



EMPIRE IN PERIL:

INVASION-SCARES AND POPULAR POLITICS IN BRITAIN 1890-1914

Public Lecture & Interdisciplinary Workshop
Queen Mary, University of London, 14-15 November 2013

Speakers:

Bernard Porter (Newcastle (em), UK) • **Nicholas Hiley** (Kent, UK) • **Michael Matin** (Warren-Wilson, US) • **Jan Rueger** (Birkbeck, UK) • **Matthew Seligmann** (Brunel, UK)

This year marks the first centenary of one of the most popular examples of the invasion-scare genre: Saki's (H.H. Munro) *When William Came* (1913). Saki's famous account imagines the defeat of Britain at the hand of an invading German army. The cultural and political concerns of Edwardian Britain lay at the heart of the novel's masochistic narrative: degeneration, the rise of modernity, militarism, national security, decadence, germanophobia, a battle for global hegemony, and imperial decline. As such, the narrative reflects the general convergence of popular politics, the public and the press, which coalesced around a repertoire of anxieties, embodied in the trope of the 'German Menace' and foreign intrigues in the metropole and in the empire.

The aim of this workshop is to facilitate a greater integration of the study of invasion-scares and popular politics at the intersection of divergent approaches. It is suggested that a more thorough investigation of the interconnectedness of press, politics and popular culture is essential to furthering our understanding of key aspects of Edwardian society and British identity on the eve of the Great War. Responding to a recent surge of interest in the pre-war period, this workshop will stimulate debate and reflection on the latest research in these areas, and identify avenues for further study, based upon a broader and more inclusive approach to historical analysis.

KEY THEMES:

INVASION-SCARE LITERATURE • SPY-FEVER • ARMAMENT RACE • ANGLO-GERMAN RIVALRY • POLITICS OF THE PRESS • IMAGINING FUTURE WARS • PANIC AND ANXIETIES • POPULAR POLITICS • FOREIGN INTRIGUES AT HOME AND IN THE EMPIRE

Contributions from established scholars as well as junior researchers in all fields relevant to the broader subject are invited. Participants should submit a 300-word abstract of their proposed paper and a brief biography by 1 August 2013.

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