



# HISTORY TEACHING REVIEW YEAR BOOK

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# HISTORY TEACHING REVIEW YEAR BOOK

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*Cover: The illustration is taken from The War, 1914 for Boys and Girls by Elizabeth O'Neill (Published by T.C. & E.C. Jack in 1914).*

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**RAY STOKES** is Professor of International Industrial History and Head of the Department of Economic and Social History at the University of Glasgow. He has published numerous works—including three single-authored and three co-authored research monographs—on aspects of business and economic history and history of technology, concentrating primarily on the German area between 1933 and 1990. His most recent book is *German Industry and Global Enterprise: BASF, The History of a Company* (CUP, 2004), which he co-authored with Werner Abelshauser, Wolfgang von Hippel, and Jeffrey Allan Johnson.

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# Editorial

ANDREW HUNT

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There's always an issue when preparing a Year Book, about whether to go for a 'theme', but following favourable comments about the 2003 Year Book, especially on including such articles as the Holocaust, I thought I would spread the net wide for interesting areas that might not necessarily fit neatly into a theme. However, that said, most contributors to this volume have offered thoughts on topic areas which are within many of the classic Higher/Advanced Higher teaching fields, although occasionally from less prominent or more 'specialised' parts of those courses. Women's history in Stalin's Russia, the Ku Klux Klan, and big business in Nazi Germany, for example, are all areas of historical study which might be considered on the fringes of our mainstream courses, but which nevertheless have prompted the contributor to give a wide-ranging review on the present state of scholarship, that will be invaluable in making our senior pupils see how history is written over time.

But; just in case there are still people out there with the totally functional view that they only ever read what they absolutely have to for a particular S5-6 course they are teaching, I've been able to gain contributors who have let me slide in some articles to remind them of what our reading used to be like! So, here's a few refreshing new thoughts also on the Eastern Question [never taught at school level nowadays but one of the staples of the Traditional Higher for those with a long memory!] and two articles on the First World War [not a common topic for the Year Book; the last was Gerard de Groot's 10 years ago, and of course, it was only ever really taught at Standard Grade which therefore seemed to deny its need for any deep-thinking senior school discussion.]

As ever therefore, I am exceptionally obliged to all contributors for their punctual and friendly helpfulness in assisting me to put together yet another such broad-ranging and readable Year Book. My editorial load was lightened by so many articles coming as e-mail attachments, where I could then just about download them straight to the printers! Over the years, I've received enough comments of praise from SATH members about the Year Book and its value in everyday teaching, to be able to pass on the thought to all contributors, that it has entirely been their freshness of style and sharp-thinking perceptiveness, that makes the Year Book such a welcome arrival on the doormat every June.

My thanks also to all the reviewers who put the time and thought and length into their reviews. Some of these are mini-articles and are surely valuable in their own right in giving the sorts of insights into why historians write the way they do; that senior pupils so need to grapple with, when they go on to read this literature for themselves as part of their Advanced Higher courses..

This is another minor anniversary I suppose; it's the fifteenth Year Book that I have edited. To celebrate the occasion, I've decided to splash out and go for the first ever full-colour cover illustration. This sort of thing used to be prohibitively expensive, but modern printing technology is making production costs for the Year Book almost static on a year by year basis, so let's go for it!

The picture itself, taken from a book actually printed in 1914, says something so intangibly evocative, doesn't it, about the sense of calm optimism, and the neatness and tidiness of all the expectations about warfare that existed at that time. There we see a pair of fundamentally decent [and therefore respectably old] allied generals confidently discussing, from what we now know was such limited and indeed worthless experience, how to win the war by Christmas. God, what idiots! Mind you, when I find myself doing a similar thing: surveying the chances of successfully 'selling' History to the incoming generations, in the light of the forthcoming changes in the teaching of History in the next 5 years, [especially the impact of the faculty system, and the mass 'clearout' of that highly professional bunch of enthusiasts who have been heading up the departmental teaching of History so effectively in the last decades], I suspect people will be looking at me and saying.. 'He's the chap in blue!'

# **Ottomans, Romanovs and Mr. Gladstone**

## **The Eastern Question from 1854 to 1898**

DR MICHAEL PARTRIDGE

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When looking at all of Gladstone's achievements, according to his biographer John Morley, there was 'nothing equal to the valour and insight with which he burst aside the chains of a mischievous and degrading policy towards the Ottoman Empire'.<sup>1</sup> The policy Morley refers to was that followed by conservative British Ministers, from Palmerston to Disraeli to Salisbury, of support for the Ottoman Empire in the face of Russian aggression. It was a policy which meant Britain gave her support to an oppressive Muslim regime, whose European Christian peoples were increasingly anxious to secure their freedom. Hence Britain fought the Crimean War of 1854-6 against Russia and stood firm in support of the Ottoman Empire at the Berlin Congress of 1878, despite the 'Bulgarian atrocities'. Given Gladstone's Christian and liberal principles, it would not be surprising to find him following a different line.

Gladstone had no doubt that the Ottoman Empire was a depraved and uncivilised regime. The Turks, he wrote in 1876, were 'the one great anti-human specimens of humanity'.<sup>2</sup> The Bulgarian massacres, breaking out in 1876, according to Gladstone 'exhibit the true genius of the Turkish government'.<sup>3</sup> The Ottoman government, he informed the Commons in April 1878, was 'that fabric of iniquity'.<sup>4</sup> He believed that the Ottomans had no right to rule over the peoples of the Balkans. This was, as he put it with stark bluntness in a pamphlet written in 1877, a question of 'race'. He thought that the Turks were quite simply an 'inferior' race to the Christians of the Balkans and, since there was 'no restraint of law in Turkey', the regime was 'totally depraved'. The Turks

exercise a perfectly unnatural domination over their fellow creatures; and arbitrary power is the greatest corrupter of the human mind and heart.<sup>5</sup>

He also did not believe, despite the strong sympathy for the Ottoman Empire voiced among 'the upper classes' that the British public as a whole had any real sympathy with it. Gladstone recalled, some twenty years after the events of 1876: 'The nation nobly responded to the call of justice. But it was the nation, not the classes'. Only when the Gentlemen's Clubs once again filled for the season, according to Gladstone, did 'the Turkish cause begin again to make head'.<sup>6</sup>

Gladstone's attitude towards the Turks, therefore, appears, for several reasons, very hostile. Generally speaking, the British governments' views of the other great power central to the eastern question, the Russian Empire, was no more favourable. Gladstone, however, was less hostile in his views of the Russians than most of his colleagues, and he went public with this in 1856, informing the readers of *The Gentleman's Magazine* that

The position of Russia in the East is of necessity commanding; and her destinies there, unless sedulously spoiled by herself, must be magnificent. She is the natural head of Eastern Christendom.<sup>7</sup>

In 1863, he defended the government's non-intervention against Russia's aggressive reaction to an uprising in Poland.

Another reason why Gladstone was anti-Turkish was his strong belief in 'freedom'. Among his six principles of foreign policy, outlined in the third of his big speeches on the Midlothian campaign, at West Calder, on 27 November 1875, was that 'the foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom'.<sup>8</sup> This was because, even if you were anti-Russian: 'Surely because the best resistance to be offered to Russia is by the strength and freedom of those countries that will have to resist her. You want to place a living barrier between Russia and Turkey. There is no barrier like the breath of free men'.<sup>9</sup> It might be suggested that those views could underpin an attitude that was equally anti-Russian and anti-Ottoman. But Gladstone believed it was the Ottomans who represented the greater threat to liberty, more so than the Russians, and his feelings reinforced his strong attacks on successive British governments at their policies in the Near East.

The Treaty of Paris, which brought the Crimean war to an end, was signed on 30 March 1856. Gladstone had several reservations about it, among them being the future of the Christian populations remaining under Ottoman rule, in particular those of Moldavia and Wallachia. The Emperor Napoleon III of France began to argue they should be united in a semi-independent state but Palmerston's government stood against this. Gladstone believed this was because the government's pro-Ottoman policy would not allow it to weaken that Empire. He felt the policy should be to let the peoples gain their independence from Islam 'and then suffer life, if it would, to take the place of death'.<sup>10</sup> By the middle of 1858 those very peoples had begun to press strongly for their union and independence, and they had Gladstone's constant support. In July 1875 another anti-Turkish insurrection began among the Christian inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This immediately attracted the attention of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian governments. Disraeli's government, which in November purchased a share holding in the Suez Canal, thereby involving Britain even more intimately in Near Eastern affairs, joined with the other powers to supply the Andrassy Note to the Ottoman government. This called for the Turks to introduce a programme of reforms and threatened action if they did not.

Matters developed further in 1876. First, unrest spread in the Balkans, when in April it broke out in Eastern Rumelia (Bulgaria). This seemed likely to cause serious problems as the Serbs threatened to join a war of liberation in support of the other Balkan peoples, to which the great power Slavic ally of Serbia, Russia, offered more or less open support. The British government, however, objected to this possibility and ordered the Mediterranean fleet to Besika Bay, repeating events of 1853. This show of support for the Ottomans, however, coupled with news of horrific massacres by Ottoman forces, prompted Gladstone into action. He began work on his pamphlet *Bulgarian horrors and the Question of the East*, in September, and he followed it up with a speech to a mass audience on Blackheath Common.

In his pamphlet Gladstone made no secret of his views:

I entreat my countrymen ... to insist that the government which has been working in one direction shall work in the other ... to concur with the other states of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves.<sup>11</sup>

By April 1877 the Russians had had enough of Ottoman recalcitrance and declared war on them. This both increased Austro-Hungarian anxieties and, in Britain, led to an increase in support for the government's pro-Ottoman policy. At the end of the month, however, Gladstone proposed five resolutions to the House of Commons calling on the government, as well as the other great powers, to force the Ottomans to grant concessions to their restless peoples. The debate climaxed on 7 May. Gladstone called on the House to vote against the government, and retrieve the 'glorious prize that is now available: freedom for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for Montenegro and Bulgaria.' He assured his listeners that the peoples of these territories sought freedom from 'an intolerable burden of woe and sham': not in alliance with anyone else, unless they had to. Gladstone stressed that Britain could – and should – help them: 'I believe, for one, that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these provinces has sounded'.<sup>12</sup> After a five-day debate and strenuous efforts on his part, however, Gladstone's proposals were defeated by 253 votes to 354.

The Russian advance in the Balkans ground to a halt at the fortress of Plevna, and the longer the Ottomans held out, the more their status in British eyes changed. From being savage oppressors they came more and more to be seen as heroic defenders of their lands, and Gladstone's views became less popular. At the end of the year, the Russians finally broke through and the British government, faced with this success, ordered the Mediterranean fleet through the Dardanelles to anchor off Constantinople, and asked for six million pounds to be added to the defence budget.

Gladstone adhered to his principles, even though he admitted to his close friend, Earl Granville, that his 'earnest hope' was that the Eastern Question 'is to reach a close or resting place during the summer, and then I shall be a free man again'.<sup>13</sup> But these developments meant it was not to be. Gladstone was outspoken, in private at least, about his hostility to the defence proposals, informing one of his friends that 'I have done my best against the six millions; a foolish and mischievous proposition.' He made no

secret of his opposition to the government's Near Eastern policy, which he publicised in an article in *The Nineteenth Century*, for March 1877, entitled 'the paths of honour and shame'. When in April, the British government ordered out the reserves, Gladstone expressed his opposition to that, too.

In March 1878 the Russians imposed on the Ottomans the Treaty of San Stefano. By this an enlarged Bulgarian state was established, independent from Ottoman rule but firmly under Russian control. This treaty caused unrest in both Austria-Hungary and Serbia, and the British now found they had another firm ally among the great powers. The Russians realised they could not carry through the Treaty, so at the end of March they agreed with the British to abandon the 'Big Bulgaria' idea. The Austro-Hungarians called on German Chancellor Bismarck to broker some kind of deal for them and the British, to please him, agreed to attend a Congress he summoned in Berlin in June 1878.

Gladstone made his views on the Congress of Berlin public on 30 July. Despite feeling unwell, he was able to speak for some two and a half hours. He had to admit that, taking the results of the Congress as a whole

I must thankfully and joyfully acknowledge that great results have been achieved in the diminution of human misery and towards the establishment of prosperity in the East.

But he had to point out that Britain's pro-Ottoman policy ensured

In this congress of the Great Powers, the voice of England has not been heard in unison with the institutions, the history, and the character of England...

This, he felt, was the fault of Lord Beaconsfield and his Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury. After all, felt Gladstone, the British government could not be expected to insist on the 'prevalence of ... British ideas' and they should have acted pretty much as European ideas dictated. However, he was clear

Within the limits of fair difference of opinion, which will always be found to arise on such occasions, I do affirm that it was their part to take the side of liberty, and I do also affirm that as a matter of fact they took the side of servitude.<sup>14</sup>

Years later, in December 1894, after Gladstone's final retirement, the whole problem of the Near East was once again brought to his attention. In the autumn of that year, the Ottoman government of Sultan Abdul Hamid II began a series of appalling massacres of Christians in Armenia. On 29 December, Gladstone's eighty-fifth birthday, a group of Armenian bishops paid him a visit at his country house at Hawarden and begged him to make use of his name to attack the Ottomans. Gladstone took some steps and in August 1895 he made a strong public assault on them.

For much of the time, Gladstone and the Conservative government of Lord Salisbury were in agreement over their policy on this matter. Gladstone felt certain, as he informed the audience at his last public meeting in Liverpool in September that year, Britain had a duty to act to stop the Ottoman atrocities, referring to their 'moral infamy',<sup>15</sup> and should help, rather than threaten, the Greeks, who had gone to war with the Turks. By this date Gladstone's active involvement in politics was over, but he had finished on a stridently anti-Ottoman note.

There is, therefore, a good deal of evidence to show that Gladstone's policies towards the Near East were strongly anti-Ottoman and, because they were in support of Balkan 'freedom', equally pro-Russian. But it is equally possible to take a somewhat different line.

For one thing, the strength of Gladstone's policy of support for Russia was qualified by several factors. Most notable were his earlier views towards that Empire. As Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Aberdeen's government during the build-up to the Crimean War, Gladstone shared the largely anti-Russian sentiment of the cabinet. But he had not initially been in favour of war: as Chancellor he knew wars are expensive, and at first found it hard to accept Britain's involvement in a conflict in which she apparently had no direct concern. The Russian 'massacre' of the Ottoman fleet at Sinope on 30 November, followed by Home Secretary Palmerston's resignation from the government on 16 December, combined to make him change his mind. While Aberdeen remained opposed to war, Gladstone now joined those who believed in its necessity. In a long conversation with Aberdeen, on 22 February 1854, he made it clear to the Prime minister why he felt it his duty to support Britain's involvement in a war. He insisted the war was 'defensive' and was not being fought



for the Turks, but we were warning Russia off the forbidden ground... We stand ... upon the ground that the Emperor has invaded countries not his own, inflicted wrong on Turkey & what I feel much more most cruel wrong on the wretched inhabitants of the Principalities.

Gladstone hoped the war would be fought but 'we would apply more power to its extinction. And this I hoped with the Great Powers of Europe'.<sup>16</sup> His support for the war against Russia was, therefore, always lukewarm. While he could share Palmerston's views on its necessity, he felt this out of moderately anti-Russian feelings, not out of strong support for the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire.

The British and French declared war on the Russians in March 1854 and despatched an army to the Near East. At this point the Russians, anxious about what the Austrians might do now they were fully engaged, decided to withdraw their troops from Moldavia and Wallachia. The allies decided they would have to do something, and lighted on an attack on the Russian Black Sea naval base at Sebastopol, which should not have been too difficult. This was not to be the case and the cost of the campaign rose. Victories at Balaclava and Inkerman, coupled with infamous examples of mismanagement, did little to help the Aberdeen government's reputation, and by the beginning of 1855 it was clearly not going to last much longer. The House of Commons appointed a Committee to investigate the conduct of the war, in opposition to the government's wishes. Beaten on this crucial matter by 348 votes to 148, the government resigned to be replaced by one headed by Palmerston.

Gladstone's decision to join this ministry was, as he soon realised, the wrong thing for him to do, as many of his supporters told him. Palmerston's acceptance of the Crimean Committee gave Gladstone his excuse to resign, which he did on 21 February 1855. As the war went on, Gladstone became steadily less in favour of it. As early as May 1855, he made public his change of front. He told the Commons that the aims of the war had been achieved, and the Russians were now displaying 'a different language and a different spirit'. Gladstone also stressed the necessity of dealing carefully with them. The more an attempt was made to cripple Russia, he declared

the more I feel the extreme indignity which it inflicts on her, and there is no policy, I think, which is so false and dangerous as to inflict upon Russia; indignity without taking away strength.

He was unimpressed with the plans to ban Russian warships from the Black Sea, and could not see any point in capturing Sebastopol.<sup>17</sup>

By the Treaty of Paris, concluding the war, the Black Sea was 'neutralised' and Moldavia and Wallachia were provided with a degree of independence. Gladstone was not impressed. The neutralisation programme for the Black Sea was 'a series of pitfalls', while the Treaty did nothing about the conditions of Turkey's remaining Christian subjects. Gladstone felt the powers should not sign away their rights to intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire, if necessary, and should insist on the immediate achievement of Moldavian and Wallachian independence.<sup>18</sup> To back up his case, he wrote an outspoken essay in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for July, criticising the Turks and excusing the Russians from many of the allegations that had recently been made against them.

But Gladstone did not emerge from this wholly pro-Russian, and the Black Sea once again became an issue during his first Premiership. The Russian government took advantage of the Franco-Prussian war, which broke out in July 1870, to unilaterally denounce the Black Sea clauses of the 1856 Treaty. They declared they would station warships in the Black Sea and reconstruct fortifications around Sebastopol. In a memorandum written in November Gladstone argued that by doing this the Russians proposed to denounce some articles of the Treaty, even though they were going to adhere to others. This, in his opinion, was quite inadmissible. 'The result obtained is the certain destruction of Treaties in their essence'.<sup>19</sup> He realised he would have to do something, particularly as British public opinion was violently anti-Russian and the newspapers were talking about 'immediate war with Russia'.<sup>20</sup>

The result was that the British approached Bismarck, the friend of the Russians, to persuade him to call for an international conference to discuss the matter. Gladstone did not want to help the Russians: 'it is the duty of the Russian government to supply a particular account of the treaties ... It would be wholly out of place for the [British government] under the present circumstances, to ask for a conference'.<sup>21</sup> This eventually opened in December, but progress was slow and its results were only reported to Gladstone at the end of March 1871. The Russians got what they wanted, but the Treaty

clauses relating to neutrality and fortifications were repealed in a formal manner, with the agreement of the signatory powers. Gladstone could not get much of a triumph out of this, but he had at least been seen to 'stand up' to the Russians, who had annoyed him by their actions.

