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EDITOR: ANDREW HUNT

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

John Collis is Professor of European Archaeology in the Department of Archaeology and Prehistory in the University of Sheffield. He specialises in the pre-Roman Iron Age, and his book on *The European Iron Age, and Oppida. earliest towns north of the Alps* are standard textbooks. He is also on the Scientific Council for the Celtic research centre at Mont Beuvray in Burgundy. He has been excavating in the Auvergne in central France for over 30 years, looking at the processes which led up to urbanisation in pre-Roman Gaul, and has more recently started field survey in central Spain. His interest in the Celts developed from this work, finding that historical and archaeological data for the Auvergne did not fit with the assumed expansion of the Celts, which led on to a detailed historiographic study of the subject on which he is writing a book.

Dr David Parker is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Leeds. He is the author of numerous articles and books on the social and intellectual foundations of French Absolutism. These include *The Making of French Absolutism* (London, Edward Arnold 1983) and *State and Class in Ancien Régime France. The Road to Modernity ?* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Dr Emma Macleod is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, and has lectured in History at the University of Stirling since 1996. She has published *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars against Revolutionary France, 1792-1802* (Ashgate, 1998) and several articles on aspects of British responses to the French Revolution and the subsequent wars. She is now working on a study of British attitudes to the United States of America after independence, c.1783-1832.

Dr Cynthia S Hamilton is currently the Subject Leader for American Studies at the Crewe and Alsager Faculty of Manchester Metropolitan University. She is the author of a number of articles on the representation of slavery in antebellum literature and culture, and has recently completed a book on the roots of anti-slavery rhetoric.

Dr Chris Venter was a high school teacher and a lecturer at the Wellington Teachers' College and a lecturer in History at the University of Port Elizabeth before he joined the Department of History at the University of Stellenbosch. He specialises in nineteenth century South African history with the focus on the Cape Colony during the Anglo-Boer War. He has published various articles in this regard and has recently published a book entitled *The diary of Stephanus Francois Hugo, Prisoner of War in India during the Anglo-Boer War*. He is currently researching the influence of the Anglo-Boer War on the community of Stellenbosch. At present he is teaching 19th and 20th century African and South African history to under-graduate and post-graduate students.

Dr Mark Sandle is Principal Lecturer in Russian and Soviet History at De Montfort University, Leicester. He studied at Warwick University and at the Centre for Russian and East European studies, Birmingham University. He has recently published *A Short History of Soviet Socialism* (UCL Press 1999) and is currently working on a volume (with Edwin Bacon of CREES, Birmingham University) entitled *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (Palgrave forthcoming). He is close to completing work on a Russian history textbook with Routledge, also due for publication next year.

Dr John Buckley is Senior Lecturer and Head of War Studies in the Department of History and War Studies at the University of Wolverhampton. He has written widely on many aspects of modern warfare, in particular the interwar era and the Second World War. His books include *The RAF and Trade Defence: Constant Endeavour* (Keele University Press, 1995) and *Air Power in the Age of Total War* (UCL, 1999). He is currently researching the operational effectiveness of the British Army in Normandy in 1944 for a forthcoming book, and is editing a book titled *War and the Twentieth Century - Myths and Realities*.

Editorial

ANDREW HUNT

The success of last year's issue of the *Year Book*, with its wide-ranging review of either topics or historiography in ten of the thirteen Advanced Higher History fields, led to a relatively common cry from the history teachers who mentioned it in passing to me; please can we have more of the same? I am happy to oblige so, as I promised in last year's editorial, here it is; *Advanced Higher, The Sequel*.

By good fortune I have been able to obtain articles relating to the three fields which were missing from the 2000 edition; (Roman Britain, Louis XIV and South Africa), and also have additional development of aspects of four of the fields already dealt with, [and for once I have not even sought a Nazi Germany article!] It is clear to me that the breakdown of each of the thirteen fields into its sub-topics should provide rich areas to look into for articles for future *Year Books*, and I think we may confidently say that Advanced Higher will figure as our *Year Book* theme for a few more years yet.

It is a pity this year that HSDU have not had the budget to become involved in co-producing the *Year Book*. It was hoped that this relationship between SATH and HSDU could continue, after all, it seemed an ideal arrangement to link the History teacher's 'professional' association with the national curriculum developers and their distribution network. It meant that important Advanced Higher materials could be sent to every History practitioner but be produced under the auspices of SATH, the very group that was most experienced at doing it. However, this year it was not to be; we hope further opportunities for collaboration will exist on future occasions.

This issue of the *Year Book* will be 'hitting the streets' to SATH members at the very time that the first cohort of candidates have just sat the Advanced Higher History examination. History teachers throughout Scotland will therefore know the shape and expectations of this new exam. What has been the reaction? It is very important to get this sort of thing right and ask ourselves the key questions. Have we [and the pupils] been well enough prepared? Have the materials produced so far pointed you in the right direction? Have the exemplar papers been an appropriate pointer to what the first real exam was like? Were the demands of the examination within the anticipated capacity of the pupil group and the time available as you saw it? Was it a realistic progression from Higher? SATH has long been a conduit [amongst other groups] for passing feedback to the SQA, on the effectiveness of their examinations. Can I make a plea through this page that all SATH members take the time to give a bit of close personal scrutiny to their chosen field of study within the Adv. Higher examination, and get some comments off to SATH on the strengths and weaknesses of the examination paper concerning the field[s] their candidates sat.

It is always a pleasure to end my editorial with a word of thanks to all the contributors. This is more than a mere courtesy; but a sincere note of appreciation for the thought and effort and perception that they all show in their articles.

Again and again SATH members see me and say 'Another great *Year Book*, Andrew', to which I'm never quite sure how to respond. After all, there's nothing great that I've done. The articles arrived by disc or e-mail so I did no typing; they required very little editing or proof reading, they all arrived before the deadline date and the printers happily looked after all production details. I just picked the front cover! So, no sweat my end; all the credit belongs to the authors themselves and I am happy once again to place this on record.

The Origins of the Celts

PROFESSOR JOHN COLLIS

It is now generally agreed by British archaeologists that the ancient peoples of Britain and Ireland were not Celts, and the idea that they were is a relatively modern invention, resting on modern definitions of a 'Celt' which were not relevant to the ancient world (Collis 1996, 1997; James 1998, 1999; Hill 1993a). In this article I will discuss briefly what the ancient sources tell us, how the modern definition came about, and the implications for our interpretation of the past and for present day ethnicity.

The ancient Celts

Celts first appear in the writings of Hecataeus (c. 480 BC) and Herodotus (c. 430 BC); the latest contemporary mention, in the late 5th century AD, is by Sidonius Apollinaris who apologises to his brother-in-law Ecdicius that the Arvernian nobility suffer from the 'scurf of the Celtic tongue'.

Nowhere in the ancient writings do we have a definition of a 'Celt' other than stereotypic descriptions (war-loving, drunken, tall, blonde, moustachioed). In both Greek and Latin there are two related terms: *Keltoi/Galatne* and *Celtae/Galli*. Different authors deploy these terms in different ways, either as synonyms or in contrast; Caesar says that the people of central Gaul called themselves *Celtoe* but the Romans called them *Galli*; Posidonius, in contrast says that the *Keltoi* lived west of the Rhine and the *Galatoe* to the east (Tierney 1960). Caesar also defines fairly precisely where they lived, bounded by the Garenne, the Atlantic, the Seine, the Marne and the Rhine, a specific group who contrasted with the neighbouring *Belgae*, *Germani* and *Aquitani*; in contrast, Ephorus, writing two centuries earlier, refers to all the inhabitants of western Europe as *Keltoi*, in the same way that we label all the indigenous people of the Americas as 'Indians'. In the latter case the usage is fairly meaningless as it would have included the ancestors of modern German, Basque and possibly Finnish speakers as well as of others which have since disappeared. We also have the problem of the *Germani* who are mentioned for the first time as an ethnic group during the Slave Wars of the 70s BC - were they a group who had recently expanded from northern into central Europe, or had they previously been included among the *Keltoi* or *Galatai*?

Ignoring the vague usage of Ephorus, peoples who referred to themselves as Celts or were so named by classical writers, are scattered across Europe, including the Celtiberians and Celtici of Iberia, the Celts of central Gaul and northern Italy, and the Galatians of central Turkey around Ankara. The situation in central Europe is less clear, but the Boii of Bohemia and Austria and the Scordisci who lived around Budapest were fairly certainly Celts, but there were other ethnic groups such as Illyrians. Most of these groups spoke what we now call a 'Celtic' language; one exception may be the Celts who, according to Hecataeus, lived around *Narbo* - in the 5th century BC the people here spoke Iberian, a non-Indo-European language.

The Celts of Britain

No ancient author ever refers to the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland as Celts, though Caesar says that the people who lived in southeast Britain resembled the *Galli*. The first author to suggest that the ancient population of Britain and Ireland included Celts was George Buchanan in his *Rerum scoticarum historia* (1582; Aikman 1827; Collis 1999). In the brilliant first book of this work he employed techniques of linguistic study which were not rediscovered until the 19th century. He started by demolishing the medieval myths for the populating of the islands, involving the eponymous Trojan, Greek and Egyptian ancestors, Brutus, Gaythelos and Scota (Kendrick 1950). Instead he turned to the methodology recommended by Pliny, of studying the language, the gods and the 'eternal' names of rivers and cities. He had no direct evidence of the language spoken, but he noted the similarity of the names of gods

found in Roman Britain with those in Gaul and Iberia. He then systematically trawled through all the ancient sources available to him collecting the place-names mentioned, and he recognised similar suffixes such as *-briga*, *-dunum*, and *-lanum* which occurred widely across western Europe. From this, he argued, the islands had been populated from the immediately adjacent parts of the continent, except for the Picts whom Bede had stated came from *Scythia* (Scandinavia). However, he noted that they seemed to speak a similar language to the other inhabitants, so were related in some way. For the fine-tuning he turned to ancient authors such as Caesar, Tacitus and Livy, and to similar tribal or city names which suggested specific links. He identified three groups:

- 1) **The Picts.** These he suggested came from the eastern Baltic where they had adopted tattooing from the neighbouring Scythians (hence Picti = painted). Livy talked about the migration of Gauls to central Europe, led by Segovisus, and so Buchanan thought they might be the ancestors of the Gothunni and Aestiones who, according to Tacitus, spoke *Britannice*, and were in turn the ancestors of the Picts.
- 2) **The Britons.** The language spoken by the Welsh was different from that of the Irish, suggesting a slightly different origin. Buchanan suggested they were the descendants of the Belgae from northern Gaul, who, according to Caesar, 'came to raid and then to settle'.
- 3) **The Irish and Scots.** Buchanan linked the Brigantes mentioned in northern Britain and in southeastern Ireland with *Brigantium* (A Coruna) in northwestern Spain, and suggested this as their origin. The ancient sources talked of Celts in Spain, whom he suggested originally came from southern France. The migration of the Scoti from Ireland into Scotland was historically documented in the early medieval period, so he claimed a Celtic origin for both Scots and Irish.

Equally important is Buchanan's recognition of a group of related languages which he called 'Gallic', consisting of Brittonic, Belgic and Celtic sub-groups. This group of languages he contrasted with the languages derived from Latin (Italian, French, Spanish), and those derived from German, which included English.

It is difficult to judge the impact of Buchanan's ideas. The book most commonly quoted as representing late 16th century ideas on the origin of the British is William Camden's *Britannia*, first published in 1586, and subsequently updated by Camden himself and by later authors, as well as being translated into English. Camden quotes Buchanan and his place-name evidence, but never refers to Celts in Britain, and he sits on the fence when it comes to deciding between the Brutus myth and a Gallic origin for the British. Buchanan's revolutionary work on place-names and his place in the history of linguistics have only recently been recognised. His language classification chronologically falls between that of Dante, and that of Joseph Scaliger published posthumously in 1610. Scaliger recognised the Romance, Germanic and Slavic groupings, but not the 'Gallic'. It is worth noting the Buchanan was a friend of Scaliger's father Julius, and visited him during his exile in France.

It was at the beginning of the 18th century that the Celtic origin of the Ancient Britons became commonly accepted, stimulated by two publications. The first was *L'Antiquité de la Nation et de la Langue celtique* (1703) by the Abbé Pierre-Yves Pezron, a native Breton speaker. His book was soon translated into English as *The Antiquities of Nations* (1706). He mistakenly assumed that Breton represented the last traces of the language spoken by the pre-Roman Celts of Gaul (it is now generally accepted as a post-Roman introduction from Britain). He claimed that it was one of the 'original' languages spoken at the Tower of Babel, and that during their migrations westwards, the Celts introduced elements of their language into Greek and Latin. He recognised the links between Welsh and Breton, but makes no mention of Irish. He is important in being the first to introduce the modern definition of a Celt, as someone who speaks a Celtic language, and also the influence that he had on British writers such as Edward Lhuyd and Henry Rowland.

Lhuyd's interest in British antiquity had been stimulated in his involvement in the rewriting of Camden's *Britannia* for the 1695 edition; his friendship with the naturalist John Ray was the source of his linguistic studies. He planned to publish, in his own right, a series of volumes entitled *Archaeologia Britannica*, for which he sent round questionnaires to correspondents throughout Britain and Ireland, and followed them up with his own journeys. Unfortunately, due to his premature death, only the first volume appeared, the *Celtic Glossography* (1707). This was a comparative dictionary of Scots Gaelic, Irish, Welsh, Cornish and Breton, with comparable Latin and Greek words, demonstrating the clear links between the languages. Lhuyd consciously followed Pezron in his nomenclature, but from his Preface it is clear that he thought Celtic could only properly be applied to the continental languages. He noted the distinction between the languages which employed a 'C' (Irish and Gaelic) and those which employed a 'P' (Welsh, Breton) in words such as Mac... and (M)Ap... The former he named Goidelic (which he considered to be older) and the latter Brythonic.

Such was the influence of these two books, that by the end of the 18th century it was universally accepted that the original population of Britain was 'Celtic' (e.g. in writers such as Sir Walter Scott). It is difficult to document how this came about, or the reasons for it. Simon James (1999) has argued that it is due to the Scots, Irish and Welsh seeking a common identity separate from that of the expanding English, especially following the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707, and he sees Lhuyd as something of a Welsh nationalist. This may be true of Pezron, who was underlining the antiquity of the Breton language as against French, but I do not see this anywhere in Lhuyd's writing; the letter quoted by James is in fact deriding Pezron's nationalism (Gunther 1945:489). Rather I see 'celticism' as part of the development of Romanticism in the 18th century that was to culminate in Macpherson's *Ossian*, and fuelled by an obsession with the Druids. The two earliest mentions of the Celts in an archaeological context are in Henry Rowland's history of Anglesey, *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* (1723), and by William Stukeley (1723); both had strong Druidic obsessions (Piggott 1985).

It was not until the 19th century that Lhuyd's innovative work was recognised, with the development of the German school of comparative linguistics culminating, in the case of Celtic studies, with Zeuss' *Grammatica Celtica* (1859). The major development of this period was the recognition of a larger group of 'Indo-European' languages extending from Ireland to India (Mallory 1989). A common origin was sought, possibly in eastern Europe, on the basis of the words shared in common by all Indo-European languages, and it was assumed that they had therefore been introduced into western Europe at a later stage. The existence of languages such as Basque and Finnish, which did not belong to this group, as well as place-name evidence, implied non-Indo-European languages had been replaced some time in prehistory.

The contribution of archaeology

The late 18th and early 19th century saw a debate among anthropologists about the reasons for human variety. Some argued for a series of separate creations (culminating, inevitably, in that supreme being, the white European!); others such as John Cowles Prichard (1813, 1973) envisaged a rapid evolution to adapt to local environmental conditions. Prichard suggested that language was therefore a better indicator of origins, leading him to write the first book on the Celtic languages using the concept of Indo-European languages (1831), and suggesting an origin for them somewhere in eastern Europe. However, he was a lone voice, and those claiming that the study of skull shapes were significant (craniology) were dominant (Morse 1999). Studies in Scandinavia (and later in Britain) showed a shift from a long-headed 'dolichocephalic' population to one that was round-headed ('brachycephalic'); the latter were equated with the speakers of Indo-European languages, including the Celts.

However, a framework was needed to date the skeletal remains. The first step came in the 1830s when the Dane Christian Thomsen put forward his 'Three Age System' with successive periods typified by an increasingly complex technology, with objects made first of stone, then of bronze, and finally of iron. Graves with associated objects could thus be dated, and the system was quickly adopted by physical anthropologists (Prichard was the first to introduce it to Britain, in 1840). The craniologists claimed the change in skull shape took place at the beginning of the Bronze Age, so most

writers from the later 19th century label the Bronze Age in western Europe as 'Celtic'.

As the 19th century progressed, more refined dating techniques were developed, such as typology (the classification of objects and placing them in evolutionary sequences), association (objects found together in a grave or hoard), and cross-dating (linking different local sequences together by the occurrence of imitations or imported objects within those sequences). By the end of the 19th century the Swedish prehistorian Oscar Montelius (1903) had succeeded in linking the sequences of Scandinavia with the historical sequences of Egypt, and the detailed chronology which he produced for the later phases of prehistory only differ in minor details from those used today. Prichard's evolutionary theories had foundered on the short timescale provided by the Bible (a mere 6000 years). In 1859 the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and more especially the recognition by the prehistorians John Evans and Joseph Prestwich of the great antiquity of mankind, allowed a more flexible approach to dating, including linguistic and racial change (Daniel 1964).

It was also believed that different peoples had distinctive art forms and material culture. In the 1850s John Kemble identified similar types of burial urns in Britain and northern Germany which he linked with the Anglo-Saxon invasions described by Bede. The associated 'Germanic' metalwork contrasted with objects with distinctive curvilinear patterns ('trumpet scrolls') which occurred on objects such as the Tara brooch (found in 1850) and the Battersea Shield (1857). Kemble died before he could publish his ideas, and it was left to his colleague Augustus Franks to complete the text and illustrations in a memorial volume *Horae Ferales* (Kemble *et al.* 1863). This style of art turned up on both pre-Roman finds in Britain and Ireland, and also in early Christian Ireland, and as the populations of both were considered to be 'Celtic', Franks termed this style 'Late Celtic Art' (Early Celtic Art was by implication the geometric patterns found on Bronze Age pottery and metalwork). This view was more extensively published in 1904 by J. Romilly Allen in his book *Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times*, the first book on what has since become generally known as Celtic Art (though he also considered Bronze Age finds).

Similarly decorated metalwork was known from the continent, especially from rich burials in western Germany, and from the site of La Tène on Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland. Most of the finest objects were considered to be imports from the classical cultures of the Mediterranean - some are, but many are local products in the distinctive 'La Tène' or 'Celtic' style. It is only with the publication of Joseph Dechelette's *Manuel d'Archéologie* in 1914 that their status was recognised as well as the origin of the style (northern France, southern Germany and Bohemia) in the 5th century BC. Dechelette's ideas were confirmed and greatly refined in Paul Jacobsthal's *Early Celtic Art* (1944). Dechelette drew on other strands of work, notably that of the first professor of Celtic Studies in the Sorbonne, Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, who, using linguistic and historical evidence, suggested that France had been colonised by the Celts from around the middle of the first millennium BC, arriving from central Europe and southern Germany, and reaching the Mediterranean around the 3rd - 2nd century (1877). This contrasted with the views of the standard 19th century book on the Gauls by Amedée Thierry, which saw the Gauls as indigenous (1827).

Dechelette mainly used burial rites to identify his 'Celts' - extended inhumation, in contrast with the crouched inhumation of the earlier 'Ligurians' and the cremation rite of the Germani and Belgae (none of this can now be supported factually or methodologically). He also used a concept which had been developing in the later 19th century, that of distinctive 'cultures' which can be defined not only from burial rites, but also in terms of artefacts - pottery, metal objects. He did not go to the extreme of his contemporary, Gustav Kossinna (1911), who believed that 'cultures' could always be equated with specific peoples, a view propagated in English speaking circles by Gordon Childe. The La Tène culture (*civilisation de La Tène*), Dechelette suggested, could be divided into three groups, 'Celtic', 'Germanic' and 'Insular'. Kossinna's more nationalistic approach, associated as it was with later Nazi claims for territorial expansion, has generally been discredited; at the same time, authors on the 'Celts' have tended to follow Kossinna's prescription ever more closely. Most of the books and exhibitions on the Celts have maps of the origins and expansion of the Celts (e.g. Cunliffe 1997; James 1993; Megaw and Megaw 1989; Raftery 1994). They are both methodologically unacceptable, and also deviate more and more from historical and archaeological facts.

Summary

The modern definition of the Celts is founded on a number of misinterpretations or false methodologies:

- 1) There has been an uncritical use of the ancient sources, with a failure to recognise the different usages in different authors.
- 2) The modern definition of the Celts has been imposed on the ancient world, that is of a Celt as a speaker on a 'Celtic' language.
- 3) The term 'Celtic languages' is an arbitrary name, and is based on Pezron's mistaken belief that Breton was a survival of the language of the ancient Celtic inhabitants of Gaul.
- 4) Celtic Art is only so-called because of the mistaken belief in the 19th century that the inhabitants of Britain were Celts. The area of its supposed origin (northern France, southern Germany and Bohemia) was mainly inhabited by the *Belgae*, not the *Celtae*.
- 5) The concept of an 'archaeological culture' is at best a heuristic device to allow archaeologists to classify their material. The equation of a 'La Tene culture' with the Celts is thus methodologically unacceptable, and also fails to take into account archaeological biases (e.g. the lack of burial evidence in the areas of central and western France defined as Celtic by Caesar). In the case of Iberia it blatantly does not work - there are historical Celts, but no La Tene culture.
- 6) There are two interpretations of the origin of the Celts (or of the Celtic languages), one which sees them as essentially indigenous in western Europe, that is arriving relatively early, or developing *in situ*, before the Iron Age (Thierry 1827; Pare 1991; Renfrew 1991); the other sees them as late arrivals (d'Arbois de Jubainville 1877; Dechelette 1914, and most 20th century authors). The evidence is inconclusive, though personally I feel the first one is more likely; in that case the correlation with the 'La Tene Culture' becomes geographically weak.
- 7) The traditional approach typified by 20th century authors assumes we can define an ancient people called the 'Celts', a group of 'Celtic' languages, and a 'Celtic' art and culture, and that these can be equated with one another. This is blatantly false, and at best there are only significant overlaps (e.g. most ancient Celts spoke a Celtic language, but not all speakers of Celtic languages were Celts).
- 8) It is assumed that there were standard characteristics of Celtic societies (social structure, religion, head-hunting, etc.), and that these often stereotypic definitions can be applied to societies where we have no written evidence, simply because the people may have spoken a Celtic language. In fact the archaeological evidence suggests a great variety of different types of society at this period, some very hierarchical, some relatively egalitarian.

Implications

The archaeological literature is littered with examples of misinterpretations due to preconceptions about the Celts, and to the imposition of modern definitions on the ancient world. In the past chronologies have been warped to fit in with preconceived interpretations (Collis 1984). One eminent Austrian prehistorian warned me about some of his younger colleagues who were dating some Early La Tene finds from Austria to the 5th century BC; though these finds might be 5th century in other parts of Europe, this could not be true in Austria, because the Celts did not arrive until 400 BC! Similar reasoning was applied in the 1950s in Britain, as it was claimed the Celts did not arrive until 250 BC. A more recent example is Barry Cunliffe's interpretation of the hill-fort of Danebury as a royal residence at which trade and industrial production was centred (Cunliffe 1983, 1984). Few other Iron Age scholars in Britain accept that there is much evidence for a chiefly hierarchy or centralised control of production and exchange at this period, and certainly not at Danebury (Collis 1985; Hill 1993b). We should be testing hypotheses rather than imposing interpretations on the data, especially if they do not fit!

