S.A.T.H.

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Editorial

ANDREW HUNT

I suppose editors of journals like this one should be a little eclectic; ranging through the whole of the study of History in search of articles and never concentrating on one time span or area. I'm sorry to be such a disappointment: I can't seem to get away from the modern option of Higher! If my arm were twisted, I would be perfectly happy to broaden out my fields of enquiry for articles, but find it that much easier (and therefore more successful) to tread paths that I vaguely know myself, rather than request contributions where I'm not really sure how wide the readership would be. Outraged medievalists probably have got a right to see more of their subject area represented within these pages, but for this year at least, they will have to live with and appreciate the excellent selection of articles on four sections of the modern option.

The main factor on my mind this past year has been the Higher Extended essay. It may sound an admission of limited failure, but the typical Higher class essay from a Paper 1 question can probably be satisfactorily written from two class text books and a synthesis of the teacher's notes. Is this the same with the Extended essay? Surely not? Are we not looking for something like twice that input both by depth of content and also by width of interpretative analysis? Then comes the big question; where do we get this extra from?

This is where I had the Year Book in mind - especially for newer and wider interpretations. The university academic staff who write for the Year Book are experts in their fields; their articles have authority and balance, they have angles and insights which are well within the grasp of a Higher student doing their Extended essay. No-one is saying to plunge one of these articles fresh into the hands of a Vth year pupil as their preliminary reading; hold them back until the second week of study, then ask, is there anything new here, maybe a different perspective? I don't think Higher students particularly see the study of History as in any way about pushing back frontiers of understanding, yet these articles (and often the footnotes and references which come with them) are the newest views out. The Extended essay gives the students the chance to synthesise this sort of material into their "normal" understanding of a topic, we should make sure they take the opportunity.

I finish with a note of thanks to all contributors. A few years ago my editorial noted with pleasure how great a contribution to the Year Book came from universities within Scotland. I now note with equal pleasure the opposite. All articles this year come from south of the border, perhaps a preponderance coming from westward parts of the British Isles. This shows how all academic staff, from whatever locality, appreciate the chance of a platform like the Year Book to air their views. We make no concessions to any English audience. I doubt if more than a dozen copies find their way past Hadrian's Wall: the Year Book is there to serve, as SATH sees it, the needs of Scottish History teachers. The Year Book's general shape and appearance is a hook for contributors, but the real attraction is the readership; there is a real multiplier effect of putting ideas into the Year Book and from there into the hands of the classroom teachers!

I must certainly record my pleasure, as Editor, with all my dealings with this year's contributors. Every one of them sent their article on disc to enable speedier and cheaper printing; all have been helpful, courteous and prompt in their production of articles. It's difficult to imagine how an editor's life could be much easier (unless six medievalists wrote to me saying they have an idea for an article which just fits into the syllabus!)

The Growth of the Labour Party up to 1914

DR ANDREW THORPE

Any political party depends for its success upon building a coalition of supporters prepared to vote for it and, to some extent, support it in other ways. Parties which can build up a broad enough coalition will usually manage to be contenders for power; those which cannot, will not. The extent to which a party is successful will be in close relation to the ability of its policies, leaders and rhetoric to attract a broad enough span of support.

This question is of obvious significance when studying the rise of the British Labour party. The great electoral coalition of the period between 1832 and the late nineteenth century had been the Liberal party, able to draw support from a wide range of social groupings, including nonconformists, Catholics, business people, and, increasingly as more of them were enfranchised, the working classes. While it is not the business of this essay to investigate the causes for the decline of the Liberal party, it can be seen fairly clearly that it was the unravelling of this coalition which led to the party's virtual demise in the period after the First World War.

By contrast, the growing power in early twentieth century British politics was the Labour party. Formed as the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) in 1900, it won two seats at that year's general election. Three more seats were gained at by-elections before the 1906 election, at which 29 seats were won with the help of an electoral pact with the Liberals. In the immediate aftermath of that election, the LRC changed its name to the Labour party. The affiliation of the Miners' Federation in 1909 brought over more MPs, nominees of the miners who had up till then sat as 'Lib-Lab' MPs, supporting the Liberals. But at the January 1910 election Labour fell back to 40 seats, and this position scarcely changed at the next election, in December 1910. That was the last pre-war election. At the next election, fought in December 1918 after the end of hostilities, Labour advanced to 57 seats, and its progress continued to such an extent that it was able to form a government (even though it was not the largest party) in 1924, and to emerge as the largest party for a second period in office between 1929 and 1931.

The reasons for the rise of Labour have given cause to a very considerable body of historical debate. Put very simply, the arguments can be divided into two camps. First, there is the 'accidentalist' school.[1] Here, historians argue that the Liberal party was in reasonably good shape before 1914, with the support of the broad mass of the working class, secured because the Liberals had updated their appeal, especially through the social reforming 'New Liberalism'. Labour, by contrast, was in a fairly static position; it may even have been in decline. What changed matters was the First World War. This split the Liberals dramatically, especially when, in December 1916, the Liberal leader, H H Asquith was replaced as Prime Minister by his erstwhile lieutenant, David Lloyd George. Asquith led about two-thirds of the Liberal MPs into opposition, while the rest supported Lloyd George, and the split was perpetuated by the continuation of the Lloyd George Coalition until 1922. At the same time, the war, which required massive state intervention, conscription of men into the armed forces, and so on, was a massive challenge to the tenets of Liberalism, which involved a limited role for the state, peace rather than war, and individual freedom rather than the compulsion of young men to be killed on the Western Front. In short, the war harmed the Liberal party and gave Labour the chance to advance.

The alternative view, which can be characterised as 'inevitablist', suggests the contrary.[2] The Liberal party did, it was true, suffer splits during the war. But so too did the Labour party, as when the chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), Ramsay MacDonald, resigned in protest at the decision of the majority of his followers to support entry into the conflict. According to this view, the Liberals were already in trouble by 1914, facing severe challenges to their position, failing to address issues which would become common to the twentieth century, and falling behind Labour as a vehicle for class politics. By contrast, Labour's advance, while not spectacular, was steady and augured well for the future. In particular, the number of members affiliated via the trade unions was increasing significantly, and working-class Liberalism was in decline. The party was using the money brought in by new union affiliations to reorganise itself in a way which would allow it to challenge more seriously at the next general election. Labour would either have broken from the electoral pact with the Liberals, or else have secured a much stronger position within it, getting a free run against the Conservatives in more seats, than hitherto. In short, Labour was already in the ascendant, and the Liberals in decline, before 1914: the events that followed were little more than the icing on the cake.

An article of this nature cannot even pretend to settle these matters. Indeed, so long as there are historians, there will probably be new contributions to this debate. The aim here is to identify the key elements in the Labour coalition of the 1920s, and then see how far these groups were coming over to Labour by 1914. Of course, we are hindered here by the sketchiness of some of the evidence. Modern polling techniques, which allow us to construct a very full picture of the components of a party's support, were not, of course, available. Furthermore, we are talking more about *potential* than about *actual* Labour voting: partly because of the Lib-Lab pact, and partly for other reasons, Labour never attempted to put up a anything like a full slate of candidates in the period, with only 15 in 1900, 50 in 1906, 78 in January 1910, and 56 that December. Nevertheless, we can move beyond mere guesswork. When Labour became a major player in politics in the 1920s, it was because it had drawn together a significant coalition of supporters. That coalition included trade unionists; the wider working class; socialists; Roman Catholics; Co-operators; and feminists. Of course, many of these groups overlapped: most Catholics, for example, were working-class. At the same time, they were not wholly pro-Labour: even in the 1920s, massive numbers of working-class people did not vote for the party. But these were to be the most fertile areas of Labour support in the twenties. How far had they 'come on stream' by 1914?

Perhaps the most likely of all the above groups to have been Labour supporters by 1914 were trade unionists. This should come as no surprise. The LRC was set up in 1900 at the behest of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). There were many reasons for this. The chief one was concern that the legal position of unions was coming under threat. This was nothing new. Unions had actually been illegal (although they had continued to exist) during the period of the Combination Laws in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Even after the repeal of that legislation, unions remained in an ambiguous position where the law was concerned, as witness the transportation of the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' in 1834 for administering illegal oaths, the doubts about the legality of picketing and striking which persisted into the 1870s, and the difficulties unions had in securing their funds against embezzlement until the same time. Reforms under Gladstone and Disraeli in the 1870s had seemed to secure the legal position, but during the 1890s a series of adverse judicial decisions, culminating in the House of Lords's Taff Vale judgment of 1901, had thrown fresh doubt on this. Fearing that, if such decisions went unchallenged, trade unionism would be back into its own Dark Ages, the unions or some of them – decided to exercise their political muscle. Hence the formation of the LRC. The final verdict on Taff Vale, reached in 1901, which stated that unions could be sued by employers for damages resulting from an industrial dispute, came at just the right time for the LRC, since it persuaded many more unions to get involved.

All this uncertainty helped to keep the LRC together, and to grow. The Lords' decision on Taff Vale led to a stream of union affiliations to the Committee: 1902 saw a rise of 25 per cent over the previous year, and 1903 a staggering 84 per cent increase.[3] This was followed by a rise of 13 per cent in the year to February 1904. At that year's conference, a compulsory levy of a penny per member per year was imposed in order to pay Labour MPs and help with election expenses. This enabled the party to pay its MPs a salary of £200 a year from 1904 onwards.[4] The committee had come a very long way, thanks largely to the decisions of the courts. By 1906, the main union outside the Labour party was the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB), but even it was to vote for affiliation in 1908. It had 500,000 members.

However, a continuing anti-Labour strain within trade unions was highlighted in 1909 when the House of Lords adjudged union contributions to political parties to be illegal. The railwayman who had brought the case, W V Osborne, was a staunch trade unionist, but opposed union involvement in party politics. The Osborne Judgment was clearly a threat to Labour's long-term development. In the short term, many local Labour parties collapsed and Labour candidates at the 1910 elections were often desperately short of money.[5] The party itself coped – it had few paid staff and headquarters were modest and inexpensive to run – but the Judgment was obviously a threat to its position and, more broadly, yet another example of legal interference in trade union affairs.

Labour's consolidation was ultimately assisted, though, by two pieces of legislation passed in reaction to the Osborne Judgement. The first, in 1911, resulted in the payment to MPs of a salary of £400 a year, which removed a burden from sponsoring organizations (mainly unions) which had previously had to find the money for MPs' wages. In retrospect, this can be seen to have removed a potential obstacle to Labour's growth. The second was the Trade Union Act of 1913. Labour grumbled about this, first because it was a long time coming, and secondly because it did not restore the *status quo ante,* as the party had wanted. Indeed, it confirmed that unions should not make political donations from their general funds. However, it allowed unions to set up, subject to a membership ballot, a separate political fund, from which contributions could be made to the party. This would be financed by a special 'political levy' from which individuals like Osborne could 'contract out' if they so wished. Many Liberals hoped these complexities would stymie Labour, but, in fact, the Act was to prove a blessing in disguise: the legal position was now clarified in a way that satisfied natural justice; most of the ballots went in favour of establishing political funds, although in some cases by a very narrow margin; and, finally, there was little else that the political fund money could be spent on except the Labour party, giving the latter a firmer base of income and budgeting than ever before. However, union executives often remained reluctant to adopt a very expansive policy of funding, with many 'refusing to finance enough Labour parliamentary candidates to sustain a broad anti-Liberal campaign'.[6]

The clarification of the legal-financial relationship between party and unions was especially important given the considerable expansion of trade unionism during this period. TUC-affiliated unions had had 1 200 000 members in 1900. This rose by 37.3 per cent in the next ten years, and then by a further 62.8 per cent between 1910 and 1914, when membership had reached a total of almost 2 700 000.[7] This increased rate of expansion after 1910 was due to three main causes. First, it was a period of trade prosperity. Secondly, many members were recruited around the time of the major industrial disputes of the period, such as the nationwide strikes of railwaymen (1911) and miners (1912). Finally, some people joined unions so that they could qualify for benefits under the 1911 National Insurance Act. All this helped the Labour party, which increased its trade union-affiliated membership by a third between 1910 and 1912.

Even so, it must be remembered that trade unionists were still only a minority of workers, and any notion of a working class homogenizing rapidly and therefore about to turn, inevitably, to Labour is deeply flawed. By 1914, 'union density' (the percentage of working people able to join unions who actually were union members) still stood at only 23 per cent (29.5 per cent for men, 8 per cent for women).[8] Secondly, even among trade unionists, many – like Osborne – were still not voting Labour, even where they had the chance to do so. After 1922, for example, the miners would become the staunchest of Labour supporters. But this was not the case before 1914. Indeed, in a number of cases between 1910 and 1914, where a Labourite mining MP died, the subsequent by-election saw Labour lose the seat because so many miners continued to vote Liberal.

Labour's grasp on the non-unionised working class was clearly weaker. It is difficult to be much more precise than this, precisely because the party tended not to run candidates in areas where trade unionism was weak, for obvious reasons. At least people who were members of trade unions were exposed to the kind of rhetoric about solidarity, and set of collectivist values, which might lead to Labour voting. This was not the case with, for example, domestic servants, still one of the largest employment groups in Britain prior to 1914 (and indeed for a considerable time thereafter). Another large swathe of workers, agricultural labourers, were also largely un-unionised: and it was no coincidence that, except in parts of Norfolk, this group remained largely immune to Labour's appeal even after the war. Places like London and Liverpool, with strong traditions of casual labour and relative union weakness, remained areas of peculiar weakness for Labour up to 1914 and, in the latter case, until after 1945. In short, the non-unionised working class seems to have been largely unlikely to have supported Labour in this period. Labour candidatures and successes tended to be in those areas where the working class was unionised: this meant, especially, the heavy industrial areas of northern England, such as Lancashire.

Among socialists, Labour was likely to be more successful. This was not because the party was a socialist party, because it was not. But from its foundation the socialists of the Independent Labour party (ILP) had played a central role in the organisation. Leading ILPers took on leading roles in the LRC/Labour party: these included Keir Hardie, one of the LRC's first two MPs and chairman of the PLP between 1906 and 1908, and Ramsay MacDonald, secretary of the committee/party from its formation until 1912. Socialism had a certain, although not really a wide, appeal at this time. A significant minority of trade unionists were socialists, for ethical reasons or because they were increasingly persuaded that the state had a significant role to play in improving wages and conditions of work. Socialism also appealed more broadly. Some liked it because they had given up on religion but needed a spiritual side to their lives: hence the appeal of the utopian 'heaven on earth' writings of William Morris.[9] Others saw it was a way to a fairer, more humanitarian society: many were attracted, particularly, by its apparent feminism. Some, like the Fabians (or at least some of them) believed that their status (as civil servants) would be enhanced in a society which was concerned more squarely to cede functions to a powerful state machine.[10] And many, including this last group, saw it was the best way of improving the rational allocation of resources and responsibilities in the great debate on 'national efficiency' which began to grip Britain towards the end of the nineteenth century.[11]

At the same time, though, it must also be remembered that there were many socialists outside the Labour party: these included the Marxists of the Social Democratic Federation (which joined a left-wing breakaway from the Independent Labour Party to form the British Socialist Party in 1914); the syndicalists, advocates of revolutionary trade unionism and rejecters of parliamentary action, whose influence was not entirely insignificant after 1910; and guild socialists, who argued for a synthesis of syndicalism and more orthodox collectivism.[12] For some socialists, it was only after 1918 – with the adoption of the party's new constitution including a commitment to socialism – that the Labour party clearly became the best vehicle for socialist advance in Britain.

A key, though problematic, part of the Labour coalition that developed in the 1920s was the British Roman Catholic community.[13] Catholics tended, on the whole, to be poor, and solidly working class. But they were also, prior to 1914, fairly staunchly Liberal. The reasons for this are not hard to see. First, the Conservatives were the party of the Protestant Church of England, the party which had resisted Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s. They were also the party of the Union with Ireland, and, increasingly obviously in the Edwardian period, the party which supported Irish Unionists against Home Rule. Conversely, the Liberals, especially since 1886, had been identified as the party which wanted to give Ireland a greater degree of autonomy under its Catholic majority. For the British Catholic population, such issues were, understandably enough, paramount. It can be no coincidence that, once the Irish question was apparently resolved in 1922 with the partition of that country into the Irish Free State and the rump Northern Ireland remaining part of the United Kingdom, Catholic voters turned to Labour. But before that time it was very difficult to draw them away from the Liberals.

What about the party's appeal to women? True, the proportion of women unionized was far lower than that of men; and women were still barred from the parliamentary franchise. But the party did not totally ignore them. Although women were typically treated as second-class members in trade unions, they could not be ignored entirely, as the leaders of the textile and footwear workers' unions found to their cost when their disgruntled female members formed rival bodies.[14] Women also played a significant role in the socialist societies. Alongside women prominent at the national level, like Katharine Bruce Glasier, were women at the grassroots, who could, and often did, play a significant role. For many, socialism was the appeal; for others, Labour seemed the most likely party to push for women's suffrage.[15] As pressure grew from women's groups for the vote and for greater rights in trade unions, so Labour came to take these issues more seriously. In 1911, when the government introduced a franchise reform bill which did not include women's suffrage, the Labour party conference declared that this, or any similar legislation, would be unacceptable. This led to greater co-operation between the Labour party and the moderate National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), and many Liberal women began to see Labour as the better bet on this issue. Ultimately, the NUWSS set up a fund to support Labour candidates in by-elections where there was no pro-suffrage candidate.[16] While it would be clearly absurd to see Labour as a 'women's party', it was at least starting to make wider connections with women and the organized women's movement than would have been possible through a narrowly trade union-oriented approach.

However, the fact that the Co-operative movement remained outside the sphere of Labour politics posed a continuing obstacle towards making those links still closer. There were many socialists, trade unionists and Labour supporters involved in the movement. But, try as they might, they were not able to get the Co-operative Union to agree to affiliate to the Labour party prior to 1914. Indeed, it was only in 1917, after a series of setbacks at the hands of Liberal-led governments during the war, that the Co-op moved to break its historic alliance with the Liberal party. Even then, it did not affiliate directly to the Labour party, but set up its own organisation, which later became the Co-operative party; and the latter did not reach a national agreement with Labour until 1927, although local deals had often been struck prior to that date.[17]

What is clear from the above was that Labour did make clear progress, overall, between 1900 and 1914. The result of this was an organisation which advanced very considerably over those fourteen years. In 1900, MacDonald had been elected secretary of the LRC partly because, having a wealthy wife, he had been one of the few people who could have afforded to do the job without payment. The LRC's organisation was virtually non-existent. Yet MacDonald showed great political ability over the next twelve years in developing the party's structures. When, in 1912, he resigned to concentrate on leading the PLP, he was succeeded by another able administrator, the Labour MP Arthur Henderson. The period between 1910 and 1914, in particular, saw significant developments. The staff at Head Office was increased, with the appointment of two national organizers. It was agreed in principle to establish a separate Scottish organization. And in London, severe difficulties were overcome finally in May 1914 with the formation of the London Labour party. Across the country, local trades councils became increasingly Labour dominated.[18] While it would be rash to argue that these changes led inexorably towards the party's post-war progress, they did signify that Labour would be pushing the Liberals for a greater role in the not-too-distant future.

This meant, in turn, a bitter debate within the Labour party over electoral policy: MacDonald and Henderson had a hard time in trying to maintain continued co-operation with the Liberals. Indeed, the question of how far the 'progressive alliance' would have been maintained in the next general election (due, probably, in 1915) has excited some historical debate. It is frequently argued that Labour would have fought that election as 'a truly independent party of the left and of the trade union movement', with anything up to 170 candidates.[19] There is evidence in favour of this argument. The Liberals were in trouble: the tactical advantages of some form of alliance were not, perhaps, as clear to Labour as they had been in 1903 or 1910. The Liberals' social reforming impulse, though not obliterated, had nonetheless been somewhat obscured by issues like Ireland, rearmament, strikes and women's suffrage: and this in turn meant that any alliance would have been harder for the Labour leadership to 'sell' to its increasingly restive followers. Labour's organization was much improved. On the whole, it does seem fair to say that even given disappointing by-election performances, the mere passage of time made it more assertive.

Yet there are also reasons to doubt whether, ultimately, MacDonald and Henderson would have stuck to their guns. Their bold talk of a broader front may well have been tactical: both to frighten the Liberals into conceding a better deal than last time, and also to appease their own more confrontational supporters. It was one thing to 'talk big' at a time when an election was still some way off. It might have been different if it had meant a real split threatening the imminent election of a protectionist, Unionist, rearming government under the perceivedly extreme Andrew Bonar Law and staffed by some of the very people who had cheered on every piece of anti-union judge-made law since the 1890s. We cannot know for sure, since, due to the First World War, the 1915 election never took place. But it does not seem wholly unlikely that, had matters taken their course, Labour and the Liberals would have renewed their pact for the next election, albeit with Labour being given, perhaps, a few more seats to fight.[20]

The period between 1900 and the outbreak of war in August 1914 saw Labour establish itself as a force in British politics. But it would be rash to claim that there was any very clear pattern to the movement of events. The idea that Labour was on the brink of second-party status seems untenable. The wilder hopes expressed in the aftermath of the 1906 election had not been borne out by events. Yet to argue that Labour was in some kind of decline also seems wide of the mark. It had developed its organization, forged deeper links with the expanding trade unions and new links with women, and acquired a more polished and effective leadership. However unsteadily, it had begun to establish a few real electoral strongholds. But it had not yet really established the kind of electoral coalition that would push it forward strongly in the short term. Labour was certainly not poised on the brink of displacing the Liberals as the main anti-Conservative party, but its strength had been consolidated. It would not have expanded as far as it ultimately did in so short a space of time had it not been for the First World War, but at least developments to 1914 meant that it was in a position to take advantage of the opportunities which that war was to offer.

