war starts. Therefore you will see our scheme is just one of common prudence, just as necessary for our safety as battleships or guns or aeroplanes, though not meaning, any more than they do, that war is bound to come soon...Our proposals give you your opportunity; it is for you to show the world what a free people are prepared to do in defence of their liberties and the ideals in which they believe.<sup>75</sup>

ARP was imagined as part of the frontline defence against this most modern method of war. Indeed ARP itself was constructed as a weapon, ensuring that the machines of war could not win out against an organized population.

In the London rally, Neville Chamberlain's words were appropriated and resituated in the national space of the hall. As well as official speakers, Aldermen and members of the borough councils were invited, so too were representatives from each of the ARP services and members of the police, fire brigades and active defence services including anti-aircraft and barrage balloon units. Following the speeches, each City and Borough Council's ARP Committee Chairman along with two representatives from their ARP services was presented with a pennon with the council's arms on it.<sup>76</sup> Despite this being a national service rally, during his speech the Lord Privy Seal stressed that the presenting of these pennons was not inappropriate as they were symbols of local solidarity and their local civilian force.<sup>77</sup> In this way the rally sought to celebrate local services and link them to national civil defence plans.

Sir John Anderson's speech at the rally carefully blended the local and the national. He opened by stressing the unique nature of the event in London's history. It marked the first time those actually serving 'through a whole range of

---

<sup>75</sup> 'The Call to Service, Prime Minister's Broadcast,' *The Times* 24 January 1939, p 12.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, Rally invitation to Lord Mayor of London, from the Home Office ARP department, 6 January 1939.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, Lord Privy Seal, Speech, Albert Hall, Tuesday 24 January 1939, 8.20-8.40.

London's effort in a great national duty' had been gathered together. He positioned this uniqueness within the history of London, calling on the audience to remember that many times in the past the sprawling city had united, organizing its citizens to defend against outside threats. Included in this account were: the creation of citizen bodies to repel a feared invasion from the Scots; the citizen bands trained to repel the terror of Spain in the days of Elizabeth; and the militia formed when the shadow of Napoleon lay over Europe. The historical episodes were reminders of past English and British glories, a history of the creation of a nation. The narrative enabled a celebration of both London and British glory. Words like terror and shadow situated this history in the contemporary setting, echoing the fear of the Munich crisis and the wider concerns over the looming threat of an enemy and a sudden strike from the air. Yet, the episodes were also reminders that these past defences prevented invasion, securing the island from an outside enemy. This sense of historical unity and past success offered security amidst the reality of a violent future threat from the air.

In his closing remarks Anderson called on the persons present to use their influence to recruit more people, not in a violent act of war, but in memory of the citizen's right to liberate themselves from an outside threat. It was the hall itself that offered both a backdrop and poignant end point to a speech rich in emotive symbolism about London and those present who had already volunteered for the cause:

In this Albert Hall where, year by year, is kept that commemoration compounded of both comradeship and reverence, the commemoration of those who fought and died in the last war, surely it is fitting that here London should reaffirm its resolve to maintain that great tradition, in obedience to the command –



“That which they fathers have bequeathed to thee, earn it anew, if thou would'st possess it.”<sup>78</sup>

The closing of the speech pointed to the annual commemoration of the last war.<sup>79</sup> The commemoration made the hall a liminal space, a boundary line between life and death. Through constructing the hall as a space of commemoration, Anderson reminded those present that wars inevitably result in death and loss. There could be no suggestion here that the population could be protected completely from danger. These dangers had to be managed appropriately and Anderson asked for courage and determination from volunteers who ‘would be of the highest importance, because on their example and their influence may largely depend that steadiness which will maintain our morale.’<sup>80</sup> The future modern war needed the heroic courage of the citizen to endure the dangers to come.

The rally utilized traditional pageantry and ceremony to encourage the population to volunteer. However, it also emphasized the threat of modernity embodied in the fears over the bombing of London. In this way its reference points were at once modern and ancient, reinventing national identity to construct a narrative about Britain’s role in the world while at the same time playing on older traditions related to the space of the hall. The decision to hold a rally in the Albert Hall points to the way in which the national government acted to invent traditions in order to situate the new ARP organization within a secure history of British success. The hall offered a site for the ritualisation of ARP. The trauma, fear and confusion of bombardment could be neutralized through the

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Mansell discusses how the festival of remembrance became dominated by a patriotic agenda facilitated by the bureaucratisation of a national culture in: ‘Musical Modernity,’ pp. 433–454.

<sup>80</sup> TNA/HO 45/18214, Lord Privy Seal, Speech, Albert Hall, Tuesday 24 January 1939, 8.20-8.40.

security of an historical space of national strength. By entering the space ARP volunteers were offered the security of this history, this legitimized their decision to volunteer, positioning them as national role models, ready to endure future danger. ARP was de-politicized through the rhetoric of volunteerism and liberty.<sup>81</sup>

### *Appropriating Space, Contesting Official ARP*

The rhetoric of national unity that official speakers aimed to impart at the rally was disrupted by alternative visions of citizenship and urban order. Richard Dennis argues that there exist regulatory hegemonic representations of space that translate into spatial practices which suggest an acceptance, whether known or not, of that regulation. This regulation can be seen, for example, in the separation of classes within certain areas of the nineteenth century city, or in the regulation of pedestrians to pavements as demonstrated in the acceptance by the crowd in figure 3.1 to not cross the road at the wrong time. At certain times there was a cross-class communal use of space, as with armistice celebrations or at jubilees. However, at certain points spaces could be appropriated or trespassed upon by other groups. The classic example is that of 'slumming' where the West Enders entered and explored the East End. In turn, at times neutral or classed spaces could be appropriated as with protests, labour marches and civil disobedience actions.<sup>82</sup> The rally differed to other commemorative and celebratory events because it was constructing an ideology for the future. A dominant narrative about ARP was not yet fixed. Indeed, it remained a

---

<sup>81</sup> On the role of exhibitions and display as a way to 'ween people off politics' see: Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition*, p. 134.

<sup>82</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 163-66.

controversial subject due to its moral ambiguity and the politicization of the subject. The national patriotic symbolism of the rally aimed to be a cross-class communal space, however some viewed the rally as both problematic and inappropriate.

Both Sir John Anderson and Ernest Brown were heckled during their speeches, and while the Lord Mayor was handing out flags shouts of “we want shelters, not pennons” were raised.<sup>83</sup> *The Daily Mirror* reported that prior to the event the Holborn ARP Wardens had tried to send a deputation to Sir John Anderson in order to:

ask him about the muddle over shelters. He refused...because he was too busy, it was stated last night, so they have drawn up questions to fire at him at tomorrows National Service rally at the Albert Hall...Mr. A.E. Dunhill chairman of the Holborn Air Raid Wardens Committee said: “The Rally is going to be a flag-waving band-playing sort of thing. The general feeling among the wardens is that that sort of thing is fit for Girl Guides, but not for serious-minded people like ourselves who have a serious job to do. ‘We want to get on with it.’<sup>84</sup>

Alderman Harold Riley, too, was highly critical of the event, at which the Finsbury contingent, along with those of six other boroughs, had to stand in the gallery. Many wardens left the hall in disgust and ‘there were in the gallery people entirely unconnected with ARP services who had assumed the right to places allotted to the wardens and volunteers.’<sup>85</sup> The rally, as this indicates, did not succeed in constructing a neutral, cross-class unity.

---

<sup>83</sup> Photo News, ‘We want shelters,’ *The Daily Express*, 25 January 1939, p. 20; ‘A.R.P. MEN TO HECKLE THEIR CHIEF,’ *The Daily Mirror*, 23 January 1939, p. 28.

<sup>84</sup> ‘A.R.P. MEN TO HECKLE THEIR CHIEF,’ *The Daily Mirror*, 23 January 1939, p. 28.

<sup>85</sup>ILHC, Manuscript Collection – Finsbury A.R.P./ Finsbury – Civil Defence, local correspondence, Letter from Arnold James.

### *The Royal Albert Hall Versus The Finsbury Town Hall*

The rally was in marked contrast to the exhibition space in Finsbury Town Hall. While Morrison, as Leader of the LCC, may have opened proceedings, linking Finsbury into a wider London agenda, the staging of the event in the political heart of local government, within the space of this local government building, acted as a means to side-step the national agenda and push local concerns.<sup>86</sup> The two halls offered competing narratives of citizenship and social order. The symbolic national ceremony that aimed to facilitate national belonging was in stark contrast to the scientific display space of the town hall.<sup>87</sup> These offered two different sets of cultural practices. The Albert Hall recruitment drive offered a spectacle of national belonging mediated through the status of the speakers and the national connotations of the hall itself.<sup>88</sup> This remade London into the space represented in figure 1.2, here London is submerged into a large organization in which the boroughs no longer stand alone but work together in a system of protective order. In contrast the town hall was a rival politicized local exhibition space and was at the centre of the council's push for improving the health of the population. It was in close proximity to the Finsbury Health Centre and the area around the hall was central to Tecton's plan for the redevelopment of the area (Figure 3.3).<sup>89</sup>

The rally and the Albert Hall acted as physical manifestations of the government's national service and ARP agenda. However, by failing to neutralize

---

<sup>86</sup> ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 'Publicity,' 29 December 1938, p. 664; ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 'Recruiting Week Sub-Committee,' 1 February 1939, p. 802.

<sup>87</sup> For discussions of Victorian architecture see: G. Alex Bremner, 'Some Imperial Institute: Architecture Symbolism and the Ideal of Empire in Late Victorian Britain, 1887-93,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 62 (2003), pp. 50-74.

<sup>88</sup> On the concept of culture as a set of practices and processes see, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford, 2001), introduction.

<sup>89</sup> As described in chapter two.

the contentious nature of ARP, the hall offered space on which to centre concerns. Critics read the space in political terms, viewing the location of different groups within as a part of a politicized agenda. *The Finsbury Citizen* was critical of the event because it was held in the Borough of Kensington, a borough with 'notoriously few volunteers.' In turn, the paper was angry as Alderman Riley was accused of not being present, while he was actually in attendance "with the Air Raid Wardens in the gallery." The *Citizen* sought to show that Finsbury was conforming to the national scheme and had 'a very high percentage of volunteers compared with other boroughs.'<sup>90</sup> This was a clear political statement about the nature of ARP in other boroughs. As discussed above, Kensington had staged ARP practices and displays. However, these conformed to the government agenda of protecting the streets through the organization of citizens within each borough into ARP services. This was markedly different to the idea of local government protecting their citizens in entirely new spaces.

The *Citizen* directly critiqued the government, suggesting that the rally was a sham and that there was little government engagement at the local level. The paper argued that 'special meetings at which "National" representatives on the Council were invited to speak, have been held throughout the borough to get volunteers. National members did not always turn up.' Yet, 'Members of the Labour Party have volunteered in force for A.R.P. work...We are not complaining that the "National" Committee's have not done likewise. They have no members to volunteer! Finsbury National Committee is not a political organization just a

---

<sup>90</sup> 'Truth Trips Up Again,' *The Finsbury Citizen*, No. 85, April 1939, front page.

few wagging tongues.”<sup>91</sup> The supposedly neutral rally that aimed to recruit heroic volunteers was redrawn as readers of the left-wing paper were told to:

Note the sham patriotic heart-throb underlying that phrase “even though symbols mean nothing to them!” How these Tories dearly love flag-wagging! If they had been in power in Finsbury should we have had the bomb-proof shelter scheme that Labour has produced?...they would have been at the Albert Hall in their best Sunday suits, with hearts all fluttering, to receive a flag that is of no earthly use to anyone, and is a sheer waste of public money...If the “National” Government keep on muddling with A.R.P. in the next year or two, as it has done in the past seven, the local Tories will no doubt be proud to lead the Finsbury contingent of dead men, women and children into heaven, with the flag flying at its head.<sup>92</sup>

ARP was utilized to put forward alternative ways to govern London. The town hall offered a rival local space to the Albert Hall. More widely it acted as the centre point for a vision of the Finsbury population in well-built, spacious housing estates with adequate protection from aerial bombardment.

ARP symbolized the need to protect the population from a new and violent kind of warfare. The literature of air warfare and the threats of the modern age embodied in the threat from the air were part of a historical situation of growing uncertainty; the 1930s had seen economic and social change and international and national upheavals. Propaganda for recruitment sought to strike some kind of balance. Thus, values of the nation were presented as having longevity while recruitment was contextualized within a new language of personal responsibility in which the citizens took on roles in representing the nation and its values by volunteering for that nation.<sup>93</sup> The *Daily Mirror* subverted this argument, questioning why ‘the people’ were being called upon to deal with this situation when the leaders of the country should be preventing

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> On traditional ceremony as situating the body-politic see: Windsor Liscombe, ‘Refabricating the Imperial Image,’ p. 329.

war and protecting the people.<sup>94</sup> In turn they undermined the scheme by referring to the rally as the launching of the ARP lifeboat, implying that little could be done to save the population.<sup>95</sup>

The Finsbury scheme offered its population a social commitment to improve their lives in a way that government ARP schemes did not. By contextualizing the scheme alongside other ARP display spaces, urban spectacles and recruitment drives we can understand the Finsbury scheme as presenting a radical left-wing alternative that propped up worker's rights.

### *Alternative Visions for London*

As discussed in chapters one and two, the collapsed and damaged urban landscape and methods for dealing with it 'came into focus' during the latter part of the 1930s, in which international tensions over bombardment, local concerns about governance and a popular interest in air warfare coincided to make shelters the central visual metaphor for the failure of national government to protect the population.<sup>96</sup> At the same time the tropes of the bombed streetscape and the technological solutions offered by Tecton were a part of a new way in which people could imagine the modern city as an ordered and safe space in contrast to the confused, congested and disordered cities like Barcelona and an unplanned London.

Rhodri Windsor Liscombe argues that 1939 to 1945 marked the consolidation of the public belief in the benign potency of technical and social science. Windsor Liscombe writes on the 1951 Festival of Britain noting how it

---

<sup>94</sup> 'Call to Service,' *Daily Mirror*, 24 January 1939, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> 'Cassandra column,' *The Daily Mirror*, 25 January 1939, p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Claudia Stein and Roger Cooter, 'Coming into Focus: Posters, Power, and Visual Culture in the History of Medicine,' *Medizinhistorisches*, 42 (2007), pp. 180-209.

was presented to its political and professional backers as the appropriate outcome of the nation's industrial and technical prowess.<sup>97</sup> In the differences between Tecton and the recruitment rally we see these shifts in flux. On the one side, we are presented with an older form of national prowess as a protection against a dangerous modernity. On the other, we are presented with a modern technical outcome for a modern problem.

The handbooks, advice, emotive speeches, broadcasts, rallies and recruitment weeks given, and advised, by the government were a means to deal with what Judith Barry describes as a 'crisis in the representations of the modernist paradigm, but also a crisis of audience relations from which legitimation was only to be obtained by a re-definition of its relations with the new urban masses and their cultural demands.'<sup>98</sup> The government sought to recruit through emotive appeal and entertainment, utilizing older spaces of display but combining newly invented traditions. In contrast Tecton used modern methods and politicized exhibition techniques to subvert the traditional political and administrative space of the town hall, they did not use ceremony or pageantry but a rhetoric of science.

The national government never supported Finsbury's scheme. In February 1938, Anderson convened an independent conference chaired by Lord Hailey to explore the issue of deep shelters.<sup>99</sup> The government continued with a policy of surface shelters, modified basements, garden shelters and trenches as offering adequate protection from bombardment. The Hailey Report suggested that bomb-proof shelters would paralyze the country, creating a deep shelter

---

<sup>97</sup> Windsor Liscombe, 'Refabricating the Imperial Image,' p. 325.

<sup>98</sup> Barry, 'Dissenting Spaces,' pp. 310-11.

<sup>99</sup> Joseph S. Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy and its Critics in Britain before the Second World War,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 5 (1994), p. 313.



mentality and stopping war production.<sup>100</sup> Finsbury found a means to fund one of the shelters, however the beginning of construction coincided with the start of the war. The shelter site had to be abandoned when the private funding for the site was stopped.<sup>101</sup> Finsbury had to conform to the government scheme of protection of the population through evacuation, dispersal and protection through knowledge, embodied in wardens and ARP workers who would be dealing with incidents and providing reassurance and security to the borough population.<sup>102</sup>

Despite the scheme never being carried out, the public attack on the national scheme resonated into the Second World War. Tecton and the government imagined two radically different ideas of London and the population within. The former looked to reorder the city through the development of new building techniques and engineering, in this way facilitating improved health and welfare for its inhabitants, and located its scheme in the specific landscape of the working-class borough and in the space in and around the town hall. The government, however, did not look to the physical landscape of London but the body of the Londoner to deal with the threat from the air; the Royal Albert Hall was a stage for citizenship and not an exhibition in itself. Neither entirely succeeded in constructing a universally acceptable vision for ARP. One offered a modernism that did not appeal to all, while the other used a form of pageantry

---

<sup>100</sup> There was also a concern that if a shelter with many people in was hit then it would damage morale as many people would be killed at one time, Meisel, 'Air Raid Shelter Policy,' pp. 313-4.

<sup>101</sup> Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, p. 362.

<sup>102</sup> Finsbury were initially criticized for their lack of facilitation in the government's scheme: ILCH, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 40, Depots for Decontamination, Rescue, Etc., Squads,' Special (Air Raid Precautions) Committee, 17 May 1939, pp. 157-164. In the end Finsbury had to tow the line and began building surface shelters and following government recommendations on basement strutting and household shelters, ILCH, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 40 'Shelters - surface and public shelters generally,' Emergency Committee, 20 September 1939, p. 33.

that proved distasteful to some; the pennons in particular were viewed as unpalatable in a hall shrouded with the memories of past deaths.

The divisions between national and local government were in part pragmatic. The government's agenda was based on the need to maximize labour for national service and war industries.<sup>103</sup> The figure of the volunteer aimed to sidestep the problematic ideology of the worker. In contrast Finsbury council looked to local government strategy and the need to appeal to its constituency. In so doing they pushed an alternative perspective. At the ideological and cultural level the two perspectives were played out in space. The two displays reveal the ways in which public spaces could be appropriated or utilized to construct different narratives and visions of urban order. The Albert Hall located the citizen in a heroic national space. This was contested by the intrusion of a set of rival cultural traditions into that space in the form of protesting ARP workers. These workers carried with them a solution to modern war backed by the alternative vision of structural protection. They were able to appropriate the narrative of defence for their own ends, exposing the invention of tradition in action by challenging the handing out of pennons. Finsbury offered a rival display space, a modern borough council with modern solutions, mapped out in the space of the borough itself. In this way two spaces came to embody two separate sets of ideas.

Both displays of ARP offered a vocabulary to Londoners to imagine themselves in multiple ways; as free national citizens, empowered workers, educated people of modernity and members of a local community with a right to

---

<sup>103</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Letter from Ernest Gowers to Sir Thomas Gardiner regarding the cutting of civil defence numbers to meet the needs of industry, 30 April 1940.

live in safety and security. These narratives would be tested, challenged, rejected or mixed up in the context of war. The final scheme for ARP marked the triumph of the government plan to protect the population through organized services.

### **3.3. The Final Scheme for ARP. Public Ritual and Social Order in the London County Council Jubilee**

In March 1939 the LCC celebrated fifty years of its existence by staging a jubilee celebration. Part of this involved presenting the Council's role in ARP to the public and in so doing recruiting ARP volunteers. Within the exhibition we find the three areas described by David Gilbert as central tenets in the public understanding of London being used to situate ARP: as an ancient site, as a city of modernity and spectacle, and as a national site of unity and power.<sup>104</sup> The LCC jubilee is used here to consider the final scheme of ARP in London, to consider why this model was used and to ask what this reveals about London at the start of the Second World War.

The final scheme for ARP in London consolidated the government's aim to create a London-wide service. The service as established was above the located power of the town halls and boroughs and was instead located within the body of the uniformed ARP volunteer and tied into a national agenda of protection, ingrained into the streetscape of London. The layout of ARP was not just about the success or failure of potential schemes to be measured by some future air raid but reflected a specific concept of London as a lived and governed space. The final scheme to unify ARP nationally meant the erosion of local powers through the removal of control over some ARP services. Writing on the handing over of powers to the LCC at the end of the war, the architects department got the

---

<sup>104</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 280.

impression that the task of organizing ARP was made more difficult by the overlapping of essentially 'interested authorities, such as the Metropolitan Boroughs, the Police and the London Civil Defence Region.'<sup>105</sup> By placing services in the hands of the LCC, the government sidestepped some of the political tensions that had been exposed by Tecton and the ARP rally.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, while the LCC was a democratically elected council its ARP services were put in the hands of the experts and not political leaders that managed the LCC's services. For example the LCC made district surveyors the heads of rescue and demolition parties and the boroughs had to hand responsibility over to them.<sup>107</sup>

At the cultural level, this meant the need for a consolidation of vision around ARP in an effort to make the subject less contestable. This is revealed in the publicity around ARP schemes and the careful language used to define and describe ARP. The final agenda had negotiated a crisis in representation about how the individual and the citizen was to function in war. These tensions had been played out within the problematic space of the Albert Hall. Rather than taking up proposals to build new wartime spaces, the LCC subsumed ARP into existing and recognized public spaces in order to depoliticize the issue and promote ARP to the London population. This aimed to neutralize the tensions that had been exposed in the Albert Hall rally.

---

<sup>105</sup> LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, The War History of the Architects Department, 1939-1945, unpublished manuscript, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> Similarly it was decided to move responsibility for the warden's service to the police, who already had a proven track record in managing and disciplining a civilian service: ILHC/Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Vol. 38., Council Meeting, 6 February 1939, p. 868.

<sup>107</sup> LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, The War History of the Architects Department, 1939-1945, unpublished manuscript, p. 11.



Figure 3.4. The LCC Jubilee. Clockwise from left, front cover to the exhibition catalogue; children enter the huge doors of County Hall on an educational visit; prospect of the front of County Hall from the north bank of the Thames. Sources: LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue, front cover and p. 5, and LMA/P.18.0 1939, *The Jubilee of the London County Council 1939*, p. 2.

On the policy level, some agency was removed from the metropolitan boroughs by the erosion of their responsibilities over ARP. In February 1939, the control of Rescue and Demolition Services was transferred from the London Metropolitan Boroughs to the LCC. This was to ensure that there was a single control of rescue services and reflected the view that the LCC was better placed to tap into the whole of the building industry in the capital.<sup>108</sup> The LCC was in charge of recruitment, training and discipline and the boroughs were expected to provide accommodation. In this way, the Rescue Service would act more like the Fire Brigade in having a centralized control point but links with the local area

<sup>108</sup> LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, 'The War History of the Architects Department, 1939-1945, unpublished manuscript, p. 6.

through the location of depots and ideally the recruitment of local men.<sup>109</sup> This decision was not just about practicalities; the transference of some of the powers to the LCC was a means to work ARP into London as an imagined space that stretched further out than the discrete boroughs. In so doing, ARP was subsumed into an organization known for London-wide public service provision marked out through existing physical spaces and public buildings: schools, baths, housing, administrative and bureaucratic buildings. These were the same spaces that would form networks of rest centres, decontamination centres, medical posts and control centres.<sup>110</sup> The shift in power to the LCC marked a new vision for London that incorporated modernity and history and acted to depoliticize ARP by moving power from the boroughs. This situated it within a securer less contentious narrative than the invented traditions of the national rally. This is demonstrated in the envisioning of ARP within the March 1939 LCC Jubilee Exhibition.

The exhibition was held to celebrate fifty years of service to London. Like the Tecton exhibition, the layout of the rooms constructed a narrative of progress, showing how the LCC had improved London. However, this narrative was secured by a longer established history of London service and could be illustrated with visions of its success.<sup>111</sup> The exhibition ran from 21 March to 4 April 1938 and was staged in the monumental County Hall, on the South Bank of the Thames opposite the Houses of Parliament (Figures 3.4 and 3.7). There were

---

<sup>109</sup> However, as a skilled job, workers recruited across London would fill gaps. Finsbury saw this as a challenge to authority and authorized their Town Clerk to protest to the Home Office on the manner in which the proposed transfer of powers was being arranged: ILHC, Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, vol. 38, 'Recruitment and Training of Air Raid Personnel,' Council Meeting, 6 February 1939, p. 868.

<sup>110</sup> The mapping out of services in space is discussed in chapter four.

<sup>111</sup> LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue.

25 exhibition rooms, 7 bays, displays on the Embankment riverfront and performances of music, drama, dancing and physical training in the conference room.<sup>112</sup> Some 70,000 people attended, 25,000 exhibition catalogues were printed and special catalogues were produced for school children to learn the history of the LCC and its role in improving the health and welfare of the London Population.<sup>113</sup> The event was not just known about in London, *The Times* printed a special supplement to mark the day which coincided with the jubilee of all the county councils which were formed by the 1889 Local Government Act. The LCC however, was the only council established for a new, completely urban area.<sup>114</sup> *The Times* helped make the jubilee an event of national interest and this was consolidated in the commissioning of a book on the history of the LCC.<sup>115</sup>

Education was at the centre of the exhibition, with displays in the conference room of the work of school children and apprentices as well as training for those out of work and reliant on public assistance. London was explored in a number of ways, with a particular focus on slum clearance, new housing and town planning, the latter shown as offering an opportunity to create a more ordered modern London through the abatement of overcrowding and new architectural solutions. There were also models of drainage and water movement in London, revealing the often hidden infrastructure of the city.<sup>116</sup>

The exhibition both celebrated the LCC's past and looked to its role in the future, particularly drawing attention to its active participation in improving the

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> LMA/LCC – Minutes of Proceedings, 1938, vol. 2, 23 May 1939, Report of the General Purposes Committee, pp. 485-88; LMA/P. 18.0 1939, *The Jubilee of the London County Council 1939*.

<sup>114</sup> 'London County Council Jubilee,' *The Times*, 21 March 1939, p. 33.

<sup>115</sup> LMA/LCC – Minutes of Proceedings, 1938, vol. 2, Jubilee of the Council, 31 January 1939, pp. 7-8.

<sup>116</sup> LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue.

health and welfare of Londoners. In the moralistic narrative of social welfare and improvement the exhibition had close links with town planning models. Kevin Morgan argues that town planning at this time visualised disordered cities as reordered through appropriate housing and management of public services.<sup>117</sup> Thus, planning imposed a moral code on the population, making value judgments about appropriate ways for that population to live.

Kevin Morgan argues that under Labour the rediscovery of the slum problem meant a shift away from 'active citizenship or self-organization to a statist social reform tradition predicated on the helplessness of its beneficiaries.'<sup>118</sup> Morgan argues that by equating housing with the slum problem there was a growth in paternalistic or even authoritarian social programmes in dealing with the consequences and causes of poverty.<sup>119</sup> The LCC Jubilee could be framed in these terms, the idea of the helpless citizen in need was prevalent in the exhibition, as illustrated dramatically in Figure 3.4, where school children are pictured as dwarfed entering County Hall; a visual metaphor of the role of the LCC in molding its future citizens. This theme of propping up the helpless was echoed throughout the exhibition with images of the elderly and the needy leading better lives through the intervention of the LCC.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> Kevin Morgan, 'The Problem of the Epoch? Labour and Housing, 1918-51,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 16:3 (2005), p. 243; Frank Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (2004), pp. 135-6.

<sup>118</sup> Morgan, 'The Problem of the Epoch?,' p. 243.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p. 243.

<sup>120</sup> Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003).





Figure 3.5. The LCC help the needy and the young. Source: LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue, pp. 10, 21.

Figure 3.5 shows two images from the official exhibition catalogue, the first illustrates the LCC's role as a public assistance authority. The image on the left shows one of the institutions for the destitute elderly and aims to represent the LCC as a benevolent and fair institution, in contrast to the poor law of fifty years prior to this. The catalogue explains that exhibits reveal the changes in assistance that have occurred under the LCC's watch and the improvements these changes have created to the standard of life its beneficiaries.<sup>121</sup> The second image is captioned 'infants - health habits' and illustrated the LCC's role in education. The catalogue shows that education was not just about preparing children for work, but encompassed social welfare. The LCC viewed education as facilitating both the physical and social welfare of London children and opened up education to all in order to 'furnish the citizens of London with opportunities to obtain every type of education to enable them to take, and to hold, their places

---

<sup>121</sup> LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue, p. 12.

as members of one of the greatest communities in the world.<sup>122</sup> The exhibition constructed the LCC as a modern, rational and progressive institution that created idealized citizens through its service provision. Citizens bodies were subsumed into an appropriate urban order through physical interventions into their daily lives enabled through social and biological mediation in the form of homes for the elderly, education for all, nutrition and health intervention and work training programmes.



Figure 3.6. Auxiliary Fire Service at Work. Source: LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue, p. 19.

The exhibition displayed a scientific approach to the management of London. It suggested that the LCC's running of London services had improved the lives of London's citizens, with a formula of service provision based on

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

appropriate living standards for all. ARP formed a part of this culture of provision.<sup>123</sup> However, ARP stood at odds with the model described by Morgan of the propping up of the helpless citizen. The government did not wish to protect the bodies of helpless citizens and workers. Instead, government ARP viewed the citizen as an active-agent who participated in their own defence through self-regulation during a raid, or by actively participating in ARP services.<sup>124</sup> These idealized volunteers would be dispersed through the physical fabric of the city. The LCC's response to ARP suggests a middle ground between the authoritarian model described by Morgan and the Tecton line that sought governance to improve the health of the population and facilitate work. Instead, the Jubilee Exhibition sought to recruit ARP volunteers by building up a narrative of the social value of the LCC in order to stimulate a sense of loyalty amongst the London population to help the Council to defend the city. This was facilitated by the construction of the council as a benevolent, useful and capable institution.

The LCC was responsible for a number of London-wide ARP services including the organization of the emergency fire and ambulance service, the organization of rescue and demolition parties, the repair of the main drainage system and Thames bridges and certain evacuation arrangements.<sup>125</sup> The ARP displays were in room number 11 at the halfway point of the exhibition. They covered the casualty service, rescue and demolition parties, domestic protective

---

<sup>123</sup> In my understanding of the role of institutions in measuring and dealing with social problems I have been influenced by James Vernon's explorations of hunger, that have looked at the way in which hunger became codified and made into a scientific subject in the first three decades of the twentieth century; James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, 2007), chapter 4.

<sup>124</sup> On active-citizenship see, James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, 2010), see introduction.

<sup>125</sup> LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue, pp. 19-20.

measures against gas and the effects of bombing.<sup>126</sup> The static exhibits used models and text to describe the workings of ARP and echoed the national broadcasts and handbooks presented to the public to give a uniform national message about the government and the council's role in ARP. In the planning stages, it was decided that the exhibition should include photos of the bombing of Barcelona to illustrate each phase of ARP activity in real life: photos of evacuation in the last crisis; men and women from services in uniform; a steel shelter display; maps of streets showing shelter locations; photos of women drivers in the Great War; pieces of bombs dropped during the last war; a small dummy incendiary bomb; and household appliances recommended for use in combating fires.<sup>127</sup>

However, the LCC was concerned that 'if the exhibits were confined to these items...the exhibition would not be very impressive.' So the council decided to have large-scale enlargements on walls showing bombing and fires in Shanghai; pictures of bombing in 1914-18 and a mass display on the County Hall Embankment of ignited incendiaries and the fire services. The mass display acted as both a spectacle and to bring home the reality of the threat of this kind of bomb and demonstrated AFS appliances in action. This aimed to reassure the public and offered an impressive and engaging spectacle for visitors.<sup>128</sup> This moved things away from a static model of service provision towards a participatory model. Unlike the Tecton model, which used images of fire and bombing to scare the population into political action through protest, the LCC Jubilee sought to use violence from the air to facilitate social citizenship and

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>127</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/275, ARP Exhibition, 1 February 1939.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

recruitment. The narrative of danger was contained, not through the space of the city but the bodies of the citizens acting to heroically defend their city (Figure 3.6). This also avoided the problem of jingoism, associated with the Albert Hall rally. Instead of flag waving and pageantry, the LCC display subsumed ARP into a practical and successful narrative of service provision, demonstrating how services would work in action. This countered some of the criticisms thrown at the government by Finsbury, by demonstrating practical alternatives to the scheme rather than an imagined volunteer service.

Moving away from the political wrangling of the borough councils and the embarrassing rally in the Albert Hall, the Jubilee situated London as a national space in a less contentious manner. Reviewing the release of the book *The History of the London County Council*, published to coincide with the Jubilee, *The Times* noted that the LCC had been from its inception 'a body which has done its work with remarkably little pomp or pageantry, and for that reason perhaps it has been slow in seizing the imaginations of the Londoners whom it serves.'<sup>129</sup> However, while the LCC presented itself as a quietly capable institution, the Jubilee was marked by ceremony. The County Hall opened up to the public, bridges and streets were decorated and the LCC positioned itself as an entrenched and successful institution tied into the national governance and monarchical rule by its proximity to Parliament, Whitehall and the ceremonial space of the Horse Guards, the Mall and, to the west of St James's Park, Buckingham Palace (Figure 3.7). This positioned the LCC as a part of London's

---

<sup>129</sup> 'The L.C.C. Fifty Years of History,' *The Times*, 21 March 1939, p. 21.

history, providing what David Gilbert describes as a careful negotiation between the old and the new.<sup>130</sup>



Figure 3.8. Journey from Buckingham Palace to Victoria Station. Source: <http://www.maps-of-london.com/map-chelsea-3.jpg> (accessed April 3 2011).

This mix of old and new was enabled through the use of pageantry. H.M. Queen Mary opened the exhibition and the next day it was closed for a private viewing by the President of the French Republic, who was visiting London. The President attended a private reception at the County Hall and visited the exhibition.<sup>131</sup> The Jubilee was marked by a holiday for all children who attended LCC schools and this was combined with the President leaving London. Large crowds gathered to wave the president off and groups of school children lined Buckingham Palace Road with parents and teachers. A procession of royal cars with the King, the Queen, the two Princesses and the President and his wife

<sup>130</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 280.

<sup>131</sup> LMA/ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue.

slowly moved along the route to cheering crowds all the way to Victoria Station (Figure 3.8).<sup>132</sup>

Processions offer a way to explore the space of streets and the particular connotations of those spaces. Peter Goheen argues that certain urban public spaces act as sites for groups to legitimate themselves or to assert certain sets of values.<sup>133</sup> They also offer a way of considering the conspicuous presentation of social structures. By analyzing how parades are ordered and who spectates we can draw conclusions about power structures within urban space.<sup>134</sup> The royal procession was a brief drive from Buckingham Palace to Victoria Station. Buckingham Palace Road was filled with the school children on holiday. The children were given further visibility due to the unexpected presence of the two princesses within the procession. The presence of this common youth amongst the pageantry was said to have given the children on the route 'intense delight.'<sup>135</sup> The public parade ended with a formal departure ceremony, separate from, but visible to, the public who crowded around Victoria station and spilt into the road to catch sight of the Royals, the President and the waiting politicians who included the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax. Final talks ensued between the President and the Prime Minister before the former kissed the Queen's hand and shook hands with the King.<sup>136</sup> Thus, the celebration of the LCC was made into a patriotic and diplomatic statement in which royal sanction was

---

<sup>132</sup> 'The President's Departure: Royal Drive to Victoria,' *The Times*, 25 March 1939, p. 14.

<sup>133</sup> Peter G. Goheen, 'The Assertion of Middle-Class Claims to Public Space in Late Victorian Toronto,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 29 (2003), pp. 73-92.

<sup>134</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 166-169.

<sup>135</sup> 'The President's Departure, Royal Drive To Victoria, Children's Greeting,' *The Times*, 25 March 1939, p.14.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

given to public services, embodied in both the visit of the President to the exhibition and the procession route lined with LCC school children.<sup>137</sup>



Figure 3.9. London takes the LCC to its bosom. Source: David Low cartoon, *Evening Standard*, 25 March 1939, p. 7.

The use of pageantry to underline the LCC Jubilee acted to resituate the council and London within a longer historical narrative about the role of London as a national space. This was not the jingoistic pageantry associated with the Royal Albert Hall rally, but rather a celebration of the LCC's public service provision and a public display of its success. David Low visually marked this in a cartoon showing Herbert Morrison being embraced by London (Figure 3.9). The modern bureaucrat and effective administrator was taken into the arms of historical London as a ceremonial space: a ceremonial space of national importance, as *The Times* reported:

---

<sup>137</sup> Around £300 was spent on decorating the parade on the approach to County Hall and Westminster Bridge for the arrival of the French President, 'Visit of the President of the French Republic – Street Decorations,' LMA/LCC – Minutes of Proceedings, 1938, vol. 2, p. 210.



The Jubilee celebrations will do a great thing for London...London has not yet so captivated the Londoner that he highly esteems the duty of taking intelligent and critical interest in its government, and in enhancing all that makes it worthy of the affection of its inhabitants and fit for its position as the first city of the greatest Empire. Members of the Royal Family and the President of the French Republic will this week show their recognition of a great occasion. The London man and woman and even the London child should be individually and cordially in harmony with the celebrations, and, becoming more conscious of London, should share actively in shaping its future.<sup>138</sup>

The article suggests that London's own inhabitants had not seen the city as nationally important. The Jubilee offered a means for a celebration of the city as both a site of successful and innovative governance and as a celebration of the 'first city of the greatest Empire.' The modern and progressive development provided by the LCC was thus tied up with the development of Britain as a whole, the greatness of one illuminating the greatness of the other.<sup>139</sup>

The success of the LCC Jubilee and the placing of ARP alongside public services helped to neutralize the political tensions exposed in the Albert Hall rally. The tone of the jubilee showed the gradual evolution of the LCC over time, emphasizing its quiet capability. The display and pageantry of the event was presented as out of the norm for this efficient organization. Rather than inventing new traditions, the LCC displayed its abilities through physical demonstrations of what ARP services could do, aided by the fact that it already ran the county of London fire service. The displays offered not only spectacle but also a clear vision of bureaucratic and administrative success. The position of the London County Hall connected it to the power of Westminster, linking it to a site of national social ordering through its proximity to Parliament, Whitehall

---

<sup>138</sup> 'The LCC Jubilee,' *The Times*, 21 March 1939, p. 17.

<sup>139</sup> Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life,' p. 138; Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of a Permissive Society* (London, 2010), see Chapter 1, sections Majesty and Metropolis.

and the Palace. Because the organization represented the whole of London it was unable to take the radical stance put forward by Finsbury. This meant County Hall could not act as a radical space in the same way as the Finsbury Town Hall. The fact that Morrison was present at both the Tecton exhibition and the Albert Hall rally, demonstrated his left-wing principles but also a pragmatic and compromising approach to government. Instead the Jubilee exhibition used County Hall, the Embankment and the surrounding area to prove its organizations capability in many areas not just in ARP.

### **Conclusion**

Kenneth Hewitt argues 'warfare intends the disorganization of enemy space.'<sup>140</sup> War in the air made this disorganization a threat, not just to the battlefield and supply lines, but also to the whole of an enemy population. The violence of war could rain down on civilian and military populations alike, disrupting productivity by damaging physical space and through the paralyzing effect of fear and trauma. ARP aimed to counter this disorganization. In so doing it exposed the hidden orders of the city, orders that were not always compatible. ARP recruitment became an ideological battleground tied to urban space and the mediation between national and local agendas. Recruitment strategies varied according to spatial location and the agenda of the recruiter. The demand by the government for volunteers needed to be communicated at the local level while at the same time conforming to national strategy. This national strategy proved problematic in the context of such a diverse city with overlapping and sometimes competing institutions of governance. Stephen Graham argues that cities are

---

<sup>140</sup> Kenneth Hewitt, 'Place Annihilation: Area Bombing and the Fate of Urban Places, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 73 (1983), p. 261.

regulated by hidden infrastructures, water supply, gas, electricity, sewer and sanitation systems. He suggests that these systems are only exposed when they fail and at that point of failure the people and things that construct those systems are exposed.<sup>141</sup> ARP recruitment similarly exposes the construction of modern space within London. ARP and civil defence had to plan for the future disruption to infrastructure and public life, constructing a version of urban management in the context of disruption. The planning for services exposed the ideological and social underpinnings to city space.

Miles Ogborn argues that during the eighteenth century the modern state and modern civil society emerged. A series of institutions developed to regulate trade, improve health, monitor the population and construct and order new modern leisure pursuits.<sup>142</sup> By the twentieth century these spaces of modernity had grown in number. Here I have focused particularly on those spaces that acted to govern and regulate the population: town halls, a county hall, the modern sites of learning and leisure around Kensington and the Royal Albert Hall and the use of the street as a display and procession space. These sites managed specific services and set out particular agendas about London and its population. When modern war threatened London, the hidden ideologies of modern spaces were revealed, particularly when different sites of modernity connected with each other.

Some boroughs conformed to the government's agenda to establish ARP schemes and to recruit volunteers. These recruitment methods reveal the way in which boroughs sought to mediate the anxiety of modernity embodied in

---

<sup>141</sup> Stephen Graham (ed.), *Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructure Fails* (New York and Oxford, 2010).

<sup>142</sup> Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*.

terrifying airpower while at the same time utilizing the appeal of modernity through the use of spectacle. The boroughs of Paddington, Hackney and Kensington sought to appeal to their local populations by situating ARP within existing spaces of leisure and social life while at the same time demonstrating the need for the modern citizen to accept forms of regulation in the context of the exciting spectacle of a raid. The responsible citizen needed to prevent congestion and self-regulate to keep London clear in a raid. These forms of regulation were mediated by the construction of an idealized citizen, communicated at a national level against an enemy other. The ARP volunteer was envisioned as a kind of heroic citizen, who would keep the rest of the population calm through their knowledge of the local area and the raids. However, the imagined air raids revealed the complexity of urban order as pedestrians and spectators blocked the streets and disrupted the work of volunteers. This demonstrated the problem of regulation of the human body at the local level. Yet, the interest in the spectacle was a reminder of the needs of recruitment to appeal to 'the new urban masses and their cultural demands.'<sup>143</sup> Thus the regulation of ARP at once utilized the spectacle of the modern city yet also had to find a way to impose an order on it.<sup>144</sup>

The construction of the idealized, heroic national volunteer was the government's answer; the citizen as the carrier of national values. This ideal type was also flexible, not bound to a specific location but a part of a wider national service agenda. The Royal Albert Hall offered a space to rally these national volunteers. The hall had long been utilized as a national space, demonstrating the

---

<sup>143</sup> Barry, 'Dissenting Spaces,' pp. 310-11.

<sup>144</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 280.

success of the Victorian period to produce wealth and with this innovation, technology and education for all, embodied in the surrounding area. This national space was also used as a mediator of dangerous modernity, acting as a site of national commemoration through the annual festival of remembrance. The celebratory, imperial hall became more muted during the 1930s, acting as a poignant reminder of the horrors of war. It is understandable why this was chosen as a space for recruitment: with its connotations of both national power but also restraint it potentially offered the right kind of tone to present the government's recruitment agenda.

However, this space was appropriated by protestors who demanded more than an 'ARP lifeboat.'<sup>145</sup> These protestors were able to present themselves as conforming citizens because they had volunteered for services. This status allowed them to present an alternative agenda, demanding structural protection and the right to get on with the job in hand not waste time waving-flags and singing songs. These protestors encroached on and subverted the national space of the hall, undermining the event that had aimed to display London as a site of national unity.

The Albert Hall acted as a rival display space to the modern, bureaucratic Finsbury Town Hall. The former emerged as a site of imperial prowess in the nineteenth century, while the latter represented the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century shift towards localized urban governance that managed a growing urban population. Finsbury, dominated as it was by a working-class population, looked to govern that population through improvements to

---

<sup>145</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 166-169.

environmental conditions and the stimulation of work: the payoff for citizenship. This did not fit with the volunteer citizen whose payoff was status.<sup>146</sup>

The final structure of ARP in London was a mixture of national, regional, county council and local borough governance. The LCC's celebratory jubilee relocated London governance into the wider national space of Westminster. Its displays did not invent new traditions or offer radical solutions to the problem of urban order under bombardment. Instead ARP was subsumed into a more secure narrative of administrative and bureaucratic progress, Herbert Morrison was taken to London's bosom in a way the Sir John Anderson, the former colonial bureaucrat, could not be. Like Finsbury the LCC presented themselves as improving the health and welfare of the population. However, its track record was shown as proven and was given status through the linking of the jubilee to international concerns, embodied in the visit of the French President. Pragmatically, this also sidestepped the politically contentious boroughs and linked ARP into a London-wide service. Indeed, this was marked by the shift of the large wardens' service into the hands of the police and the placing of rescue and demolition within the remit of the LCC.

It was the war itself that neutralized many overt tensions as the population and the boroughs had to sidestep their perspectives and ensure a full quota of recruits and services were ready for future raids. An ARP structure was imposed on London to regulate its population who would in turn gain the status of citizen through conformity. Yet, these spatial tensions had demonstrated that spaces of governance, pageantry and power could be appropriated, redefined

---

<sup>146</sup> In the next chapter I will consider further the economics of ARP in relationship to work and labour.

and subsumed into alternative constructions. Individuals could appropriate spaces through their choices of where they chose to walk and to look. Classes could subvert agendas by demanding certain rights to protection or to pay. In the context of bombardment the city space would be disrupted, exposed and challenged. While ARP may physically map damage and changes to the city, the bodies within could not be relied upon to conform. Chapter four explores ARP in the first months of war and the difficulties of imposing ARP order on London.



Figure 3.2: An area of national display: the location of the Royal Albert Hall. Source: <http://www.maps-of-london.com/map-chelsea.htm> (accessed April 3 2011)

Key:

- 1. The Royal Albert Hall.
- 2. Royal College of Music
- 3. Imperial Institute, University of London
- 4. Science Museum
- 5. Natural History Museum, Geological Museum
- 6. Victoria and Albert Museum





Figure 3.3: Supporting a Working Class Community, the location of the Finsbury Town Hall and Health Centre. Source: <http://www.maps-of-london.com/map-finsbury-4.jpg> (accessed April 3 2011).

Key:

1. The Finsbury Town Hall.
2. The Finsbury Health Centre.



Figure 3.7. Spaces of governance and display. Source: <http://www.maps-of-london.com/map-chelsea.htm> (accessed April 3 2011).  
Key:

- 1. London County Hall
- 2. Houses of Parliament
- 3. Whitehall and government offices
- 4. Westminster Bridge
- 5. Horse Guards Parade
- 6. The Mall
- 7. Bird Cage Walk

**The War on London:  
Defending the City From the War in the Air  
1932-1943.**

**By Lucy Allwright**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

Volume Two of Two Volumes

University of Warwick, Department of history  
September 2011

## Contents

List of Figures		232
4	ARP at War: the Development of ARP Services, 1939-1941.	233
<b>Part III</b>	<b>The Consequences of War in the Air: The Blitz on London.</b>	305
5	Dealing With Destruction: Representing and Narrating Blitzed London.	306
6	National Commemoration of the Blitz	368
Conclusion		417
Appendices		
A	Organisation of Controls in London.	430
B	Numbers Employed in the National Civil Defence Services in Thousands	433
Bibliography		434

## Figures

4.1	Mapping Civil Defence	237
4.2	Whole-time Volunteers for ARP General Services and Auxiliary Fire Services. London Region	241
4.3	ARP National Service Recruitment Posters	243
4.4	ARP National Service Recruitment Posters II	246
4.5	Joseph Lee's Air Raid Wardens	299
4.6	Numbers of RSD Personnel	268
4.7	Mapping Civil Defence in Urban Space	269
4.8	Maps of the London County Council Rescue Shoring and Demolition Service	300-301
4.9	Return Of Premises Occupied by RSD Service	272
4. 10	Layout of the Capland Street ARP Depot	283
4.11	The Capland Street ARP depot	284
4.12	Great Portland Street ARP Depot	302-304
4.13	Location of the Great Portland Street ARP Depot	285
4.14	Entrances to the Great Portland Street ARP Depot	286
5.1	The East End	320
5.2	The Heroic East End	331
5.3	The Homeless of London	333
5.4	Post-raid trauma?	337
5.5	Extensive Bomb Damage to the Isle of Dogs.	347
5.6	Location of Bill and Vi's home	349
5.7	Bomb Damage to Cubitt Town	353
5.8	Bill's Photos of the Bomb Damage on the Isle of Dogs	365-67
6.1	A Stroke at the Heart	412
6.2	The City Burns	413
6.3	War's Greatest Picture	377
6.4	The Civil Defence Day Parade Route	382
6.5	The Civil Defence Day Parade Route II	414
6.6	The Heroic Civil Defender	385
6.7	Remembering the Coventry Blitz	387
6.8	Numbers for Civil Defence Day Parade	392
6.9	Battle of Britain Parade Route	415
6.10	The Devastation of the City	416



## Chapter 4

### ARP at War: the Development of ARP Services, 1939-1941.

#### Introduction

'When war broke out in September we were told to expect air raids.'<sup>1</sup> So opens Henry Green's wartime novel *Caught*, an account of an auxiliary fireman during the London blitz. The novel is semi-autobiographical, Green himself joined the AFS in October 1938 and was based in a depot responsible for the City of Westminster. The novel was written between June 1940 and Christmas 1942 and recorded the events of Green's time in the AFS prior to and during the blitz on London.<sup>2</sup> The novel is narrated in the first-person, predominantly from the perspective of its protagonist Richard Roe, who is called up three days before the outbreak. He expected immediate raids to 'raze London to the ground' and is 'certain of death.'<sup>3</sup> Yet, the raids do not arrive and the early part of the war is an anticlimax. Roe gets leave from his position after 'three months of no war and no raids,' and visits his son in the country where he is staying with his grandparents. On the train down Roe is surrounded by 'young men uniformed' and, 'because this was his first leave, Roe felt that the moment he got back to the substation he might be in the thick of it, after the fruitless waiting.'<sup>4</sup>

Roe would have to wait another nine months before he would see action, caught in a situation of waiting, trapped with his Fireman Instructor Pye, who by a bizarre twist of fate was a man whose sister had abducted Roe's son.<sup>5</sup> During the early war Roe can gain no status from his position as a fireman and has no

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Green, *Caught*, With an Introduction by Jeremy Treglow (London, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Treglow, 'Introduction,' Henry Green, *Caught* (London, 2001), p. vii.

<sup>3</sup> Green, *Caught*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

agency to leave. The title of the novel, *Caught*, captures a sense that London's population was held in check, under the shadow of a war yet to come. Because, as Roe points out, the bombs did not fall. Instead, the protagonist finds himself ensnared, 'experienced enough to know there was no escape' from his situation.<sup>6</sup>

The establishment of ARP services (the ARP) and regulations in London formed part of the cerebral regulation of waiting described by Green.<sup>7</sup> In the first days of war the London stock exchange closed, banks were shut. Places of entertainment were closed down: theatres, cinemas, floodlit sports grounds, dance halls. Yet the banks were quickly reopened after only a day and entertainment venues soon followed, so that by the end of October entertainment and nightlife in the city were, to a degree, back to normal.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the landscape of London remained changed: its parks were still zigzagged with trenches and at night the city descended into darkness, in an effort to remain hidden from the planes that were yet to come. London's population was to remain waiting for war in the air for months and ARP preparations became targeted as something of a joke, made worse by the expense and cost to the London rate payer of funding those services.

During the period of the 'phoney war,' the meaning of ARP began to change as it was incorporated into a wider definition of civil defence; defence was no longer about just protecting from war in the air, but also the threat of ground invasion.<sup>9</sup> In May 1940 the surrender of the Low Countries was marked by a

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> I refer to ARP services as 'the ARP' throughout this chapter, reflecting the wartime shorthand for those services.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Ziegler, *London at War 1939-1945* (London, 2002), pp. 40-48.

<sup>9</sup> The phoney war was an American term applied to Britain that historically came to be viewed as representing a period during the war where little action occurred either at home or abroad, this

new threat from the air, not the dropping of bombs but of troops. Defence expanded with a greater role marked out for the Home Guard and a more general concern for the population to be ready for invasion.<sup>10</sup> Fears over the bombing of London and the precautionary measures against this were incorporated into the wider issue of defence and counter-invasion. This marked growing competition between services for volunteers, particularly as thousands of men and women shifted their allegiance from the ARP to the Home Guard.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the period of the 'bore-war' where little seemed to be happening on either the home or war fronts, the meanings of ARP were contested and changing. While it has been recognised that the period of the 'phoney war' allowed time for ARP services to develop, the contested and contentious meanings of the ARP during this period have been underexplored, often viewing the period as merely a footnote to the blitz.<sup>12</sup> Yet, ARP remained a subject around which debates on the meaning of labour, masculinity, and the London landscape were played out, particularly marked by debates over whether the ARP was a form of work or a patriotic citizen service.

When war broke out on 3 September 1939, London's ARP services mobilized and recruits were quickly organized. The London regional council shifted to its wartime function and took charge of overseeing London's defence services. In this way London's councils, bureaucratic and administrative services, and

---

ended in April 1940 with the invasion of Denmark and Norway, see: Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain, 1939-45* (London, 1969), p. 57.

<sup>10</sup> Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991), p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Robin Woolven, 'Civil Defence in WWII,' in Tim Essex-Lopresti, *A Brief History of Civil Defence* (Derbyshire, 2005), p. 13. On the gendering of the Home Guard see: Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Terence O'Brien, *A History of Civil Defence* (London, 1955); Helen Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line, Air Raids, Productivity and Wartime Culture, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2006); Amy Bell, *London Was Ours, Diaries and Memoirs of the London Blitz* (New York, 2008).



municipal authorities were brought under the control of central government. The commissioners oversaw all decisions on ARP and defence and regulated the ARP through circulars. These regional circulars directed operations aiming to create uniformity in the defence of London.<sup>13</sup> At the local level authorities shifted onto a war footing and metropolitan councils and the London County Council (LCC) were run under emergency committees.<sup>14</sup> This focused the remit of activities onto managing services according to the regional council's suggestions. However, despite London being ready for war in the air, the bombs did not fall and ARP recruits found themselves bored, idle and under the questioning and watchful eye of an equally bored public.

The first part of the chapter looks at the contentious meaning of the ARP volunteer. It considers particular representations of volunteers, specifically focusing on the masculine role model envisioned in pre-war and wartime recruitment publicity. During the phoney war, ARP services became particular targets for criticism: symbols of a war that had not unfolded as predicted and visible targets within the city, particularly the wardens service, the largest of the ARP services and the most visible within local communities.<sup>15</sup> The targeting of the ARP also reflected growing issues over the cost to ratepayers of funding those services.