Just as the present should not be imposed on the past, so the past should not be imposed on the present. Often this is simply a matter of continuing stereotypes - Celtic drunkenness and belligerence; Germanic bravery and individuality; or physical descriptions - tall, blue-eyed and fair. *The Guardian* recently reported a case of an Irish woman who was refused a post with a tourist office, because her image did not fit - she was black. In antiquity it is indeed very unlikely there were any black Celts, but in the modern world it is perfectly possible, as the definition depends on one's 'mother tongue'.

As already stated, most of the standard books and exhibitions on the Celts display maps of their origins and migrations. As I have said, this depends on the unacceptable methodologies used by Kossinna. While I do not envisage an army of Welshmen marching on southern Germany to claim back their homeland, the methodologies behind it are dangerous in other contexts. Archaeological material is being used in the political propaganda in the conflicts in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Near East, so what is harmless methodology in once context can be lethal in another. Archaeologists need to state clearly how their data can be used legitimately, and not allow them to be used for false political ends.

There have been accusations that people such as myself are engaging in some sort of 'ethnic cleansing', a denial of the Celts and their history (Megaw and Megaw 1996). I have no problem that modern people want to call themselves Celtic - as long as we accept that the term is arbitrary (like many other ethnic terms such as English, French, German). We are what we believe we are, but generally we choose one or two criteria to differentiate ourselves from others - language, religion, genealogical descent, geographical location, etc. Usually these are historically contingent, and we can regroup by changing the criteria we use; most of us in fact have multiple identities. The modern Celts are not the descendants of the ancient Celts; at best they are distant cousins; the descendants of the ancient Celts now speak French, Italian, German, Spanish, Turkish, and perhaps other languages. Though there may be genetic links due to intermarriage over millennia, there is no such thing as a Celtic gene. Genetically Palestinians are perhaps more related to the ancient Jews than are modern Jews; culture is more important than genetics in defining our ethnic identity.

In the modern world where technology has broken down the barriers of distance, and where political developments are redefining national boundaries, our ethnicity is becoming more important in terms of our sense of belonging and our personal identity. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it can equally, as in the Balkans, lead to conflict and bloodshed. A good knowledge and a proper sceptical approach to our own ethnicity and history is thus no bad thing in our relationships with our fellow human beings (Graves Brown *et al.* 1995; Jones 1997; Sims-Williams 1998a, 1998b).

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Revising French Absolutism

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Nineteenth liberal historians, both French and English thought absolute monarchy was a good thing. They saw the development of the strong monarchy from the end of the middle ages as the moment when in Guenée's words 'the French monarchy began to construct with the aid of the bourgeoisie modern institutions and administration, founded solidly on liberty, civic equality and national unity'¹ Apparently the sole exception was Perrens who bemoaned the failure of France to follow England's example which allowed the Nation to govern itself. In the 1860s J.H.Bridges describing Richelieu's determination to bring the wayward nobility to heel, suggested that 'this great statesman advanced the great destructive movement of modern history; and by the downfall of the Feudal system prepared the way for the Republican polity, founded upon peaceful industry, which was inaugurated by the Revolution of 1789,...'² It is true that Bridges went on to stress that much of the horror of the French Revolution could have been avoided if the monarchy had able to overcome the social power of the nobility. He concluded that, although the monarchy was 'strong enough to annihilate the aristocracy as a political power, it was not a match for their internal social power'.³ It is remarkable how long this view of the progressive nature of absolutism has survived; indeed in some later versions of the same idea the potentially significant qualifications made by Bridges about the inability of the monarchy to tackle the social power of the nobility disappeared in favour of a view that it not only did so but also brought the middle classes into being. In 1969 Maurice Ashley entitled the second chapter of his *The Golden Century, 'From Feudalism to Absolutism'*. In this he asserted that 'The 'history of the century, 'was 'largely the story of how the monarchies strove to reduce the effective political influence of their nobles, suppress their national assemblies, and to establish a workable bureaucratic form of government with the aid of the services of the middle classes'.⁴

This oversimplified view of steady linear progress towards a modern and middle class state was accompanied by a tendency to see the process as the prime accomplishment of a series of great men to which the history of seventeenth-century France unfortunately lent itself. The achievements of the absolute state were frequently told in terms of the achievements of Henry IV, Richelieu, and Louis XIV (often with little reference to Louis XIII). To Henri IV (1589-1610) went the credit of bringing stability once again to France after the wars of Religion, to Richelieu (first minister 1624-1642) the perspicacity and resolution to see that without the destruction of the Huguenot state within state there was no future for the French monarchy and to Louis XIV (1661-1715) the determination to rule without a first minister at all. This King was also credited with firmly putting the parlements in their place by depriving them of their status as 'sovereign' law courts.

In the thirty years since Ashley penned the words just cited, there have been signs of a historiographical gulf opening up between French and 'anglo-saxon' historians of absolutism. Whereas the latter, have virtually abandoned Ashley's perspective of the progressive modernization of the French state, the former, despite the significantly different approach of Pierre Goubert and Daniel Dessert, still find it attractive.⁵ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's large study of the *ancien régime*, translated into English in 1966, offers an extraordinarily bullish account of the achievements of the French State given his earlier radicalism and stature as the author of a pioneering study of the increasingly impoverished peasantry of Languedoc.⁶ Even more recently Jean Gallet, an eminent specialist of the Breton seigneurie has not hesitated to declare that 'Between 1600 and 1789 everything in France changed. The Absolute Monarchy triumphed'.⁷ Society became a court society following models established at Versailles. The economy developed in capitalist direction whilst the King fought to limit the power of feudal seigneurs with the support of both jurists and peasant communities.⁸

American and British historians on the other hand have largely spent the last thirty years revising the old picture of French absolutism in all its aspects, opening up an almost unbridgeable historiographical gulf with the view represented by Gallet. Some will no longer entertain the word

'absolutism' at all. Collins in his recent study of the French state writes without reference to it.⁹ For Henshall all monarchies were absolute in theory by virtue of their belief in Divine Right, but it was so limited in practice that absolutism was no more than a 'myth'.¹⁰ For Mettam the French monarchy was framed by a still influential aristocracy including the old *grandeurs*, who albeit mostly excluded from the inner councils, had access to the King through the royal household and were indispensable as brokers of royal power in the provinces.¹¹

My own preference is to continue to use the term 'absolutism'.¹² This is not because the monarch had complete or unfettered control. French absolutism takes much of its flavour precisely from the never ending struggle of the monarchy to get to grips with a large country and long traditions of provincial autonomy; it was to require a revolution to bring uniform laws, taxes, weights, and measures regulated by truly centralized institutions. Yet the monarchy of Louis XIV was infinitely more secure than that of Henri IV. The capacity of the old *grandeurs* for independent military action was finished, killed off by the rising costs of warfare, the destruction of many strongholds and the unwillingness of others to follow them in their adventures. The execution of the Duc de Montmorency before the town hall of Toulouse in 1632 was a profoundly symbolic gesture of changing times. During the Fronde (1648-53) the Prince de Condé, having captured Paris, forfeited all support and fled to Spain. After 1659 he and his descendants accommodated themselves to the new order in their prestigious but peaceful role as governors of Burgundy.

More importantly, the term 'absolutism' distinguishes regimes where the power of the monarch was not significantly limited by representative institutions from those where it was. The two key attributes of an absolute monarch were the power to make the law and to impose taxes. By the reign of Louis XIV no one in France doubted that the King had the power to make law, to override custom, or to repeal the edicts of his predecessors. After 1614-15 the Estates-General no longer met. Even when it had done so it had never acted as more than a petitioning body; whether its *cahiers* of grievances were transformed into laws or not depended entirely on the King and his council. As the Estates-General fell into abeyance the *parlement* of Paris quickly asserted its claims to act in its place as a check on unfettered royal power. One of the ways it did this was through the registration of royal edicts and in particular through its ability to delay their enforcement by using its power of remonstrance against those which it deemed objectionable. Louis XIV, however, insisted that the *parlement* register his decrees before making remonstrances. After 1673 he never needed to have recourse to a *lit de justice* to force unpalatable legislation through the *parlement*.

The majority of contentious edicts were fiscal ones which added to the burdens on a country already suffering from the lack of a national institution with any powers to curb the insatiable demands of the military machine. In a bad year this could consume around seventy per cent of the state's revenue. The King did however continue to negotiate the tax impositions on those regions, notably Brittany and Languedoc, where local institutions preserved considerable vitality. Nevertheless the French regime was clearly very different from that in England, in Castile prior to 1665 or in Sweden for most of the early modern period, countries where representative institutions were a major obstacle to the Crown's fiscal pretensions. In England, somewhat unusually the parliament had also long played a crucial part in the legislative process and the achievement of parliamentary sovereignty in 1688 put England on a very different track from her absolutist rival. This was well understood by those who had struggled for several decades to curtail the Stuart assertion of the royal prerogative. John Locke was in no doubt that Absolute monarchy far from being, as some would have it, the only government in the world was 'no form of civil government at all' because the monarch was exempted from the rule of the public law which distinguished civil society from a state of nature.¹³ It was not surprising that when Locke fled for his own safety in 1683 that he found refuge in the Dutch Republic. For this was a country which had shown, in the course of its long revolt against Spanish domination, that the claim to sovereignty could be wrenched from the hands of apologists for royal supremacy and put to quite contrary uses. There was a real choice to be made between absolutist and non-absolutist regimes.

Acceptance of the historical utility of the concept of absolutism does not lead, however, to the conclusion that it was in any sense a progressive or modernizing phenomenon. Of course, to the degree that the French monarchy spawned an expanding bureaucracy, increasingly responsible to

functionally defined ministries (war, foreign affairs and finance), the framework of a modern state may be discerned. It has also been claimed by Richard Bonney that the institutionalisation of the intendants in the 1630s transformed the nature of the monarchy by virtue of the fact that these royal agents, empowered by virtue of the Crown's sovereignty, held revocable commissions.¹⁴ This distinguished them from the mass of royal officers who had purchased their posts and with it a share of royal authority. However, there were never more than about thirty intendants, with limited administrative and secretarial assistance, whilst the pre-existing layers of royal officials remained in place even if their autonomy had been reduced. Without the cooperation, (however forced it sometimes was), of venal officeholders who staffed *parlements*, municipalities, seigneurial law courts and the financial administration, the work of the intendants would have ground to a halt. Moreover the intendants themselves were drawn from the venal office-holding world and they had much in common with the *parlementaires* through whose ranks they frequently passed *en route* to higher things. By 1700 the intendants were virtually all nobles, amongst the most distinguished of the *noblesse de robe*. Historians are consequently very divided about the significance of the development of the intendants. For Bonney the extensive executive, judicial and fiscal powers given to the intendants were an emanation of royal sovereignty and it changed the nature of the system; for others they did little to alter its underlying nature.¹⁵

For some, the most striking feature of the French state was the vast increase in venal office-holding which occurred between 1550 and 1650, followed by a further rapid growth from the 1690s. In some towns venal officeholders together with their families might constitute between ten and twenty per cent of the population. Pre-eminent amongst them were the 1200 judges who provided the senior personnel of the ten *parlements*. These were, at one and the same time, royal officials and representatives of particular interests, defenders of some of the most influential and privileged local elites. Beneath them in the middle ranking and lesser law courts hundreds of legal families jostled to secure their positions and treated their offices as part of their patrimony - to be sold, used as collateral for borrowing or passed on to their heirs. The extension of the intendants' authority over the fiscal administration from 1642 made little difference to the fact that this remained the property of those who had effectively bought a share in state revenues. From the humble measurer of salt in an official storehouse to the wealthiest financiers who purchased the rights to royal taxes, the financial administration constituted a gigantic spoils system.

During the middle decades of the century the competition for a share of the spoils was intense, contributing to the social and political instability of those years. Not only did the multiplicity of corporate bodies which composed the French state vie with each other, but every law court, every financial bureau and every municipality was afflicted by sectional rivalries as competing individuals, families and clienteles sought to enhance their status, privileges or revenues. Such rivalries provided much of the dynamics which shaped the absolutist state.¹⁶ Once Henri IV had brought peace and restored the Crown's access to the resources of the realm, it had become more profitable to go with the flow. Proximity to those who wielded power at every level became critical for the accumulation of riches. Treasurers of France became wealthier than wine merchants, *parlementaires* outshone the old provincial nobility. For those who made it to the highest office the rewards were colossal. Mazarin became the richest as well as the most powerful man in France, amassing more cash than lay in the vaults of the Bank of Amsterdam; Richelieu was not far behind. Colbert was more modest but rich enough. Joseph Bergin's pioneering dissection of Richelieu's investments has totally transformed the traditional image of the disinterested statesman dedicated only to the greatness of the monarchy. State taxes, an array of offices bought in other names, revenues from the Admiralty which Richelieu transformed from a commission into an office, together with his official emoluments laid the basis of a fortune filled out by the acquisition of ecclesiastical benefices and land.¹⁷

Making a fortune was almost never the work of a single person but part of the process whereby, over two or three generations, families hauled their way up the social hierarchy. From this point of view Richelieu's greatest achievement lay in hoisting a modest lineage into the ranks of the Dukes and Peers. Yet it also needs to be emphasised that his family was already noble, had already established connections within the royal household, where his father served as *grand prévôt* and then as captain of the Guards. Richelieu's elder brother (d.1619) served at the court of Louis XIII. Richelieu, as Bishop

of Luçon inherited a 'family' benefice. Patronised and protected in the early years by the Queen mother, Richelieu then replicated these patterns by the way he ruled as first minister. His brother as Archbishop of Aix en Provence over the provincial Estates; a nephew became commander of the Mediterranean galleys; a cousin acted as governor of Brittany; yet another presided over the Estates of Brittany. When Richelieu ran out of relations he patronized others. His relationship as first minister with his immediate subordinates, the Secretaries of State, has long been seen in this light.¹⁸ He took it upon himself to augment their incomes, facilitate advantageous marriages and provide pensions for their dependents. Claude de Bullion, the *surintendant des finances*, whose prodigious fortune took off from the moment that Richelieu triumphed over his rivals in 1630, secured major concessions for his relations. A son was given a special dispensation to take up the office of councillor in the *parlement* of Metz whilst a brother became an intendant in 1635. Louis XIV decided to dispense with a first minister; but Colbert managed the system in exactly the same way as Richelieu, through family members who were placed in everything from embassies to abbeys and through the establishment of his own clienteles particularly in the world of finance. The dismissal and shameful prosecution of Nicolas Fouquet, the existing *surintendant des finances*, can only be fully understood when placed in the context of Colbert's patrimonial ambitions as well as those of the State.¹⁹

Richelieu's personal aggrandisement aroused intense opposition which manifested itself in a series of noble conspiracies, survived only at considerable cost to his health. The pretensions of his designated successor, Mazarin, who was perhaps less adept than Richelieu at manipulating the interests of the great officeholders and grandees, proved too much for some and contributed directly to the civil wars of the Frondes (1648-53). Yet Mazarin also survived, managing to knit together his own clienteles and to secure sufficient backing through his connections with the great financiers to see him through even the most difficult moments. Louis XIV, who concentrated unprecedented powers of patronage in his own hands, managed the system with consummate success. In this sense his power rested on a compromise with vested interest and not an onslaught on it. Although the *parlementaires* were constantly forced to contribute and contribute heavily to the royal coffers, the threat to the hereditary possession of their offices which had aroused them against Mazarin was not repeated. Moreover the Crown was quite prepared, as Albert Hamscher has demonstrated, to waive its own regulations to assist favoured families in their pursuit of parliamentary office.²⁰ The relationship between the Crown and the office-holding elites has been further explored in William Beik's study of Languedoc. In this he shows how an element in the political accommodation achieved with the rulers of this distant province was the material benefit that accrued to them from the slow increase in royal taxation, a rising proportion of which – around half – never left the province.²¹

Largely as a result of its own desperate need for cash the Crown had brought into being a new and important element in the body politic – the *noblesse de robe*²² – with which it then could not dispense. In doing so, it had also created a major obstacle to the modernization of the state. Whilst there did emerge dynasties of officeholders with a tradition of state service and whilst the interests of officeholders became bound up with those of the Crown, France was far from creating a modern or even an efficient bureaucracy.²³ A salaried, professionally trained bureaucracy with defined career structures was still a distant proposition. The most debilitating aspect of venality was the fact that state finances became the affair of private financiers (frequently royal officers as well) who were able to advance considerable sums to the Crown. Under Louis XIV the private financiers emerged as a powerful consortium of forty or so Farmers General who effectively controlled all the indirect taxes. Their activities provoked endless litigation which further increased the burdens on the population. Financiers also played a part, though not the only one, in defeating attempts to abolish internal customs boundaries and most disastrously in the proposals for the establishment of a national bank. Like many other fundamental reforms these had to wait until the Revolution had cleared away the obstacles.²⁴

Whether the office-holders which the French monarchy had brought into being may be described as middle class or bourgeois is very doubtful. On the one hand they embraced an extended hierarchy of which only the upper echelons constituted the *noblesse de robe*, whilst lesser offices might cost their relatively humble purchasers more than they brought in. On the other hand the whole point of making such a commitment was that it might lead to better things. With greater status came the

possibility of fiscal privilege and the eventual acquisition of a title of nobility. Whilst much of the money that went into the purchase of offices originated in trade or manufacturing activity, the availability of office was a constant inducement to abandon productive activity. The progression of the Colbert family from carters and masons back in the fifteenth century, through municipal and ecclesiastical office, into the world of financiers and ministers illustrates the point nicely. Bourgeois, in the sense of capitalist entrepreneurs, the officeholders certainly were not. Even when considerable fortunes had been accumulated, very little was transformed into entrepreneurial capital. Leading financiers constituted an ennobled elite of rentiers living from state and private investments, sustained in the ultimate analysis by the burdens imposed on the labouring classes. The operations of the fisc and the financiers probably did more to impede the growth of capitalism than promote it. Although contemporaries did not use such language, the adverse economic effects of venal office holding were well understood by both writers and government officials.

The great office holders, both judicial and financial, naturally invested in land. But they did so in exactly the same fashion as the established nobility of the sword. They bought seigneuries and lived off their rents and feudal perquisites. There is some evidence that robe landowners were more systematic and efficient in maximizing their revenues but they were in no sense 'improving' landowners after the fashion of the English gentry.²⁵ There were few signs of agricultural innovation before the middle of the eighteenth century and even it was frequently half-hearted. Estates were managed largely by leasing them and their associated revenues en bloc to a *fermier* or by sharecropping leases under which the landlord supplied half the grain, equipment and often cattle as well in return for half the surplus. Under both arrangements the leases were short – commonly for six years – and discouraged experimentation. Small parcels of land were also leased in perpetuity to seigneurial dependents for a mixture of rents in kind and money; these often combined seigneurial obligations with commercial rents. In the eighteenth century the parliamentary nobility became the most determined defenders of feudal privilege and seigneurial rights. Given that the great nobility of the sword also invested in state loans just as the great office holders did, it may be safely be concluded that the economic interests and attitudes of robe and sword were identical. This commonality of economic interest was underpinned by the steady fusion of Robe and Sword through marriage; successful families were highly likely to have members present in all the socio-professional categories: robe, sword, ecclesiastical.²⁶

Of course, in France's many towns, there were to be found middling social strata who neither belonged to the nobility nor the poor: merchants, shopkeepers, better-off artisans, lawyers, doctors plus a smattering of intellectuals. But their social weight was limited. Few were really rich. Large wholesalers and overseas traders were surprisingly few in number. When they did become rich they drifted upwards into office holding and to the edges of the nobility to which status they aspired. Although more numerous than the nobility who comprised a mere one to two per cent of the population, the bourgeoisie did not yet have an equivalent sense of their own identity, nor a comparable access to the corridors of power. Their influence on the shaping of French absolutism was minimal. A permanent Council of Commerce, composed of representatives of the principal towns to advise the government on commercial matters, did not come into being until 1700. Ironically in 1692 the government had just completed the process of transforming the principal municipal offices into venal ones, a policy seemingly in utter contradiction to the professed desire to encourage commerce. It was to be the 1760s before it tried to reverse this process, only to meet with outraged protest as artisans reappeared in municipal government.

French absolutism was therefore not a system of government moulded by the bourgeoisie or even established with any significant assistance from them. Still less was it a modernising process preparing the ground in progressive fashion for the Revolution of 1789. If the concentration of royal power involved a reduction in the independent military and political capacity of the old *grands* who had torn the country apart in the sixteenth century it nonetheless remained dependent on the nobility to make the system work. The monarchy curbed the political power of the old *grands* but was not particularly anti-seigneurial. The *noblesse de robe* probably strengthened rather than weakened seigneurialism. Venality of office also confirmed and deepened the patrimonial nature of the system. Effective government depended as much as ever on the ability of the Crown to use its powers of patronage as much as its powers of command. The venal office holders both fought over and sustained

the state – the spoils system - of which they were part. The dynamics of absolutism were thus inherently unstable, riven by family and clan rivalries. But for a period the Crown, with the aid of those families who elevated themselves above the rest, was able to fashion order out of disorder, hold the system in some sort of equilibrium and create a measure of cohesion through a magnificently orchestrated court culture and patronage. As effective management diminished in the decades after Louis XIV's death, as courtly culture became discredited, so the monarchy slowly lost its capacity to overawe. Once the idea that sovereignty was an attribute of the nation rather than the King also caught hold of the public imagination, monarchical absolutism was nearing its end.

NOTES

- 1 B. Guenée. 'L'Histoire de l'Etat en France de la fin du moyen age vue par les historiens depuis cent ans', *Revue historique*, vol. 232, (1964) p. 333.
- 2 J.H. Bridges, *France Under Richelieu and Colbert*, (Edinburgh, Edmonston & Douglas, 1866), p. 36.
- 3 *ibid.*, p. 75
- 4 M. Ashley, *The Golden Century*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 21
- 5 Pierre Goubert's *Louis XIV and Twenty Million Frenchmen*, trans Ann Carter (New York: Panther Books 1966), was a welcome relief from the superficial and uncritical treatments of the great King. Goubert reduced him to size by according him only twelve years of 'grandeur', that is down to the Dutch war of 1672. Unfortunately Daniel Dessert's pioneering *Argent, pouvoir et société au grand siècle* (Paris: Fayard. 1985) which exposed the grip of private financiers on the fiscal machinery is not available in translation. See my review in T.L.S. 12 July 1985 p. 781
- 6 Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Ancien Régime. A History of France, 1610-1774*, trans Mark Greengrass, (Oxford: Blackwell 1996); see my review in TLS 13 December 1996 p.9. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Peasants of Languedoc*, trans J.Day, (Urbana Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1977)
- 7 Jean Gallet, *Seigneurs et Paysans en France 1600-1789*, (Rennes, Editions Sud-Ouest, 1999) p. 164.
- 8 Gallet, pp. 164, 167
- 9 J.B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France*, (Cambridge: CUP 1995)
- 10 N.Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy*, (London & New York, Longman, 1992)
- 11 Roger Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France*, (Oxford: Blackwell 1988)
- 12 For an amplification of this justification see my, *Class and State in Ancien Régime France. The Road to Modernity?*, (London: Routledge 1996) chapter 6.
- 13 J.Locke, *Political Writings*, ed. D. Wootton, (London, Penguin, 1993) pp. 305-6
- 14 Richard Bonney, *L'absolutisme* (Paris: PUF 1989), p. 62; *Political Change in France under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1624-1661* (Oxford: OUP, 1978) p. 442
- 15 Mettam, *Power and Faction*, pp., 210-16
- 16 Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*, (Oxford: OUP 1986) and *Judicial Politics and Urban Revolt: the Parlement of Aix 1629-1659*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1978) are two key works for understanding the dynamics of French politics.
- 17 Joseph Bergin, *Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1985)
- 18 O.A. Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XII. A Study of the Secretaries of State and Superintendants of Finance in the Ministry of Richelieu*, (Oxford: OUP, 1963). The full significance of this pioneering and highly readable book was not perhaps not recognised at the time.
- 19 Dessert, D. 'Le Lobby Colbert: un royaume ou une affaire de famille', *Annales E.S.C* vol. 30 (1975). Material from this extremely important article was later incorporated in his *Argent, pouvoir et société*.
- 20 A. Hamscher, *The Parlement of Paris After the Fronde* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 1976 and *The Conseil Privé and the Parlements in the Age of Louis XIV: a study in French Absolutism*, (Philadelphia: Transactions of The American Philosophical Society vol. 77 1987) These meticulous studies demonstrate the nature of the compromise effected between Louis XIV and the *parlement*. A contrary interpretation by a fellow American J.J. Hurt being prepared for Manchester University Press will be of interest.