In the great eastern crisis of the later 1870s, Gladstone's support for the Russians was also less than enthusiastic. He saw himself as anti-Ottoman and anti-Beaconsfield, rather than pro-Russian. As British public opinion once more became furiously anti-Russian, Gladstone found he could not even contribute to a fund set up to help the Russian sick and wounded, because of the 'furious condition of people's minds about me and my supposed cooperation with the Russians'.<sup>22</sup> But, rather than co-operating with the Russians, he only wanted them to be treated with respect in the crisis, and his strongest feelings arose because Britain, rather than working towards a solution in cooperation with the other great powers, decided to throw herself on the side of the unworthy Ottomans.

Gladstone's near eastern policies were not, therefore, as strongly pro-Russian as his opponents suggested. He was prepared to accept their presence in the Balkans as a second-best to complete independence for the Balkan peoples, but as a considerable improvement on the Ottoman Empire. Given the violently anti-Russian views of many among the British public he had also to tread carefully, and this consideration too no doubt helped shape his attitude to Russia.

The strength of Gladstone's anti-Ottoman policies, however, also needs to be treated with caution. It is not difficult to find evidence of strident denunciations of the Ottomans in his work. But as one contemporary, the fifteenth earl of Derby, the foreign secretary when it was issued, noted about the *Bulgarian Horrors* pamphlet:

... it is a fierce and violent denunciation of the Turks, the most violent, I think, that has been written ... [But] the conclusion ... falls short of what might be expected from the premises. He denounces the Turks as unfit to exist, far more to rule, anywhere: he ends by a simple recommendation of autonomy for the disturbed provinces, including Bulgaria. A tame conclusion for so vehement an invective.<sup>23</sup>

Gladstone's speeches, too, followed, a similar pattern. He found the Ottomans a grand target for his oratorical assaults, and his proposals were not so radical as might have been expected from them.

Given the violence of his numerous attacks on the Ottoman Empire, it is also surprisingly difficult to find stridently anti-Ottoman policies in place when he was Prime Minister. This is partly do with the fact that they simply did not provide him with the justifications he needed to introduce them. But it is also possible to conclude that he had another reason for proposing them, besides pure antipathy to the Ottomans.

Gladstone's attacks on the Ottomans also involved attacks on the British government. Bringing up the Romanian issue, for example, was a good way for him to vent his spleen on Palmerston, with whom he had just fallen out. Equally, assaults on the Ottoman government over the crisis of 1877-8 were a good way to attack the Beaconsfield government and their 'triumph' in Berlin. In both cases, however, Gladstone was defeated.

Gladstone spoke out strongly against the Ottoman regime and equally strongly denounced British governments' pro-Ottoman policies. He also spoke out, except in the immediate pre-Crimean War crisis and the 1870 neutralisation of the Black Sea, in favour of the Russians. But the effectiveness of his policies was limited. For the second half of the nineteenth century, British governments followed the traditional policy towards the 'Eastern question' that was both anti-Russian and pro-Ottoman. Gladstone would not support a non-Christian and illiberal regime like the Ottoman Empire, and the Russians were at least an improvement on that. But his ability to impose a strongly anti-Ottoman policy was severely restricted and he was simply unable to overturn Britain's traditional near eastern policy, no matter how 'mischievous and degrading' it was felt to be by many liberals.

## NOTES

- 1 J. Morley *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (3 vols., London, 1904), III, 538.
- 2 W.E. Gladstone *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of East* (London, 1876), quoted in Morley, *Gladstone* II, 553.
- 3 W.E. Gladstone *Lessons in Massacre* (London, 1877) quoted in H.C.G. Matthew *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford, 1997) p. 284.
- 4 Quoted in R. Shannon *Gladstone: Heroic Minister, 1865-1898* (London, 1999), p. 219.
- 5 W.E. Gladstone *The Slavonic Provinces of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1877), quoted in Matthew *Gladstone*, pp. 279-80.
- 6 Quoted in Morley *Gladstone*, II, 550.
- 7 *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1855, quoted in R. Shannon *Gladstone, I: 1809-1865* (Oxford, 1982), p. 353.
- 8 Quoted in Shannon, *Gladstone*, II, 239.
- 9 Speech, House of Commons, 4 May 1858, quoted in Morley *Gladstone*, II, pp. 2-3.
- 10 Gladstone to the earl of Aberdeen, letter, 10 Sept. 1857, quoted in *ibid.*, II, 3.
- 11 Gladstone *Bulgarian Horrors*, quoted in *ibid.*, II, 554.
- 12 Speech, House of Commons, 7 May 1877, quoted in *ibid.*, II, 567-8.
- 13 Gladstone to Granville, letter, June 1877, quoted in Shannon, *Gladstone* II, 204.
- 14 Gladstone, speech, 30 July 1878, quoted in *ibid.* II, 577.
- 15 Gladstone, speech, 24 Sept. 1897, quoted in *ibid.* II, 582.
- 16 Gladstone, memorandum, Feb. 1854, quoted in Matthew *Gladstone* p. 85.
- 17 Speech, May 1855, quoted in Shannon *Gladstone* I, 315.
- 18 Speech, 12 Mar. 1856, *ibid.* I, 323.
- 19 Memorandum [c.10 Nov. 1870] in A. Ramm, ed., *The Gladstone-Granville correspondence* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1998), p. 155.
- 20 Gladstone to Granville, letter, 22 Nov. 1870, *ibid.*, p. 165.
- 21 Memorandum, 26 Nov. 1870, *ibid.*, pp. 168-9. [22] 22 Gladstone to H.P. Liddon, letter, 27 Aug. 1877, quoted in Shannon, *Gladstone*, II, 207.
- 23 Derby, diary, 7 Sept. 1876, J. Vincent, ed., *A Selection from the diary of Edward Henry Stanley, 15th earl of Derby, 1826-93...* Camden Soc., 5th ser., 4 (London, 1995), p. 324.

# Teaching the Great War

PROFESSOR T. HUNT TOOLEY

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With some trepidation I write to scholars and teachers in the United Kingdom on the subject of teaching the Great War: UK history teachers, it is well known, have taught World War I to their students for many years and with great intensity and inventiveness. I have to ask myself, considering this audience, is there more to say about Great War? Are there fresh approaches we can take in working through its history in the classroom?

I will argue here that the answer to both of these questions is: 'Yes. At least I think so.'

A certain measure of humility is required here on all our parts, among even those of us who have taught the First World War over and over. I mean humility both before the events of this colossal catastrophe as well as before the task of helping students to find some meaning in the war.

Yet even beset by doubts and reservations, it still seems to me that we can gain a great deal by looking into some new approaches and new issues as well as new sources among the materials of World War I. In the following essay, I will trace the broad trends of recent historical literature on the First World War, discuss some aspects of the increased availability of both primary and secondary sources through the World Wide Web, and, finally, suggest some approaches to incorporating new materials and newly raised issues into our teaching of World War I.

One finds much in the way of fresh approaches to World War I in the recent historical literature, even that of the last decade.<sup>1</sup> To begin with diplomatic history, interest in that aspect of the war has never really abated since the war itself, except perhaps for a brief period during World War II. And the diplomatic history of the war continued to flourish, through the famous Fischer controversy of the 1960s and at a reduced volume right through to the present, when a number of old debates have gained new life and a number of new issues in diplomatic history been worked out by recent writers. If any one trend predominates in the newest work, it is more attention to the conflict in the context of a world balance of power, economics, and wealth, rather than a simply European context.<sup>2</sup>

The social history of the First World War has tended to parallel historians' increasing interest in social history as a whole since the 1960s. Aside from a few early classic texts on the social impact of the Great War, we find little writing on the social history of the war until the sixties, but a great deal of it thereafter. Social aspects of the war have really assumed a centrality in historical studies of the war since the path-breaking work of Arthur Marwick, Gerald Feldman, Jürgen Kocka, and (somewhat later) David M. Kennedy and Jean-Jacques Becker.<sup>3</sup> One might also add that the domestic political history of the war, to which few historians had paid detailed attention, became part and parcel of these newer approaches to social history. Hence, roughly from the seventies, historians produced a significant number of social and political studies, and writing and research in these areas has continued unabated and extended into many new areas of social and political issues: food policy, 'mobilization' of populations, class structure, and others.<sup>4</sup>

Up until the 1970s, on the other hand, investigations of the military aspects of the war remained more or less mired in the older metaphor of stalemate, a paradigm which did little to promote innovative study. Academic elites on both sides of the Atlantic, moreover, had more or less given up military history as a kind of relic of the barbaric past. A changing attitude emerged roughly at the end of the 1970s, after Paul Fussell, John Keegan, and John Terraine and others produced significant and innovative works which in different ways took seriously the military history of the war.<sup>5</sup> These works really laid the groundwork for a tremendous expansion of the range of questions that historians began asking about the battlefield of the Great War, its nature, and the behaviors associated with it, especially. These re-examinations ranged from a series of fine studies about the fighting of the war<sup>6</sup> to the nature of war-making on the home fronts.<sup>7</sup>

In a sense, renewed interest in the battle fronts of the war contributed to new questions about the

home fronts. One of the interesting aspects of this dynamic body of both primary and secondary historical materials is that historians have used these approaches and materials to create a number of categories which turn on relationships and connections between the home fronts, so to speak, and the battle fronts. Hence, a sizeable literature has emerged which is devoted to the impact of wartime economic reorientations and government intervention into war economies, the social and cultural upheavals related to the mobilization of labour (particularly that of women), the political landscape which produced the war and kept it going, the fundamental changes in attitudes about the nature of the state and its claims upon its citizens and the repression practiced by all belligerent governments, the technological and especially medical changes that resulted from the war, and, finally, the cultural and intellectual processes and forces which emerged and transformed this period. Researchers and writers have opened up all of these broad areas and more, making for both the renewal and the broadening of the 'military' history on World War I.<sup>8</sup>

So, for example, Jay Winter's book *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* traces both the impact of soldiers' deaths on the home front during the war, but its continued impact on the shaping of mentalities in the world since.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, a new range of literature devoted to the process of 'mobilization' for the war encompass not only the economic production for the war, but public relations and other areas of suasion. An important 1997 collection on the capital cities of the Western Front powers, edited by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert,<sup>10</sup> and a range of monographical studies by Roger Chickering, R. J. Q. Adams, Belinda Davis, John Horne, Charles Rearick, Kathleen Burk, Gerald Feldman, Gerard De Groot, and many others have examined the extent to which social and cultural change deriving directly from the war effort created transformations in the societies of the belligerent powers.<sup>11</sup>

One subsection of the literature on the Great War calls for special mention: memoirs and other autobiographical writing. A concatenation of conditions made this war perhaps the most thoroughly described war ever fought, at least if we are speaking of written description. The extraordinarily high level of literacy in all Western and Central European societies meant that almost all soldiers on the Western Front could write, and many did, avidly, during the war and afterward. Certainly, the quality of elite education throughout Europe meant that many officers and quite a number of 'other ranks' were much more than simply literate; they were quite conversant with European literary culture and often consumers of it, and frequently active producers of that culture. One may mention at this point a very specific kind of primary source on the war: the literature on the Great War written by participants. Readers of this journal are undoubtedly thoroughly familiar with this literature, especially that in the English language. Though some special difficulties apply to the poems of Sassoon, Owen, Brittain, and others as historical resources, they certainly deserve to be counted among the eye-witness accounts of the war.

Hence, we have at our fingertips thousands of personal primary accounts by participants, ranging from individuals who were prime ministers, field marshals, and giants of industry and the intellectual world, down to working class denizens of the trenches. Of the lower classes in the war, it is true, most did not write for publication, but even so, many families treasured sometimes terse, sometimes voluminous, and frequently informative collections of letters and diaries from the war, and made these available to the public in later years.

The body of autobiographical primary materials for World War I is not only vast and rich, but it is still growing. Since the first published accounts of the fighting appeared in European periodicals in the fall of 1914, memoirs, letters, and diaries have been making their way to the public. A great wave of writings from the late twenties to the early thirties has dwarfed the output of other periods, but until the sixties and seventies, participants in the war itself and all kinds of home front activities were still publishing their accounts. Indeed, some accounts appeared posthumously, collected and promoted by the families of the participants. The spectacular find in this category must be the amazing diaries of Edwin Campion Vaughn, a British trench fighter who died in the early thirties, but whose family hid his diary away because of some embarrassing information in it. Seventy years after the war, this powerful diary was rediscovered and appeared in print as *Some Desperate Glory* and was praised as an immediate classic.<sup>12</sup> We shall examine the further expansion of such sources below, in the context of discussing the role of the World Wide Web in the use and dissemination of sources on the war.

Finally, a steady stream of larger works is now being published which makes use of these rich published sources as well as archival materials to synthesize this complex story.<sup>13</sup> It would be an act of folly to attempt a 'synthesis' of it all in a paragraph two. Still, it is useful to contemplate briefly the ways in which all these inputs have contributed to a new basic narrative, or set of narratives, related to the war. Quite significantly, the standard usage of the metaphor of 'stalemate' – conveying as it did a kind of stasis in which irrational leaders unfeelingly stationed in the trenches masses of the best and brightest and left them there to rot or be killed, or sent them over the top to die instantly – has really begun to dissolve. Historians have shown that tacticians responded to conditions, that even some disastrous debacles such as the first day of the Somme attack were predicated on changed tactics, that warfare in 1918 bore only a surface resemblance to warfare in 1914. With only a few qualifications, one might say that the new synthesis of weapons, tactics, strategy one finds in World War II had emerged from the trenches by the summer of 1918.

That is to say, whether we look at the battlefield or the home front, historians have tended to find the war transformative, an adjective that is hard to square with some older and somewhat superficial concepts connected to the term 'stalemate'. If there is a single theme to the bulk of recent literature on the Great War, we might well nominate the crumbling of the older 'stalemate' metaphor as that theme.

At this moment, early in the twenty-first century, it is really impossible to discuss the scholarship and resources on the First World War without discussing the role of the World Wide Web. The Internet has enabled historians to access much of the literature mentioned above, or at least to find it easily. Much new research becomes available to scholars and student immediately, often from the issuing journals in downloadable formats. Moreover, various organizations and individuals have 'republished' online dozens of classic books and articles on the Great War.<sup>14</sup> In addition to expanding the usefulness of regular printed sources, the World Wide Web has made available graphic materials – both photographs and artistic depictions – which can be of great value for the historian. Almost all of the web sites devoted to the war have photographic galleries or archives, and numerous collections of posters exist in the Internet. Finally, and perhaps most important, the Internet has made it possible both to 'reprint' works which might be of 'marginal importance' to wide audiences but which yield much to the student of history, and to publish previously unknown materials.

Indeed, it is this last area in which the web has made its most significant impact. The low cost and ease of 'publishing' an item online has led many individuals, archives, and other organizations to publish previously unpublished diaries, letters, and memoirs, that is to say, material completely new to historians. Some of these resources come almost directly from the attics in which they had been kept since just after the war itself. Hence, we are now witnessing a process in which all kinds of primary accounts are making their way to the Internet. Most of these writings have to do with the ordinary and the daily as opposed to the dramatic and colorful. But for this very reason, many of the emerging memoir materials are especially informative. Indeed, in the newer literature, one element which attracts historians is the view from the bottom up: training, logistics, supply, nursing, factory work, schoolwork, and the like. In many cases, too, these newly emerging primary materials come to us in a less mediated form than the classic memoirs such as Robert Graves's *Goodbye to All that* or Ernst Jünger's *Copse 125*, both carefully crafted 'literary' memoirs. A glance at the memoir section of the excellent internet site *The World War I Document Archive*<sup>15</sup> will demonstrate the value of both materials unknown previously and 'republished' materials.<sup>16</sup>

Many of these sources are available thanks to individuals and groups interested in the war and willing to invest time and effort to create and maintain web sites. Some come from archives, universities, libraries, and official web sources. Altogether, by this time, there are hundreds of web sites devoted totally or in part to World War I. A selected and partial listing and commentary can be found in the appendix to this article.

The context of these really surprising developments made possible by the Internet gives us the chance to think here about what these materials might mean for teaching and student research. The use of the World Wide Web for student research is of course fraught with perils. For any research topic, the array of 'sources' on the web ranges from the sublime to the ridiculous, and the latter normally predominate. On most twentieth-century topics, someone somewhere has an axe to grind and plenty of time to grind it. Whatever folks of this description did with their spare moments in former

times, now they create web sites. We have all seen students mix into their research papers sources that are uninformed, inaccurate, and embarrassing.

Moreover, the electronic world makes plagiarism possible with the push of a button. Recently one of my students handed to me a paper copied word for word from a very shady internet site. I called the student in and showed her the site on my computer screen, where she could read the verbatim text of her paper. She was indignant. 'I didn't copy that paper from the Internet!' she said, 'I copied it from a book in the library!'

It is clear that there are problems associated with using the Internet as an aid to teaching History. Yet, there are some very substantial advantages as well, which derive from causes quite similar to those which create the potential for problems: the material on the internet *is* frequently chaotic, dishevelled, and unmediated. Yet these problems of provenance and context can also be part of the solution. The whole exercise of understanding and contextualizing a previously unpublished memoir, for example, taken without canned or 'authorized' answers and without much in the way of preconceptions, can be a powerful learning experience for students. While it is true that students tend to want to know 'the answer' – 'so who *did* start the war?' – it is probably quite rare that we satisfy ourselves as teachers or them as students by giving some pat answer. The same applies to the encounter with an unfamiliar document, or documents. The very testing of provenance and the attempt to understand context are exercises that History as a discipline should convey and that History as a discipline can offer the world at large. Hence, if students face challenges in trying to work out the context and meaning of an isolated set of letters from a nurse on the Western Front, the encounter with these challenges *is* the learning of history.

Indeed, in the optimal situation, a process can take place which is something like the 'spontaneous order' described by economist and political philosopher Friedrich von Hayek.<sup>17</sup> Students, or anyone else for that matter, really can find themselves involved in working out on their own the answers to important questions. In fact, some surprising and original insights can result. At the very least, perceptive students faced with ambiguous, imperfect, and even contradictory primary sources can, by confronting such new and unmediated material as the World Wide Web provides, learn one of the most important lessons of 'history': that history is full of ambiguities and contingencies, and that our knowledge of it can never be perfect.

In any case, if there are problems associated with the proliferation of sources on World War I in general, and with the proliferation of World War I sources on the Internet in particular, there are also very considerable advantages to this jumbled and sometimes confusing wealth of sources. We might, therefore, recognize the dangers and then give two, if not three, cheers for the current status of historical materials relating to the First World War.