---

<sup>13</sup> In order to gain an understanding of change over time in civil defence practices and understand the workings of regional governance during the Second World War I explored around 900 regional circulars covering the war period, most of these are held in files: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/3/17; LMA/LCC/CL/CD/03/18; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/15; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/16; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/17; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/18; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/19; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/20.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Allen Newbery, *Wartime St Pancras: A London Borough Defends Itself*, transcribed and annotated by Robin Woolven, Edited by F. Peter Woodford (London, 2006), p. 42; ILHC/Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Vol. 40, April 1939 to March 1940, Emergency Committee, 20 September 1939, p. 33; LMA/LCC/MIN/2760 (1940), London County Council Minutes of the Civil Defences General Purposes Committee.

<sup>15</sup> Mike Brown, *Put That Light Out! Britain's Civil Defence Services at War 1939-45* (London, 1999), p. 49.

The first part of the chapter then, considers the contested meaning of ARP in London during the first months of war, investigating how and why the ARP became public targets. It also considers the dominance of masculine forms of representation, exploring how issues over labour, work and resources played out around the body of the male ARP worker.

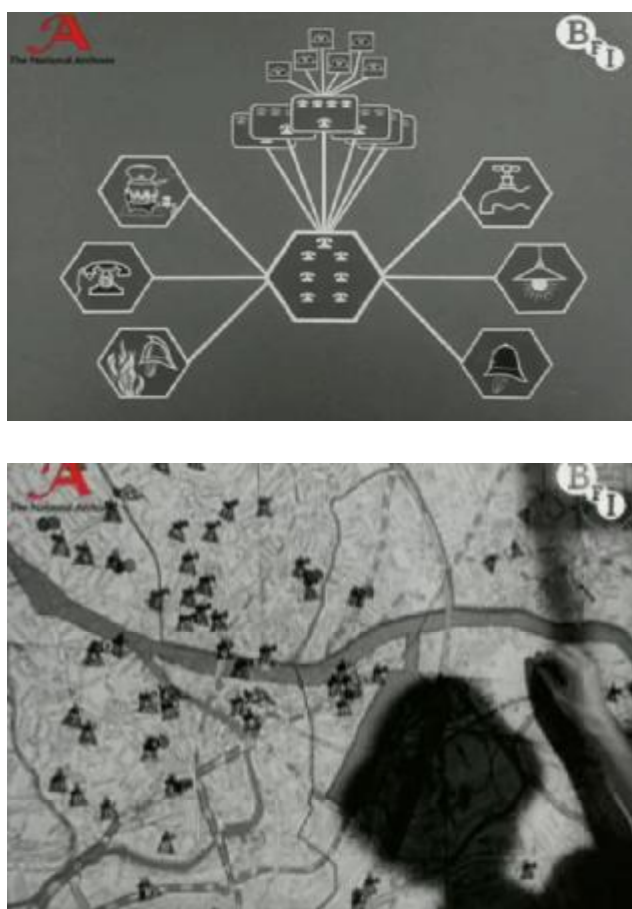


Figure 4.1. Mapping Civil Defence. Top, the Layout of CD; bottom, the Regional Control Room maps incidents to understand the direction of raids. Source: Stills from film, *Control Room, The Work of the Civil Defence Services in Bristol* (1942), Bfi Inview, <<http://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6246>> (accessed 25 October 2009).

The second and third parts of the chapter are based on a case study of the LCC's Rescue, Shoring and Demolition Service (RSD). Here I consider the specific problems of operating an ARP service at the local level and explore how ARP changed over time. Due to the nature of its work the RSD aimed to recruit a large

number of skilled operatives from the building industry. By the summer of 1940 there was a growing national shortage of skilled men from the building and engineering industry.<sup>16</sup> Exploring the RSD opens up the difficulties and tensions around labour and workers rights in the wartime context.

The final section considers the particular problems with imposing discipline on the service. This is framed by the idea of the construction of ARP as a form of urban regulation and the limits of this. I consider how ARP was constructed within the physical space of the city, inventing ARP in space and institutionalising the service. Rather than considering the wider regulation of the urban landscape, as discussed in Chapter three, I offer an institutional history. I consider the relationship between representations of ARP as discussed in the first part of the chapter and the experience of being within a particular service.

I understand ARP as a method of urban regulation, a means to impose an order on the city filtered through the bodies of ARP workers and enabled through the mapping of the city using ARP services (Figure 4.1).<sup>17</sup> The ordering of the city on civil defence lines allowed ARP control to visualise the city as a battlefield, a site in which they could map all incidents as and when they occurred.<sup>18</sup> The first image in Figure 4.1 shows the structure of ARP. In the centre the control room links all other services. At the top, a series of report centres take information from wardens, the eyes and ears of ARP at the street level. Those report centres would then contact a central regional control, which

---

<sup>16</sup> Calder, *The People's War*, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Graham (ed.), *Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructure Fails* (New York and Oxford, 2010); Susan Leigh Star, 'The Ethnography of Infrastructure,' *American Behavioural Scientist*, 43 (1999), pp. 377-91.

<sup>18</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff, discusses the power of perspective in relation to the battlefield in: 'The Right to Look,' *Critical Enquiry*, 37 (2011), pp. 473-496.

called out relevant services to incidents. The services included, the fire brigade, the police, public utility services, rescue and first aid parties. The central control mapped all incidents in order to monitor the progress of raids and to bring in reinforcements if necessary. The authority of the government was projected onto the body of the ARP volunteer. At the street level this was marked out by the wardens' service, which patrolled their local area and filtered local knowledge back to the centre; the warden then was an overseer, monitoring the population.<sup>19</sup> They provided the link between the street and the Control.<sup>20</sup> As discussed in Chapter three, ARP was not just about saving lives but bringing the city under order. As the bombs fell, disease like, over the city, they were countered by ARP services whose efforts were physically mapped in space.<sup>21</sup> The second image in figure 4.1 clearly illustrates this process, with the shadow of the ARP worker projected over a city under fire.<sup>22</sup>

The creation of ARP services during 1939-40 meant creating the points on the diagram in figure 4.1 within the space of the city. This meant physically constructing depots and posts from which services could act and imposing discipline and operational practices within those spaces in order to regulate

---

<sup>19</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out!*, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> Mirzoeff, 'The Right to Look,' pp. 473-496; Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'Torture and Truth: Images of War,' paper given at Columbia University's Centre of Critical Analysis and Social Difference, 2 October 2008, available online at <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TRSbc\\_9p4k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TRSbc_9p4k)> (accessed 5 May 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Ann Saunders has reproduced an excellent collection of the bomb-damage maps covering the county of London, in: *The London County Bomb Damage Maps 1939-45* (London, 2005); The original County of London bomb damage maps are held at: LMA/LCC/AR/TP/13, World War II, 25DQ: 1 mile bomb damage maps; LMA/LCC/AR/TP/07 World War II, 6DQ: 1 mile bomb damage maps. The Ministry of Home Security's methods of mapping bombing changed over time, records covering the London area are held at: TNA/HO 193/1-47 Ministry of Home Security: Research and Experiments Department, Bomb Census Maps, London Area; TNA/HO 193/48-54 Ministry of Home Security: Research and Experiments Department, Bomb Census Maps, London Area and Southern England.

<sup>22</sup> This example is taken from an information film showing how ARP worked in Bristol, however, London used the same methods to map raids: *Control Room, The work of the Civil Defence Services in Bristol (1942)*, available online, Bfi Inview, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6246> (accessed 25 October 2009).

volunteers.<sup>23</sup> The second part of the chapter moves on from the public critiques of ARP to look at how the service was 'actualised' in space.<sup>24</sup> This offers an institutional history of the RSD in an effort to consider how the public criticisms and issues over ARP workers were played out through the creation of the service, suggesting that ARP meant different things to those who participated in its services. Indeed, ARP was at once a system of urban order but also a major employer in London with huge numbers of people to train, clothe, discipline and prepare.<sup>25</sup> Imposing discipline on recruits would prove problematic particularly because it came into conflict with peacetime work processes and ideals of London governance. These tensions reflected other conceptualizations of London as a site of local governance and as a public employer.

The making of ARP services during the war offers a means to explore the shifts from peace to war. The services were solidified in a context in which London was at war but not in war. The panic over raids that had dominated debates in the latter part of 1938 and throughout 1939 were sidelined by new tensions over employment rights and over the right of the state to intervene in the daily lives of its citizens. I test how war made inroads into urban space through the creation of a working ARP structure and the limits of these inroads as trade unions, local authorities, recruits, the public and the press clashed over the right of the government to impose ARP on a city not under air-raid conditions.

---

<sup>23</sup> On the creation of institutions see, Miles Ogborn, *London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York, London, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> Michele de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London, 1988), p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, general introduction.

#### 4.1. No War in the Air? The Setting up of Civil Defence Services 1939-1940

##### *Recruiting Volunteers*

When war broke out numbers of volunteers were still down and this remained a problem throughout the war.<sup>26</sup> Nationally ARP incorporated large numbers of people (Appendix B). Numbers peaked in 1941 when raids were hitting major cities and towns across Britain. Appendix B illustrates a shift in working practices as services included a higher percentage of women and part-time workers. In London volunteer numbers varied depending on the service and borough. Figure 4.2 shows the number of whole-time paid volunteers within the service for the whole London region. With extra part-time volunteers, by December there was a relatively full-quota of recruits standing by.<sup>27</sup>

<b>Whole-time Volunteers for ARP General Services and Auxiliary Fire Services London Region</b>			
Service	Average number of whole-time personnel in December 1939	Disimbursements in December, 1939 in pay of personnel in Column 2. (In £)	Estimated disimbursements in a full year (In £)
1	2	3	4
ARP General	89,284	1,164,950	13,560,000
AFS	36,071	494,971	18,629,000
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>125,355</b>	<b>1,659,921</b>	<b>18,629,000</b>

1. In framing the estimate in column 4 allowance has been made for the fact that in certain cases the authorities showed 5 pay days in September

Figure 4.2. Civil Defence Workers in the London Region. Source: TNA/HO 186/473, Letter from Ernest Gowers Regional Commissioner for the London Region, to Sir George Gater, Clerk to the LCC, 20 January 1940.

Both Appendix B and Figure 4.2 reveal the huge numbers of people involved in the Civil Defence Services both in London and nationally. The ARP was male dominated although large numbers of women took part, particularly in

<sup>26</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out*, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Letter from Ernest Gowers Regional Commissioner for the London Region, to Sir George Gater, Clerk to the LCC, 20 January 1940.

the casualty services. Publicity and recruitment campaigns both prior to and during the war suggested that women were particularly suited to first aid.<sup>28</sup> Women were also visible in other services, making up one-sixth of all wardens over the course of the war.<sup>29</sup> However, while casualty service recruitment was aimed particularly at women, men became the public face of ARP services.

Working practices also varied across the period of the war. The needs of the wartime economy meant a shift and expansion in services to incorporate more part-time volunteers, who could undertake both ARP and other duties. The expansion of part-time volunteers, visible particularly in March 1941 (Appendix B), also marks the establishment of Fire Guard duties. Following the mass use of incendiary bombs during the December of 1940, Herbert Morrison gained the power to register people for fire watching, directed by the Ministry of Labour. The Fire Guard was organized by the warden's service, hence the expansion of ARP Services during 1941 as shown in Appendix B.<sup>30</sup>

However, while Appendix B reveals divisions in Civil Defence based on service, gender and whether part or full time, during the period of the phoney war, the public and the press viewed the services differently. Based on cultural constructions of the ARP, the public understood ARP workers as divided between paid and unpaid volunteers. In London in particular where there were high numbers of paid ARP volunteers, pay became a contentious issue. This suggests that the ARP at this time did not bind people in common unity but rather became a site around which labour disputes and tensions of efficiency and

---

<sup>28</sup> *The Listener*, 16 March 1938, pp. 553-4.

<sup>29</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out!*, p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

cost were played out. This contrasts with the ideal citizen of the government recruitment campaigns discussed in earlier chapters.

### *The ARP Hero?*



Figure 4.3. ARP National Service Recruitment Posters. From left: 'Air Raid Wardens Wanted,' in use 1939-45, HMSO, and right: Here's a Man's Job!, in use 1939-45, HMSO. Sources: both available online as part of the IWM: Posters of Conflict - The Visual Culture of Public Information and Counter Information, <<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/flarge.php?uid=33282&sos=3>>, <<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/flarge.php?uid=33262&sos=3>> (accessed 10 January 2011).

Indeed, while these statistics show relatively high levels of recruitment, they do not reveal the high turnover of people within the services. For example, by July 1940 the LCC had recruited a full quota of men for the RSD, with around 10,000 full-time volunteers recruited. However, since the outbreak of war some 20,000 had been recruited showing half of the men had left.<sup>31</sup> The loss of recruits occurred for four major reasons: the lack of status from the work and the boredom of standing by, public criticism of paid volunteers, the national

<sup>31</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Letter from F.R. Hiorns, Head of RSD, to ECH Salmon, Clerk of the LCC, regarding changes to the Rescue Service, 4 July 1940.



demand on labour and finally competition from alternative work with better pay for skilled operatives. Here I look at how constructions of the ARP citizen volunteer as a patriotic hero no longer worked in a context in which there were no raids. I focus particularly on men as they formed the larger part of ARP services and there is not scope here for a broader discussion of gender and ARP.<sup>32</sup>

Following the 1938 crisis and as a part of the National Service drive the government produced a series of eye-catching posters that aimed to recruit volunteers for the civil defence services.<sup>33</sup> Figure 4.3 shows two recruitment posters produced during this period in an effort to recruit men into the services. Both offer visions of masculinity that aimed to represent ideal recruits. Both appeal to the ordinary man.<sup>34</sup> The image to the left shows a smart, respectable warden, the shirt and tie act as a mark of his respectability and the seriousness of the job. This is a 'responsible job for responsible men.' In contrast to those images discussed in chapter two, which looked at the impact of bombs on the city, there is no vision of the chaos of bombardment here. Instead the focus is on the kind of man who could do this 'responsible job.' The only hint at the perils to come is offered by the tones of the background colours. The warden emerges from darkness, yet he remains calm, ready to face his responsibility and offer reassurance and security to the public.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> For an excellent discussion of the popular memory of civil defence that considers why it became remembered as male dominated see: Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*.

<sup>33</sup> 'Citizen Army of 1,800,000,' *The Daily Mirror*, 25 January 1939, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> On ideas of the 'ordinary man' and masculinity see, Sonya Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945*, (Oxford, 2003), pp. 153-154.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Mackay, *Half the Battle, Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War* (New York, 2002); Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line*.

The image on the right shows a different vision of masculinity and ARP.<sup>36</sup> This man is a well-muscled worker, complete with flat cap. The dark vision of the poster on the left is replaced by a glimpse of blue sky; the worker is bathed in sunlight as if through his efforts the skies could be made safe. His right arm is raised and his thumb points back at the words ARP. His mouth is open and, as if in sudden realization, he is exclaiming 'here's a mans job.' The posters open up ARP to men from varying backgrounds to represent their country and undertake a 'man's job.' ARP is presented here not as a service but as work, a job to be done. The theme of a 'man's job' was echoed across a numbers of posters and continued well into the war (Figure 4.4).<sup>37</sup> It aimed to elevate ARP in the minds of the public as work that should be praised and celebrated. The ARP worker was recruited as the ideal citizen, a national role model ready to help defend home, community and 'the people' from the enemy bombs. This is particularly clear in the poster on the right in figure 4.4. Here the ARP volunteer literally acts as shield from violence from the air, protecting women, children and the urban landscape behind.

The posters in figure 4.3-4 present this as a job, work to be taken on by the responsible citizen. Yet, in the first months of war the bombs did not fall. The concerted efforts to raise the status of ARP and promote recruitment prior to the war made the service highly visible and particularly open to public examination

---

<sup>36</sup> This was reproduced in magazines, newspapers and physically put up on town halls and billboards, for example a copy was put in *The Listener*, 6 October 1938, p. 707.

<sup>37</sup> Later examples include the CD recruitment posters; 'MEN WANTED FOR STRETCHER PARTIES... and they are wanted in THOUSANDS for a real man's job' and 'MEN WANTED FOR FIRST AID PARTIES... and they are wanted in THOUSANDS for a real man's job,' HMSO, style 1939-45 exact date unknown, IWM: Posters of Conflict - The Visual Culture of Public Information and Counter Information, <http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/x-large.php?uid=33294&sos=3>, <<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/large.php?uid=33293&sos=3>> (accessed 10 January 2011); LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/15, 'Help Keep London Clear,' Pamphlet Issued by the Ministry of Labour and National Service.

and criticism. The services were mobilised not into action but stasis and were watched by an increasingly bored population as numbers of volunteers escalated in the context of national competition for resources and labour. This left the services open to criticism. Critiques of ARP moved away from the view that the government was not doing enough, to a sense that these services were an embarrassing waste. The volunteer for ARP was suddenly viewed as leaching away scant funds and acting almost as an anti-citizen, cashing in on the wartime situation while others were beginning to make sacrifices.<sup>38</sup>



Figure 4.4. ARP National Service Recruitment Posters II. Sources: Men for First Aid Parties, Published by Air Raid Patrol, in use 1939-1945, IWM: Posters of Conflict - The Visual Culture of Public Information and Counter Information, <<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/flarge.php?uid=33295&sos=6>> (accessed 10 January 2011); Serve to Save, *The Listener*, 6 October 1938, p. 707.

<sup>38</sup> I say 'beginning to make sacrifices,' as in the first few months of war life did not change drastically for most of the population, rationing had not yet begun and compulsory national service had not been imposed on everyone: Mark Roodhouse, 'Popular Morality and the Black Market in Britain, 1939-55,' in Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just (eds), *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 243-265.

### *Critiques of ARP*

ARP volunteers can be divided into two categories. The first covered those employed in a regulatory capacity to monitor the population in a given area and ensure they were following ARP regulations. This role was particularly associated with wardens, who provided a public face for ARP by being the on-the-street point of contact within communities. Mike Brown suggests that wardens are the best known of all civil defence workers. Wardens performed many jobs and there were more wardens than any other service: almost half of all ARP workers were wardens.<sup>39</sup> This was a highly visible service and they became an easy target for criticisms of ARP more generally.<sup>40</sup> The second category of ARP volunteer covered recruits who were employed for their specialist skills, for example building trade workers, employed for rescue work, and drivers.

Services can be divided further between paid and unpaid volunteers. In dangerous areas it was expected that certain services, that required skilled volunteers, would be made up of paid recruits, this was particularly the case with the RSD. In other instances it was expected that large numbers would give up their time for free in order to help protect their communities. Indeed, the depiction of the man in Figure 4.4 differs from the men doing responsible jobs. This man is not motivated to do a man's job, but 'serves to save.' Criticisms particularly played on the tensions between ARP as work versus ARP as service. This was particularly the case with the warden service.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Brown, *Put That Light Out!*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>40</sup> Ziegler, *London at War*, p. 65.

<sup>41</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Review of ARP whole time personnel, 24 January 1940, p. 5; here I focus particularly on the warden's service and the second half of the chapter looks at the skilled operatives.

From October 1939, ARP services and recruits came under public attack. The standing-by of paid volunteers was viewed as particularly problematic. It seemed like a waste of labour and resources in a context in which it was felt that 'whatever the balance of resources and requirements of man-power, it can be assumed that any avoidable waste of man-power in war is an evil, a weakening at once of war effort and civilian morale.'<sup>42</sup> In this context standing-by became a symbol of wasted resources. Herbert Morrison's summary of these critiques was outlined in *The Times*:

In some quarters, he said, it was felt that air raid wardens, auxiliary firemen, and members of the rescue and demolition squads were receiving £3 per man and £2 per woman for doing nothing; that there should be a rigorous cutting down of the staff, and that those in a position where the work was not vital to them should be put out of their jobs and unemployed workers recruited in their places...He felt that some of the things written in the newspapers and otherwise, and some of the things said, about ARP workers were unkind to people who had undertaken the work in the public interest, and most of them voluntarily before the outbreak of war. They responded to the appeal to their patriotism and citizenship, and he thought it was a mean and contemptible thing now to regard them as people whose object was to obtain the small sum of £3 or £2 a week.<sup>43</sup>

The tensions over ARP as a kind of public work that emerged prior to the war now consolidated in the wartime context.<sup>44</sup> While structural ARP offered potential jobs for unskilled labourers, the time spent 'standing-by' could provide work and status for the unemployed, rather than paying those who did not need the money.<sup>45</sup> The perceived selfish ARP worker was caught in a double bind, viewed as taking money at a time when the country needed to manage resources

---

<sup>42</sup> TNA/CAB/67/8/84, William Beveridge letter to the Minister of Labour and National Service, Man-Power Survey Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and National Service (Ernest Bevin), 6 November 1940, p. 219.

<sup>43</sup> 'Too Many ARP Workers Mr. H. Morrison's Reply to Criticism, Why Unemployed Are Not Recruited,' *The Times*, 18 October 1939, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> See chapter 2, part 2.4.

<sup>45</sup> 'Too Many ARP Workers Mr. H. Morrison's Reply to Criticism, Why Unemployed Are Not Recruited,' *The Times*, 18 October 1939, p. 10.

efficiently, while at the same time taking money from the most needy in the population.<sup>46</sup>

Criticising ARP became a tangible way to voice wider issues: concerns over labour and manpower, over the meanings and implications of the war on the population and a critique of how the government was managing resources. These were all projected onto the figure of the perceived idle ARP worker. Criticisms leveled included: the accusation that large numbers of recruits were being paid to stand idle, that recruits were being paid at all, that Ministers had managed ARP badly through recruitment practices that had failed to make clear that not all workers would be paid and that some people were employed in the services who already had an income.<sup>47</sup> Criticisms were divided between attacks on volunteers and concern about the size of the organization as it was mobilized in September 1939.

On 19 October 1939 the issues that had emerged over the large numbers of idle ARP volunteers were raised in the House of Commons. Sir John Anderson sought to counter some of the critiques. In terms of the fury leveled at paid ARP volunteers, he clarified that paid whole-time ARP workers had to be in a position to 'give whole-time service at such times and for such hours of duty as are required of them and to take the necessary training for the service.' If they could fulfill this then another income did not make them ineligible. However, he did

---

<sup>46</sup> These criticisms were not without foundation. When reviewing their personnel for the RSD, the LCC found that some men were still working while also employed on ARP and taking a dual income: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, Composition of Parties (All Depots), October 1939. The Regional Commissioners issued a circular to stress to local authorities that paid personnel must be able to fit the shift pattern of the services and commit to the training required: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/03/017, London Regional Circular No. 85, 4 November 1939.

<sup>47</sup> ARP Plans Reviewed First-Line Nucleus, *The Times*, 20 October 1939, p. 3; Revision of Planning, *The Times*, 24 October 1939, p. 7; Letter to the Editor, *The Times*, 25 October 1939, p. 6; The ARP Problem, *The Times*, 4 November 1939, p. 7; LMA/LCC/CL/CD/3/17, London Regional Circular No. 85, 4 November 1939.

counter that he was looking into the practices of local authorities and was prepared to 'look into anything that may be represented as verging on unseemly.'<sup>48</sup> Indeed, there were instances of volunteers having two jobs and not being fit for service.<sup>49</sup>

The tensions over pay were based on a concern that that ARP volunteers were in receipt of 'public money,' and a feeling that how money was being spent should be 'available for public inspection.'<sup>50</sup> This reflected concerns over the shift in the function of the government as an employer. The ARP services made government authorities directly responsible for the employment of huge numbers of people. While this was a predicted outcome of the war, particularly in relation to the expansion of the armed forces, the expansion of direct state responsibility for civilian employment on such a large scale was a relatively new phenomenon. This was complicated because while the Treasury may have funded a large proportion of the ARP, employment was dispersed through the multitude of local authorities, meaning constant uncertainty from recruits and authorities over who was responsible for what. This made transparency around the cost of services and the numbers involved difficult to establish. Indeed, in October 1939 there was a lack of clarity over how many paid ARP workers there were nationally.<sup>51</sup> Following the House of Commons debate, an article in *The Times* suggested that: 'The real criticism is that, in aggregate, these jobs saddle

---

<sup>48</sup> 'Civil Defence Personnel,' *Hansard*, Vol. 352, Cols. 1023-24, 19 October 1939.

<sup>49</sup> This was in part due to the structuring of hours related to the lack of accommodation for the services. Services were based on a 24-hour shift system, however without adequate sleeping facilities initially, in some areas, services were placed on a 12-hour shift pattern. Those on nights were often found to be working during the day. The personnel were attacked for taking on two jobs but this was, at least in part, the fault of the ARP organization for varying employment practices and shift patterns. See: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, Note by F.R. Hiorns regarding shift patterns, 14 October 1939.

<sup>50</sup> 'Civil Defence Personnel,' *Hansard*, Vol. 352, Col. 1024, 19 October 1939.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

the country with an intolerable burden which could be enormously reduced by making the able-bodied population liable for services and training in the vicinity of their work and homes.<sup>52</sup> The criticism questioned why the government was making ARP a paid job, rather than unpaid, and why ARP was a choice, rather than compulsory.

Underlining the debates on the cost of ARP was the fact that the so long predicted war in the air had not arrived. Instead, a hasty equipping of services and the escalation of recruitment at the start of the war had overstretched public funds. In an attempt to counter critiques over the size of the organization, with an edge of exasperation, Anderson argued that:

Our preparations were based, and were necessarily based, on the assumption that the Civil Defence organisation would be called into action at the beginning of hostilities to meet intensive, and perhaps continuous, aerial attack. If we had based our organisation and our plans on any other assumption we should have been grievously at fault, and hon. Members will, I am sure, agree that I should have failed, and failed lamentably, in my duty, if I had not done all that was possible to ensure that we could counter successfully what is so commonly referred to as the "knockout" blow.<sup>53</sup>

The tensions around ARP as protection that emerged leading up to the war were sidelined by new wartime pressure on resources. Yet, as Anderson pointed out, those concerns about war in the air meant appropriate action had to be taken at the outbreak.

Sir Warren Fisher, the former head of the civil service and the regional commissioner in the North-West region, weighed in against the criticisms.<sup>54</sup> He

---

<sup>52</sup> Excess in ARP The Critics' Case, *The Times*, 23 October 1939, p. 4; Even uniforms were viewed as contentious as the army lacked the material yet some 1,000,000 people were being offered ARP uniforms, 'Civil Defence Personnel,' *Hansard*, Vol. 352, Col. 1025, 19 October 1939.

<sup>53</sup> Civil Defence Personnel,' *Hansard*, Vol. 352, Col. 1026, 19 October 1939.

<sup>54</sup> E.P. O'Halpin, *Head of the Civil Service: a Study of Warren Fisher* (London, 1989); pp. 18-24, 46, 64; John R. Greenaway, 'Warren Fisher and the Transformation of the British Treasury, 1919-1939' *The Journal of British Studies*, 23:1 (1983), pp. 125-142; 'Britain's War Resources, Sir



argued there was nothing to stop the unemployed volunteering and suggested that there had been a failure to understand that those who had volunteered had undergone important training and 'thereby fitted themselves for service.' In turn, he felt concerned that 'Just because the Germans had not started bombing the heroes of peace days were described as "drones"...That was monstrous. These attacks did the personnel a great injustice.' He was concerned that if the services did disintegrate due to public critique then when raids came the service would not be ready and thus it would be 'folly to take excessive risks by the unreasonable depletion of forces.'<sup>55</sup> Admiral Sir Edward Evans, a London regional commissioner, took a similar line to Fisher in an attempt to counter the growing criticisms of ARP. Evans described the ARP as the Cinderella of national service, a vitally useful but underappreciated service. He felt that the period of no raids was giving services a chance to train and build up their strength so that the service now was grown-up, and an 'indispensable member of our national household, without whom we cannot carry on.'<sup>56</sup>

### *Work or Patriotic Duty?*

The criticisms of the recruits mark competing understandings of how to define ARP: as a service or as a job. Fisher describes the volunteers as the 'heroes of peacetime.' Yet, for many ARP was about work not status.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, as figures 4.3 and 4.4 reveal, the government itself was guilty of sending out mixed

---

Warren Fisher's Charge of Misuse,' *The Times*, December 7 1939, p. 5; Warren Fisher, 'Civil Defence,' *Public Administration*, 26 (1948), pp. 211-16.

<sup>55</sup> 'Criticisms of A.R.P. Personnel, Sir W. Fisher's Reply,' *The Times*, 28 October 1939, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Admiral Sir Edward Evans, 'The Cinderella of National Service,' *The Listener*, 23 November 1939, pp. 1012-3.

<sup>57</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, Chapter 3.

messages regarding the nature of ARP. For many, ARP was a job, as the Holborn contingent stated in their protest at the Royal Albert Hall:

The Rally is going to be a flag-waving band-playing sort of thing. The general feeling among the wardens is that that sort of thing is fit for Girl Guides, but not for serious-minded people like ourselves who have a serious job to do. We want to get on with it.<sup>58</sup>

The idea of ARP as work reflects the feelings of many of the men who applied for the service. In *Caught*, Green mentions that Piper, one of the men in Roe's party, tries to get one of his friends, Mary Howells, a job as a cook as she was unemployed at the time.<sup>59</sup> Throughout 1939-40 the LCC received letters from men seeking work in the RSD. For example, in November 1939 Albert Stone wrote to the LCC complaining that he was unable to get work in the RSD within his local area. He commented:

I am sorry to have to write to you but this is a complaint. I have been showing up for employment at the Demolition Department of my borough...but to no purpose...I find out the majority of men employed there are not in the borough yet when you apply at other boroughs you are told you don't live in the borough so you cannot be taken on. I am an ex-serviceman serving through the last war and have been in the building trade as a labourer all my working life but that work is finished until after the war. I think it is only right for men who live in the borough that pay taxes should have a chance of being employed by their borough when this is their work.<sup>60</sup>

Workers who understood that they had the right to access these new wartime jobs appropriated the rhetoric of community protection put forward in recruitment campaigns. However, while ARP was understood as work by some of those seeking to volunteer, some in the press and public considered paid ARP as unpatriotic. This exposes a shift in the construction of the patriotic citizen.

---

<sup>58</sup> 'A.R.P. MEN TO HECKLE THEIR CHIEF,' *The Daily Mirror*, 23 January 1939, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Green, *Caught*, p. 44.

<sup>60</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/01/106, Letter from Albert Stone regarding employment with his local RSD, November 1939.

Once war began, the rhetoric of patriotic volunteerism did not sit comfortably with the patriotic duty of efficiency, because volunteers were receiving remuneration.

By January 1940 ARP services were established: depots, communications, equipment, controlling organisation, and transport had been worked out and large numbers of volunteers were trained for service.<sup>61</sup> The establishment of the services was related to national geography, based on: 'population basis weighted for vulnerability' and an assumption that raids were inevitable.<sup>62</sup> However, by this stage there was a wide consensus that ARP was a strain on labour resources, particularly following the withdrawal of some 2 million men for the Forces and a growing need for munitions production and export trade. In January a review looked at ways to cut down on numbers of men without undermining the services.<sup>63</sup>

In London there was a concern that too many paid volunteers were seen to be standing idle and that authorities had failed to attract enough unpaid volunteers. This was particularly leveled at the warden service. Wardens were described by the Ministry of Home Security as 'the true citizen service; to the public they are ARP.'<sup>64</sup> The warden's anticipated role as the observers of raids meant the need for high numbers, around ten posts per square mile. However, paid wardens and the number of posts in London far exceeded this.<sup>65</sup> Wardens were seen as being paid to hang around their posts with little to do, wasting

---

<sup>61</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Review of ARP whole-time personnel, 24 January 1940, p.1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> In Bethnal Green for example nearly 70% of the wardens were paid; Shoreditch about 40%, Chelsea over 45%, Kensington 30% and in Hampstead 19%, Woolwich less than 19%: TNA/HO 186/473, Review of ARP whole time personnel, 24 January 1940, p. 7; TNA/HO 186/473, Letter to Sir John Anderson regarding the reorganization of London Civil Defence, 10 May 1940.

scant public funds. Indeed, the January review described the excessive number of paid wardens as a 'scandal.' According to the review this 'sickened' the 'part-time wardens who have left the job to an inadequate army of paid wardens of inferior quality.'<sup>66</sup> The ubiquity of wardens made them easy targets and they became symbolic of the failure of the government to appropriately plan ARP services in line with national resources. The next section considers the changing representations of this service.

### *Envisioning ARP Wardens*

While ARP and wardens in particular were used as a way to criticize government policy there was a degree of complexity in the representation of volunteers. In the context of London this marked the continued uncertainty about the impact of war on urban space. Green articulated this feeling in *Caught*; while the war in the air did not arrive volunteers still expected it and the recruits 'thought the strain of waiting for raids prodigious.'<sup>67</sup> The strain suggests an anxious undertone to this period of waiting.

Joseph Lee, a cartoonist for the *Evening Standard*, produced a series of cartoons representing ARP volunteers (Figure 4.5). Lee was one of four cartoonists for the paper and was known for 'depicting cricket-loving colonels, chubby and slightly vulgar ladies with sparkling jewellery, and dapper City

---

<sup>66</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Review of ARP whole time personnel, 24 January 1940, pp. 7-8. In April 1940 the Home Office released a Circular aiming to cut the numbers of paid volunteers, reminding local authorities that the civil defence services were always 'regarded as primarily to be manned by local unpaid volunteers who undertook training and regular turns of duty for the defence of their own area: TNA/HO 186/473, Home Security Circular No. 58/1940, Organisation of ARP Services, 18 April 1940.

<sup>67</sup> Green, *Caught*, p. 15.

gents.’<sup>68</sup> Figure 4.5 shows an ARP volunteer directing a woman around the new topography of London. London is subsumed into a wider history of war. Behind the warden a sign over an air-raid shelter is marked ‘the better ole,’ a link to widely know First World War cartoons produced by Bruce Bairnsfather.<sup>69</sup> One of his most famous portrayed ‘old Bill,’ Bairnsfather’s well-loved depiction of the archetypal Tommy, in a shell-hole at night with another soldier.<sup>70</sup> Shells explode over their heads and Bill comments to the other ‘well if you know of a better ‘ole then go to it.’ The assumption of the original cartoon was that the soldiers were stuck in a ridiculous situation where there was no ‘better ole.’ The theme of the First World War continues as the warden directs the woman around the sandbagged city and the reference to windy corner directly compares London to the trenches of the first war. The reference to the Maginot Line is perhaps a hint at the futility of French defensive planning, pointless in the face of aircraft that would simply fly over the heavily defended fortifications.<sup>71</sup> The sandbagged Ritz suggests the class leveling produced by the war as London is remade as a site of battle. Yet, despite all this, the scene is brought back to reality by the banality of directing someone to a post office. Like old Bill, the warden is a symbol of someone unable to do much in the face of a war much bigger than himself, laughing through. Unlike Bill, the warden is not in a rural but an urban

---

<sup>68</sup> Biography of Joseph Lee, British Cartoons Archive, <<http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/josephlee/biography>> (accessed 20 February 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Bruce Bairnsfather, *Fragments from France* (London, 1916).

<sup>70</sup> Lawrence H. Streicher, ‘David Low and the Sociology of Caricature,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8 (1965), p. 2; W. A. Coupe, ‘Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11 (1969), p. 83.

<sup>71</sup> J. E. Kaufmann, ‘Unusual Aspects of a Unique Fortification: The Maginot Line,’ *Military Affairs*, 52 (1988), pp. 69-74.

landscape and this landscape is uncertain and untested, the 'better ole' may offer no more protection or security than a shell-hole in no man's land.<sup>72</sup>

While the first image compares the ARP volunteer to the First World War soldier, the second recasts the recruit as an officious, well-meaning middle class man. In this image the warden's maid is conversing with the hidden mistress of the house while the master of the house goes out to do his duty. The garden looks slightly overgrown, as if household jobs have gone by the wayside because of more important tasks. The master of the house proudly stands at the threshold, puffed-up chest, holding himself in a pompous, officious stance, ready to protect his community and home. Yet, the maid undermines his actions by referring to his uniform as 'his rompers.'<sup>73</sup> In the final image the middle-class warden is again represented and the same stance is adopted – hands spread wide and chest puffed out. The two wardens behind comment, "He's really one of our best wardens. The only thing in the world he's scared of is lightning."<sup>74</sup> This final cartoon was drawn when raids had started and gently poked fun at British sensibilities that viewed bad weather as worse than bombing. All the images use the figure of the warden as shorthand for the ridiculousness of officialdom.

There are also issues here around class and unity. As discussed in the general introduction, in the memory of the Second World War home front the

---

<sup>72</sup> 'London Laughs: The New Topography,' *Evening Standard*, 18 September 1939; The British Cartoon Archive, <[http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/browse/cartoon\\_item/anytext=air%20raid%20warden?page=8](http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/browse/cartoon_item/anytext=air%20raid%20warden?page=8)> (accessed 9 October 2011).

<sup>73</sup> 'Smiling Through: Official A.R.P. Uniforms,' *Evening Standard*, 31 October 1939, The British Cartoon Archive,

[http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/browse/cartoon\\_item/anytext=air%20raid%20warden?page=12](http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/browse/cartoon_item/anytext=air%20raid%20warden?page=12)

<sup>74</sup> 'Smiling Through: Achilles Heel,' *Evening Standard*, 02 October 1940, The British Cartoon Archive,

<[http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/browse/cartoon\\_item/anytext=air%20raid%20warden?page=28](http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/browse/cartoon_item/anytext=air%20raid%20warden?page=28)> (Accessed 9 October 2010).

warden became symbolic of the people's war. Equally, at the time, the Ministry of Home Security viewed them as the 'true citizen service.'<sup>75</sup> However, these images show class divisions: the stance of the pompous, well-meaning middle-class warden is in marked contrast to the stance of the warden in the first image and to that of the two wardens commenting on the warden in the image on the right. These men seem to be working-class, capable and ready but not too serious, closer to Bairnsfather's old Bill. In turn the decaying middle-class house and the anachronistic and cocky maid are in contrast to the final image in which the middle-class man is resituated into a city, a space in which the two working-class men look more at home.

These representations challenge the reassuring images offered by the recruitment posters (Figures 4.3-4). The wardens of Lee's cartoons may have adopted a reassuring stance but they were in an uncertain landscape. The city as a battleground had not been tested, and it was unclear how far the volunteers or the sandbags they sat amongst would be effective.<sup>76</sup> The working-class recruits humorously question the logic of the middle-class warden, scared only of the weather. Interrogating these images exposes some deeper rifts within ARP. Indeed, while Lee poked fun at the pompous warden in his rompers, newspapers were attacking wardens for taking jobs that could be given to the unemployed or for their greed in being paid at all. Just as prior to the war the gas mask became a symbol of poor planning for the reality of bombardment, the officious volunteer became a visual reminder of the continued uncertainty over the impact of war on

---

<sup>75</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Review of ARP whole time personnel, 24 January 1940, p. 5; Calder, *The People's War*.

<sup>76</sup> For a similar discussion see: Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, Chapter 4.

the homefront. Indeed, even when the blitz began it was questioned how useful the officious warden could be.

### *Changes to ARP*

In April 1939 a Home Office Regional Circular sought to fix the number of paid ARP workers in all areas to ensure that services were no longer escalating. The circular suggested cutting the warden service down to rely completely on unpaid volunteers, the limiting of rescue parties on stand-by to seven men and the cutting down of report centre staff. Volunteers were to be discharged based on the efficiency of the service. In future, recruitment would need to ensure that the needs of the forces were put first and only men over 40 were recruited and in the skilled services, the first aid and rescue parties, not less than 35.<sup>77</sup>

Ernest Gowers, a London regional commissioner, sought to implement Circular 58 and ration services in line with Home Office demands. However, he recognized that part of the problem had been in the nature of recruitment, whereby unpaid volunteers had not been targeted.<sup>78</sup> His task was partly about cutting numbers but also about the practicalities of how to cover the service night and day through finding appropriate accommodation and by outlining the appropriate duties for the unpaid to perform. The major issue in London, he felt, was the lack of corporate sense and the failure of local authorities to fit the unpaid volunteer into the structure.<sup>79</sup> Yet, his statement does not seem to fit

---

<sup>77</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Home Security Circular No. 58/1940, Organisation of ARP Services, 18 April 1940,

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, Letter to Sir John Anderson regarding the reorganization of London Civil Defence, 10 May 1940.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.



with the celebrations of the LCC in 1939 or the popularity of the Tecton exhibition.

The expansion and then cutting back of ARP services during the phoney war and up to the start of the blitz marked a break between how it was predicted the war would unfold and what actually happened. The ARP services were caught waiting. The recruitment ideals that had constructed the ARP worker as the idealized home-front hero left the services open to attack; none more so than the wardens, the public face of ARP and the first point of contact between a local area and ARP services. The figure, who it was imagined would raise morale in raids, lift spirits and inspire faith in home defence, became a model of waste, inefficiency and ridicule in a context in which the nation was slowly having to change by accepting cut backs and regulations.<sup>80</sup>

The criticisms of ARP workers throughout the period of stand-by offered a means for the press and the public to voice concerns about the way the government was managing resources. The idle, paid ARP worker was an embarrassing symbol of waste. Yet, the focus of blame, not just on the system but on the workers themselves, demonstrates the way in which recruitment ideologies were appropriated and reworked: the heroic volunteer became either a pompous official or an unpatriotic worker, taking jobs from the unemployed or greedily taking money. Hidden amongst these critiques and jibes were continued concerns about the impact of bombardment as the war changed London's topography. In this context of no raids the ARP workers were caught waiting, uncertain of their role or their status.

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, Memorandum on the need for some measure of economy in the expenditure of Civil Defence Services in London, April 18 1940, and: Letter from Ernest Gowers to Thomas Gardiner, Permanent Secretary of the new Ministry of Home Security, regarding the debate on the reduction of civil defence service personnel in London, 30 May 1939.

#### **4.2. The LCC Rescue and Demolition Service (RSD), 1939-1940**

The pressures of overlapping government structures and the criticisms leveled at ARP workers from the beginning of the war meant that London lacked enough volunteers and had heavy reliance on paid workers to make up the necessary numbers.<sup>81</sup> Gowers hoped to change the warden service so that there was more reliance on unpaid volunteers. However, other services were not so easy to restructure or cut. The general critiques of ARP services outlined above often ignored the differences in organization and administration between particular services, particularly as some services were constructed to use only paid volunteers. The public image of ARP was confused, divided as it was between unpaid volunteer citizens and paid workers.

In the final two sections I look at the issues over paid workers in ARP services, using a case study of the LCC RSD. This continues to consider the critiques of ARP recruits, however the lens is moved away from representation and comment to considering the structure and operational ability of a particular service. I test how valid some of those critiques were, as well as considering other areas that created problems with services, specifically issues over employment practices and on-going tensions between the metropolitan boroughs, the LCC and national government. This exposes the confused position of paid ARP workers: were they paid employees or closer to those in the military national service, bound by wartime regulations that differed to peace-time employment rights? Again, this differs to those criticisms that consolidated

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, Note to Secretary of State from one of the London Regional Commissioners on issue of unpaid volunteers in the London Region, 10 May 1940.

around the figure of the warden. The RSD was not a general service, but specialist, its workers were skilled men. The tensions around the RSD were both tensions in the meaning of ARP services and more traditional tensions over the meaning of work and labour.

The final sections expand on Amy Bell's analysis of work during the London blitz. Bell argues that wartime work in civil defence was presented as an assertion of patriotism and morale. Bell notes that at the end of the war, voluntary and conscripted wartime work became a symbol for national unity and citizenship. Thus, workers relinquishing of Trade Union rights under dilution and conscription were understood as a social contract, one to be rewarded with the rights of material citizenship in the form of postwar full employment. Yet Bell is wary of this conclusion, suggesting that conscription, compulsion and the lack of mobility between jobs reveals a more complex picture of work in London than the image of the 'people's war' has allowed.<sup>82</sup> Through analyzing the tensions, difficulties and annoyances prior to the blitz, I aim to both expand Bell's discussion and reveal the struggles that were present in the establishment of the RSD, particularly its imposition within urban space.

### *The Shift of RSD to the LCC: Labour and Employment Practices*

From February 1939 the LCC architects department took over the running of the RSD from the metropolitan boroughs in order to coordinate labour and resources across the county. The service functioned to rescue trapped casualties and bodies from incidents and shore up or demolish dangerous buildings. In May 1939 the LCC outlined its plans for the RSD. Squads

---

<sup>82</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, pp. 81-104.

were divided between light and heavy rescue parties; the former would be called into action immediately during raids, while the latter would be held in reserve for more difficult operations. Initially the service required 10,500 men for light rescue parties, 2,500 for heavy and 1,400 drivers. The light parties were made up of ten men, including a foreman and three skilled men plus six men for general assistance and elementary first aid. Heavy parties were made up of eight men including three skilled men and a foreman, plus four men for general assistance.<sup>83</sup> The work required specialist knowledge about how buildings would collapse and aimed to recruit predominantly from the building industry.<sup>84</sup> The LCC's existing relationship with the London Master Builders' Association was seen as a means to enable recruitment from the industry.<sup>85</sup>

With the shift of power to the LCC, in theory recruitment and employment practices could be standardized. However, up to September 1939 the council failed to recruit its full quota of volunteers because of continued issues over the control of the service and the need to work out employment practices with building trade unions.<sup>86</sup> Despite the agreement that the LCC would take over the service from May 1939, it was never given a clear mandate for action and was faced with constant difficulty and delay as a result of its inability to go to the

---

<sup>83</sup> The skilled men included carpenters, bricklayers and fitters, from: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/101, Joint Committee on ARP, 9 May 1939 and Scheme for LCC RSD Service, Memorandum, 3 May 1939.

<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the LCC had close ties with the industry as they the council were involved in large scale building projects in the construction of schools, hospitals and housing, see: LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/3/36, HMSO, *Air Raid Precautions Memorandum No. 2, Rescue Parties and Clearance of Debris* (London, 1939), p. 1; LMA/A/NFB/01/A/06/001, Informal Conference at the County Hall at 11.30 am RE: Air Raid Precautions – Rescue and Demolition Squads, Friday 12th May 1939.

<sup>85</sup> LMA/A/NFB/01/A/06/001, Informal Conference at the County Hall, RE: Air Raid Precautions – Rescue and Demolition squads, 12 May 1939.

<sup>86</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/101, Letter to clerk of the Council from W.J. Rudderham Secretary of the London Master Builders' Association outlining concerns about compensation for building industry over loss of wages they lose paying men while on ARP training, 20 May 1939.

borough councils with a definite assurance that it had the sole 'responsibility, both executive and financial.'<sup>87</sup>

The expectation of immediate raids put pressure on the council to recruit quickly and the LCC was informed to 'enrol whoever they could.'<sup>88</sup> This meant that parties often lacked the skilled operatives needed for the work and that 'many men without the slightest qualification as building trade workers' were enrolled. E.C. Knowles, a London district surveyor remembered that in the first days of the war all kinds of men turned up at the town hall to register for the RSD:

Men of all descriptions rolled up for enlistment a great proportion being of the trouble making class who had no trade other than that of a casual labourer, usually without the slightest justification, they described themselves as carpenters or builders...Actual tradesmen conspicuous by their absence...The Hoxton race gang found their way into the Shoreditch service.<sup>89</sup>

As the expected raids did not occur, the LCC was faced with the task of recruiting more appropriate skilled operatives while at the same time laying-off a number of unskilled workers and men deemed too old for the service.<sup>90</sup>

The employment of skilled men created further tensions within the service. In the early war pay emerged as a difficult issue. Under the National Service Scheme a general rate of pay for ARP work was set at £3 a week.<sup>91</sup> Prior to the war the architects' department were concerned about this rate because they expected it would be difficult to get volunteers unless they paid trade union

---

<sup>87</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/101, Letter to Harold Scott, 20 May 1939.

<sup>88</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, Composition of Parties (All Depots), October 1939.

<sup>89</sup> E.C. Knowles, *A History of the Regulation of Building in London and of District Surveyors 1189-1954* (London, 1954), p. 192.

<sup>90</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, Discharge of J. Barratt over age, consultation with transport and general workers union over how much must pay, dependant on whether taken on as a labourer or an ARP worker and letter to F.R. Hiorns on issue of pay, 15 October 1939.

<sup>91</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/101, Rescue, Shoring and Demolition Service for London, Memorandum of proposals agreed in principle by the Air Raid Precautions Committee of the London County Council, 4 May 1939.

rates.<sup>92</sup> This proved to be an accurate prediction and the unions expressed their concerns about the pay of the skilled operatives required for the RSD. Initially it was decided to simply make up the rate of pay for skilled men to reflect union rates. However, in the end a flat rate of £3 17s a week was paid to skilled workers, including drivers, and a rate of £4 5s to foremen.<sup>93</sup> But, there was confusion about rates of pay and who counted as a skilled operative, particularly as some skilled men were taken on only as labourers.<sup>94</sup>

These tensions over pay were compounded by there being no raids, leaving the services with little to do. Initially RSD workers were engaged on sandbagging of buildings and work associated with their depots. Under a Home Office circular RSD officers were 'entitled to call upon parties to do all kinds of work that comes with this designation: alterations and extensions of depots, trench digging and sandbag filling outside the depot or for places outside the depot by instruction of County Hall.' However, the district surveyors reported that a number of men were refusing to carry out this work and that 'there is a muddle over the exact duties of the men' and 'good men are being lost as a result of this.'<sup>95</sup>

RSD men were recruited to serve during, and to deal with the consequences, of air raids. Instead, they were building walls, strengthening depots and undertaking other defensive work; work that could be done at a higher rate of

---

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/104, Letter from Harold Scott, Chief Administrative Officer of the London Civil Defence Region, to Herbert Salmon, Clerk of the LCC, regarding the payment of civil defence rescue workers.

<sup>94</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, Discharge of J. Barratt over age, consultation with transport and general workers union over how much must pay, dependant on whether taken on as a labourer or an ARP worker, letter to F.R. Hiorns on issue of pay, 15 October 1939.

<sup>95</sup> In Kensington some men were suspended because they refused to go out with their parties to undertake defensive work,' in Southwark the officer in charge insisted upon the parties doing interior alterations to a building to be used as a depot and the men were protesting, and in Holborn one member was instructed to fill sandbags for other places and refused and gave notice to leave, see: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, Home Office Circular 244/1939; LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, District Surveyors reports on workings of the Service, October 1939.

pay if the men were employed as building trade and not ARP workers. Throughout 1939-40 the National Federation of Building Trade Unions (NFBTU) expressed its concern at the use of skilled workers within the service for improvements to depots. For example, it felt that sandbagging was appropriate, but construction of walls should rely on the employment of outside bricklayers to enable competition.<sup>96</sup> The LCC felt that the need for outside contractors for construction was foolish considering the national shortage of skilled bricklayers and sought to use the skilled men recruited to the RSD to undertake works. It was suggested that the unions were creating a culture of fear among local authorities, who were too scared to ask men to undertake building work. The Minister of Home Security supported the local authorities' case, pressing for the most economical use of manpower.<sup>97</sup> However, the friction with the trade unions marked continued tensions over the definition of the ARP volunteer: was the ARP recruit part of a military service or an employee?

With walkouts and complaints rife, the London regional commissioner Admiral Sir Edward Evans praised and sought to bolster the standing of the ARP services. However, he felt it necessary to remind 'civil defence folk who too easily grumble and complain...that we are at war, and you must put up with a measure of discomfort at a time when we need the best possible effort, national effort, real national service...We have to stand together now.'<sup>98</sup> This made an assumption that free labour would choose to stay in ARP services out of obligation. ARP recruits were strangely positioned: in the eyes of the unions they

---

<sup>96</sup> TNA/HO 186/761, Letter from Luke Fawcett, National Council for the Building Industry, to Emmerson at the Ministry of Home Security, 6 August 1940.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, Letter from Harold Scott to Emmerson at the Ministry of Home Security, 17 July 1940; LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Matters for Discussion, 29 July 1940.

<sup>98</sup> Admiral Sir Edward Evans, 'The Cinderella of National Service,' *The Listener*, 23 November 1939, p. 1013.

were workers, with the same rights to negotiate working practices as any other worker; yet, in the public eye the recruit was understood as a national servant, a citizen committed to offering him or herself to protecting others. This placed ARP workers in a strange position of being at once employees and also role models, uniquely open to public criticism. While not under the conditions of a raid and faced with a escalating criticisms of the ARP, the RSD struggled to hold onto recruits.

Thus, by the summer of 1940 the RSD was losing more and more men both due to the difficulties associated with the stand-by, and more widely through competition for labour. At the start of the war, unemployment in the construction industry rose rapidly as house-building programmes were suspended.<sup>99</sup> However, by June 1940 there were increased opportunities for building operatives and this accelerated the flow of men away from the RSD. There was a high loss in the number of operatives who had joined the service in the early months of war, and this hit the best-trained and most useful units.<sup>100</sup> In turn, despite talk of efficiency and cuts in those early months, there was no radical restructuring of the economy or restrictions on labour.<sup>101</sup> There was a growing concern that the services were being cut, while the most capable units were leaving. Two sets of distinct and interrelated problems emerged over the RSD. On the one hand, issues emerged over the recruits, on the other there were

---

<sup>99</sup> James M. Drucker, *One Big Union? Structural Change in Building Trade Unionism* (PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 1980), pp. 318-9; TUC/LMU, Circular No. 82 (1939-40), To all Secretaries of all Affiliated Unions, Labour Supply During Wartime, 1940, available online <[www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/display.php?irn=537&QueryPage=%2Fworkerswar%2Fimagesdocs.php](http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/display.php?irn=537&QueryPage=%2Fworkerswar%2Fimagesdocs.php)> (accessed 25 May 2011); for a useful overview of the relationship between the unions and one industry see: Richard Croucher, *Engineers at War 1939-45* (London, 1982).

<sup>100</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Letter from F.R. Hiorns, Head of RSD, to ECH Salmon, Clerk of the LCC, regarding changes to the Rescue Service, 4 July 1940.

<sup>101</sup> Calder, *The People's War*, pp. 113-118.



tensions related to who had agency over ARP, the local, the regional or the national authorities.

*The LCC in the Boroughs: Creating the RSD in Physical Space*

<b>Strength of Rescue and Demolition Service for London.</b>				
	Parties	Men	Driver	Total
Establishment	1310	12544	1310	13854
18 <sup>th</sup> September 1939	908 or 69%	9161 or 75%	736 or 56%	9897 or 71%
8 <sup>th</sup> October 1939	1,140 or 87%	10875 or 86%	1023 or 78%	11898 or 86%

Figure 4.6. Numbers of RSD Personnel. Source: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, LCC Emergency Committee. Review of Rescue and Demolition Service for London, 9 October 1939.

The running of the RSD marked a shift for the LCC in terms of employment practices related to the building trade. Rather than employing sub-contractors to undertake work, this service required the large-scale recruitment and management of up to 15,000 personnel (Figure 4.6). In 1945 the architects department produced a history of their wartime experiences. The writer noted that:

while the department was well equipped and had professional, administrative and technical experience behind them, they had not had to deal with a self-contained executive organization of this kind, with its problems of large man-power, transport, billeting, feeding, to some extent clothing and, above all, discipline.<sup>102</sup>

These problems were interconnected as the LCC had to build a service culture and ensure that volunteers conformed to it. In turn that culture had to be institutionalized, predominantly through the depot, the site where volunteers spent the majority of their time.