NOTES

1. Among the major texts here, see T. Wilson, *The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914-1935* (1966); P. F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (1971); and D. Tanner, *Political Change and the Labour Party, 1900-1918* (1990).
2. The classic text here, now severely dated but worth looking at, is G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935). More robust arguments are put forward in R. I. McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (1990) and idem, *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910-1924* (1974), as well as in G. Bernstein *Liberalism and Liberal Politics in Edwardian England* (1986).

3. Labour Party, *Labour Party Foundation Conference and Annual Conference Reports, 1900-1905* (1967), p. 87.
4. Ibid., pp 210, 202.
5. McKibbin, *Evolution of the Labour Party,* pp. 1-2.
6. Tanner, *Political Change,* p. 321.
7. H. Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (4th edn., 1987), pp. 297-8, and H. Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (9th edn., 1991), p. 193.
8. R. Price and G. S. Bain, 'The Labour Force', in A. H. Halsey (ed.), *British Social Trends since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (2nd edn., 1988), p. 186.
9. See eg W. Morris, *News From Nowhere* (1891).
10. See E. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men* (1964), pp. 250-71.
11. G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (1971), p. 63.
12. See B. Holton, *British Syndicalism, 1900-14: Myths and Realities* (1976); A. Wright, *G. D. H. Cole and Socialist Democracy* (1981); and M Crick, *The History of the Social-Democratic Federation* (1994).
13. See eg A. Thorpe, *The British General Election of 1931* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 23-4, 248-9.
14. S. Boston, *Women Workers and the Trade Union Movement* (1980), pp. 73-8.
15. See, e.g., H. Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up* (1977); C. Collette, *For Labour and For Women: The Women's Labour league, 1906-1918* (Manchester, 1989); P. Thane, 'The Women of the British Labour Party and Feminism, 1906-1945', in H. L. Smith (ed.), *British Feminism in the Twentieth century* (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 124-43.
16. M. Pugh, 'Labour and Women's Suffrage', in K. D. Brown (ed.), The *First Labour Party, 1906-1914* (1985), pp. 233-53.
17. S. Pollard, 'The Foundation of the Co-operative Party', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds), *Essays in Labour History, 1882-1923* (1971), and T. Adams, 'The Foundation of the Co-operative Party Re-Considered', *International Review of Social History,* 32 (1987).
18. McKibbin, *Evolution,* p. 72.
19. C. Howard, 'MacDonald, Henderson, and the Outbreak of War, 1914', *Historical Journal,* 20 (1977), p. 872; McKibbin, *Evolution,* p. 76.
20. Tanner, *Political Change,* pp. 317-37.

The end of Laisser-Faire? Britain's passage to 'Modernity' in the late 19th century

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That the periodisation of history is a luxury historians allow themselves appears obvious when looking at the 'Age of Laisser-Faire' in Britain. A.V. Dicey, notoriously divided Britain's constitutional-legal history into 3 epochs – of which laisser-faire/individualism constitutes the middle one lasting from 1825 until 1870, according to Dicey, a rose between the two thorns of conservative paternalism and socialistic interventionism.[1] Subsequent historians have spent their time chiselling away at this interpretation; presenting the rise of state intervention in public life as gradual encroachment and listing laboriously the relevant legislative Acts; worrying over the exact dates dividing these periods; discovering elements of contradiction – collectivist legislation in the individualistic age or conversely, continuing reluctance to intervene in an age of acceptable state interference. In extreme cases, historians have denied the existence of one period or the other entirely.[2] Finally a more subtle appreciation of the organic and/or "androgynous" aspect of relations between state and individuals in British political life has emerged.[3]

Dicey's notion appears, then, at first sight slain. Unfortunately, this essay cannot say much more with regards to its final resting place. The idea that collectivism and individualism were contemporaneous and to some extent mutually dependent is a supposition which seems to be now generally accepted by those looking at both the politics of the period as well as its major thinkers. Even so, despite all the qualifiers added to Dicey, something of his Whiggish spirit lives on among historians. While attention has been paid overwhelmingly to the symptoms of change rather than the cause, British public life not only still appears to have gone through some vast transformation in its political culture, but it seems to have done so as a matter of course.

This essay will attempt to say something about the forces propelling this transition. What were they? What conditioned their application? How did change take place? Did this constitute an end to laisser-faire? Was (and is) this process inevitable? These are questions of such vast proportions that any answer here will be a sketchy affair and deserve academic retribution. Yet, with apologies made, the exercise seems worthwhile if it contributes towards clarity.

Nineteenth century political culture or public life, just like that of the twentieth, was a form of continuous public discourse. Its parameters, rather like those of any ordinary conversation albeit on a grand scale, revolved round issues seen as presently relevant to the speakers. Hence subjects came and went both as the environment of politics and as the speakers – and, in this case, the political institutions – changed. Obviously, there was nothing to stop activists and intellectuals ahead of (or behind) their time introducing topics into the debate. Yet for them to become successful rather than merely sporadic would need a general recognition of their importance, particularly on the part of those in whose hands power lay.[4]

Intervention was, in fact, seen as relevant throughout the period of laisser-faire. Traditional lines of political thought and continuity in participants' interests with the past meant that state moral paternalism continued in a muted form. So too did religious reasons for state intervention: in fact religious duty to the materially and morally impoverished in society increased rather than decreased with the swell in piety of the mid-Victorian era.[5] But it was not only continuity with the past that allowed the state to intervene. The forces of liberalisation at work in all spheres of life themselves often necessitated concomitant regulation. Even a glance at detailed lists of interventionist Acts[6] throughout the nineteenth century reveals that the need to secure efficiency, safety, health, justice and social stability all tempered the unfettering of social relations and, as Brebner notes, 'constitute appreciable qualifications of 'The Triumph of Laisser Faire".[7]

Even in the main philosophical works of the day, individualism never meant the eradication of collectivism. Bentham might have stimulated reform, liberalisation of trade,[8] and, notably, the meagre punitive provisions of the workhouse, yet utilitarianism contained significant collectivist dimensions in the realm of regulation and social control. J.S. Mill did, even in his early writings, foresee state intervention where it would be for the good of all and even outlined a limited concept of state welfare.[9] Even Smiles, whose *Self Help* became an icon of the age, wrote from the standpoint of a radical with an eye on creating cooperative answers to the issue of welfare and hardship,[10] and did not consciously aim to undermine people's responsibilities for the well-being of others.

Even so, it cannot be claimed that, until around 1870, British political culture was consciously interventionist. Despite all the above objections, political dialogue concentrated itself on the subject of laisser-faire and only ever conceived of state intervention in extremely limited terns. The words 'laisser-faire' might rarely be found in discussions of the time and rather a construct of historians, but the force of their logic was stamped indelibly on the structure of those discussions. Interventionism might arise by implication, but it did not occupy a central position in the debate and in people's minds as did laisser-faire, and, as Burns has commented, 'the strength of the mid-Victorians was in part derived from their disinclination for acute and delicate analysis, from their satisfaction with rough-hewn distinctions.'[11] In practical terms, intervention continued throughout, often to a considerable extent,[12] in an organic, low-profile fashion through regulation, local government, voluntarism etc. but it did not capture the attention of the political dialogue nor, for that matter, of activists and philosophers.

The fact that intervention of this sort was not an important issue of debate was simply part of a whole frame of reference peculiar to Britain in which laisser-faire received the most attention. For one thing, twentieth-century observers must remember that in many aspects of society there was no precedent for intervention by the state and therefore no expectation that it should act. The reproach of Victorian society for its callous and brutal disregard for poverty must be set against contemporary yardsticks. Then there was also a tradition of laisser-faire in economic matters leading back to the eighteenth century.[13] Another contributory factor was the reaction against the over-blown and 'rotten' wartime state after 1815 and the movement for reform, leading, ultimately, to the initiation of cheap government and Free Trade. This was then transported forth on the back of support for political and economic liberalisation coming from radicals, but more importantly, from the emerging force of the industrial middle classes in politics, especially after 1832. The priority given to laisser-faire in the political dialogue was closely bound up with Britain's process of industrialisation and 'modernisation' – if this term means the creation of an industrialised, free-market country integrated into an international economy.

But it was also bound up with superiority. Since 1815, Britain's political and economic life had evolved on the basis of superiority over other countries. In politics, the feeling of superiority and security effected the calls for state retrenchment and encouraged a tendency both towards isolation from the world as well as discussion on the basis of abstract universal principles in, for example, political economy. In the economy, superiority meant that state structures necessary for international competition, and all the paraphernalia of an economy linked to and affected by the outside, also remained undeveloped, and agreement in the decentralised pattern of industrialisation so far pursued in Britain largely remained.[14] In the wake of the abolition of the Corn Laws, the Peelite fiscal revolution and the perceived (even if not real) boom, laisser-faire's position in public debate changed only in terms of the fact that its benefits – especially in the economy – now seemed proven.

This concentration on laisser-faire in Britain's political dialogue stemmed therefore partly from pressing needs of the time and partly from a lack of any perceived necessity for anything else. Yet the factors of the environment and of perspective which underpinned this situation could not remain in suspended animation. On the one hand, some of the elements of intervention which had been there all along now augmented themselves. Religion emerged far stronger as a politically motivating force, with effects that were most obvious in the realms of education.[15] Creeping, organic extension of the state began to generate awareness where previously there had been none, to promote its own expansion through the generation of new demands to the public purse, to calm fears of expansion through expertise and sound internal reform, and to generally change the nature of political debate on the issue.[16] Extension of the roles of local government, for example, provided new models of intervention as well as a new class of people interested in promoting it.

Yet the development of local government was itself generated in part by the economic forces at work in Britain. Industrialisation had given rise to urbanisation with its new demands in terms of housing, health, transport, education, religion, poverty and work. The so-called 'Gas and Water Socialism' of city councils was simply one expression of the growing need to intervene for the collective good.[17] Industrialisation, connected as it was with demographic change, technological evolution in communication, mass employers and mass markets, had brought more people into a situation of mutual dependency than ever before. In this new world, collective ideas would be much more likely to occur.

One effect of the general rise in wages after 1850 was that the gap between those with wealth and those in poverty widened. The problem of the poor increasingly occupied the minds of those in a position to do something about it and intervention came from voluntary and religious organisations, cooperatives, trades unions and friendly societies, as well as from the state. Industrialisation however also brought with it the prospect of trade cycles and slumps in the international market. This created a learning process. Some businesses began to see that the welfare of their workers could actually be a safeguard to the stabilisation of industry. Those who had perpetrated the idea of a human's responsibility for his own welfare now had to recognise that this was not always possible in an industrial society. The trade crisis following the American Civil War and the Great Depression of the 1870s and 1880s pulled the rug from under the feet of laisser-faire doctrinaires.

The collective organisations spawned by rising wealth now also attracted large memberships as depression set in, leading to a reconfiguration of their role as more radical, campaigning institutions. The T.U.C., founded in 1868, achieved a membership of 1.5 million by 1890, launching its own Independent Labour Party in 1893, paving the way for the Labour Representation Committee in 1900.[18] As Labour emerged into political life, the restrictions of the old political dialogue became obvious. On the one hand this led to emerging radical forces of Labour, such as the Democratic Federation of 1881 (transformed in 1884 into the Social Democratic Federation).

It also began to change the nature of political dialogue itself. The electoral reforms of 1867 and 1885 were at least partly an answer to growing wealth and urbanisation.[19] Widened electorates, however, changed considerably the tone of the political debate, as Tocqueville had sensed it would.[20] It gave rise to worries about how to prevent what was feared would be a 'tyranny of the majority'.[21] People like J.S. Mill had begun to speak of educating new electorates about their responsibilities. The Fabian Society, founded in 1884, with its ideas of expert leadership in the collective interest of society was another answer related to that of Mill. The view of those in poverty as 'malingerers' and ideas such as 'less eligibility' in the workhouse could no longer be sustained in a political dialogue which now increasingly included Labour.[22] The Liberal and Conservative parties also restructured their policies to cope with the new forces, by incorporation and opposition. They began to develop mass organisations to activate voting and to give at least a semblance of contact with the masses.[23] They began to speak of 'programmes' of action and 'platforms' of debate, with an increasing emphasis on redistribution of income. Joseph Chamberlain's radical interventionism, stemming from his municipal background and an interest in 'Fair Trade' as opposed to Free Trade, and Lord Randolph Churchill's Tory Democracy, were both attempts to incorporate mass support into their respective parties. To a great extent, mass support had developed as a stick with which each party could beat each other.

In other words, domestic factors meant the vocabulary and frame of reference of political dialogue supporting laisser-faire had changed. Laisser-faire had been suitable to an era where middle classes were emerging and the most urgent need was liberalisation. Mass politics, however, would necessitate discussion relating to the interests of the masses. Though the dividing line was not obvious, Britain had simply moved from one stage in 'modernisation' to another.

The same could be said of Britain's international relations. Where previously Britain had been able to 'dine out on Waterloo',[24] political affairs from the Crimean War onwards demonstrated that Britain could no longer occupy a position of superior isolation. More significantly, Britain was now having to readjust to the presence of international competition on home and foreign markets, and the prospect of other, more powerful, economies than its own. Free Trade had not prevented slumps, nor had it secured in perpetuity foreign markets for British goods. Important sectors of production now moved from support for international Free Trade to a more assertive policy of 'Fair Trade'. Foreign models of intervention – such as Bismarck's – were studied closely for their success. 'National Efficiency', a movement encompassing a broad range of political groups, became the catchword for intervention in the cause of the British economy, for example in technical education, health insurance, labour exchanges and so on.[25] As foreign rivalry increased, and Darwin's arguments of competition became popular, calls from nationalist and imperialist quarters for more direction of society became louder – and particularly when Britain's military strength was called into question, as happened in the Boer War.[26]

Both the domestic and international fundaments of laisser-faire had been removed. Political dialogue towards the end of the nineteenth century was gradually transformed. An important role was played by activists – those thinkers, politicians, administrators social workers and publicists contributing to the debate and creating the new language and argumentation necessary under these circumstances. In some senses it is they who are credited with providing the new 'social narrative' necessary to an age of collectivist intervention by the state.[27] Like Bentham previously, social improvers of Toynbee Hall, Fabians, Progressives, the Balliol movement of T.H. Green, the Rainbow Circle of William Clarke and Murray Macdonald, New Liberals, Imperialists, all 'irradiated'[28] the political dialogue with their calls for intervention.[29] It would not be true to say that all of this added up to a strong united collectivist front, just as it would not be true to claim that laisser-faire was ever more than a disparate set of interests. Furthermore, just as the 'Age of Laisser-faire' never precluded intervention, the 'Age of Collectivism' did not completely do away with laisser-faire. Nevertheless, the focus of political dialogue had moved appreciably away from its concentration on laisser-faire by the end of Victoria's reign.

Britain's 'modernisation' now necessitated intervention for the collective good, but this did not automatically mean the state had to take on that role. There were, as we have seen, other possible answers to society's problems. Yet the state did take on this function, and the reasons for it doing so are important to note, because it marks British liberalism's developmental path off from that of other countries.

The first important point, though it may at first seem obvious, is that Parliament remained throughout, the focus of collectivist pressure. Those looking for intervention in the collective interest, just like those searching previously for laisser-faire, were notably supportive of action through legislation. This characteristic can be explained as a demonstration of the depths of Parliament's penetration of the public debate as sovereign authority. It marks Britain off from, for example, Germany, where bureaucracies took on the role of intervention, and where such matters were hence treated in a different tone from that in Britain. The T.U.C., Fabians and Labour were all generally positive towards Parliament as a means of changing things.[30] Also, existing political parties allowed themselves to be permeated by collectivist ideas. There was in both parties, a representative culture which made them at least partially responsive to electoral pressures. The two-party system meant they were open to new tools for competition. Also important were the ideologies of both parties, which meant an inclusive attitude could be often taken to new collectivist ideas. Tory 'One-Nationism'[31] was matched, if not out-stripped, by Liberal radicalism. Certainly, the Liberal party found many common platforms with collectivists over issues such as land-reform, wealth distribution etc., and a joint front with Labour was possible. In many respects, collectivist New Liberals did not view their theories as negating Old Liberal thought, but rather as extending it to the modern age.[32]

Britain's parliamentary form of government proved itself responsive to the new impulses of collectivism. Yet this did not by any means entail a sudden commitment to collectivist intervention as a general principle. For one thing, as we have seen, political dialogue had only shifted away from its laisser-faire precepts, not abandoned them altogether. There were also strong interests – represented by elements of the Conservative Party and Whiggish Liberals, continued Treasury parsimony, and even working class organs – in politics which continued to resist intervention, and many of the Liberal Party's initiatives supported by Labour, such as Lloyd George's People's Budget or National Health Insurance, were in fact the product of compromise and of hard-headed thinking rather than of any principle as such. Again, then, compromise and organic, pragmatic, and somewhat random extension of the state's functions was the result of this. Important inroads were made into the individual's life by the state before 1914, but many areas remained beyond governmental control.[33]

The state was, then, both interventionist and non-interventionist throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. 'Ages' of history are not useful tools for understanding this aspect of British politics. Yet in the political dialogue itself it is possible to discern a changing order of priorities. This headed the policies introduced by governments and the functioning of the state in an interventionist direction.

The fact that priorities did change has much to do with Britain's path towards 'modernity'. This idea may at first smack of Whiggish history, or even Marxian determinism. Yet all it is suggesting is that if an evolutionary path such as Britain's is chosen, with mass production and markets and the social changes this entails, this does seem to involve the development of collective interests. Collectivism, once industrialisation reaches a certain point, becomes a necessity. There is nothing to say that the role of moderator of collective interests has to be taken on by the state: states, it might be suggested, can devolve collective responsibilities as much as they can gain them, though it should be noted that collectivism is not removed, simply repositioned. All that can be claimed is that the Victorian state did take on that role because parliament and government proved itself sovereign and willing.

Beyond the thrust of 'modernity' behind the demise of laisser-faire, determinism has no part. The way the state converted political dialogue into reality remained a function of its particular historical experience, the nature of its institutions and the balance of interests within them. Britain's experience of laisser-faire and its demise remains unique.

NOTES

1. A.V. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England in the Nineteenth Century* (1905).
2. Altick, for example, claims that laisser-faire was a 'political and economic myth'. Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973), p. 252.
3. W. H. Greenleaf, *The British Political Tradition. The Rise of Collectivism* (1983); Jose Harris, *Private Lives. Public Spirit. A Social History of Britain 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1993).
4. The concept of constitutional ideas being closely related to the social and economic system of the day, redolent of Marx, is not a particularly revolutionary one in the literature on the period. A.H. Birch, *Representative and Responsible Government An Essay on the British Constitution* (1977), p. 83.
5. George L. Bernstein, *Liberalism and Liberal Politics in Edwardian England* (1986), p. 14; Gordon Marsden, *Victorian Values. Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth Century Society* (1990), p. 8.
6. Lists contained, for example, in J.B. Brebner, *Laisser-Faire and State Intervention in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1966), p. 260; Sidney Pollard, *Britain's Prime and Britain's Decline. The British Economy 1870-1914* (1989), p. 220.
7. Brebner, p. 262.
8. Lucy Brown, *The Board of Trade and the Free Trade Movement 1830-42* (Oxford, 1958).
9. Matt Cole, 'John Stuart Mill: Architect of Liberalism', *ICBH (Institute of Contemporary British History) Britain 1815-1867* (1994), pp. 101-3; Oskar Kurer, 'John Stuart Mill and the Welfare State', *History of Political Economy*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1991).
10. Asa Briggs, 'Samuel Smiles: The Gospel of Self-Help', Gordon Marsden, *Victorian Values. Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth Century Society* (1990), pp. 85-97.
11. W.L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise. A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (1964), p. 120.
12. Ashworth notes that spending on civil services rose from £5.3 million in 1840-1 to £12.0 million in 1870-71. William Ashworth, *An Economic History of England 1870-1939* (1972), p. 216.
13. Pollard, p. 221.
14. G.R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency. A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Oxford, 1971).
15. Paul Adelman, *The Rise of the Labour Party 1880-1945* (1986); Michael Bentley, *Politics without Democracy 1815-1914. Perception and Preoccupation in British Government* (1984), p. 210; E.J. Feuchtwanger, *Gladstone* (1989) p. 156.
16. Ashworth comments that in health, the mining industry, education etc., 'the experience of inspectors and administrators was probably the most potent of all influences on the development of policy, and its strength increased as the number of those professionally concerned increased': Ashworth, p. 220. See also: Eugene C. Black, *British Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (1970); Bentley B. Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain. The Origins of the Welfare State* (1966); Peter Stansky, *The Victorian Revolution. Government and Society in Victoria's Britain* (1973).
17. P.F. Clarke, 'The Progressive Movement in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 24 (1974), pp. 159-81; Derek Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England. The Structure of Politics in Victorian Cities* (Leicester, (1976), pp. 154-178.
18. Bentley, p. 254.
19. Mary Langan, *Crises in the British State 1880-1930* (1985), p. 21.
20. Greenleaf, pp. 22-3. See also: John Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System in Britain 1867-1914* (Oxford, 1990), p. 1-7.

