

# The official response to Sidney Street

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# Overview



- Context: army interventions, 1890-1914
- Tottenham Outrage 1909
- Houndsditch Murders Dec 1910
- Guns
- Sidney Street
  - Raid
  - Course of seige
- Outcomes

# Military 'aid to the civil power'



- 1890 -1914 incidents in UK when the army opened fire:
  - 1893 Featherstone – 2 dead
  - 1907 Belfast – 2 dead
  - 1911 Llanelli – 2 dead
  - 1911 Liverpool – 0 dead
  - 1911 Sidney Street – 2 dead**
  - 1914 Dublin – 3 dead

# Tottenham Outrage Jan 23 1909



- 2 gunmen rob wage delivery
- 3 hour chase, including hijacked tram
- 1 police officer, 1 member of public shot dead
- Both robbers kill themselves as alternative to arrest/death.
- Chaotic chase: police borrow guns from public
- Review of Metropolitan Police firearms begins

# Houndsditch murders, Dec 16th 1910



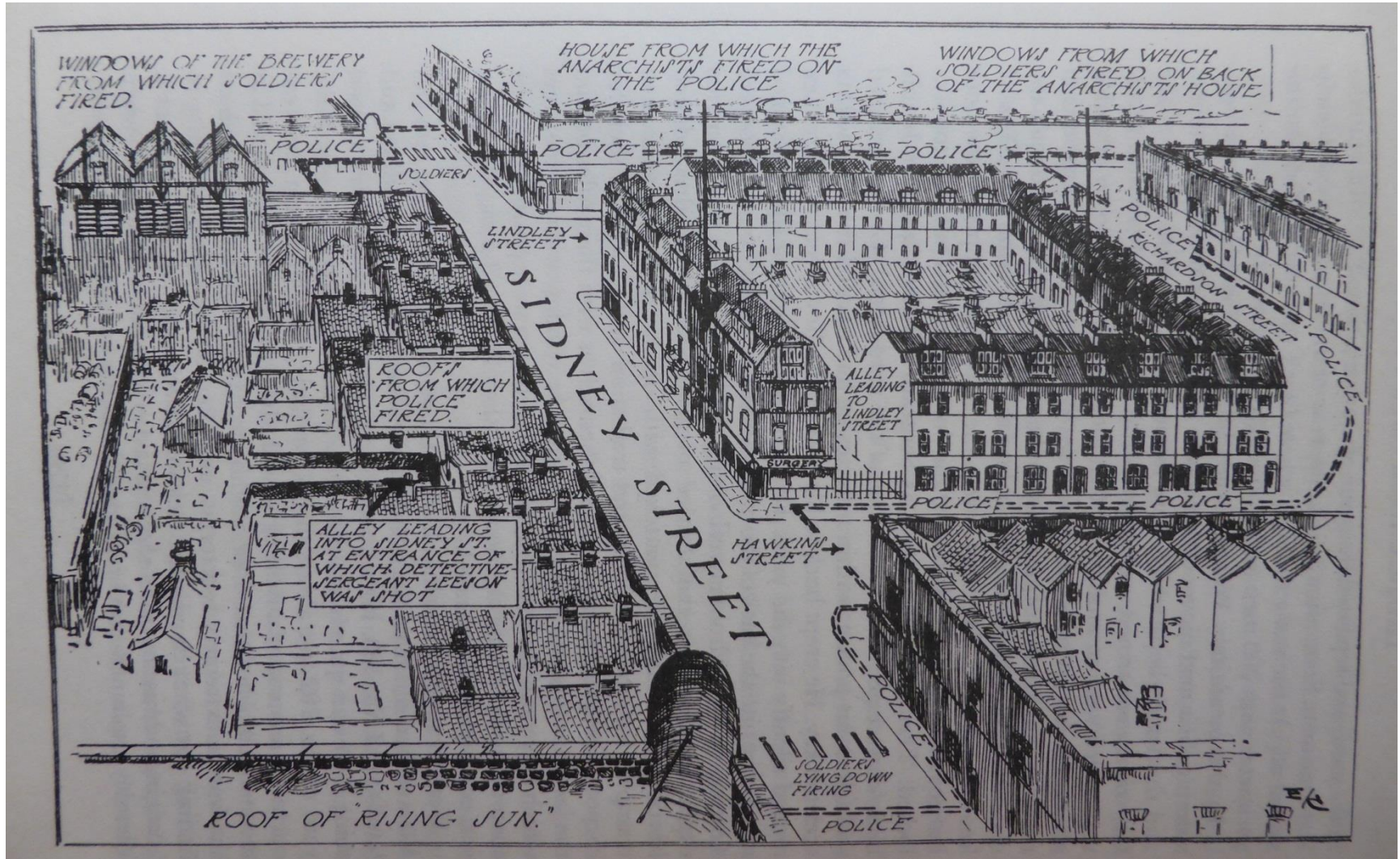
- Gang (working shifts) disturbed by City of London Police
- Sgt Bentley, PC Choate and Sgt Tucker killed
- Gardstein mortally wounded: taken by gang to Grove St house where he dies
- Dec 17<sup>th</sup> Doctor informs DI Wensley; discovers corpse; Wensley enters room
- Met and City following up Grove St evidence and at least three informers

# Guns



- 1903 Pistols Act: largely revenue-raising
- Guns used:
  - Dreyse automatic – fatal shots at Houndsditch
  - Mauser C96 (402 foot pounds) – powerful but inaccurate at range
  - Webley Mk 1 .455 revolver (250 foot pounds) – Met
  - ‘Morris tube’ rifle – intended for training – City Police
  - Lee Enfield .303 (2,400 foot pounds) – Scots Guards