<sup>102</sup> LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, War History of the Architect's Department - Final draft 1945.

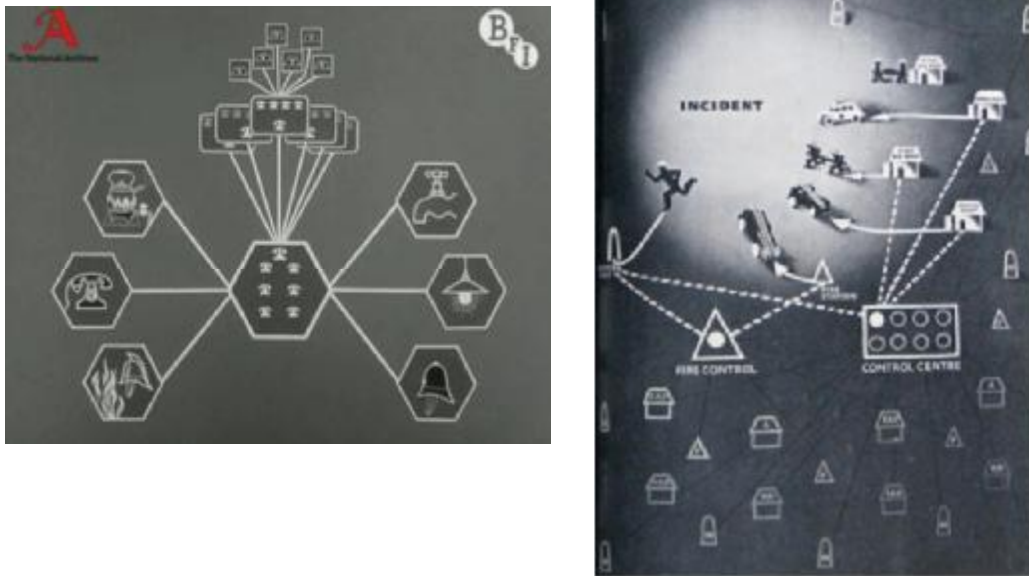


Figure 4.7. Mapping Civil Defence in Urban Space. Left: diagram showing how Civil Defence worked. Right: How Civil Defence Worked, diagram showing how wardens' posts (W), Fire Stations (F), First Aid Depots (F.A.D) and Posts (F.A.D.), and Rescue Parties (R), were distributed evenly over an area. Sources: Still from film, *Control Room, The work of the Civil Defence Services in Bristol* (1942), available online, Bfi Inview, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6246> (accessed 25 October 2009); Image and key from HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), pp. 138-9.

The transfer of RSD to the LCC offered a means to coordinate rescue across London from a single point. This removed agency over recruitment, training and discipline from the metropolitan boroughs and placed it into the tried and tested hands of the LCC.<sup>103</sup> However, the move created a new set of problems relating to authority over urban space. In the image on the left in figure 4.7 each symbol is used to represent a service.<sup>104</sup> In this way the image creates uniformity, each warden's post is represented by a square, each service by a hexagon. This removes ARP from the urban setting and constructs it as a standardized system, moveable and workable in any setting. The image to the right however, reminds us that in London ARP was mapped onto an existing urban environment. This environment was shaped by a socio-political geography

<sup>103</sup> On the tested ability of the LCC see Chapter Three.

<sup>104</sup> This is the same image used in figure 4.1.

of homes, workplaces, infrastructure and leisure and managed by governance structures.<sup>105</sup> For ARP to be successful they had to be able to function and negotiate this milieu. This meant the creation of viable ARP spaces, particularly depots and on a smaller scale warden's posts.

Figure 4.8 shows the layout of the RSD in May 1939. While the locations of depots changed, this layout reflects the operational structure of the service from 1939 to 1940. The London regional headquarters (HQ) acted as the central control for the whole service located in groups 1 to 5, the area covering the county of London and answerable to the regional council. The LCC's Assistant architect, F.R. Hiorns (and later Patrick Abercrombie), was head of the RSD and based at the regional HQ and was responsible for the 'coordination and diversion of resources between groups.'<sup>106</sup> Each of the five regional groups had an RSD headquarters from which 'it was intended to affect the operational control of the CD [civil defence] services as a whole.' These were staffed by the council's technical and administrative officers and were directly linked to County Hall.<sup>107</sup> The regional controls were connected to LCC group depots where the rescue parties were standing-by.

Initially the local organization of each borough for RSD was placed under the control of the borough engineer. However, as the services developed it became clear that engineers already had much to deal with as the responsible

---

<sup>105</sup> Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003).

<sup>106</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/101, 'RSD for London,' memo of proposals agreed by the ARP committee of LCC, 4 May 1939.

<sup>107</sup> The Five Group Centres were located in existing LCC buildings in points central to each group: 1) Avonmore Road Central School (West Kensington); 2) North-Western Polytechnic, Prince of Wales Road, N.W.; 3) Shoreditch Weights and Measures Office; 4) South-East London Technical Institute (Lewisham), 5) Brixton Day Continuation School, Brixton Hill, information from: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/101, Air Raid Precautions Department, Group Centres for Rescue and Demolition Work, Report by the architect of the Council, 5 May 1939; LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, War History of the Architects Department – Final Draft 1945, p. 8.

agents for assessment and repair of infrastructure during and following raids. On 19 July 1939, the district surveyors were asked to take over as local controlling officers, and this alleviated pressure on the engineers but also tied the service more closely to the LCC for whom district surveyors were already officers. This choice also made sense in light of the peacetime role of the surveyor, who was responsible for dangerous structures and building works and thus 'well experienced in the types of work that Rescue Squads would have to deal with.'<sup>108</sup> The surveyors would report to both the LCC and the borough Control Centres to ensure the service worked with the borough ARP control and the LCC.<sup>109</sup>

By November 1939, 208 buildings had been found for use by the RSD. The majority were used as billets or depots, 85 of the premises were schools, and of these 38 were used as depots and 43 as billets (Figure 4.9). Thus, the RSD was made, in part, through an existing network of local government buildings. However, while the RSD was overseen by the LCC, the RSD workers were located within the space of the metropolitan boroughs and often looked to the local town hall for information, particularly regarding pay.<sup>110</sup> The question of areas and groups proved problematic during the set up of the service and in those months of standing-by due to 'the overlapping of essentially interested authorities.'<sup>111</sup> While the LCC had agency over its Headquarters, setting them up in existing LCC buildings, at the local level ARP depots were often provided by the boroughs. As

---

<sup>108</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/101, Letter from Mr. Dove suggesting the use of District Surveyors as RSD officers, 9 May 1939; Knowles, *A History*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, RSD for London, memo of proposals agreed by the ARP committee of LCC, 4 May 1939; LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/103, Conference with representatives of the District Surveyors Association, 19 July 1939.

<sup>110</sup> LMA/LCC/CI/CD/1/102, Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee, Air Raid Precautions. Rescue and Demolition Services, 18 July 1939.

<sup>111</sup> LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, War History of the Architects Department, p. 7.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Number</b>
Administration R.S.&D. Services (Fulham)	1
Air Raid Shelter	2
Billet	99
Billet for lorry drivers (Southwark)	1
Billet Office (Camden and St Pancras)	2
Billet Office Store	
Billets (men) (Chelsea)	2
Billets (staff) (Chelsea)	2
Borough Cleansing (3 in Fulham)	4
Canteen	6
Decontamination (all Hammersmith)	2
General Depot (2 Hammersmith, 4 Poplar)	6
Depot, general depot, borough depot, R.S.D. Depot (Depot, billets, clerk of works office, stores, etc)	86
Depot for shoring timber	
Dormitory (all Hampstead)	3
Duty Room (Hampstead and Chelsea)	5
Entrance (to enable depot to be accessed)	1
First Aid	2
Garaging	5
Instruction Centre	3
R.S.D. Head office	1
Lecture / demonstration	4
Office/s	38
Office Headquarters	4
Parking	4
Road Repair (all Hammersmith)	4
Recreation	12
Sleeping	6
Store	18
Timber	9
Baths	1

Figure 4.9. Return Of Premises Occupied by RSD Service September to November 1939. Source: LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/01/026.

figure 4.9 demonstrates, what emerged was a mixed system: some boroughs divided sleeping and depot accommodation, meaning the need for billets for men who sometimes did not work in the area; in other instances the LCC was in charge of some depot accommodation; while in other areas, large mixed depots were used, where the RSD shared space with other ARP services.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/26, Return Of Premises Occupied by R.S.D. Service September-November 1939.

While the shift of power to the LCC allowed a consolidation of labour and equipment it also created tensions. Before the war these tensions were practical, no longer in charge of the RSD, the borough councils began to regard the service as separate to local ARP and some boroughs began refusing to store equipment or accommodate volunteers.<sup>113</sup> As funds were squeezed during the war and there was a national call for efficiency, complaints came in from across London about the cost to local councils of accommodating the RSD locally with no financial compensation.<sup>114</sup> The tensions between the LCC and the borough councils marked a continuation of pre-war concerns over the imposition of central power at the local level. The depots themselves became divisive spaces as competing authorities met within one space. The RSD servicemen, and with them trade unions, the LCC operational administrators and the local borough authority were all represented within depot spaces, each uncertain of their position and competing for authority and status.

### *Disciplining the RSD: The Depot Routine*

While the majority of 1939 to 1940 was spent standing-by or doing defensive work, the RSD still had to train for its actual job so that should raids occur the men could effectively work together. This meant that the depot had to

---

<sup>113</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/103, Memo from Architect to the LCC, Depot Accommodation, 21 August 1939.

<sup>114</sup> For example in November 1939 the Islington ARP Controller wrote to the LCC complaining about the relationship between the borough, the LCC and the RSD. The Clerk particularly complained about the cost of financing and training the RSD in the borough. He noted that the service had been given the run of Islington Town Hall in order to administer ARP locally and had been given access to arsenal football club for training and physical recreation, yet no money had been offered in compensation: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/106, Letter from Islington ARP Controller to LCC, 27 November 1939.

be invented as an institutional space that regulated behaviour within.<sup>115</sup> However, as ARP shifted to a more general labeling of services as 'civil defence' the government sought to develop a service culture to instill particular modes of behaviour in recruits.<sup>116</sup> This marked further restrictions on RSD workers who were viewed by the government not as labour, with a particular set of workers rights, but as defence volunteers, on whom discipline and controls could be placed.

In 1940 the government released its first manual for those officers responsible for ARP training.<sup>117</sup> Despite increasing public criticism of ARP workers, the imagined ideal ARP volunteer presented in the pre-war recruitment campaigns still remained enshrined in ARP training manuals. These manuals sought for volunteers to self-discipline, conforming to a service culture enabled through training, drills and parades within and from the depot.<sup>118</sup> The depot space was understood as a microcosm of ideal behaviour, a space in which recruits stood-ready to defend against a violent attack. The training manual reminded the future officers that: 'In order to assist in the attainment of efficiency and to secure the well-being of the personnel concerned, great importance is attached to the establishment of a regular and ordered routine in the daily life of the ARP worker when on duty.'<sup>119</sup> The depot was the centre of this routine and the Ministry of Home Security called for an increasingly

---

<sup>115</sup> On the idea of the disciplined body see, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan (London, 1991); Claire Edwards, Cutting off the King's Head: The 'Social' in Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault, *Studies in Social and Political Thought*, 1 (1999), pp. 3-20.

<sup>116</sup> The manuals are examples of what Patrick Joyce describe as governmentality. They define this as a type of rule imposed on a group of people to construct a certain kind of society: *The Rule of Freedom*.

<sup>117</sup> Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*.

<sup>118</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/3/69, Ministry of Home Security, ARP Training Bulletin No. 3 1940.

<sup>119</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/3/64, HMSO, *Air Raid Precautions Training Manual, No. 2. Manual for Officers Responsible for ARP Training*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (London, 1940), p. 6.

disciplined routine in an effort to regulate the men within the service. This had two aims: to ensure the men could work efficiently and collectively under a raid and to instil regulation to maintain order.

The ideal routine was summarised in the 1941 RSD training manual. All depot routines were to cover five key areas. Firstly, 'operational' aspects to depot routines aimed to ensure that an 'effective party' was standing by and ready to go out on ARP duty. Secondly, 'domestic' routine in order 'to allocate personnel to share in picketing the depot and lorries, cleaning fatigues and other domestic duties.' Thirdly, 'training' was to be incorporated, including basic ARP training in first-aid, high explosives, incendiaries and anti-gas; individual training in rescue duties; and team training in rescue techniques. Fourth, the organisation of combined exercises, to ensure experience in mutual assistance. Finally, the routine had to incorporate appropriate time for meals, organised recreation and rest. Ideally maximum time would be given to training to ensure the best use of time available. The day would be initiated with a role call, followed by an equipment check. During the day, time would be devoted to training and in the evening more training would be undertaken by new recruits and time given over to lectures, educational classes or social and sporting events. All practice exercises were to ensure that recruits were instilled with discipline and efficiency. The leader of each group was made responsible for the conduct and behaviour of his men. Any 'insubordination, obstruction, refusal to perform or carry out a duty or the reasonable instruction of the leader' would be dealt with by the civil authorities through clerk-of-works or the officer in charge. The men



were instructed to look after the premises they occupied and to avoid damage or injury to buildings or property.<sup>120</sup>

Through the invention of the depot, the RSD was constructed as a service and not merely a job. The leaders responsibility to his men was to:

...enable them to satisfactorily fulfil their desire to serve. This he can do best by encouragement and example, teaching them to act as a team and to carry out their duties in a spirit of good comradeship, good sportsmanship and good humour...he should take a personal interest equally in all of his men, try to realise their possibilities, and be watchful of their well-being in the widest sense. In this way he will be able to build up a tradition and pride of service among his men. It must not be forgotten that the Officer-in-Charge and his staff are continually working to further the interests and improve the well-being of the men. The men owe it to themselves to assist in every way, and the leader should teach his men to co-operate for this reason and give of their best.<sup>121</sup>

Through these routines it was hoped that the services would become professionalized and capable. Evans presented civil defence to the public in just those terms stating that: 'all over London ARP men...are drilling and fitting themselves to face shattering attack from the air...these adventurous spirits deserve the highest praise.'<sup>122</sup>

This professionalization was part of a wider demand for efficiency. Government employment policies came to be based on the idea of the need for the 'most efficient utilisation of the available man-power under war-conditions.'<sup>123</sup> The service had to justify itself twofold, both to a public, who were themselves being called on to show their efficiency, and as an institution that, when a raid came, were to act as a reassuring, disciplined and capable service.

---

<sup>120</sup> London County Council, *Notes on Training for Rescue Parties*, (London, 1941), pp. 19-20.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>122</sup> Admiral Sir Edward Evans, 'The Cinderella of National Service,' *The Listener*, 23 November 1939, p. 1013.

<sup>123</sup> TNA/CAB/67/8/84, Man-Power Survey Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and National Service (Ernest Bevin), 6 November 1940, p. 52.

The evolution of ARP into civil defence was envisioned within official handbooks that saw the service as one in which capable volunteers would dutifully work together to protect areas in a raid. It was imagined that parties would be instilled with a sense of duty, encouraged not through militaristic discipline but a respect for their party leader and a sense of duty to the service. In practice however, this idealised civil defence service did not emerge in 1939-40.

#### **4.3 The ARP Depot: Volunteer Citizens or Compulsory Workers?**

Throughout 1939-40 depots were contentious spaces. As explored above, they came to symbolize waste and inefficiency as the location of idle labour. The depots also marked the imposition of the LCC into metropolitan boroughs, causing tensions over who had authority over the spaces and the men within. Finally they marked a site in which labour had to be controlled in a new way, representing a shift in the relationship between the state the civil employment.

The ARP depots became the spaces in which the daily life of recruits was structured. The depot can be understood as a site where wartime labour policies and regulations were physically represented. With increasing competition for skilled labour on the wartime home front there was a growing concern about the voluntary nature of ARP services and increasing demands for stricter regulation of the workers within the service and the removal of the element of choice. Analysis of the RSD between 1939 and 1941 does not mark this ARP service out as a patriotic people's service but rather an increasingly disciplined and regulated quasi-military service.

By the summer of 1940, the government was looking to make ARP services in London more efficient and more economical. Spending on the war began escalating from May 1940 and central government, while prepared to spend, wanted efficiency if not economy.<sup>124</sup> The London regional commissioners looked to cut numbers of men in the RSD and limit party sizes to eight; formerly they had included ten or twelve men.<sup>125</sup> An enquiry committee considered issues and put forward proposals for change, particularly the regrouping of boroughs into larger groups in order to cut down the number of headquarters.<sup>126</sup> However, the national need for economy, pulled against local issues.

Indeed, F.R. Hiorns, the LCC's assistant architect and head of the RSD, was weary of making major changes to the service due to changes in the war situation.<sup>127</sup> May had seen the instigation of Nazi military authority across the Channel, and June had seen British forces swept out of France. Invasion fears gripped Britain and the threat of the bomber became a shadow on the landscape, as German fighter planes were a presence in the air over Britain throughout the summer of 1940 in their clashes with the RAF.<sup>128</sup>

The war's sudden proximity to London made problems with the RSD a pressing matter. Hiorns outlined a number of issues that continued to blight the service including inequalities in pay for administrative staff due to overtime, complaints over accommodation despite his department not being the ones to 'promote, choose, or approve accommodation,' issues over pilfering and

---

<sup>124</sup> Calder, *The People's War*, pp. 113-4.

<sup>125</sup> TNA/HO 186/473, Note from Gowers to Gardiner regarding the reduction of civil defence personnel in London, 30 April 1940.

<sup>126</sup> The latter did not occur, as there was limited time to reorganise the services before raiding occurred in September 1940.

<sup>127</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Letter from F.R. Hiorns to the clerk of the council regarding issues that still remain with the Rescue Service, 25 July 1940.

<sup>128</sup> Calder, *The People's War*, pp. 113-141.

concerns that not enough building workers were available should there be damage on a large scale.<sup>129</sup> Of particular concern was the failure of the LCC to adequately discipline and control recruits.

In July 1940 Hiorns wrote to E.C.H. Salmon, the LCC clerk, questioning how long the organisation could continue on a voluntary basis. He outlined two major concerns. The first was the high turnover of recruits: the service had a capacity of around 10,000 men, yet had recruited 20,000 since the start of the war, so that more than half the men had left during the period and needed to be replaced. He put this down to boredom amongst the men and increased opportunities for building trade workers to find employment following cutbacks in jobs during the early war. Hiorn's feared this would mean the service would not be as capable or well trained as it could be should the bombs begin to fall, as he noted: 'more than 700 left during the month of June, more than 50% of whom came in the early months of the war, and in that sense represented our best trained and most useful units.'

Secondly, Hiorns was concerned that there were increasing problems with instilling discipline within the service:

Coupled with this exodus from the service at a time when the consequences might be most serious, are the increasing troubles that are being experienced in securing discipline and proper attention to the depot routine and training exercises. Moreover, persistent theft of equipment of all kinds continues (e.g. some thousands of blankets) which, in the way in which the service is at present constituted, it seems impossible to control, and the continuing willful damage caused to beds, fittings and fixtures at depots are a constant source of expense to the council, and anxiety to those concerned. Neither my district surveyor colleagues, nor myself, can see a satisfactory solution of these difficulties, or any certainty of the personnel turning out for effective action when

---

<sup>129</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Letter from F.R. Hiorns to the clerk of the council regarding issues that still remain with the Rescue Service, 25 July 1940.

required, unless the service is put upon a footing that will secure discipline and control.<sup>130</sup>

This in turn impacted on the operational ability of the service: the LCC's ability to shape volunteers into a viable RSD workers 'trained as a team and accustomed to working with one another,' was limited by its authority over the men within the service, the kinds of men recruited, and its relationship with the local borough ARP controllers.<sup>131</sup>

Recruitment was seen as a particular challenge. In the period of transition from peace to war a number of building trade workers were taken on not as skilled operatives but as labourers, paid the ARP rate of £3 a week. These men were often those who left the service when better-paid work became available.<sup>132</sup> The service was marked by a high turnover of workers meaning a constant loss of trained men and on going pressure to recruit. To counter this the LCC asked if the London Master Builders Association would be willing to put 10% of its operatives on reserve, however, the latter considered this impracticable as men would be needed in other areas should raids occur.<sup>133</sup> In turn it proved very difficult to discipline and create a service culture amongst the men when they had agency to simply walk out.<sup>134</sup>

By the summer of 1940 it was becoming clear that the idealism enshrined in constructions of the ARP as a voluntary citizens' service did not work in

---

<sup>130</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Letter from F.R. Hiorns, Head of RSD, to E.C.H. Salmon, Clerk of the LCC, regarding changes to the Rescue Service, 4 July 1940.

<sup>131</sup> LCC/CL/CD/1/102, ARP Dept Circular, No. 142/1939, Memo "Rescue Parties and Clearance of Debris."

<sup>132</sup> TNA/HO 186/761, Cases of skilled men being paid the ARP rate, raised by the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives, 11 January 1940.

<sup>133</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Letter from F.R. Hiorns, Head of RSD, to E.C.H. Salmon, 25 July 1940.

<sup>134</sup> Ernest Bevin, newly appointed Minister of Labour and National Service, was weary of imposing restrictions in labour and advocated a free labour market: Calder, *The People's War*, p. 115.

practice, men were leaving the service or simply ignoring regulations, going to the pub, gambling, stealing and pilfering.<sup>135</sup> The LCC was struggling to impose any discipline, partly because of the RSD's standing as a voluntary service and partly due to on going tensions between national, regional and local authority systems.

### *The RSD Depot*

The ideal ARP depot was one in which overlapping authorities found ways to work together to facilitate well-trained, efficient and capable services. The LCC was informed that that they had a duty to work with the boroughs to ensure each depot was a 'happy ship,' marked by the spirit of co-operation.<sup>136</sup> The layout of the depot ideally enabled this. However, ARP depots became sites in which the powers of national and local authorities were in tension, a microcosm of the wider tensions over wartime governance. While the LCC was the governing authority over the London RSD, within the depots the division of authority between the LCC and the metropolitan boroughs undermined the formers authority. The latter had a permanent physical presence in mixed and large depots in the form of depot superintendants. These were men employed by the local borough, answerable to the borough ARP controller. The London regional council was forced to clarify that the superintendents were responsible only for the allocation of accommodation and for ensuring cleanliness and discipline within the depot and not the operational aspects of civil defence. The

---

<sup>135</sup> Henry Green depicted the rescue men in his combined ARP depot as drunk and rebellious: Green, *Caught*, pp. 40-44; the LCC RSD records contain letters from men who felt they had been unfairly dismissed for gambling while on duty: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/105, Letter from E. Tattam, 9 October 1939; LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/106, Letter from E. Tattam, 14 November 1939.

<sup>136</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/106, London Regional Circular No. 82, 2 November 1939.

LCC's RSD Officer was responsible for the operational control of RSD.<sup>137</sup> However, because depots evolved with the developing services throughout 1939-40 they were not often coherent places.<sup>138</sup>

Figure 4.10 shows the plans for an ARP depot for the borough of Marylebone. The depot was located in Capland Street School situated west of Regents Park (Figure 4.11). This early depot conforms to the original layout of the school and adapts rooms to house ARP services. The penciled in comments in each room in figure 4.10 raise structural concerns about making the school fit for ARP. There was a particular worry about dealing with gas, and thus the layout focused on gas cleansing and lacked protection from high explosives, relying simply on brick surface shelters to protect from the effects of blast.<sup>139</sup> The accommodation allowed recruits to sleep on site, although there was no distinction between different kinds of ARP services marked out on the plans. The first floor included a kitchen, mess room and lecture room for the men (Figure 4.10-1). However, the focus of plans is on readying the building for war in the air and not with the volunteers housed within that space.<sup>140</sup> The depot plan then translated official policies on structural protection into the space of the depot.<sup>141</sup> There was limited attention to how the depot actually needed to function as an operational space, merely offering basic accommodation and minimal shelter.

---

<sup>137</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/106, London Regional Circular No. 82, 2 November 1939.

<sup>138</sup> I use 'place' here is a term to denote a site in which actions and behaviours were regulated, as described by de Certeau as a site at which 'the law of the "proper" rules in the place': de Certeau, *The Practice*, p. 117.

<sup>139</sup> The panic over gas in the early days of war is described by Green, he describes a rescue squad being 'condemned by their leader to wear full gas clothing night and day': *Caught*, p. 40.

<sup>140</sup> WCA/MBN/CaplandStreetSchool/CD/PL, Plan for ARP depot in the Borough of Marylebone.

<sup>141</sup> On structural protection see Chapters One and Two.

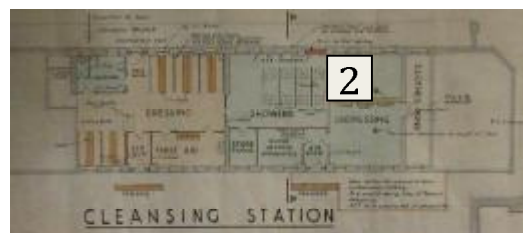
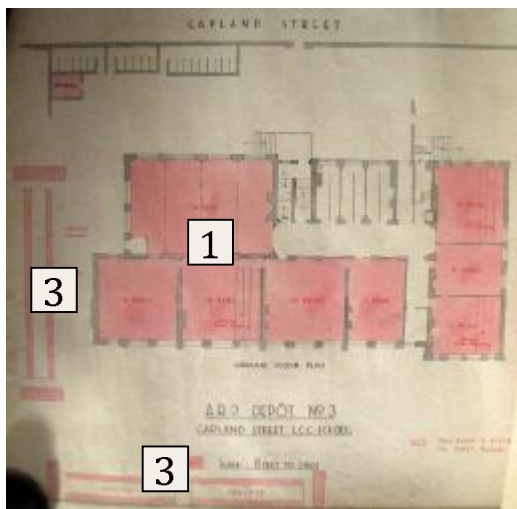
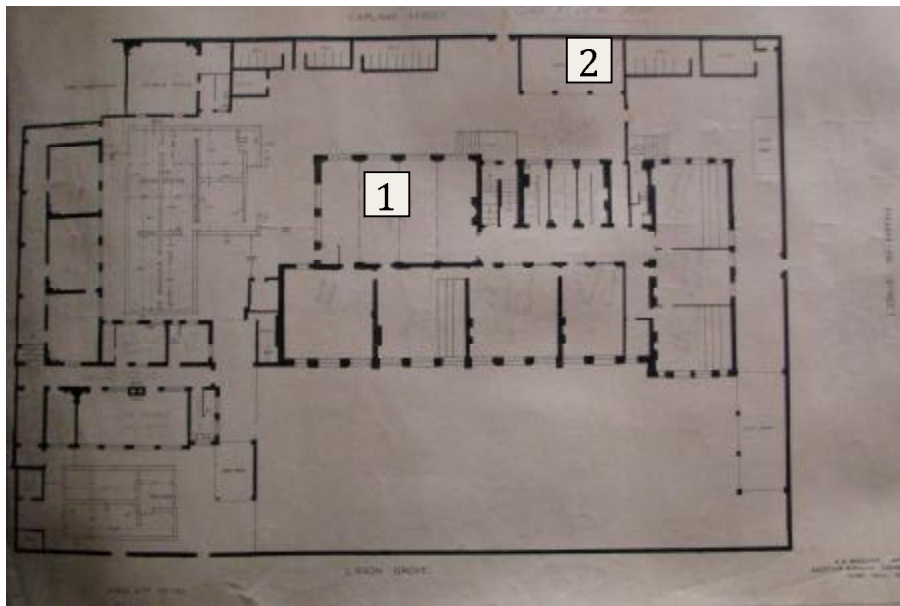


Figure 4.10. Layout of the Capland Street ARP Depot.

1. Accommodation
2. Gas Cleansing Station.
3. Brick Shelters

Source: Plan for ARP depot in the Borough of Marylebone, WCA/MBN/CaplandStreetSchool/CD/PL.

The focus on preparing the building for an air raid exposes the divide between the structural establishment of the service on the one hand and the shaping and ordering of volunteers on the other. Indeed, the Capland Street depot is in marked contrast to a later depot designed specifically for the RSD in





The officers in charge of the services were spaced throughout the depot, both with the recruits and removed from them, acting as overseers of the space. Spaces were mapped out to provide accommodation, food and recreation, turning the formerly confused sites into modern civil defence institutions with clear-cut authority structures. The depot coherently embodies ARP policies, projecting functionality and regulatory aspects onto physical space.<sup>143</sup> These plans mapped out the authority of the LCC, placing officers in charge of the service directly within the depot space.<sup>144</sup>

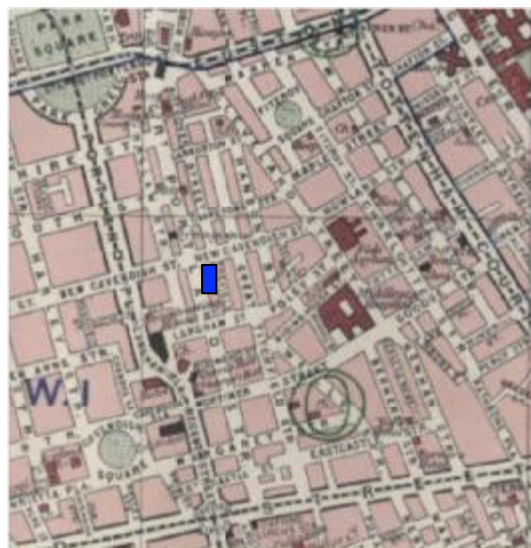


Figure 4.13. Location of the Great Portland Street ARP Depot. Source: <<http://www.maps-of-london.com/map-marylebone-4.jpg>> (accessed, 10 May 2011).

The Ground floor had three entrances, two general entrances and, like its Capland Street Counterpart, a decontamination area. However, the decontamination area in the Great Portland Street Depot was located within an area where the men changed for duties and stored their kit bags when off duty. The focus was not just on decontamination from gas, but on general cleansing

---

<sup>143</sup> Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*, p. 11

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

after raids. In this way the area was incorporated into a wider space in which the men were transformed from civilians into RSD workers: their civilian lives were literally stored in kit bags by the entrance to the depot (Figure 4.14).

Throughout 1940 one of the major issues with instilling discipline within the space of the depot was the lack of clarity over who was responsible for what within that space. Tensions emerged around provision of food, payment for and provision of blankets, responsibility and cost of training and confusion over who had the right to discipline recruits.<sup>145</sup>

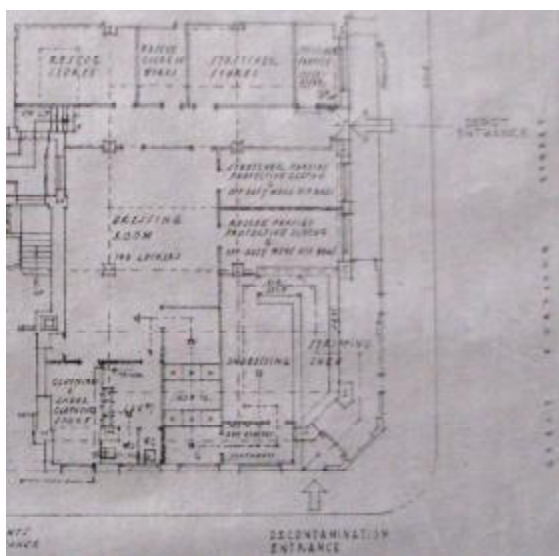


Figure 4.14. Entrances to the Great Portland Street ARP Depot, from Clipstone Street to the north and Great Portland Street to the west. Source: WCA/MBN/GreatPortlandStreet/CD/PL, Civil Defence Plans 1-3, St Marylebone, 1941, Great Portland Street, 152-56.

Theft and pilfering were difficult to prevent and made the provision of blankets and bedding particularly problematic. Lack of control over property and resources was in part due to the failure of the RSD to instill a service culture. This was related to the confusion over who had authority within the space of the

<sup>145</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/106, Rescue and Demolition Squads, Borough Council's Canteen Arrangements, 16 October 1939; and, Letters to and from Parker Morris, Westminster ARP Controller, 16 November 1939 and 23 November 1939.

depots. In July 1940 the LCC suggested the use of storekeepers to be responsible for all items within the depot owned by the LCC and the boroughs. The LCC aimed, through such policies, to create an authority structure within the depot and remove to agency from the volunteers.<sup>146</sup> This was at odds with the idea of the free volunteer citizen participating in ARP services and marks a shift towards a quasi-military service culture.

The ground floor of the Great Portland Street depot was carefully organised to regulate recruits' agency over RSD property. The men's uniforms were accounted for within stores, and equipment and stores were regulated by daily inspection and counting. In this way, responsibility for the depot was removed from recruits and placed in the hands of the officers responsible for inspection and storekeeping. The remainder of the ground floor was taken up with a kitchen and mess room, the former containing a lockable store to prevent pilfering.

Depending on the time of day and whether they were needed to deal with an air raid, recruits would either be sleeping in the reinforced basement, on training, or at leisure on the first floor. The ground floor acted as a transient space between these two areas. Within the basement (Figure 4.12) the leader's sleeping accommodation was separated from the rest of the recruits, creating a formal distance between them. This distance was maintained onto the first floor level as the RSD leaders had offices separate from, but alongside, the volunteers' recreation room, so that the leaders could monitor the actions of the recruits.

---

<sup>146</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Matters for Discussion with Major Bax, the liaison officer between the RSD and County Hall, 29 July 1940.

The Great Portland Street depot marks the professionalization of the RSD service at the end of the blitz. The seeds of this controlled space emerged in the stand-by period when authorities had to find ways to articulate the role of the ARP worker. Increasingly depots became planned, carefully organised and monitored spaces. However, that professionalization and regulation could not occur until the LCC was able to assert a formal control over that space. The period of standby was marked by confusion, tensions and disputes. As Hiorns pointed out, this emerged from a lack of coherence over who had authority over depots and the fact that the RSD was a voluntary service. 20,000 men moved through the RSD during 1939-40 making it difficult to impose any training, discipline or order. The RSD was organised on paper, but the recruits were not trained or ready for raids and that transience made policing the service difficult as men were moving in and out of employment so quickly.

In 1940 the first step was taken to impose stricter regulation in the form of the imposition of an employment order that meant all those within civil defence services lost the right to leave that service until dispensed with by the Home Office or local authority in charge of the service.<sup>147</sup> All those men aged 30 or over within the RSD were reserved under the schedule of reserved occupations. The Ministry for Home Security outlined that:

the general effect of the Order is to place members of the services in a position analogous to that of men serving in the Armed Forces, in the sense that they are required to continue in their service unless and until they can no longer render effective service or their services are urgently needed elsewhere. Accordingly all members of these services, whether of

---

<sup>147</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/119, The Civil Defence (Employment) Order, 1940, dated July 9, 1940, Made by the Minister of Home Security Under Regulations 29B and 38 of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939.

military age or not, may be satisfied that they are serving where there is most need for their skill and experience.<sup>148</sup>

The order dealt with the issue of the continued drain of volunteers and sought to elevate the services in order to undermine the public criticisms of civil defence workers as lazy. This was combined with a Restriction on Engagement order, which aimed to keep skilled men where they were needed by preventing employers from bidding against each other for supplies of skilled labour.<sup>149</sup> The Order required the engagement of workers in the engineering, building, and civil engineering industries to be made, subject to certain exceptions, through an Employment Exchange or appropriate trade union.<sup>150</sup>

With the imposition of the employment order, RSD men began walking out of the service, some threatening to walk out *en bloc*. Others attempted to enrol in other services or make themselves such a problem they would be discharged. Some volunteers found their right to leave blocked, those who left and sought other work were unable to get their cards, and any man “walking out” was rendered liable to a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment and a fine of £200.<sup>151</sup>

By the end of the summer of 1940 the LCC’s authority over the RSD men was more firmly asserted and this marked a shift in state control over the bodies of its citizens. The patriotic recruitment of a citizen’s service shifted to central direction of the war effort and a high degree of regulation over paid ARP

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, Home Security Circular No 169/1940, Reservation of Personnel in Rescue Parties and First Aid Parties; Civil Defence (Employment) Order. Letter from Ministry of Home Security to all ARP General Scheme making authorities in England, Wales and Scotland.

<sup>149</sup> Calder, *The People’s War*, p. 116.

<sup>150</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 361 col. 847, 5 June 1940.

<sup>151</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/119, R.S/C.M, 15 July 1940.

workers.<sup>152</sup> As the order was imposed men found they could not leave to find better-paid work, could not resign over working hours or Sunday work and ultimately that absence from duty was a prosecutable offence.<sup>153</sup> The amendments to employment practices changed the nature of ARP. ARP became more closely associated with the precautionary actions taken by individuals to protect themselves and their homes in a raid, the set of actions outlined in magazines, newspapers and films, as discussed in chapters one, two and three. The regulated services that would help people in raids became broadly referred to as the 'civil defence' services. This marked two things, firstly that air war was no longer perceived as to be merely about the knock-out blow but the precursor to an invasion, marked by the dropping of troops not bombs in Belgium and Holland.<sup>154</sup> This also marked a shift in the nature of those services, the idealized voluntary participatory citizen services were now disciplined, regulated and controlled and the volunteer heroes of 1938-9 were reconstructed as quasi-military defenders, the aimed impact of the Civil Defence (Employment) Order was to:

...place members of the Services concerned in a position analogous to that of men serving in the Armed Forces, in the sense that they are required to continue in the service unless and until they can no longer render effective service or their services are more urgently needed elsewhere. Accordingly all members of these services, whether of military age or not,

---

<sup>152</sup> On the growth of the central control of labour see, Croucher, *Engineers*, p. 74.

<sup>153</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/119, This file contains a number of cases against civil defence workers who were charged with breaking the terms of the employment order. On 20 August 1940 George Fraser was recorded as walking out; on 30 September 1940, a memo was received by the LCC from the Officer in charge of Battersea Rescue regarding personnel leaving, noting that one member was wishing to leave as he has a better job, another had tendered his resignation because he objected to Sunday work, at time of writing 22 men were absent from duty. Another case in Battersea recorded that Mr. Alexander Williams had failed to report for duty. In Stepney, Mr. S. Nichols, had been released from duty due to illness then traced working in an air craft factory; in Finsbury a Frederick Jones, had sought to be released from duty, he had been refused so was no longer reporting for duty.

<sup>154</sup> Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, p. 27.

may be satisfied that they are serving where there is most need for their skill and experience.<sup>155</sup>

Men in the RSD had their choice to leave removed and the outcome of the blitz and the reshaping of depot spaces marked increasing regulation and control, revealed in the clearly defined power structures envisioned within the ARP depot.

Amy Bell has recently shown that individuals participating in civil defence services during the blitz felt a sense of patriotism. Participation, Bell suggests, offered workers a sense of personal usefulness and a distraction from uncontrollable wartime events. However, Bell questions the limits of this participatory patriotism noting that ‘conscription, compulsion and the lack of mobility between jobs,’ caused tensions, annoyances and anxieties.<sup>156</sup> The development of the RSD prior to the blitz marks a service that was increasingly regulated and from which volunteers could gain little status or interest. By the Summer of 1940, when invasion fears were rife and the idealism of the nation working together was being projected in the idealism of statements on the ‘people’s war,’ paid ARP services were being marked by new regulations and compulsion.<sup>157</sup> By the times the bombs fell on London those within the RSD had little opportunity but to acquiesce, compulsorily tied as they were to the service, many made the best they could out of a difficult situation. Indeed, Bill Regan, a rescue worker on the Isle of Dogs took on the job at the start of the war because

---

<sup>155</sup> LCC/CL/CD/01/119, Home Security Circular No. 169/1940. ‘Reservation of Personnel in Rescue Parties. Civil Defence (Employment) Order, 10 July 1940. Brought in order to ‘maintain the strength of the A.R.P. Rescue Party and First Aid (or Stretcher) Party Services organised by local authorities under the A.R.P. Act, 1937.

<sup>156</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, pp. 99, 106.

<sup>157</sup> The term the ‘people’s war’ was used again and again in the Summer of 1940 during a period of fears over invasion and a concern to expand production in war industries, Calder, *The People’s War*, Introduction.



he was faced with unemployment, as building work dried up in 1939. Within a diary kept during the blitz of his time in the RSD on the Isle of Dogs he is annoyed by those in charge of the service, constantly questions those in authority and marks out his daily life in conflicts over pay, ridiculous regulation and discipline within the service.<sup>158</sup>

## **Conclusion**

By 3 September 1939 London had been mapped out as a battlefield. Invisible lines of communication crisscrossed the city ready to send recruits and help into the civilian frontline. Giant maps were hung on walls of ARP control rooms, ready to chart the reforming of the city as the bombs fell. ARP services were called-up and made ready for action, there to ensure that the city would continue to function on both a structural and emotional level. Structural functionality directed attention to the management and regulation of the London's roads, water supply, transport and communication systems, as well as the day-to-day management of health, work and welfare.<sup>159</sup> Emotional functionality directed concern towards management of morale and towards the feared collapse of support for the war through the psychological impact of being bombed.<sup>160</sup> ARP services were presented as a means to bolster morale, acting as the public face of government defence and offering protection and help during raids.

The volunteers that made up ARP services were constructed as ideal citizens, representative of the national values that would help Britain defeat the

---

<sup>158</sup> Bill's diary is discussed in detail in Chapter Five: IWM/88/10/1 Diary of Bill Regan.

<sup>159</sup> *The Times*, 28 September 1940, p. 2.

<sup>160</sup> Mackay, *Half the Battle*, introduction; Jones, *British Civilians*; Amy Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945,' *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 153-175.

militaristic, disciplined and controlled enemy other. However, the services were not mobilized into action but were stuck waiting, bored and disillusioned. In this context the first year of the war was marked by a high turnover of recruits as the panic over war in the air shifted to grinding stasis.

In this context the services began to be questioned by a public uncertain about paying for an expensive service whose purpose was not proved necessary when the predicted air raids did not occur. ARP recruits were forced into waiting – a situation in which they were increasingly criticized, particularly those who were being paid to do seemingly nothing. This led to changes in the way in which ARP was both understood by the public and represented.

The pressing demand for recruits for ARP services in the first months of war meant the subject was highly visible in the public eye. However, the visibility and public consciousness of the government's ARP messages had a contrary effect, making criticising ARP a tangible way to attack wartime policies and voice concerns over the organization of those services. While official statistics reveal that divisions within the ARP services were based on whether a volunteer was full-time or part-time, or male or female, public critiques centred on whether volunteers were paid or unpaid. ARP became a site of class conflict as paid workers were attacked for standing idle and taking potential jobs from the unemployed. Conversely, volunteering for unpaid ARP became a means to assert patriotism as the paid ARP volunteer was viewed as taking scant resources that could be directed to other areas if ARP volunteers were only willing to serve for free. These criticisms solidified around the figure of the air-raid warden. The government hoped that wardens would predominantly be unpaid volunteers with a good working knowledge of their local area who could

provide the public face to ARP and provide order and stability in raids. The majority of wardens in London however were paid and this was viewed as a scandal, undermining the values of the service and prompting good recruits to leave.

As criticism of ARP volunteers became widespread, images of the ARP became widely circulated and rival visions to the heroic recruitment posters emerged, shifting the visual culture of ARP from the bombed landscape to the figure of the civil defender. In this way, new meanings of ARP were created and contested.<sup>161</sup> Joseph Lee was able to use the figure of the ARP volunteer as a means to make wider statements about London during this period. At the outbreak of war the new topography of London was a cause for anxiety and the volunteer was a potential victim of war. Later representations of the ARP centred on the issue of class, constructing the officious middle-class volunteer as well meaning but ridiculous. The working-class volunteers in Lee's images offer a sense of knowing security, a mark perhaps of changing times.<sup>162</sup> Yet, all are caught up in an uncertain and tense situation.

The criticisms of ARP led to a renegotiation of patriotism and citizenship. Serving to save would not hold up when the worker was being paid to do nothing: there was little status in standing-idle. The reality of standing-idle is neatly summed up in Green's description of the 'prodigious' strain of waiting.<sup>163</sup> Whether motivated out of a sense of duty or for regular pay those serving exposed themselves to ridicule, summed up by the labeling of the officious ARP

---

<sup>161</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London, 1999), p. 6.

<sup>162</sup> John Hill, 'A Working Class Hero is Something to be? Changing Representations of Class and Masculinity in British Cinema,' in: Phil Powrie, Ann Davies and Bruce Babington (eds), *The Trouble with Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema* (London, 2004), pp. 100-109.

<sup>163</sup> Green, *Caught*, p. 15.

volunteer as in his 'rompers.' The services were not tested and so for a year they became the Cinderella service, the unwanted stepsister of the national services, which were proving themselves through action, if not successful action.<sup>164</sup>

The second part of the chapter offered a case study of one of the ARP services, the RSD, to consider the actual problems of running and organizing an ARP service within London. Criticisms of ARP recruits were not without foundation. The LCC found that recruits were sometimes taking on two jobs, were stealing from depots, failing to conform to regulations and were leaving the service in droves as higher paid or better jobs came along. These actions by the recruits were in part a result of the very real boredom of standing-by for 24 hours. Recruits reacted to the attempts to impose discipline either with their feet or through instilling their own practices into the service, sometimes resulting in their removal; men were thrown out for gambling, stealing and breaking terms of service.

However, these terms of service were often unclear. Throughout the period of stand-by, the LCC found itself negotiating with unions in an effort to ensure appropriate employment practices. Again this marked uncertainty over whether labour in the RSD could be understood as workers or servicemen. In turn, when labour was put to work on defensive measures the unions stepped in, questioning why building work was not being offered to outside contractors and workmen.

The control of the RSD by the LCC was a means to create a uniform service across central London. Many of the problems with the RSD were related

---

<sup>164</sup> Although of course the other services presented their own moral dilemmas see, Richard A. Rempel, 'The Dilemmas of British Pacifists During World War II,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 50 (1978), pp. 1213-1229; Muriel Mellow, 'One Woman's Way to Peace: The Development of Vera Brittain's Pacifism,' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 8 (1985), pp. 1-6.

to the fact that ARP 'services' needed to be 'actualised' in space: they had to be mapped onto an urban fabric that was divided by competing authorities.<sup>165</sup> The tensions over the depots exposes governance as 'located' – a process whereby a set of political and social ideas became embodied through the layout, architecture and management of resources and people in a spatially located community. A 'complex assemblage of diverse forces' came together to create the RSD service: the political culture of the LCC, the working practices of district surveyors, techniques of mapping and planning of both urban space and at a micro-level the layout of local-authority buildings.<sup>166</sup> The problem with creating a uniform working RSD was that the means to discipline and regulate the service was limited by a lack of 'authoritative criteria.'<sup>167</sup>

The training manuals and regional circulars offer an ideal vision of ARP culture: a service culture enabled through training, drills and parades within and from the depot.<sup>168</sup> The depot routine was at the heart of this service culture, the space in which the citizen was moulded into a civil defender. Collectively these depots would link together to form a London-wide whole.<sup>169</sup> By 1941 these depots were highly professionalised spaces, gone was the *ad hoc* adaption, replaced with controlled, ordered and disciplined space. By the onset of the period associated with 'the people's war,' the RSD was becoming professionalised, its recruits bound to the service not by duty but compulsion.

---

<sup>165</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 117.

<sup>166</sup> Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, introduction.

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

<sup>168</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/3/69, Ministry of Home Security, ARP Training Bulletin No. 3 1940.

<sup>169</sup> Mirzoeff, 'The Right to Look,' pp. 473-496

However, throughout 1939-40 the authority to classify and order ARP was incoherent.<sup>170</sup> The concerns over shelters that had dogged the service since 1938 combined with concerns over the viability of ARP workers. This in turn combined with a lack of clarity over who had ultimate agency over ARP: metropolitan boroughs, the LCC, the regional council? The ideal recruits of ARP posters were told to apply to their local council to take on men's jobs. However, once recruited, these visions of serving to save and of a united capable service did not fit with daily practices as competing authorities struggled to offer a coherent sense of order and authority within the depot. The RSD marked the imposition of the LCC into a 'local' issue and the metropolitan boroughs did not view this in terms of defence strategy but politics. Questions arose over cost, food, finances for training recruits, and issues over who had ultimate authority within the space of the depot.

The tensions in the depots also marked the very real difficulties of imposing discipline on a voluntary service. Hiorns questioned the point in spending vast amounts of resources to create a service in which all recruits had the right to simply walk out.<sup>171</sup> This was rectified by new orders preventing recruits from leaving the service and limiting the rights of competition over skilled building trade workers, and this marked the shift from ARP to civil defence. However, despite these orders being imposed many men did walkout during the summer of 1940. Despite the new order making 'members of the services in a position analogous to that of men serving in the Armed Forces,' the new services were not dealt with by military discipline but by the civil

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, pp. 476, 480.

<sup>171</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Letter from F.R. Hiorns, Head of RSD, to ECH Salmon, Clerk of the LCC, regarding changes to the Rescue Service, 4 July 1940.

authorities.<sup>172</sup> The only method of enforcing discipline was through discharge, and an option for those unhappy with their situation was to make themselves ‘a nuisance to enforce discharge.’ The LCC noted that this misconduct may mean loss of dole and not another job but that this was a risk some were willing to take.<sup>173</sup>

By summer 1940 a viable structure was in place for civil defence with trained recruits located in depots across the County of London. However, this urban order was limited by a lack of coherent authority over the structural aspects of ARP coupled with limited cultural discipline. In the period of stand-by civil defence offered its recruits little in the way of status and, for those who joined for employment, over-regulation coupled with boredom. The difficulty of establishing civil defence in London was marked by an insecure power structure. Regional commissioners may have heralded the merits of this national service but the problem was that the service was not serving. ARP came to stand for incompetence, incoherence and class-conflict. Coherent ARP depots emerged only once the civil defence services had been tested by the blitz. Analysis of these depot spaces reveals not a participatory, patriotic people’s service but controlled and disciplined spaces in which the ARP worker had little agency.

---

<sup>172</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/119, Home Security Circular No 169/1940, Reservation of Personnel in Rescue Parties and First Aid Parties; Civil Defence (Employment) Order. Letter from Ministry of Home Security to all ARP General Scheme making authorities in England, Wales and Scotland.

<sup>173</sup> LCC/CL/CD/1/109, Matters for Discussion, Rescue Service, 29 July 1940.



