

Germanophilism in Britain: Non-governmental elites and the limits to Anglo-German antagonism, 1905-1914.

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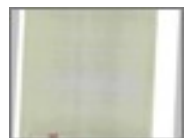
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Germanophilism in Britain: Non-governmental elites and the limits to Anglo-German antagonism, 1905-1914.

Siak, Steven Wai-Meng (1997) *Germanophilism in Britain: Non-governmental elites and the limits to Anglo-German antagonism, 1905-1914*. PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom).



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Abstract

This thesis examines the limits to Anglo-German antagonism and the sources of rapprochement between the two countries during the approximate period 1905-1914. It thus explores Anglo-German relations from a perspective which has up to now been largely neglected, and serves as a corrective to the emphasis on antagonism which prevails in the English-language historical literature. The study probes Germanophilism among non-governmental elites, focusing on the commercial, financial and academic communities, as well as cooperation between the two countries at the non-governmental level before the war. The topics examined include the Anglo-German movement in Britain, ties between British and German commercial interests and Anglo-German economic and Anglo-German links in education. The thesis also studies attitudes, including a discussion of British views of Germany based on travel accounts. British textbooks on German history that were published before the war are used as a means of assessing the prewar attitude of British academics, in particular historians, towards Germany. The study reveals the strength of the idea of Anglo-German racial kinship, and demonstrates that British historians viewed Germany favourably before the war. Their attitude, however, changed after the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. In conclusion, the thesis reappraises the ultimate failure of the 'pro-German' forces in Britain to prevent the outbreak of German hostilities in 1914. Its primary aim, nevertheless, is not to argue that the limits to the Anglo-German rapprochement have prevented the First World War, but to demonstrate that they existed and were important.

Item Type: Thesis (PhD)

Uncontrolled Keywords: Political Science, International Relations

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