- 21 William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-century France. State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc*, (Cambridge: CUP 1985) p.p 245-278.
- 22 Some ennobling offices brought full hereditary nobility; most of them required three generations of royal service
- 23 This argument is developed in chapter six of my *State and Class*
- 24 J. F. Bosher, *The Single Duty Project: A Study of the Movement for a French Customs Union in the Eighteenth Century*, London, (Athlone Press 1964); P. Harsin, *Crédit public et banque d',Etat en France du XVI au XVIII siècle*, (Paris: Droz 1933) I have summarised some of the most striking evidence from Harsin in *State and Class*.
- 25 Robert Forster, 'The Provincial Noble. A Reappraisal', *American Historical Review* vol. 68 (1963)
- 26 Franklin L. Ford, *Robe and Sword. The Regrouping of the French Nobility After the Reign of Louis XIV* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953); J.Q.C. Mackrell, *The Attack on Feudalism in Eighteenth Century France*, (London: Routledge 1973) pp. 56-9, 163-6.

Scottish Politics and State of the Union, 1780-1815

DR EMMA MACLEOD

By 1780 the project of Anglo-Scottish Union had made considerable progress. Scottish politics, since the demise of Jacobitism as a viable force, had not presented any threat to its stability. First, the Scottish elite had been largely preoccupied with gaining acceptance as equals by the English elite and with exploiting the potential of participation in the British state. There was therefore little or no organized opposition to the government and, in consequence, little or no need for an organized political party to support the government. Political parties were, in any case and especially under the reign of George III, still regarded in Westminster with a great deal of suspicion, as possibly unconstitutional and probably factious and corrupt. Second, nor was there any Scottish nationalism to speak of. The literati of the Scottish Enlightenment tended to see no contradiction in their simultaneous Scottish and British patriotisms. Rather, they concluded that involvement in the British state was beneficial for the stability and wealth of Scotland and therefore to be celebrated rather than rejected.¹ It has been argued that Scotland retained more of its own separate identity before around 1780 than it later did because of the survival till then of some sense of the old, unwritten Scottish constitution. By the later years of the century, however, this had become more or less subsumed in a greater tendency for Scots to appropriate for themselves the benefits of the ancient English constitution.² Third, although it is now increasingly recognized that popular political protest was more common in eighteenth-century Scotland than was once thought, before 1780 it was, none the less, overwhelmingly concerned with local issues such as membership of burgh councils and land boundaries, or with displays of 'tribal' allegiance, such as anti-Catholic demonstrations.³ Most eighteenth-century popular protest was ecclesiastical, social or economic in nature.

Between 1780 and 1815, however, various developments in Scottish politics took place which might conceivably have loosened the political union. It is with these developments that this short paper is concerned. In this period, popular politics developed to embrace national constitutional issues and some degree of national organization; a liberal party of opposition to government emerged in Scotland; and, in response to both of these as well as to external circumstances, a Scottish Tory party began to form. As it happened, all of these developments occurred in such a way as to bind Scotland politically more cohesively to England and into the British state. Scottish popular, liberal and conservative politics might have evolved quite differently, but in fact each cultivated links with their counterparts in England as they developed, which served to associate politics north and south of the border more closely.

Scottish historiography almost completely neglected the eighteenth century between the First World War and the 1950s, relying for its political history upon early Whig memoirs and the later Whig histories of the early twentieth century.⁴ Over the past fifty years, however, historians have regained an interest in many aspects of post-Union Scottish politics. Of particular interest in this context is recent work on the degree to which Scotland was becoming assimilated into the British state;⁵ radicalism and popular politics;⁶ and on that colossus of late eighteenth-century Scottish and British politics, Henry Dundas.⁷ It is striking, however, that there has so far been little published on the emerging liberal Whig opposition group, and this paper therefore gives them particular prominence.

The appearance of widespread popular politics in Scotland in the 1790s is perhaps now the best known of these developments. It took the French Revolution and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-2) to galvanise popular activism where apparently the American Revolution could not — among the lower as well as the middle classes. Support for the radicals was by no means evenly spread throughout the lower orders of society, particularly failing to attract rural labourers. Nevertheless, the dramatic increase in popular political activity was the most alarming aspect of the 1790s for the elite. The Society of the Friends of the People was led in Scotland by landed gentlemen and bourgeois professionals (especially lawyers), but its membership was comprised of such skilled workers as

weavers, shoemakers, tailors, joiners, cabinet-makers and cotton spinners as well as shopkeepers, clerks, merchants, teachers, students and dissenting ministers. Subscriptions in its branch societies could cost as little as three pence a quarter, opening up membership to artisans and servants.⁸ 170 delegates from at least seventy-nine societies across the Lowlands attended the first national convention of the Friends of the People in Edinburgh in December 1792. Only 117 met at the second convention in May 1793, because of the legal harassment of the radicals pursued by the authorities in the early months of that year. However, despite (or perhaps because of) the trials of Thomas Muir and Thomas Fyssh Palmer for sedition in August and September 1793, radical spirits recovered, and 165 representatives gathered at the third and British conventions in October – December 1793.⁹ (Interestingly, although local Loyal Associations spread quickly from November 1792 in Scotland, as they did in England, they were neither so numerous nor so socially popular as they were south of the border.¹⁰) The United Scotsmen — the clandestine, revolutionary organisation which operated in some parts of the country between 1797 and 1802 — seems to have attracted an even more solidly lower-order membership, being particularly popular among the weavers. If active membership extended to these groups of people, it seems highly likely that covert sympathy for radical views existed still more widely among them. Political awareness was extended considerably further down the social scale in Scotland during the French Revolutionary decade than had previously been the case, very often taking the form of reformist or radical opinion.

Scottish radicalism, however, was not nationalistic; rather, it was inspired by the cosmopolitanism inherent in the philosophy of the rights of man and dominant in the early years of the French Revolution. Some radicals hoped that the French would send them military aid, but only a very small minority (such as Thomas Muir, James Thomson Callender and Lord Daer) held nationalistic views and would have liked to have seen the establishment of a separate Scottish republic.¹¹ Most sought the reform of the existing British constitution and made common cause with radicals south of the border as well as across the Irish Sea. Links were maintained by correspondence and personal friendships, culminating in the attendance of several English and Irish delegates at the British Convention of November – December 1793 in Edinburgh. Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerrald, delegates of the London Corresponding Society, were legal victims of the authorities' response to that enterprise, alongside the Scotsman William Skirving.

Moderate reformers found that the politics of the 1790s hoisted them onto the horns of a delicate dilemma. While almost all Scottish commentators on the early days of the French Revolution welcomed it warmly for its destruction of corrupt absolute monarchy and its overthrow of the Roman Catholic Church in France, by late 1792 events in France and in Scotland had alarmed the majority of the political and social elite, and Scottish political society largely appears to have polarized into loyalist and radical camps, whether by conviction or by harassment. It is easy to receive the misleading impression that the sole liberal survivors of the conservative fever which swept the country after 1792 were the advocates Henry Erskine, Archibald Fletcher and a handful of their friends. The formation of a liberal party of opposition in Scotland in this period has been generally neglected by modern historians, so that they often tend to appear as a less significant curtain-raiser for the popular radicals.¹² This neglect is probably at least partly due to the opposition Whigs' lack of parliamentary success in the 1790s, which was particularly marked in Scotland, where Henry Dundas notoriously managed to control forty-three of the available forty-five seats in the general election of 1796. The emerging liberal opposition party was none the less a significant development in Scottish politics and deserves greater attention than it has so far been paid. Parliament was beginning to take on functions of executive power by the late eighteenth century rather than merely existing to check the pretensions of royal executive power, and the development of checks and balances to its own power was an important part of this process.¹³

A personal struggle in the 1770s between the young Henry Dundas and his distant relative, Sir Laurence Dundas of Kerse, for government appointment as the 'manager' of Scottish politics was the catalyst for a longer-lasting opposition to the triumphant Henry Dundas, a group which continued to look to Sir Laurence's son, Sir Thomas Dundas, after the death of his father in 1781. Soon afterwards, the short-lived Fox-North coalition in Westminster in 1783 seems to have galvanized a more permanent party organization both north and south of the border. In Scotland, it allowed them temporarily to

place the popular advocate Henry Erskine in the position of Lord Advocate, and even this brief seizure of power in Edinburgh seems to have encouraged those who sympathized with Erskine's Foxite political views. The fall from power of the coalition spurred them to organize themselves electorally for the first time on something approaching a national basis. From the election of 1784 onwards, the Scotsman William Adam developed the role of party manager, taking an increasingly full, British purview. Erskine, Adam and Sir Thomas Dundas continued to play crucial leadership roles in developing Scottish opposition thinking and in linking it with the emerging Westminster party. This was largely a group of landed gentry and wealthy professional men who largely approved of the existing political system, provided it was shorn of the worst excesses of electoral corruption, and who were aggrieved by the manner of William Pitt's accession to power in Westminster in December 1783 and by Henry Dundas's increasing influence in Scotland.

This group was remarkably active during the 1780s. Campaigns to reform the notoriously corrupt Scottish burgh councils and to reform the electoral system in the Scottish counties were begun in 1782, just as the Association movement in England was already campaigning against corruption in Parliament. A club called the Independent Friends was established in Edinburgh in 1785, so called to woo those who might wish to oppose the government but who might at first have been wary of outright identification with the opposition Whigs. The liberals led the Scottish outcry against Pitt's proposals to ease trade restrictions in Ireland in 1785 (on the grounds that these would adversely affect Scottish agriculture), and the campaign to repeal the sections of the Test Act which compelled Scots holding English offices to receive Anglican communion. They sent addresses and petitions in favour of Burke's proposals for reducing parliamentary corruption, and in opposition to Pitt's proposals for dealing with the Regency crisis of 1788-9. Political surveys of Scottish constituencies were commissioned for the 1784 and 1790 elections, and party agents were employed. Party funds and patronage were applied to Scottish as well as English constituencies, to grease the wheels of local support. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was used to score political points across ecclesiastical party lines.¹⁴

Along with the great majority of the political nation, these Scottish opposition Whigs welcomed the French Revolution in its early stages. Moderate reformers in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as in some of the smaller towns such as Portsoy, toasted the Revolution, celebrated the anniversaries of the fall of the Bastille and sent moral and material support to the National Assembly.¹⁵ Some Whigs became members of the radical society of the Friends of the People. It was not long, however, before the Scottish Whigs split along the same fault-line as the English Foxites. Many, with Sir Thomas Dundas, moved deliberately into support of the government, along with the Westminster Portland group, whether through disappointment with the extremism and violence of the French Revolution, patriotic support of the British war effort against France, or genuine hostility towards radical extremism. Constituency support for the opposition party, which had fallen anyway between the elections of 1784 and 1790, was almost wholly withdrawn in 1796. Few Whigs remained in active support of the radical societies after 1792. They did not favour universal suffrage, and they placed the principal blame for the 'corrupt' state of contemporary politics with the current government ministers, rather than with the political system as the radicals did.

The Scottish Whig opposition did not go entirely to ground in the 1790s, however, nor was it solely represented after 1792 by Henry Erskine and Archibald Fletcher. They and other advocates, of course, were crucial in providing leadership and constancy to opposition principles. Their willingness to defend radical booksellers, publishers, printers and politicians throughout the decade, despite their refusal to be associated personally with the radical societies, was adopted at some cost to their professional interests, but it ensured that the Whig opposition cause was seen to be enduring the conservative onslaught. To concentrate only on the Edinburgh advocates, however, is to ignore the thousands who signed petitions against the war and against domestic government policy in Glasgow in 1793 and in Glasgow, Edinburgh and elsewhere in 1795 and 1797.¹⁶ It is to dismiss the solicitors, landowners, clergymen, university professors, physicians and bankers who attended dinners in Edinburgh on 24 January every year to celebrate Fox's birthday and to drink such toasts as that 'Scotland may have at least one Representative in the House of Commons who is a Friend to Peace'.¹⁷ It is also to disregard the opposition press in Scotland: the *Glasgow Advertiser*, which soldiered on

throughout the decade; the *Scots Chronicle* which was established in 1796 and survived the persecution of its editor, John Morthland; and the *Edinburgh Monthly Intelligencer*.

Clearly the Scottish opposition Whigs were wholly unsuccessful in electoral and power-wielding terms in this period (although a few did represent English constituencies in Parliament). But they managed to maintain a political opposition for opposition's sake throughout the belligerent decade of the 1790s, at a time when political parties were still regarded with suspicion, when Scottish society was generally politically conservative, and despite the off-putting 'drudgery of opposition'.¹⁸ The government's misleading portrayal of the liberal Whigs as radical democrats in the 1790s forced those who wished to retain their moderate reforming credentials to distinguish themselves from both the radicals and the conservatives. It can be argued that they accomplished a great deal merely by surviving the decade as a party in any form. The Westminster Foxites were also still in the process of proving party to be a legitimate political practice. They failed to seize power except for a short interruption in 1806-7, to pursue a coherent ideological response to the Revolution and the war, to energize popular support in their cause, or even to attend Parliament between 1797 and 1801, in protest at their lack of impact on government policy. But they did consciously maintain an opposition party and, ultimately, they secured the legitimacy of this practice. This automatically had a positive effect on the fortunes of the Scottish opposition Whigs, whose own endurance also contributed to their future success. By the second phase of the war against France, between 1803 and 1815, the Scottish opposition was revitalized by a new generation of Whigs — such as Francis Horner and Henry Brougham in London, and Francis Jeffrey, George Cranstoun, George Joseph Bell, James Moncrieff and Thomas Thomson in Edinburgh — and by a new and brilliant organ to promote their ideas, the influential and provocative *Edinburgh Review* (established in October 1802). Those who had turned to back the government during the revolutionary 1790s did not necessarily offer their unqualified endorsement, nor was their support always permanent. The advocates (later judges) Robert Cullen and William Macleod Bannatyne, while conforming to some extent to the wishes of their Portland Whig patrons that they should withdraw their opposition to government, continued to associate frequently with the Edinburgh Whigs. Both attended the Fox birthday dinner in Edinburgh in January 1795, and both supported Henry Erskine in the political vote to dismiss him as Dean of the Faculty of Advocates in January 1796.

Meanwhile, the prominence of Henry Dundas in both Scottish and British politics between 1784 and 1806 reinforced a substantial attachment to government among the Scottish middle and upper classes, whether from conviction or self-interest. He used government patronage skilfully and exploited regional alliances to construct an increasingly solid power base for the Pitt administration in Scotland. Moreover, alarmed by the emergence of popular political activity in Scotland's expanding towns and cities, and in response also to the organisation of opposition politicians, he and the third Duke of Buccleuch fostered a party of government in Scotland. The turbulent 1790s bound Dundas's allies in Scotland much more closely to Pitt and his government, through a desire for strong government and effective defence against the arms and ideology of revolutionary France, while in the past many had only identified themselves as supporters of Dundas himself. This group, led by Dundas and Buccleuch, became the foundation of the nineteenth-century Scottish Tory party, who formed Pitt Clubs and continued to act together after the premier's death and Dundas's retirement from active politics in 1806.¹⁹ The *Quarterly Review* was founded by John Murray in 1809 to counteract the influence of the *Edinburgh Review*, and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was established in 1817 for the same purpose. The Tories were seriously weakened as a party of power by Pitt's death and by the impeachment of Dundas for embezzlement in the previous year. Patriotic fervour and Whig misjudgements, however, kept the Foxites out of political office almost continuously during the war, by the end of which the Tory Lord Liverpool had a firm grasp on the government of the country.

The development of political parties in Scotland did not promote the political incorporation of Scotland into the British state merely because their primary purpose was to achieve the election of their candidates to the Westminster Parliament. It is possible to envisage at least an opposition party emerging in Scotland which might have had very different origins to, and which might have been inspired by a rather different ideology from, the Westminster opposition grouping.²⁰ But in fact, both parties in Scotland were tied much more closely to their English counterparts than simple common interest or

rivalry would have brought them. It is difficult to disentangle Scottish and English politicians completely, in any case, because more than 130 Scots sat for non-Scottish seats between 1790 and 1820.²¹ The ideological battles of the 1790s encouraged liberals and conservatives to make common cause with their counterparts north and south of the border, as they did the radicals. Party ties were also strengthened by family and patronage networks which embraced Scottish and Westminster politicians: famously, Henry Erskine's younger brother Thomas was an ally of Fox in the House of Commons, while Henry Dundas's nephew Robert, was Lord Advocate in Edinburgh and a very active political partner in the city (as well as being an MP in his own right). Sir James St Clair Erskine and his uncle, Lord Loughborough, who were Portland Whigs, and Thomas Maitland and his brother, Lord Lauderdale, who were Foxite Whigs, are further examples of close relatives with feet in both Scottish and the London political camps. The Scottish burgh reform movement relied on Fox and Sheridan to promote their cause in Parliament, since no Scottish MP would agree to do it. And Henry Dundas, straddling the worlds of Westminster and of Scottish politics, undoubtedly drew both his supporters and his opponents in Scotland into closer involvement with Westminster politics in pursuit of him and the policies he promoted on behalf of the Pitt administration. Despite the revolutionary examples set by America and France, and despite the upsurge of political energy and activity in Scotland for which they were at least partly responsible, there is no evidence of any more Scottish nationalism in 1815 than there had been in 1780. Instead, the development of party politics and popular politics in the wake of revolutions abroad had rather ensured a greater assimilation of Scotland into British politics, because they had resulted in the association of Scots both ideologically and practically with their English political counterparts.

NOTES

- 1 David Brown, 'Henry Dundas and the Government of Scotland', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 1989), p.7; T.C. Smout, 'Problems of Nationalism, Identity and Improvement in later Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in *Improvement and Enlightenment*, ed. T.M. Devine (Edinburgh, 1989).
- 2 On pride in the old Scottish constitution, see Alex Murdoch, 'Management or Semi-Independence? The government of Scotland from 1707-1832', Institute for Historical Research, University of London, Electronic Seminars in History, <http://ihr.sas.ac.uk/ihr/esh/manage.html>; see also David Stuart [Erskine], Earl of Buchan, 'The Life of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun', in *Essays on the Lives and Writings of Fletcher of Saltoun and the Poet Thomson: Biographical, Critical and Political* (Edinburgh, 1792), esp. pp.56-58. On the emerging Scottish application to the English constitutional tradition, see Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830* (1993); idem, *British Identities Before Nationalism* (1999).
- 3 Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830* (Manchester, 2000), ch.4; W. Hamish Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics: From Radicalism to Labour* (Edinburgh, 2000), pp.1-2; Alexander Murdoch, 'Politics and the People in the Burgh of Dumfries, 1758-1760', *ibid.*, 70 (1991), 151-71; R.A. Houston, 'Popular Politics in the Reign of George II: The Edinburgh Cordiners', *Scottish Historical Review*, 72 (1993), 167-89.
- 4 For example, Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time* (Edinburgh, 1856); idem, *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, 2 vol.s (Edinburgh, 1852); Henry Brougham, *Life and Times of Henry, Lord Brougham, written by himself*, 3 vol.s (London, 1871); William Law Mathieson, *The Awakening of Scotland: a history from 1747-1797* (Glasgow, 1910); Henry W. Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution* (Glasgow, 1912). These works still of course offer much of great value.
- 5 For instance, Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London, 1992); Alexander Murdoch, *British History 1660-1832: National Identity and Local Culture* (Basingstoke, 1998); Andrew Mackillop, 'More Fruitful than the Soil': *Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (Edinburgh, 2000).
- 6 On the radicals, see John D. Brims, 'The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 1983); idem, 'From reformers to Jacobins: the Scottish Association of the Friends of the People', in *Conflict and Stability in Scottish Society, 1700-1850*, ed. T.M. Devine (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.31-50; idem, 'The Scottish "Jacobins"', *Scottish Nationalism and the British Union*, in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, ed. R.A. Mason (Edinburgh, 1987), pp.247-265; idem, 'Scottish Radicalism and the United Irishmen', in *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism and Rebellion*, eds

- D. Dickson, D. Keogh and K. Whelan (Dublin, 1993); idem, 'The Covenanting Tradition and Scottish Radicalism in the 1790s', in *Covenant, Charter and Party: Traditions of revolt and protest in modern Scottish history*, ed. T. Brotherstone (Aberdeen, 1989), pp.50-62; and Elaine W. Macfarland, *Ireland and Scotland in the Age of Revolution: Planting the Green Bough* (Edinburgh, 1994). On popular politics, see Kenneth J. Logue, *Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815* (Edinburgh, 1979); and note 3 above for more recent work.
- 7 Brown, 'Henry Dundas'; Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh, 1992).
 - 8 Rosalind Mitchison, 'Scotland 1750-1850', in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, ed. F.M.L. Thompson, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1990), I, 284. In early December 1792, the Glasgow branch had around 1200 members, and the Edinburgh branch had more than 1000.
 - 9 Brims, 'Scottish Democratic Movement', pp.398, 481.
 - 10 Nor were there any violent crowd demonstrations in Scotland in support of Church and King. Brims, 'Scottish Democratic Movement', pp.341, 346-9; Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, p.70.
 - 11 Brims, 'Scottish Democratic Movement', pp.222-6, 229, 236, 240, 553; idem, 'The Scottish "Jacobins", Scottish Nationalism and the British Union'; Smout, 'Problems of Nationalism, Identity and Improvement in Later Eighteenth-Century Scotland'.
 - 12 David Brown, 'Henry Dundas', is a notable exception to the general historiographical neglect of the Scottish opposition Whigs, and provides much of the substance which follows, but I argue that they were more significant in the 1790s than he allows. See also Donald E. Ginter, *Whig Organization in the General Election of 1790* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967).
 - 13 Party was still, of course, at a very early stage in this period: it has been estimated that at most one third of the House of Commons was attracted to the idea of party at this time; and Pitt and Fox, furthermore, were in agreement on many issues, precluding the necessity for party politics. See Frank O'Gorman, *The Emergence of the British Two-Party System 1760-1832* (London, 1982), pp.xi, 23.
 - 14 Ginter, *Whig Organization in the General Election of 1790*, introduction, and p.44; Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, pp.2-3, 27; Brown, 'Henry Dundas', p.118.
 - 15 Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, pp.44, 70-1, 75-6; G.S. Veitch, *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform* (London, 1913), pp.244-5, 359-62.
 - 16 *Glasgow Advertiser*, 15-19 July 1793; notice, National Library of Scotland, X.223.d.1 (6b); *Caledonian Mercury*, 1 April 1797; *Scots Chronicle*, 25 April 1797. Some of the signatories might have been radicals, of course, or simply opponents of the war. The most that we know about these people is that they opposed the policies of the current administration and to that extent they supported the Opposition to government.
 - 17 *Scots Chronicle*, 27 January 1797.
 - 18 Lawrence Hill, party agent, quoted in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1790-1820*, ed. R.G. Thorne, 5 vols (London, 1986), iii, 652.
 - 19 Brown, 'Henry Dundas', pp.202-3.
 - 20 In fact, as Colin Kidd has shown, Scottish Whig ideology was by this time conforming itself more and more closely with the traditions of English Whiggery: see note 2.
 - 21 *The House of Commons, 1790-1820*, ed. Thorne, i, 328.