What should we, as teachers and historians, make of this treasure trove of sources? As an American teacher of college students and periodically of secondary school students as well, I harbour no illusions that young people from ages 15 to 20 have developed a secret desire to do vast amounts of extra reading and study. Hence, in the following, I will not be suggesting simply that everyone assign a dozen extra outside readings. But I do have some ideas which might be useful in teaching World War I, and perhaps even in using World War I as entry point for teaching history in general.

Since most teachers are assigning some kind of written work anyway, one obvious way to capitalize on newer sources and newer themes is to leave aside the 'tried and true' (or is that 'tired and true?') book report and assign essays on particular issues or approaches. One might ask the students to focus on one episode, for example the issue of German atrocities in Belgium in 1914. Where the atrocities in the famous Bryce report have long been accepted as at least partial fabrications<sup>18</sup> John Horne and Alan Kramer have given much evidence in their book, *German Atrocities, 1914*,<sup>19</sup> that the Germans really did carry out a policy of 'frightfulness' which led them to kill some 6,500 Belgian civilians (many of them shot in reprisal), burn Belgian cities, and more. Though it used to be difficult to find, the complete Bryce Report is now easily available on the internet at *The World War I Document Archive*. A sampling of this report, and some judicious excerpts from Horne and Kramer and others could well make for a thought-provoking discussion. How do we evaluate German actions? Where do they stand in relation to, for example, Russian depredations and killing in 1914/15 on the Eastern

Front? Or to the British blockade of the Central Powers which by cutting off food supplies to the food-importing country of Germany led directly to substantial nutrition-related mortality, and certainly in far greater numbers than those of the German atrocities in Belgium?<sup>20</sup> Further, why were the Germans, and perhaps others, so ready to kill civilians? Was this war simply the introductory stage to the mass civilian slaughters of the Second World War?

Discussions and essays on topics such as German atrocities might well strike a chord in students whose world has really been shaped by the war. One way to make the point that their world has indeed been shaped by the events of the past, and in less than five minutes of class time, is to bring in a recent newspaper or news magazine once a week and point out, or have the students find, connections to World War I. If we consider that a wide range of newsworthy developments in the Middle East derives directly from the First World War (including the usual 'events' mentioned in textbooks and now easily available online: the Balfour Declaration, the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, Sykes-Picot Agreement, and the King-Crane Commission), and considering the enormous share of the Middle East in the daily international and often domestic news, then most history teachers could chart the connections from 1918 to the present with ease. Indeed, the more the students take part in what appears at first to be something like a parlour game, the more they might begin, almost imperceptibly, to forge for themselves some genuine historical perspective. This simple activity could provide some very rich teaching moments.

How can we take advantage of the materials, especially primary materials, mentioned above? Let me suggest an editing assignment. I have used fairly successfully some variation of the following exercise for many years, and it is particularly helpful in making sense of primary accounts from the First World War. By 'editing assignment' I mean an exercise in which students choose (with the instructor's advice and approval) a primary document or a passage from a primary document. Here is the first hurdle: teaching students to use their critical faculties to begin distinguishing between various kinds of source materials. The concept is certainly worth learning and easily learned at the secondary school level: a primary document is one which has an 'eye-witness' quality. There are of course nuances to this definition, and again, those can be explained, examined, discussed. The second stage of the assignment is reading the chosen document carefully, figuring out who wrote it, whom it was written to, for what purpose, when it was written, what its context was, etc. Next, the student should mark all difficult or foreign words, all obscure references, all names, all remote historical reference – in short, any point at which a modern general reader might need help, in the form of an annotation. These (or at least some of these) the student can look up, in the library or on the web, or both, according to the teacher's preference. One can delimit this assignment in many ways. I use variations on this assignment with students just out of high school, and I usually limit the annotation part to ten consecutive points which need annotating. Under this guideline, the students' work gives a real indication as to how carefully they thought through their text. Moreover, the rule that they must annotate everything that needs it in a given section forces them to do more than just annotate the names and references they can find easily.

These notes, it has to be emphasized, may not be mere glosses or restatement or paraphrases of the text: they must add information which enables the modern reader to make sense of them. And they need not be long; in most cases they should not be. A soldiers' reference in his letter to 'the prime minister' should not call forth a biography of Lloyd George, but simply a one-sentence identification for the reader's benefit. If a given historical document (say a letter from a V.A.D. nurse) has only a couple of points in need of annotation, then the student can find some more letters to bundle together, and make the title of the paper something like 'Three Letters from a World War I Hospital Unit'. I have the students simply Xerox or print out their document and mark superscripts after the word or phrase to be annotated. The notes themselves are written or typed consecutively from one to ten (or whatever number one chooses).

The final stage of the assignment is a short introduction. Typically I assign a two-page introduction in freshman or survey classes. This is enough space for students to introduce the document, tell something about its historical context, and suggest some aspects of the document for which the reader might be on the lookout. The temptation for many students in this regard is to summarize the document, which is of course pointless, since the reader is about to read the document itself.

The final product is clipped together in the logical order: introduction, xerox of document with superscripts written on it, and annotations. This is an exercise which makes it necessary for students to



do some practical historical spadework and to apply their critical and analytical sense as well. And this kind of assignment pulls the students away from generic textbook generalizations and nudges them into rummaging around with some real materials of history. One can use this kind of approach with any historical period, of course, but the especially fertile primary sources for World War I, available in such quantity and quality, create a very effective juncture of mechanics and theme.

In the end, one cannot do everything in the classroom. We all know that there is too little time, that there are too many distractions for students, and that what sounds like a good idea in the planning stage frequently leaves much to be desired in the execution. If an American may, in a Scots journal for scholars and historians, make bold to quote the immortal Burns:

The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men,  
Gang aft agley,  
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,  
For promis'd joy!

Still, in the serious teaching and study of the Great War, we can find many, many opportunities to understand our world in historical terms and to help our students achieve a working level of historical consciousness and perspective. As historians, we probably all agree that such work is one of our most important tasks.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Some Very Useful Internet Sites Devoted to the First World War**

There are now dozens of very fine and useful web sites devoted to World War I or some aspect of it. The following list represents a starting place, as well as a reference point. One can find hundreds of other sites by following the links from these.

**Art of the First World War.** A superb collection of art online from various repositories and put together by the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne, along with other fine museums. <http://www.art-ww1.com/gb/visite.html>

**The Canadian Military Heritage Project's Great War Homepage.** This is very good national approach to the war, which gathers a very good list of links on the Canadian part in the war.

**First World War.com.** This site by Michael Duffy is a general site on the war, very accessible, and voluminous with many kinds of resources. <http://www.firstworldwar.com>

**Hellfire Corner.** An outstanding site maintained by teacher and Western Front expert Tom Morgan. <http://www.fylde.demon.co.uk/>

**The Long, Long Trail: The Story of the British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918.** A site created by Chris Baker, who has amassed a great deal of information in a clear format. <http://www.1914-1918.net/index.htm>

**Trenches on the Web.** A fine online history of the war. <http://www.worldwar1.com/>

**Virtual Seminars for Teaching Literature.** This site is devoted to the war, and offers tutorials and links which cover a great mass of Great War literature. <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ltg/projects/jtap/>

**The World War I Document Archive.** This is one of the best historical sites on the Internet, useful for scholars, teachers, students, and anyone else interested in the war. There are hundreds of primary documents here, but there is also much more. The Links page alone is outstanding. The site is the product of a joint effort by the Brigham Young University Library, where the site is maintained by Richard Hacken, and The Great War Primary Document Archive, Inc., (overseen by Jane Plotke). <http://www.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/>

## NOTES

- 1 I have left aside discussion of archival sources in this essay, since the point of it is to discuss historical sources available both to students and scholars.
- 2 See Norman Rich *Great Power Diplomacy, 1814-1914* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992) and *Great Power Diplomacy since 1914* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003); Samuel R. Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991). For a number of 'new' approaches to the origins and diplomacy of the war, see, for example, H. W. Koch (ed.), *The Origins of the First World War: Great Power Rivalry and German War Aims*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1984); Paul Kennedy, 'The First World War and the International Power System', *International Security* 9 (Summer 1984): 7-40; and Niall Ferguson, 'Public Finance and National Security: The Domestic Origins of the First World War Revisited', *Past and Present*, No. 142. (Feb., 1994): 141-168; Paul A. Papayoanou, 'Interdependence, Institutions, and the Balance of Power: Britain, Germany, and World War I', *International Security* 20 (Spring 1996): 42-76; and William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World: An International History* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 3 Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1965); Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Jürgen Kocka, *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg: deutsche Sozialgeschichte, 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1973), translated as *Facing Total War: German Society, 1914-1918* (Leamington Spa, Warwickshire: Berg, 1984); David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Jean-Jacques Becker *Les français dans la grande-guerre* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1983), translated as *The Great War and the French People* (New York, Oxford, Munich: Berg, 1985).
- 4 Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); John Horne (ed.), *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- 5 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975); John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976); Terraine's most influential book in this regard was probably his 1960s work, *Douglas Haig, Educated Soldier* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), though Terraine's works from the sixties tended to become more widely discussed in the mid-seventies.
- 6 See especially Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics on the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack, 1916-18* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994); Paddy Griffith (ed.), *British Fighting Methods on the Western Front* (London: Frank Cass, 1996); Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare: The Live and Let Live System* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980); Timothy Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front, and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918* (Boston, London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1987); Bruce Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918* (New York: Praeger, 1989). For analogous treatments of the war at sea and in the air, see Paul Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994) and John Buckley, *Air Power in the Age of Total War* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999).
- 7 See especially, Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 8 For citations on such aspects of the war, see the suggested readings in my book *The Western Front: Battleground and Home Front in the First World War* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- 9 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1996). See also Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver, 1997).
- 10 Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* (Cambridge, 1997).
- 11 Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); R. J. Q. Adams (ed.), *The Great War, 1914-1918: Essays on the Military, Political, and Social History of the First World War* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 1990); Davis, *Home Fires Burning*; Horne (ed.), *State, Society, and Mobilization*; Charles Rearick, *The French in Love and War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997); Kathleen Burk, *Britain, America, and the Sinews of War, 1914-1918* (Boston, London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1985); Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Gerard De Groot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War, 1914-1918* (London, New York: Longman, 1996).

- 12 Edwin Campion Vaughn, *Some Desperate Glory: The World War I Diary of a British Officer, 1917* (London: F. Warne, 1981).
- 13 For example, John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: A. Knopf, 1999); Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); and the multi-volume work in progress, Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001-).
- 14 See, for example, *Relevance: The Quarterly Journal of the Great War Society*, which has an online presence and archive at: <http://www.worldwar1.com/tgws/rel.htm#news> <http://www.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/> Please see the next endnote.
- 16 'The World War I Document Archive' is an exemplary use of the internet for historical purposes, both in terms of teaching and research. The site is the product of a joint effort by the Brigham Young University Library, where the site is maintained by Richard Hacken, and The Great War Primary Document Archive, Inc., (overseen by Jane Plotke). The URL is as follows: <http://www.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/>.
- 17 Roger Garrison and Israel Kirzner, 'Friedrich August von Hayek', in *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, ed. J. Eatwell, M. Milgate and P. Newman (London: Macmillan, 1987): 609-614.
- 18 See H. C. Peterson, *Propaganda for War: The Campaign against American Neutrality, 1914-1917* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939); and Trevor Wilson, 'Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium, 1914-1915', *Journal of Contemporary History*
- 14 (July 1979): 369-383. Both of these works, by the way, can be found online, the Wilson article through a number of subscription services, but the Peterson book in a very readable e-text format at <http://www.questia.com>.
- 19 John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001).
- 20 See Paul C. Vincent, *The Politics of Hunger: The Allied Blockade of Germany, 1915-1919* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985); and Jay Winter, 'Surviving the War: Life Expectations, Illness, and Mortality Rates in Paris, London, and Berlin, 1914-1919', in *Capital Cities at War*, 487-523.

# Scotland and the Great War

PROFESSOR ELAINE McFARLAND

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Grand Ypres city, Germ-Huns shelled with great joy,  
And likewise the village of fair St Eloi,  
They thought in our armour, a weak spot to find,  
But the Scots Fusiliers made the Huns change their mind.<sup>1</sup>

The Great War offers an awesome canvas for the development of historical skills. Part of its compelling power is the extent to which it continues to operate on a variety of levels of intensity. It was, for example, a truly global conflict. Indeed, one of the strengths of recent academic surveys has been to shift the focus from operations on the Western Front to neglected theatres of war, such as Mesopotamia and Salonika.<sup>2</sup> Yet, amid the intricate statecraft and grand strategy, the war also represented a mass of individual experiences, for which the materials lie much closer to hand in the civic landscape of remembrance and in oral family testimony. For many, it is this personal dimension of the Great War – the human face of mechanised slaughter – which guarantees the most satisfying and absorbing history, almost defying contextualisation and objective analysis.

The experience of Scotland in the Great War introduces two further levels of engagement. ‘Stateless’ she may have been, but vital issues of national identity mediated the Scottish war effort. Not only were Scotland’s domestic politics and civil society uniquely configured, but her place in the British imperial system also ensured a distinctive articulation of imperial patriotism and its associated military tradition. Scots in 1914 believed themselves uniquely equipped, as ‘a martial race’, to play a full part in the Empire’s supreme moment of need. Yet it is perhaps at the level of the locality, that the real nature of Scotland’s war can be captured. For, it was here, in hundreds of small communities across the country, that the reality of war was most vividly brought home in terms of casualties and home front hardships, fashioning a new discourse of ‘national need’ and ‘total war’.

Indeed, the pervasive nature of the war in everyday life has left us rich untapped reserves of original sources. A vibrant and decentralised press in Scotland, for example, informed public opinion through a bewildering range of weekly titles, ranging from the *Dumfries and Galloway Standard* to the *Inverness Courier*. Besides community rolls of honour and individual memoirs and diaries, the body of primary material also includes less obvious survivals, not least the histories of individual territorial and volunteer battalions, respectfully compiled through subscriptions in remembrance of fallen comrades.<sup>3</sup> The secondary material, however, is less well developed – despite an explosion of Great War historiography in the past three decades. Some of these titles have merely retraced the struggles over battlefield responsibility of a previous generation, but through others our knowledge of the impact of total war on British society has definitely advanced. The main thrust of recent scholarship, such as De Groot’s *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London, 1996) or Bourne’s *Britain and the Great War* (London, 1989), has been a refusal to treat war and society as discreet variables, stressing instead their organic interdependence. Unfortunately, these substantial overviews seldom attempt to disentangle a specific Scottish dimension. Some individual studies do stand out, covering issues such as morale and identity in Scottish units, and the ecclesiastical effects of war.<sup>4</sup> Beyond this, however, Scottish historians have traditionally preferred to focus on the intricacies ‘Red Clydeside’, rather than assess the broader impact of the Great War on mainstream society.<sup>5</sup> In fact, it is Ireland’s war experience which has benefited more fully from recent professional historiography, as a new generation of commentators have struggled to rescue their service in the British Army from a collective ‘national amnesia’.<sup>6</sup>

It was against this background that a conference of historians was held at Glasgow Caledonian University in November 1997. Timed to coincide with the anniversary of the end of the Battle of

Passchendaele in 1917, the papers were subsequently published in the collection, *Scotland and the Great War*.<sup>7</sup> Here, some contributors considered the broad effects of war on the economic and political life of Scotland, while others investigated more specific case studies, such as gender and religiosity, or the Highland experience of war. Two prominent themes cutting across the individual essays were distinctiveness and change. As regards the first of these, it appears that the Scottish experience of war was broadly similar to those of other combatant nations. However, the way that this was addressed in cultural terms was distinctive – not least because of popular perceptions of Scotland's unique imperial and military heritage. In addition, the country's characteristic industrial mix meant that economic dislocation and home front mobilisation would be experienced in a particularly concentrated fashion in the Scottish case.

Similarly, the issue of how far Scotland was transformed by war is far more complex and uneven than the commonly invoked concept of a 'watershed'. In the case of the Scottish economy, Lee illustrates how the war clearly boosted productive capacity and encouraged immediate social and technological gains, but in the longer term merely accelerated the decline of pre-existing points of vulnerability, such as steel production. These were sectors bound to struggle amid post-war overproduction and the restructuring of international trade.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Hutchison suggests that the war was decisive in re-drawing the political map of Scotland, casting down the once-mighty Liberal party and putting heart into the Unionists. The Labour camp also grew in confidence and status, despite failing to see this translated into immediate political victories in the 1918 General Election. One indirect outcome in the longer term was a more combustible ideological climate for Scottish political life during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>9</sup> The war may also have assisted the reshaping of national identity – although the balance between Scottish and imperial elements contained here is contested by historians. In political terms the war may have reinforced some Scots' identification with the United Kingdom and the Empire, but Urquhart argues that as far as Scottish writing is concerned, war's destructive power marked a decisive junction point. Literature now regained its sense of history, reconnecting Scotland more confidently with external dynamics of the post-war world.<sup>10</sup>

The *Scotland and the Great War* project was designed to encourage new research rather than provide a definitive statement. Subsequently, the body of new literature has grown fairly slowly, with much interesting material contained in unpublished PhD theses and in local histories. Three main lines of enquiry can be identified. On the surface these may appear straightforward, but in practice all are extremely difficult to resolve. The first question is simply why men volunteered for military service. The second concerns the fate of minority groups in Scotland as the boundaries of 'the nation' were drawn and re-drawn amid the stresses of war. The third set of issues – and possibly the most perplexing – surrounds the mechanisms through which Scottish society sustained itself in the face of previously unimaginable casualties. In each of these, sensitivity to local variations is crucial.

Turning to enlistment, Scotland's commitment to the war effort in terms of military manpower is not in doubt. Her response to the call for volunteers was striking, and resulted in the highest proportion of enlistments in the United Kingdom during the period of voluntary recruitment during 1914 and 1915 – over 320,000 men.<sup>11</sup> Nor does this include the contribution of the Territorial Army, a force which was strongly rooted in Scottish popular culture.<sup>12</sup> In Beith, Ayrshire, for example, every local Territorial had volunteered for overseas service within a week of the outbreak of war.<sup>13</sup> New research by Derek Young has suggested that the economic background was vital in shaping this general recruitment pattern.<sup>14</sup> The Scottish economy, highly concentrated on overseas markets, was at first badly destabilised by the outbreak of war. With eight main staple industries producing 60% of the national output, her industrial sector had already contracted by 11% by October 1914. Fears of unemployment were compounded by high inflation and food shortages during the first few weeks of the conflict. The economic driver can be seen most clearly at work in the high enlistment rates for particularly vulnerable trades, like building and mining.