21. G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (1962), pp. 231-2.
22. K.D. Brown, *The First Labour Party 1906-1914* (1985), pp. 184-192; Gilbert, p. 15.
23. Paul Adelman, *Gladstone, Disraeli and Later Victorian Politics* (1970).
24. C. Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power* (1972), p. 49.
25. Derek H. Aldcroft, *The Development of British Industry and Foreign Competition 1875-1914. Studies in Industrial Enterprise* (1968), pp. 1-25.
26. Ashworth, p. 222.
27. Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects. The Self and the Social in Nineteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1994).
28. S.E. Finer, 'The Transmission of Benthamite Ideas 1820-1850', G. Sutherland, *Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth-century Government,* (1972).
29. K.W.W. Aikin, *The Last Years of Liberal England 1900-1914* (1972), pp. 76-93; Robert Eccleshall, *British Liberalism. Liberal Thought from the 1640s to 1980s* (1986), pp. 38-180; Robert Eccleshall, *Political ideologies. An Introduction* (1994); H.V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics 1892-1914* (Cambridge, 1973); Malcolm Pearce and Geoffrey Stewart, *British Political History 1867-1990. Democracy and Decline* (1992), p45.
30. A.M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics 1884-1918* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 98-119; Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867-1939* (Oxford, 1982), p. 79; Martin Pugh, *State and Society. British Political and Social History 1870-1992* (1994); A.P. Tant, *British Government: The Triumph of Elitism. A Study of the British Political Tradition and its Major Challenges* (Aldershot, 1993).
31. Fforde's seminal work on the Conservative attitude to collectivist interventionism, though it seeks to give Thatcherite neo-liberalism historical roots in the nineteenth century, does not successfully dispel the fact that Conservatism in its mainstream form had an inclusive aspect to it: Fforde, 1990.
32. Freeden, 1990; G.R. Searle, *The Liberal Party. Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929* (1992).
33. Henry Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* (1968).

Italian Nationalism and Fascism

DR JOHN WHITTAM

Whatever the context nationalism is always difficult to define.[1] The reasons for this are well known. Although there are common features, each nationality has its own specific identity based largely on territory, culture and history. Moreover, the character of these various nationalisms can change over time and a further complication can arise if several different interpretations or tendencies co-exist within a particular nation in any given period. In the Italy of 1910, for example, cultural, liberal, conservative and integral nationalism were all represented, co-operating or competing with each other.[2] The integral nationalists, calling themselves *Nationalists* to assert their claim to represent the true interests of Italy, eventually joined the Fascist party. Unsurprisingly, nationalism was their strongest bond. No one can argue with Alexander De Grand's statement: 'The core of Fascism was little more than extreme nationalism.'.[3] So each Fascist movement which arose between the two World Wars pursued its own national agenda making it very hard to grasp any concept of a 'generic Fascism' or to predict a successful outcome for plans to promote 'Universal Fascism'.[4] Each movement or party contained a chaotic assemblage of different factions which their leaders had to control and unify. Italian Fascism was a prime example. Giuseppe Bottai, one of Mussolini's most intelligent supporters, wrote that in 1922 'the *Fascisms* marched on Rome ... In Rome we have to found Fascism.'.[5] He was referring to the assortment of ex-Socialists (like Mussolini himself), syndicalists, futurists and war veterans who had all been attracted to the movement. Writing in Bottai's journal *Critica Fascista*, Augusto De Marsanich deplored the absence of an 'organic and clearly defined central idea' and added 'there is no Fascist political doctrine other than the concept of the Nation hierarchically organised ... and this is revealed by the multiplicity of interpretations made by Fascists themselves so that each individual believes in his own type of Fascism.'.[6] The Nationalists, latecomers to the party, believed that they could supply the necessary cohesion.

Amidst all the drama of the March on Rome in October 1922 and the subsequent installation of the Mussolini government, the merger of the Fascist party with the Nationalists attracted scant attention. After protracted negotiations a Pact of Union had been signed in February 1923 and the formal fusion of the two parties had taken place in the presence of the Duce at the Palazzo Chigi on 7 March. From a parliamentary point of view this seemed an insignificant event; the addition of the ten ex-Nationalists only increased the number of Fascists to forty in a chamber of deputies of 535. From an ideological point of view it merely confirmed what most people suspected; Fascism and Nationalism possessed so many common characteristics that they were virtually identical or to use President Truman's homely expression, they were two halves of the same walnut. An astute observer like the historian Luigi Salvatorelli published a book in 1923 entitled *Nazionalfascismo* to describe this new phenomenon. However, because of the often crucial role played by the ex-Nationalists in the creation of the Fascist regime, it is important to emphasise their *distinctive* contributions and to question whether they were prepared or even required to be fully integrated within the party. Perhaps, like Mussolini himself, they used the party to secure positions of power and influence which would enable them to construct an authoritarian state structure. Unlike the majority of Fascists, they had a concise and realistic programme for the salvation of Italy which had been discussed and refined for more than a decade. Few in numbers compared with the growing Fascist hordes, the ex-Nationalists placed their trust in quality rather than quantity, brains rather than brawn.

The founders of the Italian Nationalist Association (ANI) in 1910 were firmly convinced that the time had come to create and elaborate a clearly defined '*political nationalism*'. This was to be very different from the nationalism of Mazzini and the Risorgimento period. Indeed, in his biography of Mazzini, Denis Mack Smith has convincingly argued that 'Mazzini was a patriot not a nationalist, and indeed condemned nationalism as absolutely wrong ... he used the word 'nationalist' in a pejorative sense to denote those chauvinists, xenophobes and imperialists who sought to encroach on the rights of other peoples'.[7] In fact the very tendencies which Mazzini criticised became the core elements in the new nationalism of the ANI. Liberal nationalism, together with the traditional nationalism of the conservative classes, had become irrelevant and were, in any case, far too amorphous to confront the sterner realities of the twentieth century.

The co-founders of the ANI, Enrico Corradini and Luigi Federzoni, were soon joined by Alfredo Rocco and it was this formidable trio who imposed their views on the other Nationalists and ten years later attempted the same tactic with Mussolini and the Fascists. Corradini's concept of Italy as a 'proletarian nation' won widespread attention and – as it was intended – aroused the interest of many socialists and syndicalists. His aim was to replace class conflict with international war, to convert Marxist workers into Italian nationalists.[8] Corradini's skilful mobilisation of public opinion which helped to launch the Libyan War of 1911-12, gave clear evidence of the feasibility of his programme of social imperialism. Whereas Corradini was an ideologue and a populist, Federzoni was more of a practical politician, a realist with wide contacts in business and military circles. He was also a dedicated imperialist and later he was to serve as colonial minister under Mussolini from 1922-24 and 1926-28. In 1913 he was the first Nationalist to be elected to parliament and he remained active in politics throughout the Fascist era, eventually voting against the Duce in the Fascist Grand Council meeting of July 1943. By 1914 Rocco had emerged as one of the great leaders of the ANI. With his legal background, Rocco was intent upon laying a firm juridical base for the new 'political nationalism' which, he claimed, had been created only in 1912.[9] His technical competence, his belief in the motto 'everything in its place and a place for everything' impressed Mussolini in the 1920s and Rocco's laws, after being appointed justice minister in 1925, provided the framework and the foundations of the authoritarian state.

Ably assisted by men like Francesco Coppola, Maurizio Maraviglia and Roberto Forges Davanzati, the three leading Nationalists drew up their programme for the regeneration of Italy.[10] Their answer to the challenge of mass politics was to strengthen the state apparatus by reducing or removing all constraints on the exercise of executive power. This would, of course, involve the drastic revision of the existing parliamentary system with its constitutional safeguards and its respect for all those freedoms associated with liberalism. They also had plans to incorporate proletarian institutions like trade unions and co-operatives within the state structure. Finally, they advocated colonialism and a strong foreign policy in the belief that nationalist aims vigorously pursued would resolve most of the divisions within Italian society. After 1911 they could express their views in their own newspaper the *Idea Nazionale* and after 1919 in the *Politica*, described by the authoritative historian of the ANI as the 'chief theoretical journal of the Nationalist movement'.[11] Ferociously anti-Socialist, the Nationalists also began to direct their fire on Giovanni Giolitti, the dominant political figure in Liberal Italy. They still hoped, however, to win the support of some of his right-wing followers and actively sought to win over Catholic opinion. They warmly welcomed into their movement all those groups who had enthusiastically backed the Libyan War and who had deplored Giolitti's failure to impose a more punitive peace in 1912.

When Europe went to war in 1914 the Nationalists were devastated by Italy's declaration of neutrality. Being monarchists, they had friends in court circles and being imperialists and militarists, they had staunch allies in the armed services and in Big Business. They had contacts in all intellectual establishments, in universities and schools, in editorial offices and among the professional classes – unless they happened to be Freemasons. There was, indeed, no mass support but Nationalists were self-consciously elitist. There were few members of the ANI who could be described as charismatic but they could perhaps turn to someone like Gabriele D'Annunzio or even a young firebrand from the ranks of the Socialists, Benito Mussolini.

The Nationalists played an important part in the interventionist movement, organising committees, lobbying intensively and helping to orchestrate pro-war demonstrations with strange allies like ex-Socialists, Futurists, syndicalists and even democrats. They shared in the triumph of 'Radiant May' in 1915 which led to Italy's entry into the war. They kept up a relentless campaign against the neutralists – the Socialists, the Giolittian Liberals and Catholics – and then condemned them as unpatriotic traitors during the war itself. The peace of 1919 intensified the divisions in Italian society. Lenin's seizure of power in Russia, the post-war economic problems and the emergence of the Socialists and Catholics as mass parties in the 1919 elections caused panic among the propertied classes. The Nationalists warned of the danger of a Bolshevik revolution in Italy. They also bitterly attacked the Rome governments for failing to secure better peace terms at the Paris conference, joining in the protests at the 'mutilated victory'. The parliamentary system was accused of failing to preserve law and order, prompting the Nationalists to create their own paramilitary force, the blueshirted *Sempre Pronti* even before Mussolini had organised his blackshirts.[12]

Although the war had increased national consciousness, the ANI itself seemed to become marginalised, having impressive leaders but few followers and their ambiguous attitude towards D'Annunzio's capture of Fiume reflected this as did their reaction to the rise of Fascism; it was both welcomed and feared. Despite their common aims, blueshirts and blackshirts frequently clashed and the Nationalists were suspicious of a movement which claimed, at first, to be republican, anti-clerical and hostile to bourgeois capitalism. Gradually however, Nationalists and Fascists began to realise that each needed the other. During the March on Rome in 1922 the ANI would have preferred to support a coalition government under Antonio Salandra but Victor Emmanuel III's willingness to appoint Mussolini to the premiership persuaded the Nationalists to accept this victory for Fascism.

Federzoni joined the new administration as colonial minister and other Nationalists were given minor posts. It was all rather humiliating and the danger of renewed conflict between Nationalists and Fascists still persisted, particularly in the south. Despite some misgivings on both sides, the decision was taken to merge the two movements, the excessive claims of the ANI being firmly rejected by the Duce. This birth of *Nazionalfascismo* signalled the Nationalists' determination to implement their policies from *within* the Fascist party. Their opportunity to do so came unexpectedly a year later. The murder of a leading Socialist Giacomo Matteotti in the summer of 1924 resulted in a major crisis. The Duce was believed to be implicated and he came under attack from both liberal parliamentarians and from extremists in his own party who were clamouring for a 'second wave', a genuine Fascist Revolution.[13] Federzoni and the ex-Nationalists played a crucial role in averting the downfall of the Duce. As in 1922, they hesitated and intrigued but finally decided that Mussolini was indispensable. They knew that they represented the 'respectable element' in Fascism so their support would be invaluable for the survival of the Duce; they would be able to rally the moderates who were uncertain about the violent lawlessness inherent in Fascism but even more apprehensive about possible alternatives. Mussolini's appointment of Federzoni as Minister of the Interior was, therefore, a shrewd move. A few months later, in January 1925, Rocco became Minister of Justice. Placing these ex-Nationalists in such key positions infuriated the *ras*, the Fascist bosses whose blackshirts had terrorised the opponents of Mussolini – and sometimes the Duce himself – since the early 1920s. Mussolini still needed to placate both the moderates and the fascist extremists and revealed his political genius by granting concessions to both. Appointing Federzoni and Rocco guaranteed that law and order would henceforth be enforced through the operation of the state machinery and bringing in Roberto Farinacci, the intemperate *ras* of Cremona, to act as party secretary appeased the Fascist extremists. In fact, Farinacci's remit was to discipline the party and eventually subordinate it to state control, a task which was completed by Augusto Turati after Farinacci's dismissal in March 1926.[14]

After the Duce's famous speech of 3 January 1925, accepting responsibility for all the crimes of Fascism and announcing his intention to establish an authoritarian regime, Federzoni and Rocco set about implementing the old Nationalist programme for strengthening state institutions. Press laws were activated and extended to eliminate opposition newspapers and local government elections were abolished; centrally appointed *podestà* replaced elected mayors and councillors.[15] A series of attempts to assassinate the Duce were exploited to increase the powers of the executive and to introduce repressive legislation which converted Liberal Italy into a police state. The Law on the Powers of the Head of Government in December 1925 removed Mussolini's accountability to parliament and ministers. Laws against secret societies were promulgated; indeed, by the end of 1926 all non-Fascist political parties were also dissolved. Italy had become a one-party state but the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) was being rapidly depoliticised and subordinated to the state. Federzoni welcomed the appointment of Arturo Bocchini as chief of police in September 1926. Bocchini, a non-Fascist, career civil servant, was placed in charge of all security arrangements and remained in office until his death in 1940. Police powers were extended to include house arrest and confinement to remote villages for all suspected opponents of the regime. The Law for the Defence of the State introduced the death penalty, the Special Tribunal staffed by army and militia officers and the secret police organisation known as OVRA (the Voluntary Organisation for Anti-Fascist Repression). These were all rounded off by Rocco's penal code of 1931.

Rocco was delighted by the appointment as Minister of Finance of Count Giuseppe Volpi who replaced the free trader Alberto De Stefani in 1925. Rocco had long advocated a more protectionist approach to the economy, had kept in close touch with the Confederation of Industrialists (*Confindustria*), and was determined to bring trade unions under state control. The Palazzo Vidoni Pact of October 1925 confirmed *Confindustria* as the sole negotiating organ of the employers and Edmondo Rossoni's confederation of Fascist unions as representing the labour force. Non-Fascist trade unions were weakened and then driven out of existence. In April 1926 Rocco made the unions legal agents of the state, forbade strike action, instituted labour courts to impose compulsory arbitration and began to construct his version of the 'corporativist state'. Corporations were defined as the functional units which represented each branch or category of production. Rocco saw them as the key elements in the new productivist, post-liberal Italy.[16] Rossoni, whose 'integral corporativism' reflected the syndicalist tradition within Fascism, was regarded with increasing suspicion by Mussolini, Rocco, Giuseppe Bottai and, of course, *Confindustria*. His views were dismissed and his trade union confederation was broken up in 1928. Rocco and Bottai, who together drafted the Charter of Labour in 1927 – which was, in fact, another triumph for the employers – were keen to extend corporativist ideas beyond the economic sphere and into the political and social life of the nation. Rocco played a major part in the reform of the Chamber of Deputies after 1928, supporting the view that parliament should represent occupational groups (corporations) rather than territorial units. This process was only completed in 1939, five years after his death, when the lower house was renamed the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations. But although a Ministry of Corporations had been set up in 1926 (first under Mussolini and then Bottai), a National Council of Corporations in 1930 and the legalisation of twenty-two distinct corporations had been announced in 1934, the Corporative State remained a concept rather than a reality, a useful propaganda slogan for Mussolini to portray the novelty and modernity of his regime.

On two occasions – despite their ambivalence – in 1922 and 1924 the Nationalists played a crucial role in Mussolini's rise to power. More than any other group they had provided the ideas and the machinery for the consolidation of the Fascist regime. Their assistance in removing constraints from the exercise of executive power enabled the 'cult of the Duce' to develop so that Mussolini could emerge as the dictator of an authoritarian regime, largely independent of both party and state and able to play off one against the other. Ironically, the Nationalists also helped to undermine and destroy Fascist Italy. Their contribution to the survival of the monarchy, the army and *Confindustria* as more or less autonomous interest groups was to prove significant in 1943 when Victor Emmanuel, Marshal Badoglio and industrialists turned against Mussolini. Their support for conservative Roman Catholicism and the approval they gave to the Lateran Pacts with the Vatican in 1929 guaranteed the continued existence of a non-Fascist counter-culture and ideology.[17] In all this, of course, they were weakening the validity of their claim to represent the main integrating force in Italian life. Equally important, their nationalist rhetoric with its constant demands for an expansionist colonial policy and an aggressive foreign policy, helped to encourage the Duce to invade Ethiopia, intervene in Spain and annex Albania. Alienation of Britain and France reduced Mussolini's foreign policy options and led him towards an ever closer relationship with Nazi Germany. Both repelled and fascinated by Hitler's Third Reich, the Duce responded to the challenge of Nazi dynamism by trying to force Italians to 'believe, obey, fight', to regard themselves as a nation of warriors – even if privately he believed them to be a 'nation of sheep'.[18] The Rome-Berlin Axis of 1936 led to the Pact of Steel in 1939 and ultimately to Italy's entry into the Second World War as Germany's ally in 1940. The war revealed Italy's unpreparedness for any prolonged conflict. Support for an increasingly unpopular war fell away. Nationalists complained that this was 'Hitler's War' but failed to admit the part they had played in bringing it about. Federzoni was a great survivor – Corradini, Rocco and Forges Davanzati had died in 1931, 1935 and 1936 respectively – so it was perhaps fitting that in July 1943 he once again was at the centre of political intrigue. He was in contact with the court and the army; as a senator from 1928 to 1943 he had kept in touch with most conservative notables including bankers and industrialists; as President of the Royal Academy from 1938 to 1943 he knew the entire cultural and not so cultural establishment. Most importantly he still acted as a kind of mentor to leading Fascists like Dino Grandi and Bottai and even the Duce's son-in-law Count Ciano was prepared to take his advice. Grandi's motion in the Fascist Grand Council which requested Mussolini to step down on 25 July 1943 was approved and supported by Federzoni.[19] Federzoni escaped after the arrest of Mussolini, was condemned to death *in absentia* by the Italian Social Republic after the Germans re-established the Duce in a puppet state in northern Italy and then sentenced to life imprisonment by the post-war Italian Republic but amnestied in 1947. He accepted the chair in Italian literature at Coimbra University in Portugal. At the age of eighty-eight he died in Rome in 1967, an articulate Nationalist to the very end.

NOTES

1. A good start can be made by reading the Chapters on Fascism and Nationalism in A. Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies* (2nd. ed., Oxford, 1995) before moving on to E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1991), A. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (2nd. ed., London, 1983) and E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1983).
2. Integral nationalism, often associated with Charles Maurras and Action Français, is an exclusive, xenophobic nationalism searching for the enemy within as well as the enemy without.
3. A. De Grand, *Italian Fascism* (2nd. ed., Nebraska, 1989), p144.
4. See M. Ledeen, *Universal Fascism* (New York, 1972).
5. *Critica Fascista,* 15 December 1923.
6. J. Whittam, *Fascist Italy* (Manchester, 1995), p.2.

7. D. Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven, 1994), p.12.

8. Whittam, *Fascist Italy,* document 5, pp. 149-150.

9. F. Gaeta, *Nazionalismo Italiano* (Naples, 1965), p.45.

10. For brief biographies and indeed all aspects of the Fascist period consult P. Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Westport, 1982).

11. A. De Grand, *The Italian Nationalist Association and the Rise of Fascism in Italy* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1978), p.28.

12. Ibid., pp. 96-97. Dino Zanetti organised the *Sempre Pronti* in February 1919.

13. The best account of the Matteotti crisis is chapter 10 in A. Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power* (London, 1973).

14. For Farinacci a useful biography is H. Fornari, *Mussolini's Gadfly* (Nashville, 1971). For Turati see the entry by P. Morgan in F. Cordova, ed., *Uomini e Volti de Fascismo* (Rome, 1980).

15. The authoritative work on Fascist institutions is still A. Aquarone, *L'Organizzazione dello Stato Totalitario* (Turin, 1965).

16. Whittam, *Fascist Italy,* p.63 and document 11 (pp. 158-9) where Rocco gives his report on the Corporations Bill of January 1934.

17. There is excellent coverage in J. Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism 1929-1932* (Cambridge, 1985).

18. D. Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (London, 1976), pp. 190-192.

19. Whittam, *Fascist Italy,* document 17, pp. 166-167. This is a translated extract from L. Federzoni, *Italia di Ieri per la Storia di Domani* (Milan, 1967).