# Sidney St



# View from north





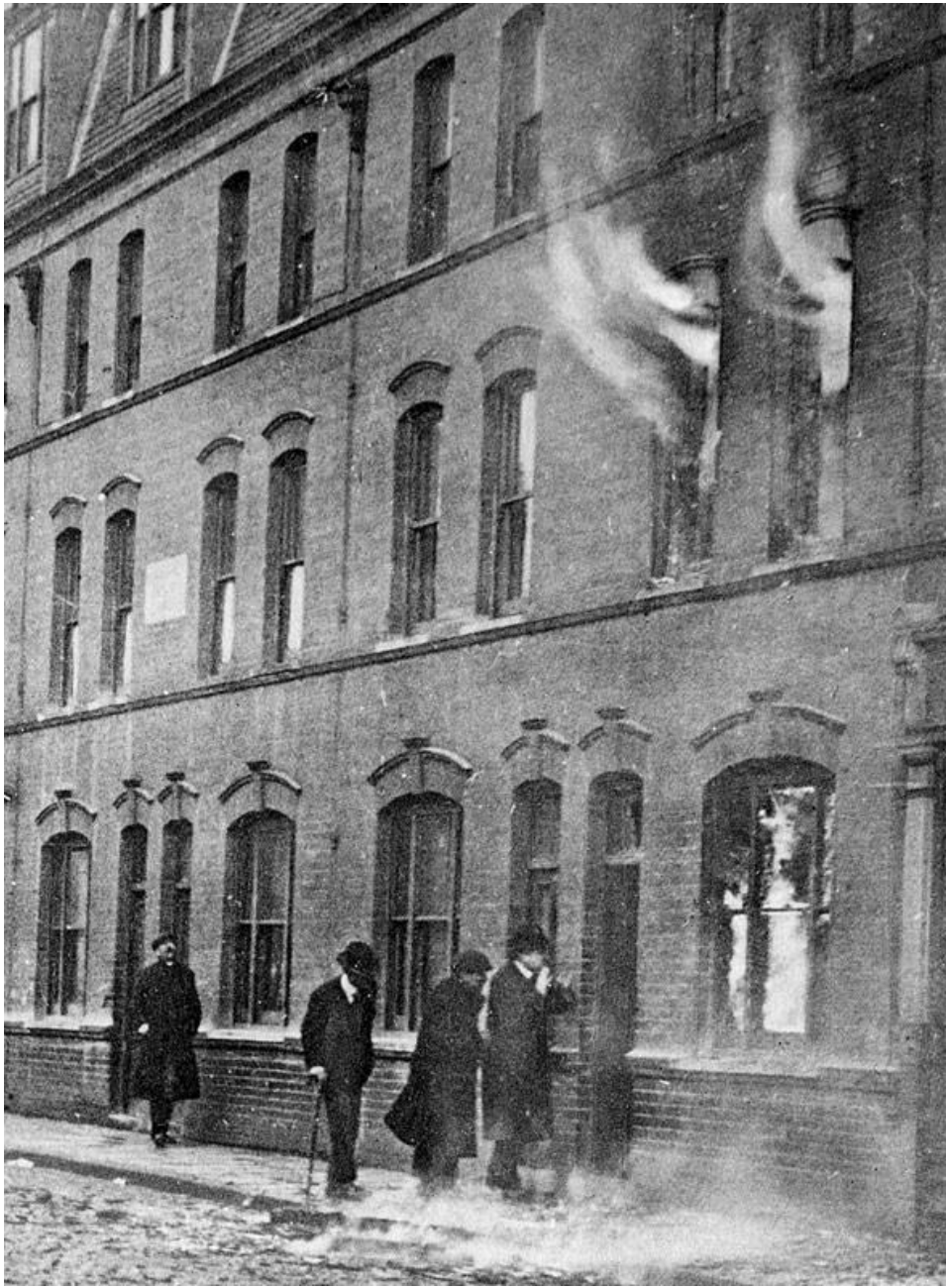
# Scots Guards at south cordon



*EAST END SIEGE. — Guards lying prone on ground firing at assassins.*

# Churchill observing





# The burning house

# Sidney Street Raid, Jan 3rd 1911



- Jan 1<sup>st</sup> Information from informer locates Fritz and Jakob at 100 Sidney Street top floor
- Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> 11.45 Supt Ottaway (CoLP) decides on big raid.; reserves turned out
- Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> 0045 Planning meeting
- 0200 Advance party under Sgt Girdler seals off house; Area cordoned
- 0300 Armed officers positioned
- 0200 - 0430 Detectives attempt to quietly empty lower floors of no.100

# Course of siege



- 0730 'Attract attention' - DS Leeman shot
- c.0830 Request to Met AC 'A' for army: Churchill consulted
- 1000 Scots Guards arrive and take position in brewery
- Morning Visits from: CoLP Commissioner; Met AC'A'; head of CID; head of SB
- 1200 Churchill arrives
- 1300 House catches fire
- c.1300 Scots Guards, Machine gun and Royal Artillery troop arrive
- 1330 Final shots: upper floors burn out
- c.1330 Churchill's 'only intervention' – holding back firemen
- 1430 Detectives and firemen enter no. 100

# Outcomes



- Feb 8th      Arrest of Hoffman at 0215
- Feb          ‘Aliens’ clause in abortive Pistols Bill
- July         Death of fireman Charles Pearson
- Nov          Adoption of new Met pistol: Webley and Scott .32 automatic
- Churchill’s account of his role



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