For some historians this is the whole story. In Ferguson's *Pity of War* (London, 1998) there is the suggestion that while 'patriotism' is a permissible inspiration for those who studied at English public schools, less sophisticated explanations, such as economic necessity or propaganda, will suffice for those from a lower 'social milieu'. For historians of the left, 'economic conscription' is equally congenial,

absolving working-class recruits from other ideologically inconvenient motivations. It is, of course, impossible to recapture the mass of individual impulses underpinning enlistment. While economic rationality must be an important factor in any analysis, the instinctive and emotional dimension of enlistment is also vital. Crucially these were also able to draw on shared values and collective enthusiasms embedded in pre-war Scottish society.

In reconstructing the subjective elements of enlistment, it difficult to overstate the mixture of fear, excitement and exhilaration which greeted the outbreak of war. The local and national press vividly capture the atmosphere as reservists hurried back to their regimental depots and territorial units were 'embodied'.<sup>15</sup> In these circumstances, it was difficult for any section of Scottish society to stand apart from what appeared as a massive national undertaking. There is also persuasive evidence that the behaviour and attitudes of friends, family and work mates provided men with further decisive triggers to enlist. The classic example is the Glasgow Tramways Department which by April 1915 had provided over 2000 recruits, a third of its workforce, but the pattern was repeated in many other workplaces, parishes and clubs. Jack Alexander's new work on the 16<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots is particularly valuable here, tracing the formation of Edinburgh's most famous volunteer battalion, a unit bound together by loyalty not only to its colonel, Sir George McCrae, but also to the Heart of Midlothian football team.<sup>16</sup>

Underlying the enthusiasm of recruits like these was an abiding sense that the war was *right*. As Stephane-Rouzeau and Becker suggest in their highly original analysis, there exists a great gulf between the meaning of war for us to whom it often appears as utterly futile – for De Groot, the folly of 'an innocent, gullible generation' – and the men and women of 1914 who actually made an *emotional investment* in it.<sup>17</sup> This investment was to prove vital as the full implications of the conflict unfolded. For many Scots, this was 'a Common Fight for Freedom', not only a crusade against German aggression, but also a visceral struggle for the survival of the British Empire. The message was brought home with great force in October 1914, with the arrival of the first contingent of Belgian refugees in Glasgow. Subsequently dispersed throughout Scotland as part of a government scheme – by 1915 there were over 14,000 of them settled across the country – they provided dramatic personal testimony of the German onslaught. In short, this was a war that Scots were anxious to claim as their own. Here they could draw on deeper wellsprings of popular empire loyalty and echoes of a heroic military past. This was expressed most vividly in the role of highland landowners in the recruitment process, or in the capacity of historic Scottish regiments, like the Black Watch and Royal Scots, to serve as familiar, romantic rallying points in time of war.<sup>18</sup> In this way, the Empire's fight was widely hailed as a uniquely *Scottish* campaign. The rhetoric of the ubiquitous recruitment campaign was able to draw precisely on these themes: national and local solidarity; the justice of Britain's cause; and the tradition of Scottish martial prowess. The ubiquitous propaganda of 1914 was directed at the undecided – the 'shirkers' – and was effective to the extent that it could draw on pre-existing community loyalties. Above all, it approached men as individuals, albeit on a mass scale. The message was that *their* participation would shorten the war – anything less would let down their country, their family, their mates, and not least those who were at the fighting front.

The patriotism of the Great War was, however, mobile and prone to subtle distinctions driven by geography, ethnicity, religion and politics. This is clearly illustrated in the case of Irish Catholics in Scotland.<sup>19</sup> The war years were a vital formative period for the whole community in Scotland. This was a well-established population, with a strong collective identity and effective leadership networks, determined to claim recognition and respect in Scottish society. Their willingness to volunteer during the opening months of war demonstrated that the Irish were by no means immune to the hopes and fears which animated the general population, though issues of community identity and external developments in Irish nationalist politics also played their part. Statistics compiled by the United Irish League of Great Britain in November 1914 suggested that during the first three months of war the Irish Catholic community had contributed a total of 13,654 volunteers. This represented 16.4% of total Scottish recruitment, though in some areas of heavy Irish concentration, such as Glasgow, the proportion was as high as 24.4%.<sup>20</sup> While war removed many of the old social and political certainties, it did not prevent the re-appearance of sectarian tensions in areas such as Motherwell. This fact would colour Irish attitudes to their record of war service and fuel their claims for full social and political participation in the post-war settlement.

The fate of the volunteers of 1914 and 1915 in Scotland is well known. It began slowly. The retreat from Mons and the battles of the Aisne and First Ypres in the autumn formed the prologue. News of the first casualties filtered in during October 1914. Yet these were the regular soldiers and this was still a conventional war of movement fought by professionals. The death toll continued to rise by the end of the year and into 1915, particularly following the opening of offensive operations at Neuve Chapelle. Now the reservists were increasingly drawn in. The pain of loss increased in local communities, but still seemed bearable. The decisive acceleration, however, began in May 1915, with the landing of British troops at Gallipoli. It was now the turn of the Territorials – the part-time soldiers. The Beith men, grouped together in D Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots Fusiliers, were in action almost immediately. News of their casualties reached the town on 17 July, known afterwards in the district as ‘Black Saturday’.<sup>21</sup> The Battle of Loos followed in September 1915, known by contemporaries as the ‘Scottish Battle’ because of the high casualties suffered by two Scottish volunteer divisions. Again these were ‘civilians in uniform’, men had joined enthusiastically in 1914. Already this was a very different kind of war. The way now lay open to the Somme and Passchendaele, where the Scottish volunteer troops were again to suffer grievously: McCrae’s battalion had 12 officers and 624 other ranks killed in action or missing on a single day at the Somme.<sup>22</sup>

Faced with casualties on this scale, the response of the Scottish public was much more complex than outright opposition to the war. War weariness had definitely set in by the end of 1916, as witnessed in repeated bursts of industrial unrest, but this was coupled with a desire to ‘see it through’. Powerful currents of thought were contained in this simple phrase. Fear and hatred of the enemy had grown in step with the casualty figures, but the motif of ‘sacrifice’ had also become crucial to Scotland’s handling of the war. As her political leaders explained, the loss of lives to date had become too great to simply withdraw. It could only be made worthwhile and meaningful by achieving total victory – even if this cost more lives. One amateur poet expressed this spirit of grim determination in early 1918:

Who would dare to falter,  
In our darkest hour?  
Who would dare to barter,  
With a fiendish power?

Who would stifle conscience,  
So that might should rule?  
Who is on the Hun’s side?  
Is there such a fool?<sup>23</sup>

Familiar social and communal networks, such as press and pulpit, also played an important role in renewing Scotland’s ‘investment’ in the Great War. For the overwhelming majority of Scottish newspapers, the issues were clear. As Macdonald’s work illustrates, the provincial press ‘localised’ the war.<sup>24</sup> Before the advent of official casualty lists in May 1915, it was through ‘deaths in service’ columns and ‘war notes’ that communities began to grasp that this was not the short, glorious war that had been widely predicted. Cramped by censorship and starved of real war news, editors turned to drama, history and mythology to make a terrifying conflict intelligible. Using traditional Scottish iconography, the virtual destruction of units like the 16<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots was framed as a triumph of ancient martial valour against a new foe. Meanwhile, the main Presbyterian churches also remained firmly behind the continuation of hostilities. As Macleod has recently argued, many Scots used religion as a source of solace in the face of bereavement.<sup>25</sup> However, the war caused widespread spiritual uncertainty throughout Europe. Already divided, the various denominations now struggled to evolve new theological positions, such as salvation through death on the battlefield and prayers for the dead, to meet the needs of grieving congregations. The position of the Roman Catholic Church was rather different. Whereas the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church could speak as ‘national’ churches, claiming the adherence of the majority of Scots, this was not the case for Catholicism. However, here the war held out the promise that participation would gain them an enhanced role in Scottish society. Indeed, the Archbishop of Glasgow was to become one of Scotland’s most passionate recruiting sergeants, calling for young men to join the war for ‘Europe’s Religion and Civilisation and against the powers of darkness’. The contribution of Catholicism in helping the

community to bear its losses can also be understood at a theological level. The Church possessed a clear set of rituals to deal with death, including sudden death. This had been poignantly demonstrated in November 1915 when the news of casualties from the Loos offensive had filtered through during the 'Month of the Holy Souls', the traditional period of intercession for the souls of the dead. As one priest explained: 'the Church is a great family, the living and the dead, we do not merely mourn our dead, we strive to help them by our prayers and good works that they may sooner have the joy of the Beatific Vision'.<sup>26</sup>

To understand finally how military losses were absorbed by Scottish society, we must place enlistment in the context of Scotland's broader civilian mobilisation behind the war effort. In some senses, the war had helped reduce the distance between the home front and the fighting front. After its initial dislocation, the Scottish economy had become completely focussed on war production. Between 1914 and 1919, for example, Clydeside shipyards turned out over 800,000 tons of naval vessels.<sup>27</sup> This had an immediate social impact. With 47% of her male workforce lost to the services, women's employment expanded dramatically – 31,500 women were employed in munitions alone by October 1918.<sup>28</sup> The image this created of a collective, communal effort may have helped neutralise alternative calls for a negotiated peace and heightened the sense of a truly national sacrifice for victory. Again, however, further detailed local studies are needed to sketch the full contours of war on the home front – Harding's study of Perth, for example, suggests that in this case at least the experience was 'limited' rather than 'total war'.<sup>29</sup>

To conclude, it has been estimated that over one quarter of all Scots who fought in the Great War were killed, with a higher percentage of Scottish servicemen killed in action than in any other country. The official figure for Scotland's war dead stands at 74,000, unofficial claims reach 110,000.<sup>30</sup> The burden on many small towns and villages was crushing – the Beith War Memorial alone contains the name of 161 townsmen. It is hardly surprising that there remain many aspects of this searing experience which require further research. The availability of source materials suggests that these may be open for 'hands-on' exploration by academic, family and classroom historians alike. Balancing the studies of voluntary enlistment, for example, more work is required on the conscripts' experience of war. Similarly, what was the fate of Scotland's ex-servicemen in the bleak decades of the 1920s and 1930s? A final compelling issue is how Scots remembered the fallen. The work of raising monuments began almost at once. Serving as a physical focus for the grief of individuals and whole communities, these shrines were to act as poignant bridges into a hostile post-war world. The struggle to give meaning to Scotland's war dead would not cease with the Armistice. Indeed, it still commands our attention.

## NOTES

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# The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s

DR CLIVE WEBB

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In the popular imagination, the Ku Klux Klan is a band of southern rednecks who use acts of terrorist violence to enforce their belief in the racial superiority of whites over blacks. The historical reality, however, is far more complex. It is the case that the first incarnation of the Klan which appeared in the immediate aftermath of the American Civil War was a southern racial supremacist organisation that waged a campaign of terror against African Americans and their white allies. The same is also true of the third embodiment of the Klan that emerged during the 1950s in reaction to the Civil Rights Movement. Nonetheless, between these two eras there was a second incarnation of the Klan that challenges the stereotypical image. This incarnation of the Invisible Empire, as the Klan is otherwise known, has attracted substantial academic debate. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the three main schools of thought that have emerged on the subject.

The first Ku Klux Klan rose from the ruins of the Confederate states after the American Civil War. It was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee in December 1865 by a band of former Confederates who derived the name from 'kuklos', the Greek word for circle. Although initially conceived as a social club, the Klan rapidly assumed a more insidious function. The pain of Confederate defeat was compounded by the Reconstruction policies pursued by the Republican administration in Washington, D.C.. White Southerners bitterly resented the confiscation of their lands and the bestowal of social, political and economic rights on their former slaves. Under the leadership of Grand Dragon Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Klan launched a terrorist campaign to destroy the Reconstruction process and restore white rule to the South. By the time it disbanded in the early 1870s, that political objective had been substantially accomplished.

The Klan remained dormant until Thanksgiving Eve in 1915, when a former itinerant preacher and insurance salesman named William J. Simmons resurrected it at a cross burning ceremony in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Simmons was in part inspired by the three-hour motion picture epic *The Birth of a Nation*. Directed by Hollywood mogul D.W. Griffith, the movie, based on the novel *The Clansman* by Thomas Dixon, depicted the Reconstruction era Klan as a heroic force of men who rescued white women from the rapacious clutches of their former slaves. Simmons failed to mobilise a substantial support base outside of the southern states of Georgia and Alabama. By 1920, the Klan had a membership of only two thousand. Its fortunes were to change when Simmons hired two professional promoters, Edward Young Clark and Elizabeth Tyler, who hired agents known as 'Kleagles' to recruit new members on a commission basis. An attempt in 1921 by the *New York World* to expose the Klan as a dangerous group of racial fanatics backfired disastrously by giving Simmons much-needed publicity. A congressional hearing on the Klan later that year had a similar effect. By the end of 1921, the Klan had established two hundred new chapters (or 'klaverns') and boasted a membership of more than one million.<sup>1</sup>

During the early 1920s the Klan went from strength to strength. By 1924 its membership had increased to more than five million, and it had seized control of the apparatus of power in several states, including Indiana and Colorado. It also used its considerable political muscle to remove from office politicians who dared to challenge it publicly. Such a fate befell the governors of both Kansas and Oregon. However, the fall of the Klan was as swift as its sudden rise. Its reputation was tarnished both by the brutal attacks of some of its members and a series of public scandals that forced several of its leaders to resign. Furthermore, by the late 1920s many of the factors that had precipitated Klan support were no longer of immediate political concern. In 1921 and 1924, for instance, Congress imposed harsh immigration restrictions that removed one of the most obvious targets of Klan hatred. The post-war recession also gave way to a renewed period of economic prosperity. Unable to respond to these political and economic changes, the Klan haemorrhaged large numbers of its membership, which had declined to only 200,000 by the end of the decade. Yet long after its demise scholars have

continued to debate the significance of the second Klan: who its members were, what they stood for, and what tactics they used to promote their political cause.

### **The Status Anxiety Model**

The earliest interpretation of the second Klan was provided by contemporary writers such as John Moffatt Mecklin and Frank Tannenbaum. These authors understood the Klan to be a psychological response to the momentous structural changes that occurred in the United States during the 1920s. The forces of urbanisation and industrialisation displaced the traditional order in the small towns of the Southern and Midwestern states. The members of these communities suffered an acute status anxiety as their lives were eclipsed by the economic prosperity and secular values of the cities. The Klan offered a means to reclaim a measure of their lost status. It represented a last desperate act of resistance by the traditional agrarian order against the relentless advance of modern urban life. In the words of John Moffatt Mecklin, the Klan was a 'refuge for mediocre men' who sought solace from the monotony and despair of their everyday lives.<sup>2</sup> At a time of unprecedented social and economic change, the costumes and elaborate ceremonies of the Klan provided its members with a renewed sense of community identity and order. By appointing themselves as the moral guardians of society they also attempted to re-establish the cultural hegemony of small town Protestant America.

According to this interpretation, the Klan was less a reaction to legitimate grievances than an expression of small town hysteria. Klansmen were depicted as dull and provincial people incapable of comprehending the complex forces that had pushed them from the centre to the periphery of American society. Their actions were less a rational response to the social and economic instability of their lives than an expression of paranoia. Klan ideology was underpinned by racial prejudice and religious fundamentalism. Unable to grasp the real explanation for their declining fortunes, Klansmen instead chose to demonise those whom they believed embodied the evils of modern life: African Americans, Jews and Catholics. This pathological hatred of racial and religious minorities made the Klan an inherently violent organisation. No writer articulated this analysis with greater force than Frank Tannenbaum. He depicted the Klan as an expression of the 'emotional insanity' that gripped small towns. Klansmen, he asserted, were essentially semi-literate morons who sadiistically scapegoated African Americans as a means of compensating 'for the dull, inbred lives led by mountain communities'.<sup>3</sup>

A second generation of scholarship on the Klan appeared in the 1950s. The interpretation of these historians, including Richard Hofstadter and William Leuchtenburg, conformed to the pathological model constructed by their forebears. The Klan, they asserted, was a violently nativist reaction by the old Protestant stock of small-town America against the rise of the industrialised cities.<sup>4</sup> The scholars of the 1950s were influenced by recent and contemporary mass movements such as Fascism, McCarthyism, and the organised resistance of white segregationists against the Civil Rights Movement. Such phenomena persuaded liberal scholars that rightwing political activism was intrinsically motivated by irrational prejudice.

This influence can also be seen in some of the studies of the Klan written in the 1960s. During that decade a resurgent Klan had launched a series of terrorist attacks against civil rights activists, including the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Alabama, which led to the deaths of four black schoolgirls, and the murders a year later of three voter registration workers during the Mississippi Freedom Summer campaign. These events compounded the perception of the Klan as an organisation that, in the words of one writer, was 'motivated more by emotion than by reason'.<sup>5</sup> Such was also the conclusion reached by David Chalmers in his monumental study of the Klan, *Hooded Americanism*. Chalmers narrated the story of the Klan through its several incarnations from the Reconstruction era to the contemporary civil rights struggle. He challenged stereotypes of the Klan by successfully demonstrating how its support was not confined to regions such as the South and Midwest but rather spread across the entire United States. Chalmers nonetheless conformed to the traditional model of analysis by concluding that Klansmen were social deviants whose fears about American society were more imaginary than real. The Klan of the 1920s was no different in this sense than either its predecessor of the 1860s or its successor of the 1960s. One of the factors that influenced this interpretation was that Chalmers was himself a white liberal activist in the civil rights movement, who had been imprisoned along with Martin Luther King, Jr. during demonstrations in St. Augustine, Florida.

## **Revisionist Interpretations**

Although the traditional interpretation of the Klan dominated academic discourse for forty years, dissenting voices could be heard as far back as the 1920s. The most substantial challenge came from Stanley Frost, who claimed that the representation of the Klan by most scholars was a caricature. Frost drew a distinction between the Klan as it was led by William Simmons, and the organisation as it emerged under the guidance of his successor, Hiram Wesley Evans, who came to power in November 1922. According to Frost, the Klan commanded by Evans was composed more of those people in the mainstream than the margins of society. As he put it, Klansmen were not so much 'gangs of night-riding hoodlums, probably criminal and certainly crazy', as the 'good, solid, middle-class citizens, the "backbone of the nation"'. Frost nonetheless concluded that the secretiveness of the Klan cultivated acts of violence and a lack of accountability.<sup>6</sup>

It was nonetheless not until the 1960s that historians started to challenge the traditional interpretation of the Klan. The foremost apostates who contested academic orthodoxy on the subject were Charles Alexander and Kenneth Jackson.