The Russian Civil War: What the Soviet Archives Tell Us

DR GEOFFREY SWAIN

The Course of the War: a Summary

The Russian Civil War began the moment the Bolsheviks seized power on the night of 24-25 October 1917. Within a week, forces loyal to Kerensky's Provisional Government tried to wrest power from the Bolsheviks at the Battle of Pulkovo Heights on the outskirts of Petrograd. Few, however, were keen for a fight and Lenin's promise to hold elections to the Constituent Assembly and form a coalition administration with the Left SRs was sufficient to restore relative calm. In the run-up to the opening of the Constituent Assembly, the only forces committed to war were the future White generals, those associated with General Lavr Kornilov's attempt to seize power from Kerensky in August 1917; by December 1917 these had gathered on the river Don, but by February 1918 they were in full retreat to a safe area in the distant Kuban. These first armed incidents, however, did point to the two very different groups which were prepared to take up arms against the Bolshevik regime. Kerensky's supporters were SRs, fellow socialists committed to Russia's democratic revolution of February 1917; the White generals on the Don had no time for democracy, and while not all of them wanted to restore the Tsar's autocratic monarchy, all wanted a dictatorial regime of some sort.

Over the summer of 1918 it was the Bolsheviks' democratic opponents who were the first to take up arms. As democrats, the SRs were committed to the Constituent Assembly. Although infuriated by the Bolshevik decision to close the Assembly down after just one session on 5 January 1918, the SRs did not respond at once for they had reason to believe it might be recalled in the not to distant future. By the middle of May 1918, however, they had concluded that the recall of the Constituent Assembly was highly unlikely and decided to prepare for an armed insurrection to overthrow the Bolsheviks by force. Hardly had those preparations begun than the Allied Czechoslovak Legion, for its own reasons, turned against the Bolsheviks and rallied to the SR cause; in a matter of days in June 1918, the Bolsheviks lost control of most of the Volga basin and Siberia; the Civil War proper had begun.

This stage of the Civil War was a war between socialists. The SRs established their own version of socialism in the areas they controlled and created a People's Army to defend it; the Bolsheviks defended their version of socialism with their Red Army. In August 1918 it looked as if the People's Army would triumph, particularly when Kazan fell on 8 August 1918. The Bolsheviks, however, lived to fight another day. Despite signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany in March 1918, relations with Germany had remained so tense that the bulk of the Red Army had continued to be stationed in the west in case the Germans were tempted to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. However, on 10 August 1918 Lenin initialled a trade treaty with Germany and, confident that his relations with the Germans were now good, he moved as many troops as he possibly could to attack the People's Army and recapture Kazan in early September 1918. The People's Army was only just beginning to stage a comeback in November 1918 when the nature of the Civil War was changed forever.

On 18 November 1918 Admiral Kolchak seized power from the democratic administration established by Lenin's socialist opponents and established a military dictatorship in Siberia; from then on the Civil War would be a war between Red Bolsheviks and White Generals, a war between progress and reaction. At approximately the same time, the ending of the First World War meant that Allied intervention in the Civil War could be channelled through the Black Sea rather than arriving in Russia through the Arctic north or Far East. Thus when fighting resumed in spring 1919 it was the southern Russian front, where General Denikin had emerged as the dominant figure, which would be important in a way that it had never been in 1918.

The year 1919 saw the most dramatic of the fighting. It began with Kolchak's advance from Siberia in March, retaking Ufa and advancing to within less than a hundred miles of the Volga; but a Red counter-offensive started in April and by June Ufa had again changed hands. Although Kolchak staged a counter-offensive in September 1919, this failed and by November 1919 his capital at Omsk had fallen to the Bolsheviks. At the very moment Kolchak began to retreat, Denikin began to make a dramatic advance from the south. The main focus of the Red Army had been the battle against Kolchak in the East, and the secondary campaign against Denikin had not been going well in the spring of 1919; repeated efforts in March, April and May 1919 had not resulted in the Bolsheviks extending their position on the Donets river. Then, in the most dramatic counter-attack, Denikin broke out and advanced within three weeks to Kharkov and beyond; on 30 June Tsaritsyn fell. As Denikin's troops advanced up the Volga, he made desperate efforts to co-ordinate activity with the retreating forces of Kolchak.

Denikin's failure to effect any substantive liaison with Kolchak saved the day for the Bolsheviks, but it was a close call. Their first counter-offensive of 15 August was unsuccessful, and although Denikin's advance had been temporarily stopped, he was able to launch a further offensive in September which captured Kursk and Orel, only 120 miles from the arsenal town of Tula and 250 miles from Moscow. At the same moment General Iudenich launched an assault on Petrograd from Estonia and by 21 October 1919 had reached the suburbs. In October 1919 the days of Lenin's regime really did seem to be numbered. However, the tide did turn. On 20 October 1919, the Red Army re-took Orel; Trotsky's inspired counter attack meant that by mid November Iudenich was back in Estonia; and on 24 October 1919 the Red Cavalry of General Budyenny recaptured Voronezh and forced Denikin's army to begin an ever more desperate retreat until it was back beyond the Don in the first week of 1920.

By spring 1920 both Kolchak and Denikin had been defeated and the Civil War seemed over. Then, at the end of April 1920 the Polish Army invaded Russia and the two countries were embroiled in a war that was to last until an armistice was signed on 12 October. The fighting enabled the remnants of Denikin's forces to evacuate the Kuban and regroup in the Crimea, from which General Wrangel launched a new assault on the Bolshevik regime in June 1920. While the Polish war was still going on, the Bolsheviks could do little but try to confine Wrangel's activities to the region immediately north of the Crimean peninsula and prevent any link up between Wrangel and the Poles; this they did successfully, for the two armies were never less than 250 miles apart. Even before the Polish War was over, the Red Army began to concentrate on Wrangel, though the decisive fighting occurred at the end of October and during the first fortnight of November; Wrangel set sail from Sevastapol into exile on 14 November 1920.

What new archival material suggests

There is one thing on which all historians of the Russian Civil War are agreed: that it was the formative experience of the Soviet state. To cite a recent history of the war, Bruce Lincoln's *Red Victory* "the Bolsheviks' desperate struggle to survive during the Russian Civil War shaped the Soviet system of government and dictated its future course".[1] But while all historians would say amen to that, the opening up of the archives in recent years has meant that it has been possible to probe a little more deeply into precisely what sort of formative experience this was.

The Russian Civil War was one of those strange topics on which there was a large amount of agreement between both Western and Soviet scholars. To quote Lincoln once again:

> Only by placing all human and natural resources within reach at the service of a government that spoke in the name of the people but acted in the interest of the Communist Party did Lenin and his comrades defeat their enemies. These included soldiers from fourteen countries, the armed forces of nearly a dozen national groups that struggled to establish independent governments upon the lands that once had been part of the Russian Empire, and a half-dozen White armies that formed on Russia's frontiers between 1918 and 1920. To comprehend the Soviet Union of today, it is important to understand how the Bolsheviks triumphed against such crushing odds and how that struggle shaped their vision of the future.[2]

This emphasis on a Bolshevik victory being achieved against the odds, with stress being given to the Communist Party's mobilization skills and the sheer scale of the interventionist forces confronted, could have come from the pen of many a Soviet historian. Following this approach, a picture is created of a heroic epoch and a heroism which somehow justifies the brutality of the Bolsheviks' dictatorial regime. The message seems to be, from Western and Soviet historians alike, the Bolsheviks were ruthless, but they were more or less forced into it by foreign intervention.

The first important step in debunking this myth was taken by Evan Mawdsley of Glasgow University in his definitive study *The Russian Civil War*. Without access to the then closed Soviet Archives, he was able to show that foreign intervention was always half-hearted and militarily ineffective, and that the Bolsheviks won, not by struggling against the military odds, but because the Red Army was far bigger than the various White Armies it faced. He also reminded us that this was a war, not so much won by the Reds as lost by the Whites, who never developed the sort of social policies on the crucial questions of land and labour that could have persuaded the mass of Russians to support them. Most Russians believed, rightly, that the Whites were simply in favour of restoring the old order.[3]

The opening of the archives in Russia since the days of Mikhail Gorbachev has enabled the process of myth debunking to go much further. Perhaps the most fundamental area of reassessment affects the very first phase of the war, an issue explored in my own *Origins of the Russian Civil War*[4]. It always suited the Soviet regime to suggest that the Civil War was a war between progress, represented by the Bolsheviks, and reaction, represented by the Whites and their supporters, the imperialist states of Europe. To a quite extraordinary degree western historians went along with this: the so-called "democratic" phase of the Civil War – from May to November 1918 – was hardly considered; Western historians seemed as keen as their Soviet counter-parts to suggest that the only forces really strong enough to resist the Bolsheviks were the White Generals.

However, as outlined above, the Civil War began as a struggle between the Bolsheviks and the democratic forces which had won the Constituent Assembly elections. They took up arms in May 1918 when the Bolsheviks voted to exclude them from the soviets, and by the autumn of 1918, together with the Czechoslovak Legion which supported them, had established an alternative "moderate socialist" regime on the Volga and in the Urals.[5] Soviet historians have passed over in silence this "democratic counter-revolution" – to use the phrase of one of its most active supporters, I V Maiskii, later Soviet ambassador to Great Britain – while Western historians have allowed their judgement to be swayed by the memoirs of White Generals like A I Denikin, and have concluded that in the autumn of 1918 the SRs had established a regime of sandle-wearing wind-bags, no more able to organise a military campaign against the Bolsheviks than Kerensky had been in 1917.

The truth is that these democratic opponents of the Bolsheviks created an effective state structure and a disciplined army which very nearly defeated the Bolsheviks in August 1918 and, despite set-backs in September, was staging a come-back in November 1918 when Admiral

Kolchak carried out his coup. What is more, it was these democratic forces in Russia which the Western Allies, and Britain in particular, first "intervened" to support. Contrary to decades of Soviet propaganda, the British had no interest in installing Kolchak's dictatorship and were committed to supporting the victors in the Constituent Assembly elections. In fact British representatives did everything they could to prevent would-be military dictators taking over in Russia in the autumn of 1918. When the First World War was over and the British Government had to justify further military involvement in Russia, the prime consideration was the fate of Russian democrats in the face of Bolshevik terrorism.[6]

In autumn 1918 Bolshevik terrorism had a very specific meaning. The presence of Bruce Lockhart in Moscow throughout the spring, summer and autumn of 1918 meant that the British knew perfectly well how the Bolsheviks kept control. Between March and May 1918 the British had been optimistic that Lenin might reopen the Eastern Front and bring Russia back into the war with Germany. In early May Lenin rejected the idea of a British alliance, and turned as he had done in the winter, to Germany. The Treaty of Brest Litovsk, signed in March 1918, had given him a breathing space; in May 1918 he decided to extend that breathing space by negotiating a trade agreement with Germany. When that was initialled on 10 August 1918 he was free, as outlined above, to move the Red Army from the west to the east to attack the People's Army of those forces loyal to the Constituent Assembly; the recapture of Kazan in September 1918 was a crucial victory for Lenin and a terrible set-back for his democratic opponents. At the same time behind the front lines, Lenin launched the Red terror, which claimed at least 10,000 victims. Relying on German support to institute a reign of terror – that was how the British Government interpreted Lenin's actions when it took the decision to continue intervening in Russian affairs.[7]

Retrieving the history of the "democratic" phase of the civil war; something that only really became possible once the Soviet archives were opened, has reminded us that the Bolshevik use of terror in the Russian Civil War was not a product of imperialist intervention, but a logical consequence of Lenin's refusal to abide by the verdict of the Constituent Assembly elections. It also reminds us, as contemporary British officials noted wryly, that the first victims of the terror were not representatives of the old order but other socialists. Put simply, if a little crudely, Bolshevik brutality preceded foreign intervention.

The subsequent fate of the Bolsheviks' democratic opponents is part of the subject matter of Vladimir Brovkin's *Behind the Front Lines of the Civil War*, a book which traces the fate of political parties in both Red and White controlled areas and which has benefitted from recent access to the archives. Among the many insights offered by this study is confirmation that, when the chips were down, Lenin preferred to rely on the Red Army and the Cheka. Kolchak's coup in Siberia changed the whole nature of the Civil War. A majority of SR and Menshevik groups decided to abandon the struggle against the Bolsheviks and join them in driving out Kolchak and the Whites. For a while, during the spring of 1919, a sort of "pluralism" returned to Bolshevik Russia, with the Mensheviks and most SRs being allowed to return to the soviets. Could a coalition of democratic forces be brought together to counter Kolchak? Some Bolsheviks certainly thought this possible, but Lenin noted how talks to other socialist political parties coincided with a strike wave which rocked Petersburg and other industrial regions in March 1919. By April 1919 all talk of "socialist pluralism" was in the past and Lenin was relying on the Red Army and the Cheka, as he had done in August and September 1918.[8]

Archival access has also helped explain one of the most dramatic incidents of the Civil War, Denikin's march on Moscow. Once Kolchak had consolidated himself in Siberia, he began an advance towards the west. By March 1919 he had retaken Ufa and was only a hundred miles short of the Volga. A Red counter-offensive began in April and made steady progress; by June 1919 Ufa was again in Bolshevik hands and the Civil War seemed to be almost over. That it was not over, indeed, that in autumn 1919 the Bolsheviks stood at the brink of defeat, has traditionally been put down to the generalship of Denikin and the foreign support he received. In reality, the whole episode was the result of a Bolshevik self-inflicted wound. It was due to the Bolsheviks sectarian policies towards the rural population in general and the cossack population in particular. Documents assembled by Brian Murphy, to be published in the forthcoming collection V P Butt, A B Murphy, N A Myshov and G R Swain *The Russian Civil War: Documents from the Soviet Archives*[9], make clear that the key to Denikin's success was the cossack rebellion against Soviet rule, and that the rebellion itself was the product of the sort of blinkered and short sighted policies towards peasants which would later be seen in the collectivisation campaigns of the 1930s.

When it came to administering the territory they controlled, the Bolsheviks were hamstrung by the false analogy Lenin made between class struggle in the town and class struggle in the countryside. Bolsheviks believed that the countryside was riven with class antagonism, and that the poor peasants were avidly looking for a working class ally in their struggle against the rich peasants or "rural bourgeoisie". This theory had been used to justify the abolition of village soviets in summer 1918 – elections to these soviets were constantly being won by the SR Party – and their substitution by "committees of poor peasants" appointed by the Bolsheviks. That most villages experienced no class antagonism, and wanted to administer themselves through their traditional democratic structures was beyond Bolshevik comprehension.

These issues came to a head in the Don, where, over winter 1918-19, the Don cossacks had volontarily abandoned any involvement with the anti-Bolshevik struggle and asked in return only that they be left in peace. The Bolsheviks welcomed this decision initially, since it kept Denikin isolated in the far south, but then decided to introduce a series of radical social measures for the "decossackisation" of the region. This involved dissolving not only traditional cossack assemblies but cossack soviets as well; it meant dividing the Don territory into new administrative units based around Tsaritsyn and other urban centres; and it meant encouraging "class war" between the poorer villages in the north and the richer villages in the south; finally, it meant that land vacated by the "decossackised" cossacks could be settled by non-cossacks new comers. To add insult to injury, even though the cossacks had come over to the Reds of their own accord, it was decided that they were to be disarmed. In March 1919 the cossacks rose up *en masse*; the Red Army's response was to make matters even worse. In a desperate attempt to keep control of the region, a dreadful series of massacres occurred. In the end the Red Army was driven from the region and Denikin could leapfrog over the Don region and begin his spectacular advance.[10]

The same document collection by Butt et al. makes clear that one reason why the Bolshevik regime did not succumb to Denikin in autumn 1919 was that by then, it had softened its attitude to representatives of the rural population. In particular it came to an understanding with the anarchist leader in the Ukraine, Nestor Makhno. The sticking point in earlier attempts at co-operation between the Red Army and these Green forces in spring 1919 had been Makhno's refusal to recognise the concept of "committees of poor peasants" and his insistence on organising his own congress of village soviets. With Moscow itself under threat, the Bolsheviks were happy in the summer and autumn of 1919 to see Makhno as an ally, whose operations behind Denikin's lines meant that the latter's eventual retreat was almost as dramatic as his advance. However, in the longer term, Lenin found it as impossible to make political concessions to Makhno as he had done in spring 1919 to incorporate the SRs into a new political pluralism.[11]

In his study, Evan Mawdsley suggested that as many men may have died in the Civil War as a result of illness as died in the fighting, and the documents in the Butt et al. collection more than confirm this; the effects of typhus in particular was devastating on the southern front, where one report talked of a "dying army" without doctors and medicines.[12] There is little heroism in dying of typhus, and the company and regiment reports now available challenge the heroic interpretation of the war. Reports from commanders make clear how poorly equipped the soldiers were. As a consequence morale was usually low, and desertion a perennial problem even when the dramatic advances of 1919 were under way. The much vaunted political commissar system may have worked at the higher level of the Red Army, but failed conspicuously further down the military hierarchy; political officers had very little opportunity to undertake political educational work. The one element of political work which did thrive, however, was political terror: this could strike at any moment and at any level. Documents in the Butt et al. collection show how the Red Army's Commander-in-Chief had, on occasion, to ask why one of his leading subordinates had been summarily arrested, while at the opposite end of the scale local commissars kept detailed records of arrests and executions, while operating networks of informers.[13]

For all the destruction of the heroic image of the Russian Civil War inherent in much of the documentary material which has recently come to light, an element of heroism remains. The Bolsheviks had clear ideas about the society they wanted to achieve. In January 1918, when Lenin first resolved to sign the Treaty of Brest Litovsk with Germany, he justified the decision to himself on the grounds that he would have to settle with the domestic counter-revolution before turning to the problem of a European revolution.[14] By the end of 1919, however, the struggle against the domestic counter-revolution appeared over, and the Bolsheviks could turn their mind to "building socialism", something not necessarily confined to the borders of Russia. Documents gathered by Nikolai Myshov for the Butt et al. collection show just what sort of economy the Bolshevik leaders first envisaged for of their country in the spring of 1919 before they were blown off course by the Polish War and Wrangel's offensive and the New Economic Policy was forced upon them.

What the Bolsheviks called for was a series of "labour armies" which would be involved with almost every element of the economy, and which would become active participants at every level of economic planning. The rhetoric of the time stressed continually the advantages this system of planned economic development would have over the old free market of capitalism; the labour armies were to be the first step to a socialist organisation of the economy, a system which would combine the public ownership of industry with the requisitioning of grain in the countryside. At the same time, the deliberate confusion between the command of labour armies and military armies, served to highlight how the Soviet state was always to be on military stand-by. The assumption, however, was not that this would be defence against a Polish attack, but on the contrary, that the further advance of socialism was just around the corner. In spring 1920 the Bolsheviks were still optimistic that the prospects for revolution in Germany were good and that the "peoples of the east" were about to rise up; the labour armies stood ready at any moment to take up arms for this purpose.[15]

Recent research on the Civil War, then, has done much to show how right Bruce Lincoln was to argue that the Civil War created the Soviet Union in the form that it existed for some seventy years. To understand what the Soviet Union was, one really does have to understand what happened during the trauma of the Civil War. However, there is far more to understanding the Civil War than accepting the propaganda version of a Bolshevik David triumphing over an interventionist Goliath. Understanding the Civil War is all about understanding the Bolsheviks' contempt for democracy, their institutionalisation of terror, their fear of their own rural population, their commitment to economic recovery through planning, and even their elusive dream of world revolution. All these things, more usually associated with Stalin and the 1930s, had their origins in the Civil War itself; Stalin merely revived them when he abandoned NEP. In this sense, then, to understand the Soviet Union you have to understand the Civil War.

NOTES

1. B Lincoln *Red Victory* (Cardinal, 1991), p. 12.
2. Lincoln *Red Victory*, p. 12.
3. E Mawdsley *The Russian Civil War* (Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 272-290.
4. G R Swain *The Origins of the Russian Civil War* (Longman, 1996)
5. Swain *Origins*, pp. 186-218
6. Swain *Origins*, p. 250.
7. Swain *Origins*, p. 252.
8. V N Brovkin *Behind the Front Lines of the Civil War* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 25-56.
9. V P Butt, A B Murphy, N A Myshov and G R Swain *The Russian Civil War: Documents from the Soviet Archives* (Macmillan, 1996)
10. A B Murphy, 'The Don Rebellion March-June 1919' *Revolutionary Russia* 1993 No. 2, pp. 315-350.
11. Butt et al., *Documents*, Part III The Kaleidoscope of War.
12. Butt et al., *Documents*, Part II The Don Rebellion.
13. Butt et al., *Documents* Part III The Kaleidoscope of War.
14. Swain *Origins*, pp. 96-101.
15. Butt et al., *Documents*, Part IV The Labour Armies of the Soviet Republic.

Mobilize and survive:
'a story from the Spanish Civil War'[1](1936)

DR HELEN GRAHAM

On 17 July 1936 sectors of the Spanish military, backed by the country's agrarian and industrial elites and some popular social sectors, rebelled against the liberal democratic, socially reforming regime of the Second Republic, founded on 14 April 1931. The rebels' motives comprized a mix of ideological conviction (hostility to the secularising, pluralising and socially-levelling intent of the Republic's key religious, agrarian, labour and (moderately) decentralizing reforms) and professional disgruntlement (the Republic's military budget cuts – intended not least to fund its reforms – were perceived as a threat to the career options and 'standing' of a vehemently centralist junior officer class (the 'backbone' of the coup) already politically hostile to the Republic's liberal pluralist values).[2]

On 18 July the rebellion spread to the Spanish mainland in the form of provincial garrison revolts. While these failed in their intended objective of taking over the entire country (with the underlying goal of restoring the pre-1931 political and socio-economic *status quo* favouring Spain's agrarian and industrial elites [oligarchy]) the rebellion did succeed in rupturing the fragile anti-oligarchic alliance between workers and middle class sectors (christened the Popular Front[3] in February 1936) that sustained the reformist Republican project, while also precipitating a state crisis of unprecedented proportions.