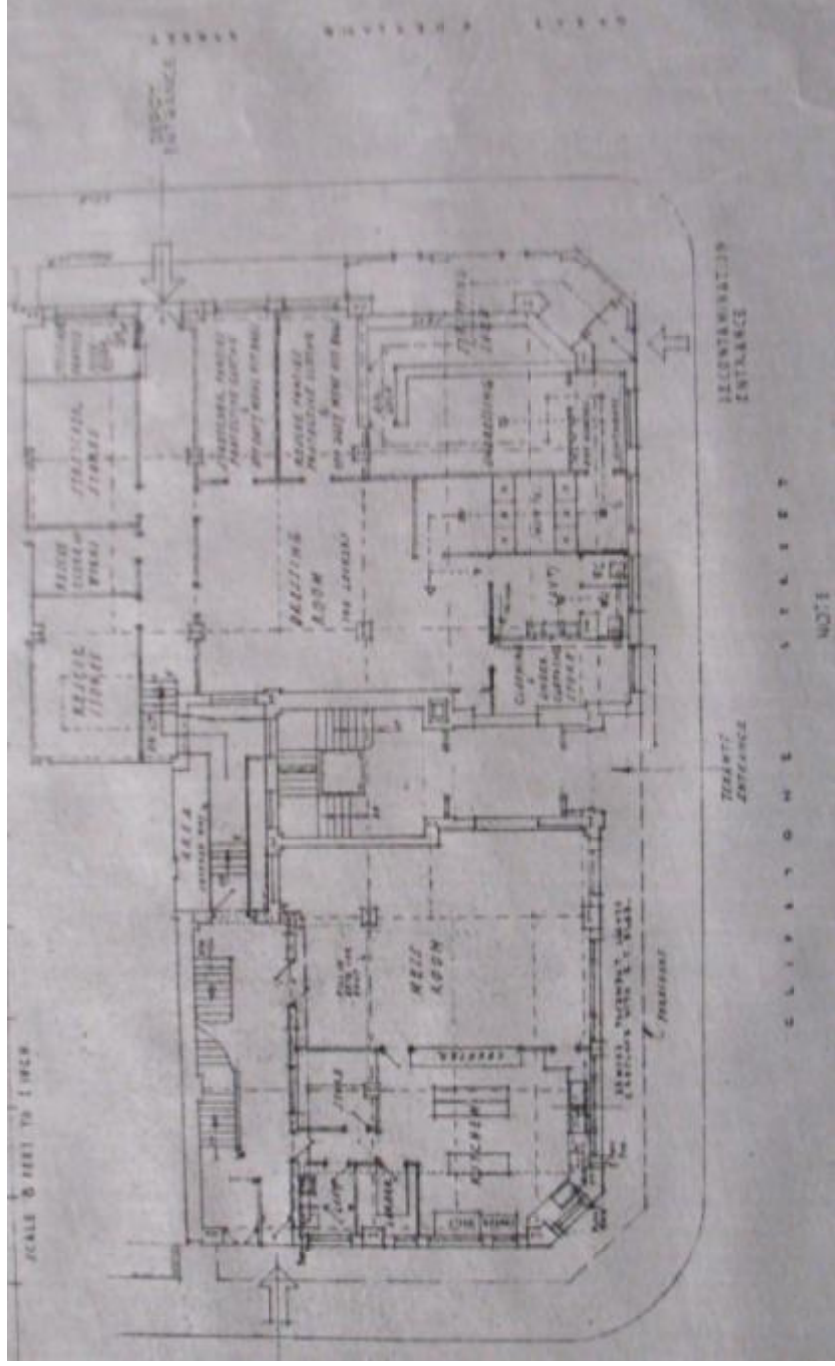


	Regional Headquarters
	LCC Central Control and Alternatives
	LCC Branch Depots for RSD
	LCC Group Headquarters for Shoring
	London Fire Brigade
	Metropolitan Police Control
	Guild Hall, City Hall or Town Hall
	Direct Telephone Lines (in colour)
	Exchange Telephone Lines (in colour)

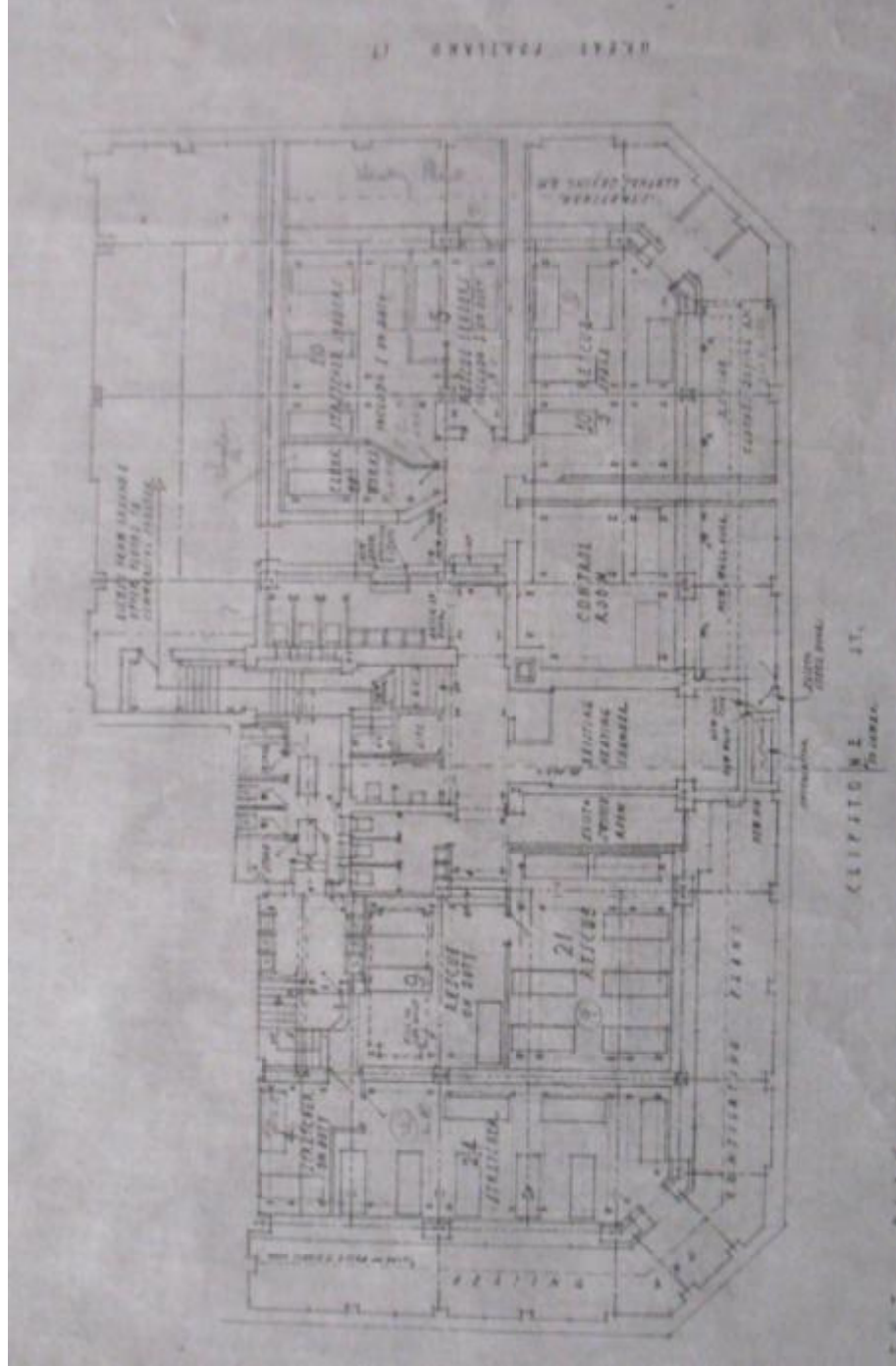




Ground Floor Plan



Basement Plan





First Floor Plan

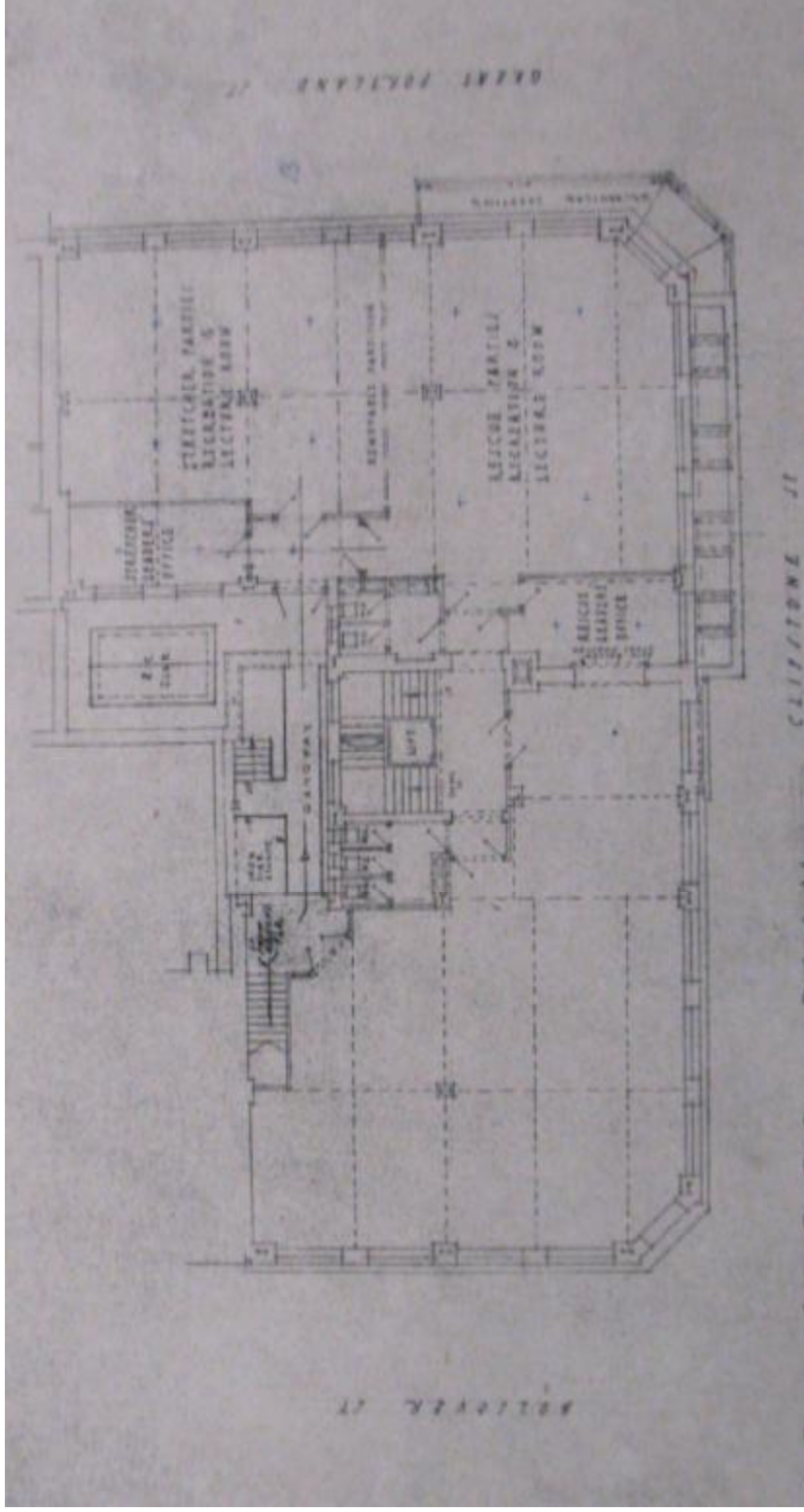


Figure 4.12. Great Portland Street ARP Depot. Source: WCA/MBN/GreatPortlandStreet/CD/PL, Civil Defence Plans 1-3, St Marylebone, 1941, Great Portland Street, 152-5.

## **Part III**

# **The Consequences of War in the Air: The Blitz on London.**

## Chapter Five

### Dealing With Destruction: Representing and Narrating Blitzed London

#### Introduction

On 7 September 1940 the first heavy aerial bombardment of a British city began. The great air battle was represented as the crux of the war, the attempt at a preemptive strike that would precede invasion. On 11 September, after nearly a week of heavy bombing on the capital, Winston Churchill addressed the nation. He asserted the strength of 'our fleets and flotillas' and confirmed that 'our Air Force is at the highest strength it has ever reached,' it is superior not in numbers but in 'men and machines.' He saw the bombing of London, Britain's 'mighty imperial city,' as a way to make its citizens a 'burden and anxiety to the government.' However, he felt reassured that from the heart of suffering could be drawn the means of 'inspiration and survival, and of a victory.'<sup>1</sup> The arrival of the long predicted war in the air forced attention on the capital. As Vera Brittain noted in the introduction to her book on the impact of war on England: 'it became clear that the world's eyes were concentrated on London' and that touring remote areas of the country would give impressions little different from peacetime compared with the 'dramatic events in London and the South.'<sup>2</sup> London under fire became a physical and ideological battleground. Its ARP was tested, local authorities were stretched, its population found themselves drained and exhausted. The population of London felt they were participating in a unique

---

<sup>1</sup> Winston Churchill, 'Every Man to His Post,' Broadcast on 11 September 1940, *The Listener*, 19 September 1940, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> Vera Brittain, *England's Hour* (New York, 2005), p. xi.

historical moment aware of the test to which they were being put and the modernity of this experience.<sup>3</sup>

London and its population 'taking it' stood as an inspiration for other cities to prove their ability to withstand an enemy attack.<sup>4</sup> Angus Calder has understood this as constructing a 'myth of the blitz': stories of heroic fortitude presented both at home and projected to an America still undecided about its position in entering the war, offered visions of a united and capable nation. The blitz was mythologised as a moment of national belonging in which the population under duress came together and collectively stood up to the war in the air and its consequences. The bombing of London was viewed as indiscriminate, crossing class lines, Calder records commentators noting the East End had suffered most but the bombs did not differentiate between the highest and lowest homes in the city.<sup>5</sup> It was onto the ordinary people that the myth was projected and the fortitude of London came to represent a national fortitude that would be generalized about across all bombed cities.<sup>6</sup>

Calder argues that the Barthesian myth that emerged constructed history through representation: not an analysis, but a projection of events.<sup>7</sup> Much scholarship of the blitz has sought to prove or disprove Calder's vision of a 'myth', exploring the darker side of blitzed cities by looking at crime; by considering how the populist myth in public culture fed into private ideas and thoughts; by questioning the consequences of the myth for memories of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Amy Bell, *London Was Ours, Diaries and Memoirs of the London Blitz* (New York, 2008), pp. 4-16.

<sup>4</sup> Neil Matheson, 'National Identity and the 'Melancholy Ruins': Cecil Beaton's Photographs of the London Blitz,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), p. 261.

<sup>5</sup> Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991), pp. 18-19; 34-37; this was described in *The Listener* as the 'democracy of bombs,' *The Listener*, 19 September 1940, p. 414.

<sup>6</sup> Calder, *The Myth*, p. 128.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.



Second World War; contemplating how the myth was politicized in national memory during the later twentieth century and more recently by challenging notions about the myth of Britain standing alone by an analysis of Britain's war machine.<sup>8</sup> This chapter does not seek to prove or disprove the myth of the blitz but to recontextualise the blitz by considering it as a part of a history of London, particularly considering the 'projection' of the event in relationship to urban practices. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the meaning of the damaged urban landscape.

Neil Matheson has explored how the damaged landscape of London, as represented during the war, has been allied with themes of national identity. Matheson explores blitz photographs produced by Cecil Beaton and included in the book *History Under Fire* (1941). The book contained a series of images of buildings damaged and ruined by the blitz. Matheson interprets these images as a part of the collective ideology of the blitz. The ruins of monumental London were a reminder of the nation's past, offering an historical continuity to the experience of the city under fire, linking for example the fires of the blitz with the Great Fire of London.<sup>9</sup> While certainly these links were made and became a part of the heroic collective memory of the blitz on London, the damaged city during the period 1940-41 was not so coherent.<sup>10</sup> The city became divided, roads were

---

<sup>8</sup> Mark Roodhouse, 'Popular Morality and the Black Market in Britain, 1939-55', in Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just(eds), *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 243-265; Sonya Rose *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003); Amy Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945,' *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009) pp. 153-175; Bell, *London Was Ours*; Lucy Noakes, 'Making Histories: Experiencing the Blitz in London's Museums in the 1990s,' in Gordon Martel, *The World War Two Reader* (New York and London, 2004), pp. 422-435; David Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War* (London, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Matheson, 'National Identity,' pp. 265-6; I explore the damage to monumental London in the final chapter.

<sup>10</sup> On the creation of collective memory of the blitz on London see: Bell, *London Was Ours*, introduction. Petra Rau questions the imagined homogeneity of the home front in: 'The Common

blocked and buildings were damaged, broken and in some areas wiped out by fire and heavy bombing. The corporeal experience of the city changed too: nights were darkened by the blackout or lit by strange new modern spectacles.<sup>11</sup> The size of the city meant those in one part could hear and see the blitz on another, safely removed from danger.<sup>12</sup> From the beginning of the blitz on 7 September to its end in May 1941, projected and reported themes of collective unity pulled against feelings of confusion, fear and apprehension.<sup>13</sup>

This chapter considers how blitz-damaged London was made sense of both through representation but also through urban practices. The first part of the chapter explores the practical measures put in place to deal with the blitz outlining how a new set of services emerged to deal with the unexpected outcomes of bombardment, specifically the unforeseen levels of damage. The second part of the chapter, broken into three sections, takes as its starting point official fears over the impact of ruins on morale and considers the relationship between the damaged urban landscape and the population of London. It contemplates how the city was 'made' through a set of long established urban practices, specifically visiting and touring the city.<sup>14</sup>

The first section considers how the East End, as the first part of London to be bombed, was explored and appropriated by those that came to witness first hand the impact of bombing on a city. The early blitz was marked by official

---

Frontier: Fictions of Alterity in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*, *Literature and History*, 14 (2005), p. 32; see also: Adam Piette, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry 1939-45* (Basingstoke, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> On the blitz at night see: Rex Ferguson, 'Blind Noise and Deaf Visions: Henry Green's Caught, Synaesthesia and the Blitz,' *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33 (2009), pp. 102-116.

<sup>12</sup> IWM 12994 04/40/1, Private Papers of I S Haslewood, diary entries, 7 September and 24 November, 1940.

<sup>13</sup> Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear,' pp. 153-175.

<sup>14</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Translated by Stephen Rendall (London, 1988), pp. 117-122.

tours of bombed areas by journalists, politicians and the royal family. I consider the meaning of the imposition of particular figures of authority within the 'poor East End.' This section suggests the East End became associated with heroic survival and that the cross-class appropriation of that space through visits by officials both legitimized the East End but also universalized the experience of bombing, ignoring the particular experience of local communities.<sup>15</sup> The second section looks at one particular tour of blitzed London taken by the writer Vera Brittain. I understand her account of blitzed London as a form of battlefield tourism that aims to try and give meaning to bombardment. Through comparisons with other accounts of blitz tourism I consider how walking became a form of commemoration, a means to both assert personal survival but also contemplate loss.

The fourth and final section of the chapter looks at the particular experience of one ARP worker, William 'Bill' Regan, who worked for the Heavy Rescue Service on the Isle of Dogs and kept a diary of the experience. His diary offers a window onto how he made sense of the bombardment of his home on the Isle of Dogs. This explores how Regan is both a creator of a narrative of the blitz and a consumer of the experience, submerging himself into a wider story about the bombardment of London and seeking to subvert those stories, particularly through offering his own visual account of the bombing of the island

---

<sup>15</sup> New approaches to the study of the Second World War suggest the need to reassess the nature of the British state and alongside this understand the cultural and social history of the war not as in the universal but the particular, locating experiences within local communities or regions, see: David Edgerton, 'War, Reconstruction, and the Nationalisation of Britain, 1939-1951,' in Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch and David Feldman (eds), *Post-war reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949, Past and Present*, 210, Supplement 6, (2011), pp. 29-46; Brad Bevan, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working Class Men in Britain* (Manchester, 2005); Chris Sladen, 'Wartime Holidays and the Myth of the Blitz,' *Cultural and Social History*, 2 (2005), pp. 215-246. On the appropriation of space see, Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 163-169.

in the production of illegal photographs. Like Brittain, Bill seeks to make sense of the destruction through walking the Island, this is both a means to record and witness damage and an act of personal commemoration, the island become a site of memory and mourning. In a walk around the Island Bill records and witnesses damage, infusing the landscape with his own personal memories and commemorating and remembering the lives formerly lived in this space.

The chapter explores how the damaged landscape was made sense of and the limits of official representations of the damaged city. The narrative of a city surviving conversely mediated the narrative of the existential crisis articulated by many as they walked around their damaged city. I consider the way in which practices of walking, visiting, recording and visualising the city under bombardment were a means to commemorate and remember loss and to assert personal survival at a moment of deep anxiety and uncertainty.

### **5.1. The Blitz on London: Practical Structures for Dealing with Damage**

#### *The Blitz*

On the 7 September 1940 a huge wave of some 350 bombers escorted by 600 fighters advanced along the Thames Estuary towards London, with a frontage some 20 miles wide.<sup>16</sup> Bombs were dropped on Woolwich arsenal; the gas works at Beckton – London's first civil target; the Docks at Millwall, Limehouse, Rotherhithe, Tower Bridge and Surrey and on West Ham Power Station; they went across the City and Westminster and got as far as bombing a crescent in Kensington.<sup>17</sup> A second raid followed some two hours later lasting

---

<sup>16</sup> Alfred Price, *Blitz on Britain 1939-45* (Stroud, 2000), p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), p. 11.

from ten past eight to four thirty the next morning. The first days of the blitz on London were marked by daylight raids, as fighter command were prepared for continued raiding of airfields outside London as had been the pattern during the preceding summer months.<sup>18</sup> Some 430 people were killed on the first night and 1,600 seriously injured. Daylight raids would continue until 15 September, when the Luftwaffe, faced with high daylight losses, switched to night bombing raids. This heavy nightly bombardment began 'the big blitz,' lasting until 14 November.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, between the beginning of the blitz and its end in May 1941 around nineteen thousand tons of bombs were dropped on London and fourteen thousand of these were dropped before 14 November.<sup>20</sup> From October, the raids spread out across the UK, hitting provincial towns and cities. However, it was London that was hit first, faced by a relentless onslaught that left its inhabitants exhausted, confused and frightened.

When the bombs began to fall London was as ready as it could be for war in the air. Irene Haslewood, a Chelsea stretcher-party driver noted in her diary that many times throughout 1939-40:

I have been on the verge of leaving the depot to find a more congenial and less boring job, but now I am glad that I have stuck to it...The stretcher parties are a branch of the A.R.P. As the latter is a completely new organization – without traditions or deep foundation – there have naturally been many ghastly mistakes and muddles made in trying to knock it into some sort of shape. But gradually, by means of trial and error and many tears, the A.R.P. is becoming a dependable and disciplined force.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Price, *Blitz*, p. 78.

<sup>19</sup> Terence O'Brien, *A History of Civil Defence* (London, 1955), p. 387.

<sup>20</sup> O'Brien, *A History*, p. 387; Philip Ziegler, *London at War 1939-1945* (London, 2002), p. 118; Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London, 1992), p. 205.

<sup>21</sup> IWM 12994 04/40/1, Private Papers of I S Haslewood; Haslewood's story was traced by the *Evening Standard* after the diary was found amongst private papers. Their account provided some useful background information on Haslewood: Charles Langley, 'How we traced the redoubtable Irene Bobby Haslewood,' *Evening Standard*

The RSD, despite setbacks and difficulties was ready for operation. Although men were still leaving the service and tensions with local boroughs remained, it proved itself capable of its primary task and by the end of the blitz in May 1941 had attended between 15 and 20,000 incidents.<sup>22</sup>

The civil defence services held up in the raids and the 'actual attacks presented few problems that had not been in some measure expected and prepared for in training and exercises.'<sup>23</sup> The population did not react with hysteria or panic, as many had feared before the war, and effective Civil defence services remained crucial in maintaining morale, as did figures of authority more generally.<sup>24</sup> Alexander Flett was in the metropolitan police based in South East London, an area subject to heavy raiding around the Elephant and Castle. He recalled that throughout the blitz on heavy nights the police used to look into places where people were congregated. He remembered that people would try and hold them back and keep them in the places they sheltered and he thought that 'a policeman was security to them. That was basic I think.'<sup>25</sup>

---

<<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-951680-how-we-traced-the-redoutable-irene-bobby-haslewood.do>> (accessed 10 July 2010).

<sup>22</sup> On tensions with local boroughs: On 28 September 1940, Mr. C.C. Knowles was removed as the Officer-in-Charge of Finsbury Rescue because it was felt by Major Bax that the service should be run by a younger man. Knowles angrily commented that when he had run the Shoreditch service there had been no setbacks and that the men he had recruited had worked well, however, the men he gained at Finsbury, he felt, were insubordinate: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/110, Notes from interview – Hiorns, Forshaw, Knowles and later Bax, 1 October 1940. On the continued problems with personnel see: LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/119. This file contains information on prosecutions and fines of men who left the service and ongoing problems with deserters. On the number of incidents: LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, War History of the Architect's Department - Final draft 1945, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> O'Brien, *A History*, p. 564.

<sup>24</sup> O'Brien, *A History*, p. 401; Edgar Jones, Robin Woolven, Bill Durodie and Simon Wessely, 'Civilian Morale During the Second World War: Responses to Air Raids Re-examined,' *Social History of Medicine*, 17:3 (2004), pp. 463-79.

<sup>25</sup> IWM/16068, Alexander Flett, IWM Interview, recorded 3 October 1995, reel 1.

The organisation of ARP and civil defence did largely function as planned, reflecting relatively accurate predictions about how raids would occur and their impact on London. However, there were some unexpected outcomes, including 'very few casualties in relation to physical damage; the large amount of rescue, repair and clearance work necessary; the high number of unexploded and delayed action bombs...the difficulty of knowing about the occupants of damaged buildings and so being able to assess and find casualties, and the extent to which operations had to be carried on in darkness.'<sup>26</sup> By the end of November 1940 some 17,119 houses in inner London were demolished or damaged beyond repair, 196,812 were damaged but repairable and a further 100,511 received first aid repairs.<sup>27</sup> The population of London changed their routines, children and the vulnerable began a second wave of evacuation, those in the most dangerous areas began nightly treks to tube stations and some slept out of London or in other parts of the city. Indeed, some began leaving London as refugees rather than through organized evacuation schemes.<sup>28</sup>

Some of these problems could be dealt with through the instigation of new services and the careful monitoring of the London population. Early on problems emerged because the services were uncertain of where people were

---

<sup>26</sup> O'Brien, *A History*, p. 564.

<sup>27</sup> Ann Saunders (ed.), *The London County Council Bomb Damage Maps, 1939-45* (London, 2005), p. 21. On repairs see: Nicholas Bullock, 'Re-assessing the Post-War Housing Achievement: the Impact of War-damage Repairs on the New Housing Programme in London,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 16:3 (2005) pp. 256-282; for more information on the relationship between the blitz and reconstruction see: Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-55: Myths and Reality,' *Contemporary British History*, 14:1 (2000), pp. 27-44. On the 'official' relationship to reconstruction see: Peter Malpass, 'Wartime Planning for Post-War Housing in Britain: the Whitehall Debate, 1941-45,' *Planning Perspectives*, 18 (2003), 177-196.

<sup>28</sup> MOA/TC23/7/B, Association of Surveyors and Technical Assistants, Housing Committee, Report on Rehousing the Homeless and Evacuation; MOA/TC65/5/E, Evacuation QQ, Undertaken by Celia Fremlin, Boundary Road Kilburn, 12 October 1940.

sheltering and were wasting time looking for people in the wrong places.<sup>29</sup> In those early raids Haslewood noted that problems were occurring because they did not know where to find people, she blamed the 'criminal mismanagement on the wardens' part.<sup>30</sup> Wardens began compiling a daily census of the inhabitants in the buildings and homes in their areas.<sup>31</sup> The collection of information became crucial in relations between wardens and rescue parties.<sup>32</sup> The rescue parties became the essential service during raids, releasing people and bodies from collapsed structures and learning to tunnel through debris: buildings falling and folding up in the manner predicted by Tecton.<sup>33</sup> Problems over the control of incidents and direction of services were overcome by appointing a warden to be in charge and direct incidents and, in the case of particularly large or complex incidents, through appointing an incident officer, usually a warden.<sup>34</sup> The collection of information served as a means to check on the well being of the population, but more practically grasp the physical locations and movements of that population in order to keep the city functioning as both a working and living space.<sup>35</sup>

However, the issues over the destruction of buildings and the consequent problem of homelessness were to become the most pressing problem of the blitz

---

<sup>29</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/1/110, letter to residents in Battersea noting how the BBC were reporting on the difficulties of deducing where the occupants of bombed houses are sheltering and asking them to fill in an attached survey to aid rescue parties in their work, 1 October 1939.

<sup>30</sup> IWM 12994 04/40/1, Private Papers of I S Haslewood.

<sup>31</sup> Rev. G. Markham a Head Warden in Southwark, recalled that the wardens used to hate filling out census sheets day after day showing where people sheltered by night, and their number, IWM/91/5/1, Rev. G. Markham, 'the church under fire,' photocopied memoir, pp. 10, 29.

<sup>32</sup> O'Brien, *A History*, p. 569.

<sup>33</sup> O'Brien, *A History*, pp. 564-76; Markham provides a vivid account of the way in which the services learnt to tunnel through debris, IWM/91/5/1, Rev. G. Markham, 'the church under fire,' photocopied memoir, p. 42.

<sup>34</sup> LCC/CL/CD/3/119, LCC, *Notes on Training for Rescue Parties* (London, 1941), p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Indeed, from January 1941 the London Regional Office of the Ministry of Information began compiling fortnightly returns in order to assess the impact of war on the London population, LMA/LCC/CL/CD/2/11, London Civil Defence Region Intelligence Reports (fortnightly), nos 1 to 31.



on London. These unexpected issues prompted criticism from the press and demands for intervention, if necessary by the army, to prevent the complete dislocation of the city.<sup>36</sup> This led to the creation of new services to support and help those affected. At the end of September 1940 the War Cabinet appointed two new special commissioners for the London Region. Mr. Henry Willink was appointed to 'supervise the arrangements for the care and rehousing of people rendered homeless as a result of air raids in the London region.' To deal with the 'rubble and ruin,' Sir Warren Fisher, the former head of the Civil Service was appointed with the duty of coordinating and facilitating the work of the authorities responsible for the restoration of roads and public utility services damaged by enemy action. Fisher was also made responsible for organizing the clearance and salvage of debris as a result of raids.<sup>37</sup> Under this remit Fisher set up a new service, the War Debris and Disposal Service (WDS), as well as linking up existing services for repair to public utilities. Under his guidance a new layer of municipal management was set up in London through a state backed regional organization to provide the labour and resources for maintaining often privately owned utilities. This aimed to standardize practice across London. The second remit, clearing up the ruins of London, not only aimed to make ruins safer and open up London's major thoroughfares, but also sought to ease the psychological burden of destruction.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> 'London is One,' *Daily Mirror*, 15 October 1940, p. 5; see also: 'Clearing Away the Debris, 5000 Pioneers to make London Tidy,' *The Times*, 14 October 1940, p. 3; 'Clearing the Wreckage, Pioneer Corps at work in London,' *The Times*, 15 October 1940, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> *The Times*, 28 September 1940, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> TNA/HO 186/1205, Note by Sir Warren Fisher, prepared by him at the personal request of the Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, 27 January 1941; TNA/CAB/65/9/40, Air Raid Damage, use of army units to repair damage and clear debris, October 28 1940, *Daily Mirror*, October 15 1940, p. 5; Arthur Marwick, *The Home Front: The British and the Second World War* (London, 1976), pp. 63-64; 'Clearing Away the Debris, 5000 Pioneers Make London Tidy,' *The Times*, October 14 1940, p. 2; TNA/HO 186/1205, Letter to JH Burrell, Ministry of Home Security regarding the

The need to clear up London as quickly as possible had two aims: practical and psychological. Practically the clearance of debris and rubble was necessary to keep the city functioning.<sup>39</sup> The bombing of London had exposed the workings of the city at the infrastructural level: the city relied on the movement of people, goods and information to function. Food had to be brought in, waste had to be taken out and the working population had to be kept productive.<sup>40</sup> Bombardment 'produced a gradual decline in the efficiency of the city,' and thus 'energetic steps were necessary to prevent dislocation of London's existence.'<sup>41</sup> There were a number of dangerous walls to be demolished, a large quantity of useful material to be salvaged and roads and transport links had to be cleared and repaired as quickly as possible. These problems were dealt with through the instigation of the new special commissioners; clearance was enabled through help from the army Pioneer Corps and the Royal Engineers were

---

numbers of Pioneers utilized to help clear up after the blitz on London 1940-41, 28.10.1942; 'Debris Disposal,' *East End News*, November 22 1940, p. 6; TNA/CAB/67/9/41, Use of Military Personnel for non-military purposes The War Office, 22 April 1941; TNA/CAB/65/9/40, Air Raid Damage, use of army units to repair damage and clear debris, 28 October 1940; LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/2/18, Notes for the assistance of contractors and military units, 12 October 1940.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Letter from P. Smart, Borough Engineer and Surveyor Southwark, to the WDS, asking for assistance, 21 April 1941.

<sup>40</sup> My understanding of the functioning of London at the infrastructural level has been shaped by Mathew Gandy's work on the bacteriological city. In this model a series of shifts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries facilitated a new kind of urban order. According to Gandy, these included the rise of germ theory; the emergence of new forms of technical and managerial expertise in urban governance; innovative use of financial instruments such as the municipal bonds to enable the completion of ambitious engineering projects; new policy instruments such as the power of eminent domain and other planning mechanisms, which enabled the imposition of a strategic urban vision in the face of multifarious private interests and the political marginalisation of agrarian and landed elites so that an industrial bourgeoisie, public health advocates and other voices could exert greater influences on urban affairs. Above all he defines the bacteriological city as: 'a new socio-spatial arrangement that could simultaneously ensure a degree of social cohesion at the same time as protecting the political and economic functions of the modern city,' Mathew Gandy, 'Rethinking Urban Metabolism: Water, Space and the Modern City', *City*, 8 (2004), pp. 364-6; Andrew Saint, (ed.), *Politics and the People of London, the London County Council 1889-1965* (London, 1989), p. 365.

<sup>41</sup> LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/2/109, History of the Special Force, London, 1940-1941.

brought in to accelerate problematic and technically difficult repair work.<sup>42</sup> However, there was also a concern that 'the desolate appearance of damaged buildings was liable to have a depressing effect upon the population and it was considered essential that the debris should be cleared and a rough tidy up done of damaged sites.'<sup>43</sup>

The physical evidence of bombing, it was feared, could break morale and produce an unsettling sense of disorder.<sup>44</sup> Concerns over how people would respond to the damaged landscape made representing damage a contentious issue during and following the blitz. Censors feared images of bombed buildings might knock civilian confidence.<sup>45</sup> Thus, there were strict controls over who could take photos of damaged buildings and what could be represented. The 1939 Control of Photography order prevented the taking of photos of 'any building structure, vessel or other object damaged by enemy action or as a result of steps taken by enemy action.'<sup>46</sup> Permits were issued by the Ministry of

---

<sup>42</sup> An excellent record of clearance work is held in the mass observation archive. In 1941 a full time mass observation surveyor undertook a survey on demolition and debris clearance practices in London. To this end the surveyor obtained work with a London demolition contractor, he kept a detailed record of working practices and the problems of clearance work in London at this time, MO/TC15 Demolition in London, 1941.

<sup>43</sup> LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/2/109, History of the Special Force, London, 1940-1941. Thousands of tons of rubble and debris had to be moved: during the six months between October, 1940, and April 1941, over 1,905,000 tons of rubbish, 30,000, 000 bricks, 630,000 cubic yards of hardcore, 79,000 tons of timber and firewood, 30,000 tons of metal and 400,000 slates and tiles were recovered from sites; LMA/LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, War History of the Architects Department, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> TNA/HO 186/1205, Note to the Minister of Home Security regarding the use of manpower to clear up debris, 28 January 1941. In March 1941 a London Civil Defence Region Intelligence Report recorded the severe housing shortage in relation to building prior to the war calculating that: 'The number of houses demolished in the Administrative County up to March 13th, - 24,533 - is roughly 3% of the estimated number of houses in the Administrative County in 1937. The number of houses demolished in the Region up to the same date - 43486 - roughly equals the average annual output of houses in the same area between 1928 and 1932. If the number of houses which cannot be rendered habitable by First Aid repairs - 56,305 - is added to those demolished - 43,486 - the total 99,791 of housing accommodation lost until more than first aid repairs can be taken is equal to more than two years' output of the pre-war building industry in London, LMA/LCC/CL/CD/02/011, London Civil Defence Region Intelligence Report 7, 26 March 1941, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, p. 27.

<sup>46</sup> TNA/HO 186/247, Emergency Powers (Defence), Control of Photography, 10 September 1939.

Information to press photographers and film cameramen, who had to have their photographs submitted to censors before publication.<sup>47</sup> As discussed in Chapter four, the regulatory system of ARP imposed controls on urban space through the policing of the streets by appropriate uniformed bodies with local knowledge. The overwhelming amount of damage prompted an official desire to impose regulations on the representation of that landscape and a need to respond to the changed urban landscape. The way in which the landscape of bombed London was presented and articulated within public reflects a combination of personal responses filtered by the wartime constraints that regulated representation.<sup>48</sup>

## **5.2. Appropriating the East End: Official Witnesses to Destruction**

The first area to be badly hit by bombardment was the East End of London (Figure 5.1). The area comprised Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Stepney and Poplar.<sup>49</sup> It was home to large swathes of the working population and to London's established industries: clothing, boot and shoes, furniture, engineering, chemicals, food processing, etc.<sup>50</sup> While not characterized as the 'East End,' to the south of the river Bermondsey was marked by a similar socio-demographic as the East End, related to work provided in the large dock complex along the river bank and the high proportion of working-class people living there.<sup>51</sup> At the end

---

<sup>47</sup> TNA/HO 186/247, Information for Chief Constables on the Control of Photography Order, 14 September 1939.

<sup>48</sup> Caroline Winter argues that to make sense of how particular social memories of events are created researchers need to 'identify the nature of the constraints which society imposes during the various stages in which social memory is established,' in: 'Tourism, Social Memory and the Great War,' *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36 (2009), p. 609.

<sup>49</sup> Sally Alexander, 'A New Civilization? London Surveyed 1928–1940s,' *History Workshop Journal*, 64 (2007), p. 304.

<sup>50</sup> Alexander, 'A New Civilization?', p. 304.

<sup>51</sup> This spilled into Southwark to the West and Greenwich to the East of Bermondsey; for the characterization of the East and West during the Second World War see: J.H. Forshaw and Patrick

of the nineteenth century these boroughs were characterized by mean, dirty slum life, narrow rotting housing, overcrowding and high death rates.<sup>52</sup> By the interwar period there were changes marked by new forms of municipal and socialist politics, sports clubs, markets, music halls and leisure pursuits and, in some areas, hope for improved housing through slum clearance efforts.<sup>53</sup> As in Finsbury, municipal government was dominated by Labour councilors.<sup>54</sup>

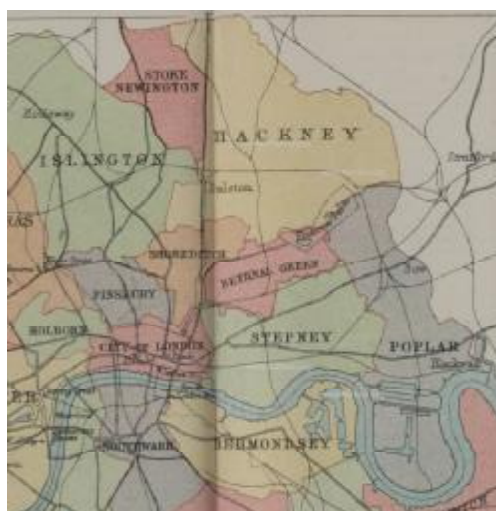


Figure 5.1. The East End. *Bartholomews Pocket Atlas and Guide to London* (London, 1922), available online at: <[http://www.hpkiss.org/data/maps/bartholomews-pocket\\_atlas-and-guide-to-london\\_1922\\_metropolitan-boroughs\\_2000\\_1486\\_600.jpg](http://www.hpkiss.org/data/maps/bartholomews-pocket_atlas-and-guide-to-london_1922_metropolitan-boroughs_2000_1486_600.jpg)> (accessed March 5 2011).

On 7 September 1940 the Luftwaffe followed the Thames and dropped thousands of 1-kilogram incendiary bombs, a spiteful rain of magnesium that burned at 650 degrees. These small but destructive weapons were released

---

Abercrombie, *County of London Plan: prepared for the London County Council* (London, 1943), PP. 12-13.

<sup>52</sup> Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London, 2000), pp. 366-367.

<sup>53</sup> Chapters two and three give details of slum clearance efforts and the social imaginations of architects and planners who facilitated these plans. See also, Peter Ackroyd, *London The Biography* (London, 2000), pp. 682-3; Gillian Rose, 'Imagining Poplar in the 1920s: Contested Concepts of Community,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 16 (1990), pp. 425-37; IHT/DOC/0314/0-2, Info on Housing, 1925-33.

<sup>54</sup> TH/347.IP, Tower Hamlet's Archive cuttings on ARP and Alderman Key; Ziegler, *London at War*, p. 64.

with explosive splinter bombs and 500- and 1000-kilogram bombs packed with TNT. Millwall Docks was set ablaze as over a million tons of wood fed the fires.<sup>55</sup> The east of the city was illuminated by a bizarre nighttime sunrise that lit the way for later waves of destruction.<sup>56</sup> The visual spectacle of bombardment imagined in pre-war and wartime civil defence recruitment campaigns became a reality, buildings collapsed and folded just as Tecton had visualised. The population of London came out to witness the almighty exhibition.<sup>57</sup> As the first location of the blitz the eyes of the rest of London and the nation turned on to the East End of the city as the Archbishop of Canterbury was to comment during October 1940: 'It was chiefly upon the people of London, and specially of East and South-East London, that the cruelties of this wanton bombardment had fallen. The whole civilized world was loud in the praise of their courage and endurance.'<sup>58</sup>

The heavy raids prompted a number of reactions. Faced with high levels of damage and, as Tecton had predicted, inadequate shelter, a wave of evacuation began to empty out the east of the city. 30,000 school children were evacuated from the London Region during the first month of bombing and facilities for evacuation were organized for mothers and children who had been rendered homeless from the Metropolitan Boroughs of Bermondsey, Bethnal Green, Deptford, Poplar, Shoreditch and Stepney, the districts in which

---

<sup>55</sup> Johnathan Schner, *The Thames: England's River* (London, 2005), pp 196-208.

<sup>56</sup> I.S. Haslewood recalled leaving the theatre on the first night of the blitz and the sky being lit by the huge fires set in the east of the city: IWM 12994 04/40/1, Private Papers of I S Haslewood, diary entry, 7 September 1940.

<sup>57</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, p. 27.

<sup>58</sup> 'The People of the East End: Archbishops Tribute,' *Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*, 19 October 1940, p. 5.

conditions were regarded as most difficult. Around 10,000 mothers and children were evacuated from these areas in the last three days of September.<sup>59</sup>

Those first weeks of the blitz were marked by confusion, dislocation and uncertainty. Vera Brittain articulated this in her wartime polemic *England's Hour*:

I remember the first fortnight of astonished confusion, when the relentless rain of high-explosive and delayed-action bombs caused whole areas to be evacuated and roped off for days. I recall the letters which took nearly a week to reach one London district from another, because post offices, like banks, were bombed.<sup>60</sup>

The first month of bombing stretched ARP to the full and it took time for the new special commissioners to get services functioning.<sup>61</sup> The wave of evacuation, the visible evidence of bombardment, the dislocation of London and press reports that articulated the high levels of damage to the East End prompted the need for an official response.<sup>62</sup> Laurence Gilliam, a BBC producer, planned a programme entitled 'London under Fire,' which aimed to tell 'London's own story of life under war conditions, recorded in the streets, the shelters, the shops and in the homes of Londoners themselves.'<sup>63</sup> Andrew Stewart an officer at the Ministry of Information wrote to Gilliam offering his support for the programme and asking

---

<sup>59</sup> TNA/CAB/68/7/16, War Cabinet. Civil Defence Report No. 22. Submitted by the Minister of Home Security, covering the period from 1 September 1940 to 29 September 1940, p. 116.

<sup>60</sup> Brittain, *England's Hour*, p. 186.

<sup>61</sup> It took months for Fisher's service to get up to full strength and resources were stretched as tensions emerged over the use of military personnel for civilian needs, NA/HO 186/205, Damage, Reconstruction and salvage: Military Assistance to Warren Fisher. Heavy raids always strained services. Following heavy raiding in Southwark on April 16 and April 19 1941, P. Smart the Borough Engineer and Surveyor for Southwark, wrote to the War Debris and Disposal Service (WDS) asking for assistance with the clearance of debris as 'many important roads are now blocked and areas devastated. Dead horses, damaged hops, and perishable goods are buried beneath the ruins with the danger of epidemics, rats and disease. This is the central London Borough, the roads of which carry most of the south bound traffic and is a most congested area: LMA/LCC/CE/WAR/2/18, Letter from P. Smart, Borough Engineer and Surveyor, Southwark, to the WDS, 21 April 1941.

<sup>62</sup> 'In the Trail of the Bomber: Heavy Damage in East London,' *The Times*, 9 September 1940, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> BBC/WAC/R19/673, Letter from Laurence Gilliam to the editor of *Radio Times*, 25 September 1940.

that they: 'Take the line that London is carrying on - not that it is out of action. Gigantic rumours are being spread by evacuees who want to be the centre of attention (I went home the other day so I know!) and which should counter them.'<sup>64</sup>

### *London Carries On. Tours of the East End*

The concern over the need to show that London was carrying on made the East End a site of battlefield tourism in which officials entered and appropriated the space.<sup>65</sup> The damaged East End became the location of public pilgrimages in which local and national leaders paraded around and publicly witnessed the effects of the blitz. This area had long been a site of anxious modernity: surveyors, urban planners, observers, philanthropists and socialist welfare reformers visited the area to consider the impact of industrial modernity on the masses.<sup>66</sup> The bombing of the East of the city brought the area under a national spotlight as a new kind of modernity rained down on the industrial district.

On 9 September the King toured the East End to witness first hand the impact of the first night of raids. The *Evening Standard* recorded that 'The King to-day toured the East End, visiting many places where German bombs had wrecked homes during the ten-hour raid on London.' The use of the King was a means to assert that there was both national interest and empathy for the victims of bombing. Indeed the *Standard* reported: 'Pushing past a police

---

<sup>64</sup> BBC/WAC/R19/673, Letter from Andrew Stewart to Laurence Gilliam, 25 September 1940.

<sup>65</sup> On the idea of the appropriation of space see: Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 163-169. Nicholas Saunders argues that battlefield landscape can be understood as a material object because battlefields are products of human action rather than natural processes: Nicholas J. Saunders, 'Apprehending Memory: Material Culture and War, 1919-1939,' in: Peter Liddle and John Bourne and Ian Whitehead (eds), *The Great War, 1914-1945* (London, 2000), p. 477.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander, 'A New Civilization?', pp. 296-320.



sergeant one woman tapped the King on the arm and shouted: "I'll bet 'Itler daren't go among his people like this."<sup>67</sup> The entry of the King into the *East End* was a piece of morale boosting propaganda. The *East London Advertiser* reported that the people of the East End gave the king a cheer and it was noted he took time to listen to people's experiences and problems.<sup>68</sup> Yet, this was more than about morale, the entry of the King into the area marked out a visible cross-class appropriation of the area in which entering the East End to witness, walk and listen to its inhabitants mediated the crisis occurring in the area.

Indeed, on 4 October the King undertook another tour of the East End, this time to visit the shelters. The reporting of this event served two functions. *The Times* asserted that the tour took place during an air raid. In this way the King was presented as getting on fearlessly with his own work despite the raids as they 'drove to the shelters while the anti-aircraft shells were exploding in the clouds.'<sup>69</sup> The King became symbolic of people carrying on, despite danger. The King also acted as a neutral observer in a context in which the shelter question had again become an issue.<sup>70</sup> David Cannadine argues that during the interwar period George V and VI came to embody 'consensus, stability and community.'<sup>71</sup> The latter's presence in London during the war has been understood as morale boosting, showing the monarchy were prepared to stand with their people and

---

<sup>67</sup> Philip Ziegler recorded that the socialist mayor of Stepney was 'immensely impressed by the King's indifference to comfort and safety when visiting the bombed sites' and cited a woman saying to him the exact same thing as the *Standard* quoted: 'I bet old 'Itler daren't go among his people like this: *London at War*, p. 165.

<sup>68</sup> 'The Visit of the King: Chats with Raid Victims. Cheered by Workers,' *Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*, 14 September 1940, front page.

<sup>69</sup> 'The King's Tour in Air Raid, Visit to East End Shelters,' *The Times*, 5 October 1940, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> MOA/TC23/7/A, Interview with "Tubby" Rosen, Organising secretary of the Stepney Tenants defence league, outlines issues over lack of deep shelters in Stepney, 17 September 1940.

<sup>71</sup> David Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition,' c. 1820-1977,' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 140.

face danger.<sup>72</sup> However, his tours of the damaged East End also offered a politically neutral way of showing the state was taking seriously the problems created by bombing. The King as a figure of consensus was presented as having no vested interests and thus his gaze on the East End would be one that captured and understood the truth of their experiences, bolstered by the common unity of living under and surviving the bombing.

The presence of the King in the East End after bombing ritualised the East End tour establishing a set of practices. The reporting of the King in the East End allowed the bombing of a small area of London to become a media event, establishing the bombardment as significant and turning it into a collective experience. The neutral reporting of the event by the press was integrative allowing readers of reports to witness damage to the East End with the King. His presence with his people and the reporting of the excitement and sense of pride in his presence in the East End, even articulated by a socialist mayor, also offered a sense of loyalty acting to legitimate an imagined national community embodied within the figure of the monarch.<sup>73</sup> In this way the King at once gained legitimacy from his presence in the East End, offered legitimacy to that often-contentious space and opened up the bombing of the area to the national gaze via the press.

Similarly, tours of the East End made by politicians were a public display of governance. In the early days of the blitz, prior to the instigation of new services, visits by politicians acted as a means to physically place state authority within the East End. In the first weeks of raiding, tensions grew over the issue of shelters, people forced their way into tubes and these tunnels had to be

---

<sup>72</sup> Ziegler, *London at War*, pp. 164-5.

<sup>73</sup> Mary Vipond, 'The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Media Event,' *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 35 (2010), pp. 153-54.

regulated and made sanitary for the large numbers of people that chose to sleep there.<sup>74</sup> Others continued to politicise the issue of shelters by using the social-geography of the city. On 15 September the Stepney Tennant's Defence League took forty homeless people to the Savoy hotel and demanded to be let into the shelter, resulting in a clash with the police. The League pushed for the 'commandeering of hotels in the west end, where the homeless of the east end can go to.'<sup>75</sup> The perceived social divisions of the city were used performatively to make demands for those in the East through a deliberate occupation of the space of West London.<sup>76</sup>

Coinciding with the growing tensions over the provision of adequate shelters, on 10 October 1940 the Home Secretary Herbert Morrison toured the London shelters. As Home Secretary, Morrison was the appropriate figure to make this tour. As the former leader of the LCC, he was a well-known public figure within London; he had been involved with the debates over shelters prior to the war and had opened the Tecton exhibition.<sup>77</sup> The *East London Advertiser* presented Morrison as known and liked by local people and after finding out he was sheltering in a large communal shelter with them recorded him as being greeted with cries of "good old Herb."<sup>78</sup> Morrison's presence again mediated between the local and national, his witnessing of the problems in shelters and his knowledge of London government allowed for a symbolic reassurance that issues were being solved.

---

<sup>74</sup> 'Air-Raid Shelters and the Public Health,' *Hansard*, vol. 117 cols. 716-33, 20 November 1940.

<sup>75</sup> MOA/TC23/7/A, Collection of information from the Stepney Tenants Defence League, 15 September 1940.

<sup>76</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, p. 163.

<sup>77</sup> See Chapter three.

<sup>78</sup> 'Shelterers Greet Mr. Herbert Morrison,' *Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*, 17 October 1940, front page.

The physical presence of politicians within the East End was a strategy to offer reassurance and status to the worst hit areas and a way of rendering those areas meaningful to those consuming news and images of bombardment.<sup>79</sup> The East End became the site of multiple visits by politicians. On the evening of the 8 September 1940, after the first heavy raid, Churchill visited the heavily bombed districts of East London. His presence gave status to the areas he visited. In turn Churchill's authority gave authenticity to accounts of the bombing, adding weight to the descriptions of how the area was coping. *The Times* recorded that Churchill was 'deeply impressed both by the resilient spirit of the civil population in a grim ordeal and by all that he saw and heard of the splendid work.'<sup>80</sup> Similarly during September Lord Woolton, the Minister of Food, visited the East End to discover how the 'people were standing up to the reign of terror from the air.' He was recorded as commenting, 'they were magnificent. I came away with a lump in my throat.'<sup>81</sup>

The reporting of Ministers in the East End acted as a means to provide order to the bombing of the area. The views of the East End filtered through the descriptions of the Ministers touring the damage meant the visions were structured by a visible reassurance that actions could and were being taken. Churchill, by voicing the success of the Civil Defences, offered reassurance that services were able to cope with the raids; Lord Woolton confirmed food services were able to operate after raids; and Morrison acted as a reliable witness to

---

<sup>79</sup> Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>80</sup> 'Civil Defence of London,' *The Times*, 10 September 1940, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> 'They were magnificent...Lord Woolton Visits Raided Areas in East End,' *Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*, 28 September 1940, p. 2.

shelter problems.<sup>82</sup> During the first month of bombing, when services to deal with homelessness and the levels of damage were not in place, these visits gave a public presence to governance, reassuring that solutions would be found to problems.

By October journalists were brought on guided tours of London and the East End in an effort to mediate rumours and present the right kind of picture to the public. In the first week of October the Ministry of Information arranged for fifty journalists to be taken on a tour of bombed London. The *East London Advertiser* reported that the 'outstanding impression they [the journalists] received was that London was carrying on.' After touring thirty-five miles of London streets they thought that 'by contrast with reports reaching them in the provinces, the actual damage to London after a month of bombing was small.'<sup>83</sup> On 8 October forty foreign newspaper correspondents visited East London. They were shown a homeless centre; clothing provided for the homeless by the Lord Mayor's Fund and help from the British and American Red Cross; and a school where meals were provided for people without the means to cook their own.<sup>84</sup>

In the first months of the blitz on London official visits to the East End acted as a way to contain the destruction. The press, the BBC, journalists, politicians and the royal family all came to witness the damage. Their gaze mediated bombardment, offering solutions to its impact and praise for survivors. It also acted as proof that the war in the air had not succeeded in breaking

---

<sup>82</sup> The public presence of politicians and figures of authority after raids became standard practice in other parts of the country.

<sup>83</sup> 'Journalists Visit East London,' *Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*, 5 October 1940, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> 'Foreign Correspondents Visit East London,' *Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*, 16 October 1940, p. 2.

morale; the cross-class appropriation of the East End offered a vision of social unity.<sup>85</sup>

### *Representing the East End*

The press did not rely wholly on the perspective of figures of authority to mediate the damage done to the East End. In situations where the vision of the landscape could not be filtered through this official point of view, the point of view of the people within the community was taken and they were presented as heroes, carrying on regardless.

On 28 September 1940, the illustrated news magazine *Picture Post* reported the bombing of the East End of London. The magazine vividly described and illustrated the raids under the sub-heading: 'war, which had been a word, becomes a thing. It becomes a winged thing in the sky. On to the poor East End of London it sheds ruin.'<sup>86</sup> A series of images serialized the bombardment of East End streets. The opening image, 'A London Street in the autumn of 1940', showed two women in a rubble strewn street. Subsequent photographs show: a home that has been directly hit and salvage squads at work; a home wrecked by blast that has smashed the belongings of 'poor people'; a street corner 'where we used to meet,' completely destroyed; a man and a woman carrying possessions over a pile of bricks, 'all that was left of their home'; and a chalked sign explaining the presence of an unexploded bomb, and 'the destruction that has still to come.' The list continues with an image of a family loaded on the back of a lorry, leaving the East End 'for the hopfields, the woods, the country – anywhere to get an

---

<sup>85</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, p. 163.

<sup>86</sup> 'East End at War,' *Picture Post*, 28 September 1940, p. 9.

undisturbed nights rest'; another shows people starting out for shelters.<sup>87</sup> One image glimpses a lucky family finding shelter with friends, while another shows a family on the street asking 'but what is to become of us?'<sup>88</sup> Continuing the 1930s 'socialvision' of bombardment, the bombs falling on London were visualised within a working-class urban landscape: the consequences of unchecked modernity have rained down on these working folk, who are forced to seek protection in a landscape of the past, seeking shelter in woods, hopfields, the country.<sup>89</sup>

Within the *Picture Post* article there are no officials to offer a narrative of order through governance. In place of the official is the East Ender. The subheading to the article comments: 'with courage, with patience and with friendship, the East Enders carry on.'<sup>90</sup> This characterization of the East End as heroic was echoed across other reports. The *East End Advertiser* reported that when the fifty provincial journalists reached Poplar the 'event of the day occurred.' They were taken to see a large crater and were joined by a little boy who cycled over to them. Here he gave a press conference of his own 'Yes, he heard the explosion. No, he wasn't frightened. Yes, he in his shelter. No, his sister wasn't frightened either (this with a jolly little laugh).' The journalists were so 'impressed by his courage, his resolution, his cheerfulness,' they made a collection.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Sladen suggests this movement was also part of accessing leisure, 'Wartime Holidays,' pp. 215-246.

<sup>88</sup> 'East End at War,' *Picture Post*, 28 September 1940, pp. 9-13.

<sup>89</sup> See chapter 2. Indeed, the pressure of raids prompted the organization of schemes to provide respite to those in the worst hit areas in the form of rest schemes. An excellent record of a rest scheme and the kinds of people who were sent away from London is held a

<sup>90</sup> 'East End at War,' *Picture Post*, 28 September 1940, p. 9.

<sup>91</sup> 'Journalists Visit East London,' *Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*, 5 October 1940, p. 3.



Figure 5.2. The Heroic East End. Source: David Low, cartoon, 'Impregnable Target,' *The Evening Standard*, 11 September 1940, p. 5.