Alexander developed the interpretation first suggested by Frost that the Klan recruited its supporters not from the margins of society but from a cross section of the white community, especially the middle class. His study of the Klan in four southwestern states also contested the assumption that it was primarily a white supremacist organisation. Instead he asserted that the Klan was principally motivated by a 'passion for reform'. According to Alexander, Klansmen sought to preserve the traditional social order by eradicating what they believed were the moral and political ills that afflicted their communities. Their energies were therefore focused on stamping out crime and political corruption, particularly through the enforcement of Prohibition. The Klan demonstrated a 'strikingly small amount of hostility' towards racial and religious minorities, but instead directed its violence towards whites who transgressed its strict moral code.<sup>7</sup>

Although Alexander argued that the Klan did not make racial and religious minorities its principal target, he nonetheless perpetuated the notion that the organisation acted with violent lawlessness. He also conformed to the traditional depiction of the Klan as an essentially rural and small-town phenomenon with its principal roots in the southern states. Jackson disputed both these interpretations. His study of the Klan concluded that the organisation not only eschewed violence outside of the South, but that it recruited the core of its membership from within the expanding metropolises of the United States. He characterised the Klan as a lower middle-class movement that enlisted its principal support from urban blue-collar workers. These individuals were alarmed at the influx of black and foreign migrants to the cities. Job competition with cheap labour threatened to impair working conditions and depress wages. Jackson identified the 'zone of emergence' separating white residential areas from the emerging ghettos as the principal recruiting base for the Klan. 'Not a reaction against the rise of the city to dominance in American life,' Jackson asserted, 'the Invisible Empire was rather a reaction against the aspirations of certain elements within the city'.<sup>8</sup> Although Jackson provided an important revisionist perspective by establishing the urban dimension of Klan support, his analysis also adhered to the traditional social anxiety model by portraying Klansmen as economically marginal whites motivated by hostility towards minority groups. It would take more than another ten years before historians entirely abandoned their old ideas about the Ku Klux Klan.

## **The Populist-Civic School**

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the emergence of a post-revisionist interpretation of the Klan. Proponents of what came to be known as the Populist-Civic school took a more rigorous methodological approach to their subject than many of the earlier scholars of the Invisible Empire. Previous studies of the Klan had sometimes used the speeches and writings of the national leadership to draw generalised conclusions about their supporters. Post-revisionist scholars used the membership records of local klaverns to construct a more accurate representation of the rank and file.

There are two crucial elements to the post-revisionist analysis of the Klan. Firstly, they deem the debate about whether the Klan was an urban or rural and small town phenomenon as a false dichotomy.

Instead they determine that the Klan enlisted its support from all areas of the United States. Klan membership also cut across class lines. The Invisible Empire attracted supporters from 'all social strata', both the margins and the mainstream.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, the Populist-Civic school dismisses the depiction of the Klan as a terrorist organisation inspired by racial and ethnic hatred. Klansmen, they insist, did not suffer from a form of mental delusion, but were rather rational individuals who sought redress for genuine grievances. As Robert Alan Goldberg asserts, 'Social movements are rooted not in individual psychosis or breakdowns in society's integrating mechanisms but instead in confrontations with real community problems'.<sup>10</sup> Klansmen were ordinary citizens who mobilised in political reaction to the conflict and tension that destabilised the communities in which they lived. Far from being paranoid fanatics on the lunatic fringe of American politics, they should therefore be seen as members of a relatively conventional social protest movement operating within the parameters of the democratic process. Kathleen Blee dismisses the traditional notion that the Klan attracted its support from the ranks of the economically marginal and mentally unstable. Klan ideology, she asserts, was not a political aberration. On the contrary, it was consistent with many of the core values of mainstream white Protestant society.<sup>11</sup>

According to post-revisionist scholars, Klansmen were disaffected citizens frustrated at the failure of political authorities to address social and economic problems. Despite increasing crime rates, the erosion of traditional morals, and the deterioration of public schools, local government leaders were too apathetic or corrupt to push for political reform. Confronted by the refusal of politicians to serve the people who elected them, Klansmen attempted to restore popular control by taking matters into their own hands. In the opinion of Leonard Moore, the Ku Klux Klan represented an attempt to reclaim power from unrepresentative elites by promoting 'the ability of average citizens to influence the workings of society and government'.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most important contributions made by the Populist-Civic school is its refutation of simplistic generalisations about the Klan. Case studies of specific communities show distinct local and regional differences between klaverns. In El Paso, Texas the Klan mobilised around the problem of bootlegging along the border between the United States and Mexico. In Youngstown, Ohio the principal issue was the threat to the cultural dominance of white Protestants by southern and eastern European labourers who came to the city in search of employment in the local steel industry. In Indiana, where immigrants settled in much smaller numbers, the Klan was more concerned with reclaiming power from the special interest groups that monopolised local and state politics. What all of these communities have in common is that the protests of Klansmen were rooted in real and immediate social and economic problems rather than paranoid delusions about foreign hordes in far-off cities.<sup>13</sup>

### **Recent Writing on the Klan**

The last several years have seen a number of important new studies of the Invisible Empire. The authors of these studies have absorbed the interpretation of the Populist-Civic school without diminishing the importance of racial and ethnic hatred to the political philosophy of the Klan. Historians have been so determined to deconstruct the traditional interpretative model of the Klan that for decades the focus of their study has been outside of the southern states. The two most significant studies published in recent years have returned our attention below the Mason-Dixon line.

Nancy MacLean argues that Klansmen in Athens, Georgia were members of the lower middle class whose social and economic status was threatened from above by the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small elite and from below by a militant labour force. Although these were matters of legitimate grievance, Klansmen took much of their anger and resentment out on racial and ethnic minorities whom they scapegoated as the source of their troubles. MacLean describes the Klan's attitude toward race relations as 'nothing short of apocalyptic'. Her study demonstrates that the Klan was an irrational response to the rational concerns of its supporters. She thus defines the ideology of the Klan as 'reactionary populism'.<sup>14</sup>

Glenn Feldman's study of Alabama similarly demonstrates how the Klan could simultaneously be a civic-minded organisation and an instrument of racial terrorism. Feldman's study is consistent with

the Populist-Civic school in portraying the Klan as an uprising by ordinary white citizens against the economic elite of planters and industrialists that exerted a stranglehold on state politics. Feldman nonetheless sees race as the single most important issue to Alabama Klansmen, and in particular their fear of job competition with black labourers. He also re-establishes the essential role of violence in Klan activism. In contrast to the more mainstream social movements with which it shared some common values, the Klan persistently acted outside the democratic process, beating, intimidating and kidnapping its political opponents. According to Feldman, the Klan was the 'single factor most responsible for breeding an atmosphere of unrestrained mob violence in the state'.<sup>15</sup>

Historians have therefore developed an increasingly sophisticated interpretation of the second Ku Klux Klan. What is still needed is a new work of synthesis that will weave the numerous case studies into a broader national overview, demonstrating both the common interests of the klaverns and their distinct local and regional identities.

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- 14 Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Quotations on pp.127 and xiii.
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# Pursuing a 'los von Europa' policy? British foreign policy and Europe in the 1920s

DR FRANK MAGEE

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For many years a certain consensus seemed to dominate the thinking of historians when assessing British foreign policy in the 1920s. A particularly strong element of that consensus was to view Britain's signature of the Treaty of Locarno in 1925 as an attempt by London to cut itself away from European antagonisms in order to concentrate on imperial and domestic concerns. For instance, Anne Orde, in her excellent analysis of British foreign policy from 1920 to 1926, has asserted that from Locarno 'the gain for Britain was release from the constant involvement in Franco-German friction.'<sup>1</sup> Paul Kennedy has argued, in what perhaps has come to represent the standard view of Britain's decision to sign the Locarno Pact, that 'Locarno was not really about military commitments, even in the West. It served to patch up the European concert and allow Britain to concentrate upon domestic and imperial issues.'<sup>2</sup> Middlemas and Barnes, in their major biography of Stanley Baldwin, Prime Minister from 1924 to 1929, wrote that after Locarno 'Britain herself retired behind the veil of security, into a form of isolation which persisted into the early thirties.'<sup>3</sup> According to Keith Robbins the British government hoped that Locarno would encourage Europe to 'become self-regulating, allowing Britain to concentrate on the world beyond.'<sup>4</sup> An assessment of Britain's strategic policy in the early 1920s found that 'the Treaty [of Locarno] led Britain to believe that Europe would remain peaceful during the foreseeable future.'<sup>5</sup> Such is the pervasiveness of this theme that it appears even in general works discussing the Great War and its impact. Thus we are told by Holger Herwig, that after the war 'Britain returned its attention to the Empire.'<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps we should not be altogether surprised that this interpretation has held sway for so long. Indeed, there were many voices in the 1920s that wanted Britain to cut itself away from Europe and strengthen the ties with the Empire. Lord Beaverbrook's, 'Empire Free Trade' campaign at the end of the 1920s may be viewed in part as an expression of this outlook. Of course, in this regard, one can scarcely neglect the impact of the First World War itself. In the most gruesome fashion Europe had shown itself to be a most dangerous place where the flower of Britain's youth had been mown down. The loss of three quarters of a million men, the yearly memorial on Armistice Day, the erection of monuments in even the smallest villages to 'The Glorious Dead', the sense of a lost generation, were all powerful stimulants to the idea that European entanglements were best avoided and reliance on 'kith and kin' in the developing Commonwealth and Empire to be preferred. Even when the carnage of Flanders was over, the peace that followed seemed hardly to have brought tranquillity. The early 1920s witnessed numerous occupations and invasions throughout Europe which served notice of its underlying instability.

Another result of the Great War had been the extension of the British Empire to its greatest extent. The collapse of Germany had seen Britain absorb new colonial territories in Africa, while the end of the Ottoman Empire had seen Britain gain control of Palestine, Transjordan and Mesopotamia, present day Iraq. These new territories brought new commitments military and otherwise: policing the vast Empire was an enormous undertaking. However, the extension of the Empire also coincided with major domestic developments. One of the most important was the passage of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 which produced a significant extension of the franchise. The further extension of the vote to women between the ages of 21 and 30 in 1928 meant that the 1929 General Election was the first held under a truly democratic franchise. In a new age of mass democracy politicians of all parties were more acutely aware of the need to satisfy the electorate. Unsurprisingly, therefore, there was greater demand for higher spending on social services than before, a demand which was not ignored. Pressure on the defence budget was magnified as a consequence, and a significant amount of disarmament took place even though Britain's global commitments had increased.

The Great War had also demonstrated, if such a demonstration were required, that Germany, with

relatively little help from Austria-Hungary, represented the major threat to British security. In the circumstances of the 1920s that threat seemed distant but the recent past had shown that Bismarck's creation was capable of defying the other European great powers. On the other hand, the British also wanted to see German recovery. As early as March 1919, Lloyd George had made clear in his Fontainebleau Memorandum that he believed the demands of France were too severe on Germany and he worked to have the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles ameliorated in Germany's favour. Part of his case was political, the other economic with the latter becoming more important as the 1920s wore on. Before 1914 Germany had been a major export market for British goods and the post-war economic recovery of the Reich was sought for the benefit of Britain. Given the post-war slump in Britain, which saw unemployment running consistently over one million, the economic recovery of Germany was at the heart of the strategies designed by successive British governments for solving the twin domestic problems of unemployment and structural industrial decline.<sup>7</sup>

The war and its aftermath made manifest Britain's interest in the maintenance of a politically stable and economically prosperous Europe. During the Paris Peace Conference Lloyd George had tried to temper what he regarded as excessive French demands over, for example, the Rhineland, Danzig and Upper Silesia. He feared that a Carthaginian peace would stoke up the desire for revenge in Germany and lead inexorably to a new conflict. In order to assuage French fears and cajole Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister, into a more accommodating attitude, an Anglo-American Treaty of Guarantee was offered to France. Unfortunately for the French, the United States' Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and with it the Treaty of Guarantee.<sup>8</sup> The loss of this guarantee meant that France's main *quid pro quo* for accepting Versailles had gone and Paris was left with a treaty she might otherwise not have agreed to. Worse than this, France was left with a feeling of betrayal and a profound sense of insecurity.

French insecurity was to bedevil Anglo-French relations in the post-war years and prevent the development of European affairs consonant with British wishes. Without a commitment from Britain or the United States, France sought to underpin its security through a series of understandings with the Successor States in Eastern Europe who had a vested interest in the maintenance of the Versailles system, and through the strict enforcement of the Treaty. However, that very enforcement produced continuing political instability in Western Europe and, at the same time, prevented economic recovery. Clearly, both of these outcomes were at odds with Britain's requirements. Perhaps the deepest low in a series of depressions that swept across Anglo-French relations after the war came with the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in 1923.<sup>9</sup> On this occasion France had marched troops into the Ruhr to secure productive guarantees following yet another German reparations default. Although Britain did not approve of France's action, London did nothing to hinder its progress. The result, however, was to further destabilise Germany with hyperinflation added to the misery of domestic political instability. Given that the maintenance of Germany's territorial integrity as a bulwark against Bolshevism and as an important factor in the European balance of power were important considerations in London, the French support for Rhenish separatism during the Ruhr crisis was another alarming development.

It was becoming increasingly clear in London that if France were not given a greater measure of security then British objectives in Europe would be frustrated. The prospect of an Anglo-French alliance, which had been discussed between 1921 and 1922, foundered on the fears entertained in Whitehall that any such alliance would extend Britain's commitments to France's friends in Eastern Europe. Conscious of their own global obligations and recognising the incendiary nature of the relationships between the eastern European states, the British refused to become embroiled in that region. This decision, of course, meant that French fears for the future remained and attempts to secure that future by other means cut across the preferred option in London. The Ruhr crisis in 1923, the London Conference of 1924 which witnessed the acceptance of the Dawes Plan dealing with reparations and the question of the evacuation of the first of the Rhineland zones centring on Cologne which arose in late 1924, all contributed to the renewed search for finding some method of satisfying French security fears. The first because it demonstrated that without a solution continued instability would remain; the second because the Dawes Plan offered the prospect of American investment in Europe which would not be forthcoming without a political settlement and the third, because France



made it clear that without the question of her security being addressed there would be no withdrawal from the Cologne zone which threatened a new crisis in Allied-German relations and, consequently, between the allies themselves.

The solution was eventually arrived at in the form of the Treaty of Locarno. Initialed in October 1925 and signed in London in December, Locarno was believed to have ushered in a new spirit of détente in Europe. Much of the credit for the success of the negotiation must go to the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain.<sup>10</sup> As soon as he returned to office in November 1924, Chamberlain recognized that something would have to be done to satisfy France, particularly when it became clear that the Geneva Protocol, designed to strengthen the Covenant of the League of Nations, would not win the support of the Baldwin Government. His first option, an Anglo-French or Anglo-French-Belgian alliance, failed to win the support of the Cabinet. Leading members, such as Curzon, Birkenhead, Churchill and Balfour, were opposed to an alliance because they feared it would bolster the French in their existing policy towards Germany. They also believed that public opinion would be hostile to such an alliance because it appeared to be supporting the strong against the weak and, mindful of the view held in many circles that the alliance system before 1914 had brought on war, were opposed to any act which appeared to be dividing Europe. The fear that an Anglo-French alliance would involve British commitments in Eastern Europe also remained.

The Treaty of Locarno, on the other hand, appeared a much more suitable vehicle for the pursuit of British interests. The core of Locarno was the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee signed by Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Great Britain, which established the acceptance by the signatories of the territorial *status quo* on Germany's western frontier as determined by the Treaty of Versailles including the demilitarised Rhineland zone. Germany and France, and Germany and Belgium promised never to go to war with one another again and Britain and Italy stood as guarantors of the treaty, promising to aid the victim of unprovoked aggression. Germany also concluded arbitration treaties with France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Poland but Germany's eastern frontiers were not guaranteed. From a British point of view Locarno offered considerable advantages over a simple Anglo-French alliance. For one thing Locarno limited Britain's commitments to an area of vital importance and promised to keep Germany behind the line of the Rhine. The General Staff outlined their strategic thinking to the Cabinet in February 1926:

The true strategic frontier of Great Britain is the Rhine; her security depends entirely upon the present frontiers of France, Belgium and Holland being maintained and remaining in friendly hands. The great guiding principle of the German General Staff in making plans for a future war will be, as in the last war, to try to defeat her enemies in detail. Any line of policy which permitted Germany (with or without allies) first to swallow up France, and then to deal with Great Britain would be fatal strategically.<sup>11</sup>

They further observed: 'For us it is only *incidentally* a question of French security; essentially it is a matter of British security.' Britain's adherence to Locarno was not a matter of altruism, therefore, but a closely considered decision based on British interests. Moreover, the British guarantee was much more closely confined than might have been the case under the putative Anglo-French alliance. Locarno clearly also had the advantage of offering France greater security but, because it was a pact of mutual assistance, without alienating the Germans thereby avoiding the possibility of splitting Europe into two mutually antagonistic blocs.

Chamberlain hoped that the British guarantee of the French frontier and the demilitarised zone contained in the treaty would calm French fears of German revival. He also expected, as he explained to the Cabinet, that after the treaty was signed Britain would 'have the right to speak with an authority and to expect to exert an influence with France that we can neither claim nor expect whilst we hold ourselves coldly detached.'<sup>12</sup> The immediate post-war years seemed to demonstrate all too clearly that without such a link Britain's ability to influence European events had been severely limited. London could hope that now that France had won her long sought after commitment from Britain she would be loath to surrender it. Rather than the one-sided enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles that had done so much to bedevil European affairs, Britain now worked to ensure its negotiated application and even amelioration in Germany's favour to produce an agreed *status quo* in Europe.

Chamberlain once wrote that 'if we fail in our present effort to keep the Great Powers together, our interests when the Powers divide will place us on the same side as France and Belgium.'<sup>13</sup> In treaty form Locarno represented that desire to keep the European Great Powers together and prevent that divide taking place. The continuation of the concert of Europe could not be left to chance. After all, if Germany and France once again clashed it would almost certainly involve the future of the Rhineland, an area of special interest to the British, and one where she had just undertaken specific commitments. The policy of the British government was to work for the continuation of Franco-German reconciliation which would mean, it was hoped, that the military undertakings to go to war in certain circumstances would never have to be honoured. With this in mind one can understand why Chamberlain could tell the Imperial Conference in 1926 that, 'I have always regarded the spirit of Locarno as more important than the treaties themselves.'<sup>14</sup> The Treaty of Locarno was the beginning of a process as far as Britain was concerned, not an opportunity to wash her hands of European affairs.