In shattering both army and police command structures the rebellion deprived the liberal republican government of the coercive force it needed to exercise centralized control of resistance measures. Without unified, coherent security forces – which remained in the 1930s the defining institutions of the central state in Spain – the republican government's authority collapsed. The capital city of Madrid became, for a time, just another 'island' of conflict as, everywhere they could, the left's parties and unions declared a general strike as the first stage of mobilization against the insurgent military. The left also called for the workers to be armed to face down the garrison rebellions.

The shock troops of this front line defence (the 'July Days') were predominantly Spain's urban and rural proletariat, organized mainly by the two major trade unions, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT [Confederación Nacional del Trabajo] and the socialist-led UGT [Unión General de Trabajadores] (and in industrial Barcelona -city and province – to some extent by the radical anti-stalinist communist group, POUM [Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista]). Proletarian protagonism obviously owed a great deal to workers' awareness that they had most to lose should the military rebellion succeed – an awareness that had been heightened over time by a string of bloody working class defeats in 1920s and 1930s Europe (Italy 1922, Germany 1933, Austria 1934) as well as by the military repression following the Asturian miners' rising in Northern Spain in October 1934.[4]

But working class predominance was also the result of the political eclipse of republicanism. The military rebellion saw swathes of the republicans' natural constituents – peasant small holders and tenant farmers, traders, shopkeepers, small entrepreneurs – side with the rebels. In an attempt to heal the breach in republican ranks and also to obviate the necessity of arming the proletariat – a prospect which was anathema to all republican politicians – they sought to reach a compromise with the rebels' chiefs. The military leaders were not prepared to treat, but in even making the attempt, the republican political class lost its last shreds of political credibility in the eyes of the proletarian forces opposing the rebellion.

The cleavages within the popular anti-oligarchic coalition which the military rebellion exposed, derived at root from Spain's very particular and acute experience of *uneven* historical development (industrialization, urbanization and the concomitant process of mass political mobilization) which had produced both acute regional differences and highly *internally* fragmented social class formations which endured into the 1930s to produce tremendous clashes and tensions (both inter- and intra-regionally) between different ways of life: urban with rural, religious with secular, fixed hierarchies against the rise of new social movements (especially organized labour).

In more immediate political terms, however, the fragmentation of the anti-oligarchic coalition has to be traced to the failure during 1931-3 of progressive republicans (and, indeed, the co-governing Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE)) to mobilize an inter-class social base around a viable programme of modernizing social and economic reform. The deeply damaging polarization process occurring in Spain between 1933 and 1936, when conservative forces mobilized a popular base against democratic reform under the banner of 'defending the Catholic faith' might have been avoided (or made much less intense) if the liberal left had itself possessed more sophisticated and integrated strategies to meet the challenge of mass political mobilization.[5] In a country like Spain where such disparate socio-economic and cultural sectors existed in the same time frame, the only means of successfully tackling modernizing reform was by addressing 'contradictory' popular demands – i.e. those of the urban and agrarian lower middle classes: shopkeepers, farmers, small entrepreneurs and professional groups, alongside those of industrial workers (unskilled as well as skilled) and the rural landless – in order to provide a sufficiently broad social support base for the Republic to withstand oligarchic assault. It was only in the war period that a Spanish political party would emerge, the newly ascendant Communist Party (PCE), which was capable of implementing such a strategy in a bid to re-cement the anti-oligarchic Popular Front coalition.[6]

In the initial weeks after the rebellion, proletarian-led resistance took various forms – the siege of rebel garrisons, street fighting, the raising of militia forces (the regular army had been dislocated by the coup whose very occurrence had also massively eroded workers' confidence in the officer class) and the formation of myriad popular committees in villages, neighbourhoods and workplaces to oversee the immediate needs of the emergency defence and to salvage essential supply and transport services from the dislocation of the post-coup days.[7]

The immediate key to Republican survival lay in Barcelona and Madrid. In the former the rising failed rapidly in the face of worker – and predominantly CNT – mobilization, seconded by loyal police elements from both civil and assault guards. While Catalan premier Luis Companys held out against calls to arm the workers on the evening of 18 July, the CNT managed to storm several depots and some sympathetic officers had, as elsewhere, allowed them access to the arsenals. Thus resourced, they went out to meet the disparate rebel columns and picked them off, one by one, before converging to consolidate their strength in the city centre. By the evening of the 19th only two barracks held out: San Andrés on the outskirts of the city and the Atarazanas near the port. Both would be stormed by CNT militia and Catalan security forces (assault and civil guards) which thus ensured the complete suffocation of the rising in Spain's most radical and cosmopolitan city. In Madrid workers successfully stormed the rebel-held Montaña barracks, although the death toll was high on both sides. Once the capital was safe for the Republic, the militia forces set off northwards to the Guadarrama sierra in order to stem the rebels' military advance from the North on the capital.

Militia action was crucial to the failure of the rebellion in the majority of populous, urban Spain and its hinterlands. Nevertheless, there were enough examples of urban labour movements being defeated in the July Days for us to be wary of claiming that the militia alone were sufficient to guarantee Republican survival in the face of the garrison revolts. Madrid and Barcelona were very specific in terms of the sheer scale of proletarian organization and even there the militia's strength was reinforced by support from professional army officers loyal to the Republic as well as by assault guards and civil guards. There were also cases in July of the rebels seizing control of cities with big labour movements and a strong left wing tradition – Seville (the most revolutionary city in the south[8]), Zaragoza[9] (Aragón) and Oviedo (Asturias) being the most notable examples.

Conversely, the military rebellion succeeded rapidly and relatively easily within the first two days (18-19 July) in the conservative rural Spain of the north down to the centre where it had a significant measure of civilian support extending to the popular classes. (While the Basque industrial heartland of Bilbao (Vizcaya) was held for the Republic, the Carlist strongholds of Navarre and Alava as well as virtually the whole of Old Castile, with all its major centres (Salamanca, Zamora, (León) all the way down to Cáceres in Extremadura) fell to the rebels.) By 22 July Galicia, in the north west corner, would also be almost entirely rebel-held in spite of desperate resistance in the left's urban bases, most notably in the ports of Vigo and La Coruña. In this initial phase, the rebel zones largely corresponded to those which had returned conservative candidates during the pre-war Republican elections. Neverthless, the fact remained that by the end of July 1936 the rebels had failed to take more than a third of Spain's national territory.

But in the approximate two thirds where the rebellion had failed, power was fragmented. We cannot refer in any meaningful sense to a single 'Republican' war effort. The coup had dislocated state structures so, for a time, there was no overarching political structure within which to plan a single, co-ordinated war effort. Moreover, the proletarian forces resisting the military conceived of their task in overwhelmingly *local* terms: the formation of agrarian and commercial cooperatives, food and supply committees and so on was about direct action to change the lived unit of experience – the neighbourhood or village. The popular consciousness which fuelled 'emergency defence', whether in town, country or capital city, was very far from what we might call a 'war consciousness' (i.e. understood as an awareness of the need for total, co-ordinated, large-scale social and economic mobilization over an extended period of time).

Also absent, therefore, was any notion of the need for centralized state organization. Indeed, if anything, there was active hostility to this among Spain's working classes. For industrial workers, as well as for the urban poor and rural landless, the notion of any form of centralized power was still perceived in terms of the old exclusive oligarchic order which had repressed and exploited them. The state – when it impinged upon popular consciousness – was still largely associated with indirect taxation and military service/conscription as well as with persecution at the hands of the police – particularly for the unionized. The police, and especially the civil guard, were seen as the front-line maintainers of oligarchic power – both by their protection of vastly unequal rural landowning patterns (in the centre-south[10]) and their enforcement in the streets and *comisarías* (police stations) of urban proletarian districts of a brutal discipline which reinforced that exerted by factory and workshop owners. This last was supremely the case in Barcelona and its surrounding industrial belt with its uniquely high concentration of casualized, unskilled and sweated factory labour and other sectors of the urban poor.

Nor, as recent research has shown[11], did the experience of such poor and unskilled sectors of labour under the Second Republic much improve their view of the state. Ironically in view of the Republican goal of greater social equality/inclusion, the period 1931-36 saw Republican-made laws (predominantly the Law for the Defence of the Republic (1931) and the public order and anti-vagrancy acts of 1933) used to discriminate against precisely these social sectors – the unemployed and unskilled, casualized labour – who were already suffering most acutely the consequences of the economic depression. (Contrary to the received 'macroeconomic' historical wisdom, the depression did indeed cause great social distress in Spain). The same legislation was also used repeatedly to castigate non-social democratic sectors of the labour movement and especially the CNT – the organization with which poor and marginalized labour constituencies identified *par excellence.* (Not least because the CNT was associated with direct action strategies, for example, spontaneous industrial action, rent strike/housing occupations, campaigns against speculation by shopkeepers, prisoners aid and solidarity work which spoke directly to the needs of the poor and the powerless.)[12]

Given this picture, it is scarcely surprising that after the military rebellion of 18 July 1936, significant sectors of the urban and rural working classes, constituted as the 'people in arms' (i.e. the popular militia forces) conceived of resisting the rebels and their civilian backers, and thus preventing the return of an oppressive order, in terms that were specifically anti-state. For such sectors the collapse of the army, police force and central government was a positive state of affairs to be consolidated by the removal of other sources and bearers of the old power – whether material (by destroying property records, land registries etc.) or human (the retaliatory violence which led to the assassination of priests, civil guards, police, estate bailiffs, shop keepers associated with speculative pricing and other exploitative practices such as food adulteration).

It was these same proletarian sectors which responded most enthusiastically to the appeal of radical [*Faísta*] currents in the CNT to build forms of locally-oriented, anti-capitalist, collectivist social and economic organization. These occurred predominantly in urban Barcelona (multi-formed industrial and commercial collectives and cooperatives) and in Aragón and parts of the Republican south (agrarian collectives).[13] This revolutionary process was, by the active preference of those involved, decentralized. It was, moreover, inevitably an inward-focussing one. Nor, in Barcelona or Aragón, would there be any immediate or direct sense of the inadequacy of this focus *vis-a-vis* the imperatives of Republican defence. For both Barcelona and Aragón were rather distant from the war. What brought the central state back into the picture was the sudden and massive escalation of hostilities in Spain's 'deep south'.

General Franco, coordinating the southern campaign from Tetuán (in North Africa), successfully negotiated with Hitler and Mussolini the provision of transport planes to fly the rebels' crack force, the Army of Africa (colonial troops commanded by career officers) to the mainland – the Straits having been blocked by naval ratings who had rebelled against their pro-rebel commanders. This initial instance of foreign intervention effectively gave the insurgents the forces with which to turn a foundering coup into a war.[14]

By the end of July there was an air ferry of troops from Morocco to Seville which in ten days saw 10,000 troops transferred. By 6 August there would also be troop ships crossing the Straits under Italian air cover. The Republican navy could do little to stop this – causing significant demoralization – since its ships were debarred from refuelling or using the port facilities at Gibraltar by the hostile British authorities.[15] Republican ships were also debarred from Tangier in spite of its free port status and further harrassed by the presence of German warships patrolling the Moroccan coasts. The Germans also sent some Heinkel fighters and volunteer pilots and mechanics from the Luftwaffe.

Within a week of petitioning, the rebels were thus receiving regular supplies of armaments and ammunition from both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Between the end of July and October 1936, 868 flights were to carry nearly 14,000 men plus artillery and 500 tons of equipment to mainland Spain. The Republic was now confronting much more than series of ill-coordinated and only very partially successful garrison revolts. Courtesy of their fascist suppliers, the military rebels were now declaring total war on the Republic – and they were preparing to fight it with all the force of superior fire power and technological advance that their foreign backers could provide. It was the agrarian south that was to feel the brutal blast of that escalation first.

Once the Army of Africa had reached the mainland then the worker militias had no means of resisting what was a vastly superior force in terms both of military training and firepower. The

Africanista-led troops swept out from Seville (capital) on a campaign of widescale repression in the province. (The precedent here had been set in Asturias in October 1934 when, at Franco's initiative, they had been used violently to repress the workers' rebellion in the northern mining *cuenca.*) The Republic's agrarian reform was violently reversed and land and power handed back to the *latifundistas* (owners of the large estates) who often rode along with the rebel army to reclaim their lands *manu militari.*[16] Rural labourers [*braceros*] were killed where they stood, the 'joke' being they had got their 'land reform' at last – in the form of a burial plot. In pueblos across the rebel-held south there was systematic brutality, torture, shaving and rape of women[17] and mass public killings in the aftermath of conquest.[18] Where there was a particularly strong radical or collectivist tradition or where there had been land occupations or militancy in spring/ summer 1936 or after the rural landworkers' strike of June 1934 or as a consequence (though this more rarely) of the October 1934 revolt, the apoplectic rage of a feudally-minded ruling elite saw villages literally wiped off the map by repression.[19] (And, when, at the end of the war this repression was institutionalized by the triumphant Nationalists throughout the south in the form of highly summary legal proceedings, rural workers would be found guilty in mass 'trials' and executed – without any apparent intended irony – for the crime of military rebellion.) The colonial mentality permeating the rebels' southern campaign is more then amply demonstrated by Franco's letter of 11 August to General Mola, the commander of the rebels' northern forces. In the context of explaining that the conquest of Madrid remained the military priority, Franco stressed the need to annihilate all resistance in the 'occupied zones' (*sic*), especially in Andalusia.[20]

But the main thrust of the rebels' advance from the south was in the direction of the greatest prize – the capital Madrid. They saw it as the hub of Republican resistance whose conquest would win them the war. Ultimately there was nothing urban workers – still less an atomized rural labour force – could do to stop this advance or to defend Republican land and labour reforms, or their cherished agrarian collectives, pitted as they were in open country against lorry-loads of seasoned *Africanista* troops, artillery and German and Italian air bombardments. The scratch militia would fight desperately as long as they had the cover of buildings or trees. But they were not trained in elementary ground movements nor even in the care and reloading of their weapons. Moreover, as reports of the atrocities committed by the rebel troops mounted, even the rumoured threat of being outflanked was enough to send the militia fleeing, abandoning their weapons as they ran. A vast army of refugees fled northwards before the rebel army.

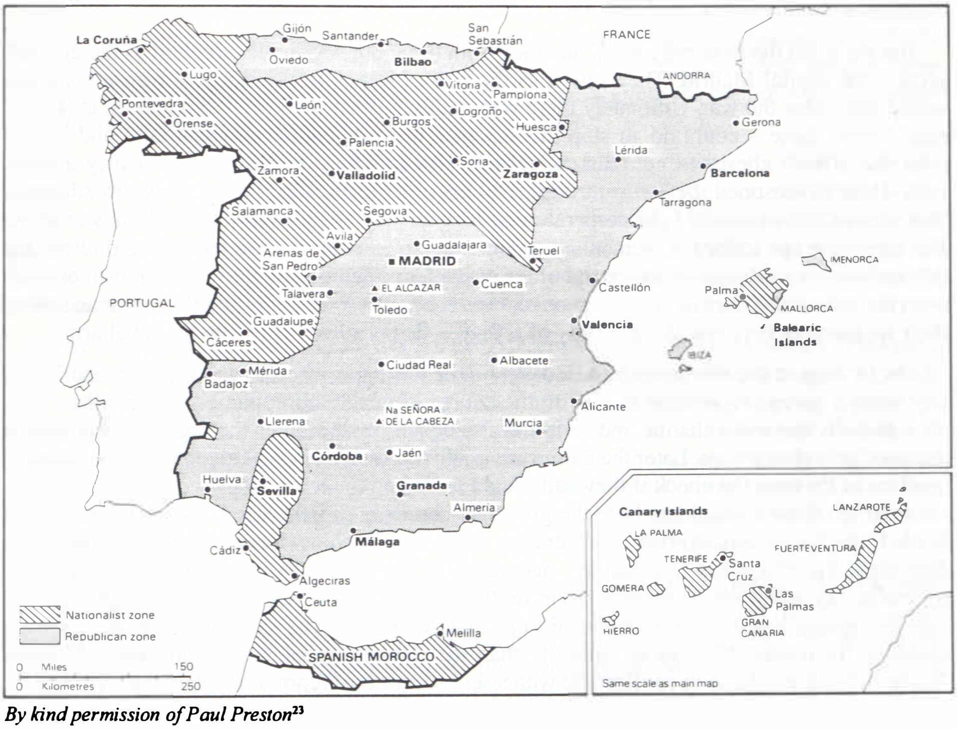
On 14 August the rebels reached Badajoz on the Portuguese border. Once they breached its city walls a savage repression ensued in the course of which more than 2,000 Loyalists were shot. Initially there was chaotic, indiscriminate slaughter and looting in the streets by *Africanista* and foreign legion troops. Later the more systematic repression began. Falangist patrols stopped workers in the street to check if they had fought to defend the town. They would rip back their shirts to see if their shoulders bore the give-away bruising of rifle recoil. The defenders were herded into the bullring-turned concentration camp and machine-gunned in batches. After the first night the blood ran 'palm-deep' according to the witnesses interviewed by American journalist Jay Allen whose famous report on the Badajoz massacre catapulted the Spanish war into newspaper headlines throughout Europe and America[21]. The shooting at Badajoz would continue for weeks. No less an authority than the southern rebel army commander Colonel Yagüe himself would soon confirm the witnesses' accounts of repression when, interviewed by another American journalist, John T. Whitaker (who accompanied him for most of the march on Madrid), he made his – now famous – reply:

> 'Of course we shot them. What do you expect? Was I supposed to take four thousand reds with me as my column advanced racing against time? Was I supposed to turn them loose in my rear and let them make Badajoz red again?'[22]

Bodies were left for days in the streets to terrorize the population and then heaped together in the cemetery and burned without burial rites.

On the rebels marched. In Medellín part of one column came close to destruction at the hands of the Republican air squadron, organized by the French writer André Malraux, in its first serious engagement. While it could not challenge the faster Italian fighter planes that gave the rebels local control of the air, the Republic's overriding military weakness at this stage remained the militia. Untrained in elementary ground movements, they were being constantly outmanoeuvred and forced to retreat. Even occasions of prolonged resistance were not that plentiful and when they occurred were usually based on natural obstacles or the advantage of urban terrain. In the harsh conditions of the barren Tagus valley on the approach to Talavera, the militia's vulnerability meant retreat was the only option for the Republican commanders (sent out from Madrid to try to co-ordinate the defence). While the militia fighters themselves still seemed to believe that their undoubted bravery would find its own recompense, the government simply could not afford to risk all their men in a general engagement. Talavera collapsed on 3 September 1936. In a bare month the rebels had advanced almost 500 kilometres. And now the last important town between the rebels and Madrid had fallen.