Slavery and the African American Experience, 1850-1865

DR CYNTHIA HAMILTON

Toni Morrison ended her acclaimed novel, *Beloved* (1988) with the repeated injunction, "This is not a story to pass on."¹ The array of potential meanings contained within that simple statement about the experience of slavery on the eve of the Civil War, and the emotive energy behind its emphatic, repeated assertion suggest the fraught politics that continued to haunt studies of slavery at the end of the twentieth century. Indeed, the moral issues of slavery are still alive and make themselves felt in contemporary scholarship, even as scholars attempt a more dispassionate analysis of the dynamics of the institution and a more complex examination of the people affected by it. Studies of slavery have come a long way since Ulrich B Phillips presented the institution as benevolently paternalistic, or since Stanley Elkins made his case for slavery as comparable to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany.²

The work of contemporary historians is certainly more nuanced. In this respect, it rests heavily on the studies of the generation of scholars who began publishing in the 1970s, particularly on the work of Eugene Genovese, John Blassingame, Herbert Gutman, and Lawrence Levine. Genovese's *Roll, Jordan Roll*, Blassingame's *The Slave Community*, Gutman's *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, and Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* remain landmark studies on American slavery.³ In their different ways, these historians sought to discover and analyse the slave's experience of slavery, an experience in which the slave was seen as far from a powerless, culture-less, joyless, psychic cripple despite the very real oppressiveness of the institution. The work of these historians suggested the complexities of the dynamics of interaction between the slaves and their masters, culturally, economically, and socially. Such studies were a natural extension of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, the affirmative action programmes of leading American Universities during the 1960s and 1970s, and the growing interest in, and demand for, an acknowledgement and chronicling of African American contributions to American history and culture. Thanks to these scholars, the historians of slavery in the 1990s had the advantage of working in a field that had already been moved from the margins to the centre of historical debate, and a field that was kept in the public eye as part of the continuing debates within American and British societies over race, racism, and cultural pluralism.

Recent studies of slavery are affected by two trends that are pulling the field in very different directions. On the one hand, recent scholarship seeks to narrow its focus so as to achieve a more detailed and more complex examination of slavery in a particular place at a particular time. On the other hand, historians are moving beyond national boundaries with comparative studies of slavery in the United States that look to a more international context and a broader historical perspective.⁴ The breadth and volume of current studies of slavery make it impossible to discuss the full range of current research. In this essay I will be looking at the issues raised by studies that examine the experience of slaves and fugitive slaves in relation to the wider communities in which they moved and the Abolitionist circles in which they were involved.

Whatever perspective one takes of current studies of slavery, however, one thing is very clear: the most revolutionary aspect of contemporary research is related to the impact of information communications technology. Increasingly, slavery scholarship has been, and will continue to be, shaped by our increasing access to obscure documentary archives, an accessibility enabled, in part, by internet based publication. Research will also be shaped by the increasingly sophisticated potential of computer assisted searches, and by increasingly easy electronic access to a wide range of scholarly journals. There are a host of internet sites related to the study of slavery, but three stand out at the moment as particularly valuable. The American Memory project at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. has three relevant access points to important electronic archives on slavery: "The African American Odyssey," "African American Pamphlets," and "Born in Slavery."⁵ The last makes available the enormously influential WPA Slave Narratives, a voluminous collection of narratives

collected through interviews with former slaves by the Federal Writers Project, 1936-1938. Two other important websites are overseen by leading scholars in the field. David Brion Davis is the director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University, a research centre which hosts a scholarly, well organised site with a host of useful links.⁶ William L. Andrews has developed a site that contains the full text of many of the slave narratives.⁷ "North American Slave Narratives" is part of a larger project, "Documenting the South," at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.⁸ The aim of "North American Slave Narratives" is to provide a comprehensive electronic archive of all slave narratives published before 1920.

Because so many of the resources for studying African American history have been obscure and difficult to access, scholars working in the field have been keenly aware of the need to recover "lost" materials and to place them within the public domain. In part, this has involved the publication or republication of obscure texts, including a growing number of slave narratives.⁹ This recuperative activity has also involved the publication of significant archival resources such as the Frederick Douglass Papers and the Black Abolitionist Papers.¹⁰ Even where such materials are not drawn on directly, they have influenced those working in the field, for they have helped to build a wider and more appropriate context for scholars than existed a few decades ago. On a smaller scale, the number of docu-histories available in the field has helped to draw attention, within the academic community more generally, to the breadth and depth of the African American contribution to American history.¹¹ On every level, these recuperative efforts speak to the politically sensitive interracial politics of the enterprise and to the imperatives of reclaiming a "lost" past.

One of the areas where the politics of recovery and interpretation is most fraught concerns slave culture, for discussions here engage with issues of African American identity very directly, as well as with issues of acculturation and cultural appropriation. Just how African was slave culture; just how American? In a recent work on corn shucking, Roger D Abrahams shows how European and African traditions converged in a single common practice of harvest activity and celebration.¹² *The Birth of African American Culture*, first published in 1976 and revised and republished in 1992 and Sterling Stuckey's *Slave Culture* are two of the most highly regarded studies of African inheritances within American slave culture.¹³ The focal point for many discussions of African inheritances is religion.¹⁴ Did African inheritances retain their potency as Sterling Stuckey suggests, or did they become attenuated as Albert J. Raboteau argues?¹⁵ For both Stuckey and Raboteau, as for many scholars, religion is seen in terms of either African tribal belief systems or Christianity. Allan D. Austin's work on the influence of Islam adds a new dimension to the discussion.¹⁶

In debates over the more secular aspects of a slave's existence, political sensitivities make themselves felt as well, particularly around the important issue of the extent to which slaves were able to shape their own lives and to resist the pressures of slavery. While the question of the slave's agency is central to much recent work on slavery, there has been a growing sensitivity to the way slavery developed over time, and to the vast differences in the conditions that pertained, even within a single region at a similar time. Early studies tended to be based on the late antebellum period. A number of recent studies have charted the institution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and have, as a consequence, enhanced our understanding of the way it evolved, and the ways in which changes altered the conditions of life for the slaves.¹⁷ Ira Berlin's *Many Thousand Gone* is a particularly important overview of the evolution of the institution through the Revolutionary period.¹⁸ Even within studies of nineteenth century slavery, one finds scholars seeking to identify the variable conditions that existed. Regional studies of slavery in the nineteenth century have allowed scholars to re-examine the nature and importance of slave families, to re-assess the character of master-slave interaction, to define more fully the material conditions of slave life, to place slaves within the status structures of the plantation and within the class structures of the local community, and to look more closely at the different types of economic exchange involving slaves within the local economy.¹⁹ The picture of slave experience that emerges from such studies can be strikingly different, even when looking at the same region at the same time; where Hudson portrays slaves' resourcefulness and ascribes to them a considerable degree of self-determination, Dusiinberre depicts slaves as debilitated victims.²⁰

As these works show, the question of the stability of slave families remains firmly on the agenda. It has remained on the agenda since the antebellum period when abolitionists used the separation of families as one of the most emotive symbols of the evils of slavery. Now, as then, there are ramifications that go far beyond the spectre of human misery evoked, for too often deprivation has been interpreted as depravity. One finds this confusion in the *Preliminary Report Touching the Condition and Management of Emancipated Refugees* (1863), a report sent to the Secretary of War by the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, one of many reports from the field which expressed concern over the way slavery destroyed respect for both marital and maternal relationships, inferring that those who had suffered as slaves now needed moral regeneration.²¹ That view has cast a long shadow. Writing about the problems of the inner city in the 1960s, Glazer and Moynihan said: "The experience of slavery left as its most serious heritage a steady weakness in the Negro family."²² Such statements show the wider political context that has made the debates over slave experience of continuing political concern. It is a very real question whether such recent studies as Wilma King's *Stolen Childhood* add more to our understanding than they add to harmful stereotypes.²³

The growth of women's history has ensured that the lives of female slaves have been given increased attention, though scholars in the field have been hampered by the dearth of resources. The publication of Deborah Gray White's impressive *Ar'n't I a Woman?* marked an important milestone in the field.²⁴ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's *Within the Plantation Household* examines the relationship between the plantation mistress and her female slaves.²⁵ Given the popularity of *Beloved*, it is hardly surprising that the story of Margaret Garner, the fugitive slave whose story formed the basis for the novel, has been re-examined.²⁶ Margaret Garner's story is significant, not just because of Toni Morrison's work, but because during the nineteenth century she became symbol for pro- and anti-slavery forces alike. Where those defending slavery saw her as an example pointing to the necessity of the "civilising" force of slavery, those attacking the institution used her to demonstrate the dehumanising power of slavery.

Interest in the lives of individual slaves and self-liberated slaves is, as this suggests, a feature of recent studies. Slave narratives, both individual published narratives and the voluminous collection of WPA narratives, have been used as a source of information on slavery for many decades now, but interest in the slave narrative has grown.²⁷ Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave* (1845) and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) remain the most popular narratives of the mid nineteenth century, particularly for teaching purposes, but with greater accessibility, the range of reference is, mercifully, widening.²⁸ Researchers do not always treat the narratives with the necessary caution, however. When using the slave narratives published in the three decades before the Civil War, it is important to bear in mind that they were written as polemical pieces in support of the abolitionist movement. At best, this means that the narratives of this period are a highly circumscribed view of slavery; at worst, it means that the accounts themselves may contain questionable material. The dispute over the authenticity of James Williams narrative, the variable nature of Frederick Douglass's presentation of his mother and grandmother, and some suspect descriptions in the first edition of the narrative of Charles Ball must instil a certain level of caution.²⁹ The accuracy of Harriet Jacobs's rather unbelievable account of her hiding place and eventual escape from slavery have, on the other hand, been confirmed by Jean Fagan Yellin's exhaustive research.³⁰ The WPA narratives inspire caution for different reasons: the relatively young age when slavery was abolished of those interviewed, their advanced age at the time the interviews were done, and the time lapse between the experience and the recounting make these accounts somewhat problematic.

A number of the self-liberated slaves whose narratives were published became celebrities on the abolitionist lecture circuit and ambassadors of the cause in Britain. One thinks of William Wells Brown, William and Ellen Craft, James Pennington, and Samuel Ringgold Ward in addition to Frederick Douglass. Richard Blackett's *Building an Antislavery Wall* offers important insights into the involvement of these figures in the international abolitionist movement.³¹ All too often historians have ignored the contributions of both fugitive slaves and members of the African American community to the abolitionist movement, as such influential works as Louis Filler's *Crusade Against Slavery* and Aileen Kraditor's *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism* demonstrate.³² In ignoring the contributions of African Americans, these scholars have perpetuated the self-promotional practice of

the abolitionists themselves. Those interested in the role of African Americans in the abolitionist struggle would do well to begin with Benjamin Quarles's *Black Abolitionists* and with *They Who Would Be Free*, by Jane H Pease and William H Pease.³³ Neither of these works are recent studies, but both have been re-issued of late. A more recent synthesis of scholarship in the field is offered by *In Hope of Liberty*, by James Oliver Horton and Lois E Horton.³⁴ Shirley J. Yee's *Black Women Abolitionists* is important because it draws attention to the contributions of women to the protest movement.³⁵

There is a growing biographical literature of African Americans of the antebellum and Civil War period. Some of the most interesting recent biographical works use their subject as a focus for a study of the dynamics within a broader community or communities. In tracing the sources, dynamics, distribution and impact of David Walker's revolutionary *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, Peter Hinks's *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren* discusses the African American culture of self help, subversion, and resistance which existed even in the Carolinas; and traces the communication networks among the free blacks and slaves of the South, and between the black reform leaders of the North.³⁶ In telling the story of Mary Ann Shadd Cary's life, Jane Rhodes draws a picture of the political divisions that existed within black abolitionist circles in the United States and Canada, and the struggles that attended the emergence of a black abolitionist press.³⁷ Both *The Trials of Anthony Burns* and *Shadrack Minkins* sketch the inter-racial politics of Boston in the 1850s as they chronicle the attempts of abolitionists to rescue particular fugitive slaves from the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act.³⁸ Fugitive slaves were not the only persons in danger of capture and enslavement, as Carol Wilson makes clear in *Freedom at Risk*, a study of the kidnapping and enslavement of free African Americans in the border states and the North.³⁹

Although the artificial and highly inaccurate division between the (good) abolitionist North and the (bad) defenders and practitioners of slavery in the South has been more fixed in the popular mind than in scholarly literature, particularly since Leon Litwak's seminal study, *North of Slavery*, the persistent reality of slavery's existence in the North even on the eve of the Civil War does need to be emphasised.⁴⁰ Margaret Washington's excellent introduction to the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* describes the enduring nature of slavery in New York state, while Graham Hodges's *Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North* describes conditions in New Jersey, and Joanna Pope Melish deals with the situation in New England.⁴¹ The use of violence to suppress antislavery sentiment North and South is discussed by David Grimsted in *American Mobbing 1828-1861*, a worthy successor to Leonard L. Richards' *Gentlemen of Property and Standing*.⁴² The presence of antislavery sentiments and the existence of antislavery societies in the South, particularly before 1830 is well documented, but Stanley Harrold's *Abolitionists and the South* shows that there was a continuing presence of abolitionist activity, particularly in the Upper South.⁴³

Recent scholarship seeks to provide a more complex view of the experience of African Americans in slavery and freedom during the mid nineteenth century. To this end it has sought to make the invisible men and women of American history more clearly visible, but one can ask whether the process has yet escaped from the obfuscating racial tensions of the wider society. Scholars' efforts to locate and recover important primary sources, and the increasingly intense scrutiny of demographic data and court records to throw fresh light on slavery is to be welcomed. The work of amending the historical record to bring recognition of the extent and significance of African American achievement will of necessity continue. But historical invisibility is itself a complex phenomenon. "It is the misfortune of a man of African descent to be heavily shadowed by a cloud," Douglass wrote in an unpublished introduction for Victor Schoelcher's biography of Toussaint L'Overture, "they must wait to have it dispelled before they can be properly seen either by themselves or by others."⁴⁴ In this essay, Douglass spoke of the difficulties of writing a just appraisal of an eminent individual of African descent. It was not just the racial prejudice against the black man which acted as an impediment to just judgement, Douglass argued, but the tendency toward blind praise on the part of his defenders. "I do not know whether I have been more amazed than amused, by some descriptions I have read and heard of the negro's perfections," Douglass wrote, "some making him out a very angel of piety, a natural born Christian and a very lamb in docility and the like."⁴⁵ Douglass was writing against the background of the highly polarised political debates over the "Negro Problem" in the late nineteenth century.

Current scholarship is more balanced and complex, but one can ask whether, given the racial tensions and sensitivities of our time, the cloud has yet been lifted enough to see slavery as clearly as we see other discredited institutions.

NOTES

- 1 Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (London: Picador, 1988), p. 274, 275.
- 2 Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York: D. Appleton, 1918); Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).
- 3 Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-bellum South* (New York: Oxford, 1972); Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- 4 For a discussion of the current state of play in slavery studies, see the AHR Forum, "Crossing Slavery's Boundaries," *American Historical Review*, 105; 2 (April 2000). Contributors include David Brion Davis and Peter Kolchin. For a useful overview of slavery see Peter Parish, *Slavery: History and Historians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989); Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery* (London: Penguin Books, 1993).
- 5 <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aapchtml/aapchome.html>
- 6 David Brion Davis's best known work is *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966). <http://www.yale.edu/glc/>
- 7 William L. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).
- 8 <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/neh.html>
- 9 The narratives of Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Henry Bibb, and James Williams are currently in print. See also Kate Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed: The Narrative of Peter and Vina Still after Forty Years of Slavery* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999); Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (New York: Dover Publications, 2000); and collections such as William Loren Katz, *Flight From the Devil: Six Narratives* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1996).
- 10 Both Frederick Douglass's Papers and the Black Abolitionist Papers are available on microfilm. There are also published transcriptions available. John Blassingame, et. al, *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, Series one, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, 5 volumes (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1979-c1992); C. Peter Ripley, et al., *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, 5 volumes (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, c1985-c1992).
- 11 See, for example: John Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977); Virginia Meacham Gould, ed., *Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To be Free, Black & Female in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia, Press, 1998); James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Blacks Felt and Acted During the War for the Union* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991); Ira Berlin, et al., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation*, Series one: *The Destruction of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); *Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom and the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ira Berlin, et al., *Free At Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War* (New York: The New Press, 1992).
- 12 Roger D Abrahams, *Singing the Master: The Emergence of African American Culture in the Plantation South* (New York: Pantheon, 1992).
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- 14 See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*; Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); John B Boles, ed., *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988).
- 15 Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture*; Albert J Raboteau, *Slave Religion*.
- 16 Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
- 17 See for example Philip D Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., 1998) and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).
- 18 Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone : The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).
- 19 Lynda J. Morgan, *Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 1850-1870* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992); R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992); Ann Patton Malone, *Sweet Chariot: Slave Family and Household Structure in Nineteenth Century Louisiana* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) which focuses on Loudoun County, Virginia.
- 20 Larry E. Hudson, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); William Duminberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- 21 *Preliminary Report Touching the Condition and Management of Emancipated Refugees; Made to the Secretary of War by the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, June 30, 1863.* (New York: John F. Trow, Printer, 1863), p. 9-10.
- 22 Nathan Glazer and Daniel P Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, Second Edition (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1970), p. 52. The book was originally published in 1963.
- 23 Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
- 24 Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987)
- 25 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
- 26 Steven Weisenburger, *Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).
- 27 William L Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988) and numerous articles and collections of slave narratives. See also Marion Wilson Starling, *The Slave Narrative; Its Place in American History*, Second Edition (Washington: Howard University Press, 1981).
- 28 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave Written by Himself* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.
- 29 The American Antislavery Society withdrew the narrative of James Williams after its authenticity was brought into question. This narrative and documents chronicling the controversy are available at the "North American Slave Narratives" website. It was later re-issued. Frederick Douglass's account of his grandmother's fate in his *Narrative* was inaccurate, and he later apologised for the implicit accusations made. The factual accuracy of the geography and descriptions of the flora and fauna of the region have been questioned with regard to Charles Ball's narrative, written by Isaac Fisher: *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave, Under Various Masters, and was one Year in the Navy With Commodore Barney, During the Late War. Containing an Account of the Manners and Usages of the Planters and Slaveholders of the South— A Description of the Condition and Treatment of the Slaves, With Observations Upon the State of Morals Amongst the Cotton Planters, and the Perils and Sufferings of a Fugitive Slave, Who Twice Escaped from the Cotton Country* (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837). An electronic version of this narrative is available at the "North American Slave Narratives" web site.

- 30 See Jean Fagan Yellin's "Introduction" and documentary appendices to the Harvard University Press edition.
- 31 R.J.M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983).
- 32 Louis Filler, *Crusade Against Slavery: Friends, Foes, and Reforms, 1820-1860*, Revised Edition (Algonac, Michigan: Reference Publications, Inc., 1986); Aileen S. Kraditor, *(Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc: 1989), first published 1969.
- 33 Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Jane H Pease and William H Pease, *They Who Would be Free; Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).
- 34 James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
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- 37 Jane Rhodes, *Mary Ann Shadd Cary: The Black Press and Protest in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
- 38 Albert J. Von Frank, *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Gary Collison, *Shadrack Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).
- 39 Carol Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780-1865* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).
- 40 Leon F Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).
- 41 Margaret Washington, "Introduction," [Olive Gilbert], *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); Graham Russell Hodges, *Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North: African Americans in Monmouth County, New Jersey, 1665-1865* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1998); Joanna Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).
- 42 David Grimsted, *American Mobbing, 1828-1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing": *Anti-Abolitionist Mobs in Jacksonian America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).
- 43 Stanley Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South, 1831-1861* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995).
- 44 Frederick Douglass, second draft manuscript of introduction, untitled, on "Toussaint L' Ouverture, Frederick Douglass Papers, reel 19, folder labelled Toussaint L' Ouverture, p. 2 of second manuscript in the folder.
- 45 Frederick Douglass, second draft manuscript of introduction, untitled, on "Toussaint L' Ouverture, Frederick Douglass Papers, reel 19, folder labelled Toussaint L' Ouverture, p. 5 of second manuscript in the folder.

Political Developments In South Africa, 1910 – 1948

DR CHRIS VENTER

Introduction

The unification of the four British self-governing colonies in South Africa in 1910 was as much the legacy of the past as the result of the ideal to create a new South Africa in order to strengthen the British Empire. In the process of creating a new South Africa one finds elements of change and continuity.

There were ample reasons for a form of unification or federation in South Africa by 1908. The Bambata rebellion in Natal in 1906¹, the labour unrest on the Witwatersrand gold mines, especially the 1907 strike, and the resistance of the Indians in the Transvaal against white domination during 1906 to 1908, made the White political leaders in the Transvaal and Natal aware of the advantages of closer political co-operation between the states. This included a South African army and police force for common security and a uniform policy regarding the Non-White population..² Other problems which clouded relations among the four colonies and which were the continuation of pre-war (Anglo-Boer War) differences, were the railway tariffs and customs policies which enhanced the economic rivalry between the states. When John X Merriman of the South African Party (SAP) became premier of the Cape in 1908, Afrikaner-controlled parties were in power in three of the four colonies and this made the road to union much easier.³

Against this background of internal problems in South Africa, one must view the position of Britain in the changing European scene in the 1901-1907 period. Britain had become increasingly drawn into the European continental struggle as a result of the *Entente Cordiale* with France in 1904 and her *rapprochement* with Russia, while the Anglo-Boer War highlighted the fact that Britain's military force was barely adequate to defend her world-wide empire.⁴ Therefore political unity in South Africa for the sake of economic growth became a priority for the British government in the face of a growing Anglo-German antagonism. In case of war, a united or federated South Africa would be of greater value to Britain than four separate colonies.⁵

The British government did not want to force unification for fear that it would be a failure as was the case in the 1870's when Lord Carnarvon's federation plan failed, but by 1908 the White political leaders of the four colonies also began thinking in terms of unification as a solution to the internal problems of South Africa. In this political atmosphere the National Convention was convened and during the discussions held successively in Durban, Cape Town and Bloemfontein between October 1908 and May 1909, White male politicians drew up the constitution for a new united South Africa.

The Constitution of the Union of South Africa

The National Convention decided that a Union would be better for South Africa than a federation, because it would eliminate the differences between Boer and Briton and thus could lead to unity and strength. But, during the course of the National Convention a few compromises had to be made in order for unification to succeed.

An important compromise was negotiated on the question of the franchise and political incorporation of the Coloureds and Africans. The four colonies had different traditions in this regard. In the two former Boer Republics only White men had the right to vote. In Natal the situation was more or less the same where 99% of the electorate was White and 1% Black, while the Indians were totally excluded no matter what their qualifications. In the Cape Colony all adult male British subjects who met certain economic and educational qualifications, had the right to vote since 1854. In 1909, 85% of the voters were White men, 10% Coloured men and 5% African males. The property base qualification for the franchise which required that land should be held by individual tenure, eliminated Africans living on communal land and thus kept the number of African voters down.⁶

It was on the question of the Non-White franchise that negotiations in the National Convention nearly broke down. The delegates of the Transvaal and Free State refused to give the franchise to the Non-Whites, while the British government wanted to have a uniform voting system introduced in the Union. They did not want the Non-Whites to be excluded from the vote. However, because the British government was afraid that the Transvaal, with its strong economy, would not enter the Union, it accepted the maintaining of the *status quo*. The Convention reached a compromise to maintain the existing franchise laws of the four colonies, but to ensure that the Non-Whites in the Cape would not lose their franchise later, the agreement was entrenched in Article 35 of the Constitution. That meant that Article 35 could only be changed by a two-thirds majority in a joint session of both Houses of Parliament. In addition it was decided that only White men could become members of Parliament. As was the case in 1902 and again in 1907 and 1908, Black, Coloured and Indian political rights were put on the altar by the British government in favour of White unity and conciliation between the Boers and the British.