By signing the Treaty of Locarno Germany had given France some reassurance, at least with regard to Western Europe. After all, Berlin had accepted the Treaty of Versailles in the west. This acceptance, together with the new British commitment, provided the essential underpinning for a solution to the issue of the Cologne zone, which the Allies agreed to evacuate. Chamberlain intended to use the new détente created by Locarno to bring about a new European equilibrium based on consent and not the force of arms. After 1925 Britain did not withdraw from European affairs to concentrate on Imperial concerns. Chamberlain was vitally interested in the development of European affairs after that date and played a full part in the negotiations between France and Germany which brought about some revision of the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1926 the number of French troops stationed in the Rhineland was reduced partly due to Chamberlain's pressure on Paris. During the negotiations leading to the removal of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission from Germany in 1927, Chamberlain adopted his preferred role as arbiter, encouraging the Germans to carry out the most important elements of disarmament required by the IMCC and, at the same time, persuading the French not to insist on trivial matters. The Foreign Secretary was particularly encouraged by the victory of the SPD in the May 1928 Reichstag elections. Their victory led him to believe that the time was right for the Allies to start discussing the final evacuation of the Rhineland ahead of the schedule established by Versailles. Although he had left office by the time the evacuation of the Rhineland and the Young Plan had been agreed to, it is difficult to conceive of either being agreed to without Locarno being in place.<sup>15</sup>

It may be said that Chamberlain's successor at the Foreign Office, Arthur Henderson, was a little cooler, at least initially, in his attitude to France, but as his period in office extended he acted to keep the Great Powers together. In Henderson's case there was the additional motivation of the forthcoming World Disarmament Conference due to open in February 1932. He placed a great deal of store in the value of disarmament in bringing peace and stability to a troubled world. Perhaps it was the strength of his faith in disarmament that led to his appointment as President of the Conference. He of course realised that the chances of securing a disarmament convention would be greatly reduced if France and Germany were at each other's throats. The impact of the Great Depression, leading to economic dislocation of prodigious proportions and providing the breeding ground for the rise of political extremism, most notably in Germany, inevitably made the conduct of Britain's Locarno diplomacy more difficult. However, given the consequences for Europe and Britain's position in the world should the Great Powers divide, Henderson's period at the Foreign Office witnessed a continuation of the attempt to keep Germany and France together. One of the best examples of this continuation of Chamberlain's policy came with the crisis produced when Germany and Austria announced in March 1931 that they were working towards the conclusion of a customs union. The French immediately viewed the proposal as the precursor to the Anschluss forbidden by both the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain. The Germans denied this contention and insisted on their right to proceed. Henderson tried to steer a middle course, anxious to avoid a rebuff for Paris or Berlin.<sup>16</sup>

Chamberlain did not believe that Britain could pursue a 'los von Europa' policy and it is clear that during his tenure at the Foreign Office, and even under his successor, there was no turning away from Europe to concentrate on affairs elsewhere. British governments in the 1920s did not have the luxury of being able to choose where to concentrate their attention. Europe was on the doorstep and the

major threat to the Empire in the future was present there. If the European Great Powers could be kept together, if a new *status quo* could be achieved which Berlin and Paris accepted without rancour, then Britain's position in the world and her ability to act overseas would be immeasurably improved. These were questions of British security that could not be left to chance. Consequently, in the 1920s the British were fully involved in the attempt to construct a new European consensus after the horrors of war.

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# What's new in the women's history of the Stalin era?

DR MELANIE ILIČ

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This brief article presents an overview of the context for and study of the women's history of the Stalin era and introduces readers to some of the recent literature on this topic. My aims here are, firstly, to locate the women's history of the Stalin era within the broader framework of the historiographical debates that have shaped writing and research in the discipline of Soviet history in the past decade or so, and, secondly, to outline some of the themes and topics that recent studies about women in the Stalin era have sought to address. In doing this, I hope to introduce readers to a range of scholarship to support the study of women in the Stalin era as well as in Russian history more generally. For bibliographic references to the growing English-language literature on Russian and Soviet women's history, readers are advised to make use of the endnotes.<sup>1</sup> In presenting a guide to further reading, I hope to encourage scholars to use this article as a basis for beginning their own research in Russian and Soviet women's history.

The field of women's history has been slow to develop within the broader framework of Russian and Soviet studies, and this is arguably the case even for the histories of both the 1917 revolutions and the Stalin era, where much of the historical research has so far been focused. In the same way that Soviet history was slow in responding to trends and developments in social history (a decade or so later than they were beginning to appear in other fields of European history), publishing in Soviet women's history, particularly of the Stalin period, broadly speaking did not really take off until the 1990s, despite the fact that works on the pre-revolutionary women's movements and women's lives had begun to appear somewhat earlier.<sup>2</sup> The 1990s and the turn of the twenty-first century have seen the publication of a number of important works on post-revolutionary women's history (some spanning pre- and post-revolutionary history, with other works crossing the crucial 1920s and 1930s divide before and after Stalin came to power),<sup>3</sup> and the beginnings of a focus of research more exclusively on women in the Stalin era.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the work in Russian and Soviet women's history has engaged (sometimes consciously) with the types of issues that have shaped the development of women's history in other areas of study: periodisation (particularly in relation to ideas of 'continuity versus change' over specific periods of time), exclusivity, sources and methodology, for example.<sup>5</sup> Some historians of the Russian revolutions have argued that the events of 1917 impacted little on the lives of ordinary women, and in this regard they place a stress on the continuities rather than changes of the pre- and post-revolutionary periods. From this perspective, the history of Russian women in the twentieth century is more one of progressive modernisation than revolutionary upheaval.<sup>6</sup> Women's historians have protested against the progressive exclusion of women from the historical studies and historiography of some of the most important events in Russian history, including the revolutions of 1917<sup>7</sup> and, more recently, the Stalin era.<sup>8</sup>

One of the areas where women's history has impacted on the broader discipline of history, and social history in particular, is in the use of oral testimonies and interview data to tell the whole story – to include also the life histories of ordinary women (and men) to flesh out the historical narratives derived from the 'big' names (kings and queens, political leaders) and major events (wars, revolutions, etc) of history. The constraints imposed by the Soviet system on such research techniques and methodologies have, until recently, limited the impact of oral history in the area of Soviet women's history.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the use of women's written testimonies, such as autobiographies, memoir literature and diaries – more recently supplemented with oral and life history data – has in itself resulted in some interesting contributions to our knowledge of women's experiences of certain aspects of Soviet history during the Stalin period. Notable examples here are women's experiences in the forced labour camps of the Gulag, life in Leningrad during the siege of 1941–44, and the reminiscences of women in the military during the Second World War.<sup>10</sup>

Soviet women's history has engaged less consciously, I would argue (with a few notable exceptions where it has deliberately set out to do so), with the 'totalitarian versus revisionism' type debates that have shaped and dominated the mainstream Soviet histories published in the post-war period, and particularly those concerning the Stalin era. There appears to be a less obvious division between 'left' and 'right' amongst women's historians of the Stalin era. On the whole, the underlying impetus of research and publication in women's history (which I take to mean here an engagement with feminist politics and methods; or at least a desire to place women at centre stage) has, so far, been little impacted upon by the 'Cold War' divisions witnessed elsewhere in the discipline. Nevertheless, it is also probably true to say that Soviet women's history has always engaged in some form of 'revisionism' – if nothing else, simply in the challenge it offers to Soviet orthodoxy on such issues as the claims that women's liberation was brought about by the October revolution, and of sexual equality having been achieved in the 1930s (so often repeated in the early western histories of the post-revolutionary period).<sup>11</sup>

This brings us back in some degree to the question of historical periodisation and its relevance to women's history. It would, clearly, be wrong to argue that women were 'liberated' by the Bolsheviks after October 1917 (despite a rush of woman-friendly and welfarist legislation, including an easing of the divorce laws and the legalisation of abortion), and there is certainly a wealth of evidence to suggest that Soviet women were anything but 'equal', despite this being cited as one of the reasons for the closure in 1930 of the *Zhenotdel*, which had conducted specialist work amongst women on behalf of the Communist Party throughout the 1920s, and the proclamations of the 1936 'Stalin' Constitution. Do the traditional periodisations offered by Russian and Soviet histories, then, including the period of 'Stalinism', really mean anything in relation to Soviet women's history?

For example, was the granting of the vote to women after the February revolution (before the Bolsheviks came to power) more significant for women than the changes introduced by the new regime *after* October 1917? Did 1920 – the year in which abortion was legalised – have more of an impact on women's everyday lives than 1917? What was the impact of the closure of the *Zhenotdel* in 1930 on women's political fortunes and political engagement later in the decade? The activities of the *Zhenotdel* during the 1920s have received a considerable amount of historical attention, but Soviet women's political participation *after* 1930 remains for the most part under researched. There is certainly some evidence available of women's involvement in domestic voluntary social movements as well as a number of international political organisations in the 1930s, but little is known about these activities at present.

In the periodisation of Soviet history, 1928 is often taken as a significant marker because it is the year that saw Stalin's ascendancy to power and the introduction of the First Five-Year Plan. Perhaps, though, 1931 was a more important year for women – because this was the year when women began to be recruited in huge numbers into the paid labour force. In 1931, by which time the reserves of male labour had mostly been absorbed, a campaign was launched to recruit 1.6 million women – housewives and young women with no prior experience of employment – to industrial labour. Despite the mass recruitment of female labour during the 1930s, iconic representations of the Soviet working class continued to take a masculine form. Female images in contemporary iconography often represented the relatively backward, rural, peasant sector.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, at the same time as setting the legal foundations for sexual equality in the Soviet Union, the year of the 1936 Constitution also saw the beginnings of the 'great retreat' in family policy, according to Timasheff's evaluation, when the re-criminalisation of abortion was added to the tightening up of the divorce laws that had taken place in 1935.<sup>13</sup>

This is not to argue that the Bolshevik revolution of October 1917, the period of the Civil War, the operation of the New Economic Policy from 1921 to 1928, and Stalin's 'revolution from above' (as well as the Second World War) did not bring about far-reaching changes to many women's lives, but at the heart of all of these upheavals some very basic social relations and the roll-call of responsibilities remained unchanged for most women. For the Stalinist leadership, 'liberation' and 'equality' boiled down to the accommodation of women within the 'malestream', with the granting of a few concessions to ease the process and to allow women more easily to fulfil the 'double burden' (that is, the combination of household management and paid employment, in which women now had a duty to engage). We

could argue, quite convincingly then, that patriarchy endured through the revolution and was deeply embedded in the Stalinist system, and was further intensified by the events of the Second World War. Under Stalin, many things changed for women (some for the better, some for the worse), but the underlying relationship between women and men (and women and the state – largely one of exclusion from the processes of government and decision-making) remained mostly the same.

It is, of course, true that a few individual women were accommodated into 'the Stalinist system' more fully than others and became Soviet heroines (for example, the *traktoristka* Pasha Angelina, and the women fighter pilots in World War II – in this sense, women had much to gain from the Stalin regime if they were willing to play by its rules); but for other individual women, a once prestigious position in the Bolshevik hierarchy could now become a precarious past. I am thinking here of women such as Nadezhda Konstantinova Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, who was routinely 'demoted' in status after Lenin's death in 1924, and Aleksandra Vasil'evna Artyukhina, the last director of the *Zhenotdel*, who chose to withdraw from government and party politics altogether after its closure; the leading 'Bolshevik feminist', Aleksandra Mikhailovna Kollontai, had already been effectively sidelined and sent abroad as a Soviet diplomat. These were sometimes individuals who had a long history of active engagement with women's issues. On the subject of notable individuals, despite the fact that there have been countless biographies published in recent decades of Lenin and Stalin (with still more being commissioned on a regular basis), as well as other leading male figures of the Stalin era *nomenklatura*, the leading women of the Stalin years have yet to receive serious biographical attention.<sup>14</sup>

And what of ordinary women? We have evidence of women serving as the 'loyal cadres' of the Stalinist system – in politics as *Komsomol* (the youth league of the Communist Party) and party activists;<sup>15</sup> in the economy as shock workers and Stakhanovites;<sup>16</sup> and in society in the *obshchestvennitsa* (volunteer wives') movement,<sup>17</sup> for example – and also of the state's ambiguous attitude towards women.<sup>18</sup> Women, then, could sometimes be active supporters of the Stalinist regime's initiatives, and often doubtlessly benefited from them. Even here, though, it has been demonstrated that women were able to use their positions to influence change and to use their own initiative irrespective of party demands and controls.<sup>19</sup> Mary Buckley, in putting forward a revisionist claim in relation to the late 1930s *obshchestvennitsy*, has argued that 'the regime may have attempted to direct the *obshchestvennitsa* "from above" and to mobilise the wives' movement around its priorities, but success varied owing to the differing levels of enthusiasm for the *obshchestvennitsa* in local party and trade union organisations', and that 'she often worked independently from political controls because the controllers, in their "political blindness", had chosen to ignore her.'<sup>20</sup> It is clear from these examples, therefore, that women may have been, to a greater or lesser extent, supporters of the Stalin regime, but they did not always simply do what they were told and were expected to do.

We also have evidence of extensive, and often influential, women's active resistance to Stalin's policies and the very direction that the Stalinist regime was taking.<sup>21</sup> Lynne Viola's study of the *bab'i bunty* provides us with a measure of rural women's resistance to the campaigns to collectivise agriculture in the late 1920s;<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey Rossman's study of the Teikovo cotton workers' strike similarly illustrates women's active resistance to Stalinist policies in the industrial sector in the 1930s;<sup>23</sup> Wendy Goldman's studies of both family policy and female industrial workers show that initiatives that were introduced supposedly to help women, often, on the contrary, failed to do so, resulting in swingeing criticisms being launched against the regime by some women;<sup>24</sup> Sarah Davies' study of popular opinion in the 1930s sets out the extent to which women's complaints were taken less seriously than men's;<sup>25</sup> Lesley Rimmel's study of Leningrad in 1934 documents, in part, urban women's responses to the end of bread rationing.<sup>26</sup> All of these examples demonstrate (contrary to the totalitarian model) that the Stalin regime was not able simply to impose its will on its citizens.

There is also a whole body of evidence that suggests that women were also at the forefront of passive resistance to the goals of the regime: their continued adherence to religious belief and practices,<sup>27</sup> women's continued failure to enter the collective farm system in the 1930s, or to adopt the prescribed norms of the time. To a somewhat lesser extent than men, and for seemingly different reasons, women were also responsible for some of the problems associated with labour turnover, which dogged Soviet industry for much of the early 1930s. Archival records suggest that women were

absent from work when it was laundry day, or simply after pay day because they wanted to go window-shopping. A brief glimpse at the lists of victims of the purges identifies the majority of female victims (themselves, only a small proportion of the victims overall) as those who remained in some way outside the Soviet system by 1937-38.<sup>28</sup>

One could argue here that Stalinism had less of an impact on women's lives (except in a very instrumental sense – as a reserve army of labour, for example) because the regime did not take women seriously or view them as sufficiently politically aware to pose any real threat or danger. To some extent, the example of women as a reserve army of labour, then, also offers us a picture of continuity across countries and different types of regimes. Their potential and actual role as mothers also afforded women some protection from the excesses of the Soviet regime, as it has done also in other countries. Research in Soviet women's history has tended to focus so far on the degree to which the policies of the regime impacted on women's lives, and what we are able to discern about women's reactions to such policies. Work currently being undertaken in cultural history and Soviet subjectivities may serve to throw more light on women's individual, as well as collective, responses to Stalinism.

In addition to the use of oral testimonies, noted above, historians of women in the Stalin era have also employed a range of contemporary written sources. One of the genres of primary sources from which historians have drawn their evidence is that of eye-witness accounts, both of foreign visitors (sometimes identified as 'fellow travellers' in view of their political sympathy with the socialist ideological foundations of the new regime) to the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s,<sup>29</sup> and of a number of political émigrés (sometimes identified as 'survivor testimonies' because the authors were inmates of the labour camps, for example).<sup>30</sup> Whilst these accounts need to be approached with much caution by historians, they do also provide interesting insights into the everyday workings of the Soviet system and the impact of Stalinist policies in various walks of life. Other useful English-language primary sources of information are, for example: the contemporary newspapers – *Moscow News* and *Moscow Daily News* (available at the British Library's newspaper section at Collindale); the various British government reports held at the National Archives at Kew (some of which are published in the multi-volume series of *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*); and the published collections of contemporary Soviet documents (though there is, as yet, no comprehensive documentary history of women in the Stalin era).<sup>31</sup>

Two further recent developments in the women's history of the Stalin era are worthy of note here. Firstly, there is now a growing literature that examines the impact of Stalinist policies on women outside of the Russian republic, most notably in the various regions of Soviet Central Asia. The Moslem-dominated areas of the Soviet empire presented their own specific challenges to the regime's attempts to 'Sovietise' the population, largely because of the nature of the religious and cultural practices of these regions.<sup>32</sup> The Soviet-led 'unveiling' campaigns had a disastrous impact for women in some areas of the country, resulting in the loss of hundreds of innocent women's lives, and the introduction of new family codes – the outlawing of polygamy and 'bride price', for example – met with resistance even amongst male Communist Party members in parts of Central Asia.<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been a renewed interest in women's history, and feminist scholarship more broadly, within Russia. Some of the research of post-Soviet women's historians is now finding its way into publication, but not yet necessarily into English translation or the Western academic press. On a recent research visit to Moscow (November 2003) I bought books by Russian scholars covering the following topics: women terrorists in the Russian revolutionary movement; the trial of Fanny Kaplan (who fired a shot at Lenin in 1918); a study of women operatives in the Soviet secret police; the parts played by Russian women in wars between 1853 and 1945; biographies of Aleksandra Kollontai and Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Allilueva; a collection of the Marxist feminist writings of Aleksandra Kollontai; women in Russian villages from the 1960s to the present day; and women in the 'new Russia'. A bibliographical listing has also recently been published detailing works about Russian women's history – the women's movement and feminism from the 1850s to the 1920s. The Social History yearbook for 2003 was devoted to women's and gender history. There is now also a much greater potential for Russian historians to work in collaboration with Western scholars to develop themes of mutual interest and to exchange 'good practice' in feminist research, writing and publication.

I am sometimes left feeling that I work 'with a different head on' when I research and write in the area of Russian women's history than when I am reading and writing about Soviet history more generally. Most studies of the broad and in-depth history of the Stalin period still very often lack a gender perspective. Currently, with the release of new archival information, there is a shift back to investigating the high politics of the Stalin era (the structures and systems of power; the role of the Politburo; Stalin as dictator, etc), but these are processes from which women were largely excluded. However, the focused studies and 'micro-histories' offered by women's history also throw light on the relationships between 'regime' and 'society' in the Stalin era – the extent and limits to the imposition of control from 'above', the scope and degree of resistance from 'below', and the shaping and reshaping of policy under the impact of personal and / or collective initiative, action and reaction. From this perspective, we still have much to learn about the Stalin era.