The division of Spain into Republican and Nationalist zones, as of 22 July 1936


La Coruña
Gijón
Santander
San Sebastián
FRANCE
Oviedo
Bilbao
Lugo
ANDORRA
Vitoria
Pamplona
Pontevedra
León
Logroño
Orense
Burgos
Huesca
Gerona
Palencia
Lérida
Soria
Zamora
Valladolid
Zaragoza
Barcelona
Tarragona
Salamanca
Segovia
Avila
Guadalajara
Arenas de San Pedro
Teruel
MADRID
MENORCA
Talavera
EL ALCAZAR
Cuenca
Castellón
Palma
Toledo
PORTUGAL
MALLORCA
Valencia
Balearic Islands
Guadalupe
Cáceres
IBIZA
Ciudad Real
Albacete
Mérida
Badajoz
Alicante
Na SEÑORA DE LA CABEZA
Llerena
Murcia
Córdoba
Jaén
Huelva
Sevilla
Granada
Almería
Canary Islands
LANZAROTE
LA PALMA
Málaga
FUERTEVENTURA
Cádiz
TENERIFE
Santa Cruz
Algeciras
GOMERA
Las Palmas
Ceuta
Nationalist zone
HIERRO
GRAN CANARIA
Melilla
Republican zone
SPANISH MOROCCO
0 Miles 150
0 Kilometres 250
Same scale as main map

By kind permission of Paul Preston[23]

The militia defeats and ensuing repressions continued through September – terrible and seemingly unstoppable. Moreover, on each occasion that militia resistance was broken, the, quite literally, terrible price paid had an ever more devastating (and unaffordable) impact on Loyalist morale. But the Republic's political leaders in Madrid (socialist, communist and to a lesser extent republicans) were learning a hard and crucial lesson – paid for in blood by the thousands of militia men and women who fought and died in the south: the rebels had launched a war which could not be won unless the Republic could prepare itself to meet the rebels in pitched battle. And this meant – sooner or later – having to confront the cumulative material and technological expertise of the rebels' Axis backers – including the most sophisticated military-industrial complex of the day, the Nazi state gearing itself up for war.[24]

As soon as the military rebellion occurred the Republic had straightaway (19 July) attempted to secure material aid from the western democracies in order to quell it. But the Republicans came up against French reluctance (after an initial offer of help) and British hostility. For policy makers and the establishment in Britain the Spanish Republic was perceived as less capable than the rebels of guaranteeing capital and property – not least in respect of significant British investment in Spain. (The fact that it was precisely the act of military rebellion itself which had provoked the violence and disorder that so shocked British diplomats and political leaders did not seem to register in these circles.) And once the British were holding aloof, then France, with vulnerable frontiers and thus fearful of diplomatic isolation from Britain, reneged on its promise to send war material to the Spanish Republic. Given the British and French stance, the Republicans had been reduced in August and September to scrambling for arms piecemeal through *ad hoc* purchasing agents – a process as hideously expensive and wasteful as it was inefficient.[25] Moreover, the imposition in August of Non-Intervention (sponsored by the British and French and, in practice, a highly pro-rebel policy) meant the Republic's isolation was very grave indeed. For at this stage (July-September) there was no prospect of Soviet assistance, given the USSR, also afraid for its vulnerable frontiers and thus worried by the destabilizing potential of the Spanish conflict, was determined to remain uninvolved.[26]

Meanwhile, the war was bearing down on Madrid from the south. It was physically manifest in the tide of refugees who poured in having fled before the rebel army. To the north at Guadarrama lay the rebels' other forces under Mola. On 23 August the military airfield at Getafe, on the city's perimeter, was bombed and on the 25th that of Cuatro Vientos – even closer. On 28 August the population of Madrid suffered their first air raids – indeed the first of their kind to occur anywhere. Gradually, as the socialist and communist leaderships in Madrid organized civil defence mobilization, the war began to enter popular consciousness. It was now an only too tangible reality – perceived directly through their own experience and in the news/rumours of incessant defeats borne by the refugees. On 21 September Yagüe's troops took Santa Olalla, mounting a public execution of 600 militiamen in the main street of the town:

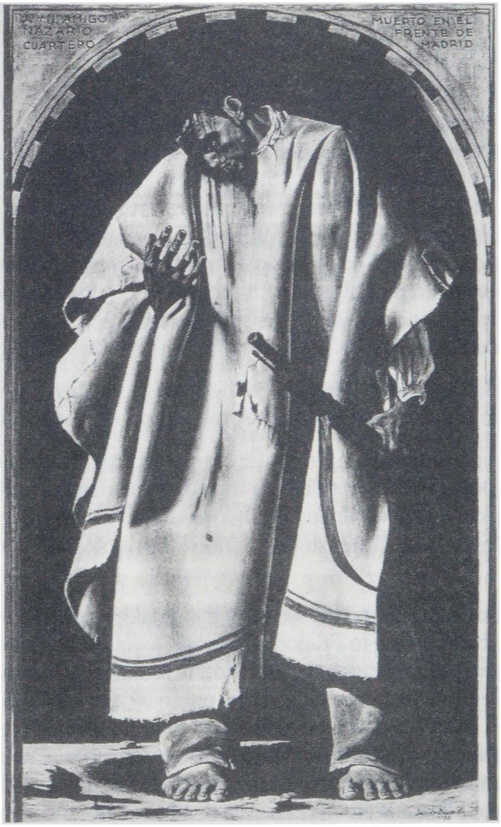
> 'they were unloaded and herded together. They had the listless, exhausted, beaten look of troops who can no longer stand out against the pounding of German bombs'.[27]

The conviction was growing among the Madrid-based Republican leaders that something else was needed: the 'apocalypse' had to be organized.[28] The defeats in the south and the aerial bombardments were a constant reminder of the need for military preparation and popular mobilization in both of which the Spanish Communist Party especially would soon show itself to excel.

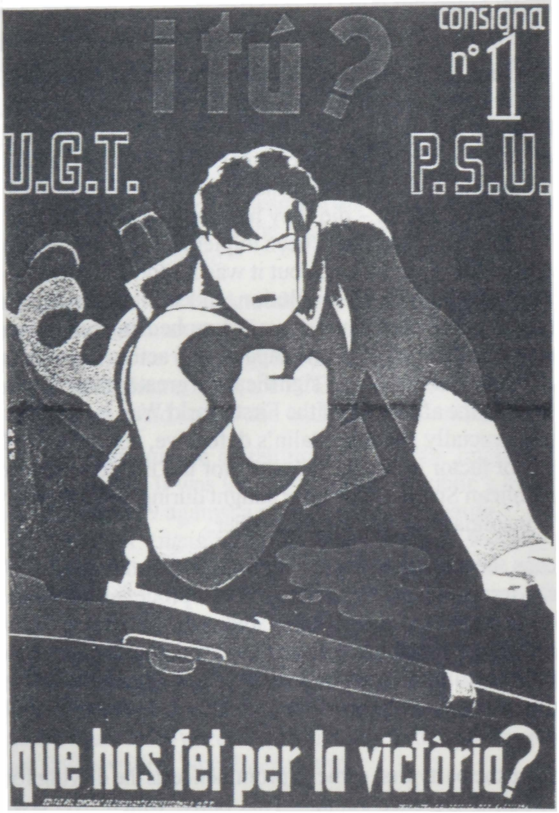
By the end of October 1936 the rebels were on the outskirts of Madrid. This was somewhat later than it might have been owing to Franco's ordering a detour to Toledo to relieve the rebels holding out in the Alcazar (probably with the intention of reinforcing his own leadership position.) This delay gave the Republicans crucial time to organize the city's defences. This and the USSR's tardy provision of military aid (sent for fear that the threatening Republican collapse would free up Nazi firepower for aggression against vulnerable Soviet frontiers) saved the Republic from certain military defeat.[29] No less important were the military advisers sent under Soviet auspices. The Republicans were in desperate need of experienced strategists with practical knowledge of how to wage modern warfare. The defence of Madrid involved intense and bitter fighting and enormous casualties, especially among the International Brigades who at this stage were acting as the Republicans' shock troops (the battle of Jarama (February 1937) would see the decimation of its British contingent and savage losses among the American brigaders). The price was great, but so was the prize: Madrid was a major defeat for the rebels. As their forces dug in to besiege the capital's perimeter, the conflict turned into a long war of attrition.

But for all the psychological boost which the presence of the International Brigades provided, in the harsh light of day the Republic was badly isolated by the economic blockade which underlay the Western capitalist diplomacy of Non-Intervention. Moreover Soviet aid was insufficient to do more than keep the Republic afloat. In such circumstances it is difficult to see how the Republic – isolated and facing the onslaught of 'violent modernity' in the form of full-scale warfare, courtesy of the rebels' fascist backers – had any practical alternative to reconstructing a central state apparatus in order to facilitate the maximum mobilization and coordination of its internal resources. Only by so doing could it withstand a long war of attrition against the rebel ('Nationalist') forces. In other words, the challenge facing the Republic was that of mobilizing its entire economy and society for what was in effect, *total war* – something entirely unprecedented in Spanish experience.

Xavier BUENO: The Spanish soldier -
in memory of my friend who died in defence of Madrid



By kind permission of Musée Goya-Castres ‘y tú?’ A Republican mobilization poster, 1936


¿tú?
consigna
nº 1
U.G.T.
P.S.U.
que has fet per la victòria?

By kind permission of Marx Memorial Library, London

In arguing thus I am not attempting to deny that the Republican state under reconstruction was bourgeois in nature and as such hostile to the radical collectivist forms of social and economic organization born in the July Days. But in contrast to what is often suggested in the well-worn ‘revolution versus the war’ debate[30], I would argue that the outcome here could scarcely have been in doubt, given the intrinsic *political* weaknesses of the collectivist project.[31] The balance of social groups within the Republican zone pointed towards the reconstruction of a liberal capitalist (or bourgeois) state rather than the forging of a radical anti-capitalist (proletarian) order. For Spain in 1936 was most decidedly not a re-run of Russia in 1917. In Spain the decisive factor was *uneven* development rather than underdevelopment. Spain very definitely possessed a variegated middle class which had to be politically accommodated by the Republic at war if its popular anti-oligarchic coalition was to be rebuilt. Such rebuilding was crucial, moreover, because the military rebellion itself had meant the loss to the Republic of the bulk of its most radical (and numerous) proletarian constituency – the rural landless of the ‘deep south’ who, as we have seen, had fallen victim to the brutal ‘colonial’ war waged by the Army of Africa. Revolutionary groups were not a clear majority within the Republican zone. Even leaving aside the Republican Basque country with its socially conservative traditions, both the Levante and Cataluña had, as well as powerful labour movements, a very substantial rural middle class of peasant smallholders who were no supporters of the social and economically radical policies associated with the proletarian defenders of the July Days. If the Republic alienated these middle class groups politically it could not hope to mobilize them for the war effort. And this it could not risk – precisely because of its acute international isolation.

The likelihood of an anti-capitalist/revolutionary state order emerging from the Republic's period of emergency defence was also reduced by the organizational and geographical fragmentation of the radical left in Spain. There was no group capable of channelling the social radicalism of the July Days/collectivist experiments into alternative political structures that could be articulated Republic-wide. Certainly the anarcho-syndicalists (CNT) had no blueprint for this, nor – and this was as crucial – did they have any centralized organizational structures through which such a 'blueprint' could have been implemented.[32] The radical communist POUM had rather more sophisticated political ideas but it was far too small and geographically limited to act as the Bolsheviks of the Spanish revolution. Indeed it is hard to imagine a scenario in which a radical anti-capitalist order could have triumphed in Republican Spain without the backing of the Soviet Union. Especially as the capacity for active Western capitalist intervention against the Spanish Republic in 1936 was significantly greater than that which had threatened the new Bolshevik order in the aftermath of the First World War. It was, moreover, the memories of that threat which, in crucially shaping Stalin's defensive, conservative foreign policy in the 1930s, were a significant factor in Soviet support[33] for the liberal democratic wartime Popular Front alliance in Republican Spain as the latter sought during 1937 to 'domesticate' radical left currents in order to consolidate the liberal state order.

For the Republicans the successful defence of Madrid at the end of 1936 signified both in symbolic and material terms the real beginning of this process of political reconstruction and national mobilization – both of which necessitated a centralized political/military authority [*mando único*] and a single military/state apparatus. And in all of this process the Communist Party's (PCE) structural role in permitting the Republic to 'mobilize and survive' would prove absolutely vital – and for reasons above and beyond the party's function as a channel for vital Soviet military aid.

In the political sphere the party first came to prominence as the driving force of mass rearguard mobilization in the Madrid Defence Junta.[34] This body, which oversaw the city, organizing supply and civil defence once the government had moved to Valencia on 6 November, represented a crucial intermediate stage in the process of Republican state reconstruction which would then be 'exported' with great difficulty to other parts of its territory.

For although in Madrid they knew there was a war on, elsewhere this was far from the case. The experience of emergency defence: street fighting and the storming of rebel garrisons did not of itself produce any sense of the need to build a war machine, still less that this necessarily involved the reconstitution of centralized political power to organize total mobilization. Indeed, as we have seen, significant sectors of the Spanish working class – above all in the strongly federalist, anarcho-syndical stronghold of industrial Barcelona – were hostile to the very idea of the state. This not least because of powerful memories of their own longstanding social war against its oppressive influence. For workers and peasants in Aragón too, up until 1938 the war seemed a less than immediate reality. Moreover bourgeois regionalist movements in the Basque Country and Cataluña had always had a fraught relationship with a central state historically dominated by the anachronistic values of a Castilian elite of soldiers and landowners. These rationales and resistances did not suddenly cease on 18 July 1936 and the morale-grinding, resource sapping jurisdictional disputes between the central Republican state and both the Basque autonomous government[35] and the Catalan *Generalitat* impeded the assimilation of precisely those industrial centres most necessary to an integrated war effort – above all given the mounting impact of the Non-Intervention arms embargo.

The major challenge of domestic policy for the central Republican government between

1937 and 1939 would be to demonstrate to its various social constituencies that not all states were equally 'bad' or 'exclusive', that there was a real difference between the 'old power' (whose survival in some form the rebels sought to guarantee) and the 'new' Republican forms of post-18 July 1936. To demonstrate this break with the past, in a way conducive to both the middle classes and workers who constituted the new anti-oligarchic order's crucial social base, would require the state to defend a liberal property order but also to enact long-pending welfarist social policy – the latter now even more essential to meet the needs of total war mobilization. By addressing these 'contradictory' popular demands, the Republic would be mending the fragments of the anti-oligarchic alliance blasted apart by the military rebellion. And in the context of war, welfarist reforms would be the 'state side' of a social contract with those who were fighting and dying for the Republic.[36]

In the end, however, the Republic could not deliver its side of the bargain. The reconstruction of central state structures and national mobilization did allow the Republic to fight a long war in extremely unfavourable conditions. (Through its articulation of the mass organizations of the Popular Front on the Republican home front, the PCE was pivotal in rebuilding the anti-oligarchic coalition.) But this endeavour could not, in the end, stave off military defeat.

But defeat was not the consequence of failing to 'build the revolution', nor, primarily, of internecine Republican divisions. It was the result of the Republic's finally losing the battle it had fought between 1937 and 1939 against a crippling arms embargo.[37] This not only prevented the Republican army from ever engaging on an equal military footing, but in the end also savagely undercut the Republican government's attempts to sustain the physical fabric and morale of its home front – crucial to its war of resistance, the only war the Republic's limited resources allowed it to fight. In the end the Republic died because savage shortages provoked the material and psychological collapse of its home front. But the sustained policies which led to that situation were not authored by Stalin – for all that Soviet aid was self-interested, insufficient and fuelled political antagonisms in the Republican camp. The policies which slowly destroyed the Republic between 1937 and 1939 were those implicitly and explicitly pursued by the Western capitalist democracies underwriting Non-Intervention.

NOTES

1. Cf. Ken Loach's recent film, *Land and Freedom,* subtitled 'a story from the Spanish revolution'. As a film linking the roots of European crisis in the 1930s with the still-pending agenda of social reform in late 1980s/1990s Britain, Loach's work has much to tell us. However, as a film about the imperatives of the war or the reasons for the Republic's ultimate defeat, it tells us very little.
2. Paul Preston (ed.), *Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939* (London, 1984); 'The Failure of Democratic Modernization 1931-1939' (Part II of) *Spanish Cultural Studies. An Introduction: The Struggle for Modernity* (Oxford, 1995) (eds.) Helen Graham & Jo Labanyi, pp. 95-166 (various essays); Paul Preston, *The Politics of Revenge. Fascism and the Military in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London, 1990).
3. On the Spanish Popular Front and European context, see *History Today*, (vol 36), July 1986.
4. Adrian Shubert, 'The epic failure: the Asturian revolution of October 1934' in P. Preston (ed.), *Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939* pp. 113-136 and *The Road to Revolution in Spain. The Coal Miners of Asturias 1860-1934* (Urbana/Chicago, 1987). Amnesty for those imprisoned as a consequence of the October rising was probably the single most important factor behind worker mobilization in the February 1936 electoral campaign.
5. H. Graham, 'Community, State and Nation in Republican Spain 1931-38', in A. Smith and C. Mar-Molinero, *Nationalism and National Identity in the Iberian Peninsula* (Berg, forthcoming 1996); Santos Juliá, 'La experiencia del poder: la izquierda republicana 1931-1933' in *El republicanismo*

en España (1830- 1977) (Madrid, 1994) (ed.) Nigel Townson, pp. 165-192.

6. H. Graham, ‘War, Modernity and Reform: the premiership of Juan Negrín 1937-39' in *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (Edinburgh, 1996) (eds.) Paul Preston & Ann L. MacKenzie, pp. 159-92.
7. Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain. The Experience of Civil War* 1936-39 (Harmondsworth, 1981); Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War* (London, 1986) now available in a new edition entitled *'A concise History of the Spanish Civil War'* (Fontana 1996). (A basic overview analysis of events after 18 July is also available in Sheelagh M. Ellwood, *The Spanish Civil War* (Historical Association Studies) (Oxford, 1991). See also chronologies in Raymond Carr, *Images of the Spanish Civil War* (London, 1986) and *Spanish Cultural Studies. An Introduction.* (eds.) H. Graham & J. Labanyi.)
8. José Manuel Macarro Vera, *La utopía revolucionaria. Sevilla en la Segunda República* (Seville, 1985).
9. Julián Casanova, *Anarquismo y revolución en la sociedad rural aragonesa 1936-1938* (Madrid, 1985).
10. Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War. Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic* (revised edition, London 1994).
11. Christopher Ealham, ‘Policing the Recession: Unemployment, Social Protest and Law-and-Order in Barcelona 1930-1936' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1996). Some small part of this rich and fascinating social history of the working classes and urban poor of Barcelona is to be found in the following: C. Ealham, ‘Crime and Punishment in 1930s Barcelona' in *History Today*, October 1993 and ‘Anarchism and Illegality in Barcelona 1931-1937' in *Contemporary European History* 4, 2, 1995.
12. C. Ealham, ‘Policing the Recession'.
13. There is an enormous bibliography on collectivization. For a brief, useful summary of the current state of the historiographical debate, see Julián Casanova, ‘Anarchism, revolution and civil war in Spain: the challenge of social history' in *International Review of Social History*, XXXVII (1992), pp. 398-404. In English see also, J. Casanova, ‘Anarchism and revolution in the Spanish civil war: the case of Aragon', in *European History Quarterly*, 17, 1987, pp. 423-45, oral testimonies in Ronald Fraser's *Blood of Spain*, and Pierre Broué and Emile Témime, *The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain* (London, 1972). Of the Spanish material see especially Walther L. Bernecker, *Colectividades y revolución social. El anarquismo en la guerra civil española 1936-1939* (Barcelona, 1982) (German original, *Anarchismus und Bürgerkrieg. Zur Geschichte der Sozialen Revolution in Spanien 1936-1939* (Hamburg, 1978); Julián Casanova *Anarquismo y revolución en la sociedad rural aragonesa 1936-1938* cited above and Casanova (ed.) *El sueño igualitario. Campesinado y colectivizaciones en la España republicana* (Zaragoza, 1989); Luis Garrido González, *Colectividades agrarias en Andalucía: Jaen (1931-1939)* (Madrid, 1979) and Aurora Bosch Sánchez, *Ugetistas y libertarios. Guerra civil y revolución en el país valenciano 1936-1939* (Valencia, 1983).
14. For the process of intervention see Paul Preston, ‘Mussolini's Spanish Adventure: From Limited Risk to War', in *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (Edinburgh, 1996), Paul Preston & Ann MacKenzie (eds). The standard works are Angel Viñas, *La Alemania nazi y el 18 de julio* (2nd edition, Madrid, 1977) and John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton N.J., 1975) and see also Paul Preston, *Franco. A Biography* (London, 1993).
15. P. Preston, *‘Mussolini's Spanish Adventure: From Limited Risk to War';* Enrique Moradiellos, ‘The Gentle General: the Official British Perception of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War' in *The Republic Besieged.*
16. P. Preston, ‘The agrarian war in the south', in P. Preston (ed.) *Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939*, pp. 178-9.
17. There are many sources for this picture, among them see, Mijail Koltsov, *Diario de la guerra de España* (Madrid, 1978) pp. 96-7; John Whitaker, ‘Prelude to World War: A Witness from Spain,

Foreign Affairs vol. 21, no. 1, October 1942, pp. 105-6.

18. On the meanings of violence in the rebel zone, see H. Graham, `*War, Modernity and Reform: the premiership of Juan Negrín 1937-39'*.
19. Francisco Moreno Gómez, *La guerra civil en Córdoba* (1936- 1939) (Madrid, 1985), *passim* and his article `La represión en la España campesina', in J.L García Delgado & M. Tuñón de Lara, *España durante la segunda guerra mundial* (Madrid, 1989), p. 191.
20. Paul Preston, *Franco,* p. 165.
21. `....After the first night the blood was supposed to be palm-deep on the far side of the lane. I don't doubt it. Eighteen hundred men – there were women, too – were mowed down there in some twelve hours. There is more blood than you would think in 1,800 bodies.' Jay Allen, report in the *Chicago Tribune,* 30 August 1936.
22. Mário Neves, *La matanza de Badajoz* (Badajoz, 1986), pp. 13, 43-5, 50-1. See also Jay Allen, `Blood flows in Badajoz', in Marcel Acier (ed.), *From Spanish Trenches: Recent Letters from Spain* (London, 1937), pp. 3-8; J. Whitaker, `Prelude to World War: A Witness from Spain' (see 17. above) pp. 104-6; Juan José Calleja, *Yagüe: un corazón al rojo* (Barcelona, 1963), pp. 99-109.
23. Paul Preston *The Spanish Civil War*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986.
24. Although, in spite of how the Republicans perceived the situation, in the long run Fascist Italy would provide the rebels with more aid than did Nazi Germany, P. Preston, *`Mussolini's Spanish Adventure: From Limited Risk to War'*.
25. H. Graham, *`War, Modernity and Reform: the premiership of Juan Negrín 1937-39'*.
26. P. Preston, *`Mussolini's Spanish Adventure: From Limited Risk to War'*.
27. In the words of American journalist, John Whitaker, *`Prelude to World War'*, pp. 105-106.
28. André Malraux's famous metaphor in *L'Espoir* (Paris, 1937).
29. Soviet intervention was motivated by her perceived defence needs. For the subsequent political ramifications of intervention both within the USSR and Republican Spain see Helen Graham & Paul Preston (eds), *The Popular Front in Europe* (London, 1987) (especially chapters by Graham, Sassoon and Haslam)
30. For a classic exposition of this, see Vernon Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* (London, 1953, 1969).
31. For a fuller elaboration of the arguments here see H. Graham `Spain 1936. Resistance and Revolution: the Flaws in the Front', in *Community, Authority and Resistance to Fascism in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 1996), (eds.) Tim Kirk and Tony McElligott.
32. H. Graham *`Spain 1936. Resistance and Revolution: the Flaws in the Front'*.
33. Helen Graham & Paul Preston (eds), *The Popular Front in Europe*, as in note 28 above.
34. Julio Aróstegui and Jesús A. Martínez, *La Junta de Defensa de Madrid* (Madrid, 1984); P. Preston, *The Spanish Civil War 1936-9* (ch. 6).
35. The Republic had finally approved the Basque autonomy statute in October 1936.
36. The `model' here being the interpretation of how mobilization for total war in 1914-18 and 1939-45 produced in some countries the political and social incorporation (respectively) of the masses to the `nation' – (through the concession first of political rights – the franchise – and then of social rights – through welfare reform).
37. The period 1937-9 and the PCE's mass mobilizing role during this time are explored in H. Graham, *`War, Modernity and Reform: the premiership of Juan Negrín 1937-39'* and will be dealt with at greater length in my forthcoming book on the Spanish Republic at War (Cambridge University Press).