The legislative power of the Union was vested in the Governor-General, the Senate and the House of Assembly. It was decided that the total number of White male voters in each province would form the basis of calculating the number of seats each province would have in the House of Assembly. Another decision that had a direct influence on the outcome of the 1948 election, was that the number of voters in a constituency could be loaded to 15% more or unloaded to 15% less than the quota for each constituency. That meant that rural constituencies would have fewer voters than urban constituencies which could favour a political party with a strong rural support – as was the case with the National Party in 1948.⁷

Equal language rights was also a thorny problem for the National Convention. On the insistence of General HBM Hertzog and ex-President MT Steyn, English and Dutch were recognised as official languages of the proposed Union and the language clause in the constitution (Section 137) was also entrenched.⁸

The draft constitution was taken to London where it was passed by the British Parliament and on 20 September 1909 it was signed by the king as the *South African Act*. When this act came into effect on 31 May 1910, the Union of South Africa became a self-governing dominion within the British Empire with the same status as the other dominions such as Canada and Australia. In internal affairs the British government observed the autonomy of the dominions, but in foreign affairs and defence policy the dominions were subordinate to Britain.⁹

Black, Coloured and Indian protest

Even before the first meeting of the National Convention, politically aware Black and Coloured leaders held countrywide meetings to discuss their attitude towards unification. They were unanimous in their denouncement of the exclusion of Non-Whites from the National Convention and felt that the Cape franchise should be the basis of a unified South Africa. When the National Convention started its discussions, African and Coloured leaders sent petitions to the Convention to the effect that the political rights of the Black and Coloured population should not be ignored. When the draft constitution was made public in February 1909, African newspapers such as *Imvo* rejected the colour bar provisions in strong terms.

In March 1909 Black delegates from all four colonies as well as representatives of the Coloured political organization, the African People's Organization, attended a *South African Native Convention* in the Waaihoek location in Bloemfontein. This Convention unanimously passed, amongst others, resolutions objecting to the colour bar clauses of the draft and declaring that it was the responsibility of the British government to ensure that Blacks were given the same political privileges as the Whites. It was also decided to send a delegation to London if the National Convention ignored their plea. They were indeed ignored and a deputation under W.P. Schreiner, a former Prime Minister of the Cape, went to London. This also failed. In London the deputation met the Indian political leader Mahatma Gandhi, who was in London for the same purpose. As mentioned above, the British government approved the South African Act in 1909 because it was anxious to strengthen the Empire in South Africa. This led the Africans and Coloureds to believe that since the Treaty of Vereeniging in 1902 they had been betrayed by the British Government and that in future they alone would be responsible

for their own political salvation. With this in mind, the *South African Native Convention* kept on functioning and eventually this culminated in the founding of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) in 1912 which in 1923 became the African National Congress (the ANC).¹⁰

White Party politics, 1910-1939

Prior to the inauguration of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, General Louis Botha was appointed Prime Minister because of his dedication to conciliation between Briton and Boer and his acceptance of the imperial tie. Botha's cabinet included both English and Dutch speakers and his government won the first election in September 1910. It was only in November 1911 that the government supporters founded the Union-wide South African Party (SAP). The two other parties which contested the first election were the South African Labour Party under the leadership of FHP Creswell who represented the interests of the white English-speaking workers, and the Unionist Party of Dr LS Jameson whose supporters were English speakers.¹¹

Although a spirit of hopeful optimism prevailed when Botha's government took office, it soon became clear that there were differences of opinion in the cabinet on matters of policy, especially between Botha and General JBM Hertzog, his Minister of Justice. The most important of these concerned the relationship between South Africa and Britain and the relationship between Afrikaners and English-speaking South Africans.

With regard to the relationship between South Africa and Britain, Botha was of the opinion that it was in the Union's interest, and a matter of honour, that the imperial link must be maintained. Therefore Botha was opposed to the idea of secession from the Empire or the Union's neutrality in case of a British war. General Hertzog, on the other hand, was of the opinion that self-government meant the right of the Union to remain neutral in a British war and even to secede from the British Empire.

With regard to the relationship between Afrikaners and English-speaking South Africans, Botha and Hertzog had the same goal, namely to unite them in a single nation, but differed on how that goal was to be achieved. As part of his conciliatory policy Botha wanted to unite the two groups as soon as possible through his "*one-stream policy*." At the inauguration of the South African Party in 1911, Botha said that his policy would lead to co-operation and the formation of a single South African nationality of the White population of the Union.¹² Hertzog instead, advocated his "*two-stream*" policy, because he felt that the time was not ripe for a "*one-stream policy*." He was afraid that the young Afrikaner culture would be overwhelmed by the stronger British culture, especially after the anglicisation of the civil service after 1902 which put English into a superior position to Dutch. Therefore, to safeguard Afrikaner culture against extinction, he envisaged two cultural streams which flowed alongside one another on a basis of complete equality until such time in the future when the two groups should merge into a single nation as a result of common experience and understanding. There was no doubt in Hertzog's mind that one way of achieving this in practice was compulsory bilingualism. These views of Hertzog, labelled "Hertzogism", were unacceptable to his political opponents and he was presented as a narrow-minded racist by the English press.¹³

Hertzog retaliated strongly during a series of speeches during the last months of 1912 in which he denounced the "foreign fortune seekers" who were more loyal to the Empire than South Africa. In line with the principle of "South Africa first" he declared that imperialism was only acceptable to him in so far as it served South Africa, but if it clashed with South Africa's interest he was against it. Therefore only "Afrikaners" – by which he meant politicians of both language groups who were loyal to South Africa – should be allowed to govern South Africa.

Hertzog's speech led to the resignation of his colleague Sir George Leuchars, from the cabinet. When Hertzog refused to adhere to Botha's demand to resign as well, Botha resigned himself. Asked to form a new government, Botha omitted both Leuchars and Hertzog from his new cabinet. A direct result of this action was the establishment of the National Party (NP) in 1914 by Hertzog and his supporters based on Hertzog's principles of placing South Africa's interests first, to cultivate an awareness of national independence, to promote bilingualism and unity among the White nation, and respect for the history, religion and customs of the two language groups.¹⁴ At this point in time, the

two political parties which came to dominate the political scene in South Africa for the rest of the 20th century, the SANNC (later known as the ANC) and the National Party had been established.

The outbreak of the First World War on 4 August 1914 intensified the split between Hertzog and Botha. For Botha it was a matter of honour and duty for South Africa to take part in the war on the side of Britain. When the Botha government agreed to a request of the British government to invade German South West Africa, a section of the Afrikaners under the leadership of revered Boer generals rose in rebellion because they felt that it was not in the interest of South Africa to take part in a British war. For them the war was an opportunity to regain the independence of the former Boer Republics. Although the rebellion – in which Afrikaner fought Afrikaner – was soon ended with relative little bloodshed, and despite the leniency with which the government treated the rebels, much bitterness prevailed amongst the Afrikaners and Botha and General JC Smuts were branded as betrayers of the Afrikaners.¹⁵

Hertzog did not rebel because he disapproved of taking up arms against the government, but his sympathies were with the rebels and he was not prepared to repudiate them. The result of the rebellion was that the National Party became the champion of Afrikaner nationalist ideals and therefore the Afrikaners strongly supported the NP in the 1915 election. The growth of Afrikaner Nationalism was also embodied in the establishment of the *Helpmekaar* society to raise funds to help pay the fines of the rebel leaders; the political awakening of Afrikaner women who took part in the fundraising of the *Helpmekaar* society, as well as the founding of the first Nationalist newspaper *De Burger*.¹⁶

When General Louis Botha died in 1919 he was succeeded as Prime Minister by General JC Smuts. Smuts, a man of exceptional intellect, had the difficult task of leading the SAP whose popularity was steadily declining. This became clearly visible when the National Party became the strongest single party in the National Assembly after the 1920 election. This made it very difficult for Smuts to remain in power. Attempts to re-unite the SAP and the National Party failed on the secession issue and Smuts had no other choice but to turn to the Unionist Party for support. This resulted in the merger of the two parties and Smuts went to the polls again in 1921 to strengthen his position. Smuts and the “new” SAP received a clear-cut majority and Hertzog and the National Party became the official opposition.¹⁷

By 1923 Smuts found himself in a similar position to that of 1920. His popularity was down as a result of the economic recession after the First World War, growing White poverty intensified by White, especially Afrikaner, urbanization and the violent way in which he put down the White mineworkers strike in 1922. This action against the mineworkers, many of whom were Afrikaners, irreparably damaged his image amongst the white working class. Smuts was seen as the champion of the capitalists and the Chamber of Mines, and as such he was portrayed in the opposition’s newspapers cartoons as the henchman of Hoggeneheimer, symbol of capitalist greed.¹⁸

Since the election of 1921 the government lost a number of by-elections which caused a serious decline of the government’s support. Smuts therefore announced that a general election would take place in 1924. Prior to the election Hertzog and Creswell announced that the National Party and the Labour Party had formed what was called a Pact to oppose Smuts’s SAP. The Pact won the election and Hertzog became the Prime Minister. Between 1924 and 1929 Hertzog’s Pact Government implemented its election programme with the credo of “South Africa First”. That included the development of secondary industries; the protection of “civilised” White labour to solve the poor-White and unemployment problems; solving the racial question; securing equal language and cultural rights for both White groups and bringing the dispute over the constitutional status of South Africa – that is the right of self-determination for the Union in foreign policy – to an end.

Supported by a complete economic upswing Hertzog was able to accomplish most of his goals. The economy of the Union developed strongly, White labour was protected against the competition of cheap Black labour through legislation, Afrikaner culture and Nationalism were strengthened by organisations such as the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings* (FAK) founded in 1929, Afrikaans replaced Dutch in 1925 as the official language next to English and in 1928 the Union received its own national flag alongside the Union Jack. At the Imperial Conference in London in 1926, the status of South Africa and the other British Dominions was cleared up by the Balfour Declaration whereby the Union and the other Dominions were no longer subordinate to Britain in any aspect of

their internal and external affairs. The recommendations were ratified by both the British Parliament (Statute of Westminster, 1931) and the Union Government (the Status Act, 1934) which entrenched the sovereignty of the Union Parliament.¹⁹ In practice it meant that South Africa in future had the right to remain neutral if Britain went to war and that South Africa could secede from the Commonwealth. Hertzog was of the opinion that his “*two stream policy*” and the policy of “South Africa first” had been successfully completed.

Because of the economic prosperity during his first term as prime minister, Hertzog’s Pact government won the 1929 election. In October 1929 the New York Stock Exchange crashed, followed by a severe economic depression which was aggravated by a terrible drought throughout South Africa. These factors, followed by the gold standard crisis, led to a sharp decline in South Africa’s economy. The gold crisis started in 1931 when Britain abandoned the gold standard. The Hertzog government did not follow Britain’s example which meant that South African produce sold to Britain was worth far less because the British pound had dropped in value in comparison to her own currency. A by-product of the gold crisis was that speculators in South Africa invested large sums of money in Britain in the hope of making huge profits if the English pound would rise in value. Against this background of economic turmoil Hertzog and Smuts agreed to form a coalition government. In a public speech Hertzog explained that coalition was necessary because, amongst others, the nation desired it, the economy demanded it and the National Party might be defeated in the next election.²⁰ Although the two leaders agreed on many policy matters, they agreed to disagree on three fundamental principles, namely, the divisibility of the Crown, the right of neutrality and the question of secession from the Commonwealth. They saw these differences as purely academic questions, but it sowed the seeds of division between them which would shatter their partnership when the Second World War erupted in 1939.

The alliance between Hertzog and Smuts led to fusion between the National Party and the South African Party, and the new United Party with Hertzog as Prime Minister and Smuts as his deputy, became the ruling party after the 1934 election.

Fusion led to the breakaway from Hertzog by the “Purified” National Party under the leadership of Dr DF Malan, leader of the old National Party in the Cape. This Purified National Party, officially still known as the National Party, became the vehicle for the political mobilization of Afrikaner ethnicity and Afrikaner Nationalism with the aim of taking political power away from the United Party.²¹

The strategy used by the National Party was multi-faceted. The Party declared that it would in future change the Union into a republican form of government free from the British Crown, because such a constitutional dispensation would be best suited for the traditions and aspirations of the Afrikaner nation or *volk*. The middle-class Afrikaner worked to unite and mobilize the rural and urban people, the rich and the poor under the banner of Afrikaner Nationalism. Afrikaner ethnic mobilization was also combined with the promotion of *volkskapitalisme* for the economic uplifting of impoverished Afrikaners with the aid of Afrikaner financial institutions such as Sanlam and Volkskas Bank, and the launching of the *Reddingsdaadbond* (Act of Rescue Fund) to support small Afrikaner business enterprises. Afrikaner culture was systematically strengthened through the Afrikaner Broederbond (a secret organisation), cultural organisations, the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938, and Christian National Education. By means of the emphasis placed on the history of the Afrikaners the political myth was created that the Afrikaner was God’s chosen people, destined to bring Christianity and civilization to South Africa. Another feature of Afrikaner Nationalism as embodied by the National Party, was that it became intolerant toward other racial groups.²²

With the 1938 election the National Party became the official opposition, although it could only win 27 seats to the United Party’s 111. The Second World War which broke out on 3 September 1939, ended the Hertzog-Smuts coalition. Hertzog was of the opinion that South Africa should remain neutral in what he described as a war between European powers. Smuts, on the other hand, maintained that it was in South Africa’s interest to enter the war in alliance with Britain. Because the cabinet was divided on this issue, it was taken to the House of Assembly and the majority of the representatives voted for Smuts. Thereupon Hertzog resigned as Prime Minister and he and some of his followers left the United Party. Smuts, who succeeded Hertzog as Prime Minister, and the United Party led South Africa into war with Germany.²³

Segregation and Non-white reaction, 1910-1939

From 1910 successive governments basically followed a policy of political, economic and social segregation towards the Non-Whites. But it was Hertzog who made segregation the official government policy towards Africans in 1936 when Parliament passed the *Representation of Natives Act* and the *Native Trust and Land Act* as his solution for what he called the “native problem.” The *Representation of Natives Act* removed enfranchised Africans in the Cape from the common voters’ role and placed them on a separate role to elect White representatives to the House of Assembly and the Provincial Council. This was a deviation from the 1910 Constitution because the African franchise was entrenched in Article 35, but the change was legally passed with a majority of two-thirds in both houses. Other Africans in the country had to elect four Whites to the Senate. As a conciliation to the Africans the Native Representative Council, with advisory powers only, was established.

The *Native Trust and Land Act* added more land to the “Native Reserves” than had been allocated to them by the *Native Land Act* of 1913. That meant that the total land of South Africa to which the Reserves could lay claim increased from less than 8% in 1913 to 12.4%. With this Act it was hoped that, if the economy of the Reserves was developed, women and children could be kept in the Reserves since only male labourers were needed in urban areas. These acts were followed by the *Native Laws Amendment Act* of 1937 whereby the system of African urban segregation and influx control was reinforced.²⁴

Since the 1970’s, a lively historical debate has developed over the purpose of segregation. Marxists and neo-Marxists argued that because South Africa had developed a capitalist economy, segregation became the instrument to ensure a regular supply of cheap black labour to the economic sectors such as mining and agriculture. That is a too one-dimensional argument and Saul Dubow was more correct when he stated the following: “Segregation cannot therefore be fully comprehended by relating it only to the immediate needs of capital: it was a complex political package which was first and foremost concerned with ameliorating the threat to white supremacy posed by South Africa’s process of rapid industrialisation.”²⁵

Up to the 1930’s the leaders of the African, Coloured and Indian political organisations, such as the ANC, APO and the Indian Congress, were mostly middle-class men who stood for moderate action. They hoped to influence the government through petitions, delegations and the press. They failed to develop a unity amongst them and with the South African Communist Party. In 1935 they tried again to unify their action when the All-African Convention (AAC) was formed when the Herzog bills were tabled. The AAC’s tactics failed to influence the government because it differed little from earlier methods.²⁶

The Second World War: Watershed in South Africa’s history

The Second World War which was fought to restore democracy in Europe, and the Atlantic Charter of 1941 influenced the ANC in 1943 to issue a document called African Claims, in which they demanded the same freedoms expressed in the Atlantic Charter and the abolition of all forms of discrimination. The revival of the ANC was given a further impetus with the establishment of the ANC Youth League in 1943 under the dynamic leadership of people such as Anton Lembede and Nelson Mandela, amongst others, who were dismissive with the political style of the 1930’s. The Youth League also stressed the importance of using the “masses” and direct action such as strikes, boycotts and the mobilization of trade unions.

The township and squatter protests as well as the Alexandra bus boycotts during the war years, although not very successful, emphasised the political potential of these militant actions for the ANC leadership. It was the mineworkers strike of 1946, to date the largest strike to have taken place in South Africa, which changed the ANC into a militant organization.

The Coloured-initiated Non-European Unity Movement adopted a Ten Point Programme in which they denounced segregation and asked for united action against the government to establish a true democracy. In the Transvaal and Natal, Indian passive resistance campaigns were renewed against laws which limited areas of Indian property ownership. This led to the condemnation of the Smuts government by the United Nations and India breaking off economic and diplomatic ties with South

In this atmosphere of growing Non-White militancy and Black urbanization, Dr DF Malan succeeded in mobilizing Afrikaner Nationalism behind his National Party. When the United Party won the 1943 election by a large majority Malan did not believe his Party could win the 1948 election. In the end the National Party did win the 1948 election with a small majority of 5 seats but it failed to secure the majority of votes. In actual fact it had 181,000 fewer votes than the other parties. This must be ascribed to the voting system agreed upon by the National Convention in 1909 and written into the Constitution, namely the "loading" of urban constituencies and the "unloading" of rural constituencies. This benefited the National Party because its support came from the rural areas. In the final analysis this was the most important reason for the National Party's victory. There were other reasons for the election results. The National Party was better prepared and organised than the United Party and post-war economic problems brought the government into disfavour. Malan also managed to form an alliance with Hertzog's followers after the latter had left politics early in 1940. Thus Malan united Afrikaners and Afrikaner Nationalism behind him. The international view of the equality of all people which prevailed after the war and the decolonising process which started with the independence of India in 1947, filled some of the Whites in South Africa with fear. Therefore the National Party's policy of Apartheid made it attractive to many voters.²⁸

So in 1948, the National Party with its Apartheid policy came into power and would dominate the political scene for more than fifty years. In opposition to the National Party there was a growing militant Black Nationalism. The scene was set for decades of political conflict and turmoil in South Africa.

NOTES

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Stalin, Collectivisation and the Soviet Peasantry

DR MARK SANDLE

Of all the transformations set in motion by the events of October 1917, the reshaping of the agricultural map was arguably the most far-reaching and traumatic. Within the space of four to five years, the whirlwind of forced collectivisation begun in November 1929 destroyed a way of life that had persisted for centuries. Assessments of this process by historians have been highly contentious, ranging over the reasons for its introduction, the relationship between collectivisation and industrialisation, disputes over the statistics and evaluations of how successful it was. In addressing the key questions pertaining to collectivisation, it is also possible to trace the way in which writings on the Stalin era have seen a gradual shift, away from the personalities of key actors, the state, the centre and ideology, and towards a focus on society, culture and the periphery. In this way, a fuller and more rounded view of collectivisation has emerged to challenge many of the notions that dominated the earlier scholarship.

The Decision to Collectivise

The earlier writings on collectivisation examined the reasons for the introduction of collectivisation, and the extent to which the state and/or Stalin achieved their objectives.¹ In particular, the question of why the decision was taken to collectivise the peasantry was debated. Explanations have tended to fall into a number of categories. Was it a politically-motivated policy to destroy the peasantry and subordinate society to the party? Was it inspired by Bolshevik visions of agriculture under socialism? Was it a response to the economic and international circumstances facing the party in the late 1920's? Was it a response to popular pressure from below for a transformation of the agricultural sector?

It is important to draw a distinction between why the Bolsheviks believed in collectivisation, and why the decision was taken to collectivise at that time and in that manner. Collectivisation had been a cornerstone of party policy since 1917. The long-term vision of all Bolsheviks was of an agricultural sector dominated by large-scale, mechanised, modern farms. These would be more efficient (benefiting from economies of scale) and productive (because of the use of new machinery), substantially increasing the amount of grain produced. There were also other benefits that would accrue. The experience of working together would help to develop a "socialist" consciousness in the peasantry, broadening the basis of support for the party. The introduction of machinery would release labour to go into the factories, increasing the numbers of workers and also strengthening the position of the party. Collectivisation also represented an important psychological moment for the party. The Bolsheviks – a party of the urban proletariat – were committed to the modernisation and industrialisation of the Soviet Union. The Russian peasant, working his small strip of land with his wooden plough, was a potent symbol of Russia's backwardness. Collectivisation would destroy this symbol, and provide important evidence of progress towards their vision of the future.²

No Bolshevik questioned the necessity of collectivisation. The question that did vex them was, how? Lenin had always insisted that collectivisation should be undertaken gradually and according to the voluntary principle: peasants should be persuaded of the advantages and benefits of collectivisation by observing "model" collective farms in operation. Any resort to coercion would be liable to lead to confrontation and conflict with the peasantry, reviving memories of the civil war and possibly threatening the existence of the regime. An answer to this question was provided by Stalin in 1929. He decided "suddenly and without warning" in November 1929 to embark upon a policy of wholesale, rapid, forcible collectivisation which entailed a mass mobilisation of the resources of the state to persuade, cajole and drive the peasants into newly created collective farms. Alongside collectivisation, the state also adopted a policy of declaring war against the kulak class (the so-called "rich peasantry") who were seen as the class enemies of the Soviet state, and liable to resist collectivisation. This process of "de-kulakisation" – the arrest and deportation or exile of a whole swathe of peasants – marked a radical break with the Leninist "voluntary" principle. Why did Stalin make this break?

The circumstances at the end of the 1920's provide some clues, although no conclusive picture emerges. At the end of 1927, the party had taken the decision to place industrialisation at the centre of the policy agenda, in order to begin laying the foundations for the construction of socialism and to ensure the national security of the country in the face of an increasingly hostile international environment. Industrialisation required a regular, cheap, reliable supply of grain to feed the workers and soldiers, and to export for investment funds. Was the structure of peasant agriculture under NEP able to do this? In 1927/28, there appeared to be grave doubts. Owing to the low prices paid for the grain by the state the peasants temporarily withdrew from the market and held on to their grain stocks. Rationing resulted in the urban areas. If industrialisation was to succeed, the uncertainty over grain supplies had to be ended.

In this sense there were **economic problems** confronting the party, to which collectivisation provided a possible solution. But how far was collectivisation **necessary** to enable industrialisation to proceed? Could the same economic results have been accomplished with a slight change in the economic basis of NEP agriculture? This was the basis for a well-known exchange between James Millar, and Alec Nove in 1976 entitled "Was Stalin really necessary?"³ Millar argued that the "standard story" (that collectivisation was necessary to achieve the rate of industrialisation required by the Soviet state) was flawed. In his view the same results could have been achieved with an adjustment in grain prices. This obviated the need for a turn to coercion, and for the onset of wholesale collectivisation. Nove countered that collectivisation was the most likely outcome in these particular circumstances, as the other potential solutions did not fit comfortably with the Bolshevik world-view. The debate was inconclusive, turning on the definition of "necessity". Nove saw it as neither desirable nor inevitable, but a necessary development given the Bolshevik world-view and the circumstances of the time. Millar deferred, arguing that collectivisation was neither necessary nor optimal to the developmental path chosen by the leadership.