On 10 October *The Listener* ran an article on whether there should be reprisals for the German bombing of Britain.<sup>92</sup> Within the piece the East End was the space used to consider the arguments for and against reprisal. The writer describes two people coming to his office, one a girl on whose doorstep a bomb had fallen, the other a man who has been 'down the East End of London to see what things were like down there after nearly three weeks of night raids.' On the one side was anger at the indiscriminate loss of her home. On the other, the man told a story of the East End people refusing to be driven from their homes: 'That is the spirit of these poor people of London.'<sup>93</sup> The East End became the symbol of the London Blitz. On the 11 September David Low captured the idealism that

<sup>92</sup> Although this notion of reprisal was a statement for the public, the British had begun their first bombing offensives against cities on 11 May 1940: Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, p. 67.

<sup>93</sup> 'Should We Take Reprisals?', *The Listener*, 10 October 1940, p. 524.



became associated with the *East End* (Figure 5.2). In a cartoon entitled the 'impregnable heart,' he showed streets of terraced houses protected by the Cockney Heart.

Descriptions and images of the bombed-out working classes became the visual currency of the London blitz, circulated within magazines and newspapers and incorporated into a wider urban visual culture, most clearly seen in the use of such an image for the frontispiece of the *County of London Plan* (CLP) (Figure 5.3).<sup>94</sup> Visual images and narrative combined to produce public stories about resistance, stoicism and good humour, all underpinned by a national consensus of social justice.<sup>95</sup> The frontispiece from the CLP utilizes the idea that the blitz constituted a discovery of an able, courageous working class. The planning document offers a new vision for London and the lives of its inhabitants.<sup>96</sup> It exploits the language first established in the early days of the blitz as the East End was appropriated as a national symbol of survival. In the CLP the payoff is a

---

<sup>94</sup> The CLP was a planning document produced in 1943 outlining ideas for the rebuilding of London: J. H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *County of London Plan: prepared for the London County Council* (London, 1943). The shift of the narrative of the blitz into a narrative on urban planning and clearing of London slums by bombs is entrenched within histories of the urban planning profession and more widely in explorations of the physical reconstruction of London see: Tatsuya Tsubaki, 'Planners and the Public: British Popular Opinion on Housing During the Second World War,' *Contemporary British History*, 14:1 (2000), pp. 81-9; Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities, 1945-55: Myths and Reality,' *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), pp. 27-44; Nick Tiratsoo, 'New Vistas, The Labour Party, Citizenship and the Built Environment in the 1940s,' in Richard Weight and Abigail Beach, *The Right to Belong, Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (London, 1998), pp. 136-156; David Matless, 'Appropriate Geography: Patrick Abercrombie and the Energy of the World,' *Journal of Design History*, 6 (1993), pp. 167-178; Jame Simie (ed.), *Planning London* (London, 1994); Andrew Homer, 'Creating New Communities: The Role of the Neighbourhood Unit in Post-War British Planning,' *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), pp. 63-80.

<sup>95</sup> Paul Rennie, 'Socialvision: Visual Culture and Social Democracy in Britain during World War II,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), pp. 243-60; Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 71-120.

<sup>96</sup> The plan has been discussed as a planning document and as a social vision of London on a number of occasions see: Frank Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43:1 (2004), pp. 120-152; Alexander, 'A New Civilization?,' pp. 297-320.

better future for those who endured the bombardment. Underneath the image is a quote from a speech made by Churchill:

Most painful is the number of small houses inhabited by working folk which have been destroyed...We will rebuild them, more to our credit than some of them were before. London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham may have much more to suffer, but they will rise from their ruins, more healthy and, I hope, more beautiful...In all my life I have never been treated with so much kindness as by the people who have suffered most.<sup>97</sup>

In both Churchill's speech and the *CLP* from ruin comes rebirth, and not just rebirth, but an improved product, healthier and more beautiful than before.



Figure 5.3. The Homeless of London. Source: J.H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *The County Of London Plan* (London, 1943), Frontispiece.

The bombing of the East End offered an opportunity for a mass discovery of the area. The documentary vision of the 1930s became a central way to represent the blitz and to mediate the trauma of the event.<sup>98</sup> The survival of the East Ender was heralded as a heroic moment. The area of the city that had for nearly a century been a site of anxiety and uncertainty became a site of

---

<sup>97</sup> Forshaw and Abercrombie, *The County Of London Plan*, frontispiece.

<sup>98</sup> Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' pp. 71-120.

celebration.<sup>99</sup> The language of heroism directed at the people of the area marked the continuation of the language used in ARP recruitment campaigns, as Sir John Anderson had articulated in the January of 1939, the ARP recruit would act as a national role model: 'because on their example and their influence may largely depend that steadiness which will maintain our morale.'<sup>100</sup> Indeed, the ARP and civil defence workers sat at the top of a hierarchy of East End survivors.<sup>101</sup>

Whereas the national recruitment campaigns had used the monumental spaces of London to assert the status of the civil defender, during the blitz the bombed streetscape itself became the location of heroism.<sup>102</sup> The East End proved itself able to withstand the pressures of modern war. The construction of the East End in this way had a symbiotic relationship with those officials who then entered the space, offering them a means to project values of unity, survival and hope and linking this into the agenda of urban improvement that emerged in the interwar period.

---

<sup>99</sup> For an excellent discussion of the social-geography of London see: Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Oxford, 2006).

<sup>100</sup> TNA/HO 45/18214, Lord Privy Seal, Speech, Albert Hall, Tuesday 24 January 1939, 8.20-8.40.

<sup>101</sup> This vision of the heroic East End civil defender is particularly prevalent in Humphrey Jennings 1943 film *Fires Were Started*. The film dramatically illustrates the work of the AFS through one night's work putting out a huge warehouse fire in the East End docks during the blitz. Within the film a 'well-to-do' recruit is initiated into the service by a group of working-class firemen, *Once I was a Fireman* (Humphrey Jennings, 1943, UK, Crown Film Unit); Michael Eaton, 'Humphrey Jennings,' in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford, 1996), p. 329.

<sup>102</sup> Underneath Low's cartoon was an article aiming to recruit more ARP warden's entitled: 'Hero in Every Street.' The article did not focus specifically on the East End but on the 'battle of London' and the ordinary hero, the air raid warden, who went out night after dangerous night 'on the streets looking after everybody's interests except his own: Hero in Every Street,' *The Evening Standard*, 11 September 1940, p. 5.

### 5.3. Walking the City: Blitz Tourism

#### *East End Tourism*

The frontispiece to the CLP celebrates the integrity of the people that suffered bombardment and links them to a wider cultural construction of the survivor of the blitz as heroic and worthy of an improved urban environment. Within *England's Hour*, Vera Brittain makes a tour of the bomb-damaged East End. Just as with the CLP the space of the city offers Brittain a means to articulate calls for post-war change, particularly through support and help for the working classes.<sup>103</sup> In her record of visits to the heavily bombed areas of the East End, Brittain exposes the fragility of the lives and homes that have been damaged through no fault of their own and demands a better outcome than the last war.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, she visits an evacuee depot in Oxford that accommodated and looked for billets for 700 people. Brittain notes how staff at the centre dealt well with the huge influx of people from the East End. She hoped the experience of helping these fragile people and the knowledge gained would translate into post-war change. She felt that change could only occur when 'the West End really knows and cares about how the East End lives.'<sup>105</sup> Later Brittain goes further suggesting that:

I have been witnessing not merely a country at war, but the closing stages of a civilization. It was not an equally distributed civilization; my two hours in the Oxford cinema re-emphasized the shameful standards of

---

<sup>103</sup> John Baxendale suggests that Priestley's *English Journey* has often been mis-read as a backward looking English travelogue that celebrates an historical English landscape and the countryside as a national symbol and is critical of the urban consumerism that dominates England. Baxendale suggests that in fact Priestley is not critical of cities but of unplanned modernity and considers questions around the nature of urban civilization. Brittain's *England's Hour* considers many of the same issues. John Baxendale "I had seen a lot of Englands": J.B. Priestley, Englishness and the People, *History Workshop Journal*, 51 (2001), pp. 87-111.

<sup>104</sup> Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye,' pp. 71-120; Brittain, *England's Hour*, p. 151.

<sup>105</sup> Brittain, *England's Hour*, pp. 170-71.

living which we and our rulers have shut away in the East Ends of overcrowded cities and complacently forgotten.<sup>106</sup>

The social divisions in London give Brittain a tangible way to demand change.

Brittain used the social geography of London as a means to articulate her calls for change. This supports Stuart Hall's argument that the war prompted a representational shift in which a kind of new social imagining emerged in which British people began to see their world differently and to place themselves differently within it. This is particularly related to the mass use of documentary photography techniques that used realism to assert truth claims about the subjects of their photographs and films. Hall suggests, almost using the same language as Brittain, that the ubiquity of such wartime images of every day life in Britain made society transparent, revealing the other half of the nation, the hidden half, to the more powerful half.<sup>107</sup>

Brittain's descriptions of the discovery of the East End almost directly correlate with Hall's arguments and more widely with the presentation of the East End within the wider press. This too is reflected within the use of the image of a bombed terrace street within the CLP. The photograph trades on documentary realism, the image offers the viewer a truth claim that they are witnessing something real occurring, what John Tagg refers to as a 'status of truth.'<sup>108</sup> The children within the image looking back at the camera underline this: they are aware that their lives are being photographed and this gives legitimacy to the image, as if a moment has been captured.

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p. 180.

<sup>107</sup> Hall, 'The Social Eye,' pp. 71-120.

<sup>108</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 9.

Yet, there is a deep ambivalence within the image used in the CLP. The people within are hard to interpret. In the background, they stand in muddled groups, seemingly immobile and inactive. To the left of the image, a distraught woman gasps seemingly in horror while another stands beside her resigned to whatever the man walking out of shot heads towards (Figure 5.4.). In the centre, a man on the back of a lorry stares at the camera, face in a grimace, head slightly bowed as if nodding in acceptance. To the right, a woman stands with her hands on her hips beside a woman blackened with dust. The woman with her hands on her hips appears contemplative, as if questioning what to do next. This is a moment of suffering and processing, possibly staged. It catches a group of people forced to make unplanned decisions about their lives and futures.



Figure 5.4. Post-raid trauma? Source: J.H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *The County Of London Plan* (London, 1944), Frontispiece.

The people in figure 5.4 do not conform to any idealized standard of behaviour. They are messy, exposed twofold by the camera and by the damage to the houses they formerly inhabited. They are strangely difficult to read, as ambiguous and uncertain as the ruined street they once lived in. Despite the stasis there is also the promise of movement here, the rubble, the possessions on

the street and the blown out doors and windows have made this place no longer habitable. The image reveals unity of experience but a breakup of physical unity; these people are not staying they are preparing to leave. This East End seems at odds with the account of the East End in *The Listener*: 'That is the spirit of these poor people of London. They simply will not be driven from their homes. If you forcibly take them away for their own safety, they will only come back as soon as they see a chance.'<sup>109</sup>

Similarly, while Vera Brittain, like the politicians and planners before her, used the social geography of the city to discuss class relationships, her encounter with the bomb-damaged East End was ambivalent. On the 17 September 1940 Brittain visited the East End for a meeting at Kingsley Hall in Poplar. On leaving the meeting she took a taxi to Paddington and recorded in her diary:

It was a nightmare journey like one of Wells' most terrible fantasies. Went along Mile End Road, then through City. Dislocation appalling everywhere; yawning gaps where buildings had been; immense detours, huge traffic blocks, piles of rubble, craters in street. Made me feel too sick for words.<sup>110</sup>

In the penultimate chapter of *England's Hour* Brittain describes a journey around the worst hit areas of London, which she titles 'the ruins of Troy.' The chapter is a subversion of the popular travelogue and offers not reassurance, but a journey into a blighted landscape.<sup>111</sup> The chapter opens in the East End on Cherry Tree Pier, on the south bank of the Thames, in Bermondsey's Dockland. From the pier,

---

<sup>109</sup> Should We Take Reprisals?', *The Listener*, 10 October 1940, p. 524.

<sup>110</sup> Vera Brittain, diary entry Tuesday 17 September 1940: *Wartime Chronicle, Vera Brittain's Diary 1939-1945*, edited by Alan Bishop and Y. Aleksandra Bennett (London, 1939), p. 56.

<sup>111</sup> John Baxendale discusses the English travelogue with reference to Angus Calder's analysis of J.B. Priestley's *English Journey*. Calder characterizes the journey as a 'popular travelogue,' a part of what Baxendale describes as the 'deluge of English travel books which poured from the presses in the 1930s,' that offered a celebration of the English landscape and skirted around 'industrial districts and modern conurbations,' in: "I had seen a lot of Englands': J.B. Priestley, Englishness and the People, *History Workshop Journal*, 51 (2001), p. 91; see also: Calder, *The Myth*, p. 198.

Brittain looks to the west, observing the pool of London and the Tower. Her eyes scan in a sweep over the East End, surveying the burnt-out skeletons of warehouses; a reminder of the huge fires that had guided the raiders in to destroy the docks. By surveying the scene from the other side of the river, Brittain shifts her narrative temporally, using the river as a memory device. She recalls how the bombing had caused dislocation so bad that the river was for a time, the easiest means to transport commuters into the City. Initially then, the East End is visualised from a distance, Brittain's gaze sweeps along the river and takes in the area in panorama, a traditional tourist perspective that reflects perhaps that while Brittain is acquainted with this area it is not the location of her home, that she is a visitor here.<sup>112</sup> While at the time of writing the bombing continues, there have already been changes which allow Brittain to process the landscape as memory. The main roads out of the dockland area have been cleared and services put in place to ensure people can get in and out of the most damaged parts of the city, a reminder of the way in which planning and governance can offer solutions to urban chaos.<sup>113</sup>

Continuing her tour, Brittain hires a car from a Cockney tobbaconist to see 'what more we can of the consequences of the Battle of London.' The Cockney

---

<sup>112</sup> David Gilbert notes that the panorama was particularly used in tourist exhibitions within cities as a means to give a quick and immediate overview: 'London in all its Glory - or How to Enjoy London': Guidebook representations of Imperial London,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), p. 293. Brittain, *England's Hour*, pp. 199-200. Fred M. Leventhal suggests that for many women writers the war offered the first opportunity to have contact with the East End and particularly with slum dwellers. He argues that they are embarking on 'a type of urban spectatorship reminiscent of Victorian social investigators whom Deborah Nord and Judith Walkowitz documented as transgressing social as well as geographical boundaries. Indeed, Britain constructs the city as divided between East and West and the war prompts her to look to offer herself for relief work in the East End, see: See Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago, 1992), esp. pp. 15-39; Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (Ithaca, 1995), cited in: Fred M. Leventhal, 'British Writers, American Readers: Women's Voices in Wartime,' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 32 (2000), pp. 1-18.

<sup>113</sup> Brittain, *England's Hour*, p. 200.



owner-driver acts as a tour guide and Britain asserts his authority on two counts. Through defining him as a 'cockney' she classifies him as a native East Ender, able to translate this area of the city through personal knowledge rather than as an imperious guide offering up the city in a comprehensive and secure way.<sup>114</sup> Through recounting the driver's stories of the bombing of his own borough, Brittain also represents the driver as an authority on the blitz; the driver informs Brittain, he heard and got to a particularly bad incident that had 'wiped out' an entire street, even before the ARP were on the scene.<sup>115</sup> Brittain not only seeks to render the East End visible, but she needs local knowledge to do so. While bombing may have been a common experience for many in London it had not broken down the culturally constructed barriers that defined different areas.

In turn, despite having this knowledgeable guide, in some places the damage they encounter renders the city completely alien. On driving to Bow the devastation at Bow Bridge is so great that 'even our damage-accustomed eyes examine it with a fixed stare of incredulity.' Here even the driver's 'comprehensive knowledge of London' is 'defeated by this sinister metamorphosis,' and he is forced to stop and ask one of the Military Pioneers digging among the ruins, 'a conscripted student of East End archeology.'<sup>116</sup> Despite the driver's local knowledge, even he is lost within this landscape, forced to rely on the agents of the state brought in to deal with the urban battlefield. Here Brittain suggests that the inhabitants of the East End have been alienated by the impact of the blitz.

---

<sup>114</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 88-94.

<sup>115</sup> On the idea of those who had experienced the blitz gaining a sense of pride in their survival see: Bell, *London Was Ours*, Chapter one.

<sup>116</sup> Brittain, *England's Hour*, p. 203.

Brittain was not the only one who was prompted to make a pilgrimage to the blitzed East End. On 24 November 1940, I.S. Haslewood was off duty and decided to 'tour surrey docks,' in Bermondsey, with a friend. Only two months before she had seen the fires at the docks as a 'dull red glow in the sky,' that had marked the first night of the blitz.<sup>117</sup> During her November visit she witnessed the impact of those fires first hand and like Brittain found herself shocked by the decimation:

'nothing left of the docks except skeletons...It was like a dead forest of distorted and mangled steel girders, and these lifeless shells, standing gauntly in the still sunlight. There was no life of any sort as far as the eye could see – utterly deserted – still, grimly silent.'<sup>118</sup>

The desire to witness destruction and to travel to, and around, the worst bits of the damaged city reflects the disturbing and disruptive nature of the bombing of London.<sup>119</sup> Despite witnessing bombing first hand both Haslewood and Brittain felt the need to visit the other parts of the city that had been reported as damaged or that they had seen from a distance. In an interview about his memories of his childhood spent in wartime London, Gerry Braham recalled it as 'an incomplete city that was grey and damaged.'<sup>120</sup> Similarly, Elizabeth Bowen in her novel the *Heat of the Day*, set in London during the war, describes London during the autumn of the blitz as 'apocryphal,' a weird uncanny world; an enclave, broken up and divided, punctuated by islands of

---

<sup>117</sup> IWM 12994 04/40/1, Private Papers of I S Haslewood, diary entries, 7 September and 24 November, 1940.

<sup>118</sup> IWM 12994 04/40/1, Private Papers of I S Haslewood, diary entries, 24 November 1940.

<sup>119</sup> Gabriel Moshenska, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests? Counter-Monumentality and the Commemoration of the London Blitz,' *Journal of Social Archeology*, 10 (2010), p. 22.

<sup>120</sup> MOL/2001.2. MOL Oral History Collection, Interview with Gerry Braham, 9 and 23 November 2000, Reel 1.

destruction.<sup>121</sup> These islands are the roped off streets and ruined buildings that have become the battlefield of London:

All through London, the ropings-off of dangerous tracts of street made Islands of exalted if stricken silence, and people crowded against the ropes to admire the sunny emptiness of the other side. The diversion of traffic out of blocked main thoroughfares into byways.<sup>122</sup>

While official tours of the East End sought to affirm the area as a site of survival, these personal pilgrimages by Brittain and Haslewood suggest that there were rival journeys to those taken by officials, ones in which individuals sought personally to make sense of the damage being done to their city. Brittain suggested that the battle of London could only be made sense of as a whole retrospectively:

How much of those of us who survive this war will have to learn about our own lives when the struggle is over! Like the men on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918, we know what is happening only in our own sector of the battle.<sup>123</sup>

This need to visit and to witness points to the contentious nature of the urban battlefield: official projections of the meaning of the landscape were in competition with personal perspectives.<sup>124</sup> For Brittain and Haslewood, touring the damaged East End was a means to come to terms with the impact of the blitz they had only seen from a distance. For Brittain, this was also a way to articulate her pacifism, her sense of the failure of the lessons of the last war, and a moment of discovery in which the social divisions of the city became exposed and in response to which she was able to project demands for an improved future. Yet, Brittain and Haslewood were also visitors, and thus they explored the landscape

---

<sup>121</sup> Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*, with an introduction by Roy Foster (London, 1998), p. 91.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>123</sup> Brittain, *England's Hour*, p. 189.

<sup>124</sup> Saunders, 'Apprehending Memory,' p. 477.

as self defined West Enders: both women lived in Chelsea and when Brittain visited her side of the city she commented: 'A new journey takes us out to the Western areas of London, already more familiar than the East.'<sup>125</sup> The final section of this chapter considers the function of walking and touring the area by someone who lived and worked in the East End.

#### **5.4. Bill Regan's East End: The Bombing of the Isle of Dogs**

At the outbreak of war William 'Bill' Regan lived in the East End on the Isle of Dogs, where he had been since his family moved there when he was three. His wife and two daughters were born on the island and he claimed to know everyone of his own generation and many of previous generations.<sup>126</sup> Bill and his family were well known in the area, tied into a close network of friends and family, linked by proximity, work and leisure.<sup>127</sup> Bill was a keen cyclist and had many friends on the island through his membership of the dockland settlement, where he had taken part in activities and holidays in his youth.<sup>128</sup> At the outbreak of war Regan was a staff bricklayer with the Office of Works at the Houses of Parliament, 'a job for life'; until war broke out and he was 'suspended for the duration.' Faced with unemployment he decided to volunteer and went to 'Poplar Town Hall, at Bromley-by-Bow, and enquired about various A.R.P...services.' He chose the Rescue Service and was taken on as a member of a

---

<sup>125</sup> Brittain, *England's Hour*, p. 208.

<sup>126</sup> IHT/AUB/318, Bill Regan, Story sent in for the Isle of Dogs at War, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> Eve Hostettler describes the interwar island as divided into small neighbourhoods, shaped by nineteenth-century development and settlement patterns and retained because young married couples often lived close to their parents, and children and adults followed the same route every day – to visit grandparents, to get to school, to work, to the corner pub, to the local shops. School leavers often went to work in the same place as their parents, aunts or uncles, and frequently courted and married within the locality. Many had a 'deep-rooted knowledge of environment and people,' and felt a sense of security and well-being in this,' see: *The Isle of Dogs, Memory and Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (London, 2002), p. 7. On working-class community networks see, Ellen Ross, 'Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War I,' *History Workshop*, 15 (1983), pp 4-27.

<sup>128</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 16 September 1940.

Heavy Rescue Party on the island after telling the recruiters he 'would like to work on the Isle of Dogs, and knowing the location of every street and factory, would cut down the time taken to reach an incident, and hopefully save a life or two.'<sup>129</sup>

Bill recorded his wartime experiences in a series of handwritten diaries spread across various notebooks and scraps of paper that covered the first blitz on London and then the period between January 1942 and September 1944.<sup>130</sup> He originally wrote the diary for his two young daughters who had been evacuated to Oxfordshire, should he or his wife die during the raids.<sup>131</sup> The act of recording his personal experiences offered him agency over his own legacy; the diary is a material object that brokers Bill's past, presenting his children a version of himself.<sup>132</sup> The diary provides another function, acting as a space for Bill to make sense of his own self, a site to outline his own responses to events and to weave his personal narrative into the larger historical narrative of the war.<sup>133</sup> Writing too offered Bill agency to act as an historical witness, recording

---

<sup>129</sup> IHT/AUB/318, Bill Regan, Story sent in for the Isle of Dogs at War, p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> The manuscripts of the diary were typed up by his daughter some forty years later working with a local historian, John Fines. Bill too translated his experience, distilling it into a wartime poem about his experiences in the Heavy Rescue and later participating in recreating the former community of the Isle of Dogs by submitting his memories to the Island History Trust, established in the 1980s to record the changing landscape of the island at the cusp of redevelopment; IWM/88/10/1 Private Papers of WB Regan; IHT/AUB/318, Bill Regan, Story sent in for the Isle of Dogs at War. Thanks to Eve Hostettler, one of the original curators of the collection established at the trust for sharing with me the ever-growing archive as well as deep-knowledge of the area and inviting me to one of the trust's excellent open-days where I met current and past residents of the Island with memories of the war on the Island and of the Regans.

<sup>131</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Bill's preface to the diary; IWM/88/10/1, Dr. John Fines, West Sussex Institute for Higher Education, Preface to Bill Regan's diary, p. iv; IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 20 March 1941.

<sup>132</sup> On family history and objects as brokers of the past see, Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London, 1995).

<sup>133</sup> James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 4-5; see also, Dorothy Sheridan, Brian Street and David Bloome, *Writing Ourselves: Mass Observation and Literacy Practices* (Cresskill, 2000).

the damage to his island and asserting his authority and right to do this.<sup>134</sup> The diary offers a testimony of the experience of being an ARP worker in the East End during the blitz, but also offers Bill a space through which to try and make sense of the damage being done to his home.

The Isle of Dogs was one of the most heavily bombed areas of London during the war (Figure 5.5). The concentration of industry and warehousing on the island as well as its visibility from the air made it an obvious target.<sup>135</sup> Yet, there was nothing that could have prepared the islanders for the intensity of the bombing.<sup>136</sup> Bill had tenancy of a six-roomed house on Manchester Road in Cubbitt Town on the east side of the island (Figure 5.6).<sup>137</sup> By 1945, 75% of homes in Cubbitt Town were found to be unfit for habitation. The population of the island had shrunk from 21,000 to 9,000. One third of all warehousing was destroyed as well as schools, a public bath and twelve public houses.<sup>138</sup> Under the pressure of the nightly raids and wanton destruction that accompanied them, life on the island was stultified. Industry ground to a halt as gas, electricity and water supplies became intermittent and the island slowly emptied of its inhabitants.<sup>139</sup> In September 1940 an official observer wrote: 'The Isle of Dogs is like a district of the dead, and nearly everyone who can go has gone.'<sup>140</sup> The level

---

<sup>134</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>135</sup> Reginald Bell the Group 3 ARP Coordinating officer commented that above all, London could be navigated by 'the U-shaped curve of the river around the Isle of Dogs – London's appendix, so to speak – is a feature well known to air navigators for its conspicuous individuality' and that this coupled with the concentration of industry on the Island meant no enemy could afford to leave it untouched by bombs: *The Bull's Eye*, With a Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison (London, 1943), p. 17.

<sup>136</sup> Eve Hostettler, *Island at War: Memories of Wartime Life on the Isle of Dogs* (London, 1990), p. 13.

<sup>137</sup> TH/South Poplar Register of Electors (1939), Cubbitt Town Ward, Polling District T; Eve Hostettler, *The Isle of Dogs*, p. 6.

<sup>138</sup> Hostettler, *Island at War*, p. 45.

<sup>139</sup> Hostettler, *The Isle of Dogs*, p. 69.

<sup>140</sup> Hostettler, *Island at War*, p. 45.

of destruction prompted one island inhabitant to describe it as 'like another country.'<sup>141</sup> Another who had family links with the island remembered it as 'like a wilderness, it is a miracle how anyone survived the bombing.'<sup>142</sup> For those that remained on the island it was a battered, bruised and confusing place.

Bill witnessed first-hand the destruction of his home and his island. He lived on the island with Vi until 10 May 1941 when his house became too dilapidated to live in and they moved out to Beckenham.<sup>143</sup> His job in the Rescue Service kept him on the island as others slowly moved away under the pressure of the raids. On the 17 September, after ten days of raiding, Vi's mum and dad left the island for Ilkestone because they didn't 'like the raids.'<sup>144</sup> The couple that they sublet upstairs rooms of their house to, Jackie and Maudie Bowers, left too, moving in with Maudie's mother.<sup>145</sup> Bill noted the dilapidation of the island. Early on in the diary he recorded: 'landscape re-arranged, beginning to look like Spain and Poland.'<sup>146</sup> Bill's house was slowly wrecked through the effects of blast and fire and eventually they slept in one room, but it didn't seem worth moving because other houses available were in no better state than their own.<sup>147</sup> By the December of 1940, his house was so damaged he'd stopped paying rent, although he felt some sympathy for Lew Smith the agent of the landlord because 'he has a book full of empty, or wrecked houses.'<sup>148</sup> After two weeks of bombing Bill recorded a conversation with his local warden Ernie Lowther who told him

---

<sup>141</sup> IHT/TR/053/Interview 1983/ Mr. and Mrs. Horlick.

<sup>142</sup> IHT/AUB/199/Letter to Eve Hostettler from Harry Willmott.

<sup>143</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 11 May 1941, p. 51.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 17 September 1940, p. 12.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, September 1940, p. 27.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, September 1940, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, September 1940, p. 27.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, December 1940, p. 31.

that most people in the area had left the island 'except adult males who work on island - seem to be eating out and sleeping in homes or Andersons.'<sup>149</sup>

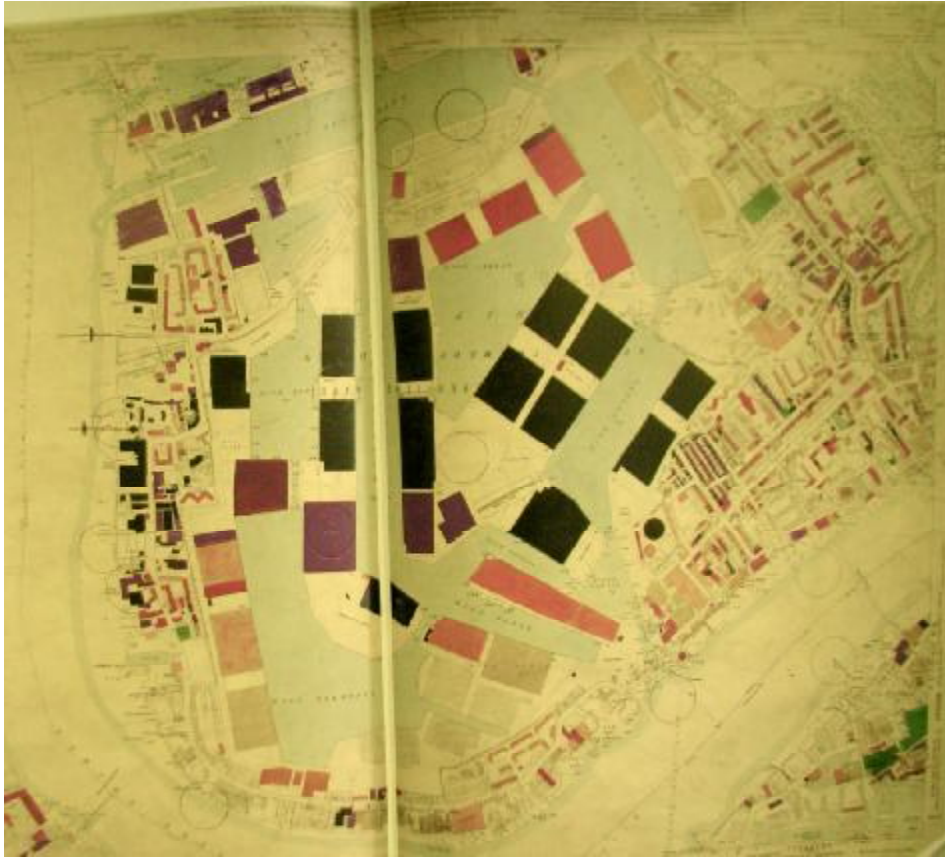


Figure 5.5. Extensive Bomb Damage to the Isle of Dogs. Key: Black - Total destruction; Purple - Damage beyond repair; Dark Red - Seriously damaged, doubtful if repairable; Light Red - Seriously damaged, repairable at cost; Orange (some faded to beige) - General Blast Damage, minor in nature; Yellow - Blast damage, minor in nature; Green - Clearance area; Small Circle - V2 Bomb; Large Circle - V1 Bomb. Source: Ann Saunders (ed.), *The London County Council Bomb Damage Maps 1939-45, with an Introduction by Robin Woolven* (London, 2005), Map 78: Rotherhithe.

Bill structures the impact of the blitz on the island in two ways: through his position as a Rescue Worker, and as an island resident. As a Rescue worker, Bill asserts a sense of authority and agency over the landscape asserting his right to be out on the streets during raids.<sup>150</sup> His descriptions of rescue work at night are often infused with a sense of glee. Bill's squad subvert orders, crossing a

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, September 1940, p. 12.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, September 1940, p. 4.



bridge 'despite being told not to by a policeman'; they compete with the other squads passing them in the night and waving, gesturing and laughing at each other; they storm into pubs during raids for a quick 'wallop' before carrying on into the night; and they delight in bashing down doors, charging through rubble and making silly jokes using props from destroyed buildings.<sup>151</sup> The island of the night raids is one of movement. It is fast paced, centred on the men Bill works with and their shared experience. Bill's descriptions, driving around in raids, match other wartime diaries and memoirs. Amy Bell suggests that Londoners in the blitz reflected the modernist idea of the privileged spectator.<sup>152</sup> Indeed, Bill's assessment of the landscape as being like 'Spain and Poland' connects his island experience into a wider knowledge of the impact of aerial bombardment, asserting that he too is participating in a modern war.

Bill is aware that his experience as a member of a service has allowed him to experience raids in a different way to those not actively participating. He notes that Vi's brothers 'don't like the raids, and they have only been here one night.' He suggests this is because they must 'sit and wait, instead of doing something about it.'<sup>153</sup> Given this privileged perspective on the raids, Bill asserts his own version of the truth, aware that the nature of the ARP service's exploits may have been exaggerated to the public.<sup>154</sup> In March 1942 the poet Sir John Masefield visited the ARP depot in which Bill was stationed to 'dine with some of the men,' and 'see the conditions we sleep and eat under.' Bill was determined

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, entries: September 1940, December 1940, pp. 4, 22, 35; 44.

<sup>152</sup> Bell, *London Was Ours*, p. 26.

<sup>153</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 17 September 1940, p. 12.

<sup>154</sup> Bell similarly argues that diarists articulated a need to record daily details of lives to give historical legitimacy. Bell notes that published writers, often journalists, were restricted by censors and emphasised the courage of the British populace in the face of raids and the historical durability of London. Diarists often disliked official narratives and felt they could correct official versions: *London Was Ours*, p. 17.

that the poet would see the reality of the shabby ill-equipped ARP depot and refused to be gagged by the men sent from the Town Hall to accompany the poet.<sup>155</sup>



Figure 5.6. Location of Bill and Vi's home, 271, Manchester Road, six houses south of the Pier Tavern on the corner of Pier Street and Manchester Road. Source: Address from, IWM/88/10/1, Violet Regan's Account, p. 1; map: TH/OSS/LCC Rev/1937/XII.2.

During this visit, Bill reserved most scorn for the account of the raids by others in the service. He noted that 'Sir John asked lots of questions and wanted to hear of our experiences,' dismissing him as a tourist of the East End blitz. Bill began recounting stories but recalled:

Our efforts weren't thrilling, and personal enough for Nunn, so he calls in Sergeant. What tales he told. He drove Mr. Kennard through the fires and

<sup>155</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 26 March 1942, p. 64.

bombs, he drove over a time-bomb. He had a wife and child at home, but he had his duty. He knew it was do or die. All with mock modesty, bit with an abundance of 'I's' (The dirty tramp). Ye, he could see the time-bomb, but he went on just the same, and it blew up just as he got past it (The liar). I only hope Sir John remembered all he was told. Lord Dawson of Penn, was also there. They inspected the remains of the depot afterwards. I believe they were astute enough to reject all but the wheat.<sup>156</sup>

Bill in typical mocking fashion draws attention to the way in which visits from officials are stage-managed. By 1942, the memories of the actions of those who participated in the ARP during the blitz had turned into performances of heroism and daring for the visitors to the East End. Bill asserts a truth claim to his version of events by attacking the exaggeration and mock heroism of those around him.

The Rescue Service gives a structure to Bill's experience of London under fire. He is an active participant in dealing with the results of the raids and uses the diary to assert his own version of events. Yet, the paradox at the heart of his account is that he has been forced into this situation by unemployment and he remains as the island slowly empties. Indeed, his nighttime visions were tempered by the daily reality of encountering the decimation of his home. Many in London during the blitz articulated the strange uncanny nature of the city after raids. One man recalled of his childhood experience of walking around the city after a raid: 'it was as if a giant fist had come out of nowhere, er, and just smashed the buildings, you know like broken biscuits, or, a load of toys being kicked over, there was rubble, and ruin.'<sup>157</sup>

Gazing on ruins became a part of daily post-raid practices, a means to make sense of the noises and visions from the night before: to witness damage and to mentally remap the city. Brittain recorded in her diary the 'immense

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 26 March 1942, p. 64.

<sup>157</sup> IWM Sound Recording 5346, Apr/1981.

detours now necessary in central London' and related this to the damaged landscape, noting down which buildings had been damaged.<sup>158</sup> Similarly, Alexander Flett recalled the difficulty of making sense of the city in the daylight:

But as I say the public, during the day it was difficult to say, there were so many changes going on, you know buildings getting [breath] and I found one of the worst, the most difficult things was to try and visualise what was there yesterday. It's very difficult, I mean a place is just bombed out of existence how can you visualise what was there yesterday?<sup>159</sup>

The acts of looking and walking were not just about witnessing for those that inhabited the bombed areas or knew the areas that had been damaged; looking and walking were a form of memory work, a means to recreate the lost cityscape.<sup>160</sup>

During the months of bombing of the Isle of Dogs Bill's diary reveals a deep sense of loss marked both in writing and in a visual record he kept of the damage to the island. His position as a rescue worker and his reading of the space as a member of the service is written alongside his position as an inhabitant of the island. The diary is more than a means to articulate his version of an unprecedented event; it is also an object that acts to mediate a crisis, a personal form of battlefield tourism. I would suggest the diary can be understood as a souvenir. Susan Stewart suggests the souvenir is a part of an event that cannot be repeated, something out of time which must be made sense of; she goes on: 'we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the

---

<sup>158</sup> Vera Brittain, diary entry Saturday 14 September 1940, *Wartime Chronicle*, p. 55.

<sup>159</sup> IWM/16068, Alexander Flett, IWM Interview, recorded 3 October 1995, Tape one, reel 1.

<sup>160</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice*, pp. 117-122.

invention of the narrative.<sup>161</sup> In 1941 Bill noted down the purpose of the diary: 'The only people to read these jottings will be my two little daughters, after we have won the war.'<sup>162</sup> The diary can be conceptualised as part of a desire to do what Stewart describes as inventing a 'realizable world.'<sup>163</sup> Bill's diary is a kind of psychogeography in which the bombed streets are made sense of through the memories related to them.<sup>164</sup> Through recording damage to the island, Bill uses the diary as a memorial to his past life and the lives lived on the island in a context of perceived fragmentation and discontinuity.<sup>165</sup> Particularly during the months of bombing between 1940-41, the diary mediates loss and indeed, bereavement.<sup>166</sup>

#### *Memorialising the Isle of Dogs: Walking and Photographing the Island*

Bill's record of damage to the Isle of Dogs was recorded through recollections of walks around the Island, particularly Cubitt Town where he and Vi lived throughout the period of the blitz (Figure 5.6.). He also recorded damage to the island in a series of photographs, some of which were included in the 1980s manuscript of the diary. In this final section of this chapter, I will consider the role of recording damage and the photos as a form of personal memorialisation.

---

<sup>161</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing, Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London, 1993), pp. 132-35.

<sup>162</sup> In turn, in the introduction to the 1980s transcript of the diary, Bill comments he had written the diary for his daughters, in case he was killed, IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 20 March 1941, p. 15 and introduction.

<sup>163</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 132.

<sup>164</sup> Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (London, 2006), p. 16; A useful introduction to psychogeography is provided by Merlin Coverley's *Psychogeography* (London, 2006).

<sup>165</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Le Lieux de Mémoire,' *Representations*, 26 (1989), pp. 1-16.

<sup>166</sup> Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 5.



Figure 5.7. Bomb Damage to Cubitt Town including the completely destroyed Glengarnock Avenue and Parsonage Street, both photographed by Bill during the blitz. Key: Black – Total destruction; Purple – Damage beyond repair; Dark Red – Seriously damaged, doubtful if repairable; Light Red – Seriously damaged, repairable at cost; Orange (some faded to beige)– General Blast Damage, minor in nature; Yellow – Blast damage, minor in nature; Green – Clearance area. Sources LMA/LCC Bomb Damage Map, Map 92.

Bill lived on Manchester Road (Figures 5.6) surrounded by some of the most damaged property on the island (Figure 5.7). During the September of 1940 he recorded two walks around Cubitt Town, providing a detailed account of the damage he witnessed and relating this to his personal memories of the island. Bill records himself as feeling increasingly depressed and angry by the damage he was witnessing and the futility of the rescue service's actions. On a number of occasions he repeats his sense of misery: on 16 September, on witnessing the damage to a neighbour's house, he recalls, 'felt depressed'; on 21 September, he was called to a 'depressing routine job'; on another job, he records that it 'was all very depressing;' he describes a walk around the island as a

'depressing journey;' and on 12 December, after a particularly bad job, he noted, 'feeling depressed.'<sup>167</sup> His sense of depression was articulated at particular times within the diary, either following a rescue where he had witnessed death, or when he was recording walking around the island. Walking and recording those moments offer Bill the opportunity to construct an historical memory of the damaged island and are rituals for commemorating the dead.

### *Witnessing Destruction: Walking Cubbitt Town*

During September 1940, Bill recorded a walk from his house to Island Gardens. The decimation he would have seen here is recorded in a set of photographs (Figure 5.8), possibly taken in 1941, as he recorded in his diary: 'Took some photographs today. Must be careful, it is 3 years gaol if caught. A policeman friend of Alf Crawley is to develop and print them.'<sup>168</sup> In his reference to a policeman's complicity in this act, Bill rejects the official regulation of the representation of bombardment. He uses his camera and diary as a means to depict his own version of the impact of war on the island.

Indeed, during September, on the same day that Jackie and Maudie came to collect their possessions. Bill walked around the Island:

From our house to Pier Tavern is looking sick, number 263 is still occupied by Bob Collier, 259 by Ted Chastell, and 257 the estate agents by Lew Smith, so I carried on round the bend to Seyssel St, where the houses backing on to the Saunderness School are looking sick. The first four or five houses, although they took as much blast as the school, still have their party walls standing, and couple of them still have pictures hanging on them. One house has a row of china tea-cups, unbroken, still hanging on their hooks, the rest of the dresser has joined the wreckage below. The garden wall of the first house is still in place, but the close boarded fence that topped it, is lying on the pavement. I remember that fence very well.

---

<sup>167</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, entries: 16, 21 September, 12 December, pp. 10, 15, 22, 27, 30.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 20 March 1941, p. 46.

During the First World War, about early 1916, Fred Smith who was then about thirteen years old and the leader of our gang of boys, had carved the initials of the five girls who lived in the row of houses, very neatly on the last panel. I heaved at the fence until it was free of debris, turned it over, and there was the neat line of letters. ER. NC. EG. DL. BL. Edie Rogers, Nellie Cox, Eileen Greenaway, Daisy Lavender and Bessie Lavender. I wonder where they are now. This became a depressing journey right along Saunderness Road to end of the Island Gardens, hard by the railway station. And George Allen's tea hut, where tea, and cheese sandwich raised my spirits a little. I wandered as far as the Magnet and Dewdrop, but the poor old Island was so wounded I could not carry on.<sup>169</sup>

The walk animates the landscape as a site of memory, the material objects reminders of a personal past. As Robert Bevan argues, housing, especially vernacular housing, 'can be monumental in the sense of acting as a stimulus to the memories that evoke group identity.'<sup>170</sup> He argues that 'in part we recognize our place in the world by an interaction with the built environment and remembering these experiences and by being informed by the experience of others.' The built environment is 'a prompt, a corporeal reminder of the events involved in its construction, use and destruction.'<sup>171</sup> For Bill, walking acted as a form of ritual, a means to mark the damage done to the Isle of Dogs, to witness the devastation and to ensure that the destruction of architecture did not lead to the destruction of memory.

Bill's attack on authority by photographing the island and his mocking of exaggerated accounts of the blitz in 1942 could be read as means to resist authority and assert his personal agency. Indeed, Philip Ziegler has described Bill as an 'angry radical.'<sup>172</sup> Within the diary, Bill lashes out at people he perceives as rich enough to be able to flee the capital, commenting on the raids on Norwich,

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, September 1940, p. 27.

<sup>170</sup> Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory*, p. 14.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>172</sup> Ziegler, *London at War*, p. 207.



Exeter, Bath, Brighton that the Germans have 'done what everyone else has failed to do. Struck at the luxury livers, and arm-chair lounging...Let's hope its well mixed by now.'<sup>173</sup> Yet, this is not just about the discovery of one half of the population by the other.<sup>174</sup> His sense of depression, rage and anger at elite luxury is tied up with anger over personal suffering and ultimately death, and his narrative is bound up with an articulation of his own survival and a desire to mark the island as a site of death. Bill's rallying against authority is not so much the revolutionary demanding change as a victim's last words.

Similarly, in Bowen's novel *The Heat of the Day*, gazing at the damaged city after each nightly raid was both a daylight activity of reconstructing the night before and a form of asserting survival. Bowen describes scenes of disembodied, exhausted lookers-on marking absences as they gazed at the broken streetscapes:

most of all the dead, from mortuaries, from under cataracts of rubble, made their anonymous presence – not as today's dead but as yesterday's living – felt through London...Absent from the routine which had been life, they stamped upon that routine their absence – not knowing who the dead were you could not know which might be the staircase somebody for the first time was not mounting this morning, or at which street corner the news vendor missed a face.<sup>175</sup>

The ruins here are not merely a modern spectacle but tombs, sites of spontaneous commemoration.<sup>176</sup> Gerry Braham similarly described the phantasmic quality of his childhood city: 'it was like erm, a bit like a ghost city in

---

<sup>173</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 28 April 1942, p. 60.

<sup>174</sup> Hall, 'The Social Eye,' pp. 71-120.

<sup>175</sup> Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>176</sup> There has been little research on forms of spontaneous commemoration in the Second World War however the need to witness and mark events has been explored in the context of the First World War, particularly with reference to the emergence street shrines, see: Saunders, 'Apprehending Memory,' p. 479; Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 20-26.

a way, not only there were ghosts erm, of erm, people who had died, there were other ghosts and the feeling of, notion that, people had lived there before. So it's a time warp. Does that make sense to you?<sup>177</sup>

On 16 September, Bill took another walk around Cubitt Town through Seyssel Street to Stebondale Street. There he found a big gap where several houses should have been. In the middle of the street was a space where his friend Bob Elderly's house should have been. There was no trace of Elderly or his two sisters, only the remains of a shelter torn out of the ground. Bill remembered that they had been at school together and both belonged to the dockland settlement. Bill arrived at the depot and asked about who had attended the incident. He was told the night shift had been and found nobody. Bill was adamant they should look again and 'so Major Brown came out with my squad to investigate. We gathered three bushel baskets of remains, I picked up two left feet. One of the men saw a body perched on the rooftop. Nobby climbed up to recover it. It was badly mutilated, it was some time before we were able to identify it as female.' Bill noted that 'some men were feeling queasy so rum was dished out...I gave mine away,' eventually they found enough evidence to account for 3 people and came away.<sup>178</sup>

Bill's gruesome account articulates the indignity of this death. The mix up of body parts, the discovery of charred remains all give immediacy to the violence meted out by bombardment. Yet, his assertion that they must go out and inspect the crater and his record of his memory of Bob Elderly are a means to mark the loss that has occurred and to write it into the streetscape. Bill carefully

---

<sup>177</sup> MOL/2001.2. MOL Oral History Collection, Interview with Gerry Braham, 9 and 23 November 2000, Reel 1.

<sup>178</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, 16 September 1940, p. 10.

asserts his own survival and the survival of Bob through the record of his memory. In this way, Bill acts to police the landscape, retrospectively constructing the lost community and offering dignity amongst the indignity of the depressing ruins.

During the December of 1940, Bill claimed in his diary that he had been instrumental in the recovery of the bodies of two young women who were killed in Saunders Ness Road School. On 18 September, Violet Pengelly and Joan Bartlett, were killed while on duty at the school, which was used as a fire sub-station.<sup>179</sup> During December, Bill recorded that there had been a panic as more victims had been found at the school. Again, Bill asserted his authority over the job, noting that 'he worked on building of school and knew the layout.' Bill claimed that they:

uncovered two young girls, about 18 years of age, quite unmarked, and looked as if they were asleep. Men looked shocked and a bit sick, usually found bodies mutilated and were lifted out by hands and feet and quickly got away...One man sick and Major brown hands round rum...By now I am feeling angry about the prospect of these two girls being lugged by their hands and legs. They must been in bed only wearing petticoats and knickers and dry weather meant rubble packed and preserved them. Limbs not even rigid...life like and could not be handled like the usual corpses...I know I would have belted the first one who handled them with disrespect, but nobody makes a move to shift them and are just standing there gawping...Bill says to George, stretcher, blanket, then picks girl up under shoulders and knees, head resting on his shoulder and lay on stretcher "you'll be comfortable now my dear." Does same with other one and waits for some smart alec to make a remark 'nobody did.' I cooled down a bit after I had smoked a cigarette, wonder why I had been so angry.<sup>180</sup>

While the account may be an accurate version of the event there is some uncertainty over whether Bill presents a true account. Mrs. A. Sharp who was stationed at the school could not remember if it was days or weeks that it took to

---

<sup>179</sup> IHT/'War Heroines Remembered,' *East London Advertiser*, 24 July 2008, p. 2.

<sup>180</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, December 1940, p. 31.

find the girls.<sup>181</sup> Similarly Eve Hostettler the curator of the Island History Trust has been unable to find any evidence that the girls' bodies were found in this condition.<sup>182</sup> This suggests that Bill used the diary as a means to project a sanitized version of this event. His anger that the girls should be dealt with appropriately perhaps reflects a wider felt anger over those incidents where he'd dealt with mutilated and damaged bodies.<sup>183</sup> By suggesting the girls looked asleep and unharmed, bodies intact, and suggesting that they must have been sleeping, he bypasses any sense of suffering or fear that the girls may have met at the end.

Bill's diary therefore offers a rival to official narratives of the East End. Certainly he hopes that the war will expose the inequalities he perceives in society. He also conforms to Bell's analysis of other blitz diaries by writing himself as a witness to an unprecedented historical event, and his accounts of driving around the blitz at night are typically vivid, exciting and humorous. Yet, he is also aware of the way in which others exaggerate narratives of the blitz, and he seeks to assert the deeply depressing, confusing and disorientating nature of the bombing of the Isle of Dogs. Unlike official tours of the East End or tours by

---

<sup>181</sup> IHT/AUB/158 – autobiography, Mrs. A Sharp.

<sup>182</sup> Eve Hostettler felt it strongly likely that Bill had fabricated the story, discussion at the IHT, 7 October 2009.

<sup>183</sup> Indeed, early on in the blitz Bill witnessed the treatment of dead bodies: 'return to depot in time to see mortuary staff cleaning and shrouding 6 bodies. I could not recognize them but apparently they were Islanders, apparently from Chapelhouse Street [footnote confirms from Hesperus Crescent]...only one of the mortuary staff had any close contact with dead bodies, their senior member, and was the official in the Coroners mortuary for Poplar, but he soon had his men broken in...the school playground shed, screened off for cleaning and shrouding: I never saw them coffined. It was fine warm weather, and the shed was wide open, with the bodies lying on the asphalt; he soon by order and example has his men stripping off whatever clothing remained on the corpse. "Now wash 'em off" he says, and the first one to try, had a water bucket and a sponge and began to gently wash the face of one corpse with the sponge...expert stopped this – was not going to have a four hour job...ordered two men to keep the buckets of water coming, and with a long-handled, well wetted mop, gave the first corpse a good wash, back and front, showed his men how to wrap them in shrouds, label them, and stow them ready for final disposal...each took 3 or 4 minutes he said "that's how its done, you'll soon get the hang of it soon enough...I don't think they ever did: IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, September 1940, pp. 2-3.

those visiting the area, as an inhabitant of the East End Bill uses his diary as a form of spontaneous commemoration, a means to articulate the lives once lived here and to infuse into the gaping ruins of his photographs a personal memory of the people of this tight-knit community.<sup>184</sup> In so doing, he offers a version of himself for his daughters and a presentation of his life once lived here. He also mediates the trauma of the deaths that he encountered, presenting them, with sometimes-gratuitous honesty, but also providing a memorial to those who have died. In walking and recording, Bill presents a rival urban practice subverting the burden of representation through memory and passing on his personal knowledge as a means to secure an uncertain future, mediating the crisis, which has befallen the East End.

## **Conclusion**

The onset of the blitz on London did not result in a complete breakdown in morale, panic did not occur and the Civil Defence Services held up. However, while London escaped the predicted high number of deaths, it was faced with the challenge of responding to physical damage and the resulting problems of dislocation and high levels of homelessness. In this context, new services were quickly established under the remit of new special commissioners. This offered a new level of municipal management to London.<sup>185</sup> However, while service emerged to deal with the physical problems of the bombardment of London, there was a concern about the psychological impact of bombardment and

---

<sup>184</sup> Little has been written on the commemoration of the dead in the Second World War so my ideas on the idea of spontaneous commemoration have in part been influenced by the discussions of street shrines in World War One, see: King, *Memorials of the Great War*.

<sup>185</sup> This has been explored by Robin Woolven: 'Civil Defence in London 1935–1945, (PhD Thesis, King's College London 2002).

pressure to find an appropriate way to communicate and represent the physical damage to the city. The need to represent and communicate the impact of bombing on the city was thus deeply related to concerns over morale, preventing rumour and panic. It also needs to be understood in relation to the context of the second mass evacuation of London, as women, children and the vulnerable fled the city.

As the first location for a major blitz, the East End became a key ideological and physical battleground in the representation of bombardment. This area of the city, that had long been a site of anxiety and tension because of concern over the living conditions of its inhabitants, was made highly visible as accounts of the endurance and fortitude of the population of the area were released within the press. The invention of the wartime East End was partly the product of official blitz tourism, in which figures of authority appropriated the space, in order both to assert that the dislocation of the area was being dealt with and to impose an official gaze over the area. Associations with the neutral body of the King, constructed as a figure of consensus and stability, offered legitimacy to the East End. In turn, by remaining within London and sharing in the dangers of the war in the air, the King gained the legitimacy to represent the East End. Such associations helped to shift the East End from a site of anxious modernity to one of national heroism.

During the first months of the blitz, tours of the East End became ritualised media events, in which certain actions would be taken including meeting up with inhabitants of the area and listening to their problems, visiting services to see how they were functioning and using the voices of the people within the area to give a kind of documentary realism to the reporting of the

tour. These tours saw a cross-class appropriation of city space. The East End may have been appropriated by visitors who claimed association with national suffering, but residents of the East End also appropriated the space of the West End, asserting their right to adequate shelter and safety. The entry of politicians into this physical space provides an example of the type of encounter that ensued. On the one hand, such political visitors appropriated the East End in their existing visions of governance. On the other hand, in entering the East End and witnessing the impact of war and the impressive survival of residents, the politicians were forced to offer new solutions to problems associated with bombing.

Through this process, the East End thus became newly visible during the war and was invented as a space of national heroism, a tangible location on which to debate issues around the problems of aerial bombardment and its impact on the population.<sup>186</sup> Representations of the bombed-out East End became related to a wider idea that the blitz constituted a discovery of an able, courageous working class. In this way, the immediate damage of the blitz was projected onto an imagined and improved future. People may have suffered but they would be paid off with a better, healthier and brighter city in the future. Thus, the problematic damage to London was contained.