African Americans in the Twentieth Century

DR NEIL A. WYNN

A number of significant events and incidents in recent years have turned the spot-light once again on race relations in the U.S.A. The savage beating of Rodney King by the members of the Los Angeles Police Department in 1991, and the race rioting which followed the subsequent trial in 1992; the Million Man March led by the out-spoken Black Muslim leader, Louis Farrakhan in 1995; the trial of O.J. Simpson, with its explosive mixture of sex and race and a verdict which left the population totally divided, have all served to question the extent of racial progress in America since the 1960s. Even the name 'African American', adopted almost universally in 1994, while putting blacks on a par with other ethnic groups (Italian Americans, Irish Americans, etc.), served to point up the sense of separation and identity among the black population, of belonging to a "distinctly black world within the American community."[1]

The realisation of the persistence of racism in America and a more pessimistic outlook has informed much of the recent writing on civil rights. More and more students ask what Martin Luther King and the civil rights protests of the sixties achieved, questioning both the role of King himself and the results of civil rights reform. Studies of King, with details of his academic limitations and his sexual liaisons, have done much to modify his early near-saintly reputation.[2] The focus on legislative achievements of the 1960s – the Civil Rights Acts, Voting Rights legislation, and affirmative action programmes –has shifted, following attacks on such legislation during the Reagan-Bush years. As a consequence, there is now a whole new perspective on the movement for racial equality which dominated so much of contemporary American history .

The new interpretations emphasise local rather than national developments, add a great many lesser known names, female and male, to the list of civil rights leaders with which we are familiar, and point to significant elements of continuity linking the so-called 'Negro Revolt' of the fifties and sixties to earlier decades. For many of the new writers in this field, the history of civil rights was not of a movement awoken and energised by a new fearless national leadership, but more a broad grass-roots movement which built up over a period of time in a number of separate communities and called the leadership into being. This was the "black freedom struggle", a growing racial awareness and identity which challenged the old stereotypes and provided the groundswell on which King and others were to build. This view not only echoes the comment made by Ella Baker that the "movement made Martin rather than Martin making the movement", it points back beyond that moment in Montgomery on 1st December 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to vacate her seat on a bus, and leads to a closer view of the 1930s and 1940s as a formative period in the genesis of modern civil rights.[3]

> The Negro rebellion began not in Montgomery in 1955, not in Greensboro in 1960, not in Birmingham in 1963, but in Boston in 1905.[4]

How far back one goes to locate the origins of the modern civil rights movement is not quite clear. Whether we would all agree with Lerone Bennett and start with the Niagara movement, a gathering of African Americans to challenge earlier 'accommodationism', is debatable. Most writers would, however, probably begin with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the organization of Blacks and Whites which followed on from Niagara. Established in 1909, and surviving today as a credible force despite recent internal conflicts, the NAACP was for a long time the leading civil rights organization in America. In the 1960s the NAACP was largely forgotten, seen as representative of an older, gradualist approach, rejected by the new direct-action, black movements as too middle-class, too conservative, too slow, and too narrow in action. Such views may be too dismissive.

Certainly the NAACP was never a mass movement and it tended to support, rather than initiate the direct action campaigns which erupted from the mid-1950s on. Nonetheless, the association had been the first modern group to mobilize black and white opinion against racial discrimination, and its journal *The Crisis* often spoke in militant terms (particularly under the editorship of W.E.B. DuBois until 1934). From 1919 the organization led an anti-lynching crusade, working to publicise acts of race violence and secure the passage of legislation against lynching. In the 1930s the association was effective in securing a significant foothold within the new Democratic party alliance. With increasing support in politics and government, the NAACP successfully led the legal struggle to overturn the various measures denying blacks the vote and equal opportunity in education, culminating in the landmark *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* case in 1954. The NAACP slogan, 'Free by '63', provided the focus for the famous March on Washington in 1963, and the association was responsible for much of the organization of that event which is now remembered mainly for King's "I have a Dream" speech.[5]

The modern civil rights movements often built upon the foundations established by the NAACP. As at least one historian has noted, the lack of success in achieving the passage of legislation did not depreciate from the NAACP's efforts in winning more white support and helping to create a "national-community spirit".[6] While its national campaigns and publications educated and formed public opinion, local branches provided the sense of community and support which backed the spontaneous and often individual protests of African Americans. Rosa Parks, for example, was an active NAACP member and had been a branch secretary, and Edgar.D. Nixon, who initially directed the Montgomery Improvement Association was a member of the NAACP and a trade unionist. Such was NAACP support for the Montgomery bus boycott that the organization was banned in the state of Alabama. The participants in the sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, also had roots in an NAACP branch established in the 1940s, and Medgar Evers, the civil rights leader in Mississippi assassinated in 1963, was an NAACP organizer even if he was often in conflict with national office over direct action.[7]

The NAACP had flourished in the 1930s – a now rather forgotten period in African American history – in 1929 its membership was 21,000, by 1939 it had grown to 54,000. The depression years brought greater sympathy for the dispossessed generally and encouraged a variety of radical and reformist activists to call for social change. Most famously the Scottsboro case, the trial of nine black youths for alleged rape in 1931, witnessed the NAACP and the Communist party engaged in a defense campaign which reached international, as well as national, levels, and involved a march of 5000 protestors on the White House. The case of Angelo Herndon, the Black Birmingham coalminer and communist party activist sentenced to 18 years in jail for inciting insurrection also pointed up the left-wing involvement in racial matters in this decade. (Herndon was freed after five years.).[8]

Other radical groups were involved in race relations in the 1930s concentrating on labour issues and co-operative programmes. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union founded in 1934 in Arkansas under Socialist auspices and, focusing on the need for racial unity among rural workers, highlighted the plight of sharecroppers. Although weakened by internal political divisions, by 1936 the STFU claimed a membership of over 25,000 and had successfully organized a number of cotton pickers' strikes. An earlier group, the Alabama Sharecroppers' Union, formed in 1931, survived violent confrontations with the police, and had a membership estimated at 3,000 in 1934.[9] (These rural movements were themselves not new: a Colored Farmers' Alliance had contributed to Populism in the 1880s, and cotton pickers had been involved in strikes in the 1890s.)

The Southern Negro Youth Congress, a federation of local groups of young Blacks formed in Virginia in 1937, organized local protests against restrictive covenants, separate schools, and segregation in public transport. In 1946 their legal action against a Virginia bus company resulted in the Supreme Court ban on segregation in inter-state travel which was to provide the basis for future 'Freedom Rides'. As Gunnar Myrdal pointed out in *An American Dilemma*, the groups like the SNYC contributed to the "training and vision'" of a new generation of African Americans.[10]

Some White southerners also recognized the need to improve race relations during the thirties. The first meeting of the Southern Conference on Human Welfare in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1938 involved 1200 delegates, one fifth of them Black. Although never a powerful force, the SCHW survived for ten years as a representative of the New South, and was one of the leading voices calling for an end to the poll tax.[11] Another White organization, the Highlander Folk School founded in Tennessee in 1932 to promote social change, social justice, and the eradication of racism by training labour organizers, ultimately trained a veritable Who's Who of modern civil rights organizers – Rosa Parks, E.D. Nixon, Fred Shutlesworth, Septima Clark, Andrew Young, Hosea Williams, Marion Barry, to name but a few.[12]

These various developments amongst Blacks and Whites encouraged African Americans to see the thirties as a period of "great awakening." [13] Certainly the decade saw a variety of different protests and demonstrations ranging from protests against unemployment in Birmingham, Alabama, sit-ins in the municipal library in Alexandria, Virginia, boycotts of local theatres in Greensboro, North Carolina, in the South through to rent strikes, protests against school segregation, and 'Don't Buy Where You Can't Work' boycotts in the North. As yet these actions were still diverse, sporadic, isolated, and lacking a unifying focus, but a groundswell of black action was growing both at the grass-roots and national leadership level.

This pattern grew even more quickly during the next decade. Once ''The "Forgotten" Years of the Negro Revolution', increasingly the war years are seen as "turning point in the Negro's relation to America", or "a watershed in the politics of race ...." One writer has said that in the South "the war planted seeds that hastened the development of a new agricultural structure, intensified urbanization, and launched a civil rights movement." [14] Not surprisingly, the war for democracy pointed up the black demands for equality and inclusion already evident in the thirties. Even before America had entered the war, African Americans led by the trade unionist A. Philip Randolph, and backed by the NAACP, had won a major concession from the federal government in the form of an executive order prohibiting discrimination in defense industries by threatening a march on Washington of 10,000 people. Further concessions led to wider participation of Black Americans in the armed services, and although military segregation survived, it was increasingly challenged.[15]

Throughout the war, black organizations fought a "Double V" campaign for victory at home and abroad. The NAACP organized an Emergency War conference in Detroit in 1943 and refused "to listen to the weak-kneed of both races who tell us not to raise controversies during the war." [16] By 1945 its membership had risen to more than half a million. Other groups and individuals protested against wartime discrimination in less well-supported, but well-publicised ways. The Black Muslims, or Nation of Islam, refused to serve in the forces, and their leader Elijah Muhammad and over 60 others were jailed for draft evasion. A number of smaller nationalist groups across the country, described in the Black press as "foolish fanatics", suffered a similar fate.[17]

There was rather more sympathy in the Black press for individual African Americans like Ernest Calloway who told his local draft board in Chicago that he would only serve "on a basis of complete equality," and was jailed. Bayard Rustin a Quaker, and founder member of the Congress of Racial Equality and a future advisor to Martin Luther King, served three years in jail as a conscientious objector while Winfred William Lynn, a thirty-six year old vegetable gardener from New York, contended that his induction as part of a racial quota was contrary to the Selective Service Act. Lynn fought his case all the way to the Supreme Court in 1944, but the Court ruled it had no jurisdiction as he was no longer in the country, having agreed to be inducted into the Army.[18]

Frustration and anger, particularly about the treatment of Black servicemen, could lead to more direct protest. An incident involving a policeman and an African American soldier sparked the riot in Harlem in 1943 which resulted in widespread looting and the death of five Black people. If Harlem was a "modern" riot, strikingly similiar in pattern to those of our own time, Other riots reflected the growing inter-racial conflict. As Americans of all races crowded into defense centres, competition for jobs and houses, combined with the stresses and strains of war, brought increasing friction between the races. In all, 242 racial incidents were recorded in 47 cities. The worst confrontation took place in Detroit where 25 Black and nine White people died before federal troops restored calm. It was not only northern centres which experienced these outbursts: Pete Daniel lists "six civilian riots, over twenty military riots and mutinies, and between forty and seventy-five lynchings"[19] in the South where the war was transforming economic and race relations. Confrontations particularly focused on segregated transport in southern towns and cities, and often involved Black service personnel. So much was this the case that the Army adopted a non-racial transportation policy – at least on paper.

Black servicemen continued to protest against their treament, both through the media, in letters to the President and Secretary of War, and in acts of resistance. By the end of the war, the NAACP had been sent $25,000 in donations from soldiers. While War Department surveys revealed low morale among many Black service personnel, violent clashes between Blacks and Whites were indicative of a "general unrest."[20] Increasingly, segregation in the forces proved to be inefficient, unworkable in certain areas, and generally bad for morale. By the war's end, integration had been experimentally, but successfully, used by the Army during the Battle of the Bulge, was becoming accepted in the Navy, and would be implemented by the Air Force in 1947. By then the threat of mass concerted protest and possible civil disobedience by African Americans had helped persuade President Truman to order a start to the general process of integration.[21]

Military service had an enormous effect on African Americans. For some it was "an eye opening experience'" and many expected to be better off after the war.[22] Once the conflict had ended Black veterans seemed less prepared to return to the *status quo* and were twice as likely to move than Whites; an estimated 75,000 Black veterans had left the South by 1947. Others demonstrated "their unwillingness to accept the prewar structure of racial dominance" in different ways.[23] One of the immediate targets for protest among ex-servicemen was the vote – "All across the South, Negro veterans tried to register and protested attempts to keep them from doing so."[24] In Birmingham, Alabama, in 1946, 100 veterans marched on the courthouse to demand the right to vote. Several of the leading black activists of the 1950s, had experienced military service. Medgar Evers served in Europe, and thought about not returning to Mississippi. Instead, he and four other veterans became the first African Americans to register to vote in Decatur; E.D. Nixon in 1944, led a march of 750 on registrar's office. As a former Black serviceman said, "After the close of hostilities, we just kept on fighting. It's just that simple."[25]

Military service was just one factor in the new mood among African Americans. The migration of over a million Black workers to war centres in the north and west had an enormous impact. As one Black woman recalled, "we got a chance to go places we had never been able to go before," and another spoke of discovering "another way of life."[26] If one consequence of this movement was the outbreak of racial violence in 1943, another was increased economic opportunity as total Black employment in manufacturing rose by 135 per cent. Indeed, as one study of the Detroit riot suggests, White rioters represented "a working class threatened by black socio-economic advances."[27]

In the South too, violence and resistance were indicators of the extent of wartime change and the threat to existing relations. Even though the first chair of the government's Fair Employment Practices Committee could declare "All the armies of the world could not force southerners to end segregation,"[28] change was coming. Like it or not, it was obvious even to a former governor of Alabama "the Huns have wrecked the theory of the master race."[29] Inspired by this belief, African Americans demanded action against racial violence, protested against segregation in the armed forces, mobilised for legal action against discrimination in housing, and registered to vote in greater numbers following the successful conclusion to an NAACP lawsuit in the *Smith vs. Allwright* decison which outlawed the white primary. In 1947, in a harbinger of the later Freedom Rides, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a group formed in 1942, organized a 'Journey of Reconciliation' to test the Supreme Court's ruling on inter-state transport, while other African Americans threatened to refuse to serve in a segregated army. At a local level the Women's Political Council was established in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1946. Begun after the arrest of people challenging segregation on the buses, Jo Ann Robinson later recalled "By 1955, we had members in every elementary, junior high, and senior high school, and in federal, state, and local jobs."[30] Here was the foundation for the Montgomery bus boycott which propelled Martin Luther King to prominence and a partial explanation for the success of that momentous event.

Seen against this background, the events of 1955-56 suggest strong elements of continuity with the preceding decades and point to a rising tide of actions, individual and organized, national and local, which led to the emergence of the modern mass movement. Nonetheless, there clearly was a marked shift in mood, method and extent in the "Negro revolt" in the late 1950s and 1960s. Triggered by anger and frustration at the response of White southerners to the decision against segregated schooling in *Brown vs Topeka Board of Education* in 1954, the brutal murder of 14 year-old Emmett Till in 1955, and an increasing deterioration in the economic situation of African Americans in the late 1950s, a sustained mass movement of non-violent protest began the "Negro Revolt". If there was a "Negro Revolution", it was a revolution born out of frustrated expectations; those expectations had developed in the previous decades, and so too had the basis for the new organizations and new forms of protest which dominated the 1960s.

NOTES

1. John Hope Franklin & Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, (7th edition, New York 1994), p. 423; see also pps. 527-31.
2. See for example, David J. Garrow's detailed study *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, (London 1988), and 'Becoming Martin Luther King, Jr. – Plagiarism and Originality: A Round Table', *Journal of American History*, 78, 1, June 1991. John White, *Black Leadership in America: From Booker T. Washington to Jesse Jackson*, (London & New York 1990), provides a good summary.
3. Ella Baker quoted in Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, p. 625. For the notion of the "Black freedom struggle" see Clayborne Carson, 'Civil Rights Reform and the Black Freedom Struggle', in Charles W. Eagles, ed., *The Civil Rights Movement in America*, (Jackson, Mississippi & London 1986). The local emphasis can be found in William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, (New York 1980), Robert J. Norrell, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee*, (New York 1985), and Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: the Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley & London 1995). The historiography of civil rights is surveyed in Adam Fairclough, 'State of the Art: Historians and Civil Rights', *Journal of American Studies*, 24, December 1990, and Steven F. Lawson, 'Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement', *American Historical Review*, 96, April 1991.
4. Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Confrontation : Black and White*, (Baltimore, Maryland 1965), p. 95
5. The NAACP has not been well served by historians. See Langston Hughes, *Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP*, (New York 1962); Charles F. Kellogg, *NAACP*, (Baltimore, Maryland, 1967); Mark V. Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925-1950*, (Chapel Hill, N. Carolina 1987); Franklin & Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, provide a basic survey.

6. Robert L. Zangrando, 'The NAACP and a Federal Anti-lynching Bill', in Bernard Sternsher, ed., *The Negro in Depression and War: Prelude to Revolution, 1930-1945*, (Chicago 1969), p. 180.
7. See Lawson, 'Freedom Then, Freedom Now', 464-65; Henry Hampton & Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s*, (New York & London 1990), pps. 19-20, 20-1,141, 151.
8. African Americans and the 1930s are fully dealt with in Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue,* (New York 1978); also see John Williams, 'Struggles of the Thirties in the South', in Sternsher, *The Negro in Depression and War*, pps. 166-181.
9. William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War*, (New York 1982), pps. 99, 103.
10. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, (New York, Evanston, London, 1944), p. 819.
11. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, p. 469, and Franklin & Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, pps. 388, 431.
12. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, pps. 70-2.
13. Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, p. 262.
14. Pete Daniel, 'Going among Strangers: Southern Reactions to World War II', *Journal of American History*, 77, December 1990, p. 887; Richard M. Dalfiume, 'The "Forgotten Years" of the Negro Revolution', *Journal of American History*, 55, June 1968; A. Russell Buchanan, *Black Americans in World War II*, (Santa Barbara, Calif. 1977), p. 132; Harry Ashmore, *Civil Rights and Wrongs: A Memoir of Race and Politics, 1944-1994*, (New York 1994), p. 31.
15. The history of the March on Washington Movement is the subject of Herbert Garfinkel, *When Negroes March: The March on Washington Movement in the Organizational Politics for FEPC*, (Glencoe, Ill. 1959); see also, Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War*, (New York & London, 1993 ed.) pps. 43-7.
16. Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, 'The Politics of Disorder: Re-examining Harlem's Riots of 1935 and 1943,' *Journal of Urban History*, 18, August 1992, p. 400.
17. These groups are looked at in Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War*, pps. 104-5.
18. Wynn, pps. 25-6.
19. Daniel, 'Going Among Strangers', pps. 905-8; Wynn, pps. 60-73.
20. Wynn, pps. 28-9.
21. Richard M. Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the US Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939-1953*, (Columbia, Missouri, 1969), gives the best account of the move towards integration.
22. John Modell, Marc Goulden, and Sigurder Magnusson, 'World War II in the Lives of Black Americans: some Findings and an Interpretation', *Journal of American History*, 76, December 1978, p. 845.
23. Modell, *et al*, p. 838.
24. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, p. 24.
25. Charles A. Gates in Studs Terkel, *"The Good War": An Oral History of World War II*, (London 1985), p. 270; Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, p. 416.
26. Sarah Killingsworth in Terkel *"The Good War"*, p. 116, and Sybil Lewis in Mark J. Harris, *et al*, eds., *The Home Front: America during World War II*, (New York 1984), p. 251.
27. Dominic J. Capeci and M. Wilkerson, *Layered Violence:The Detroit Rioters of 1943*, (Jackson, Mississippi, 1991), p. 179.
28. Mark Ethridge quoted in David Southern, 'Beyond Jim Crow Liberalism', *Journal of Negro History*, 66, Fall 1981, p. 211.
29. Frank Dixon quoted in Richard Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States since 1938*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex , 1980), p. 71.
30. In Hampton and Fayer, *Voice of Freedom*, 22; For CORE see August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Cights Movement 1942-1968*, (New York 1973).

Lincoln **David Herbert Donald**

Jonathan Cape £30 714pp 1995 ISBN 0-224-0422-x.