But there were also political factors at play in the decision to collectivise. Stalin went to Siberia in 1928 to investigate and claimed that the peasants were deliberately hoarding the grain in order to hold the regime to ransom. In other words, Stalin interpreted peasant withdrawal from the market as a political action. Stalin sanctioned the use of coercion against the peasantry (a clear break with the policy of moderation and conciliation towards the peasant which was the cornerstone of NEP) in order to ensure that sufficient grain reached the urban areas. During 1928 and the first half of 1929, Stalin began to preach that collectivisation was a **political necessity**.⁴ The kulaks were posing a growing political threat to the Soviet state. Problems with food supply not only threatened national security, it also put a strain on relations between the party and the workers. The pace and extent of collectivisation had to be stepped up to prevent a political crisis emerging.

The problem with interpretations which have highlighted the economic dilemmas or the political interests of Stalin and the Soviet state is that they fail to address the specific questions of why at that time and in that manner? This requires a close analysis of the period between June 1929, the decision in November 1929 and the unfolding of the policy up to March 1930. Collectivisation evolved fitfully; it was not a planned process. It also requires an analysis that incorporates developments both at the centre/state/elite, and also at the periphery/society, as outlined by many of the new "social" histories of collectivisation.⁵ Three questions present themselves: Why rapid? Why comprehensive? Why coercive?

In June 1929, it was still assumed that collectivisation would happen gradually. However, events in the localities and the regions ran ahead of the plans of those at the centre. Enthusiastic campaigns were organised on the initiative of those at local levels. High rates of collectivisation in the main grain-producing regions encouraged more ambitious plans to be adopted. In the atmosphere of revolutionary radicalism of the time, the collectivisation campaign began to develop a dynamic of its own, and the centre merely jumped on board in the autumn of 1929. The aim was to complete comprehensive collectivisation in the main grain-producing regions as quickly as possible, and across the whole country by 1932. A series of party decrees and meetings from October 1929 to February 1930 saw the collectivisation process gradually unfold.

A mass mobilisation of urban party workers, army officers and other political activists was organised

to carry out the creation of huge collective farms, to socialise all property and to persuade the peasants to join. The attitudes prevailing within the party are crucial in explaining the turn towards rapid, comprehensive collectivisation. A sense of impatience with the slow pace of progress towards socialism produced by NEP, a sense of injustice at the apparent ease with which peasants were able to “get rich” and a sense of anxiety at the deterioration in the international situation and the isolation of the USSR all combined to produce a groundswell of support for radical solutions to the dilemmas facing the party. This atmosphere was crucial in setting the tone for decisions, and for shaping the debate about the logistics and tempo of collectivisation.⁶ A gradual process was also thought to be much easier to sabotage. Speed was seen as critical.

Why was the turn towards collectivisation accompanied by the policy of “eliminating the kulaks as a class”? Why exclude the most successful farmers from joining the collective farms, when their experience and skills would be invaluable in establishing and running the collective farms? Once more the atmosphere of radicalism and the rhetoric of class warfare shaped the decisions of the party. By “liquidating” the kulaks, this would undermine the forces of capitalism in the countryside. It would also remove the class most likely to organise opposition to collectivisation, and send a clear message to the rest of the peasantry about the consequences of resistance. Both collectivisation and dekulakisation can be seen as part of a campaign both to eliminate capitalism and to end the state’s dependence on the peasantry, and so establish socialism and Soviet power in the countryside.

The decision taken in November 1929 to collectivise the Soviet peasantry was a complex combination of ideology, economics, politics, international circumstances and the interaction of state/society and centre/periphery. Much of the recent research, by throwing light on developments at the regional levels and below, has shown that collectivisation evolved between June 1929 and March 1930, that the centre was often following the periphery, rather than leading, and that the atmosphere of international isolation and revolutionary fervour was crucial in framing the response of the centre.

The Achievements and Consequences of Collectivisation

The drive to collectivise was carried out by a vast array of workers, party activists and students sent out into the countryside. Accompanying this was the de-kulakisation campaign. Although collectivisation was still nominally “voluntary”, the atmosphere of revolutionary maximalism in which it occurred, and the interpretation of any opposition as evidence of “kulak” tendencies, resulted in the forcible seizure of livestock and the bullying of peasants to join the collective farms. In the chaos of those first few months, many excesses were committed, countless numbers of livestock were slaughtered and thousands upon thousands of “kulaks” deported or exiled. The countryside was in chaos, and the central leadership called a halt to the process in March 1930, worried that the spring sowing would not take place. Blaming the excessive zeal of local officials, they stated that the peasants could leave the collective farms, which they did in droves. Having ensured the harvest would be collected, the state stepped up the campaign again in the autumn of 1930, this time without respite.⁷

What sort of set-up emerged from this process? There was a great deal of variation in practice, as the guidelines handed down were vague. Gradually, the key features evolved, and were eventually codified in the 1935 *Model Kolkhoz Statute*. There were two main structures: *sovkhozy* and *kolkhozy*. The former were organised as large-scale single product structures which paid their employees a guaranteed minimum wage. The majority of *kolkhozy* were defined as “voluntary co-operatives”. Land, horses and basic implements were held in common, while livestock were the property of individual households. After the *kolkhoz* had met the compulsory delivery quota imposed by the state, whatever cash or produce remained was divided up amongst the peasants. A later concession saw farmers allowed a personal plot within the collective farm. The whole set-up was, in Davies’ words, a “compromise”.⁸ By 1936, the vast majority of the countryside had been collectivised. But did collectivisation achieve its objectives?

Three questions have dominated the literature. Did collectivisation increase output? Did collectivisation make a positive contribution to industrialisation? What were the sources of the increased procurements acquired by the state? Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft have provided some detailed analysis and estimates (given the difficulties with the statistical data available) of the

performance of the agricultural sector.⁹ In general terms there was a precipitate decline in production in the period 1928-32/33, although in most sectors there had been a recovery by the end of the decade. According to the estimates provided (supported by official figures from Soviet sources in the 1960's), levels of agricultural output only exceeded the 1928 level in 1940 by c. 2.5%. Grain production (for human consumption, and for animal fodder) rose slightly in 1930, but then declined quickly between 1932/33 (probably reaching only 50-55m tons), and then recovered slowly until 1940. By 1935, grain output reached 75m tons (the first time the 1928 levels had been surpassed). A fall in 1936 (to 56.1m tons) was followed by a rise in 1937 to 97.4m tons. The decline in livestock numbers (and thus of meat, dairy products, hides etc.) was staggering. According to Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft's figures, the number of cattle dropped by 44%, pigs by 55% and sheep and goats by 65%. Only the numbers of pigs had recovered to their 1928 level by 1940.¹⁰

It is clear that in economic terms, the aims of collectivisation – to create an efficient, mechanised, modernised agricultural sector that would outstrip capitalist production – had not been realised. Why? Firstly, the arbitrary, unplanned nature of the process created a great deal of chaos in 1930. No-one knew how it should be carried out, in the absence of clear guidelines from above, which led to a great number of mistakes being made. Problems with the infrastructure – storage and transport – also need to be taken into account. Secondly, de-kulakisation removed a stratum of knowledgeable and successful peasants, and prompted the destruction of livestock and tools. Thirdly, there was a lack of expertise and understanding. The collectivisation brigades were drawn overwhelmingly from the ranks of urban dwellers, who lacked an understanding of agriculture and peasant methods of working. This lack of expertise on the ground was exacerbated by the inflexibility of the policy makers, who developed policies with little reference to the specific conditions in the different regions of the USSR. Moreover, the high procurement quotas established by the state reduced the economic incentives for the farmers to work on the collective farms. Fourthly, the levels of mechanisation failed to reach their expected targets, which when combined with the loss of animal power meant that the collective farms lacked the means to develop an efficient farm benefiting from economies of scale. Finally, fluctuations in the weather also had a role to play. Droughts in 1931/32 contributed to the decline in production in 1932/33.¹¹

Production levels did not reach the intended levels. However, the state was able to procure more grain than they had in the past. What was the source of these increased procurements? And did this process make a positive contribution to industrialisation? The sources of increased state procurement, in the light of small overall increases in output, can be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, the state left a great deal less in the countryside than previously, often less than the minimum necessary for basic subsistence. Secondly, it has been argued that the increase in procurements came from the decline in livestock holdings. With fewer cattle, sheep and horses to feed, there was more grain available for human consumption. Thirdly, a high proportion of the non-grain and industrial crop output came from the individual plots of the peasants. In other words, even the modest economic successes of collectivisation can be put down to coercive state pressure, or the unintended consequences of the process of collectivisation. The rise in output after 1936 has also been explained by the improvements in climate, rather than the impact of mechanisation. Did collectivisation contribute to industrialisation? The debate has centred on the ways in which collectivisation **provided** resources (food, labour, earnings from exports) and the way in which it **absorbed** resources from the industrial sector (machinery, purchase of consumer goods). Millar has argued that there was a net outflow of resources from industry to agriculture.¹²

The human cost of collectivisation has also proven to be highly contentious. No-one disputes the misery and trauma suffered by the peasantry. Life was harsh and impoverished. Most collective farm workers (*kolkhozniki*) lived like nineteenth century serfs, excluded from the rest of society. The labour camps were full of "kulaks". This much is undisputed. The precise human cost, and the causes of the famine which beset Ukraine in 1932-33 are much more contentious. A series of articles have attempted to address the question of the so-called "population shortfall" caused by the combined impact of the event of the 1930's (collectivisation, the famines, the terror, the gulags and so on). There has been no real resolution to this debate, with estimates for the deaths from the famine ranging from between 3-4m at the low end, to 7m at the upper end.¹³

The causes of the Ukrainian famine have been debated at length. Robert Conquest is in no doubt that the famine was deliberately engineered, that it was in effect a “terror famine” the motive for which was part of the, public campaign against nationalism [in Ukraine and Kuban]. In these and in other areas affected, the apparent concern in the agrarian sphere proper was to break the spirit of the most recalcitrant regions of peasant resentment at collectivisation.¹⁴

It is clear that the state knew about the impending disaster in the countryside, yet failed to act, condemning millions of peasants in Ukraine, Kazakhstan and elsewhere to death. Davies, Tauger and Wheatcroft have challenged some of the figures supplied by Conquest, in particular that Stalin had deliberately stockpiled grain reserves of 4.53m and refused to release this, which would have fed up to 13-14m people in one year. They argue that the reserve grain stocks were only 1.41m tons.¹⁵ However, the wider point still stands. The famine was a direct consequence of the policy of forced collectivisation and de-kulakisation, and the state could have done a great deal to have alleviated it, but failed. The result was a tragedy of quite enormous proportions.

In general, collectivisation failed to achieve almost any of its economic objectives. In the longer term it was a central factor in the failure of the Soviet economy. Rationing and shortages were endemic to the life of the Soviet consumer, and agriculture became the achilles heel of the Soviet economy. In human and social terms, the suffering and trauma induced by collectivisation is almost too painful to describe. Perhaps the only real “achievement” of collectivisation was a political one. It freed the party from having to placate the peasantry, and ensured a regular, reliable supply of grain for the army and the industrial sector. But surely much more could have been achieved, at less cost via a different route?

Responses to Collectivisation

Recent research has explored the experiences of those doing the collectivising, and those being collectivised. This has taken the focus away from the debates around intentions and outcomes, and has painted a detailed picture of the operation of the process, the motivations of the participants, and the responses of the peasantry.

One of the earliest (and best) studies was that by Lynne Viola, *Best Sons of the Fatherland*. In her 1987 text, she sets out the experiences of the 25000ers, a group of workers recruited to implement the collectivisation drive after the November 1929 plenum. This demonstrates that there was significant support for collectivisation amongst key elements in the urban areas. The 25000ers were in the forefront of the collectivisation movement, and formed the core of the new rural elite controlling the collective farm sector. However, as Viola suggests, “the experience of the 25000ers reflected the revolution’s fate in the countryside”.¹⁶ Unable to turn rural Russia into the vision of a modernised socialist agricultural sector, they were forced to make a series of compromises with peasant culture and traditions. The revealing element of Viola’s study, is that while collectivisation was initiated as a revolution from above, consciously led and guided by the communist party, the centre was never able either to control the process, or realise its vision in practice. The revolutionary heroism of Bolshevism had to retreat in the face of the cold, hard, unbending reality of the countryside, its cultures and its people.

Finally, what of the peasantry during collectivisation? Recent studies have demonstrated the variety of responses from the peasantry. Hoffman has argued that peasant solidarity and unity against external forces dissipated after 1917 with the removal of the nobility as their ever-present oppressor. He relates that although there were examples of resistance, the peasants as a whole did not stand unified in opposition to collectivisation. The main divisions fell along generational lines. The younger peasants were generally more willing to learn about collective farms and to assist in their creation, as a result of their dissatisfaction with life in the countryside during the 1920’s. The older generation were implacably opposed, and rural officials were able to exploit these divisions in the early stages of collectivisation.¹⁷

Peasant protest also took a variety of forms. The response of women to collectivisation has been detailed by Atkinson, Viola and others. Dorothy Atkinson noted that there were certain sections of rural women (widows, wives of migrant labourers) who supported collectivisation as they found working alone burdensome. Many young women openly welcomed collectivisation.¹⁸ Viola by way of

contrast detailed the protest strategies adopted by women during the years up to 1932. She looks at the “spontaneous riot” or *Bab’i bunt’*. In spite of appearances to the contrary, the *Bab’i Bunt’* were organised movements directed at particular issues in the village: halting grain requisitioning, seizing seed stocks and so on. They demonstrate that there was organised, direct resistance to the process of collectivisation from all sections of the rural community, and emphasise the rationality of peasant responses.¹⁹

The most comprehensive study of the responses to collectivisation has come from Sheila Fitzpatrick’s work *Stalin’s Peasants*. She details the range of strategies adopted by the peasants to cope with collectivisation, and to make the collective farm work for them. These strategies included: “everyday resistance” (general unwillingness to work, delaying, petty theft); flight (mainly to the urban areas); profession of religious belief (in contradistinction to the atheism of the state); negotiation over the exact definition, structure and operation of the collective farm (in the absence of any detailed guidelines from above), as well as the more irregular outright protest.²⁰ However, Fitzpatrick has also shown that there were elements amongst the peasantry who adopted strategies of active accommodation (becoming part of the new system). This entailed becoming “a kolkhoz officeholder, a machine operator working part of the year for the local Machine Tractor Station, ...and to become a Stakhanovite”.²¹

Fitzpatrick’s work – along with those of Viola, Atkinson, Hoffman, Buckley²² and others – has demonstrated the importance of an awareness of how collectivisation was experienced on the ground. It was a policy with active support from key urban constituencies, and also from certain sections of rural society. Protest and resistance also took a variety of forms, highlighting the complexity of rural society. Moreover, the light these studies shed on the chaos, failures and compromises of the collectivisation campaign demonstrate the extent to which the state was ultimately frustrated by society in its attempts to realise its grand vision.

Conclusion

Summarising this process is not easy, given the scale and speed of the transformation, the trauma endured by the peasants and the disputes over its origins and achievements amongst historians. Two things can be said unambiguously. Firstly, recent research has substantially modified perceptions of the process as a whole, by highlighting the chaos and arbitrariness at local levels and the complexities of the response of the peasants, without undermining the centrality of the role played by Stalin and the state in shaping and driving this policy. Secondly, collectivisation was an enormous tragedy which destroyed a whole way of life in a few short years, a world lost forever.

NOTES

- 1 The key texts for collectivisation are as follows: M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power* (London, 1968); R. W. Davies, *The Socialist Offensive 1929-30* (Houndmills, 1980) and *The Soviet Collective Farm* (Houndmills, 1980); R. Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivisation and the Terror-Famine* (London, 1986); good general texts include, G. Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union* (London, 1992, final edition); C. Ward, *Stalin’s Russia* (London, 1999, second edition); A. Nove, *An Economic history of the USSR* (Harmondsworth, 1982). V. Andrie, *A Social History of Twentieth Century Russia* (London, 1994) ch.6.
- 2 To examine the ideological aspects of collectivisation see, M. Sandle, *A Short History of Soviet Socialism* (London, 1999) pp. 234-38;
- 3 James R. Millar and Alec Nove, “A debate on collectivisation: was Stalin really necessary?” in *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1976, pp.49-62;
- 4 L. Viola, *Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivisation* (Oxford, 1987) pp.27-31.
- 5 See *ibid.*, also her other works, “The campaign to eliminate the kulak as a class, winter 1929-30: a re-evaluation of the legislation” in *Slavic Review*, 45, 1986, no. 3, pp.503-24; and “*Bab’i Bunt’* and peasant

- women's protest during collectivisation" in *Russian Review*, 45, 1986, pp. 23-42; S. Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivisation* (Oxford, 1994)
- 6 Aside from Viola, *Best Sons*, see also C. Merridale, *Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin: The Communist Party in the Capital 1925-32* (London, 1990).
 - 7 See Davies, op. cit. *The Soviet Collective Farm*, for a detailed narrative of this process.
 - 8 Ibid., p. 175.
 - 9 R.W. Davies, M. Harrison and S.G. Wheatcroft, *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union 1913-45* (Cambridge, 1994) ch.6.
 - 10 Ibid., pp. 113-130.
 - 11 Ibid., pp. 117-128.
 - 12 The key sources for this debate are, Millar and Nove, op. cit.; J.R. Millar, "Mass collectivisation and the contribution of Soviet agriculture to the first five-year plan" in *Slavic Review*, December 1974, pp. 750-66; M. Ellman, "Did the agricultural surplus provide the resources for the increase in investment in the USSR during the first five-year plan?" in *Economic Journal*, 4, 1975; H. Hunter, "Soviet agriculture with and without collectivisation", in *Slavic Review*, 47, 1988. A good summary of this debate can be found in Ward, op. cit. pp. 94 -96.
 - 13 S. Rosefielde, "Excess collectivisation deaths 1932-33" in *Slavic Review*, 44, 1, 1985. See the subsequent debate between Wheatcroft and Rosefielde in *Slavic Review*, vol. 44, 3, 1985. Also M. Ellman, "A note on the number of 1933 famine victims" in *Soviet Studies*, 2, 1991.
 - 14 Conquest, op. cit., p. 329.
 - 15 R.W. Davies, M.B. Tauger and S.G. Wheatcroft, "Stalin, grain stocks and the Famine of 1932-1933" in *Slavic Review*, 54, no.3 1995, pp. 642-57. Other sources on the famine include, M. Carynnyk, L. Luciuk & B. S. Kordan (eds), *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-33* (Kingston, 1988); V. Danilov & N. V. Teptsov, "Collectivisation: the Results" in R.V. Daniels (ed.), *The Stalin Revolution* (Boston, 1997, 4th edition) pp. 126-41
 - 16 Viola, op. cit. *Best Sons*, p. 213.
 - 17 D. L. Hoffman, "Land, freedom and discontent: Russian peasants of the Central Industrial region prior to collectivisation", in *Europe-Asia Studies*, July 1994, 46, 4.
 - 18 D. L. Atkinson, *The End of the Russian Land Commune 1905-30* (Stanford, 1983), p. 367-69.
 - 19 Viola, op. cit. "*Bab'i Bunty*".
 - 20 Fitzpatrick, op. cit., pp. 3-18;
 - 21 Ibid., p. 10.
 - 22 M. Buckley, "Was rural Stakhanovism a movement?" in *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2, 51, March 1999

The Allied Bombing Campaign Against Germany in World War Two

DR JOHN BUCKLEY

The strategic bombing offensive against Germany during the Second World War has provoked more comment and debate than any other campaign in the short history of air power. Both on an ethical and strategical level the rights and wrongs of the offensives have been the subject of a long succession of books, memoirs and articles and will almost certainly continue to elicit speculation and discussion. Clearly, the revolutionary nature of strategic bombing in widening and deepening modern war has been the factor that has set it apart from other uses of air power.

In terms of strategic bombing's impact on the outcome of the war the debate continues. However, despite the ethical and moral issues which surround the use of massed bombers to attack civilians, the value of the Allied bombing offensives to final victory should not be dismissed lightly as many continue to do.¹ Moreover, when the more wide-ranging effects of the offensive are considered, such as the destruction of the Luftwaffe from 1943 onwards, and the diversion of scarce resources to the defence of German airspace, then the impact of the offensive appears more pronounced. The Allied victory in Normandy would have been unthinkable without the vast and overwhelming support of the Allied air forces, and if the attrition imposed upon the Luftwaffe had not been forced by the use of long-range fighter-escorts from late-1943 onwards, then such air supremacy would in no way have been as complete. Debate over the strategic bombing offensive has too often been bogged down in retrospective quibbling over the amount of damage (or lack of it) done to the German economy, and has glossed over the wider strategic requirements of the time. This is not to assert that mistakes were not made, or that strategic bombing fitted neatly into an integrated Allied grand strategy at all times, or indeed that just because the Allies won, the systematic flattening of German cities, particularly from the autumn of 1944 onwards, was entirely justifiable on all counts. However, a wide perspective of the strategic bombing offensive's contribution to Allied victory needs to be appreciated.

Following the defeat of France in 1940, the British Chiefs of Staff formulated a new strategic plan in August and September, which made the best of Britain's parlous state, offered a rationale for continuing the fight, and made the bombing offensive a cornerstone of the war effort. The new strategy rested on three points.² Firstly, Germany would be subjected to blockade to undermine the Nazi economy, which the British considered susceptible to such indirect attack. Secondly, Britain was to adopt a policy of subversion, which included the raising of underground armies across Europe that would rise up at the appropriate moment to link up with a returning British army. The way would be prepared by the undermining of morale in Germany itself by a combination of covert activity and propaganda, and the third strand to British strategy, strategic bombing. Bombing would cripple the German economy, weaken the resolve of the people, and bring the Nazi state to the point of collapse, at which point the underground army would rise up, and the British liberator army would return to Europe to mop up resistance.

Once 'unleashed' on the orders of Churchill in the summer of 1940, however, RAF Bomber Command's offensive suffered a rude awakening over Germany. Daylight raids resulted in very heavy losses and were soon abandoned in favour of night-raids, in the hope that this would evade the Luftwaffe's preying fighters and bring losses under control. To a degree this was successful, but it increased the inaccuracy of bombing still further. The Butt Report of 1941, which was based on photo-reconnaissance information, was the first real test of Bomber Command's record. It was damning indeed and even Churchill's faith in the offensive was undermined. Its findings were that only some 20% of bomber crews were getting within 5 miles of the target. Indeed so inaccurate were the bombing raids that the German authorities were often at a loss as to what the RAF was attempting to hit. Moreover, as losses at the hands of the increasingly sophisticated German night-fighters increased, with sinkings of merchant shipping in the Atlantic to U-boats for want of long-range bomber type aircraft mounting, and with growing demands for more air resources to be used to support the Mediterranean campaign,

the whole basis of the bombing offensive seemed to be about to collapse.

The campaign was saved by three factors. Firstly, in February 1942 the Air Staff switched the premise of the offensive from destroying particular industrial targets to one based on a strategy of general area attacks on cities. This it was hoped would hinder the German economy by 'dehousing', demoralising and killing workers both at work and in their homes. Secondly, Arthur Harris was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief of RAF Bomber Command in February 1942 and his influence was both marked and impressive. Whatever his detractors were to say later, he was a major factor in pulling Bomber Command together in 1942 and his single-minded determination, perhaps later a disadvantage, was ideal at this stage of the war. Paradoxically, he was not a true believer in the Air Staff's new morale cracking stratagem, but did see significant possibilities in the straightforward disintegration of Germany's industrial infrastructure via the policy of area bombing.