Yet, the visual culture of documentary realism that came to dominate representations of bombed cities and that has been related to the discovery of a capable and heroic working-class was only partially able to represent bomb damage. Embedded in Britain's narrative of her tour of the East End is a vision

---

<sup>186</sup> Hall, 'The Social Eye,' pp. 71-120.

of decimation so complete that it is even difficult for her native driver to comprehend and navigate. The only ones able to interpret this damaged landscape were those sent to clear it up. This troubling landscape was not part of the official or memorial visual culture of the blitz. Those that visited the bombed East End did not and perhaps could not articulate it in these terms. The buildings had become skeletons: the deathly remains of lives once lived. What can be described as unofficial tours of the East End, like those of Bill Regan, emerged during the blitz as both a counter to official narratives and as a means to mark out a sort of loss that was invisible to the visitor.

Bill Regan's diary offers a counter to official representations of the East End. In his personal photographs and in his record of destruction to his island, he asserted himself as a surviving East Ender, able to withstand the pressures of modern war in a way that 'luxury livers' could not. His diary contains hope that the war will lead to the idea of the discovery of the other half of the population. Yet, he is aware of the performance that occurs in the discovery of the East End, evident in the way he and his fellow workers are told to put on a show when visitors look at the state of their ARP depot, and evident in the way stories of the blitz told to visitors stressed excitement, heroism and spectacle over dislocation, suffering and fear.

His diary attests to a set of rival practices that emerged within the blitz amongst those in bomb-damaged parts of the city. Walking for Bill was not a moment of discovery or tourism but a means of remembering. His bleak images of decimation and endless rubble do not have the same set of practices for making them meaningful as those in *Picture Post*, the CLP or newspaper accounts



of bombing.<sup>187</sup> Instead Bill offers a rival set of practices in which the landscape is infused with personal memory, an act of commemoration not for the heroism of the survivor but for the memory of the dead.

The diary is a means to mediate Bill's own survival. He records that it is for his two daughters. However, it also serves a purpose of making sense of his experience, fashioning a 'realizable world' out of an experience that is disjointed and confusing.<sup>188</sup> The destroyed buildings on the island are thus remembered through the record of walks in an effort to prevent the destruction of the memories associated with those places. This points to our need to revise official representations of the East End. Ultimately Bill and his wife did not die and the diary was not needed to fulfill its intended function. However, its survival draws attention to the dislocation, fear and indignity of the bombardment of the East End.

---

<sup>187</sup> On interpretation of photographs see, Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*.

<sup>188</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 132.

Figure 5.8. Bill's Photos of Cubitt Town



Parsonage Street Cubitt Town.



Parsonage Street Cubitt Town.



Corner of Parsonage Street and Manchester Road, Cubitt Town.



Glengarnock Avenue, Cubitt Town



Dock Entrance, Glengall Road, Cubitt Town.

Figure 5.8. Bill's Photos of the Bomb Damage on the Isle of Dogs. Source; IWM/88/10/1, Photographs: Bomb Damage on the Isle of Dogs Taken by Bill during the Blitz.

## Chapter Six

### National Commemoration of the Blitz

#### Introduction

On Sunday 15 November 1942 church bells rang out across England to celebrate the victory at El Alamein. However, these bells also marked the celebration of Civil Defence Day, a national commemoration of the heroism of Civil Defence and the 'great victory over the Luftwaffe' two years previously.<sup>1</sup> The event carefully contextualized victory abroad within a narrative of the heavy blitzes on Britain, presenting the nation's withstanding of the war in the air as the 'precondition of everything that has happened since.'<sup>2</sup> The date was chosen because it fell on the anniversary of the first great raid on Coventry and it was used to commemorate the air attacks upon all areas and the services rendered by the Civil Defence throughout the United Kingdom. The day was marked in London by a national parade and church service. The parade was presided over by the King, who received the salute, before it snaked into the nation's great Cathedral, St Paul's, for a service led by the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup> This wartime national commemoration of the blitz linked up the most badly blitzed areas in the country within the communal space of the Cathedral.<sup>4</sup> While this was not the first large review of the Civil Defence Services, this was the first time

---

<sup>1</sup> 'All Europe Heard the Bells,' *Daily Mirror*, 16 November 1942, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Letter to A.P. Ryan from S.C. Leslie, 10 November 1942.

<sup>3</sup> On the function of the church as a national space see: John Wolffe, 'National occasions at St Paul's since 1800,' in Derek Keene, Arthur Burns and Andrew Saint (eds), *St Paul's: the cathedral church of London, 604-2004* (London, 2004), pp. 381-391.

<sup>4</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter from Herbert Morrison to WR Matthews, 19 October 1942.

those services had been brought together to commemorate their work and service in a National Memorial Day.<sup>5</sup>

Civil Defence Day, like the recruitment drives of the late 1930s, used the landscape of London to situate the civil defence services in a particular way, constructing a national narrative about the bombardment of Britain. The Ministry of Home Security promoted the day and in London it was facilitated by A.S. Hutchinson, the Chief Administrator of the London Civil Defence Region. The choice of those present, the structure of the parade and the accompanying religious service not only offered a celebration of the defence of Britain but also a memorialisation of the damage done to bombed areas and the lives lost as a result.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the story of the blitz was being consolidated within a book: *Front Line, 1940-41*, the official story of civil defence of Britain, the release of which was meant to coincide with the day, although in the end it was released a few weeks later.<sup>7</sup> S.C. Leslie, the Public Relations Officer at the Ministry of Home Security, authored the book and worked closely with Hutchinson to arrange the London review and service.<sup>8</sup>

In 1943, the BBC were researching a programme on the Battle of Britain and recommended that the researcher met up with Mr. Leslie, the author of

---

<sup>5</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Letter from S.C. Lesley, Public Relations Department, Ministry of Home Security, regarding the success of Civil Defence Day, 18 November 1942. On the 14 July 1941 civil defence workers in London were brought together in an inspection of 6,000 men and women, representing the 200,000 civil defence workers of London: 'Civilian Army on Parade. Praise For London's Courage, Inspiration To The World,' *The Times*, 15 July 1941, p. 2; TNA/HO 207/345, Letter to S.C. Leslie, Public Relations Department, Ministry of Home Security, regarding the inspection of the Hyde Park Parade, 1 April 1941.

<sup>6</sup> 'You, the People,' Broadcast by the Rt. Hon. Herbert S. Morrison on Civil Defence Day, *The Listener*, No. 723, 19 November 1942, p. 647.

<sup>7</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter from S.C. Leslie, Public Relations Department, Ministry of Home Security, to Major Bax, 25 November 1942.

<sup>8</sup> BBC/WAC/R19/79/2, Letter from Betty Cawter, a public relations officer at the Ministry of Home Security to Cecil McGivern, BBC, regarding his programme, 'The Battle of Britain,' 24 August 1943.

*Front Line*, as they considered it 'the bible' of civil defence.<sup>9</sup> On the memorial day and within the book, the definition of civil defence shifted in meaning. The book was not an 'account of an organisation,' but a 'narrative of action.'<sup>10</sup> All those who were placed under conditions of bombardment were understood as civil defenders, successfully coping, getting to work and not breaking down under the pressure of the blitz: within the book and on the day, the myth of the blitz was deliberately constructed to offer a sense of order, purpose and celebration of the actions of a large number of those within the services and more actively to place them in the context of the national community.<sup>11</sup> In a broadcast to mark the Day, Herbert Morrison carefully articulated that this day was more than a memorial: 'the spirit that took us through those months of bombing,' he felt, continued to keep 'us steady and solid' through hard work, heartbreak and 'irksome and troublesome orders,' in a 'spirit worthy of the high hour of the blitz.'<sup>12</sup> Civil Defence was utilised to stand for agency, choice, and a people making a decision to collectively act together. It was presented as a marker of the will of the people in the midst of growing restrictions and restraints on the wartime population. And it served as a means to assert

---

<sup>9</sup> BBC/WAC/R19/79/2, Letter from Betty Crawter, a public relations officer at the Ministry of Home Security to Cecil McGivern, BBC, regarding his programme, 'The Battle of Britain,' 24 August 1943.

<sup>10</sup> HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), preface.

<sup>11</sup> Amy Bell, *London Was Ours, Diaries and Memoirs of the London Blitz* (New York, 2008), chapter three, esp. p. 99; Edgar Jones, Robin Woolven, Bill Durodie and Simon Wessely, 'Civilian Morale During the Second World War: Responses to Air Raids Re-examined,' *Social History of Medicine*, 17:3 (2004), pp. 463-79; Helen Jones, *British Civilians in the Front Line, Air Raids, Productivity and Wartime Culture, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2006); Robert Mackay, *Half the Battle, Civilian Morale in Britain During the Second World War* (New York, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Morrison, 'You, the People,' p. 647.

Britain's international standing, linking the blitz not just to national identity but global prowess: 'The Britain that beat the blitz has much to give the world.'<sup>13</sup>

Civil Defence Day and *Front Line* can thus be understood as an official construction of the 'people's war.'<sup>14</sup> Morrison's broadcast on the day was entitled 'You, the people,' and Sir Alexander Hardinge, Private Secretary to the King viewed the creation of this national tradition as a means to 'refresh the public memory of its own achievement and that of the Civil Defence Services, to give a fillip to the morale of those services and to recall all of us to the nature and seriousness of the possible tasks ahead.'<sup>15</sup> The 'people' were characterized in terms of their 'valour and fortitude,' and while they continued to be constructed as 'citizens,' the use of the vaguer term 'people' enabled the projection of a narrative of national belonging. The term, used by Morrison, was less political and more encompassing, to cover all those who were needed to contribute to the national war effort: 'You – all the people of Britain, all classes and kinds, men and women alike – have played, and are playing, a great part in this war.'<sup>16</sup>

This myth making covered up the tensions, lack of agency of those in paid civil defence work and the tensions over who had authority in local defence services, as discussed in Chapter four; it offered a sanitized and idealized version of the events of 1940-41.<sup>17</sup> Yet, I would suggest that a close reading of the organization and location of the day complicates the idea that this was merely a projection of the people's war. Understanding Civil Defence Day not simply as

---

<sup>13</sup> Morrison, 'You, the People,' p. 647. For a counter to the narrative of the blitz and the interpretation of 1940-41 as Britain 'standing alone,' see: David Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War* (London, 2011), Chapter three.

<sup>14</sup> Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain, 1939-45* (London, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Rt. Hon. Sir Alexander Hardinge notes on event, 28 September 1942.

<sup>16</sup> *The Times* described the London parade as a 'column of private citizens: 'Home News: Civil Defence Day,' *The Times*, 16 November 1942, p. 2; Morrison, *You, the People*, p. 647.

<sup>17</sup> Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991).



part of the narrative of the people's war but as a process of memorialisation of the blitz opens up new ways of thinking about the how the blitz has been commemorated. Indeed, Morrison reminded listeners that the day was both a celebration and a memorial; official statistics recorded that across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the months of battle, both in the air and on the ground, had resulted in forty-seven thousand deaths, fifty-six thousand people being maimed, and 'two and three-quarter million homes smashed or damaged.'<sup>18</sup> The event actively sought to give meaning to those deaths and to provide a way to make sense of the physical damage wrought by aerial bombardment. The day was not just about constructing a popular memory of the blitz as a moment national belonging, but about processing and publically commemorating the trauma that had been inflicted on the population, marked by the physical damage to the urban landscape and the loss of life.

Gabriel Moshenska argues that, despite the ubiquity of representations of the blitz and interest in it as an event, the blitz has never been adequately memorialized. He suggests this is because of the fragmented nature of the experience that made it difficult to articulate in any monumental form.<sup>19</sup> Yet, Bill Regan's diary has drawn attention to the idea that memorialisation could occur in different spaces to the physical public monument. The act of walking the damaged streets, witnessing and remembering past lives and articulating personal survival all offered ways to acknowledge the dead within the city and the violence inflicted on the lives therein. Bill for example, places his personal narrative within a public framework not of war but of a former community, the

---

<sup>18</sup> Morrison, *You, the People,* p. 647.

<sup>19</sup> Gabriel Moshenska, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests? Counter-Monumentality and the Commemoration of the London Blitz,' *Journal of Social Archeology*, 10 (2010), pp. 5-27.

damage to the Isle of Dogs prompting a kind of salvage ethnography in which he articulates the breakup of that community.<sup>20</sup>

These individual acts of remembrance and personal means for witnessing and recording trauma worked alongside and interacted with public and collective forms of commemoration. Commemoration is a complex process that links personal and public narratives.<sup>21</sup> Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper argue that in the modern era it has been the nation that has been the prime arena for the articulation of war memories and commemoration, since war has been central to its identity and symbolic continuity.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, public remembrance can offer a means to create a shared understanding of the past and construct political legitimacy.<sup>23</sup> Analyzing the Civil Defence Day and particularly the London parade offers a means to grasp the function, role and construction of the people's war in relationship to a commemorative ritual. In so doing it complicates that story, offering an alternative reading of the way that the popular memory of the blitz was constructed during the war.

At the same time, considering how the landscape of London was used, who was present and the management of the event offers a means to consider the practical function of the parade at that particular time.<sup>24</sup> Lucy Noakes argues that to 'grasp processes of public remembering it is important to discover what

---

<sup>20</sup> Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, Michael Roper argue that 'responses to war are formed in relation to both personal experience and pre-existing narratives': 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics,' in Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, Michael Roper (eds), *Commemorating War: the Politics of Memory* (London, 2004), p. 34; Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester, 2007), p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Ashplant, Dawson, Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory,' p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Rachel Ibreck, 'The politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-genocide Rwanda,' *Memory Studies*, 3(2010), p. 330.

<sup>24</sup> Herman du Toit, 'Introduction,' in Herman du Toit (ed.), *Pageants and Processions: Images and Idiom as Spectacle* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. xiii-xiv.

has been forgotten, in order to understand what has been remembered.<sup>25</sup> Civil Defence Day marked the active historicisation of Civil Defence through the invention of a tradition. Unpicking that event opens up space for considering alternative commemoration practices and memories of civil defence and the blitz. I seek to relocate the memory of the blitz in relationship to the landscape of London in order to consider the tensions, disputes and uncertainties that emerged in the processes of the construction of that projected moment of national collectivity.<sup>26</sup>

This final chapter then, offers two readings of the 1942 Civil Defence Day. It considers the day as a projection of the myth of the blitz, exploring how and why the public memory of the blitz was created and envisioned. The event was deliberately constructed as a moment of national belonging and, along with *Front Line*, narrated the story of the civil defence of Britain in 1940-41 in heroic terms. In this way the chapter considers the processes of public memory making, building on the discussions of the blitz as a media event explored in Chapter five. However, the chapter offers an alternative reading of the day, suggesting that it was not just a moment of patriotic and forward looking celebration, but a moment in which individuals marked the trauma and dislocation of the period of the blitz. The chapter specifically interrogates the space of St Paul's Cathedral, exploring alternative readings of the symbol that, in the popular memory of the Second World War, has so often stood for the blitz as a moment of heroic survival.

---

<sup>25</sup> Lucy Noakes, 'Making Histories: Experiencing the Blitz in London's Museums in the 1990s,' in Gordon Martel, *The World War Two Reader* (New York and London, 2004), p. 431.

<sup>26</sup> Moshenka, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests?', pp. 5-27.

### 6.1. St Paul's Cathedral at War: The People's Church?

Within the context of the Civil Defence Services regular parading of all parties and leaders was viewed as means to maintain discipline. Parades allowed the depot superintendent or officer in charge to inspect every shift and ensure standards were maintained.<sup>27</sup> This was a part of the institutionalization of civil defence, as discussed in Chapter Four, and placed the Civil Defence worker in the public eye. If parades acted to discipline civil defenders they also served the public role of asserting the success and capability of the civil defences, showing their ability to conform to forms of discipline and authority.<sup>28</sup> However, parades were often localized, linked into the particular region, borough and depot space from which services functioned. In contrast, Civil Defence Day brought together services from some of the worst hit cities in the country. This was the first major national attempt to collectively mark the destruction of the 1940-41 blitz on Britain. The day centred on St Paul's Cathedral. The use of this Cathedral constructed the public memory of the blitz in a particular way, filtering the experience through the monumental space of the Cathedral and building on a particular collective consciousness of St Paul's that had emerged through the reporting of the Cathedral's survival from a firestorm that had raged through the City on 29 December 1940.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/3/69, Ministry of Home Security, ARP Training Bulletin No. 3 1940, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> On parades and discipline see, Jeremy A. Crang, 'The Abolition of Compulsory Church Parades in the British Army,' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 56 (2005), pp. 92-106.

<sup>29</sup> Penny Summerfield, and Corinna Peniston-Bird define 'popular memory' as a 'collective consciousness of the past which is historically and spatially situated.' I use the term here to refer to 'deliberate forms of public commemoration,' *Contesting Home Defence*, p. 13.

### *St. Paul's and World War Two*

During the Second World War the Cathedral acquired a mythic symbolism. *Front Line*, the official story of civil defence of Britain, constructed the Cathedral in these terms, devoting two double pages to the great monument (Figures 6.1. and 6.2.). The images were used to represent the 'onslaught on London' and were a reminder of the fires that ripped through the City of London on 29 December 1940. On this evening the heavy use of incendiaries by German bombers devastated large areas of the City in what became known as the 'second fire of London.' The London Intelligence Reports noted that it was recognized at least as early as March 1940 that 'no amount of fire fighting personnel could guarantee the avoidance of a conflagration in certain parts of London Region for example parts of the City' and that the 'essential ingredients for a conflagration area are, high buildings stocked with inflammable goods, narrow streets and no adjacent open spaces to form a fire stop.'<sup>30</sup> During the night of 29 December there was a conflagration in and to the north of the City, between Cheapside and Old Street and major conflagrations between Shoe Lane and Fetter Lane; in the Minories; in Lower Thames Street; in Southwark Street, and around Guy's Hospital.<sup>31</sup> A huge swathe of the City was burnt around the Cathedral, with the area to the northeast made completely impassible. Within the City, an area of one-quarter square mile was almost completely destroyed (Figure 6.10).

---

<sup>30</sup> LMA/LCC/CL/CD/2/11, London Civil Defence Region Intelligence Reports, IR4, 12 February 1941.

<sup>31</sup> During the night there were 28 major fires (over 30 pumps each, 51 serious (11 to 30), 101 medium (up to 10) and 1,286 small fires, LMA/LCC/CL/CD/2/11, London Civil Defence Region Intelligence Reports, IR4, 12 February 1941.



Figure 6.3. 'War's Greatest Picture.' Herbert Mason's iconic image of St Paul's Cathedral surrounded by flames. Source: *Daily Mail*, 31 December 1940, front cover, available online, Museum of London, <<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/archive/exhibits/blitz/positive/media.htm>> (accessed 12 July 2010)

Despite encroaching flames, the night watch at St Paul's was able to put out the incendiaries. The survival of the Cathedral became a key priority. As the rest of the City burned, Churchill phoned the Guildhall to insist that the Cathedral had to be saved.<sup>32</sup> On the morning of 31 December 1941, the *Daily Mail* published a photo by Herbert Mason of the dome of St Paul's rising up through the flames, captioned: 'war's greatest picture, St. Paul's stands unharmed in the midst of the burning city' (Figure 6.3.)<sup>33</sup> Building on two centuries of national associations with the Cathedral, the image of this solid, indomitable building became the central symbol of the blitz. Angus Calder argues that the Cathedral image was at the heart of the myth of the blitz: 'the heroism of the British was

---

<sup>32</sup> Burns, 'From 1830 to the Present,' p. 98.

<sup>33</sup> 'War's Greatest Picture,' Herbert Mason's iconic image of St Paul's Cathedral surrounded by flames, *Daily Mail*, 31 December 1940, front cover, available online, Museum of London, <<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/archive/exhibits/blitz/positive/media.htm>> (accessed 12 July 2010).

quasi-Christian – its greatest symbol...was St Paul's dome flourishing above the flames.'<sup>34</sup> *Front Line* offered the view of the Cathedral but also a view from the Cathedral, a vision to articulate just how close those flames had come (Figures 6.1-2).

The bombing of the City on 29 December became one of the central stories of the blitz on Britain. On 31 December, *The Times* reported the story as 'The City's ordeal by fire,' a 'deliberate attempt at destruction,' the 'Guildhall and eight Wren churches burnt.' The story of the 29 December coupled with Mason's image consolidated St Paul's as a national wartime emblem of survival and, despite the raid being directed at London, offered a means to construct the blitz as a national event through the use of London as a tourist and heritage site.

Robert Bevan argues that the destruction of architecture in war is an attempt to eradicate the 'history and memory' attached to place.<sup>35</sup> In terms of the blitz on London, Gabriel Moshenka argues that bomb-damaged churches were utilized as blitz memorials in an effort to give meaning to the experience. He suggests that 'the bombed church as a war memorial signifies the chaotic lives and fragmented material remains of bombed cities, while embodying a sense of meaning and sacred purpose that transcends the individual.'<sup>36</sup> A popular notion emerged during the London blitz that bombers were deliberately targeting churches: an attempt to destroy the cultural heritage of the nation.<sup>37</sup> Moshenka argues that churches as war memorials offered a means to re-sacrilize a once sacred space made profane: this privileged communal, public, patriotic and religious ritual over private forms of memory and inevitably tended 'to

---

<sup>34</sup> Calder, *The Myth*, p. 43.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (London, 2006), p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Moshenka, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests?' p. 12

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

promote and maintain hegemonic memory narratives of heroism and sacrifice over individual and small-group narratives of suffering.<sup>38</sup> For Moshenka, the non-destruction of St Paul's Cathedral and the endurance of the building lies at the centre of the myth of the blitz. The construction of the building as a memorial site, he argues, detracts from it as an authentic site that contains traces of conflict. Through the church as memorial the collective is emphasized over the individual experience.

Yet, while London churches and churches more generally did play an important role in memorializing the blitz, the reporting of the fires of 29 December and the image of St Paul's rising above the flames, did not make St Paul's into a memorial, but a heritage site that used the tropes of tourist writing.<sup>39</sup> The fires on the City on that night provided a way to narrate the broader experience of London under fire as though for the consumer of the traditional and unmissable 'great historic sites of the city.'<sup>40</sup> The litany of destruction was laid out like a guidebook of popular London sites: 'Guildhall, eight Wren churches, the ancient hall of the Girdler's Company, other famous buildings...were either destroyed or severely damaged in the fierce attack on the City of London.'<sup>41</sup> Just as Bill Regan had narrated his personal history through

---

<sup>38</sup> Moshenka recognizes that this was in part because censors discouraged images and descriptions of destroyed homes and workplaces: 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests?', p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> David Gilbert argues that interwar guidebooks constructed London in three ways: firstly as a site of longevity in which pre-modern sites were displayed as visible connections with an established and sometimes ancient civilization; secondly as a site of modernity, people visited to see the spectacle and movement of a modern city, and in terms of London this often reflected a careful negotiation between the old and the new; finally, London was constructed as a site of unity and power, a central place in the nation and an imperial metropolis: 'London in all its Glory - or How to Enjoy London': Guidebook representations of Imperial London,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), p. 280. Emma Waterton, 'Branding the Past: The Visual Imagery of England's Heritage,' in Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (eds), *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past* (Farnham, 2010), p. 156.

<sup>40</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' p. 281.

<sup>41</sup> 'The City's Ordeal by Fire,' *The Times*, 31 December 1940, p. 4.



walking amongst destroyed buildings on the Isle of Dogs, so too was London's history narrated through the destruction of its heritage sites. Other sites were also hit: 'the house in Gough Square, Fleet Street, where Dr. Johnson compiled his dictionary, was burnt out. His famous chair and first editions were saved.' Sites of state power and authority were also hit as the 'Central Criminal Court,' was damaged. One of the 'oldest houses in London' built in 1664 and a survivor of the Great Fire was also damaged.<sup>42</sup> The modernity of London was played down as the blitz on the City was presented as an historic battle between the machines of modern warfare that reigned down fire with 'senseless ferocity' and the heroic fire fighters and civil defence services that battled to save the traditional city. *The Times* may not have had Mason's image but it successfully captured it through its description of St Paul's that night: 'From two or three miles away St Paul's Cathedral stood out clearly against a glowing sky – a challenge and an inspiration.'<sup>43</sup> The City was protected by the 'firemen, wardens and other civil defence workers' who 'held on grimly, and many died that London might be saved.' The Germans were cast as 'the vandals of the skies,' against which these heroic figures fought. St Paul's was cast as the ancient heart of the nation and the Civil Defence Services as the heroes protecting the Cathedral from the flames.

This battle of the City displayed London as a traditional monumental site in which the reader of the account and viewer of the images were pulled into a vision of British and London heritage. This acted to repress the vision of the City as a site of modernity and spectacle, which had been prevalent within 1930s visions of the metropolis.<sup>44</sup> Amy Bell has shown that the spectacle of raids gave

---

<sup>42</sup> 'The City's Ordeal by Fire,' p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Gilbert, 'London in all its Glory,' pp. 286, 290.

those who witnessed them a chance to place themselves within a narrative of destructive modernity and gave many a sense of witnessing a terrifying modernist spectacle.<sup>45</sup> However, the official representation of the bombing of the City used heritage symbols to offer a secure past and showed the limits of modernity. The eternal symbol of St Paul's and the heroes who acted to save it were tied into a longer history of national strength.<sup>46</sup> The City fire, like the bombing of the East End before it, became a media event, reported in such a way that it became a moment of collective experience despite the limited number of people who were actually present to witness the fires first hand or even see them from a distance.<sup>47</sup> The subsequent use of the Cathedral for the national civil defence memorial day built on the way it had been constructed through the blitz as a national heritage site. Thus, those who entered the space may have done so for the first time, but they carried with them a cultural framework about the meaning of that space.<sup>48</sup>

*The 1942 Civil Defence Day: The Official Memory of the Civil Defence of Great Britain*

Some 1500 people from the services involved in dealing with the consequences of aerial bombardment took part in the Civil Defence Day parade.<sup>49</sup> These included the National Fire Service, the Anti Aircraft Command, the Royal Air Force, the Police from England and Wales, the Fire Watchers from St Paul's Cathedral, the WVS and various representatives from the region's Civil

---

<sup>45</sup> Amy Bell suggests that many Londoners used modernist metaphors to describe and articulate the raids on the city: *London Was Ours*, chapter one.

<sup>46</sup> Emma Waterton, 'Branding the Past,' p. 158.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Vipond, 'The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Media Event,' *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 35 (2010), pp. 153-54

<sup>48</sup> Emma Waterton, 'Branding the Past,' pp. 6-7.

<sup>49</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Composition of Parade of 1500 for Civil Defence Day, 13 October 1942.

Defence Services. The order of the day was arranged in a chronological sequence of the principle air raids, first from each of the main blitzed areas of 1940-41 and then from those towns affected in the 1942 Baedeker raids.<sup>50</sup> This gave a structure to the bombardment of Britain and offered a universal narrative to the particular experience of bombing. Although the day was to commemorate the air attacks, the use of the term Civil Defence Day, rather than blitz memorial or bombardment remembrance, deliberately focused the event away from the death and destruction wrought across British cities and focused on the actions of those who helped keep the nation functioning.

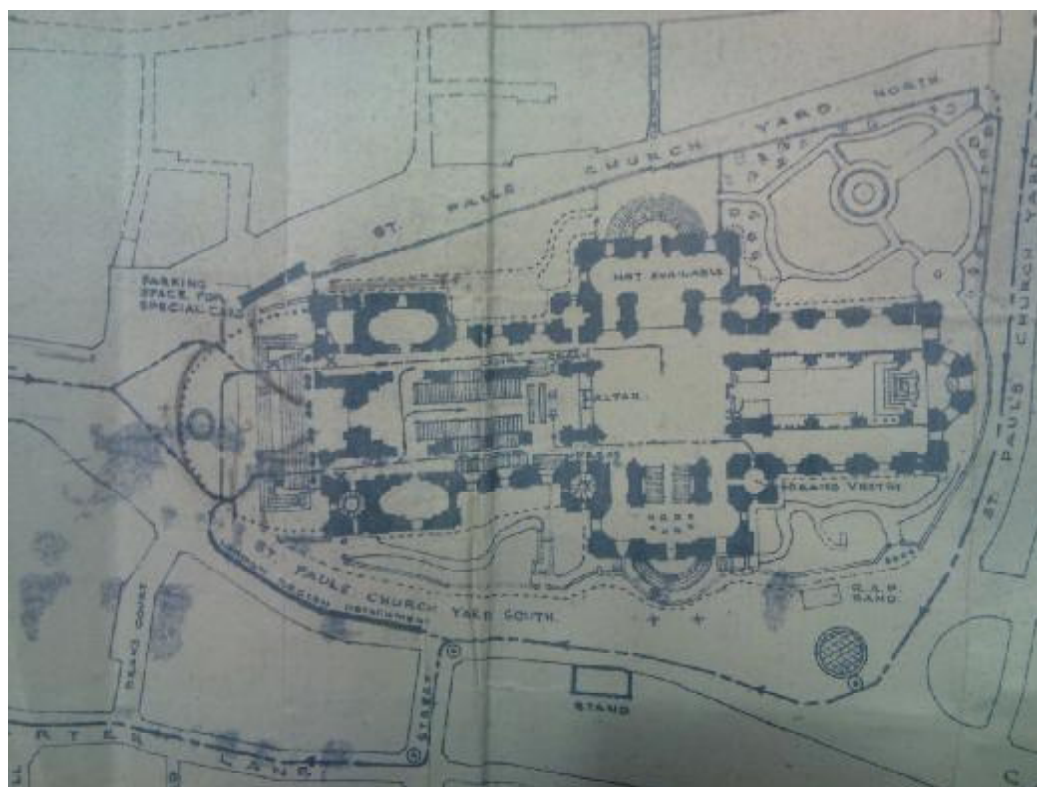


Figure 6.4. The Civil Defence Day Parade Route. Source: TNA/HO 207/215.

The parade in London assembled in St Martin's Le Grand and followed a route around Godliman Street, Charter Lane, Ludgate Hill and ended at the west

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, Review and Service in St Paul's Cathedral, Information for Ticket Holders.

Entrance of the Cathedral.<sup>51</sup> The salute was taken by the King in St Paul's Church Yard South (Figures 6.4-5). The choice of route was a calculated attempt to avoid parading through the devastated area around the Cathedral; instead the procession began in a less damaged street.<sup>52</sup> The service itself used a long established model of national thanksgiving events.<sup>53</sup> Those whose services were being commemorated occupied the space under the Dome and the procession entered the west doors and led to this space before the nave and aisles were filled.<sup>54</sup> Having saluted the King, on entering the Cathedral the parade processed past a number of dignitaries including Ministers, the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, High Commissioners and representatives of the fighting services.<sup>55</sup>

Dignitaries included Herbert Morrison; Lord Leathers the Minister of Transport during the blitz; Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Paget, General Officer Commander in Chief of the Home Forces; and Major General E.A. Tremlett, Commanding-Officer of the Anti-Aircraft Division. The major administrators of civil defence were also present, including Harold Scott the London regional administrator; Wing Commander E.J. Hodsoll of the ARP department of the Ministry of Home Security; Commander Firebrace, the commander of the London fire service during the blitz then seconded to the Ministry of Home Security and the London regional commissioners; and special commissioners for ARP.<sup>56</sup> Also present were a number of trade union representatives, from whose ranks skilled

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, Review, St Paul's Cathedral, 15 November 1942.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, Letter from S.A. Hutchinson to Harold Scott regarding Civil Defence Day, 9 October 1942.

<sup>53</sup> Wolfe discusses thanksgiving events related to the monarchy and military commemorations in: 'National occasions,' pp. 381-391.

<sup>54</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Meeting between the Archdeacon of London, Mr. Hutchinson and Major Bax, to discuss the parade and service on 15 November 1942, 19 October 1942.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, Letter to H.A. Strutt on the final plans for Civil Defence Day, 28 October 1942.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, List of Acceptances.

civil defence workers had been recruited.<sup>57</sup> The Soviet, American and Chinese ambassadors and the other twelve representatives of the United Nations were also present at the service.<sup>58</sup> These men did not lead the procession but were processed past, linking state and services in a collective effort of unity. The event was closed to the general public although the service was broadcast on loudspeakers outside.

The construction of the parade route and the use of the Cathedral mark a shift in the use of the space of London to represent the blitz. In the early days of bombardment, in September 1940, there had been an effort to move official bodies into the culturally contentious space of the East End. Now, in 1942, the memorialisation of the blitz was marked by the movement of civil defenders into a national space demarcated through a hierarchy of officials. The encounter between the bodies of the civil defenders and the administrators of the state was thereby distanced; it no longer occurred within a working-class streetscape but instead was relocated to a national ceremonial space. Indeed, a letter from Charles S. Mason of the North West Region, commenting on the success of the day, noted that, 'many members did not know the King was taking the salute and 'as they marched down the saluting base they had that added thrill.'<sup>59</sup>

For the service itself, the choir was hired and three hymns were chosen in thanksgiving: 'Through All the Changing Scenes of Life', 'Son of God Eternal Saviour' and 'Onward Christian Soldiers'.<sup>60</sup> The hymns chosen were on the

---

<sup>57</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Letter from Arthur Deakin, Transport and General Workers Union, 2 November 1942; Letter from Luke Fawcett General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, 3 November 1942; Letter from Arthur Mayle, National Union of Public Employers, accepting Morrison's invitation to CD day, 3 November 1942.

<sup>58</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter from H.A. Strutt to V.G. Lawford, 30 October 1942.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, Letter to S.C. Leslie from Charles S. Mason

<sup>60</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Civil Defence Day, St. Paul's Cathedral, Special Service.

themes of deliverance and the righteousness of the just. This was echoed by the chosen lesson, Joshua I, verses 1-9, which included commands to be strong, courageous and not frightened.<sup>61</sup>

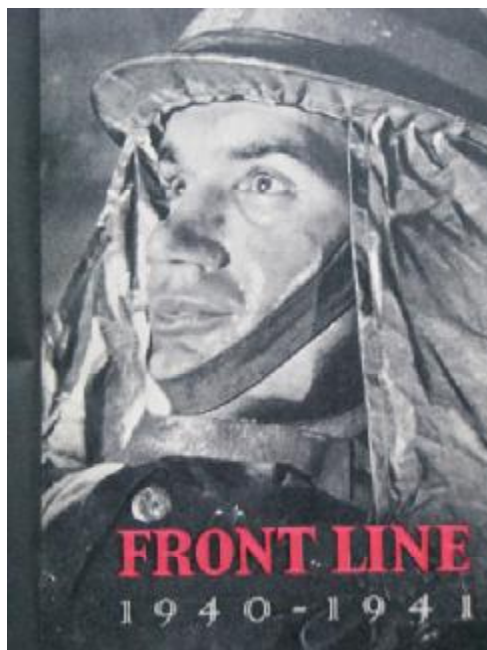


Figure 6.6. The Heroic Civil Defender. Source: HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), front cover.

The structure of the service, the choice of the dignitaries invited and selection of services represented reveal the official construction of the memory of the Civil Defence of Britain. The 'blitz heroes' were at the centre of this construction; the ultimate national heroes, ready to give up their lives in the defence of their nation (Figure 6.6).<sup>62</sup> These model heroes were paraded past the architects of ARP, and the disputes, tensions and critiques over ARP in the later 1930s and into the phoney war were forgotten. The pay off for their time

---

<sup>61</sup> Joshua I, Verses 1-9, King James Bible, available online, <<http://buscarenlabiblia.com/en/verse/kjv/6/1/9/>> accessed (5 June 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Ashplant, Dawson, Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory,' p. 7; 'Blitz Heroes to Parade,' *The Daily Mirror*, 14 November 1942, p. 2.

and commitment was their integration into the state as heroes.<sup>63</sup> This was embodied in the cover image of *Front Line*, the official narrative of Britain's civil defenders, which presented the uniformed fireman as the idealized blitz hero (Figure 6.6).<sup>64</sup>

## 6.2. The Myth of the Blitz?

### *Representing the Blitz as International Propaganda*

While the presence of those who had facilitated and established ARP and Civil Defence in Britain acted as a public reminder of actions prior to bombardment, the presence of international representatives reveals the way in which the defence of the British homefront was now also constructed at the international level. One of the major functions of the event was as a piece of 'international propaganda to remind allies and neutrals of significance of Britain's part in 1940/41.'<sup>65</sup> The civil defence of Britain and the heroic civil defenders were presented in the international press to assert and continue to remind other nations about Britain's international strength and to link home defence with the wider fighting forces.

It was hoped therefore that the event would offer some useful images for the foreign press. St Paul's Cathedral acted as an easily recognizable symbol. Moreover, the survival of this Cathedral could remind the audience about the devastation of another. The date chosen for Civil Defence Day coincided with the

---

<sup>63</sup> Morrison, 'You, the People,' p. 647.

<sup>64</sup> Rose argues that physical fitness and muscular beauty infused the home front through propaganda images of the fit citizen. In this model of masculinity uniformed men were at the top of the hierarchy. Using evidence of responses to conscientious objectors and reactions to men out of uniform, Rose suggests that non-uniformed men were perceived as not committed to the war effort and were viewed as suspect: Sonya Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 160-170, 179-80.

<sup>65</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, For All Regions from Home Security, From Mr. Leslie, 5 Nov 1942.

anniversary of the bombing of Coventry (Figure 6.7). The Lord Mayor of Coventry hoped for some striking photographs of the ruined Cathedral taken on Civil Defence Day, to be made available to the international press.<sup>66</sup> In this way, the survival of St Paul's would be juxtaposed alongside the ruins of Coventry Cathedral, a reminder of both Britain's capacity to survive and the violence of the enemy.

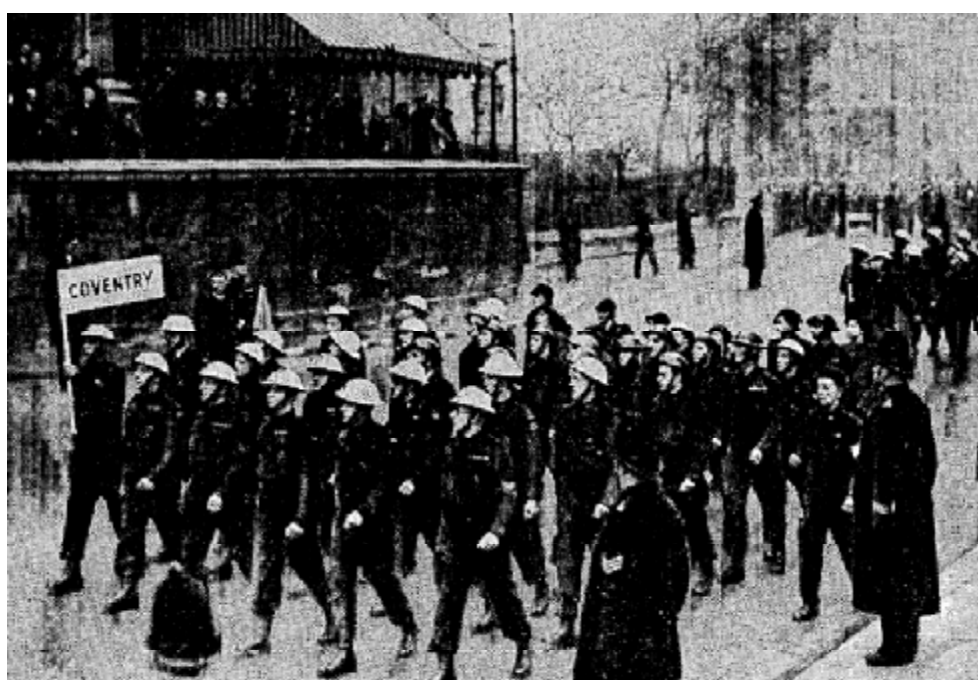


Figure 6.7. Remembering the Coventry Blitz. 'The March Past the King...of civil defence contingents drawn from bombed areas throughout the country. The order of the march of civil defence detachments represented the chronological sequence of the principal air raids. Source: *The Times*, 16 November 1942, p. 8.

The use of the bombardment of Britain by Germany as a piece of international propaganda has long been understood as part of the function of the myth of the blitz, particularly in the efforts to bring the US into the war in 1940-

---

<sup>66</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Letter from Mayor Coventry to Herbert Morrison, 7 November 1942.



41.<sup>67</sup> However the use of the blitz as a means to forge international relations was not limited to this period. David Edgerton has shown that in 1942 the British Empire was being spectacularly overtaken by the USA. In this year the US became much more important as a co-belligerent and as a source of critical supplies. Edgerton argues that at the end of 1941 Britain and its empire had been the richest, greatest naval and air power, the greatest mercantile power on the seas, and the greatest producer of tanks and aeroplanes.<sup>68</sup> Yet, in 1941-42 the British Empire in the east was decisively weakened by the surrender of Singapore and later the fall of Hong Kong and Malaya.<sup>69</sup>

The Civil Defence Day offered a reminder of the brutality of attacks on Britain in 1940-41. Through its role as a victim, Britain could then securely assert itself as an international moral guardian in which the national community acted together to defeat the attacks by the enemy aggressor. The visual culture of damaged and bombed cities was developed to articulate the viewpoint that Britain could carry on despite destructive trauma; Britain was thus at once victim and crusader.<sup>70</sup> The use of heritage culture did not leave room to present Britain in propaganda terms as the warfare state, as Edgerton has characterized it, but instead cast Britain as a working-state, a community pulling together to carry on.<sup>71</sup> *Front Line* made direct links with the civil defence of Britain and international relations, quoting from Roosevelt: 'the British defence showed that Britain was able to hold off disaster until adequate help could come from ships,

---

<sup>67</sup> Calder, *The Myth*, chapter 10.

<sup>68</sup> Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, p. 84.

<sup>69</sup> Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, p. 76.

<sup>70</sup> Neil Matheson, 'National Identity and the 'melancholy ruins': Cecil Beaton's photographs of the London Blitz' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), p. 261.

<sup>71</sup> David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge, 2006).

air planes, tanks and guns from the United States.<sup>72</sup> This suggests that commemoration of the blitz as constructed as a national 'people's' event in part aimed to consolidate and assert Britain's international standing through an assertion of the will of the people to defend their nation.

### *The Limits of Civil Defence Day as a National Ceremony*

While the national parade used all the tropes of national ceremony, it was in reality a limited and exclusive event. A parade of only 1500 people meant that, although it aimed to be symbolic of the national experience, the event was highly exclusive, representing those areas deemed to be the chief places that suffered heavy attack.<sup>73</sup> Harold Scott had to write to each regional commissioner to explain that direct representation at the parade had to be limited.<sup>74</sup> This caused concern amongst the regions, as it was felt that many areas that had experienced heavy raids were left out (Figure 6.8.). Looking at the numbers included in the parade, each region was represented based on the blitzed centres, and each contingent was allotted in proportion to the 'total number of fatal casualties suffered in the region.'<sup>75</sup> Scotland decided to opt out of the review in London entirely.<sup>76</sup> This rejection of the event by the Scottish Home Department prompted a decision to exclude Northern Ireland, for it was felt this would be an invidious decision that would make the absence of a Clydeside contingent more conspicuous. However, it was decided that the absence of the two blitzed areas Clydeside and Belfast, could be explained on grounds of 'fuel and economy.'

---

<sup>72</sup> HMSO, *Front Line*, p. 106.

<sup>73</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Memo sent by Ministry of Home Security to Reading, Cambridge, Nottingham, Newcastle, Leeds, Bristol, Tunbridge Wells, Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester, 20 October 1942.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Home Security Circular No.209/1942 15 October 1942, Civil Defence Day 15 November 1942.

<sup>76</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Letter from Scottish Home Department to S.C. Leslie, 15 October 1942.

Indeed, the limiting of the parade to 1500 people was articulated in these terms.<sup>77</sup>

The Civil Defence Day parade therefore constructed a new wartime geography of Britain based on a selected geography of bombardment. This select geography was echoed within *Front Line*. London was constructed as the national centre and the moral guardian of the nation, St Paul's at the Centre of this. The rest of the nation under fire was divided in terms of a socio-economic and wartime geography that made particular sites a target. One set of cities and towns attacked were characterized as 'the arms towns,' including Coventry, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield and Manchester.<sup>78</sup> Another set of towns were characterized as 'Port Towns', including Portsmouth, Southampton, Cardiff, Swansea, Liverpool, Plymouth, Clydeside, Belfast and Hull.<sup>79</sup> Finally mention was made of attacks on rural areas and tip-and-run seaside raids. This geography of the blitz located national identity and national survival predominantly within urban space; the city became the locus of Britain and London was at the centre of that geography.<sup>80</sup>

Images of destruction within *Front Line* coupled with descriptions of raids created a narrative of urban desolation: 'London was deeply scarred and widely desolated. In the City and parts of the East End, great blocks and neighbourhoods were brought down or burnt out'; other urban centres:

---

<sup>77</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, The national parade in connection with Civil Defence Day will not include a contingent from Scotland, 22 October 1942.

<sup>78</sup> HMSO, *Front Line*, pp. 86-7.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>80</sup> Indeed, Calder notes that in January 1943 the *Bristol Labour Weekly* angrily criticized *Front Line* for its errors in 'describing our losses during the blitzes,' and for ignoring the raids they had suffered in June 1940 'weeks before London': *Bristol Labour Weekly*, 22 January 1943, cited in Calder, *The Myth*, p. 128.

...may have had one or two raids, half a dozen or a dozen, against London's score of attacks, there are few indeed where the minds and memories, like the physical fabric of the streets, are not deeply marked by the white heat of intense experience.<sup>81</sup>

Neil Matheson argues that the popular collective memory of the blitz became embedded within the photographic image and that the chronicling of destruction articulated a particular model of 'Englishness.' Matheson notes that *Front Line* aimed to represent 'the whole spirit of Britain.'<sup>82</sup> However, it is predominantly the urban landscape that dominates and within the narrative it is the heroic uniformed civil defender that is utilized to represent that nation.

Parading civil defenders through the damaged landscape and into the nation's great Cathedral enabled a visual spectacle of survival and tied the bodies of the people within the parade to state power and authority. The parade past the King was a reminder that these defenders were both citizens and subjects, and that ultimately the political freedoms of the former would be laid down in defence of the latter. The narrative of survival that emerged in this official interpretation of the blitz offered a structure of emotion into which people could project their continued existence. And for those in the civil defence services, it offered potential status and purpose to their actions.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> HMSO, *Front Line*, p. 84.

<sup>82</sup> Matheson, 'National Identity,' p. 263.

<sup>83</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter to SC Leslie from Charles S. Mason of North-midland regional office.

<b>Civil Defence Parade. 15 November 1942.</b>					
<b>Region</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>	<b>Blitzed Centres</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Coastal</b>	<b>Total</b>
RAF	-	48	-	-	48
AA Command	-	48	-	-	48
NFS	-	198	-	-	198
Police	-	150	-	-	150
1. Northern	Newcastle	18	6	12	36
2. North Eastern	Leeds	36	6	6	48
3. North Midland	Nottingham	12	6	6	24
4. Eastern	Cambridge	-	18	24	42
5. London	London	438	-	-	438
6. Southern	Reading	36	6	6	48
7. South Western	Bristol	84	6	12	102
8. Wales	Cardiff	30	6	6	42
9. Midland	Birmingham	96	6	-	102
10. North Western	Manchester	144	6	-	150
11. Scottish	Edinburgh	-	-	-	-
12. South Eastern	Tunbridge Wells	24	12	12	48
Total		1362	78	84	1524
<b>Officers</b>					
RAF	1)				
AA	1)				
NFS	1)				
Police	1)	17	1	1	19
Regions less					
4,5,11	9)				
Region 5	4)				
Total		1379	79	85	1543

Figure 6.8. Numbers for Civil Defence Day Parade. Source: TNA/HO 207/215

In summary, the Civil Defence Day Parade served three roles: it was a piece of international propaganda; it was a national memorial day aimed at uniting the nation; and it was a means to rally the civil defence services. The parade had another consequence, alongside *Front Line*, the official guidebook to the blitz, the parade universalized the experience of the bombardment of Britain and constructed a narrative of experience really only applicable to a certain number of cities. In this way they can be viewed as constructing an official memory of the blitz that would have a long-term legacy, establishing its heroes

and its values and celebrating the city and London as the nation's centre. The account of the blitz and the civil defence of Britain embodied within *Front Line* came to dominate the popular memory of the blitz on Britain. Thus, analysing both the day and the book help to reveal the processes through which the collective consciousness of this period in history was constructed.

### 6.3. Why Commemorate the Civil Defences?

#### *Responses to the Day*

The Civil Defence Day service reveals a number of things about the official commemoration of the civil defence services and the position of London as a national space during the Second World War. The parade route linked the event to other national services of thanksgiving that had been arranged in and around St Paul's. The route and the procession along Ludgate Hill was tried and tested: similar processions had marked royal events and London only celebrations, and the stand used for the salute was left over from the Lord Mayor's Day.<sup>84</sup> It was now becoming a parade route for the commemoration of the Second World War, and a similar route was used for United Nations Day (in fact, the procession organized for this event was used as a model for arranging Civil Defence Day).<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> St Paul's had been used for national celebrations from the end of the eighteenth-century, marking royal occasions and military heroes. The crypt remains the site of the interment of both Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington. The funeral of the latter consolidated St Paul's as a space of commemoration for Britain's national military heroes. The use of the Cathedral for state occasions reached its apogee with Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897. During the later 1930s the Cathedral had links with both George V and VI. See: Wolffe, 'National occasions,' p. 381-91; Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, p. 167.

TNA/HO 207/215, Letter from A.S. Hutchinson to Mr. Strutt, Min of Home Security, 26 October 1942.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, Letter from A.S. Hutchinson to Harold Scott regarding Civil Defence Day, 9 October 1942; TNA/HO 207/214, Meeting to consider arrangements for Battle of Britain Sunday, 26 August 1943.

The parade attracted large crowds. One woman who took part in the parade commented 'we marched down that road with thousands of people on each side and they were all cheering us.'<sup>86</sup> Others felt that marking the activities of defenders continued to be important and hoped that such parades would occur, even when the war was over.<sup>87</sup> Yet there was some criticism leveled at the parade. Wandsworth borough council questioned if anyone was interested in the parades that marked the event across the country and felt that there was little interest to be taken in wardens who were getting older and older.<sup>88</sup> Crayford District Council boycotted the event completely:

Whilst my Council have every sympathy with the objects of the proposed Day of National Remembrance and Thanksgiving for the Defeat of the German Air Attacks on this County in 1940-41, and the great raid on Coventry, they are of the opinion that there is a strong public feeling that a more useful purpose would be served at this juncture by concentration of the Country's energies in connection with the prosecution of the War, instead of such functions, which, of necessity, involve unnecessary expenditure, labour and travelling, and, moreover, that before any further such functions are contemplated, an expression of the Country's feelings in the matter should be sought.<sup>89</sup>

In turn, the event clashed with another popular civic event, Lord Mayor's Sunday. Local community celebrations of belonging in fact overrode the national attempt at memorialization of the blitz. This is demonstrated by the event in Coventry. The event in the city was linked to the city's annual Lord Mayor's procession. The Mayor explained that to mark both the Mayor's Day and Civil Defence Day the Cathedral was to be incorporated in to the annual procession of

---

<sup>86</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter to S.C. Leslie from Charles S. Mason

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, Letter from George Rogers Group Co-ordinating Officer, County of Surrey Civil Defence to A.S. Hutchinson, 28 December 1942.

<sup>88</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter to Hutchinson from ARP Controller and Town Clerk Wandsworth Borough Council, 30 November 1942.

<sup>89</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter from Leonard Burslem, Clerk of Crayford Urban District Council, Regarding the Home Security Circular No.209/42, 22 October 1942.

the Alderman and Councillors of the city. They planned to halt at the South-West Door and proceed to the High Altar, where they would place a floral cross in memory of those who gave their lives in Coventry and in thanksgiving for the way in which the city had come through its ordeal. There was no formal service planned within the Cathedral so it was decided that after waiting at the altar for a few minutes the civic party would leave quietly through the Cathedral and proceed to the Central Hall followed by the remainder of the civic procession. The Mayor felt that this 'act of homage in the Cathedral' would be both impressive and symbolic and predicted that there would be a pilgrimage of citizens to the Cathedral and other emblems placed at the altar.<sup>90</sup> As with parades of the East End, this civic procession offered a means visually to assert the survival of Coventry through the parading of its elected representatives; a vision of governance. In Coventry rather than focusing on the national Civil Defence Day, the memory of the blitz was incorporated into an older civic ceremony, which asserted continuity with past municipal governance and incorporated civil defence into a longer history of the city.

For those within the services parades and ceremonies were sometimes viewed with scorn. In December 1940 Bill and Violet Regan left the Isle of Dogs to visit their evacuated children. Bill was given some chocolate to take to them by two of the men in the depot. The chocolate had been presented to them for 'courage and dedication of our brave, unflinching rescue workers to be served up at the weekly parade.' Bill viewed this as a nonsense, noting that he was not brave or dedicated but merely 'concentrates on getting the casualty out, without causing further injury, and particularly, not shifting anything likely to bring

---

<sup>90</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Letter from Mayor Coventry to Herbert Morrison, 7 November 1942.



down whole lot' because 'I have an aversion to getting squashed.' He laughingly continued that 'there is one adjectival attribute I must work on. The next time a bomb seems to be heading for me I shall try not to flinch.' In this way he positions his own experience above the collective experience offered in the weekly parade, rejecting a sense of community belonging associated with civil defence and asserting his own status as a hard worker.<sup>91</sup> Bill dislikes the pageantry and status offered in the weekly parades, noting he is simply doing a job.<sup>92</sup> His case suggests the limits of parades to offer a sense of collective identity to all of those participating.

#### *The 1943 Civil Defence Parade*

In 1943 another event was organized to mark the civil defence of Great Britain during 1940-41. Because of the clashes with Lord Mayor's Day the previous year, and mindful of some of the criticisms leveled at the former Civil Defence Day, a decision was made to combine the commemoration of the civil defences with the Royal Airforce Commemorations of the Battle of Britain. The commemoration was to cover three areas in one, tying up the Ministry of Home Security, Civil Defence and AFS, the Air Ministry, the RAF and the Ministry of Aircraft Production for the workers.<sup>93</sup> The event was intended:

to commemorate the air engagements known as the "Battle of Britain", the prolonged series of night attacks that followed and the services of all those, whether members of the Royal Air Force, the Anti-Aircraft Gunners, the Civil Defence Services, the Police, the Royal Observer Corps, aircraft workers or members of the general public, who by their skill, fortitude or devotion to duty contributed to the defeat of the whole of the attacks,

---

<sup>91</sup> This conforms to Bell's analysis the blitz in which 'work' became a high priority for those in the London Blitz, *London was Ours*, chapter three, esp. p. 99.

<sup>92</sup> IWM/88/10/1, Diary of Bill Regan, December 1940, p. 12.