In his detailed textual notes at the end of this volume, the author observes that by 1943 almost 4,000 books and pamphlets about Lincoln had been published, and that thousands more have appeared since, not to mention periodicals such as the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* devoted exclusively to the subject of America's greatest president. So why add another to the pile and does this one contribute much to our understanding of its subject? Donald is certainly well qualified for the job - he is Professor Emeritus of American History and Civilization at Harvard and a life-long Lincoln scholar whose many works include *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* and *The Civil War and Reconstruction.*

The answer is almost certainly 'yes'. Surprisingly, according to the fly-leaf, "there has not been a full-scale, single volume biography . . . covering the years from (Lincoln's) birth to his assassination". In addition Donald's approach to his subject is fairly objective, seeking neither to glorify nor to debunk. He is also relatively modest in what he sets out to achieve, making it clear in his preface that "It is not . . . a history of the Civil War" and that he has stuck very close to Lincoln himself - his words and what happened to him. I say "what happened to him" advisedly because Donald flags up his essential view from the start by including as a frontispiece Lincoln's statement of April 1864 - "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me".

Donald has tried to write as far as possible from the original sources and, in this respect, has a number of advantages over previous major biographers in that, after the publication of the authorised biography by Lincoln's secretaries, Nicolay and Hay in 1890, Lincoln's papers were sealed until 1947. Donald also had access to the Lincoln Legal Papers from the latter's years as a practising lawyer in Springfield which are still being processed by archivists and historians. He also makes clear in his note on sources that "This is a book about Lincoln - not a book about the literature about Lincoln" and his comments on historiographical controversy are confined largely to brief but perceptive footnotes.

What then of the book's portrayal of Lincoln himself? While offering many insights into and explanations of Lincoln's outlook and actions, Donald thankfully attempts no over-arching 'explanation' of one of the great charismatic figures of American and world history. He tells the story of his life and lets it speak largely for itself, ending with the assassination and eschewing the temptations of a judgemental epilogue. In relation to Lincoln's origins, the book focuses on his humble beginnings (notwithstanding his own reported belief that he was the descendant of an aristocratic Virginian planter on the wrong side of the blanket) and his tense relations with his father - a personality as well as a generational conflict - but from whom he appears to have inherited a deep and early aversion to slavery. The book also details Lincoln's later family life - his often difficult relations with his wife, Mary Todd, the deaths of two of their children and his own rather distant relationship with his eldest son, Robert.

The picture of the young Lincoln coming to terms with himself and his strong sense of destiny is a fascinating one, showing how the series of varied occupations in which he engaged as a young man - including sharing a bed for four years with his first law partner- must have contributed to that store of 'folk wisdom' which is one of his most endearing and enduring hallmarks. But despite Lincoln's own sense of predetermined fate and the workings of a 'higher power', the author shows how Lincoln grew into the man he became largely as a result of the situations in which he found himself and the experiences he underwent. The picture of Lincoln as a slow, deliberate, logical, often secretive thinker, anti-emotional and cautious in coming to decisions but tenacious once committed is a convincing one. At the same time the other side of his character -the tom-foolery, sarcasm and earthy humour which almost involved him in a duel with a Democratic opponent in 1842 - is well documented. The related dichotomy between the gregarious spinner of yarns and the private melancholic personality is also well brought out. Equally revealing is his favoured reading matter - Aesop's Fables, Pilgrim's Progress, Shakespeare, Paine. Both he and his wife were very fond of Burns whose longer poems he could recite. He also enjoyed both the melancholy sentimental verse and the humourous writings of his age but read little in the way of novels, history or biography, considering the last two untrustworthy.

Lincoln's views on religion/philosophy and slavery are revisited and built up through the course of the narrative, providing some of the most revealing insights in the book. Lincoln was not religious in the conventional sense and sometimes had to defend himself against accusations of being a 'deist' and 'anti-christian', accusations which he deflected rather than denied, with Socratic statements which said no more or less than he felt the circumstances and a diverse audience required - a tactic which also characterised his approach to politics from its earliest stages and at which he became a master during the course of the Civil War. At the same time he was deeply 'religious' in the philosophical sense. He always had a Bible on his desk and in his most reflective moments wrote and spoke of a 'higher power' which seems to have been more akin to a concept of fate or destiny than to a personal God - and on to which, Donald suggests, Lincoln was able psychologically to place the responsibility for the prolonged bloodshed and suffering of the War which affected him so deeply. At the same time he displayed a greater sense of responsibility and foresight than any of his rivals on either side.

As well as his central role in the Civil War and Emancipation, Lincoln's reputation rests to a considerable extent on the powerful and evocative speeches on which posterity continues to draw for inspiration. Donald is very good on the origins of the most famous speeches in terms of purpose, content and style - including what was derived and what was original - and shows how, from the Douglas debates through to his last major speech on reconstruction, Lincoln was one of the first, if not the first, leader in modern times to put his policies and proposals direct to the people over the heads of the political elite including Congress. His letter of June 1863, for example, to an obscure 'Copperhead' peace democrat, Corning, defending the Presidential violations of civil liberties in the conduct of the war was distributed in at least 500,000 copies and read by 10,000,000 people. He even appealed directly to the working people of Britain and France which must have seemed well out of order to their political masters. It is also worth noting that the Tsar Alexander II was the Union's strongest supporter amongst foreign heads of government - the 'liberator' of the serfs but still an exponent of autocratic government - an alleged parallel which Lincoln's critics were not slow to point out.

Donald also goes behind the scenes of the polished public statements and the historical icon, to reveal a striking picture of a sharp political operator. Lincoln's 1840 leap from a second-floor window of the Springfield capitol in an unsuccessful attempt to deprive the Democrats of a quorum goes beyond anything the reviewer has experienced in over 20 years of sometimes farcical EIS politics. While generally sticking to the conventions of the time by which candidates were expected to refrain from public involvement in their own campaigns, Lincoln is shown as having had his finger very much on the political pulse, working unceasingly behind the scenes together with his political advisers to influence the outcome of candidatures and campaigns. Far from being a 'dark horse' for the 1860 Republican nomination, Donald shows Lincoln to have been the natural choice because he antagonised the various factions in and around the Republican party less than any other potential candidate such as Seward - or, as he himself suggested, antagonised them all equally. His capacity for keeping people just on-side by neither endorsing nor condemning them while continuing to steer his own course seems to have been almost limitless.

This pragmatic approach to events, policies and personalities is brought out well. When he was elected President he was still very much a local Illinois politician in terms of outlook and experience and had to learn fast on the job. This, together with his cautious, methodical, 'taking stock' approach, his over-confidence in unionist sentiment in the south and the conventions of the time, largely explains the famous 'silence' between his election and inauguration for which he has been much criticised. Nor could he be expected to impose an authority which only later events bestowed on him. He was on an equally steep learning curve in selecting and working with a cabinet composed of disparate elements - a task which he mastered largely by leaving them to get on with their jobs while he increasingly took the big decisions on himself. And the biggest was, of course, the Emancipation Proclamation in relation to which Donald shows Lincoln to have been motivated both by pragmatism and principle; pragmatism in the sense of mobilising blacks on behalf of the Union, preventing foreign recognition of the Confederacy and wrong-footing his abolitionist critics as well as in having delayed the measure for fear of antagonising the border states; principle in the sense that Donald documents Lincoln's long-standing opposition to slavery and refusal to backtrack on the Proclamation, defending him against charges of racism resulting from his half-hearted advocacy of the colonisation of freed slaves in central America. At worst the latter was an attempt to appease the racism of many in the north and, in his albeit limited personal contact with blacks, the evidence is that he treated them as equals and with a respect that was reciprocated (although his plans for reconstruction did not appear to give a high priority to advancing their status). His lack of prejudice is further borne out by his refusal to establish the immigration controls advocated by the anti-Catholic, anti-foreigner 'Know-nothings' although he did not alienate their potential support by explicitly rejecting them.

Donald does not shrink from delving into the darker corners, emphasising Lincoln's ambition (with its admixture of self-deprecation) and analysing those episodes such as the appointment of the tainted Cameron as War Minister or the failed negotiations with the Confederate commissioners at Hampton Roads in February 1865 where Lincoln's integrity has been called into question, but in general the image of 'Honest Abe' is confirmed even if he did sail close to the wind at times.

On the crucial question of Lincoln's handling of military affairs and his relations with his generals, he is shown as possessing a good strategic sense, having been an early advocate of the destruction of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia rather than the capture of their capital at Richmond, but lacking in the technical and tactical military knowledge which might have enabled him to have acted more decisively in relation, for example, to McLellan. Donald also credits Lincoln with having got Grant to abandon his initial elaborate plan of campaign as general-in-chief in favour of the strategy of 'attack on all fronts' by getting Grant to believe it was his own idea. On the other hand it is arguable that the relative success in the West was due to the fact that there were fewer political cooks spoiling the military broth. To the picture of Lincoln fighting Jeff Davis' Confederacy, as well as the radicals in his own party and the Peace Democrats, is added that of his struggle with his own commanders. It is perhaps not surprising that he saw the continuing survival of the Union cause in the midst of failure, dissension and defeat as evidence of a higher guiding purpose.

As well as penetrating insights into an extraordinary and complex personality, his daily life and work routine, and the big issues of the Civil War, the book contains a lot of fascinating and often unflattering detail which help to break down, or at least get behind, the myth. The picture of all six foot four of his lanky frame with its crowning stove-pipe hat standing exposed to fire on the battlements of Fort Stevens (two people nearby were shot) is a tribute both to his courage and his foolhardiness (trust in a higher power?). His close attention to military technology even led him to engage in a brief correspondence with someone who claimed to be able to predict the weather. When he met with a delegation of Amerindians following the 1862 Sioux uprising in

Minnesota in which 350 whites were killed and which resulted in the execution of 39 Indians (reduced by Lincoln from 303) - he stated with breathtaking condescension and presumably unconscious hypocrisy "we are not as a race so much disposed to fight and kill one another as our red brethren". We are also told of the excavation of his house and midden in Springfield and of proposals to clone his DNA to discover if he suffered from Marfan's syndrome.

There is not much analysis of Lincoln's economic views and Donald doesn't think he had much interest in or even understanding of such matters. He shared the general Whig/Republican positions on the protective tariff, a national bank, a Homestead Act, federal finance for infrastructure development, and subscribed to a primitive labour theory of value in an anti-planter aristocracy rather than an anticapitalist sense. The financial and economic side of the war he left largely to his sometime rival the capable Salmon P. Chase. Partly due, therefore, to Lincoln's own personality and areas of activity and interest there is a lack of socio-economic analysis of what he represented. Lincoln himself was very much a self-made man -a successful lawyer for individual and commercial interests (including at least one slave owner) before entering politics. Although a picture is presented of the White House being open to all-comers (and Lincoln himself was certainly no snob) the evidence seems to indicate that Mary Lincoln was in charge of the social side and that the Lincolns, as one would expect, generally mixed with the relatively wealthy elite whether self-made or inherited. This is not to call for a rigorous class analysis - Lincoln himself had one foot in his pioneering origins and the other in his experiences as a lawyer/politician - but simply to express a feeling that a bit more could have been made of such issues given the importance of economic and social factors in the Civil War.

But this in no way invalidates the achievement of Donald's masterly account which adds considerably to our understanding of Lincoln's personal and political growth and development, and, in passing, to our understanding of the Civil War. Although Donald does not spell it out in his brilliant analysis of the Gettysburg Address, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, as Lincoln moved from defending the Law, the Constitution and, above all, the Union, to appealing more directly to the humanitarian and egalitarian sentiments of the Declaration of Independence, he was drawing ever closer to the social and moral sources of his political consciousness, adjusting the flame with such care, skill and precision that his words will go on endlessly "moving from past to present to future".

This is an invaluable book for anyone doing the 'House Divided' option at CSYS/Advanced Higher - not only essential reading for those doing a dissertation relating to Lincoln but also for general course reference. It is already a best-seller in America so hopefully it should come out in paperback before long. If, like me, you cannot afford the hardback from the departmental requisition, get your school and/or local library to order it.

Duncan Toms

The Origins of the Russian Civil War **Geoffrey Swain**

Longman £13.99 296pp 1996 ISBN 0 582 05968 2

This new book in Longman's ***Origins of Modern Wars*** series, has lots of new ideas and emphases to offer; many of them unfortunately needing too much in the way of detailed explanation to be of use to a typical Higher set whose reading "Target for tonight" seems too often to peak at about two sides of McColgan. Staff teaching the "Russia: Great Power" section, would however, get a lot from this book. Its title seems less than auspicious since a scrutiny of the syllabus doesn't exactly require a coverage of the *"Origins"*, more an analysis of the impacts on its course/the reasons for Red victory/extension of Bolshevik authority angles. This is where though, that there is more to this book than its title suggests. Its deep discussion of the origins and how far you can take the origins back, does have a vital impact on its course since its background shaped what it became.

Dr Swain suggests that the Russian Civil War was a war of many phases; some more important than others. One very much overlooked phase is the Reds versus the Greens *(best described as moderate Socialists and SR's),* which in itself shaped a lot of post-civil war actions (it created in the Bolsheviks a lasting hatred and disdain of the peasantry which was to reach its culmination in the collectivisation of the 1930's). In contrast, the author argues that the Reds versus Whites phase *"did relatively little to shape the subsequent soviet regime".* He argues that the Reds versus Greens phase is too often seen as the preliminary skirmishing before the main event and Red propaganda of course, wants it that way (It doesn't want to admit that there were alternative socialist forms of government that were viable and available that the Bolsheviks crushed). In this sense, you can see Kronstadt in March 1921 as the final Green resistance, a resistance that had started as early as November 1917, when Lenin decided not to co-operate with the other socialist parties. Thus, the Reds versus Greens phases both started earlier and finished later than what is normally construed as the main war (Reds versus Whites). How then has it been so forgotten? The answer lies in that to rediscover this war would require that history be re-written, yet it is easier to follow the traditional line and rock no boats. This is why the author, clearly a radical revisionist, chases his task with such enthusiasm and fetchingly describes the Reds versus Greens conflict as *"the forgotten civil war'.* If Lenin's refusal to co-operate with the other socialist parties on 4th November 1917, signalled that a civil war was imminent, his decision to abolish the Constituent Assembly on 5th January 1918 started it. The moderate socialists had hoped to supplant Bolshevism democratically; they were now denied this chance so they had to try to do it by force. For most of 1918 they tried. It was Kolchak's coup of November 1918 that ruined their efforts. The civil war was turned from a Reds versus Greens into a Reds versus White Generals. This is what the Bolsheviks wanted, and History has been written from their point of view ever since because *"Kolchaks action ended a war that the moderate socialists might have won and started a war that the Whites would inevitably lose".* Contentious stuff!

The Allies however were keen to intervene since they were very pro the patriotic socialists; what later became formalised as the directory; it wasn't because they liked the White generals. Historians have criticised the directory's socialist experiment as typical White divisiveness - bound to fail, (in a back-handed sort of way summing up the ineptness of British involvement, trust us to back the losers!). Dr Swain's view is that the directory was far more unified than you might think, and certainly, *"It's defeat was by no means inevitable or final"* In fact, his view is that the very survival of Lenin's regime was due to Kolchak and the White generals. They snuffed out the Greens' threat by their coup in November 1918 and therefore removed any chance of a "middle way" in Russian politics.

Seen from this angle, civil war therefore really started with Kornilov by July 1917, since that was when the middle socialist road had its first set-back facing counter-revolutionary forces. In these early days, Kolchak also was another candidate to lead the counter-revolution and "was *almost besieged by counter-revolutionary groups wanting to adopt him as their leader."* Britain's attempts to make sense of this fast cracking-up situation began with Somerset Maugham's visit to Russia in Autumn 1917 to see exactly what socialist groups there were to deal with and where Thomas Masaryk and the Czech Legion stood in the whole business. Dr Swain's analysis shows that whatever views the British might have had, about helping the democratic socialist element to make progress inside Russia, were doomed by what we know already: that every player in Russia at that time was determined to play their hand as they saw it and take advice from nobody. It is this which makes it such a tangle to explain. Everybody had got hidden agendas and was playing one hand while keeping another to try to cover their backs. Thus, by spring of 1918, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks (at that time facing diminishing support) were weighing up what they might do either with the Germans or with the British (Lockhart's mission) or even a rapprochement with other socialists: We were weighing up what we might do with either the Czechs, the Bolsheviks or the patriotic socialists, while the Czechs were weighing up the Bolsheviks or the Allies or going home anyway, Perhaps naively, we thought that a plan was beginning to come together where Russia could move towards democracy and stay in the war, Lenin however, had in fact pushed out on his own, decided against compromise with anybody (but for an economic deal with the Germans) and was going to go for it; start a civil war; hit the Greens first and get them out of the way.

This is the nub of Dr Swain's argument about the origins of the Russian Civil War; Lenin wanted it. (p156) He had at least two chances of negotiated settlement out of all Russia's social conflicts, yet he chose civil war because any alternative meant a coalition socialist administration. Any chance that the Greens had of a speedy victory were ruined from the start when *"all the actors were in the wrong place at the wrong time. and everything went off at half cock."* The decision by the Czech Legion to let the allies down (in the first instance) by going it totally alone, also helped scotch any early chance the Greens had.

By the summer of 1918 however, Dr Swain's view is that the Greens had overcome some of their earlier problems and were a viable force; with a People's Army and the Czechs back on their side. One group set up an assembly (from all possible elected members from the closed Constituent Assembly) and a government at Samara with an administration which *"was aggressively socialist."* It planned to undo the excesses of the Bolsheviks socialist experiments while retaining the socialist gains of February 1917. Four pages on its measures and aspirations (pp188-191) reveal the affection Dr Swain has for this near-success for popular socialism; a dream which was not to be. Another moderate socialist group meanwhile (URR), which had most British support, fell out with the Samara group but appeared to start a settlement of differences at the Chelyabinsk conference at the end of August 1918, (continued at the Ufa conference in September). The Greens' cause seemed on the verge of great things. It was at this moment that the real threat emerged: not the Bolsheviks but the White Generals. Contrary to the verdict of some of its critics, *"the directory was overthrown not because it was on the point of collapse, but because it was on the point of success."* It was overthrown by kornilovite white officers of the reactionary right. The coup was *"The work of headstrong and embittered young officers"* who were worried that the directory was *"repeating all the old mistakes of Kerensky."* By staging the Omsk coup on 18th November 1918, Kolchak and the Whites highjacked the civil war. Only four days earlier, the British had "recognised" the directory. We now snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. We had been backing a possible winner making a run up the rails, now, the horse we seemed to be backing was an outright loser; the officer corps and upper classes. Of course, it is by no means certain the directory would have won the civil war, but it was pretty certain that allied intervention would now have less a part to play in it. The Kolchak coup pushed many socialists into the arms of Lenin while the ending of the war on the Western Front removed most of the allied reasons for staying in Russia. Lenin was now able to go about his business of finishing off the Greens, This fight became subsumed within the greater, more heroic (for the Bolsheviks, since they weren't attacking their own kind) struggle between Reds and Whites; the civil war the History books do tell us about.

Andrew Hunt

International Yearbook of History Education. Vol. 1, 1995:

edited by A.Dickinson, P.Gordon, P.Lee, J.Slater

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Coming at a time of increasing international contacts between history teachers and educationists, this is a very timely new publication emerging from London University's Institute of Education where most of the editors work,but with an international team of contributors. Its ambitious objectives in relation to history education are: to review aims, developments and achievements; to examine the philosophical, psychological, sociological and historical perspectives; to build up a global shared understanding of the consequences and effectiveness of particular ways of treating and teaching history in education; and to combat the manipulation and distortion of history education for political purposes. To this end the editors invite contributions from all over the world for the next and subsequent volumes.

This first volume contains eleven varied and stimulating articles. There is an analysis of different approaches to 'multiculturalism' and 'nation building' in history teaching in South Africa which gets behind the political assumptions which often underlie such slogans. Two articles on the situation in Spain provide a revealing review of changing history syllabuses and prescribed text-books over the past two centuries, and an in-depth analysis of the debates and measures of the past 20 years which have parallelled the debates elsewhere on the so-called 'new history'. A long article on the National Curriculum in England is very useful in digging deeper than the often ill-informed public debate, and addressing some of the real problems, particularly those relating to attainment targets and assessment. There is a very bland description of the changing fortunes of history education in the People's Republic of China which skirts round most of the issues the Yearbook is setting out to address - especially in comparison with a much more robust and revealing article on how Estonia and Eastern Germany are negotiating the rapids between communist dogma and nationalist reaction.

An article from Denmark provides a useful summary of how their decentralised history curriculum operates and one from New South Wales shows the difficulties Australia is experiencing as a result of often conflicting lobbies for more 'Australian history' versus a more pluralist, skills-based approach, which seems to divide along broadly right-left political lines. Two further contributions from England raise important questions in relation to text-book use and economic awareness amongst history teachers. Perhaps the article of most immediate interest, however, is a report of the symposium on 'History Teaching in the New Europe' organised by the Council of Europe in Bruges in December 1991 which led to the formation of EUROCLIO (European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations) and subsequent international initiatives, and in which SATH is now involved.

We should avoid the temptation to dismiss this sort of publication as of no practical value to history teachers. The more 'clued-up' we are on the different approaches to history education, the better and more enjoyable the job becomes, and the easier it is to defend and promote it. The price is prohibitive but ask your local library and/or college to order it. Better still, submit an article on history teaching in Scotland.

Edward Duncanson

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