Finally, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent German declaration of war on the USA brought the Americans into the war. Agreed Allied strategy was predicated on the 'Germany first' principle, and the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) was a firm and ardent supporter of strategic bombing and the potential of a joint offensive offered possibilities that it would have been foolish to ignore.

The USAAF's plan was in essence to try just what the RAF had abandoned and was now telling its American cousins was unworkable; precision, daylight raids over Europe. Vicarious learning is difficult at the best of times and despite warnings from the RAF, the Americans were determined to test the capabilities of the B-17 Flying Fortress bomber and their own air battle doctrine.³

Early efforts were often restricted to targets in northern France and within range of Allied fighter escorts, but when the US 8th Air Force (the American strategic air force in Britain) began operating over Germany itself and started to encounter the Luftwaffe in strength, losses mounted and faith in the US techniques began to be questioned. The German fighters rapidly developed new tactics for dealing with the higher defensive firepower of the US bombers, which in any case proved somewhat less effective than pre-war US doctrine had presumed.⁴ Both bombing offensives were slowly improving and the learning curve of the US forces was much steeper than its British counterpart, but by the end of 1942 little had been achieved that could be said to have noticeably influenced the course of the war, even including the much publicised 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne.

Efforts in 1943 again demonstrated an up-turn in the campaign. In July the RAF launched a major raid on Hamburg in which a high proportion of incendiary bombs (designed to burn rather than blast) were deployed. Due to the hot weather and dry conditions, parts of Hamburg burned with such ferocity, possibly reaching temperatures of 1000 degrees Celsius, that all the oxygen was used up and more was sucked in from outlying areas creating what became known as a 'firestorm'. The consequences were appalling with asphyxiation and incineration accounting for many of the 30 000-40 000 dead. The firebombing of Hamburg caused considerable consternation in Germany, with Albert Speer's comment that six more raids of that nature and the war would have been over, being the most interesting, though he was later to moderate his statement.⁵

However, it was clear to General 'Hap' Arnold (Commander in Chief, USAAF) by mid-1943 that the only way the Luftwaffe's fighter strength could be neutralised was by sending US escort fighters to do battle around the bomber formations as they travelled to and from their targets, and the key to this was finding a fighter that would be able to fly to Berlin and back.⁶ A crash programme was instituted that resulted in the mass production of a modified long-range high performance fighter, the P-51 Mustang. It outclassed anything in the Luftwaffe and was to turn the course of the air war over Germany.

The chance to test the US 8th's new strategy came in late-February 1944 in what was later titled 'Big Week'. A period of clear weather allowed the USAAF to begin a series of substantial raids on German aircraft production plants, which continued into March, and then switched to targeting oil production before being used to support the Normandy landings. The Luftwaffe was forced to fight and though they inflicted heavy losses on the US bomber fleet (some 20% were written off in February) the cost to the German fighter arm was immense.⁷ By attempting to intervene and engage the USAAF in air superiority battles the Luftwaffe opened itself up to heavy 'imposed' attrition; attrition which the USAAF could endure, but which the Germans could not.

With US fighters, most notably the P-51, arriving in ever growing numbers and beginning to shoot the Luftwaffe out of the skies, realisation dawned that control of German airspace was being lost. Albert Speer recorded that Goering had always claimed that Allied fighters would never be able to reach Germany, and when they did, it was clear the war was lost.⁸ As loss rates soared, the growing problem of replacing the pilots, even more than their aircraft, began to appear insurmountable. Between January and May 1944 the Luftwaffe lost the equivalent of its entire fighter pilot strength, meaning that replacements could only just keep up with losses. Thus, no expansion of the fighter arm could take place at the very time the Allied air forces were expanding rapidly and encroaching ever further into German airspace. German industry made exceptional efforts to increase aircraft production, but little could be done to prevent the haemorrhaging of trained Luftwaffe aircrew. Pilot training was hit particularly badly by the bombing raids on oil production and by 1944 German pilots had less than half the length of flying time prior to being thrown into the fray, than their American and British counterparts. In the months leading up to the Normandy landings, the Luftwaffe suffered grievous losses to its fighter arm, with some 3278 aircraft being lost. The battle for air supremacy over Europe had been won, and the Allied air forces were able, once they had fulfilled their commitments to D-Day, to pick and choose their targets over Germany at will. For the Germans, rapid defeat in the air war came not as a result of events in 1944 but in part because of the failure to increase production and training programmes in 1940-42. The crucial nature of attrition and industry to air campaigns in total war was no better illustrated than the battle for air supremacy over Europe in 1944, and the investment in long-term air power expansion made by the Allies some years before paid huge dividends.⁹

The latter stages of the bombing offensive in many ways caused the greatest controversy. Firstly, Allied policy in the autumn of 1944 emphasised the value and importance of targeting oil production in Germany, which was viewed as a critical chokepoint in the German war machine. Considerable success was achieved in this area, but criticism was and has been levelled at Arthur Harris that he did not prosecute the campaign as fully as he might because he did not believe it to be effective. Throughout the war he had argued that 'panacea-mongering' would not solve anything; the only way to achieve results was to concentrate on area bombing. On many occasions he had been proved right, but on the oil offensive even Harris accepted after the war that he may have underestimated the effectiveness of the campaign.¹⁰ At the time, although he opposed the principle of the policy, he did grudgingly carry it out, contrary to the popular perception that he ignored direct orders from above. Recent research has shown that RAF Bomber Command could have contributed little more than it actually did in the winter of 1944-45 to the oil offensive.¹¹

However, the controversy that has overshadowed all others concerning the bomber offensive in World War Two in Europe was that surrounding the Dresden raid of February 1945. The firebombing of the city by the RAF and the USAAF in which tens of thousands, perhaps as many as 100 000, perished in a firestorm akin to that which gutted Hamburg in 1943 and was later to devastate Tokyo, caused a storm of protest then and has continued to do so since. Whatever the justification for area bombing in the war hitherto, the destruction of a city with little industrial plant, filled with fleeing refugees, at a time when the war was all but over seemed little more than senseless slaughter. Many arguments have been offered, including that the raid was a warning to demonstrate to the Soviets the strength of Allied air power; or that Harris was determined to prove that area bombing could have won the war; or that the military technology was available so had to be used to justify the investment.

None of these are in themselves an explanation. For example, far from being a purely political act, the Dresden raid was requested by the Soviets to cause the more rapid collapse of German resistance on the eastern front, though indeed some in Allied command may have considered the psychological value of a massive raid on the advancing Red Army. Again, although Harris still firmly believed in the area bombing policy, he was not directly responsible for the Dresden raid; this was merely the continuation of a policy in place for three years and which had been reaffirmed by the military Chiefs of Staff only weeks before the attack on Dresden itself. The strategy remained what it had been since 1942 and the issue is not whether an active decision should have been made to destroy Dresden, but whether and if, there should have been a decision not to. No one in power considered such a revision of policy necessary until *after* the raid, and by then the achievement's of RAF Bomber Command in particular had been tarnished.

Moreover, the selection of targets in the eastern sector was taken over Harris' head; he was merely directed to attack them when possible. It is also worth noting that in January and February 1945 the war was still being fiercely contested by the German armed forces. Although the final outcome may not have appeared to be in doubt, the cost of finishing the war was still high. The Red Army suffered 1 000 000 casualties in its winter/spring offensive to capture Berlin, and the western Allies had only recently fought off the German attack through the Ardennes that was to become known as the Battle of the Bulge. In addition, all the Allies were becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of troop replacements arriving in their front-line units. Loss rates remained excessively high as the Germans continued to resist with determination. Quite simply there was an understandable desire to end the war as quickly as possible to save Allied lives.

What marks out the Dresden raid was the excessive brutality of its prosecution, which in the aftermath made even the Allied leadership flinch, and the protagonists seek a scapegoat. Harris with his curious political naiveté was the willing fall guy, as to his credit he stuck to his principles, however questionable they may have been, when others turned their backs, including Churchill. In contrast, the US 8th Air Force carried out a largely successful whitewash of its role in the Dresden raid, repeatedly playing the precision bombing card in the post-war years to prove its innocence. The reality was that the USAAF was following its late-war psychological knockout blow policy, worked out back in 1942, and in any case in the prevailing poor European weather the USAAF was often less accurate in its bombing than the RAF which had been developing radar-assisted bombing for low/non-visibility operations since 1940/41. In many cases the USAAF resorted to bombing what it euphemistically phrased 'marshalling yards', which in truth meant area bombing.¹² What the Americans did well was to distance themselves from the policy of area bombing in a way that Harris never even attempted.

In many ways the Dresden raid has coloured the post-war view of the effectiveness of the bomber offensive. Yet, the impact of strategic bombing on the outcome of the war was immense, on three counts. Firstly, the direct impact on the German economy caused by the physical damage of bombing; secondly, the massive redeployment of resources by the Germans to counter the bombing raids; and thirdly, the imposed attrition on the Luftwaffe caused by the bomber offensive, especially from the spring of 1944 onwards.

The area of the debate which has caused most controversy has been that of what the bombing actually did to the German economy, and consequently what it contributed to the outcome of the war. There is no doubt that the German war economy did expand significantly following Albert Speer's appointment as Reichsminister of Armaments, but it is spurious to argue that because production increased then bombing had no real impact. There was considerable slack in the German economy that was not taken up until Speer's appointment, and it was this in conjunction with the major reorganisation of German industry that brought about the increase in production. Strategic bombing acted as a braking effect on this increase, hampering attempts to expand output by disrupting and crippling the industrial infrastructure of Germany. Clearly, during the last two years of the war the German manager had two battles to fight; one to increase production, the other against the chaos and disruption caused by precision and area bombing.¹³ Tank and aircraft production for 1944 was around a third lower than planned and the denial of such resources to the German armies dramatically aided the efforts of the advancing Allied armies. German production targets for 1945 aimed at manufacturing 80 000 aircraft, but dispersal and bombing had reduced the 1944 level to 36 000, just 8000 more than the Japanese, who did not suffer serious bombing or disperse their industry until late-1944. Bombing clearly kept the expansion of German industrial output to manageable proportions for the Allies.¹⁴

In addition, the impact on the morale of the German workforce is often overlooked. Around a third of the urban population under threat of bombing had no protection at all during raids, and in major cities they saw some 55-60% of their homes destroyed by the Allied air forces. Mass evacuations were a partial answer for some 6 million civilians, but this had a severe impact on morale as families were split up and forced to live in difficult and trying conditions for long periods of time. Consequently, morale in the working force exposed to constant bombing slumped as the war went on. By 1944 absenteeism rates of 20-25% were not unusual and in post-war analysis 91% of civilians stated that

bombing was the most difficult hardship to endure and was a key factor in the faltering of personal morale.¹⁵

However, as has also been argued, the expansion of German production solved many of the equipment problems that had confronted the frontline armed forces in 1943-44 era. By the end of the war much military equipment lay around parts of Germany for want of replacement parts which could not be moved around the country to where they were needed because of the collapse of the transportation network. Moreover, lack of fuel brought the German army's equipment to a standstill. By 1945 advancing Allied armies found their task much easier because they confronted a largely static enemy. Both the destruction of fuel production and the transportation network were to a significant degree the result of precision bombing carried out by the Allied air forces, both the RAF and the USAAF in 1944.

Whatever the direct impact of strategic bombing on the German war economy, the diversion of scant resources to defend the air space over the Third Reich was a major effect of the bomber offensive. The allocation of vast numbers of men and equipment to mount the defence of Germany is all too often ignored by those seeking to criticise the impact of the strategic air offensive. The drain on resources increased significantly as the war went on; diverting in particular guns, ammunition and technical equipment from the front-line armies. By 1944, 33% of artillery production and 20% of ammunition was directed towards anti-aircraft activity, whilst between 1 and 2 million Germans were employed in countering the bombing offensive. In addition, the investment of technology in battling the Allied air forces was a distraction the already straining and disparate German war economy could do without.¹⁶ The argument often cited that the resources allocated to the bomber offensive by the Allies exceeded those deployed by the German defenders against them, and therefore was strategically wasteful, is also flawed for the British allocated no more than 12% to the bomber offensive (and probably much less¹⁷). More importantly, this line of reasoning neglects the fact that the Germans did not have the resources to spare whilst the Allies did. The strategic bombing offensive added a major drain on German resources and by diverting guns, aircraft, men and technical equipment from the front-line the strategic balance came down firmly in the Allies' favour. Indeed, the decreasing manpower factor is a crucial issue as it has been argued that loss of production or shortages of equipment were much less important in Germany's defeat than the shortage of troops and personnel generally. Although it can be viewed that this argument undermines the contribution of bombing by hindering the expansion of German production, it more emphatically supports bombing because the defence of the Reich against the air offensive absorbed such a large amount of available German manpower.¹⁸

The third impact of the strategic air offensive was the destruction of the Luftwaffe, already discussed. Critics of the bombing offensive invariably ignore this crucial contribution to victory. Without the threat of the strategic offensive, the Luftwaffe would almost certainly have been available to prevent the Allied air forces from influencing the ground war in north-western Europe to the degree that they did. In view of the decided deficiencies of the Allied armies when dealing with the German army and the SS on the ground, the lack of such air supremacy could well have been catastrophic.

There is little doubt that the strategic bombing offensive contributed greatly to Allied victory in World War Two. However, the debate is so wrapped up in ethical and moral issues that the reality has been clouded by post-war indignation, in particular over the bombing of Dresden, Tokyo and of course the atomic bombings of Japan. In isolation the deaths of half-a-million German civilians as a result of aerial bombing in World War Two when the war had to be won by Allied ground forces anyway seems obscene. Yet, when the war as a whole is considered and the wider implications of the bomber offensive appreciated, the justifications offered for the actions of the RAF and the USAAF in aiding Allied victory and defeating the Nazi regime are understandable. In strategic terms the necessity and value of the combined bombing offensive to Allied victory is irrefutable.

NOTES

- 1 Some recent examples are, RA Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, (New York, 1996), pp.311-313; J Ellis, *Brute Force: Allied Strategy and Tactics in the Second World War*, (London, 1990), pp.213-221, and S Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower in World War Two*, (New York, 1993).

- 2 JRM Butler, *Grand Strategy - volume II: September 1939 to June 1941*, (London, 1957), pp.343-345; JMA Gwyer and JRM Butler, *Grand Strategy - volume III: June 1941 to August 1942*, (London, 1964), pp.21-48 and pp.349-352.
- 3 TD Biddle, 'British and American Approaches to Strategic Bombing: Their Origins and Implementation in the World War Two Combined Bomber Offensive', in J Gooch (ed.), *Airpower: Theory and Practice*, (London, 1995), pp.118-120.
- 4 IB Holley jnr., 'The Development of Defensive Armament for US Army Bombers, 1918-1941: A Study in Doctrinal Failure and Production Success', in H Boog ed., *The Conduct of the Air War*, op cit., pp.131-147.
- 5 A Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, (London, 1970), pp.388-389.
- 6 SL McFarland, 'The Evolution of the American Strategic Fighter in Europe 1942-44', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol.10, no.2, June 1987.
- 7 W Murray, *Luftwaffe – Strategy for Defeat*, (Washington, 1985), pp.226-241.
- 8 A Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, (London, 1970), p.290.
- 9 Murray, *Luftwaffe*, op cit., p.241.
- 10 S Cox's introduction in AT Harris, *Despatch on War Operations: 23rd February 1942 to 8th May 1945*, (London, 1995).
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 W H Park, 'Precision Bombing and Area Bombing: Who Did Which and When?', in J Gooch (ed.), *Airpower: Theory and Practice*, op cit.
- 13 R Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, (London, 1995), pp.130-131.
- 14 Murray, *Luftwaffe*, op cit., p.240.
- 15 Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, op cit., p.131; O Groehler, 'The Strategic Air War's Impact on the German Civilian Population', in Boog (ed.), *Conduct of the Air War*, op cit., pp.284-290; 'Effects on German Morale', *USSBS Report 64B*.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 R Overy, *Bomber Command 1939-45*, (London, 1997), p.200.
- 18 See RA Pape, *Bombing to Win: Airpower and Coercion in War*, (Cornell University Press, 1996).

Scottish Society 1707-1830; beyond Jacobitism towards industrialisation

Christopher A Whatley

Manchester £14.99 Pbk 354pp 2000 ISBN 0 7190 4541 X

This book hardly needs a review from me. In the annotated bibliography for the Advanced Higher field of study 'Georgians and Jacobites' the first and last sentences of its annotation are: "This book is essential reading for students taking this course..... No History teacher can be excused from reading this book."

I would agree with these judgements, for the book is a most thorough and comprehensive survey of Scottish economic and social history during the long eighteenth century. It is a very up to date synthesis of research in this area and Professor Whatley, of Dundee University, has carried out, or supervised, a good deal of this research himself. It will be tough going for all but the most well motivated sixth year pupils, however, and they may need some guidance from teachers in finding and using the pages they want. Not that there is any obscure language or economists' jargon. Professor Whatley writes very clearly. But it is a book for adults, a good deal more than twelve months in advance of the sort of textbook that is written for Higher. Opening the book at random I find such sentences as "*The kirk itself was both the locus and source of legitimacy for certain forms of disorder*" and "*It was this sense of the day as a ritualised outpouring of tension followed by healing brought about by the return of normality which was captured by Robert Fergusson in his 1722 poem 'The King's Birthday in Edinburgh'*".

Nothing wrong with these sentences but they would be tough for many seventeen year olds. Mind you, it is a beneficial toughness; it will do them good to cut their teeth on some "proper" historical writing. The book has the full apparatus of scholarship, and some interesting lessons on historiography could be derived from the footnotes and the bibliography. It is also well indexed.

The eight chapters are divided into two sections by the establishment of the first cotton spinning mills at Penicuik in 1778. The first five chapters deal with Scotland before the Industrial Revolution, the last three with the first Industrial Revolution and its impact.

TC. Smout writes in *A Century of The Scottish People* how different are the perspectives of the social and the economic historian. One may be charting decline at during the very decades when the other is charting progress. Professor Whatley manages to wear both hats very elegantly, switching from matters of supply, demand, investment and labour shortages to housing, political attitudes and education. Chapter One deals with the state of Scotland on the eve of the Union, when "*clearly late seventeenth century Scotland was by no means as backward as was once assumed.*" Chapter Two is about the economic impact of the Union, with efforts to sort out the short and medium term effects. Chapter Three, "Political Economy and Scottish Development", tackles the same subject with respect to government policies and the theories of the Enlightenment which led, in the mid century to "*the question of the means of achieving national economic success*" being "*the subject of passionate discussion in Edinburgh clubs.*" Chapters Four and Five deal with protests and their limitations - arguments over church patronage, Jacobitism and riots over social questions such as food prices and customs duties, which Whatley urges us to treat seriously: "*To portray smuggling and the riots against customs and excise officers and attacks on the King's warehouses as a 'national sport' (Lenman) fails to convey the severity and character of these disorders.*". Chapter Six deals with the Industrial Revolution, "*neither 'confined to cotton' nor to west-central Scotland*", that began in 1778 and lost momentum for a while after the Napoleonic Wars. Chapter Seven deals with the social changes that resulted from industrialisation, when "*children comprised a remarkable 84 per cent of the employees in Renfrewshire's 41 cotton mills.*" Chapter Eight explores the territory opened up by EP Thompson forty years ago, the development of the working class and the growth of class consciousness.

These themes naturally take the book into controversial territory. Politicians and commentators today care about the impact of the Union, the integration of Scotland and the status of the working class within the nation. Historians, if not in their monographs then in the columns of the Sunday newspapers, not infrequently call upon the old world to shed light on the problems of the new. This book certainly contributes to these debates, but it is by no means a polemical work. At one point he takes a side-swipe at those whose assertions "*may be interpreted as a form of nationalist rhetoric.*" (Reference to the footnotes reveals that he is talking about Richard Finlay.) As befits a student of the Enlightenment, Professor Whatley aims for a well-balanced view. On the question of why Scotland was relatively quiescent in the eighteenth century we read: "*this is not to say that the old view is altogether wrong*" and on the question of riot and disorder before 1780 "*careful quantification is largely lacking for Scotland.*" On the Union he assures us that "*close examination of the evidence shows us that the Union did have short-term effects but that these were enormously varied and complex.*"

There are some more decisive conclusions, however. On the extent to which Scotland's Industrial Revolution was imported he acknowledges the importance of the British navy in protecting the merchant fleet and the British Empire in providing markets, but goes on "*within the context of the security this provided, it was the Scots themselves who ultimately harnessed the resources available to them and drove this early and most northerly Industrial Revolution.*" He is sure that the Jacobites have cornered too large a share of Scottish historiography. "*The consensus among most historians (but not shared here, or supported by the evidence already presented) is that the effects of the Union passed the common people by.*" The food riots of the 1720s, for example, precipitated by the flow of grain out of many east coast burghs, were as important in some ways as the Jacobite rebellions, "*though it would be foolish to deny the momentous importance of the Jacobite risings*". And this point illustrates the main perspective of the book. Professor Whatley is chiefly interested in ordinary people, not in the cast of named characters who have traditionally provided the heroes and villains of colourful Scottish narratives, from *Tales of a Grandfather* onwards.

One great strength of this book is the emphasis on regional variations. The "ordinary people" may come from the north-western Highlands, as opposed to the more fertile south and east or Shetland, where the standard of living was distinctly higher than the Western Isles, thanks to a more varied diet. Perth - a hotbed of republicanism at one time, with "Damn All Kings" daubed on the bridge over the Tay, is very different to Shotts, where the ironworkers fired a field gun in salute on the King's birthday and drank his health. The wretched state of the poor in early nineteenth century Glasgow was relieved somewhat by the employment and charity available from the substantial middle class, whereas in Clackmannan "*the rickle of mined houses which is dignified with the appellation of the County Town is a receptacle of poverty, filth and vice.*" This awareness of regional differences runs through every chapter and is applied to every generalisation.

Historians must generalise, of course, but Professor Whatley is scrupulous in telling us when his evidence is only impressionistic or incomplete. One of the great pleasures of this book is the number of real people who reach out from the past to the present through the medium of its pages. There are the incompetent weavers of Kirkcaldy who "*have debased this fabric (cotton cloth) to a mere rag.*" There is Jean Wood of Stonehaven, banished from Perth for vagrancy in 1777, and the baillies of Crail who threatened to organise a raid to demolish the enclosure walls of Colonel Philip Anstruther. There is the blackleg, John Graham, who was shot in the back, and the female cotton mill workers who sang a derisive ballad about him.

This book is a gold mine of information and a quarry for challenging ideas. (Perhaps the metaphor could be made appropriate to the book by likening it to the iron rich "blackband" ironstone found in 1802 by David Mushet of Calder ironworks.) All SATH members will enjoy it, if they have time to read it. Certainly everyone involved in the "Georgian and Jacobite" paper should have ready access to a copy and make frequent use of it.

GEORGE HARRIS

"The battle of Verdun is not a human battle at all. It is hell. A man needs a devil in him to be able to survive it. The attacking [German] forces have only death, carnage and horror before them. We are fighting an enemy who is a match for us".

This was the summary of the state of the battle of Verdun as reported in the *Vossische Zeitung* in May 1916. David Mason's book, **Verdun**, is the first major review of this battle, in English, for nearly thirty years. Using new primary material from both sides of the conflict, he attempts to portray the sheer scale of the horror which all combatants faced in this death struggle during the first six months of 1916.