<sup>93</sup> BBC/WAC/R19/79/2, Battle of Britain, notes on new type of commemoration.

which were aimed first at the invasion of this country and later at the destruction of morale of the civilian population.<sup>94</sup>

The day was marked, not by a parade around St Paul's, but by a military style review in St James Park. Like the 1942 event, local parades and remembrance events were organized with special services of thanksgiving in churches.

For the civil defence services, the day was largely organized in the same way as the 1942 event, with contingents chosen to represent the bombed areas. While the event combined the commemoration of both civil and fighting services, the civil defence column was given pride of place at the head of the procession.<sup>95</sup> In contrast to the 1942 event, the Foreign Office decided not to invite representatives of Spain, Switzerland, Portugal, Turkey, Sweden, Afghanistan, or the Argentine, among the neutral nations, and it was agreed that the Service Departments should follow suit in their invitations to Service Attachés because it was felt the commemoration was a domestic issue.<sup>96</sup> Service Attachés were invited from Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Norway because their Air Arms had taken part in the Battle of Britain.<sup>97</sup> The event was framed in national terms, representing a move away from the use of the blitz for international propaganda. A national service was held in St Paul's Cathedral, however the 3000 strong parade followed a traditional military parade route along Birdcage Walk and Parliament Street, past the Cenotaph, along the Mall and was dismissed at

---

<sup>94</sup> TNA/HO 207/214, Home Security Circular No. 138/1943. Battle of Britain Sunday.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, Letter to Mrs. Murdoch, Ministry of Home Security, 2 September 1943.

<sup>96</sup> TNA/HO 186/1223, Battle of Britain Sunday, Minutes of the meeting of the Church Sub-Committee held at the Home Office on 2 September 1943.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

Buckingham Palace Gate (Figure 6.9).<sup>98</sup> The decision to hold the parade here linked the event into a traditional military ceremonial space.<sup>99</sup>

The decision to combine all the services within a national celebration of the Battle of Britain marked an effort by the government to assert a particular version of the nation's immediate past. The BBC had planned a programme of events to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Britain. During 1941, Cecil McGivern had produced an extremely popular radio dramatization of the Battle of Britain that celebrated the 'achievements of RAF Fighter Command during the great days from August 8 to October 31, 1940.'<sup>100</sup> The programme billed itself using Churchill's words as: 'a tribute to the FEW, who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, turned the tide of war.'<sup>101</sup> The programme proved so popular that it was repeated on a number of occasions, and was broadcast throughout the Empire and in North America.<sup>102</sup>

However, in 1943 the government asked the BBC not to bill programmes on commemorative days as being specifically about the Battle of Britain. For, by this time, the Home Office had decided that 'Fighter Command has had too much publicity about the Battle of Britain and that workers in factories etc. should have their fair share.'<sup>103</sup> Indeed, it was hoped that McGivern would be able to change the programme to incorporate activities of the civil defence and other services who had contributed to the success of the Battle of Britain.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> TNA/HO 207/214, Battle of Britain Day, Sunday 26 September 1943, Orders for Civil Defence Services.

<sup>99</sup> Bob Bushaway, 'The Obligation of Remembrance or the Remembrance of Obligation: Society and the Memory of World War,' in: Peter Liddle and John Bourne and Ian Whitehead (eds), *The Great War, 1914-1945* (London, 2000), p. 498.

<sup>100</sup> BBC/WAC/R19/79/1, Planned Programme on the Battle of Britain.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, The Battle of Britain, Billing, 11 April 1941.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, The Battle of Britain.

<sup>103</sup> BBC/WAC/R 79/2, Schedule, Battle of Britain, Week 37.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, Letter from Air Ministry to Cecil McGivern, 28 July 1943.

The 1943 parade was a deliberate effort to subsume the Battle of Britain into a wider narrative of the civil defence of Britain. This coincided with a wider push for production. Within this context, the insertion of the production of armaments and the protection of factories into the story of the Battle of Britain can be seen as an attempt to reward factory workers with the cultural capital previously associated with heroic RAF fighters.<sup>105</sup>

Indeed, both the 1942 and 1943 parades offered a means to mediate particular policies associated with the civil defence services. During the summer of 1942, rumours had been rife that civil defence services were to be cut.<sup>106</sup> While the Prime Minister asserted that this was not the case, as it was assumed that air attacks on Britain would begin again in the autumn of 1942, there were still tensions over the costs of the services and their burden on local authorities.<sup>107</sup>

In fact behind closed doors a report by senior regional commissioner to the Minister of Home Security outlined potential cuts to ARP services. The report outlined that a review of all services had been completed and that there had been a revolutionary reorganisation of services by local authorities due to the absence of enemy action. The Light Rescue were now trained as first aid parties, limiting the need for separate first aid parties, and Heavy Rescue services were now more fully equipped and better trained meaning that they could become a more compact efficient service with fewer men. Indeed, many had now left the services and were finding alternative work.<sup>108</sup> While the report suggested that the

---

<sup>105</sup> Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, pp. 124-132.

<sup>106</sup> Philip Ziegler, *London at War 1939-1945* (London, 2002), pp. 209-210.

<sup>107</sup> Ziegler, *London at War*, p. 209; *Hansard*, vol. 382 col. 735-93, 30 July 1942.

<sup>108</sup> HO 207/186, Extract of Report by the Senior Regional Commissioner to the to the Minister of Home Security, Progress of Civil Defence, Man-power.

services were functioning effectively, rumour and tension remained rife through the summer of 1942. In this context, the parade offered a boost to morale for those in ARP. The 1942 parade offered a means to 'refresh the public memory of its own achievement and that of the civil defence services, to give a fillip to the morale of those services and to recall all of us to the nature and seriousness of the possible tasks ahead' at a time when aerial bombardment was still a serious possibility but services were being cut.<sup>109</sup> Similarly the 1943 parade coincided with further cuts to services as shown in appendix B full time work in the ARP services was declining. In turn, the Home Guard began to take over some of the functions of paid ARP workers. The linking up of civil defence with the Battle of Britain offered a means to mediate tensions over those changes to services.

In summary, the 1942 and 1943 parades marked another shift in the meaning of civil defence. Up to the beginning of bombing, civil defence had largely been equated with 'the needs which might arise for defence against air attack'. As discussed in previous chapters, this was marked by new regulations that sought to reorder social life and institutionalize a set of services within communities.<sup>110</sup> With the onset of bombing, civil defence services had expanded to cover a wider remit and in London this had been marked by the expansion of clearance and welfare programmes for the homeless. This placed a growing burden on local authorities, who began to see the civil defence of Britain as a national issue.<sup>111</sup> A national civil defence memorial day offered a means to celebrate the local and the national through a public spectacle within the nation's

---

<sup>109</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Rt. Hon. Sir Alexander Hardinge notes on event, 28 September 1942.

<sup>110</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 382 col. 739, 30 July 1942.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

capital while at the same time offering local communities an opportunity to celebrate their own actions.

#### **6.4. Commemorating Devastation: An Experiment in Blitz Memorialisation.**

This chapter has demonstrated that the style and meaning of official commemoration of the blitz changed significantly in the first three years of the war, and that this can be related to political decisions over productivity, the armed services and ARP. However, the nature of the ceremonies also reflected changes about appropriate ways to encounter and conceptualize the blitz on Britain: about what was culturally suitable, but also what worked in practice. The decision to hold the 1943 parade around Whitehall and Buckingham Palace, and not around St Paul's, marked tensions over the use of St Paul's as a space of wartime commemoration. The 1943 organizing committee was wary of using St Paul's at all. Lord Sherwood 'understood that the Home Secretary was averse to holding a religious service in London as part of the celebrations of the Battle of Britain'. However, it was clarified that 'it was not that the Home Secretary was opposed to the service' but that 'if, as he thought, the parade could be held more conveniently outside Buckingham Palace rather than at St. Paul's, then it would be difficult to arrange a church service as well.' Sir Harold Scott explained that the experience of the 1942 parade and service was that St. Paul's was not the most satisfactory venue: 'It was difficult to get a long enough march past, the distance from the point of assembly to the saluting base was not enough, and the site on the whole did not provide the most dignified setting. Moreover, it had not

been an easy matter to accommodate in St Paul's all those taking part in the parade.<sup>112</sup>

While St. Paul's had long been associated with national ceremony and was an obvious choice for the location of the national memorialisation of the blitz, Scott's assertion that the whole site did not prove the most dignified setting reflected the culturally contentious nature of ruins associated with the bombardment. The firestorms that had raged around St. Paul's on the 29 December 1940 and the image of the Cathedral rising above the flames may have made it a symbol of national survival. However, the ruins around it remained problematic. Indeed, Herbert Mason's original photograph was cropped so that the thick black smoke billowing around the Cathedral was not shown, nor were the ruins that dominated the foreground.<sup>113</sup> The marchers on Civil Defence Day would inevitably have glimpsed some of the tidied up ruins that spread out from the Great Cathedral, and the crowds that descended on the City would have had to negotiate a desolate landscape (Figure 6.10).

As discussed in Chapter five, the bomb-damaged landscape was highly contentious. In particular, it was feared that damaged buildings were bad for morale. In turn, Bill Regan's diary has shown that buildings could become symbols of the dead; a public marker of lives once lived. Cecil Beaton, who photographed many post-raid scenes, noted the intense emotional response to ruins after raids. Despite having a permit, he was arrested and set upon by angry crowds when seen photographing post-raid damage. This was not just about public conformity to wartime regulations; it was an emotional response by those

---

<sup>112</sup> TNA/HO 186/1223, Minutes of Meeting of the committee dealing with the celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

<sup>113</sup> M.J. Gaskin, *Blitz: The Story of 29<sup>th</sup> December 1940* (London, 2005), p. ix.

around him also witnessing damage. In one incident he showed a man his papers, but the man still felt it was not acceptable to photograph the damage. A plain-clothes policeman told Beaton the 'people must be pacified,' and he was prevented from taking any more photos.<sup>114</sup>

Gabriel Moshenka argues that the physical effects of bombing on a city are fragmentation, destruction and loss and that memorials of the London blitz have not adequately incorporated this, thereby failing to incorporate the alienating and confusing nature of the blitz into popular memory.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps this was why representations came to focus so much on the future. Indeed, Chapter five has shown that the damaged landscape became bound up with a narrative of the future, as revealed in documents like the County of London Plan. Similarly, Bob Bushaway has suggested that the reason there was no rush to erect memorials for World War Two more generally is that the war was always focused on the future, and was about fighting for freedom not remembering the dead.<sup>116</sup> This can help explain why Morrison's speech on the 1942 day focused on the spirit of the blitz as a metaphor not just of national survival but also of better future, as he articulated:

History will name you, for your part in these years, the spearhead of humanity in its onward march. After the war, whatever may happen to the body of civil defence, its spirit will not die. Keep alive the fellowship of this great army of people...The future of your country is in your hands.<sup>117</sup>

Yet, in fact the 1942 Civil Defence Day had sought to memorialize not just the civil defence of Britain but the damage wrought on Britain. Indeed, it was hoped that the regions would organise events in their own areas and that these

---

<sup>114</sup> Matheson, 'National Identity,' pp. 271-273.

<sup>115</sup> Moshenka, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests?', p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> Bushaway, 'The Obligation of Remembrance,' p. 502.

<sup>117</sup> Morrison, 'You, the People,' p. 647.



would serve two functions: firstly to honour the workers in the services through parades; and secondly, to involve the general public in services of commemoration which might involve religion or might take a secular form but be situated on 'devastated ground.'<sup>118</sup> The 1942 Civil Defence Day thus sought to mark not just survival but loss, memorializing the damage wrought by bombardment. The official desire to witness damage and to make sense of it has marked similarities to the walks taken by Bill Regan around the Isle of Dogs. However, rather than individual marking and recording of loss, a community of people would come together to witness destruction and articulate and give thanks for their survival. In this way the devastation wrought on bombed areas could be publicly commemorated.

This public commemoration could and did offer a means for individuals to project their own memories and experiences onto a space: while the parade in Coventry and the image of the destroyed Cathedral was useful as a piece of international propaganda and an easy visual means to articulate a sense of community survival, the Mayor also predicted that there would be a 'pilgrimage of citizens to the cathedral and other emblems placed at the altar.'<sup>119</sup> The Mayor's sense that the local community would utilize this day as a form of personal commemoration is a reminder that in official acts of commemoration there can also be space for personal outlets of mourning, a public outlet for private grief.<sup>120</sup>

Moshenska argues that the use of St Paul's as a site of commemoration would not allow those who experienced bombardment to remember

---

<sup>118</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Home Security Circular No.209/1942 15 October 1942, Civil Defence Day 15 November 1942.

<sup>119</sup> TNA/HO 186/1221, Letter from Mayor Coventry to Herbert Morrison, 7 November 1942.

<sup>120</sup> Ashplant, Dawson, Roper, 'The Politics of War,' p. 8.

bombardment in their own terms and to deal with the traumatic consequences of that bombardment.<sup>121</sup> Moshenka understands St Paul's as a monumental space. Henri Lefebvre defines the latter as offering 'each member of society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage.' Lefebvre suggests that cathedral space is the apogee of monumental space. He argues that the 'cathedral's monumental space necessarily entails its supplying answers to all the questions that assail anyone who crosses the threshold.'<sup>122</sup>

Yet, in Lefebvre's understanding the monument is reality changed into appearance, it is a projection, a 'materially realized appearance.' Clearly St. Paul's was a powerful wartime symbol of survival and became representative of a collective wartime identity. Yet, the Cathedral itself was also a damaged space: on 10 October 1940, a 500 lb bomb penetrated the choir and shattered the high altar; and on the 17 April 1941, a direct hit on the north transept destroyed the vault over the central bay of the crypt, bulging the walls of the transept and blowing out much of the glass that remained.<sup>123</sup> While most of the evidence of bombing had been cleared up, certain parts of the Cathedral could not be accessed and damage to the heating meant that only the West Doors could be used.<sup>124</sup> The Cathedral thus contained physical traces of conflict that directly impacted on the bodies within the space, directing where people could walk and

---

<sup>121</sup> Moshenka, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests?', p. 9.

<sup>122</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), pp. 220-221.

<sup>123</sup> Burns, 'From 1830 to the Present,' p. 100.

<sup>124</sup> TNA/HO 207/215, Letter from SA Hutchinson to Harold Scott regarding Civil Defence Day, 9 October 1942; TNA/HO 207/215, Letter from Herbert Morrison to The Right Hon. Sir Alexander Hardinge, 13 October 1942.

the exits they could use. In this way, St Paul's was in fact both monument and counter-monument, a disturbed and incomplete space marred by damage.<sup>125</sup>

In turn, the Cathedral was the end point for a parade route that had taken in the damaged city. While the parade may have been regimented, the space it could process along was limited by the damage inflicted on the area. Walking amongst those ruins was an act of public witnessing and a performance of remembrance. Those who did not know the area before had been informed of the loss of cultural heritage, and those who knew the City could mark other absences and project private memories onto the spaces of absence. Thus, the 1942 Civil Defence National Memorial Day can be read as an experiment in memorialisation that was not repeated, but that was closer to the personal and spontaneous commemoration and witnessing that marked the experiences of those who were present during the blitz on London.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have considered the wartime government-backed effort to actively commemorate the blitz on Britain articulated as a remembrance of the civil defence of Britain. In particular, the chapter has analysed the 'invention of tradition' in the state sponsored ceremonial events, associated local actions, and the production of an official account of the blitz on Britain.

Creating a national memorial day for the civil defence of Britain acted to universalize the experience of bombardment, moving it beyond the working-class streets that figured in the early representations of the blitz and celebrating

---

<sup>125</sup> Moshenska, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests?', p. 7; on the counter-monument see also: James E. Young, 'The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today,' *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (1992), pp. 267-296.

the blitz instead as a moment of national survival. This process of nationalization centred on the use of the monumental space of St. Paul's Cathedral. The day was both a deliberate construction of the nation's past and an attempt to assert its position on the international stage through the creation of a patriotic language of togetherness.<sup>126</sup> Richard Weight argues that the idea of the 'finest hour', tied into the narrative of Britain standing alone against the German attempt at invasion and then bombardment, dominated the popular idea of Britishness for nearly half a century, a legend offering a new unity of nationhood.<sup>127</sup> He suggests this emerged with the coinciding of a particular set of national symbols perpetuated through certain kinds of media including, broadcasts, art, religious services, music and the monarchy. Culturally, Weight suggests, the finest hour offered an acceptable version of Britishness.<sup>128</sup>

Civil Defence Day offers all the tropes of the people's war imagined within the finest hour: a parade of varied, yet united, citizens, and 'blitz heroes;' the King and Queen taking a salute; the Archbishop of Canterbury offering a national sermon; follow up broadcasts by national leaders; a message from the great national leader Winston Churchill; and a linking up of different areas of the country to give unity to local experiences.<sup>129</sup> The day was mediated through

---

<sup>126</sup>Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions,' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1-14; James E. Young argues that 'traditionally state-sponsored memory of a national past aims to affirm the righteousness of a nation's birth, even its divine election. The matrix of a nation's monuments traditionally exploits the story of ennobling events, of triumphs over barbarism, and recalls the martyrdom of those who gave their lives in the struggle for national existence—who, in the martyrological refrain, died so that a country might live. In suggesting themselves as the indigenous, even geological outcrops in a national landscape, monuments tend to naturalize the values, ideals, and laws of the land itself. To do otherwise would be to undermine the very foundations of national legitimacy, of the state's seemingly natural right to exist: 'The Counter-Monument,' p. 270.

<sup>127</sup>Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 27.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid, part 1: Warriors.

<sup>129</sup>'Blitz Heroes to Parade,' *The Daily Mirror*, 14 November 1942, p. 2; 'King Honours Raid Heroes,' *The Times*, 16 November 1942, p. 2 TNA/HO 207/215, Prime Minister, Order of the Day, 15 November 1942.

*Front Line*, an official reading of the blitz on Britain. The book also acted as a broader guidebook to the blitz, and constructed a new geography of Britain based on the geography of bombardment. Cities, with London at the top of the hierarchy, were constructed as the moral centre of the nation, with the mighty symbol of St. Paul's Cathedral at the centre.

St. Paul's Cathedral was consolidated as a national symbol through its survival of bombardment on 29 December. The image of the Cathedral rising above the flames became symbolic of the nation's heart (Figure 6.1). This in turn constructed London as a heritage site. St Paul's did not carry with it the tensions of other parts of the city, nor, despite the fires that raged around it, was it a part of the spectacle of modern London. Instead, it was represented as linked into an historic tourist route of Britain's development, the outcome of which was not the machines that rained down violence from the skies but the heroic defenders that stood by and protected their city. The city was thus no longer a site of anxious modernity, as the changes that were wrought by development could be mediated by the security of heritage, a national past projected onto those that lived and worked in this great city. The image of St Paul's thereby nationalized the experience of the blitz, creating a media event whereby the reporting of the fires turned the blitz into a collective experience.

The 1942 parade had a number of functions. The chronological order of the event, based on the principal air raids, allowed the narrative of the blitz to be mapped out in the physical bodies of the civil defence personnel. The size of each contingent was related to the heaviness of the raiding and the lives lost, death was projected onto the bodies of the living and their survival was a marker

of the survival of the places they represented. The parading of the living in place of the dead acted to secure the future, marking collective survival.

At the same time, the parade was an active form of governance. The civil defence services paraded past a hierarchy of officials related to the administration of the home front. The procession marked a visible form of national integration in which the services were reviewed and legitimised by the officials that witnessed the parade. Those present included foreign dignitaries and in this way the event also offered a useful piece of international propaganda at a time when Britain had only just experienced its first victory. The Britain offered up on the international stage was not a belligerent warring state but a victim of ruthless bombing, marked particularly by the twinning of St. Paul's with the ruined Cathedral in Coventry. This was articulated as a brutal reminder of the enemy's power and the will of a free people to survive.

Yet, the event itself was highly limited, only 1500 people took part in the parade and these were taken only from England and Wales. The event was seen by some as pointless. Crayford District for instance questioned the impact that parading elderly wardens around London could really have on morale.

Yet, the need for an event at this time and an official desire to commemorate the blitz also suggests an awareness of the need to use such events to mediate particular policies. The 1943 parade thus focused not on remembering the bombardment of Britain but the collective defence of Britain. This was an effort to play down the Air Ministry while using the cultural capital that had grown up around heroic RAF fighters, projecting the popular memory of their efforts onto both the civil defenders and those involved in the production of

armaments. This too coincided with cuts to services and the restructuring of ARP.

Official commemorations of the Civil Defence of Great Britain thus served two functions: the celebration of services and the memorialisation of the impact of the blitz on Britain. This process of active remembrance through national memorial days has not fully been recognized within histories of the Second World War. The first Civil Defence Day may have been a projection of the people's war, it may have incorporate tropes of the myth of the blitz but it was also an experiment in collectively dealing with the psychological impact of bombardment through the visits to and processions around damaged space. In 1942 there was a will to mark and remember the damage to the urban landscape. However, the indignity of this landscape was not deemed appropriate for later events. For this reason, the 1943 national service was held in the Cathedral but the celebratory parade followed an established military route around the nation's military and monarchical display grounds.

The 1943 event also marked a collective effort to remember the national efforts of a wider range of services. The government had hoped that the collective remembrance of the RAF, civil defence and armaments factory workers would mediate and temper the focus of national understanding of the defence of Britain in 1940-41. Yet, in the press the day was heralded as the 'proud remembrance of the few,' and a moment when 'the many remember the few.'<sup>130</sup> Civilian endeavour was linked to military in an effort to place them on an equal footing, yet what emerged in 1943 was a celebration of the uniformed heroic

---

<sup>130</sup> 'In Proud Remembrance of the Few: King Leads the Nation's Thanks,' *Daily Mirror*, 27 September 1943, pp. 4-5; 'Battle of Britain Day...The Many Remember the Few,' *Daily Express*, 27 September 1943, p. 4.

male pilots, signifying the beginning of a form of collective memory that was to dominate in Britain for the next half a century.<sup>131</sup>

National memorial days were a means to assert a particular version of the war on Britain, to allow people to come together to remember, to celebrate and to give thanks. These public ceremonies were aimed at being moments of national collectivity and thus they offer a window into how the idea of the nation was constructed at a particular time. However, interrogating their form and their relationship to the space in which they occurred suggests that these public ceremonies could incorporate private grief. The pockmarked Cathedral and the rubble and ruin surrounding it were reminders of the dislocation, confusion and trauma of blitz. Moshenka's suggestion that the blitz has not been adequately memorialized perhaps does not account for the way in which the landscape itself became a site of memory and memorialisation during the war. Thus, St Paul's and the surrounding areas were spaces of presence and absence, a marker both of the nation's secure past and hopeful future and yet an indicator of individual trauma and loss.

---

<sup>131</sup> See for example Lucy Noakes discussions on memory and national identity in, Lucy Noakes, *War and The British: Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London, 1998),



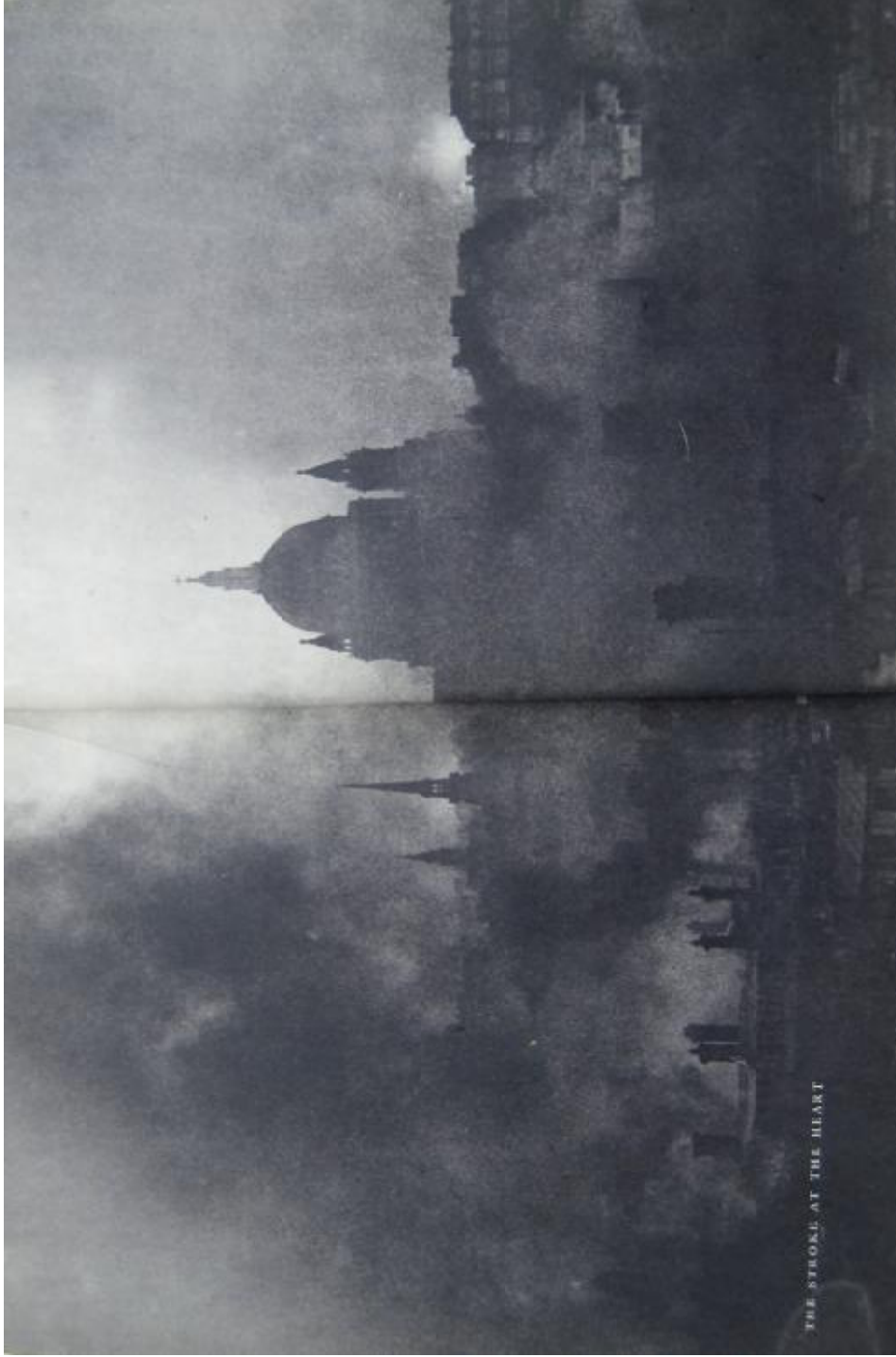


Figure 6.1. A Stroke At the Heart. Source: HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), pp. 16-17.

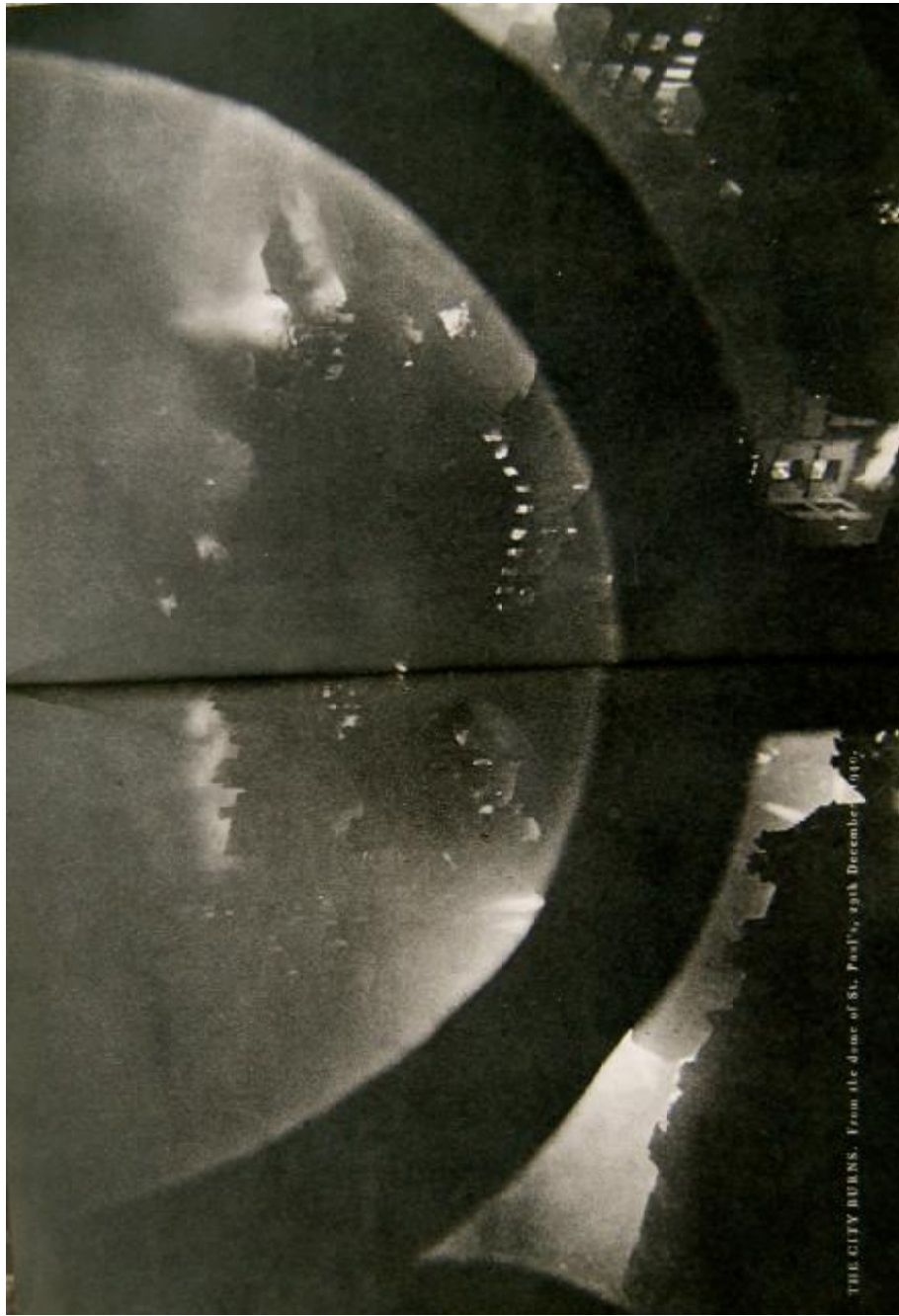


Figure 6.2. The City Burns. Source: HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942), pp. 18-19.



Figure 6.5. The Civil Defence Day Parade Route II. Source: TNA/HO 207/215.

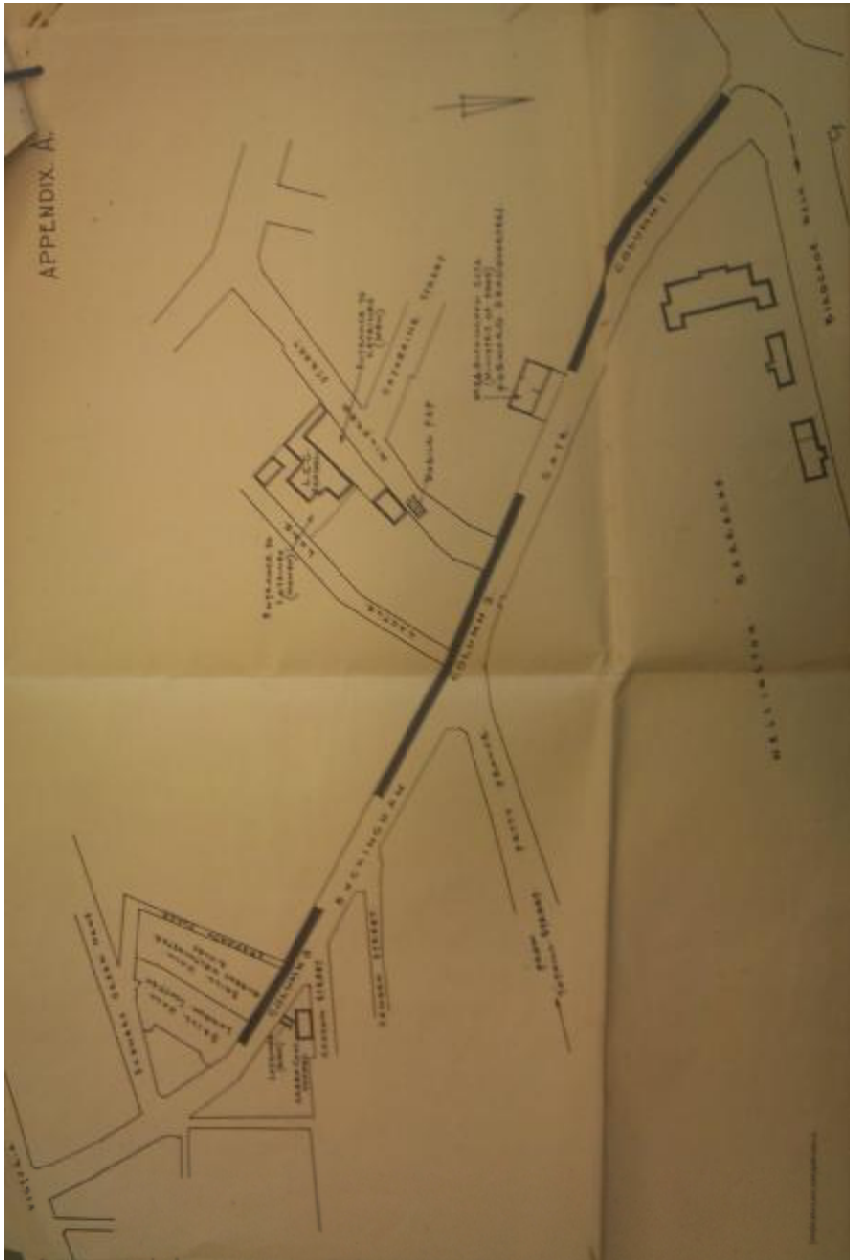


Figure 6.9. Battle of Britain Parade Route. Source: TNA/HO 207/214, Order of Parade.



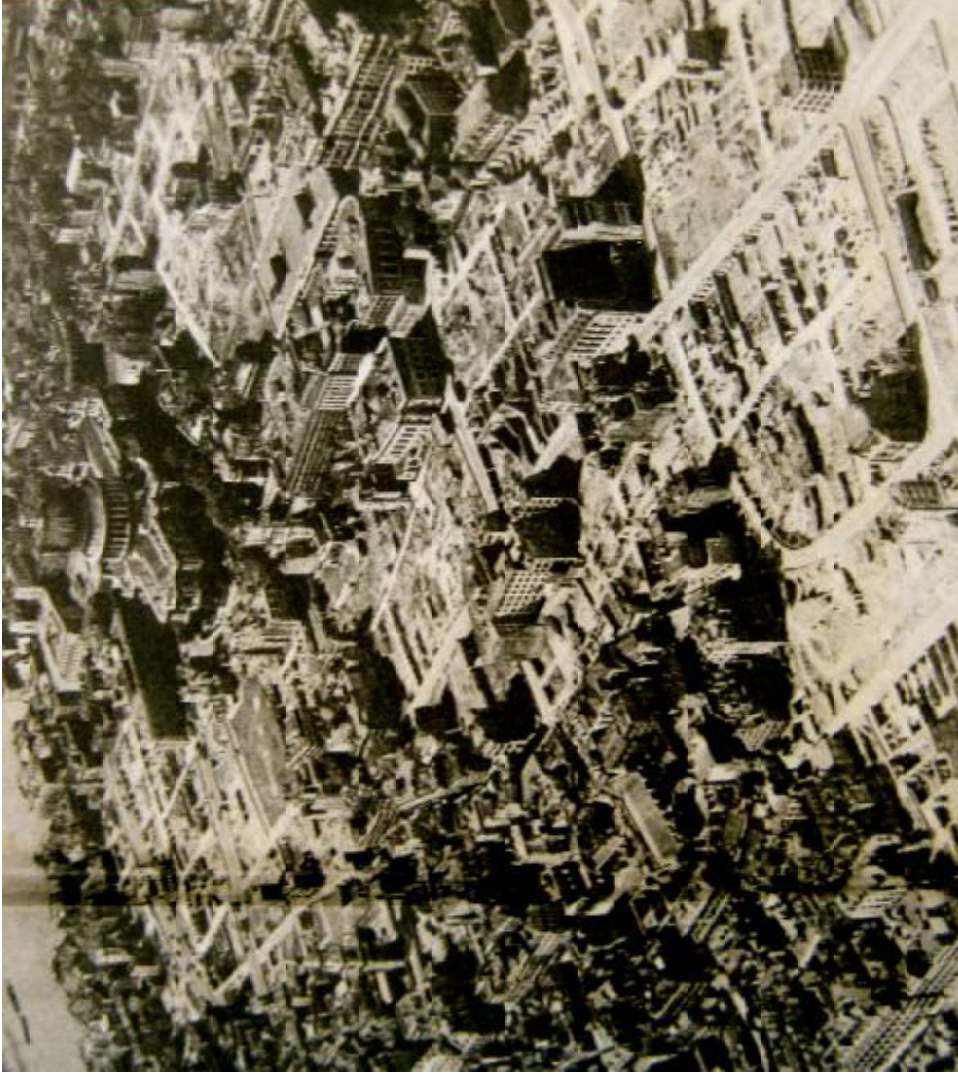


Figure 6.10. The Devastation of the City. Source: William Kent, *The Lost Treasures of London* (London, 1947), cover page.

## Conclusion

She had always had an exaggerated dread of the air.<sup>1</sup>

From the moment the plane first took flight it captured human imaginations, offering the possibilities of new horizons, wonder and beauty, as Jan Struther was to record through her much loved character Mrs Miniver: 'it gives you for the first time in your life the freedom of a new dimension.'<sup>2</sup> Yet, more insidiously, that new dimension changed the landscape beneath. No longer was the human body held in check by rivers, hills and mountains or by the constructed human landscapes of buildings, villages, towns and cities. The plane was free to roam unchecked and in so doing was free to inflict violence. The aeroplane, above all, was a threat to the urban landscape. These human conglomerations that, by the early twentieth century, had become centres of power, dispersed through public institutions and the condensing of finance and wealth, could suddenly, it was feared, be wiped from the earth, as fragile as the bodies of those that had created them.

Within this thesis I have set out to explore the reactions and consequences of the threat of this new mode of warfare and what it reveals about the meaning of London as a governed, represented and practiced space. In so doing I have explored how that threat was communicated to the public, the new imaginings of the city created by that threat and ultimately the changing meanings of London and its population once the bombs began to fall. Within this I have sought to explore a number of key themes. Firstly, I have examined what

---

<sup>1</sup> Jan Struther, *Mrs Miniver* (London, 1989), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108.

bombardment reveals about practices of governance and about the meaning of the British state during my period, and in doing so I have attempted to offer a fresh perspective on existing interpretation about the relationship between the war and social change. Secondly, I have considered the visual culture and communication of ARP. And finally, I have focused on the construction of the public memory of the war in the air. Within the thesis these themes have connected with and illuminated each other. They have also provided the basis for contesting and challenging the theoretical underpinnings opened up at the start of the thesis. More broadly, the thesis has also historicized ARP and civil defence, opening up and revealing how these subjects changed over time both in structure and meaning.

So what has analysis of ARP and civil defence revealed about the meaning of the British state and governance during my period? The threat of the war in the air, as articulated in debates over the meaning and regulation of the bomber, was that it had the capacity to break up the structures of civil society. This threat was a fear of collapse in morale and, with this, a breakdown in the power of the democratically elected institutions of the state to govern. There was also a concern over the structural breakdown of the country and of the infrastructural regulators that ordered social life.

In response to this threat, the national government remapped the nation based on a geography of defence. The nation was divided into regions, and power, formerly centralized in London, was dispersed into a set of regional institutions imbued with regulatory and law-making powers. This new regional governance model also reveals a national socio-economic geography, marking the nation out into areas of greater and lesser danger based on assumptions

about an aerial bomber's primary target. Alongside regional governance, the threat of the bomber created concerns about the most appropriate forms of protection and the function of the population within that.

Alongside new structural modes of governance was a recognition of the need for the population to be regulated in an effort to prevent panic and to ensure that the nation could continue to function under the conditions of war in the air. ARP emerged as both a set of new services that would aid the population under the conditions of bombardment and as a new social contract. Pre-war ARP was communicated through idealized projections of citizenship whereby the citizen conformed to a set of practices to help protect him or herself and, in so doing, helped to protect the wider community. Switching the lights out, moving out of the streets during a raid, carrying a gas mask and freeing up the roads for services to get through were all markers of good citizenship, articulated through broadcasts, posters, films and magazines. The war in the air visualised the citizen in new ways, revealing individuals' responsibilities to their wider community. The pay off for conformity during a raid was the provision and funding for a set of services that would help to aid that population when the bombs fell. The ultimate patriotic citizen, ready to protect and support his or her community during a raid, would people the ARP services. Recruits would be rewarded with status, celebrated through public recognition offered through parades, uniforms and badges.

Yet, while ARP may have communicated an idealized vision of the patriotic national citizen, in practice ARP services had to be established at the local level. The call for local authorities to establish ARP plans and services during the 1930s was both pragmatic and ideological. The former reflected that



local authorities already managed a set of services. The case study of London has shown that the imposition of ARP at the local level meant that it could draw on an existing set of bodies with experience in managing municipal services and regulating the city. Local government in London had close ties with architects, planners, engineers, health professionals and capable administrators who could facilitate and organize new services to protect the community. However, the handing over of responsibility to these local authorities was also ideological. Tensions had emerged over ARP. Some viewed it as a psychological burden, forcing the population to live under constant threat of war in the air. Others viewed the government calls for ARP as marking a failure to find international solutions for peace. Either way, by 1937 the ARP Act made it compulsory for local authorities to establish new services.

The official image of ARP was as a social contract between state and citizen. Within London, however, ARP did not mark a coherent intervention into the daily lives of the population but a series of mixed messages projected onto an equally uncertain landscape. The negotiations over the establishment of ARP within London created a flourishing of ideas about the function of the state in society, as exemplified in the new socio-technological solutions in the Tecton scheme.

The Tecton scheme for ARP offered a rival vision of citizenship to that rendered by the national government. In this alternative vision, the state had a responsibility to improve the well-being of its citizens through forward thinking schemes based on scientific knowledge of a particularly spatially located community, in this case a working-class dominated community. This marked a new visual culture that drew on technical-military-scientific knowledge and

rested on the visualisation of bombed urban populations that had emerged during the Spanish Civil War. Those who visited Spain were not just social commentators but engineers, planners and architects. Thus, London governance was presented as bound to knowledge of the urban landscape, which would in turn impact on the bodies that circulated within. This was in contrast to the national vision of citizenship, which rested on an individual's conformity to regulatory policies as a marker of commitment to the nation. Thus, the meanings of the state were contested and filtered at the local level by rival visions of social life.

The thesis has therefore articulated not just the structure of the British state during this period but also its strategies of rule. The government sought to rally and encourage its citizens to participate in ARP practices through offering regular encouragement and showing ideal role models. In turn, government recruitment strategies presented ARP as a status symbol. Recruitment posters envisioned the ideal ARP volunteer as doing a 'man's job,' and a national rally in the Royal Albert Hall sought to reward recruits with status by handing out pennons. These practices would continue into the war. For instance, the creation of a national civil defence memorial day offered a means to publically thank services and to mark out their struggles. Those parades also coincided with tensions over the future of civil defence services and were thus an effort to rally those who made up the ARP.

The relationship between the state and citizen was also articulated through public parades and displays. The LCC jubilee legitimized the LCC's right to oversee ARP by linking it to a successful record of service provision. The bombing of the East End and its terrible decimation was brought to order by the

physical presence of figures of state authority within the area who could offer solutions and publically encounter and witness the trials of those who had remained to face the bombing. By 1942-43 that witnessing had been institutionalized through the practice of remembrance days in which civil defence services marched and paraded the city's streets and through official representations of the defence of Britain marked out in *Front Line*.

The thesis, however, has also sought to show how those strategies of rule were contested, utilized or came to mean other things. Both the warden's service in Holborn and the Finsbury borough council politicised the national rally in the Royal Albert Hall by demanding structural protection and the right to simply get on with their jobs. This too marks the fact that people's relationship with the state was both created and contested at the level of the everyday. This is particularly clear within the space of the ARP depots. Here both national and local state authority was constructed through the ordering of the space and the nature of regulation imposed on the recruits within. During the war, depots became increasingly disciplined and regulatory spaces, marking new state power over the bodies of its citizens.

Indeed, considering how the meaning of ARP and civil defence evolved over time sheds new light on the 'people's war.' Up to the summer of 1940, ARP was defined in relationship to a dangerous and controlling enemy other, and thus participation in ARP and within ARP services was a means to counter this enemy. However, ARP was presented as a rival to the militaristic services of the enemy and instead was envisioned as a voluntary citizenship service, a marker of the freedoms offered by, and the benign control of, the British state. Into the war the meanings of ARP changed. The phoney war marked a period when the press and

public criticized ARP services as a drain on resources. In this context there was a high turnover of volunteers and increasing concern that recruits were difficult to discipline when they had the freedom to simply walk out. The invasion crisis of the summer of 1940 did not mark a moment of collective coming together within the civil defences but a continued exodus, particularly in paid services, as more work became available. This was met with increased regulation and those in the Casualty and RSD services found their right to leave their jobs taken away. These then were not the participatory, patriotic people's services representative of the collective idealism of the people's war, but controlled and disciplined services in which the ARP worker had little agency. By 1942 the meaning of ARP and civil defence had changed again. This was marked by the national memorial day for the civil defences. Here, the conflicts, tensions and annoyances experienced by those who were regulated by being in a service were sidelined in a celebration of civil defence as a moment of national pulling together.

Exploring ARP in relationship to governance has revealed a complex picture. National government did assert new powers in the local context, as suggested by those who have discussed war as a moment of social change. This was mediated by a new visualisation of that state, marked out in the physical presence of figures of authority on the London streets and facilitated by the strategies of rule in the form of parades, broadcasts, memorial days and displays. However, those powers were negotiated and contested by rival visions of life in the city and by day-to-day interactions with those authorities. This was rule by negotiation. So, although the state may have had new powers over the lives of its citizens, these powers were still filtered through competing authorities and those citizens themselves. Indeed, using the new found legitimacy of being

within the ARP, recruits could push alternative ideas and agendas. In turn faced with regulation some men in the depots pilfered, stole or walked out.

The physical consequences of bombing also had implications for the nature of the British state. The unpredicted scale of damage caused by the blitz meant a closer reliance on those who had helped to build and regulate London: architects, planners, engineers and surveyors. David Edgerton has recently shown that Churchill's wartime administrations were made up of large numbers of men whose primary expertise was not political, but rather technical or administrative.<sup>3</sup> This was also the case with the governance of London during this period. Warren Fisher, the former head of the Civil Service renowned for his restructuring of the British Civil Service, was put in charge of the clear-up of London. Fisher set up a new layer of municipal management in London that linked up existing services for repair to public utilities, thus linking the state more closely with privately provided services. Ernest Gowers the regional commissioner for London, was a capable and technically minded civil servant, who during the war pushed for greater central control over local authorities in taking action against future and actual air raids.<sup>4</sup> J.H. Forshaw, who eventually became the head architect of the LCC, oversaw the County of London Rescue Service and was instrumental in planning for the city's future. The reliance on these figures marked not political choices but a move to technically informed expertise in the governance of the city enabled through the new regional council structure: governance by, what Edgerton refers to as, technocrats.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> David Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War* (London, 2011), pp. 95-97.

<sup>4</sup> Ann Scott, *Ernest Gowers: Plain Words and Forgotten Deeds* (Basingstoke, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, p. 95.

This thesis has also considered the visual culture of ARP and Civil Defence. The official structure of ARP imposed a hegemonic strategy of rule on the population, envisioned through that remapping of the nation for defence, and marked out in the remapping of London. However, those visions were challenged by rival visions of life in the city, as discussed above. Secondly, I considered visions of ARP in relationship to the war and social change thesis, considering how far the imagined and actual bombardment of the city created a context whereby the population were envisioned as a collective, particularly through the incorporation of the urban working-classes into collective consciousness as discussed by Stuart Hall.

The visions of London within the Tecton exhibition and plans offered a new vision of urban life that demanded a better-planned future for London's working classes. While the Tecton plan may never have come to fruition, it did predict that the solutions to the problems of urban bombardment would not merely be psychological ones. The technical demands of dealing with the damaged city meant both local and national state forged closer ties with planners, architects, surveyors and engineers. The damage inflicted on the city became envisioned as a means to improve the city. The meaning of London became more secure within these visions: gone were the uncertain and dangerous urban masses, and in their place were a stoic and capable working-class. The damage to the city was articulated as a moment of rebirth: the city could be rebuilt, more healthy and more beautiful than before, a reward for the endurance by the urban masses.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>J.H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *The County Of London Plan* (London, 1943) frontispiece.

These celebratory visions of a new future that emerged during the actual bombing of London also marked another shift in the meaning of ARP and civil defence. The bombing of London, indeed the nation, was experienced by a relatively small number of people. However, the mode of reporting turned that bombing into a nationally important event, compounded by a build-up that had linked London's survival with national survival from the moment that Baldwin had articulated that the bomber would always get through. The visions of bombed London were filtered through a particular way of looking that ensured the bombed landscape was made appropriately meaningful. The East End of London had long been a site of uncertainty, filled with slums and a site of concentrated poverty. The damage caused to this area was on a massive scale. Exploring diaries and encounters has shown how traumatic and confusing the experience of bombing was for the East End's inhabitant. However, a particular visualisation of this bombing mediated that crisis. Politicians, the monarchy, and ARP administrators made public tours of bomb-damaged London, making that landscape meaningful through offering solutions to the bombing and, through official controls on representation of bombing, limiting alternative readings of the city. This also marked a moment in which the metropolis came to stand for nation, the bombs falling on the cockney heart representing the moral fortitude of the British people at war. In this way civil defence was no longer about a set of discrete services or actions by individuals, but came to stand for a moment of national survival, an emotional response.

Finally then, this thesis offers a reading of the way in which the bombing of London has been remembered. It argues that the modes of representing the city and the governance strategies necessary to keep London functioning created

a particular memory of the blitz and the civil defence of Britain. I suggest that memory must be understood as an active process, filtered through private and public consciousness. This is marked out in the changing meanings of the defence of London, as it shifted from general precautions taken by householders, to a set of services ready to help defend and protect the nation, to a general period of time that embraced the battle of the RAF and then the period of heavy bombing that lasted in Britain until the spring of 1941.

In particular, I address the 'myth of the blitz' by exploring how and why two symbols came to represent the nation during this period. Firstly, the thesis demonstrates that the bombing of the East End became a symbol of national fortitude. Secondly, it shows how and why the survival of St Paul's Cathedral from a firestorm at the end of 1940 became central in commemorating the civil defence of Britain. I argue that although London had hitherto often represented a site of anxious modernity, St Paul's Cathedral offered a comfortable metropolitan symbol for national survival. Thus, changes wrought by modern development were mediated through the security of this heritage symbol. In turn, those citizens who had fought to save the Cathedral were celebrated as the nation's heroes and as offering hope for Britain's future. Again, this was a more comfortably heroic image than that associated with the earlier disputes over the role of civil defence. These visions were articulated again and again in the press, in *Front Line*, in BBC broadcasts and popular entertainment programmes. Indeed, by 1943 that defence was tied up with the battle of Britain and the RAF, diluting again the clear meaning over who or what made up civil defence.

Clearly my longer history of the meanings of civil defence and ARP show that this lasting image does not reflect the complexity of the experience or



identity of the civil defence recruit. Civil defenders were motivated to join for a number of reasons including the need for money, unemployment and compulsion. In turn, the public had not always viewed the ARP worker with such a rosy glow. During the phoney war the ARP became associated with waste and inefficiency, it was marked by class conflict and the questionable status of ARP recruits. In turn, once the bombs fell some, like Bill Regan, both gained status from being able to contribute, yet, paradoxically, found they were participating in witnessing the destruction of their homes and communities. Bill Regan, indeed, mocked those around him who described their own daring and heroism during the blitz, instead asserting his own personal narrative of survival and carefully recording loss.

Bill Regan's awareness that a particular narrative of the blitz and the ARP's part in it was exclusive and limited could suggest that the collective memory of the civil defence of Britain was a form of false consciousness. Indeed, my reading of Civil Defence Day suggests that the public memory of the blitz was regulated and sanitized. Yet, I also want to suggest alternative readings of the symbols of London under fire. The blitz may not have been memorialized, but, as both Elizabeth Bowen and Bill Regan attest, articulating survival could be a moment of remembrance. Walking around the damaged city was a means to mark loss, to record who or what was missing, and to infuse the landscape with personal memory. Urban practices negotiated public meanings of bombing: incorporating, contesting and synthesizing those meanings. The need for a public outlet of grief over bombing was articulated within the 1942 Civil Defence Day, in the call for both religious and secular community commemoration, ideally on devastated ground. St Paul's Cathedral, surrounded by ruin, was also

both a space to give thanks and to grieve, to find ways to cope with the trauma that had fallen on the city. This offers a more complex reading of the symbols of the myth of the blitz. The public memorialisation of the blitz was an active process that translated and narrated hopes for a better future. The myth of the blitz gave order to dislocation and presented a means to commemorate an intensely traumatic moment.

On 10 June 1945 a final parade of the civil defence services marked the disbanding of the ARP. Numbers had been cut markedly by this time (Appendix B), and faced with shortages, lack of money and more pressing problems these services needed to be cut quickly. Many felt that their work and commitment to the services had not been adequately marked.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the existential crisis of the war in the air was over and the population no longer needed to be regulated under its shadow. Yet, the technology of the bomber had permanent consequences. London became the nation's symbol, its survival no longer under threat and the uncertainty over the meaning of its modernity no longer present. Instead it could be celebrated as representing hopes for the nation's urban future. Yet, this meaning ran parallel within another: the city still contained the devastating reminders of war in the air, a site of death and of loss that demanded a more hopeful future.

---

<sup>7</sup> Robin Woolven, '1945 Stand-Down,' in Tim Essex-Lopresti, *A Brief History of Civil Defence* (Derbyshire, 2005), p. 32.