## NOTES

- 1 Please note that these references are not intended to provide a comprehensive guide to the literature. Readers are encouraged to consult also the Bibliographies in the works listed below.
- 2 A conference on 'Women in Russia: Changing Realities and Changing Perceptions', held at the University of Stanford in 1975, resulted in the publication of a set of essays that span the revolutionary divide: D. Atkinson, A. Dallin and G. W. Lapidus (eds), *Women in Russia* (Stanford: Harvester Press, 1977). Since then, a number of international conferences on women in Russia have resulted in further publications: some of the papers presented at an international conference on Russian women's history in Akron in 1988 were published in B. E. Clements, B. A. Engel and C. D. Worobec (eds), *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991). See also B. Farnsworth and L. Viola (eds), *Russian Peasant Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and R. Marsh (ed. and trans), *Women in Russia and Ukraine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Other pioneering works on Russian and Soviet women's history published in the 1970s and 1980s include, for example: G. J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); R. Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978); B. A. Engel, *Mothers and Daughters: Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); L. H. Edmondson, *Feminism in Russia, 1900-1917* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1984); R. L. Glickman, *Russian Factory Women: Workplace and Society, 1880-1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984); and D. L. Ransel, *Mothers of Misery: Child Abandonment in Russia* (Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press, 1988).

Various book-length studies of women's involvement in the revolutionary movements, sometimes taking a biographical approach, were also published. See for example: B. A. Engel and C. N. Rosenthal (eds and trans), *Five Sisters: Women Against the Tsar: the Memoirs of Five Young Anarchist Women of the 1870s* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1975); and V. Broido, *Apostles into Terrorists: Women and the Revolutionary Movement in the Russia of Alexander II* (London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1977).

There is also now an extensive journals literature on Russian and Soviet women's history, as well as Russian and Soviet women's writing, literature and culture.

- 3 See, for example, W. Z. Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); E. A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997); B. E. Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); L. Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman* (Basingstoke; Macmillan, 1999); M. Ilić, *Women Workers in the Soviet Interwar Economy: From 'Protection' to 'Equality'* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); S. Fitzpatrick and Yu. Slezkine (eds), *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women From 1917 to the Second World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); C. Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910-1939* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).
- 4 M. Ilić (ed.), *Women in the Stalin Era* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); W. Z. Goldman, *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- 5 For more detail see M. Ilić, 'Writing Women In: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet History', in A-M. Gallagher, C. Lubelska and L. Ryan (eds), *Re-presenting the Past: Women and History* (Harlow: Longman, 2001) pp. 145-61.



- 6 See, for example: B. E. Clements, 'The Effects of the Civil War on Women and Family Relations' in D. Koenker et al. (eds), *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989); B. Farnsworth, 'Village Women Experience the Revolution' in *Russian Peasant Women*; and J. McDermid and A. Hillyar, *Women and Work in Russia: a Study in Continuity Through Change* (London: Longman, 1998).
- 7 On the ways in which Aleksandra Kollontai, in particular, and women in general have been written out of 1917, see, for example, M. Donald, "'What did you do in the Revolution, Mother?'" Image, Myth and Prejudice in Western Writing on the Russian Revolution', *Gender and History*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1995) pp. 85-99; B. Fieseler, 'The Making of Russian Female Social Democrats, 1890-1917', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 34, no. 2 (1989) pp. 193-226.
- 8 Ilić (ed), 'Introduction'.
- 9 For notable recent contributions see B. A. Engel and A. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck, *A Revolution of Their Own: Voices of Women in Soviet History* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1998); S. Vilensky (ed.), *Till My Tale is Told: Women's Memoirs of the Gulag* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); V. Shapovalov (ed. and trans.), *Remembering the Darkness: Women in Soviet Prisons* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001). Given the age cohorts with which we are now dealing, it is likely that future oral history projects will focus on the post-Stalin period.
- 10 In addition to the sources on the labour camps listed above, see also E. Mason, 'Women in the Gulag in the 1930s', pp. 131-50. On the Leningrad siege, see C. Simmons and N. Perlina, *Writing the Siege of Leningrad: Women's Diaries, Memoirs and Documentary Prose* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002). Recent works on women in combat include: K. J. Cottam, *Women in War and Resistance: Selected Biographies of Soviet Women Soldiers* (Nepean; New Military Publishing, 1998), and R. Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (Kansas; University Press of Kansas, 2001). For a study of women in the 'home front' before and after the Second World War, see S. Conze, 'Women's Work and Emancipation in the Soviet Union', in Ilić (ed.), pp. 216-34.
- 11 For the orthodox Soviet perspective, see G. N. Serebrennikov, *The Position of Women in the USSR* (London; Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1937).
- 12 For more on this topic, see V. E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1997).
- 13 N. S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: the Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York; 1946).
- 14 The most recent study of Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Konstantinova Krupskaya, a leading figure in educational reform after 1917, as well as a number of other important causes, was published in the 1970s: see R. McNeal, *Bride of the Revolution* (Ann Arbor; 1972). Lenin's sisters are the subjects of a current PhD dissertation nearing completion by Katy Turton, University of Glasgow. We know a little bit about the spouses of leading male figures from Larissa Vasilieva's *Kremlin Wives* (London; Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994), which covers the whole Soviet period. See also the memoirs of the widow of Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin: Anna Larina, *This I Cannot Forget* (New York; W. W. Norton and Co., 1993). For brief written portraits and sketches of notable Russian women revolutionaries, see Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, and A. Hillyar and J. McDermid, *Revolutionary Women in Russia, 1870-1917: a Study in Collective Biography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
- 15 A. E. Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia: Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents* (Bloomington, IN; Indiana University Press, 2000), ch. 5.
- 16 M. Buckley, 'Why be a Shock Worker or a Stakhanovite?' in R. Marsh (ed.), *Women in Russia and Ukraine* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1996) pp. 199-213; M. F. Oja, 'From Krestianka to Udarnitsa: Rural Women in the Vydvizhenie Campaign, 1933-1941', *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 1203 (1996).
- 17 R. Maier, 'Sovety zhen as a Surrogate Trade Union: Comments on the History of the Movement of Activist Women in the 1930s', in K. McDermott and J. Morison (eds), *Politics and Society Under the Bolsheviks* (London; Macmillan, 1999) pp. 189-98; R. B. Neary, 'Mothering Socialist Society: the "Wife-Activists" Movement in the Soviet Culture of Daily Life, 1934-41', *Russian Review*, vol. 56, no. 3 (1999) pp. 396-412; M. Buckley, 'The Untold Story of the Obshchestvennitsa in the 1930s', in Ilić (ed), *Women in the Stalin Era*, pp. 151-172.
- 18 M. Buckley, 'Complex "Realities" of "New" Women of the 1930s: Assertive, Superior, Belittled and Beaten', in L. Edmondson (ed.), *Gender in Russian History and Culture* (Basingstoke; Palgrave, 2001) pp. 177-93.

- 19 See Wendy Goldman's arguments on the gendering of jobs in *Women at the Gates*, for example.
- 20 Buckley, 'Untold Story', in Ilic (ed), pp. 152, 153.
- 21 For a recent collection of essays, not all focusing on women, see L. Viola (ed.), *Contending with Stalinism: Soviet Power and Popular Resistance in the 1930s* (Cornell; Cornell University Press, 2002).
- 22 L. Viola, 'Bab'i bunt' and Peasant Women's Protest During Collectivisation', *Russian Review*, vol. 45, no. 1 (1986) pp. 23-42; reprinted in Farnsworth and Viola (eds), *op. cit.*, and C. Ward (ed.), *The Stalinist Dictatorship* (London; Arnold, 1998). On rural women after collectivisation, see R. T. Manning, 'Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II, 1935-1940', in Farnsworth and Viola (eds), *op. cit.*, and S. Bridger, *Women in the Soviet Countryside* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- 23 J. J. Rossman, 'The Teikovo Cotton Workers' Strike of April 1932: Class, Gender and Identity Politics in Stalin's Russia', *Russian Review*, vol. 56 (1997) pp. 44-69.
- 24 See Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution*, and Goldman, *Women at the Gates*.
- 25 S. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934-41* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1997). See, in particular, ch. 3; reprinted, in revised form, as 'A Mother Cares: Women Workers and Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia, 1934-41', in Ilic (ed.), *Women in the Stalin Era*, pp. 89-109.
- 26 L. A. Rimmel, 'Another Kind of Fear: the Kirov Murder and the End of Bread Rationing in Leningrad', *Slavic Review*, vol. 56, no. 3 (1997) pp. 481-99.
- 27 See I. Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia* (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 2003).
- 28 See the section on 'women' in my study of the evidence provided by the Leningrad *Martirolog*, republished recently in S. G. Wheatcroft (ed), *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) ch. 7. A brief glimpse of the evidence available for other regions provides a similar picture as that noted here. I am currently engaged in a more extensive study of 'Women and the Purges'.
- 29 See, for example, E. Winter, *Red Virtue: Human Relationships in the New Russia* (London; Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1933); E. M. Delafield, *I Visit the Soviets: the Provincial Lady in Russia* (Chicago; Academy Chicago Publishers, 1985 [orig. 1937]).
- 30 See, for example, E. Ginzburg, *Into the Whirlwind* (London; Collins Harvill, 1989 [orig. 1967]). Her second volume of memoirs is entitled *Within the Whirlwind*. See also M. Joffe, *One Long Night* (London; New Park Publications, 1978).
- 31 See, for example, R. Schlesinger (ed.), *The Family in the USSR: Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia* (London; Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949). For legislative initiatives, see *Soviet Legislation on Women's Rights: Collection of Normative Acts* (Moscow; Progress Publishers, 1978), which includes a few decrees from the 1930s and 1940s. For ideological statements, see *Women and Communism: Selections from the Writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin* (London; Lawrence and Wishart, 1950). I am currently compiling a collection of 'readings in Russian women's history'.
- 32 For an interesting comparative study of childbirth and childcare practices, see D. L. Ransel, *Village Mothers: Three Generations of Change in Russian and Tataria* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 2000).
- 33 For background on the 1920s, in addition to Massell's study noted earlier, see A. L. Edgar, 'Emancipation of the Unveiled: Turkmen Women under Soviet Rule, 1924-29', *Russian Review*, vol. 62 (2003) pp. 132-49, and M. Kamp, 'Remembering the Hujum: Uzbek Women's Words', *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 1 (2001) pp. 1-12. For recent literature on the Stalin period, see S. Keller, 'Trapped Between State and Society: Women's Liberation and Islam in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1926-41', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1998) pp. 20-44; D. Northrop, 'Languages and Loyalty: Gender Politics and Party Supervision in Uzbekistan, 1927-41', *Russian Review*, vol. 59 (2000) pp. 179-200; D. Northrop, 'Subaltern Dialogues: Subversion and Resistance in Soviet Uzbek Family Law', *Slavic Review*, vol. 60, no. 1 (2001) pp. 115-39.

# Big business in the Third Reich: New research and perspectives

PROFESSOR RAY STOKES

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In early November 2003, I was approached by a member of the research staff of the new Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin<sup>1</sup> for an expert report on the role of the chemical industry in the Third Reich. The subject was not just of academic interest, not owing to mere curiosity about the past. After all, the company which was about to be awarded the contract for supplying the graffiti-resistant coatings for the concrete slabs that make up the main part of the Memorial was Degussa, a name that will mean little to most in the English-speaking world. But a small piece of background information will make the company's significance fully clear: Degussa had a substantial interest in Degesch GmbH, the company which supplied Zyklon B, the pesticide used in the death chambers at Auschwitz. That there would be an outcry over Degussa's participation in the Memorial project is, in retrospect, self-evident.<sup>2</sup>

In the end, the Board of the Foundation that operates the Memorial decided after lengthy deliberation of the many complex issues associated with the case to accept the Degussa participation as a gesture of reconciliation, in large part no doubt because Degussa was one of the initial and major participants in the Foundation for Memory, Responsibility, and the Future (which was established by German government and industry to provide compensation to forced and slave labourers in the Third Reich) and was thus demonstrably owning up to its past misdeeds.<sup>3</sup> The Board also decided to stage a lecture series beginning in April 2004 which is meant to explore issues relating to the role of business in the Third Reich and, in particular, in the Final Solution.

This episode encapsulates a number of key points relating to the historiography of business in the Third Reich. First, the episode makes it clear that this area of inquiry has immense relevance to the present. Second, the episode provides a hint of the complexities of the relationship between the Nazi government and business. And, third, the episode indicates the thirst for reliable studies of this relationship, which has been slaked only in part through an astonishing output of scholarship in the past decade. I would, for example, not have been able to write the expert report with the confidence that I did without having had recourse to the recent outpouring of books and articles on this theme.

What I would like to do in this brief article is to sketch out the state of scholarship on business in the Third Reich as it existed through the mid-1980s, and to explore some of the findings of research since that time. I conclude with some brief thoughts on the future of research on this topic.

In a sense, it is surprising that much of the most dependable scholarship on the history of business in the Third Reich only began to appear about two decades ago, and has reached fever pitch only in the last four or five years. After all, even in the 1930s, fascism was seen by many—and not just Marxists—as a particularly virulent form of capitalism, and the role of big business was emphasised repeatedly in a number of early analyses by sociologists and lawyers.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, this fascination with business in the Third Reich continued in the decades that followed, with Arthur Schweitzer's study of *Big Business in the Third Reich*<sup>5</sup> a key text in this regard.

Despite this growing body of literature, however, many of these texts were problematic. First of all, those written before the end of World War II were not based on reliable archival sources, and were also produced in part with an eye towards influencing the outcome of the conflict itself (or of influencing the occupation that would follow the end of it). But even those written after 1945 relied in large part on official governmental documents captured in Germany, with the authors generally not having recourse to the archives of firms involved. The companies themselves, not surprisingly, were often hostile to visits from historians. But, in any case, yet another reason existed for the literature being problematic: many of those carrying out these early studies had no interest in firms *per se*; instead, they focused on business interests as expressed through industry and trade associations. Not surprisingly, since these associations were explicitly designed to link business to politics, the studies uncovered considerable political activity on the part of industry. And it was only a short step to use this evidence to support the contention that there was an identity of interest between the Nazi regime and German business, in particular German big business.

One of the most controversial pieces of research to take this “identity of interest” position with regard to the role of business in bringing about the end to the Weimar Republic and the National Socialist seizure of power was David Abraham’s *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic: Political Economy and Crisis*,<sup>6</sup> the first edition of which appeared in 1981. Although Abraham did use some primary sources located in firm archives, his main focus remained on the role of industry and trade associations. What is more, his book unleashed the so-called “Abraham controversy,” in which a number of prominent historians pointed to serious deficiencies in Abraham’s use of primary sources.<sup>7</sup> Abraham defended himself vigorously, but, in the end, also admitted a number of errors and issued a second, corrected edition, although many of his critics remained deeply unsatisfied. The subtitle of one review of the second edition says it all: “Abraham’s Second Collapse.”<sup>8</sup>

One of the first studies to break with this “identity of interest” tradition appeared not long after Abraham’s first edition, tackled the same topic, and also used business archives, although it again focused primarily on the role of industrial and trade associations. Yale historian Henry Ashby Turner, writing in 1985 about *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler*, addressed the alleged infusion of business funds into Nazi party coffers, which many previous commentators had seen as leading ultimately to Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor on 30 January 1933.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of a range of evidence, much of it drawn from business archives, Turner showed conclusively that, although there was some support for the Nazis before 1933 from small and medium-sized businesses, big business on the whole did not approve of, or contribute to, the Party. Turner thus successfully challenged the notion of identity of interest between big business and the Nazis.

Regardless of the Abraham controversy and the Turner thesis, a number of questions remained outstanding in the mid-1980s with regard to the relationship between the Nazi state and business in the Third Reich. After all, the studies by Turner and Abraham were meant only to deal with the question of this relationship in the run-up to the seizure of power in 1933. How, though, did the relationship develop after 1933? Were particular firms or industries more or less likely to align themselves with the National Socialists? To what extent did 1936 mark a breaking point in this regard? What was the role of business in the so-called “Aryanisation” programmes? How did industry help the Reich prepare for and conduct the war? What impact did it have on the territories that Germany occupied after the war began? And, crucially, what was the role of industry in the Holocaust?

Answers to these and other questions could only come in the first instance through detailed studies of the activities of particular firms and industries on the basis of archival evidence from a number of sources, including business archives. John Gillingham’s was the first book-length treatment of this topic, with his study of Ruhr coal in the Third Reich.<sup>10</sup> But Peter Hayes’s classic study of the German chemical giant, I.G. Farbenindustrie AG, made a much larger impact, not least because I.G. Farben had long been associated with the crimes of the Third Reich.<sup>11</sup> (A number of I.G. Farben executives were tried at special trials in Nuremberg in 1947/8, with several of them found guilty, some owing to their involvement in the firm’s use of slave labour.) Hayes drew a much more nuanced picture of the relationship between this massive firm and the Third Reich than had existed before. Instead of portraying the I.G. as engaging in “prepar[ation of] Hitler for War,” the “rape of the European chemical industry,” and “slave labor and mass murder,”<sup>12</sup> Hayes insisted that I.G. Farben executives engaged in actions that were meant, first and foremost, to protect their business interests rather than serve the state. In order to maintain some degree of independence, they engaged in a “strategy of indispensability,” parlaying the I.G.’s excellence in key technologies (such as synthetic fuels and rubber) into a buffer against an increasingly intrusive state. Hayes does not minimise the crimes of I.G. executives—not least, for instance, in engaging in a massive project to build a new industrial plant near the Auschwitz death camp. Indeed, Hayes indicates that some of the crimes arose out of the narrow pursuit of profit and competitive advantage without regard to the ethical consequences or victims of those actions. But he also maintains that businessmen were generally not the primary perpetrators of such crimes, and strove often to maintain independence and freedom of manoeuvre in the face of an authoritarian state.