One of the surprising features to emerge is the lack of preparedness on the part of the French for the German onslaught, surprising given the hugely symbolic value of the fortress. This can partly be explained by the experience of the Belgians during the German offensive of 1914. Joffre had conceived a contempt for such static lines of defence and were now regarded as obsolete. As a result, French defences around Verdun had been down-graded during 1915 with the transfer of troops to the front and the removal of some of the heavy calibre artillery, which rendered the forts vulnerable to attack. The book also attempts to resolve the conflict between von Falkenhayn and the Crown Prince, William, whose command was given the task of leading the attack. Was the aim of the battle to "bleed France white" as von Falkenhayn insisted, or was it the capture of this symbol, as the Crown Prince insisted? There is no resolution of this dispute, but it does appear that von Falkenhayn may not have taken the Crown Prince totally into his confidence as to the ultimate objective. Bad though this turned out to be, he did not alert the commander of his Austrian allies, General Conrad, about the coming attack at all, which would rebound on the Germans in the summer of 1916. Certainly the book outlines the cool relations between General and Crown Prince as exemplified in von Falkenhayn's decision not to re-inforce the Verdun front as quickly as was needed.

Verdun was characterised by a number of features. The first was the sheer scale of the brutality of the fighting. The second was the mass introduction of the new flame-thrower in hand to hand combat and the 'use of air support for ground forces'.

Mason also tries to set the battle in a much wider context by referring to the extreme climatic conditions which existed in the area of the battle -from bitter cold and wet in the winter and spring, to baking heat and rutted earth in the summer. The terrain was also of significance, the city being surrounded by steep ridges, which were easy to defend and conversely difficult to attack. This meant that the battle was confined to a twenty square kilometre front.

The German attack had been well planned, especially the use of heavy artillery to obliterate the defenders' positions. One of the themes of the first stage of the battle was the massive impact which German shelling had on the French. The other emerging theme was the lack of understanding of the nature of the battle at French military headquarters. Joffre is criticised for ignoring the intelligence coming from his Verdun commanders and the somewhat piecemeal re-inforcement of the French garrison. Further, his insistence that every loss of territory had to be immediately recaptured resulted in heroic, but ultimately futile French counter-attacks with enormous loss of life. Mason is equally hard on the German commanders, claiming that in the early battle, tactical blunders had been committed which would ultimately cost them dearly.

As if the battle were not bad enough, the loss of Fort Douamont at the end of February without a shot being fired, is described as a humiliation for the French. The fort was not recaptured until the 25th October 1916.

A change in the nature of the battle came with the arrival of Petain as French commander. Beloved by his men (or *poilus*), for whom Petain had a great deal of respect, and inspired by the belief in "victory at the smallest cost", he reduced the scale of French counter-attacks and introduced a troop rotation system known as the '*Noria*'. Tours of duty in the front line were reduced to a maximum of eight days. This helped to reduce the physical, as well as the psychological, fatigue that came with combat. The result of this was that of the 330 available French divisions, 259 saw service at Verdun.

The Germans were not able to emulate this and thus the fighting efficiency of their men declined as the battle ground on.

Pétain also re-organised the French defences, instituting a 'Line of Resistance' on both banks of the Meuse, as well as a 'Line of Panic' whereby the French would be called upon to defend the city, following the collapse of the former line. His other great contribution was *La Voie Sacrée* which helped re-arrange French logistical support. At its peak, a vehicle passed along this route every 14 seconds.

Mason paints a vivid, if horrific, picture of life in the French trenches. He himself concedes that it is not possible to convey what that experience was, although he quotes from pitifully harrowing letters from French soldiers to loved ones, in his attempt to re-create this hell on earth. French determination not to be forced out of Verdun led to an escalation in the German attacks (was this a change of tactic?) which led to ever-increasing losses as they had no alternative but to pursue "a relentless offensive".

What was the value of Verdun? To quote Mason, "*The debate among the hierarchy of the German army and the fractures evident within the French staff were indicative of the fact that Verdun had taken on a heavy symbolic significance out of all proportion to its actual strategic importance*". This latter significance was brought home to Joffre in a letter from Pétain on June 11th 1916: "*Verdun must not fall. The capture of this city would constitute for the Germans an inestimable success which would greatly raise their morale and correspondingly lower our own*".

However, Pétain's fear of the loss of Verdun was not to be fulfilled. One reason was the need to transfer German troops to stem the Brusilov offensive in the east, stretching German capability to the limit.

An interesting feature of the book is the role of the Crown Prince. Ignored by his father, the Kaiser, and held in contempt by his fellow officers, he quickly realised the near impossibility of German success at Verdun and urged the abandonment of the attack. However, as in so many other areas, his opinion was ignored with tragic consequences for the German army. The final nail in the coffin came with the launching of the Anglo-French offensive on the Somme which forced the Germans, on July 11th, to declare a defensive front at Verdun.

Was it worth it? In the chapter "Balance Sheet", Mason concludes: "*There can be little doubt that at the Battle of Verdun, the least amount was gained at the highest of costs. At the end of the campaign neither side found itself better off strategically*".

German failure is accounted for by her inability to "muster the necessary strength to overcome the French forces they had drawn into Verdun", and "because they did not concentrate their efforts in the necessary manner nor at the critical times".

Verdun sums up the dispassionate, routine slaughter which characterised the First World War. This was a fascinating book, taking the reader beyond the facade of the rhetoric surrounding the battle. The lack of French preparedness and in-fighting amongst the German High Command - all played out against the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of men. The book is richly illustrated, with appropriate diagrams and maps to enable the reader to comprehend the text unfolding page by page. There are inserts about particular features - such as the loss of Fort Douaumont or *La Voie Sacrée*. The last word is left to a 21-year-old French lieutenant, writing on 23 May: "*Humanity is mad! It must be mad to do what it is doing. What a massacre! What scenes of horrors and carnage! I cannot find words to translate my impressions. Hell cannot be so terrible. Men are mad!*" Forty-eight hours later, his name was added to the French roll of honour at Verdun.

JIM MCGONIGLE

This *European History in Perspective* series is a good one. I've been impressed with them right since I reviewed Peter Waldron's wider perspective on the decline in Tsarist Russia a few years ago, [and promptly persuaded him to write an excellent article for the 1998 *Year Book!*]. This new volume is just on Lenin and therefore has a sharper focus; although the author's views may possibly be too sophisticated for all Advanced Higher pupils to be able to handle all of [especially in the first half of the book].

The author makes it clear from the start what he will try to do. He wants to compare what Lenin said with what he did; to place Lenin's expressed thoughts and actions within the framework of Marx. This naturally causes a difficulty since firstly there is the great problem of separating fact from fiction with Lenin himself anyway, and secondly, Lenin took on Marxism, via his study of Plekhanov, yet both of them were pursuing an idea of Marxism which Marx himself had rejected! This was the question of how far socialism could be based on the peasant commune or did it need to come through the working class? It obviously makes it difficult to discuss how Marxist Lenin was if Marx himself would not have considered that Lenin was a Marxist at all!

The author believes in giving plenty of the background to Lenin's pedigree. I've not seen such an exhaustive history of the Lenin family ancestry in any other book of this size - and it has a significance; because the author is trying to demonstrate the serious importance of the role of Lenin's brother in shaping Lenin's attitudes. The author builds up a strong case for saying that Lenin, without really knowing what it was his revolutionary brother had died for, essentially went through a *reprise* of his dead brother's life, and "*Lenin became a revolutionary through loyalty to his brother.*" There was after all, nothing revolutionary about Lenin's family background to turn him into a natural rebel; these were people who had gained from tsarism.

Having already criticised Lenin's delusions [in trying to prove things that Marx knew he couldn't prove himself], the author further 'puts the boot in' with a fair comment that from an early stage in his career, and ever thereafter, Lenin adopted a cynical writer's ploy. He found ways of arranging the data and arguments to suit his own views. One excellent example of this was his writing of *Russian Capitalism* [while in exile in Siberia] with no reference to Witte or the role of foreign investment!

It seems that too much of Lenin's early career was just intellectual revolutionaryism. It was vapid discussion of such things as the role of 'Economism' or the role of the intellectual in guiding the working class towards socialism. It was all pretty sterile stuff. This continued into the twentieth century when Lenin was writing what some have considered to be seminal works. The author rightly dwells on both *What Is To Be Done* and the 1903 Party Congress in London.. but continues the attack on Lenin with the comment that, despite the radical principles that *What Is To be Done* laid down, it was still based on "*a stylised version of events.*" It was interesting to read that both Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg were able to offer comment at the time on Lenin's 'achievement' in splitting the party in 1903. They pointed out some of Lenin's contradictions.

With reference to the 1905 revolution; once again Lenin and most of the Bolsheviks were in London at their third Congress.. and when Lenin finally made his way back to St Petersburg by November, he only infrequently went to see the Soviet and didn't seem concerned about it. I'd be more critical of Lenin than this author, who doesn't castigate him for missing the 'revolutionary moment' and merely suggests that the main gain the Bolsheviks made out of 1905 was due to inheriting '*the considerable personal fortune*' of a key Bolshevik supporter who was killed in the suppression of the Moscow rising. This money helped underwrite terrorist activity in the following years. My tendency here would be to attack Lenin's thinking and want to know why there is no praise from him for the soviet in late 1905 [or in his written works immediately thereafter] yet almost 12 years later, praising the soviets was just about the first thing on his lips at the Finland Station.

The author is probably correct to make the claim that Lenin did NOT have a set of long term guiding principles. It might be easy to teach it to pupils as though he did, but too often you just have to face up to the fact that Lenin made it up and changed his mind as he went along. Nowhere is this better shown

than in 1906 when there was an attempted re-joining of the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks; and the principles Lenin signed up to were a long way from those he had propounded four years previously in *What Is To Be Done!* [And yet so often we imply that the state of Russia that was arrived at by 1924 was so similar to what Lenin said in *What Is To Be Done* that he must have had that plan in his mind all the time.]

The author is sometimes out-rightly critical of Lenin, but his main task is to place him more accurately within the context of his time. We get a good impression of this in looking at Lenin in the period between 1905 and 1914; we see him as just ONE of many revolutionary intellectuals in Europe. There were a lot of them and they were not dominated by Russia [as seemed to be the case after 1917] and Lenin was by no means the foremost. What does come out though is what surely must have been the absolute futility of the way much of this revolutionary clique must have passed their thinking days! Without exception they all seemed to spend vast amounts of time writing articles to all and sundry, arguing over the slightest interpretation or re-interpretation of some esoteric point of revolutionary behaviour. Even in 1917, Lenin was still beaver away in the Zurich library on *The State and Revolution* [getting to grips with attacking Bukharin] and yet Tsarist Russia is just about collapsing around its own ears. Lenin probably just loved spending time in the libraries of the European capitals, in all likelihood preparing speeches like his 1917 Bloody Sunday anniversary speech where he made the notable error of commenting to the young Swiss workers in his audience that *'the people of his generation might not live to see the decisive battles of the coming revolution, but he hoped the young people in Switzerland would not only live to fight but to win..'* I suppose you can't be right all the time.

Chapter 5 covers Lenin and the events of 1917. It starts with Lenin's return, the April Theses and Sukhanov's reaction of amazement. No wonder he was amazed really, given the intellectualising over the meaning of socialism that they had all gone into over the previous 20 years. What Lenin was now seriously suggesting was solely a political solution! Since there was no suggestion that the objective economic and social forces [previously thought so necessary] were there, Lenin therefore side-stepped Marxism and replaced it with nothing at all. No wonder it took him a month to explain to the rest of the Bolsheviks how 'All power to the soviets' fitted in.. it seemed little more than a suggestion *"of anarchist inspiration."* As Dr White says, *"At some point between his leaving Switzerland and arriving in Russia, Lenin decided he would orientate himself towards a socialist revolution in Russia, but as yet had no rationalisation to offer as to why this would be possible."* This is just one more example of Lenin the master of 'expediency masquerading as ideology'; playing it off the cuff.

The chapter continues with some comments on Lenin's views on the Provisional Government, and the Petrograd Soviet. It makes the contentious point concerning Soviet Order Number 1, that it was *"...an attempt to give the soldiers an incentive to fight."* I'd not seen it put exactly like that before.

In continuing his debunking of the Lenin myth [or more accurately placing him within the context of his time?], in considering the time of the seizure of power, Dr White also gives much more of the credit for the seizure to Trotsky and his old pals in the Mezhrainka, concluding that, in these circumstances, *"to speak of a Bolshevik seizure of power may be something of a misnomer."*

He also points out how Lenin went against 'policy' after the October revolution by his continued use of the old civil servants to rule Russia. 'Smashing the state' was not quite as easy as he had claimed in his only too recent writings!

The author goes on to critically develop this point of Lenin's lack of knowledge or ideology on how to rule the Russian state that he was now in charge of. All his plans were entirely inadequate to deal with the situation he now faced since all he had was an set of misplaced delusions.. *"Lenin's pre-Revolutionary vision of Russia's future very rapidly evaporated."*

The sections which follow cover the familiar ground of Lenin's input into the Cheka, War Communism, the role of the Constituent Assembly, Brest-Litovsk and Comintern. The arguments here may be much more readily grasped by Adv. Higher pupils than some of the earlier chapters in the book. In each case the author is able to point to why/how Lenin developed policy the way it did; and is often able to point to the contradictions, errors, retreats or expediciencies that the policy involved. Classic among these was Lenin's continuing inaccurate belief in the peasant class war which never existed! In most cases, as you would expect, Lenin pushed policy through as if Marx was at his elbow guiding him.

The book ends with a historiographical chapter on Lenin's legend. Lenin's health decline occurred as both his 'legend' was being created, and serious opposition was starting towards the Communist government due to the consequences of his policies. It is interesting to speculate how [or if] Lenin could have dealt with the situation for 5 years after 1924 if he had lived. Rather pathetically, Lenin was writing until the end [obviously old habits die hard], and he was still rebutting criticism, this time from Sukhanov. Dr White makes the point that in his last writings about the economic reasons underpinning the Bolshevik take-over in 1917, Lenin's reply absolutely mangles Marx yet again!

This book provides a convincing set of backed up arguments, to take some of the myth out of the story of Lenin as a revolutionary thinker and tactician. It questions his motives for becoming a revolutionary, it questions his probity in both following policies he believed and sticking with them. It paints a rather less admirable picture of a political opportunist with an ego who had more chameleon qualities than principles. This is really quite an elegant demolition job on the great man, putting him into a more human perspective as an early 20th century Russian wannabe, rather than a rigorous disciple of a great philosopher. This book demonstrates that if your deeds are likely to be judged by your words and proclaimed intentions, then you maybe should not leave so many of your words lying around!.

ANDREW HUNT

Hitler's Henchmen

Guido Knopp

Sutton Publishing £19.99 Pbk 325pp 2000 ISBN 0 750 92587 6

The Hitler of History - Hitler's Biographers on Trial

John Lukacs

Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £25.00 Hbk 2000 ISBN 0 297 64646 X

When will we ever be rid of Hitler? Why does he haunt us still? Do we want to be haunted? Book publishers and television channels appear unable to slake the public's thirst for knowledge of Hitler's Third Reich. The Hitler industry of our times is not quite the memorial that the old monster and his cronies planned for themselves yet it is testimony to the baleful spell that lingers on. The two titles under review form part of this phenomenon.

Channel 5 has acquired a certain reputation for its kitsch classics: the Warrior Princess, Fort Boyard, Estonia v Scotland, Keith Chegwin's genitalia. Last winter viewers were offered radically different fare - a series on Hitler and his henchmen.

The programmes were the work of Guido Knopp. A prodigious researcher and programme maker, Knopp is Germany's Laurence Rees. A web search throws up 3600 entries on this "tv historian". Born in 1948 he is one of that post war generation of Germans seeking to come to terms with the Third Reich, its historical and moral legacy:

"Those of us who were born after the war cannot be held responsible for Auschwitz. But we are responsible for the memory, for preventing it from being obliterated or suppressed." (p7) *Hitler's Henchmen* is the book of the TV series, a translation by Angus McGeogh of the 1996 German edition. Alas, there is no evidence of any updating of the text for the English language edition and the "Select Bibliography" omits several key titles such as Breitman's study of Himmler, architect of genocide.

The book's format is "vox pop" rather than "academic" history. Each of the six biographies is prefaced by gobblets uttered by each character and by contemporaries. Each essay is interspersed with chunks of primary sources seeking to illuminate each man. But none of these quotations is footnoted, a major defect in any history text. Teachers using this book with their students will have to make this clear.

For there is no doubt that Knopp's book will appeal to students peppered as it is with lively quotes

and anecdotal evidence, written in a style often more akin to Tarantino than to Gibbon. Perhaps the chapters reflect their origins as scripts written by Knopp and his collaborators, but in places the text cries out for refinement. Thus, describing Berlin's New World ballroom in 1930, we are told, "*On this occasion the joint wasn't jumping*". On page 89 Goring is reduced by the ascendancy of Ribbentrop, "*to the position of Hitler's gofer*". Earlier he had "*looked for excitement in the air, rather than on the sofa or the dance floor*".

So is Knopp's book serious history? When properly handled, yes. As an example, take his introductory essay, "Perfectly ordinary Germans?" On one level it is a disappointment. The author eschews any attempt to provide his reader with an overarching study placing Hitler's paladins in perspective to the Fuhrer. Knopp robustly dismisses any notion of Hitler as a weak dictator. It was, he argues, Hitler's "*criminal energy which released the criminal energies in others*". Hitler's willing executives became Hitler's willing executioners. Hitler held his henchmen in a firm grip: "*They carried out what he decided or what in their view was the Fuhrer's intention.*" A Kershavian analysis indeed.

But Knopp's real purpose in this essay is to tackle Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's view of the German people as Hitler's willing executioners. Knopp's line is that "*Hitler's Holocaust was put into effect by the many 'little people' willing executioners - who later pleaded that they were forced to obey orders. They were not psychopaths, but perfectly ordinary Germans from a population of supporters and hangers-on.*" (p7).

From this Knopp seeks to identify the guilt of half a million Germans using the evidence of a survey carried out in 1996 for Second German Television. On this level the essay is a powerful and effective polemic against the opportunistic empiricism of Goldhagen, providing readers with a rapid "detox" if they have overdosed on the seductive, but flawed, text of this writer on the Holocaust.

But what of the character sketches themselves? One of the hits of the London theatre in 1967 was Bertolt Brecht's "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui" in which Hitler and his henchmen were ruthlessly satirised as gangsters. A generation later, historians of Nazi Germany provide much more sophisticated analyses than that of the Marxist Brecht. Yet on a certain level the notion of the Nazis as gangsters still holds a fascination for us, and Knopp's brief lives of Hitler's hoodlums both entertain and inform. Goring, "*the perfumed Nero*", is revealed in all his vanity, venal, corrupt, an intellectual bankrupt. Himmler, by contrast, is revealed as an austere and fanatical monster inhabiting a kind of Teutonic Brigadoon. The essay on the SS chief is truly chilling as an illustration of what happens when in conditions of total war and the collapse of civic society Behemoth runs amok.

For this reviewer the most valuable essay was that on Hitler's successor Karl Donitz, "*the Rommel of the war at sea*" (p289), a man rarely regarded as one of Nazism's first circle. It became the task of the Grand Admiral to steer the ship of state through the stormy waters of total defeat in May 1945. Knopp vividly describes this black farce. In Flensburg, Donitz presided over the meetings of the last Nazi cabinet (with Speer as his Minister of Production), still dreaming of an ethnic German state, denouncing reports of the concentration camps as exaggerated propaganda, still ruthlessly executing servicemen for desertion.

This Theatre of the Absurd ended on 23 May 1945 in an episode that might have come from the voluminous memoirs of Gunner Milligan: "*Two weeks after the surrender Hitler's imitators finally had to stand down. 'Hands up' and 'trousers down' bawled the British soldiers as they stormed the naval college. After an embarrassingly intimate body search some 300 'cabinet members' were led away...*"

To turn Brecht on his head, there was farce at the heart of horror.

With Lukacs and *The Hitler of History* we enter the world of the autodidact. Once more this is a book which is not entirely new, the title having been first published in the USA in 1997.

Lukacs is an ambitious scholar. He set out to fillet the huge body of historical scholarship on Hitler, a task involving reading one hundred biographies [probably one of the tortures in Hell's outer circle, administered to those History teachers who did not meet all the requirements of HMCI's Performance indicators].

In carrying out this task, Lukacs took as his role model, Pieter Geyl, author of *Napoleon: For and Against*. The result is a book which will certainly be valuable to History departments as they seek to

deliver Advanced Higher History.

But two reservations must be made. The first concerns format. The author and his publishers have chosen to present the text in an eccentric fashion. On too many of the pages the footnotes crowd the text upwards until they dominate the page. The author might have reconsidered his approach. Young students – sixth year or undergraduates – might well find the task of unravelling Lukacs too daunting. As teachers we preach clarity not obfuscation. A student dissertation written in the style of *The Hitler of History* would be robustly criticised.

More seriously, does the book really live up to its sub-title? Are Hitler's biographers put on trial? In particular, Lukacs gangs warily on David Irving. He does not – as it were – lop off Irving's head and show him to be, in the words of Mr Justice Gray, "*motivated by a desire to present events in a manner consistent with his own ideological beliefs even if that involved distortion and manipulation of historical evidence.*"

Instead, readers have to be content with "*some of Irving's references and quotations are inaccurate.*" [p229]. Certainly, Lukacs is critical of Irving's method; skilfully pointing out how writers such as Irving make "*emphatic use of adverbs and adjectives, which they employ not as qualifiers but to carry the main thrust of their statements. They become rhetorical substitutes for evidence.*" [p230]

But it is a curiously muted condemnation and one which is perhaps rooted in fear of the workings of English libel law. For the real trial of Irving we will have to wait on the publication by Granta Books of Richard J Evans' account. Evans is Professor of Modern History at Cambridge and was employed by the defence, Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books, when Irving sued for libel. His task? To thoroughly discredit Irving's scholarship in order to prove that Lipstadt's statements about Irving were true.

Evans duly delivered, spending 28 hours in the High Court witness box. On 11 April 2000, Irving got his come-uppance. Students of German history eagerly await Evans' account. In outlining his preparations Evans has written [in BBC's *History Magazine*] how under the rules of 'Discovery' in a libel case he studied videotapes and cassettes of the plaintiff. These proved invaluable "*since Irving often expressed himself in less guarded form in his speeches than in his books.*"

This points up one weakness in Lukacs' method. His is too cloistered an approach, too much a battle of the books. Unlike Ron Rosenbaum in the eccentric but engaging *Explaining Hitler* [1998], he has not gone walkabout, he has not talked with the scholars. Such a method was pioneered almost forty years ago by Ved Mehta in *The Fly and the Fly Bottle*, an unduly neglected classic in which Mehta entered the homes and studies of the heavy weight contenders in the battle to explain the origins of the war in 1939. How often in conversation and debate are we able to tease out a historian's views?

Yet Lukacs' book is undoubtedly valuable. Once attuned to his approach, teachers and students will certainly find *The Hitler of History* greatly assists in seeking to explain what made Hitler Hitler. As an example, on pages 95/100 he discusses the question posed by Joachim Fest in 1973 – what would Hitler's reputation have been, had he died in 1938?

Like the Corsican Napoleon and the Georgian Stalin, Hitler was an outsider. Like Mussolini he came from nowhere, no social network assisted his climb. For all the relentless babbling to an inner circle of sycophants, he remained intensely secretive.

Two generations after his death Hitler remains a compulsion. He has to be explained – witness the phenomenal international success of Kershaw's biography.

Despite the shortcomings identified above, *The Hitler of History* is thus an important addition to Advanced Higher History bibliographies. In this new course students progress towards an understanding of historiography, an awareness of why historians have been compelled to write about Hitler and an understanding of what they have found. Lukacs' work will greatly assist them

RON GRANT