## Appendix A

### Organisation of Controls in London.

#### Group 1

Group Centre	West Kensington L.C.C. School, Earsbury, Fulham.
Group Co-ordinating Officer	F.M. Davis
Deputy Group Co-ordinating Officer	H.A. Bray
Regional Officer attached to the Group	A.R. Beaumont

Local Authorities in the Group	Address of Control and Report Centre	A.R.P. Controller
Chelsea Met. B.	Chelsea Town Hall, King's Road	E.W.J. Nicholson (Town Clerk)
Fulham Met. B.	Fulham Town Hall	W. Townend (Town Clerk)
Hammersmith Met. B.	Hammersmith Town Hall Broadway Hammersmith	Hugh Royle (Town Clerk)
Kensington Met B.	Kensington Town Hall Kensington High Street	F. Webster (Town Clerk)
Westminster, City of	Westminster City Hall, Charing Cross Road	Parker Morris (Town Clerk)

Private Telephone Lines between Group Centre and:  
 Regional Head Quarters.  
 Control and Report Centre of each Local Authority in the Group.  
 No. 1 Police District, Hyde Park Police Station, Hyde Park, W.2.  
 Manchester Square Fire Station, 1, Chiltern Street, Manchester Square, W.1.

#### Group 2

Group Centre	North Western Polytechnic, Prince of Wales Road, N.W.5
Group Co-ordinating Officer	I. I. Ungar
Deputy Group Co-ordinating Officer	A.J. Shrove
Regional Officer attached to the Group	A.R. Beaumont

Local Authorities in the Group	Address of Control and Report Centre	A.R.P. Controller
Hampstead Met. B.	Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill	P.H. Harrold (Town Clerk)
Islington Met. B.	Islington Town Hall, Upper Street	W. Eric Adams, (Town Clerk)
Paddington Met. B.	Paddington Town Hall, Harrow Road	W.H. Bentley, (Town Clerk)
St. Marylebone Met. B.	St. Marylebone Town Hall, Marylebone Road	
St. Pancras Met. B.	St Pancreas Town Hall, Euston Road	C. S. Bainbridge (Borough Engineer and Surveyor)
Stoke Newington Met. B.	Stoke Newington Town Hall,	C. Kent Wright,

	Stoke Newington Church Street,	(Town Clerk)
--	--------------------------------	--------------

Private telephone lines between Group and Centre and:  
Regional Headquarters  
Control and Report Centre of each Local Authority in the Group.  
No. 2 Police District, 62, Harrow Road, W.2.  
Clerkenwell Fire Station, 44, Rosebery Avenue, E.C.1.

#### Group 3

Group Centre	Group 3. Headquarters, E8
Group Co-ordinating Officer	R.W. Bell
Deputy Group Co-ordinating Officer	W.H. Tarrant
Regional Officer attached to the Group	Capt. C. Carstares Dunlop

Local Authorities in the Group	Address of Control and Report Centre	A.R.P. Controller
City of London	Guildhall	A.T. Roach (Town Clerk)
Bethnal Green Met. B	Bethnal Green Town Hall Cambridge Heath Road	Watson Strother, (First Engineering Assistant, Borough Engineer's Department).
Finsbury Met. B.	Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebury Avenue	T.J. Wilson, (Town Clerk)
Hackney Met. B.	Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street	R.H.R. Tee LL.D., (Town Clerk)
Holborn Met B.	Holborn Town Hall High Holborn	C.F.S. Chapple, (Deputy Town Clerk)
Poplar Met. B.	Poplar Town Hall, Bow Road	H.E. Dennis (Town Clerk)
Shoreditch Met. B.	Shoreditch Town Hall, Old Street	R. Cyril Ray, (Town Clerk)
Stepney Met. B.	Public Cleansing Depot, Osborn Street	James (Town Clerk) Councillor M.H. Davis (Chairman of the A.R.P Committee)

Private telephone lines between Group and Centre and –  
Regional Headquarters  
Control and Report Centre of each Local Authority in the Group.  
No. 3 Police District, 4-6 Shepherdess Walk, N.1.  
City of London Police, Old Jewry, E.C.1.  
White Chapel Fire Station, 27, Commercial Road, E.1.

#### Group 4

Group Centre	South East London Technical Institute, Lewisham Way
Group Co-ordinating Officer	H.J. Allen
Deputy Group Co-ordinating Officer	S.D. Mann
Regional Officer attached to the Group	Capt. N. Duncan

Local Authorities in the Group	Address of Control and Report Centre	A.R.P. Controller
Bermondsey Met. B.	Bermondsey Town Hall, Spa Road	W.E. Baker (General Manager to Council)
Deptford Met. B.	Deptford Town Hall	H.G. Reed

	New Cross Road	(Town Clerk)
Greenwich Met. B.	Greenwich Town Hall, Greenwich Road	D. J. Reason (Town Clerk)
Lewisham Met. B.	Lewisham Town Hall Catford	John T. Duff (Town Clerk)
Woolwich Met. B.	Shrewsbury House, Bushmoor Crescent	D. Jenkins (Town Clerk)

Private telephone lines between Group and Centre and –  
Regional Headquarters

Control and Report Centre of each Local Authority in the Group.

No. 4 Police District, 47, Cavendish Road, Balham, SW. 12.

New Cross Fire Station, 266, Queen's Road, New Cross.

#### Group 5

Group Centre	Brixton Hill Day Continuation School, 54-56, Brixton Hill.
Group Co-ordinating Officer	G.A. Bamlet
Deputy Group Co-ordinating Officer	J. P. Humphreys
Regional Officer attached to the Group	G.W. James H.S. Cotterill

Local Authorities in the Group	Address of Control and Report Centre	A.R.P. Controller
Battersea Met. B.	Bermondsey Town Hall, Spa Road	W.E. Baker (General Manager to Council)
Camberwell Met. B.	Camberwell Town Hall, Peckham Road	Councillor C.A.G. Manning, D.L., J.P., L.C.C.
Lambeth Met. B.	Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill	O. L. Roberts (Town Clerk)
Southwark Met. B.	Health Dept, Southwark Town Hall, Walworth Road	D.T. Griffiths, (Town Clerk)
Wandsworth Met. B.	Wandsworth Municipal Buildings, Wandsworth	R.H. Jerman, O.B.E., M.C., (Town Clerk)

Private telephone lines between Group and Centre and –  
Regional Headquarters

Control and Report Centre of each Local Authority in the Group.

No. 4 Police District, 47, Cavendish Road, Balham, SW. 12.

Clapham Fire Station, Old Town, Clapham.

Source: TH/347/London Regional Organisation for Civil Defence/ (For the Controller), Typed booklet, Revised Issue, August 1940, p. 7.

## Appendix B

### Numbers Employed in the National Civil Defence Services in Thousands

Great Britain		Whole-time						Part-time					
		ARP Services <sup>1</sup>		National Fire Services <sup>2</sup>		Casualty Services <sup>3</sup>		ARP Service <sup>1</sup>		National Fire Services <sup>2</sup>		Casualty Services <sup>3</sup>	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1940	March	117.5	15.9	72.9	5.4	17	31.6	..	..	153.9	7.6	41.9	125
	June	108.7	14.9	72.2	4.7	14.9	33	719.4	136.9	161.6	8.9	46.7	134.2
	Sept	112	14.9	82.1	4.2	15.2	35	774	153	168	9	51.2	137
	Dec	112.3	15.2	88	5.4	15.1	35.4	774.7	149.9	163.4	8.9	49.8	129.1
1941	March	112	15.8	92.5	4.5	14.9	35.3	778.4	152.2	168.1	9.8	48	122.8
	June	110.1	16.8	96.8	5.4	14.5	36	759.2	148.3	159.4	10	47.2	122.2
	Sept	109	17.5	..	..	13.6	37.2	<del>734.7</del>	<del>140.6</del>	..	..	45.6	117.7
	Dec	107.1	19.1	106.8	19.7	13.4	37.9	668 <sup>a</sup>	127.2 <sup>a</sup>	136.5	8.2	42.9	107.6
1942	March	99.7	19.4	108.6	26	11.8	36.1	710.8	127.2	122.1	9.6	39.8	97.1
	June	88.7	17.6	107.7	28.5	9.3	30.7	739.6	137.3	129.9	11.1	39.7	95.2
	Sept	78.9	14.9	101.8	30.4	8.2	26.2	746.2	148.1	141.1	18.6	41.2	101.9
	Dec	74.4	13.5	98	31.9	7.5	24.8	777.4	165.5	176.6	33.1	44.5	114.2
1943	March	69.6	12.4	95.5	32.2	7.2	23.2	782.5	165.3	200.3	42.6	48.2	120.3
	June	66.5	11.7	93.8	30.7	7.1	21.8	773.4	167.1	214.8	47	47.5	116.6
	Sept	62.2	11	92.6	29.4	6.9	20.3	797.9	175.7	224.5	51.1	49	117.7
	Dec	59.6	10.4	90.6	27.3	6.7	19.3	799.3	177.4	233.2	53.8	49	116.2
1944	March	57.7	10.2	88.6	25.7	6.6	18.7	802.5	178.4	234.9	53.6	49.4	115
	June	56.9	10	86.6	24.1	7.1	17.8	799.4	179.8	231.9	54.6	49.8	114.2
	Sept	54.3	9.5	84.4	22.2	6.5	17.8	791.7	177.4	228.5	53	48.9	112.6
	Dec	28.5	5	71.7	20	4.1	9.6	651.8	150.8	160.4	46.3	37.8	81.9
1945	March	24.8	4.4	57.9	15.1	3.4	7.7	622.7	142.3	136.6	35.7	29.3	63
	June	..	..	46.2	10.6	..	..	..	..	102.9	5.2	..	..
	Sept	..	..	36.5	5.5	..	..	..	..	47.6	9.8	..	..

1. Civil Defence (General) Services: wardens, rescue and first-aid parties, report and control centres, messengers.
2. Until September 1941 regular Fire Brigades and Auxiliary Fire Service. Including Works Brigades.
3. Emergency ambulance service and first-aid post.
4. Excluding non-effectives previously included. They numbered 37.3 thousand males and 11.9 thousand females in December 1941.

Source: Central Statistical Office, *Fighting with Figures: A Statistical Digest of the Second World War* (London, 1995)

## Bibliography

### Manuscript Sources

#### *The National Archives (TNA)*

AVIA 15/2330, Factories: General (Code 25/1): Evacuation of aircraft factories: dispersal of labour in or prior to emergency.

CAB/24/234, Committee of Imperial Defence paper, Air-Raid Precautions, suggested administrative organisation for Air Raids Precautions Services.

CAB/24/256, Re-orientation of the Air Defence System of Great Britain, 16 July 1935.

CAB/24/255, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Four, issued to Cabinet, 24 May 1935.

CAB/24/255, Air-Raid Precautions Circular, Draft Proof Five, Issued to Cabinet, 30 May 1935.

CAB/65/9/40, Air Raid Damage, use of army units to repair damage and clear debris, 28 October 1940.

CAB/67/8/84, Man-Power Survey Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and national service (Ernest Bevin), 6 November 1940.

CAB/67/9/41, Use of military personnel for non-military purposes, The War Office, 22 April 1941.

CAB/68/7/16, War Cabinet. Civil Defence Report No. 22. Submitted by the Minister of Home Security, covering the period from 1 September 1940 to 29 September 1940.

HLG 7/38, Brief for Minister's speech during Parliamentary debate on air raid precautions, 1939.

HLG 7/122, Broadcasts and other announcements.

HO 45/14650B, Civil Defence: Committee of Imperial Defence: Air-Raid Precautions in the event of war, 1923-1932.

HO 45/18214, Civil Defence: A.R.P. Rally at Albert Hall, January 1939.

HO 144/20058, Committee of Imperial Defence protection of civilian population in case of air attack, July 1931.

HO 186/68, National Voluntary Service: compilation of the National Register.

TNA/HO 186/1223, Publicity Ceremony and Parades, Battle of Britain Sunday 1943, parade and service. In St Paul's Cathedral.

TNA/HO 186/247, Censorship and/or export of guidebooks and of maps showing ARP dispositions; control of photography.

HO 186/1205, Damage, Reconstruction and Salvage, military assistance to civil authorities in dealing with air raid damage in London, 1941-1943.

HO 186/473, Regional Organisation, organisation ARP Services in London Region: review of expenditure and recruitment of paid personnel.

HO 186/761, Finance, remuneration of skilled building trade personnel in rescue and demolition services: consultation and complaints from trade unions, 1939-1942.

HO 186/1221, Publicity, Ceremonies and Parades. Civil Defence Day, 15 November 1942.

HO 193/1-47 Ministry of Home Security: research and experiments department, bomb census maps, London area.

HO 193/48-54 Ministry of Home Security: research and experiments department, bomb census maps, London area and southern England.

HO 207/9, Region No 5 (London): Air Raids, Air Raid Precautions, bombs and training: daylight exercise by civil defence services for education of public and volunteers on 19 June 1939 – Chelsea.

HO 207/115, Region No 5 (London): Training - general: Regional training notes.

HO 207/186, Region No 5 (London): Rescue services: miscellaneous papers, 1940-45.

HO 207/214, Region No 5 (London): Ceremonies, parades and visits: civil defence services: participation in Battle of Britain parade Sunday 26 Sept 1943.

HO 207/215, Region No 5 (London): Ceremonies, parades and visits: civil defence day parade and service at St Paul's cathedral. Pageants, ceremonial parades and charitable appeals, CD workers. Civil defence days.

HO 207/345, Region No 5 (London): Civil Defence personnel: ceremonial occasion 1941-1944.

MEPO 2/3754, Services of police band at Albert Hall Meeting to stimulate A.R.P. recruiting.



BBC Written Archives Centre (BBC/WAC)

R19/673, London Under Fire.

R19/79/1, "Battle of Britain" file 1, 1941.

R19/79/2, "Battle of Britain," file 2, 1942-53.

R42/4/1, ARP Instructions file 1936-38.

R 45/3 Recorded Programmes, Air-Raid Precautions 1937-41.

R51/13/1, Talks, Air Raid Precautions file 1 Oct 1937-June 1938.

R51/13/2A, Talks, Air Raid Precautions, 1938-1939.

R51/13/3, Talks Air Raid Precautions, file 2B, 1939.

Imperial War Museum Collections (IWM):

IWM/Sound Recording/5346, Apr 1981.

IWM/88/10/1 Private Papers of WB Regan.

IWM/91/5/1, Rev. G. Markham, 'the church under fire,' photocopied memoir.

IWM/372/Misc 147/(2305), Papers relating to rest schemes for London's civil defence workers, October 1940 - July 1941.

IWM/12994/04/40/1, Private Papers of I S Haslewood.

IWM/16068, Alexander Flett, IWM Interview, recorded 3 October 1995, reel 1.

Victoria and Albert, Royal Institute of British Architects Collections (V&A/RIBA)

LUB/3/5/1, Press Release, Alderman Riley, Editorial on Finsbury ARP scheme.

LUB/11/1/15, Letter from P. Harrington, Private Secretary to Winston Churchill from P. Harrington, 20 March 1939.

LUB/24/6, Air raid shelters, for Finsbury Borough Council, by Tecton. 1938-1940.

Museum of London (MOL):

MOL/2001.2. MOL Oral History Collection, Interview with Gerry Braham, 9 and 23 November 2000, Reels 1, 3.

Mass Observation Archive (MOA):

MOA/TC15 Demolition in London, 1941.

MOA/TC23/7/B, Association of Surveyors and Technical Assistants, Housing Committee, Report on rehousing the homeless and evacuation.

MOA/TC23/7/A, Collection of information from the Stepney Tenants Defence League, 15 September 1940.

MOA/TC65/5/E, Evacuation QQ, undertaken by Celia Fremlin, Boundary Road Kilburn, 12 October 1940.

London Metropolitan Archives (LMA)

ACC/3520/028, London County Council Jubilee Exhibition Catalogue.

P. 18.0 1939, *The Jubilee of the London County Council 1939*.

*Papers of the London County Council (held in LMA):*

LCC/AR/TP/07, World War II, 6DQ: 1 mile bomb damage maps.

LCC/AR/TP/13, World War II, 25DQ: 1 mile bomb damage maps.

LCC/AR/WAR/1/29, The War History of the Architects Department - Final draft 1945.

LCC/AR/WAR/1/26, Return of premises occupied by RSD service September-November 1939.

LCC/CE/WAR/1, London Regional Council and London Civil Defence Region Co-ordinating committee. General papers September 1938-July 1939.

LCC/CE/WAR/2/18, War Debris Survey and Disposal, September 1940-May 1944.

LCC/CE/WAR/2/109, History of the Special Force, London, 1940-1941.

LCC/CE/WAR/3/15-20, London Region Circulars, March 1939 - June 1945.

LCC/CE/WAR/3/36, HMSO, *Air Raid Precautions Memorandum No. 2, Rescue Parties and Clearance of Debris* (London, 1939).

LCC/CL/CD/1/100-110, Rescue Service - General papers, Apr 1938-Mar 1941.

LCC/CL/CD/1/119, Rescue Service - Prosecutions under Civil Defence (Employment) Order and other regulations July 1940 - September 1944.

LCC/CL/CD/1/274, Civil Defence recruitment publicity campaigns April-December 1938.

LCC/CL/CD/1/275, Civil Defence recruitment publicity campaigns January 1939-October 1941.

LCC/CL/CD/2/11, London Civil Defence Region Intelligence Reports (fortnightly), Numbers 1 to 31.

LCC/CL/CD/3/17-18, London Civil Defence Region - London Region Circulars, 1939-41.

LCC/CL/CD/3/64, HMSO, *Air Raid Precautions Training Manual, No. 2. Manual for Officers Responsible for ARP Training*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (London, 1940).

LCC/CL/CD/3/69, Ministry of Home Security, ARP Training Bulletin No. 3 1940.

LCC Bomb Damage Map, Map 92.

LCC Minutes of Proceedings, 1938, vol. 2, 1939.

LCC/MIN/2760 (1940), London County Council Minutes of the Civil Defences General Purposes Committee.

*Papers of the London Master Builders' Association, London Region of the National Federation of Builders (Held in LMA):*

A/NFB/01/A/06/001, Civil Defence Committee continuing as Executive Committee from 11 Oct. 1939 File

*Hackney Archives (HA)*

HA/1, 13 Jan 1938-18 Aug 1939, ARP Committee Minutes vols. 1 and 2.

*Islington Local History Collection (ILHC)*

Finsbury ARP/L3.163, Home Office's Air Raid Precautions Department, *Memorandum No. 10 Provision of Air Raid Shelters in Basements* (London, 1939).

Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Vol. 38. Apr 1937-Mar 1938.

Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Vol. 39. Apr 1938 to Mar. 1939.

Finsbury Borough Council Minutes, Vol. 40, Apr 1939 to Mar. 1940.

Manuscript Collection, Finsbury A.R.P/ Finsbury – Civil Defence, local correspondence.

*The Island History Trust (IHT)*

AUB/158, autobiography, Mrs. A. Sharp.

AUB/318, Bill Regan, Story sent in for the Isle of Dogs at War.

DOC/0314/0-2, Info on Housing, 1925-33.

*Westminster City Archives (WCA)*

WCA/MBN/CaplandStreetSchool/CD/PL, Plan for ARP depot in the Borough of Marylebone, 1939.

WCA/MBN/GreatPortlandStreet/CD/PL, Civil Defence Plans 1-3, St Marylebone, 1941.

*Tower Hamlet's Library and Archives (TH):*

347.IP, Tower Hamlet's Archive cuttings on ARP and Alderman Key.

347/London Regional Organisation for Civil Defence/ (For the Controller), Typed booklet, Revised Issue, August 1940

OSS/LCC Rev/1937/XII.2, Ordinance Survey Map, 1937, Isle of Dogs, Cubitt Town.

*University of Warwick Modern Records Centre (MRC)*

MSS.78/BT/4/3/1, Synopsis of publication on shelters.

MSS.78/BT/5/1/4, National Air Raid Precautions Co-ordinating Committee, Labour Research Department: 'Break the cement ring.'

MSS.292/883/1 Trade Unions Congress, Air Raid Precautions, Civil Defence, Voluntary Service: 1920-1960.

**Government Publications**

Central Statistical Office, *Fighting with Figures: A Statistical Digest of the Second World War* (London, 1995)

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 270 (London, 1932).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vols. 275, 276, 283 (London, 1933).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 286 (London, 1934).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 224 (London, 1936).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 319 (London, 1937).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 352, (London, 1939).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 361 (London, 1940).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 382 (London, 1942).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 485 (London, 1951).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 183 (London, 1953).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 577 (London, 1957).

*Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 387 (London, 2002).

Home Office's Air Raid Precautions Department, *Memorandum No. 10 Provision of Air Raid Shelters in Basements* (London, 1939).

### **Newspapers and Periodicals**

*Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney and East London Advertiser*

*East London Advertiser*

*Evening Standard*

*Illustrated London News*

*Paddington News*

*The Daily Express*

*The Daily Mirror*

*The Finsbury Citizen*

*The Listener*

*The Paddington Mercury and West London Star*

*The Times*

### **Contemporary Articles, Books, Pamphlets and Speeches**

Bairnsfather, Bruce, *Fragments from France* (London, 1916).

*Bartholomews Pocket Atlas and Guide to London* (London, 1922), available online at: <[http://www.hipkiss.org/data/maps/bartholomews-pocket\\_atlas-and-guide-to-london\\_1922\\_metropolitan-boroughs\\_2000\\_1486\\_600.jpg](http://www.hipkiss.org/data/maps/bartholomews-pocket_atlas-and-guide-to-london_1922_metropolitan-boroughs_2000_1486_600.jpg)> (accessed March 5 2011).

Bell, Reginald, *The Bull's Eye*, With a Foreward by the Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison (London, 1943).

Brittain, Vera, *England's Hour* (New York, 2005).

- Brittain, Vera, *Wartime Chronicle: Vera Brittain's Diary 1939-1945*, edited by Alan Bishop and Y. Alexandra Bennett (London, 1989).
- Bryant, H. B., 'Public works aspect of air-raid protection,' *Builder* (30 October 1936), p. 827.
- Camden History Society, *Hampstead at War 1939-45* (Oxford, 1946).
- Charlton, L.E.O., *War Over England* (London, 1936).
- Cotterell Butler, R., 'War-Time Building Practice: "The Dispersal Theory,"' *The Builder*, 160 (7 February, 1941), pp. 149-151.
- Cotterell Butler, R., 'War-Time Building Practice: "The Dispersal Theory" - continued,' *The Builder*, 160 (14 February 1939), pp. 173-175.
- Eady, W.G., Esq, 'The Progress of Air-Raid Precautions,' *The RUSI Journal*, 84 (1939), pp. 1-23.
- Fisher, Warren, 'Civil Defence,' *Public Administration*, 26 (1948), pp. 211-16.
- Forshaw, J. H. and Abercrombie, Patrick, *County of London Plan: prepared for the London County Council* (London, 1943).
- Green, Henry, *Caught*, With an Introduction by Jeremy Treglow (London, 2001).
- Haldane, J.B.S., *A.R.P.* (London, 1938).
- Hampstead Communist Party Pamphlet, *A.R.P for Hampstead, Foreward by J.B.S. Haldane* (London, ca. 1938).
- HMSO, *Front Line, 1940-41 The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain* (London, 1942).
- Kent, William, *The Lost Treasures of London* (London, 1947).
- Knowles, E.C., *A History of the Regulation of Building in London and of District Surveyors 1189-1954* (London, 1954).
- Lord Horder, 'The Modern Troglodyte,' *The Lancet*, 19 April 1941, pp. 499-502.
- Langdon-Davies, John, *Air Raid: The Technique of Silent Approach High Explosive Panic* (London, 1938).
- Lepawsky, Albert, 'The London Region: A Metropolitan Community Crisis,' *The American Journal of Sociology*, 46:6 (1941), pp. 826-834.
- London County Council, *Notes on Training for Rescue Parties* (London, 1941).

- Matthew, W.P., *How to Be a Handyman* (London, 1939).
- Newbery, Charles Allen, *Wartime St Pancras: A London Borough Defends Itself*,  
Reproduced by the Camden History Society (London, 2006).
- Orwell, George, *Coming up for Air* (London, 2000).
- Orwell, George, *Homage to Catalonia and Looking Back on the Spanish War*  
(London, 1966).
- Read, Herbert, *Art and Industry: The Principles of Industrial Design* (London,  
1934).
- Rickman, John, 'Panic and Air Raid Precautions,' *The Lancet*, 4 June 1938, pp.  
1291-1295.
- Robson, William A., *The Government and Misgovernment of London* (London,  
1939).
- Stewart, Major Oliver, 'The Battle of London,' *Air and Airways*, September 1931,  
pp. 187-188.
- Struther, Jan, *Mrs Miniver* (London, 1989).
- Tecton Architects, *Planned A.R.P.* (London, 1939).
- Teague, Walter Dorwin, *Design This Day: The Technique of Order in the Machine  
Age* (London, 1946).
- The Cambridge Scientists' Anti-War Group, *The Protection of the Public from  
Aerial Attack: A Critical Examination of the Recommendations put Forward by the  
Air-Raid Precautions Department of the Home Office* (London, 1937).
- Towndrow, F.E. (ed.), 'The Case for Deep Shelters, With Particular Reference to  
the Finsbury Scheme, designed by TECTON,' *Special A.R.P. Supplement of  
Architectural Design and Construction*, 9 (1939), pp. 22-23.
- Wells, H.G., *The Shape of Things to Come* (London, 1967).
- Wells, H.G., *The War in the Air* (London, 2005).
- Wintringham, T.H., *Why the Royal Air Force is to Be Doubled* (London, 1934).

## Published Secondary Sources

Ackroyd, Peter, *London The Biography* (London, 2000).

Alexander, Sally, 'A New Civilisation? London Surveyed 1928-1940,' *History Workshop Journal*, 64 (2007), pp. 297-320.

Allan, John, *Berthold Lubetkin: Architecture and the Tradition of Progress* (London, 1992).

Ashplant, Timothy G., Dawson, Graham and Roper, Michael, 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics,' in Ashplant, Dawson, Roper (eds), *Commemorating War*, pp. 3-87.

Ashplant, Timothy G., Dawson, Graham and Roper, Michael, *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory* (London, 2004).

Auerbach, Jeffrey A., *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven, 1999).

Barry, Judith, 'Dissenting Spaces,' in Greenberg, Ferguson and Nairne, *Thinking About Exhibitions*, pp 307-12.

Baxendale, John, 'I had seen a lot of Englands': J.B. Priestly, Englishness and the People, *History Workshop Journal*, 51 (2001), pp. 87-111.

Baxendale, Michael, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford, 1988).

Behr, Charlotte; Osborne, Cornelia and Wieber, Sabine, 'Introduction: The Challenge of the Image,' *Cultural and Social History*, 7 (2010), pp. 425-34.

Bell, Amy, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945,' *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 153-175.

Bell, Amy, *London Was Ours, Diaries and Memoirs of the London Blitz* (New York, 2008).

Benson, John, Laura Ugolini, (eds), *A Nation of Shopkeepers: Retailing in Britain, 1550-2000* (London, 2002).

Berg, Maxine, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005).

Bevan, Brad and Griffiths, John, 'The Blitz, Civilian Morale and the City: Mass Observation and Working Class Culture in Britain, 1940-41,' *Urban History*, 26 (1999), pp. 80-81.

Bevan, Brad, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class men in Britain, 1850-1945* (Manchester, 2005).



- Bevan, Robert, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (London, 2006).
- Bialer, Uri, 'Elite Opinion and Defence Policy: Air Power Advocacy and British Rearmament during the 1930s,' *British Journal of International Studies*, 6 (1980), pp. 32-51.
- Bialer, Uri, *The Shadow of the Bomber: the Fear of Air Attack and British Politics, 1932-1939* (London, 1980).
- Booth, Janine, *Guilty and Proud of It! Poplar's Rebel Councillors and Guardians, 1919-25* (London, 2009).
- Bradley, Katherine, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working Classes in London 1918-1979* (Manchester, 2009).
- Branson, Noreen, *Poplarism 1919-1925: George Lansbury and the Councillors' Revolt* (London, 1979).
- Braybon, Gail and Summerfield, Penny, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* (London, 1987).
- Bremner, G. Alex, 'Some Imperial Institute: Architecture Symbolism and the Ideal of Empire in Late Victorian Britain, 1887-93,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 62 (2003), pp. 50-74.
- Brown, Mike, *Put That Light Out! Britain's Civil Defence Services at War 1939-45* (London, 1999).
- Buchanan, Tom, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain, War, Loss and Memory* (Eastbourne, 2007).
- Bullock, Nicholas, 'Re-assessing the Post-War Housing Achievement: the Impact of War-damage Repairs on the New Housing Programme in London,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 16:3 (2005) pp. 256-282.
- Burke, Peter, 'Interrogating the Eye Witness,' *Cultural and Social History*, 7 (2010), pp. 435-444.
- Bushaway, Bob, 'The Obligation of Remembrance or the Remembrance of Obligation: Society and the Memory of World War,' in Liddle, Bourne and Whitehead (eds), *The Great War*, pp. 488-508.
- Burns, Arthur, 'From 1830 to the Present,' in Keene, Burns and Saint (eds), *St Paul's*, pp. 84-110.
- Calder, Angus, *The People's War: Britain, 1939-45* (London, 1969).
- Calder, Angus, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991).

Cannadine, David, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition,' c. 1820-1977,' in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention*, pp. 101-164.

Carey, John, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London, 1992).

de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Translated by Stephen Rendall (London, 1988).

Clapson, Mark, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Post-War England* (Manchester, 1998).

Clifton, Gloria, 'Members and Officers of the London County Council, 1889-1965,' in Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People*, pp. 1-26.

Clout, Hugh, *After the Ruins: Restoring the Countryside of Northern France after the Great War* (Exeter, 1996).

Cooper, Nicola and Holman, Valerie, 'War and Visual Culture since 1900,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), pp. 219-222.

Corum, James S., 'The Spanish Civil War: Lessons Learned and Not Learned by the Great Powers,' *The Journal of Military History*, 62 (1998), pp. 313-334.

Cosgrove, Denis, 'Landscape and Landschaft. Lecture Delivered at the "Spatial Turn in History Symposium German Historical Institute, February 19, 2004,' printed in, *German Historical Institute Bulletin*, 35 (2004), pp. 57-71.

Coupe, W. A., 'Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11 (1969), pp. pp. 79-95.

Court, W.H.B., *Coal* (London, 1951).

Coverley, Merlin, *Psychogeography* (London, 2006).

Crang, Jeremy A., 'The Abolition of Compulsory Church Parades in the British Army,' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 56 (2005), pp. 92-106.

Crang, Mike and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *Thinking Space* (London, 2000).

Cronin, James, 'The British State and the Structure of Political Opportunity,' *Journal of British Studies*, 27 (1988), pp. 199-231.

Croucher, Richard, *Engineers at War 1939-45* (London, 1982).

Dennis, Richard, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge, 2008).

Driver, Felix, *Power and Pauperism. The Workhouse System, 1834-1884* (Cambridge, 1993).

Duchen, Claire and Bandhauer-Schöffmann, Irene (eds), *When the War Was Over: Women, War, and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956* (London, 2000).

Eaton, Michael, 'Humphrey Jennings,' in Nowell-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford History*, pp. 328-329.

Edgerton, David, *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War* (London, 2011).

Edgerton, David, *England and the Aeroplane: An Essay on a Militant and Technological Nation* (Basingstoke, 1991).

Edgerton, David, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge, 2006).

Edgerton, David, 'War, Reconstruction, and the Nationalisation of Britain, 1939-1951,' in Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch and David Feldman (eds), *Post-war reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949, Past and Present*, 210, Supplement 6, (2011), pp. 29-46.

Edwards, Claire, 'Cutting off the King's Head: The 'Social' in Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault,' *Studies in Social and Political Thought*, 1 (1999), pp. 3-20.

Edwards, Elizabeth and Hart, Janice, 'Introduction: Photographs as Objects,' in Edwards Elizabeth and Janice Hart, *Photographs, Objects, Histories* (New York, 2005), pp. 1-15.

Eley, Geoff, 'Finding the People's War: Film, British Collective Memory, and World War II,' *The American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), pp. 818-838.

Essex-Lopresti, Tim, *A Brief History of Civil Defence* (Derbyshire, 2005).

Fawcett, Helen and Lowe, Rodney (eds), *Welfare Policy in Britain the Road from 1945* (Basingstoke, 1999).

Feldman, David, 'Preface,' in Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch and David Feldman (eds), *Post-war Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949, Past and Present*, 210, Supplement 6 (2011), pp. 9-11.

Ferguson, Rex, 'Blind Noise and Deaf Visions: Henry Green's Caught, Synaesthesia and the Blitz,' *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33 (2009), pp. 102-116.

Fernbach, David, 'Tom Wintringham and Socialist Defense Strategy,' *History Workshop Journal*, 14 (1982), pp. 63-91.

Fielding, Steven, 'What did 'The People' Want? The Meaning of the 1945 General Election,' *The Historical Journal*, 35 (1992), pp. 623-693.

Forgan, Sophie, 'Festivals of Science and the Two Cultures: Science, Design and Display in the Festival of Britain, 1951,' *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 31 (1998), pp. 217-240.

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan (London, 1991).

Fussell, Paul, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford, 1975).

Gandy, Matthew, 'Rethinking Urban Metabolism: Water, Space and the Modern City,' *City*, 8 (2004), pp. 363-379.

Gaskin, M.J., *Blitz: The Story of 29th December 1940* (London, 2005).

Gilbert, David, 'London in all its Glory - or How to Enjoy London': Guidebook representations of Imperial London,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), pp. 279-297.

Gillespie, James, 'Municipalism, Monopoly and Management: The Demise of Socialism in One Country, 1918-1933,' in Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People*, pp. 103-125.

Gladstone, David (ed.), *Before Beveridge: Welfare Before the Welfare State* (London, 1999).

Goffman, Erving, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (London, 1990).

Goffman, Erving, *Behaviour in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organisation of Gatherings* (New York, 1963).

Goheen, Peter G., 'The Assertion of Middle-Class Claims to Public Space in Late Victorian Toronto,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 29 (2003), pp. 73-92.

Graham, Stephen (ed.), *Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructure Fails* (New York and Oxford, 2010).

Green, Anna and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory* (Manchester, 1999).

Greenaway, John R., 'Warren Fisher and the Transformation of the British Treasury, 1919-1939' *The Journal of British Studies*, 23 (1983), pp. 125-142.

Greenberg, Reesa, Bruce Ferguson, Sandy W. Nairne (eds), *Thinking About Exhibitions* (London, 1996).

- Hadlaw, Janin, 'The London Underground Map: Imagining Modern Time and Space,' *Design Issues*, 19 (2003), pp. 25-35.
- Hall, Stuart, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 71-120.
- Hancock, W. K. and Gowing, M.M., *British War Economy* (London, 1949).
- Harris, Jose, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War,' *Contemporary European History*, 1 (1992), pp. 17-35.
- Harvey, David, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change* (London, 1990).
- Heathorn, Stephen, 'The Civil Servant and Public Remembrance: Sir Lionel Earle and the Shaping of London's Commemorative Landscape, 1918-1933,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 19 (2003), pp. 259-287.
- Hewitt, Kenneth, 'Place Annihilation: Area Bombing and the Fate of Urban Places,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 73 (1983), pp. 257-284.
- Hill, John, 'A Working Class Hero is Something to be? Changing Representations of Class and Masculinity in British Cinema,' in Powrie, Davies and Babington (eds), *The Trouble with Men*, pp. 100-109.
- Hinton, James, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, 2010).
- Hinton, James, *Women, Social Leadership and the Second World War: Continuities of Class* (Oxford, 2002).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions,' in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 1-14.
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).
- Holman, Brett, 'World Police for World Peace: British Internationalism and the Threat of a Knock-Out Blow from the Air, 1919-1945,' *War in History*, 17 (2010), pp. 313-32.
- Homer, Andrew, 'Creating New Communities: The Role of the Neighbourhood Unit in Post-War British Planning,' *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), pp. 63-80.
- Hostettler, Eve, *Island at War: Memories of Wartime Life on the Isle of Dogs* (London, 1990).

- Hostettler, Eve, *The Isle of Dogs, Memory and Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (London, 2002).
- Hubble, Nick, *Mass Observation and Everyday Life: Culture, History Theory* (Basingstoke, 2006).
- Humphreys, Robert, *Poor Relief and Charity, 1869-1945: the London Charity Organisation Society* (Basingstoke, 2001).
- Hynes, Samuel, *A War Imagined: the First World War and English Culture* (London, 1990).
- Ibreck, Rachel, 'The politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-genocide Rwanda,' *Memory Studies*, 3 (2010), pp. 330-343.
- Jones, Edgar, Robin Woolven, Bill Durodie, and Simon Wessely, 'Civilian Morale During the Second World War: Responses to Air Raids Re-examined,' *Social History of Medicine*, 17 (2004), pp. 463-479.
- Jones, Helen, *British Civilians in the Front Line, Air Raids, Productivity and Wartime Culture, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2006).
- Joyce, Patrick, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003).
- Kaufmann, J. E., 'Unusual Aspects of a Unique Fortification: The Maginot Line,' *Military Affairs*, 52 (1988), pp. 69-74.
- Keene, Derek, Arthur Burns and Saint, Andrew (eds), *St Paul's: the Cathedral Church of London, 604-2004* (London, 2004).
- Kingston, Ralph, 'Mind Over Matter? History and the Spatial Turn,' *Cultural and Social History*, 7 (2010), pp. 111-121.
- King, Alex, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford, 1998).
- Koven, Seth, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Oxford, 2006).
- Kuhn, Annette, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London, 1995).
- Lee, Gerald, "'I See Dead People': Air-Raid Phobia and Britain's Behavior in the Munich Crisis,' *Security Studies*, 13 (2004), pp. 230-272.
- Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991).

- Leventhal, Fred M., 'British Writers, American Readers: Women's Voices in Wartime,' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 32 (2000), pp. 1-18.
- Lewis, Jane, 'The Voluntary Sector in the Mixed Economy of Welfare', in Gladstone (ed.), *Before Beveridge*, pp. 10-17.
- Liddle, Peter, Bourne, John and Whitehead, Ian (eds), *The Great War, 1914-1945* (London, 2000).
- Loach, Judi, 'Le Corbusier and the Creative Use of Mathematics,' *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 31 (1998), pp. 185-215.
- Lowe, Rodney, 'The Second World War, Consensus and the Welfare State', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1 (1990), pp. 152-182.
- Lyde Hargreaves, Eric, and Gowing, M.M., *Civil Industry and Trade* (London, 1952).
- Mackay, Robert, *Half the Battle, Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War* (New York, 2002).
- Mackenzie, John M (ed.), *Popular Imperialism and the Military 1850-1950* (Manchester, 1992).
- Malpass, Peter, *Housing and the Welfare State: The Development of Housing in Britain* (Basingstoke, 2005).
- Malpass, Peter, 'Wartime Planning for Post-War Housing in Britain: the Whitehall Debate, 1941-45,' *Planning Perspectives*, 18 (2003), 177-196.
- Mansell, James G., 'Musical Modernity and Contested Commemoration at the Festival of Remembrance, 1923 -1927,' *The Historical Journal*, 52 (2009), pp. 433-454.
- Martel, Gordon (ed.), *The World War Two Reader* (New York and London, 2004).
- Marwick, Arthur, *The Home Front: The British and the Second World War* (London, 1976).
- Mason, John, 'Partnership Denied: The London Labour Party on the LCC and the Decline of London Government, 1940-63,' in Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People*, pp. 251-268.
- Matheson, Neil, 'National Identity and the 'Melancholy Ruins': Cecil Beaton's Photographs of the London Blitz,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), pp. 261-274.

Matless, David, 'Appropriate Geography: Patrick Abercrombie and the Energy of the World,' *Journal of Design History*, 6 (1993), pp. 167-178.

Mazower, Mark, Jessica Reinisch and David Feldman (eds), *Post-war Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949, Past and Present*, 210, Supplement 6 (2011).

Meisel, Joseph. S., 'Air Raid Shelter Policy and its Critics in Britain before the Second World War,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 5 (1994), pp. 300-319.

Mellown, Muriel, 'One Woman's Way to Peace: The Development of Vera Brittain's Pacifism,' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 8 (1985), pp. 1-6.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London and New York, 1999).

Mirzoeff, Nicholas, 'The Right to Look,' *Critical Enquiry*, 37 (2011), pp. 473-496.

Morgan, Kevin, 'The Problem of the Epoch? Labour and Housing, 1918-51,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 16:3 (2005), pp. 227-255.

Mort, Frank, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (2004), pp. 120-152.

Mort, Frank, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of a Permissive Society* (London, 2010).

Moshenska, Gabriel, 'Charred Churches or Iron Harvests? Counter-Monumentality and the Commemoration of the London Blitz,' *Journal of Social Archeology*, 10 (2010), pp. 5-27.

Nairne, Sandy, 'The Institutionalization of Dissent,' Greenberg, Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, *Thinking About Exhibitions*, pp. 387-410.

Nead, Lynda, *Victorian Babylon: People Streets and Images in Nineteenth Century London* (London, 2000).

Nead, Lynda, 'Animating the Everyday: London on Camera circa 1900,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (2004), pp. 65-90.

Newall, Venetia, 'Armistice Day: Folk Tradition in an English Festival of Remembrance,' *Folklore*, 87 (1976), pp. 226-229.

Noakes, Lucy, 'Making Histories: Experiencing the Blitz in London's Museums in the 1990s,' in Martel (ed.), *The World War*, pp. 422-435.

Noakes, Lucy, *War and The British: Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London, 1998).



- Nora, Pierre, 'Between Memory and History: Le Lieux de Mémoire,' *Representations*, 26 (1989), pp. 1-16.
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford, 1996).
- O'Brien, Terence, *A History of Civil Defence* (London, 1955).
- Ogborn, Miles, *London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York, London, 1998).
- O'Halpin, E.P., *Head of the Civil Service: A Study of Warren Fisher* (London, 1989).
- Omissi, David Enrico, 'The Hendon Air Pageant, 1920-37,' in Mackenzie (ed.), *Popular Imperialism*, pp. 198-220.
- Overy, Richard, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London, 2009).
- Page, Robert A., *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Cornell, 1996).
- Patterson, Ian, *Guernica and Total War* (London, 2007).
- Pedersen, Susan, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (London, 2004).
- Piette, Adam, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry 1939-45* (Basingstoke, 1995).
- Porter, Roy, *London: A Social History* (Harvard, 1994).
- Powrie, Phil, Davies, Ann and Babington, Bruce (eds), *The Trouble with Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema* (London, 2004).
- Postan, M.M., *British War Production* (London, 1952).
- Price, Alfred, *Blitz on Britain 1939-45* (Stroud, 2000).
- Rau, Petra, 'The Common Frontier: Fictions of Alterity in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*,' *Literature and History*, 14 (2005), pp. 31-56.
- Rempel, Richard A., 'The Dilemmas of British Pacifists During World War II,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 50 (1978), pp. 1213-1229.
- Rennie, Paul, 'Socialvision: Visual Culture and Social Democracy in Britain during World War II,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1 (2008), pp. 243-60.
- Robb, George, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2002).
- Roodhouse, Mark, 'Popular Morality and the Black Market in Britain, 1939-55,' in Trentmann and Flemming (eds), *Food and Conflict*, pp. 243-265.

- Rose, Alexander, 'Radar and Air Defence in the 1930s,' *Twentieth Century British History*, 9 (1998), pp. 219-245.
- Rose, Gillian, 'Imagining Poplar in the 1920s: Contested Concepts of Community,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 16 (1990), pp. 425-437.
- Rose, Jonathan, 'The Workers in the Workers' Educational Association, 1903-1950,' *Albion*, 21 (1989), pp. 591-608.
- Rose, Nickolas, *Powers of Freedom, Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1999).
- Rose, Sonya, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003).
- Ross, Ellen, 'Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War I,' *History Workshop*, 15 (1983), pp 4-27.
- Saint, Andrew, 'Introduction,' in Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People*, pp. ix-xiv.
- Saint, Andrew (ed.), *Politics and the People of London, the London County Council 1889-1965* (London, 1989).
- Saint, Andrew, 'Spread the People': The LCC's Dispersal Policy, 1889-1965,' in Saint (ed.), *Politics and the People*, pp. 215-235.
- Saunders, Ann (ed.), *The London County Bomb Damage Maps 1939-45* (London, 2005).
- Saunders, Nicholas J., 'Apprehending Memory: Material Culture and War, 1919-1939,' in Liddle, Bourne and Whitehead (eds), *The Great War*, pp. 476- 508.
- Schneer, Johnathan, *The Thames: Englands River* (London, 2005).
- Scott, Ann, *Ernest Gowers: Plain Words and Forgotten Deeds* (Basingstoke, 2009).
- Sheridan, Dorothy, Brian Street and David Bloome, *Writing Ourselves: Mass Observation and Literacy Practices* (Cresskill, 2000).
- Simie, James (ed.), *Planning London* (London, 1994).
- Sladen, Chris, 'Wartime Holidays and the Myth of the Blitz,' *Cultural and Social History*, 2 (2005), pp. 215-246.
- Stein, Claudia and Cooter, Roger, 'Coming into Focus: Posters, Power, and Visual Culture in the History of Medicine,' *Medizinhistorisches*, 42 (2007), pp. 180-209.
- Stradling, Robert, *Your Children Will be Next: Bombing and Propaganda in the Spanish Civil War 1936-39* (Cardiff, 2008).

- Streicher, Lawrence H., 'David Low and the Sociology of Caricature,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8 (1965), pp. 1-23.
- Sturken, Marita, and Cartwright, Lisa, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford, 2001).
- Summerfield, Penny, "'It did me good in lots of ways": British women in Transition from War to Peace,' in Duchen and Bandhauer-Schöffmann (eds), *When the War Was Over*, pp. 13-28.
- Summerfield, Penny and Peniston-Bird, Corinna, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester, 2007).
- Tagg, John, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke, 1988).
- Thackrah, John Richard, *The Royal Albert Hall* (Lavenham, 1983).
- Thrift, Nigel, *Spatial Formations* (London, 1996).
- Tiratsoo, Nick, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-55: Myths and Reality,' *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), pp. 27-44.
- Tiratsoo, Nick, 'New Vistas, The Labour Party, Citizenship and the Built Environment in the 1940s,' in Weight and Beach, *The Right to Belong*, pp. 136-156.
- Titmuss, R. M., *The Problems of Social Policy* (London, 1950).
- du Toit, Herman, 'Introduction,' in du Toit (ed.), *Pageants and Processions*, pp. xiii-xiv.
- du Toit, Herman (ed.), *Pageants and Processions: Images and Idiom as Spectacle* (Cambridge, 2009).
- Treglow, Jeremy, 'Introduction,' Green, *Caught*, pp. vii-xiv.
- Trentmann, Frank, and Just, Flemming (eds), *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars* (Basingstoke, 2006).
- Tsubaki, Tatsuya, 'Planners and the Public: British Popular Opinion on Housing During the Second World War,' *Contemporary British History*, 14:1 (2000), pp. 81-9.
- Vernon, James, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, 2007).
- Vipond, Mary, 'The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Media Event,' *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 35 (2010), pp. 149-172.

Walsh, Claire, 'Social Meaning and Social Space in the Shopping Galleries of Early Modern London,' in Benson and Ugolini, (eds), *A Nation of Shopkeepers*.

Waterton, Emma and Watson, Steve (eds), *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past* (Farnham, 2010).

Waterton, Emma, 'Branding the Past: The Visual Imagery of England's Heritage,' in Waterton and Watson (eds), *Culture, Heritage and Representation*, pp. 155-172.

Waterton, Emma and Watson, Steve, 'Introduction: A Visual Heritage,' in Waterton and Watson (eds), *Culture, Heritage and Representation*, pp. 1-16.

Weight, Richard, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (Basingstoke, 2002).

Weight, Richard, and Beach, Abigail (eds), *The Right to Belong, Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (London, 1998).

Welshman, John, 'Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The Our Towns Report of 1943,' *The Historical Journal*, 42 (1999), pp. 781-807.

White, Edmund, *The Flâneur* (London, 2001).

White, Jerry, *London in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (London, 2008).

Windsor Liscombe, Rhodri, 'Refabricating the Imperial Image of the Isle of Dogs: Modernist Design, British State Exhibitions and Colonial Policy 1924-1951,' *Architectural History*, 49 (2006), pp. 317-348.

Winter, Caroline, 'Tourism, Social Memory and the Great War,' *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36 (2009), pp. 607-626.

Winter, Jay, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995).

Wolffe, John, 'National occasions at St Paul's since 1800,' in Keene, Burns and Saint, (eds), *St Paul's*, pp. 381-391.

Woolven, Robin, 'The London Experience of Regional Government 1938-45,' *London Journal*, 25 (2000), 59-78.

Woolven, Robin, 'Civil Defence in WWII,' in Essex-Lopresti, Tim, *A Brief History of Civil Defence* (Derbyshire, 2005), pp. 12-22.

Woolven, Robin, 'Pre-WWII Preparations,' in Essex-Lopresti, Tim, *A Brief History of Civil Defence* (Derbyshire, 2005), pp. 7-11.

Robin Woolven, '1945 Stand-Down,' in Essex-Lopresti, Tim, *A Brief History of Civil Defence* (Derbyshire, 2005), pp. 32-34.

Young, Ken and Garside, Patricia, *Metropolitan London: Politics and Urban Change 1837-1981*, (London, 1982).

Young, James E., 'The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today,' *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (1992), pp. 267-296.

Ziegler, Philip, *London at War 1939-1945* (London, 2002).

### **Unpublished Papers and Theses**

Gonyo, Denise, 'Visions of India,' paper presented at the Historylab Seminar at the IHR, 17 March 2011.

Drucker, James M., *One Big Union? Structural Change in Building Trade Unionism* (PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 1980).

Holman, Brett, *The Next War in the Air Civilian Fears of Strategic Bombardment in Britain, 1908-1941*, (Phd Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2009).

Kümin, Beat, 'Spatial Approaches to the Past,' paper given at the Mellon Summer Workshop 2006, The University of Warwick.

Woolven, Robin, *Civil Defence in London 1935-1945* (PhD Thesis, King's College London 2002).

### **Films**

*Once I was a Fireman* (Humphrey Jennings, 1943, UK, Crown Film Unit).

### **Internet Sources**

Allan, John, Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40675>> (Accessed, 1 March 2011).

Allan, John, Obituary: Francis Skinner, 17 January 1998, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/obituary-francis-skinner-1139173.html>> (accessed 1 March 2011).

Berthold Lubetkin, Entry in 'Designing Modern Britain - Design Museum Exhibition,' <<http://designmuseum.org/design/berthold-lubetkin>> (accessed 1 March 2011).

Biography of Joseph Lee, British Cartoons Archive,  
<<http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/josephlee/biography>> (accessed 20 February 2011).

Committee of Imperial Defence, The National Archives, glossary,  
<[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/glossary/glossary\\_c.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/glossary/glossary_c.htm)> (accessed 16 February 2011).

'Dick Sheppard: A Short Biography,' Peace Pledge Union,  
<[http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/infodocs/people/pst\\_dick.html](http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/infodocs/people/pst_dick.html)> (accessed 10 July 2011).

Green, David, *Finsbury: Past, Present & Future*, Report for EC1 New Deal for Communities (May 2009), One History, EC1 in the making,  
<<http://www.ec1history.co.uk/articles.html>> (accessed 11 March 2011).

Green, David and Dunne, Eoin, *Public Housing Pioneers*, both available online at One History, EC1 in the making, <<http://www.ec1history.co.uk/articles.html>> (accessed 11 March 2011).

IWM: Posters of Conflict - The Visual Culture of Public Information and Counter Information, <<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/flarge.php?uid=33282&sos=3>>,  
<<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/flarge.php?uid=33262&sos=3>> (accessed 10 January 2011).

IWM, Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, IWM:PST 8661,  
<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73198&sos=3> (accessed 1 April 2011).

Joshua I, Verses 1-9, King James Bible, available online,  
<<http://buscarenlabiblia.com/en/verse/kjv/6/1/9/>> accessed (5 June 2011).

Kelly, Michael, 'Henri Lefebvre,' 'Obituary', *Radical Philosophy* (1992), available online,  
<[http://www.radicalphilosophy.com/default.asp?channel\\_id=2191&editorial\\_id=9838](http://www.radicalphilosophy.com/default.asp?channel_id=2191&editorial_id=9838)> (accessed February 20 2006).

Langley, Charles, 'How we traced the redoubtable Irene Bobby Haslewood,' *Evening Standard* <<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-951680-how-we-traced-the-redoubtable-irene-bobby-haslewood.do>> (accessed 10 July 2010).

McGahan, Katy, 'If war should come,' Curator (Non-Fiction), BFI National Archive, Commentary, BFI Inview: <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6220>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

'Militarized Landscapes in Twentieth-Century Britain, France and the United States,' <<http://www.bris.ac.uk/history/militarylandscapes/>> (accessed 12 February 2011).

Mirzoeff, Nicholas, 'Torture and Truth: Images of War,' paper given at Columbia University's Centre of Critical Analysis and Social Difference, 2 October 2008, available online at <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TRSBc\\_9p4k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TRSBc_9p4k)> (accessed 5 May 2011).

The Light Programme, 11 May 1950, available online, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/marriage/10517.shtml>> (accessed 5 March 2011).

'War's Greatest Picture,' Herbert Mason's iconic image of St Paul's Cathedral surrounded by flames, Daily Mail, 31 December 1940, front cover, available online, Museum of London, <<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/archive/exhibits/blitz/positive/media.htm>> (accessed 12 July 2010)

War torn Shanghai, British Pathé Newsreel, issue date 14 March 1932, available online <<http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=2877>> (Accessed 7 February 2011).

2003 Balzan Prize for European History since 1900, 'Reconstruction in the Immediate Aftermath of War. A Comparative Study of Europe, 1945-50,' <[http://www.balzan.org/en/prizewinners/eric-hobsbawm/research-project\\_20\\_94.html](http://www.balzan.org/en/prizewinners/eric-hobsbawm/research-project_20_94.html)> (accessed 12 February 2011).

#### British Film Institute: BFI Inview:

Control Room, The work of the Civil Defence Services in Bristol (1942), BFI Inview, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6246> (accessed 25 October 2009)

*Housing Problems*, documentary Film, produced by Arthur Elton and E.H. Anstey for the British Commercial Gas Association (1935), BFI Inview, <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6212>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

*Housing Progress*, information film by Mathew Nathan, produced for The Housing Centre (London, 1935), BFI Inview, <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6216>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

*If War Should Come*, produced by the G.P.O. Film Unit for the Home Office (1939), BFI Inview, <<https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/6220>> (Accessed 10 October 2009).

#### Workers' War: Home Front Recalled Project:

TUC/LMU, Circular No. 82 (1939-40), To all Secretaries of all Affiliated Unions, Labour Supply During Wartime, 1940, available online <[www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/display.php?irn=537&QueryPage=%2Fworkerswar%2Fimagesdocs.php](http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/display.php?irn=537&QueryPage=%2Fworkerswar%2Fimagesdocs.php)> (accessed 25 May 2011);

#### Maps of London:

<http://www.maps-of-london.com>