A range of detailed studies of particular businesses or industries appeared at around the same time or shortly after those of Gillingham and Hayes. Richard Overly, for instance, published a number of key articles on heavy industry, including a study of the Reichswerke Hermann Göring. Bernard Bellon

looked at Mercedes Benz, a study which was extended in chronological coverage and theme by Neil Gregor. Hans Mommsen and Manfred Grieger examined Volkswagen in enormous detail, a study which unfortunately remains available only in German. Harold James turned to an examination of the activities of the Deutsche Bank.<sup>13</sup> In all of these works, scholars emphasised conflict as much as co-operation in the relationship between German business and the Nazi state, as well as stressing the complexity of this relationship by highlighting the extent to which it differed by firm, industry, and even individual. In a sense, of course it has not been surprising that scholars have found a *lack* of identity of interest in examining sources held in company archives. Business people are often not concerned primarily or directly with politics, even in extraordinary times such as those in the Third Reich. Instead, they pursue what business people always pursue: profit, market opportunities, competitive advantage, and so on. This is not to imply, however, that these studies have failed to recognise the extensive and disastrous collusion between business and the Nazi state. In fact, they are generally speaking excellent examples of the application of Tim Mason's famous dictum that:

"If historians have a public responsibility, if hating is part of their method and warning part of their task, it is necessary that they should hate precisely."<sup>14</sup>

By the mid- to late-1990s, then, a large literature had grown up on the topic of business and the Third Reich. But, despite the extensive output, the surface of the problem had only been scratched. After all, the studies dealt with no more than a handful of the very most prominent German firms in a small number of industries. Far too little was known about other industries and firms, including non-German firms operating in Germany during the Third Reich. And even for those major firms for which studies existed, details about a number of key issues remained unresolved and/or unknown. Among these were, for instance, Aryanisation; forced and slave labour; activities in occupied territories; and, the precise extent and nature of the participation of business in the war economy and Final Solution. Finally, the studies that existed through the mid-1990s continued to focus primarily on the intersection between business and politics, whereas a logical extension of the notion that there was no identity of interest between business and the Nazi regime would be that business was pursuing long-term strategic objectives that had very little directly to do with that regime.

If scholarship on the relationship between the Nazi state and German big business was flourishing but incomplete in the mid-1990s, four major factors combined in the latter part of the decade to revolutionise this field of inquiry, with resulting scholarly output which is quantitatively and qualitatively different from that existing previously. The first factor involved extension and further investigation by new scholars of the new research questions and approaches identified by students of the business-Nazi government relationship through the mid-1990s. Second, the arrival on the scene of professionally trained business archivists in the late 1980s and during the 1990s was extremely important. Unlike their predecessors, they were more likely to allow access to archival materials to all scholars, regardless of topic or approach. Third, German unification provided unprecedented access to a range of archival materials from firms and state archives in the former East Germany as well as previously unavailable captured documents from the former Soviet Union.

The fourth and most important factor in this outpouring of scholarship has been investment by the firms themselves. Unlike the bad old days when journalists were commissioned to pen "company histories" in which a firm's activities in the Third Reich were ignored, minimised, or "airbrushed out",<sup>15</sup> companies began in the mid-1990s to commission professional historians to do research monographs focusing primarily on these activities. The historians by and large insisted on, and were guaranteed in their contracts, full access to relevant archival materials held by the company, full support for gathering additional materials in other archives, and full independence and freedom from influence or censorship by the company with regard to reporting of findings. Although there have been some critics of "sponsored historians,"<sup>16</sup> most historians and their readers would agree that the recent spate of publications has demonstrated considerable scholarly integrity and spectacular breadth. To give just a flavour of what is now available: Major studies have already appeared (some unfortunately still only in German) of prominent industrial companies such as Krupp and BASF (which was at that time a part of I.G. Farben, but retained key aspects of its previous and future independent identity); banks such as the Dresdner Bank and a fuller set of investigations of the Deutsche Bank; a major insurance company; and, more recently, a range of small

and medium-sized companies.<sup>17</sup> The results of some of this research and increasing pressure from a number of groups who stress that it was not only German, but also German-based, firms that were involved in Nazi crimes, has led to investigation of a range of other companies. These include General Motors, Ford, international oil firms, and Swiss chemical firms.<sup>18</sup>

So what has the unprecedented focus of scholarly inquiry yielded? First, it should be noted that some of the most important commissioned studies, including Peter Hayes's book-length study of Degussa, remain to be published, as does his book-length general study of Aryanisation. But those that have already appeared allow some general points to be made. First, it is clear that a distinction has to be made between the relationship between business and the Nazis before January 1933 and that afterwards. Turner's general findings about the former have not been seriously questioned to date. But it is clear that, once the Nazis were in power, companies were willing to go to great lengths to please the new regime in order to secure or gain markets, access to foreign exchange and/or raw materials, and so on. Let me just list a number of points of consensus that have emerged from recent research:

1. All major firms located in Germany conformed to National Socialist racial policies, and, by 1938, had disassociated themselves from any "Jewish" managers or high-ranking officials. There is little doubt that this is the case, and all scholars agree on this. One finding that has emerged from recent research on the activities of foreign firms operating in National Socialist Germany is this: it appears that foreign firms began conforming to the racial "expectations" of the regime as early as 1933, whereas "German" firms often took somewhat longer. Thus, for example, the managing board of Olex, the Berlin-based subsidiary of what later became British Petroleum, decided to limit the contracts of, or to fire, "Jewish" employees in late spring/early summer 1933. And, in the same year, the Swiss-based Geigy corporation actively set out to acquire certification as an "Aryan" concern in order to guarantee sales of dyes to the National Socialist Party "for symbols of the national movement".<sup>19</sup>
2. Industry in Germany played an essential role in preparing the Third Reich for war, although in spite of Allied propaganda during and after the war, it does not appear that industrial managers actually engaged in planning for a war of aggression. Instead, they were active in devising defensive measures in the case of wartime mobilisation, and they participated avidly in a number of projects associated with autarky policy, in particular in the context of the Four-Year Plan Organisation after 1936.
3. Many firms in National Socialist Germany took advantage of Aryanisation policies. This was true not just of German-based firms, but also of non-German ones, as a recent study of the activities of Swiss firms operating in the Reich following the *Anschluss* has indicated.<sup>20</sup>
4. Virtually all firms active in Germany during the National Socialist period utilised forced labour, and a sizeable number also used slave labour. Mark Spoerer's work has been especially important in this regard for its contribution towards precise estimates of foreign, forced, and slave labour operating in German industry as a whole. But in-depth studies of individual companies (and even, as in the case of the former BASF and Hoechst, divisions of companies) indicate that foreign- and forced-labour was used extensively virtually everywhere. In western-based factories, it was unusual for slave labour to be deployed. But for those in central and eastern Germany and in the eastern territories held by the Reich, it was much more common.<sup>21</sup>
5. Through its design and construction of the I.G. Auschwitz plant at Monowitz, I.G. Farbenindustrie AG in particular was complicit in some of the worst crimes of a criminal regime. Although initially unenthusiastic about creating a synthetic rubber plant in Upper Silesia, I.G. Farben gradually came on board in this regard. One factor behind this was pressure from the Reich. But at least as important was the desire to capitalise on an opportunity to create a large, technologically sophisticated, and fully integrated chemical plant that would bring together two major technological traditions within the firm (synthetic rubber and synthetic gasoline), along with the intermediate and subsidiary plants necessary to support their production. The plant was designed in Ludwigshafen, and most of those responsible for planning and running it came from factories closely associated with the former BASF, i.e. primarily Ludwigshafen, Oppau, and/or Leuna. In order to build it, I.G. Farben co-operated closely with the SS in the Auschwitz

- concentration camp, and had the dubious distinction of being the first corporation to finance and build its own labour/concentration camp, which was staffed by SS guards.<sup>22</sup>
6. The Degussa corporation and I.G. Farben were joint owners of the Degesch company, which supplied the pesticide Zyklon B to various organisations, including the SS, and this chemical was used in the gassing of large numbers of Jews. This point has long been well known, although some important recent research has clarified some key points. One of the most important is this: Despite the fact that Degesch was a subsidiary of both chemical firms, it appears that the Degussa corporation was the more important and active shareholder in Degesch.<sup>23</sup>

There are, of course, many more detailed results of this recent research, although space is insufficient even to outline them here; indeed, despite the numerous citations indicated in the endnotes, this brief article can only scratch the surface of that which has appeared in the past few years. What, though, can be said about the future of research on business and politics in the Third Reich? First, it is clear that although a number of significant pieces of research are still to be published, the recent outpouring of detailed studies has attenuated. Second, it should be noted that, although most of these studies move decisively away from the “identity of interest” school (and generally towards a position stressing some coincidence of interest, but considerable conflict), this strand has by no means disappeared.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, there are indications that some will take the opportunity of the extensive resolution of a number of issues relating to business and politics in the Third Reich to explore long-term industrial and business strategy of firms during that period. After all, in spite of the overwhelming and undeniable politicisation of business and industry between 1933-1945, these years form part of a continuum with those before and after for most firms and business people. Like other highly industrialised countries, Germany in the twentieth century experienced long-term changes in the business environment, including for instance, development of mass production; growing pressures of international competition and growing opportunities of international co-operation; increasing levels of technological and scientific intensity in industry; new materials; and motorisation and growth of consumer societies. Business decisions in the Third Reich were often made on the basis of the contemporary understanding of those trends, and not just for political reasons.

## NOTES

- 1 The web site for the Memorial is at the following URL: <http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/> (accessed 18 March 2004).
- 2 Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: I.G. Farben in the Nazi Era*, CUP, 1987; 2nd ed., CUP, 2001, pp. 361-363.
- 3 “Kein ‘makelloser’ Denkmal. Die Debatte um die Beteiligung der Degussa,” *DenkmalInfo* no. 3 (February 2004), p. 3, available on-line at: [http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/download/Denkmal\\_Info\\_III.pdf](http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/download/Denkmal_Info_III.pdf) (viewed 18 March 2004). I should note that, although this decision was one that in the evidence in my report would have supported, that report played no role whatsoever in the proceedings since the German translation of it was not available in time for the Board meeting. The web site for the Foundation for Memory, Responsibility, and the Future is: <http://www.stiftung-evz.de/> (viewed 18 March 2004).
- 4 Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, London, Gollancz, 1942; Joseph Borkin and Charles Walsh, *Germany’s Master Plan: The Story of Industrial Offensive*, London, John Long, 1943.
- 5 Arthur Schweitzer, *Big Business and the Third Reich*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1964.
- 6 Princeton University Press, 1981; 2nd edition, New York/London, Holmes & Meier, 1986.
- 7 See, for instance, the exchange between Henry Turner and Tim Mason on the one side and David Abraham on the other in *American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 1143-1149.
- 8 Peter Hayes, “History in an Off Key: David Abraham’s Second Collapse,” *Business History Review* 61 (1987): 452-472. On the other hand, Volker Berghahn, one of the most prominent and respected German historians in the world reviewed the second edition favourably in the *New York Times Book Review* (2 August 1987): 12-13.

- 9 Henry A. Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler*, OUP, 1985.
- 10 *Industry and Politics in the Third Reich: Ruhr Coal, Hitler, and Europe*, London, Methuen, 1985
- 11 Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*.
- 12 The quotations come from chapter titles in Joseph Borkin's best-selling book, *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farben*, New York, Free Press, 1978. Borkin was on the prosecution staff at the I.G. Farben trial in Nuremberg and co-author of *Germany's Master Plan* (see note 4).
- 13 Richard Overy, "Heavy industry in the Third Reich: The Reichswerke Crisis," pp. 93-118 in R.J. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994 (note that this article initially appeared in *Central European History* in 1985); Bernard Bellon, *Mercedes Benz in Peace and War*, New York/London, Columbia University Press, 1990; Neil Gregor, *Daimler-Benz in the Third Reich*, New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998; *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter im Dritten Reich*, Dusseldorf, Econ, 1996; Harold James, "Die Deutsche Bank und die Diktatur 1933-1945," pp. 315-408 in Lothar Gall and others, *Die Deutsche Bank. 1870-1995*, Munich, Beck, 1995.
- 14 Tim Mason, "Intention and explanation: a current controversy about the explanation of National Socialism," p. 230, in Tim Mason, *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class*, CUP, 1995.
- 15 For evidence on how and where this was done in the immediate post-World War II period, see, for instance, S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-1955*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- 16 This phrase has been used in the *Times Literary Supplement* in the extensive and long-running discussion in the Letters to the Editor pages that followed publication of an article by Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, "Selling the Past," TLS (23 October 1998).
- 17 Lothar Gall and others, *Krupp. Der Aufstieg eines Industrieimperiums*, Berlin, Siedler, 2000; Werner Abelshauser and others, *German Industry and Global Enterprise: BASF, The History of a Company*, CUP, 2004; Johannes Bähr and Michael Schneider, *Der Goldhandel der Dresdner Bank im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Leipzig, G. Kiepenheuer, 1999; Jonathan Steinberg, *The Deutsche Bank and its Gold Transactions during the Second World War*, Munich, Beck, 1999; Harold James, *The Deutsche Bank and the Nazi economic war against the Jews / the expropriation of Jewish-owned property*, CUP, 2001; Gerald Feldman, *Allianz and the German Insurance Business, 1933-1945*, CUP, 2001; Michael Schneider, "Business Decision Making in National Socialist Germany: Machine Tools, Business Machines, and Punch Cards at the Wanderer-Werke AG," *Enterprise and Society* 3 (2002): 396-428.
- 18 Reinhold Billstein and others, *Working for the Enemy: Ford, General Motors, and Forced Labour in Germany during the Second World War*, Oxford/NY: Berghahn Books, 2000; "Research Findings about Ford Werke under the Nazi Regime," Ford Motor Company Archive, 2001 (available on web in PDF format: [http://media.ford.com/events/pdf/0\\_Research\\_Finding\\_Complete.pdf](http://media.ford.com/events/pdf/0_Research_Finding_Complete.pdf) [viewed 25 Aug. 03]); Rainer Karlsch and Raymond G. Stokes, *Faktor Öl. Die Geschichte der deutschen Mineralölindustrie 1859-1974*, Munich, Beck, 2003; Lukas Straumann and Daniel Wildmann, *Schweizer Chemieunternehmen im "Dritten Reich"*, Zurich, Chronos, 2001.
- 19 Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*; Karlsch and Stokes, *Faktor Öl*, especially pp. 161-162; Straumann and Wildmann, *Schweizer Chemieunternehmen im "Dritten Reich"*, quotation, pp. 68-9.
- 20 Straumann and Wildmann, *Schweizer Chemieunternehmen*, pp. 71-76.
- 21 Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2001; Spoerer and Jochen Fleischhacker, "Forced Laborers in Nazi Germany: Categories, numbers, survivors," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33 (2003): 169-204; Spoerer and Fleischhacker, "The compensation of Nazi Germany's forced labourers: Demographic findings and political implications," *Population Studies* 56 (2002): 5-21; Raymond G. Stokes, "From the I. G. Farben Fusion to the Establishment of BASF AG (1925-1952)," pp. 206-361 in Abelshauser and others, *German Industry and Global Enterprise*; Stephan Lindner is completing a history of Hoechst during the Third Reich, and I have had the opportunity to read the draft of this manuscript recently.
- 22 Stokes, "From the I.G. Farben Fusion," pp. 313-335; Bernd Wagner, *I.G. Auschwitz. Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung von Häftlingen des Lagers Monowitz 1941-1945*, Munich, Saur, 2000.
- 23 Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, pp. 361-363; Hervé Joly, "L'implication de l'industrie chimique allemande dans la Shoah: Le cas de Zyklon B," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 47 (April-June 2000): 368-400; Peter Hayes is currently working on a history of Degussa AG during the Nazi period, and some of his initial findings were presented in his lecture "Profits and Persecution: German Big Business and the Holocaust," U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 17 February 1998.
- 24 Edwin Black's recent book, *IBM and Holocaust*, New York, Crown, 2001, is representative of this. Although very weak and misleading on many points, Black's portrayal of the IBM subsidiary Dehomag's complicity with the government is accurate for the most part.



# Thinking About the End of the Cold War

PROFESSOR RICHARD CROCKATT

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## The Cold War and Its End

The cold war has been an absorbing topic of political and historical debate virtually since its inception but its ending has turned what was a steady stream of intellectual activity into a raging torrent. Cold War historians have their own journal (*Cold War History*), there is a centre in Washington devoted to publishing original documents and analyses of every aspect of cold war history (the Cold War International History Project or CWHIP), and the academic presses continue to turn out quantities of books sufficient to keep armies of scholars busy for the term of their careers. In short, cold war history has become an industry.

An important reason for this phenomenon is that the ending of the cold war neatly finishes off the story. The cold war really now is history. No doubt we are in danger of believing that the only story of the post-Second World War years was the cold war and in doing so we will miss many important features of this period. Such salutary reminders, however, should not blind us to the advantage we now possess of being able to see many critical events and processes of the postwar period in the round, which is to say in terms of their full life histories. The end of communism was a hugely dramatic series of events which had equally dramatic international consequences but it is of significance also because the attempt to comprehend it takes us to the heart of the cold war itself. Why did communism prove to be so fragile? Did the West consistently over-estimate the Soviet threat, as the collapse of the system appeared to indicate, and if so does this vindicate the views of so-called 'revisionist' historians who essentially blame American aggression for the cold war? On the other hand, do not recent revelations about the Soviet nuclear programme indicate that Soviet intentions were highly aggressive from the beginning of the cold war, which would seem to confirm the views of 'orthodox' historians that the Soviets were to blame for forty years of tension?<sup>1</sup> What was the cold war about — ideology, national interest, geopolitics, culture or a combination of all these?<sup>2</sup> Why, asks one historian, 'has humanity survived the cold war? [given the existence of weapons of mass destruction]?'<sup>3</sup> The questions are endless — as varied as the interests and temperaments of the historians who pose them, as can be seen by perusal of collections of writings which appeared in the wake of the Soviet collapse.<sup>4</sup>

It is no surprise to find that debates about the end of the cold war bear some striking resemblances to debates about its origins. Historians contemplating the end of the cold war have a vested interest in interpreting it in a way which is consistent with their views of the cold war. Furthermore, the debates in both fields carry political overtones.<sup>5</sup> The adoption of historiographical stances often correlate with political positions on matters of contemporary moment. For example, the question of the end of the cold war became an issue in the American presidential election of 1992, with Bush supporters claiming that the collapse of communism had come about because of America's tough stance during the Reagan-Bush years. Bush's opponents, meanwhile, argued that communism's demise had predominantly internal causes.<sup>6</sup> Behind these two claims in turn was a great debate about whether it was appropriate for the West to claim 'victory' in the cold war. Triumphalism seemed wholly justified to many commentators, while others believed that such a reaction was inappropriate politically and morally.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed these two reactions, though crude in their historical analyses, directed as they were towards political advantage, nevertheless indicated two of the main lines of historical interpretation on this topic which we can term 'externalist' and the 'internalist'. Needless to say, few historians (as opposed to politicians) subscribe to the view that the truth lies wholly with one interpretation or the other; it is often a matter of emphasis. For the purposes of clarity, however, we shall consider them separately, looking at each in turn and then concluding with a survey of alternative viewpoints which offer more complex readings of events.

## External Factors

Externalist arguments rest on one general and a number of subsidiary or more specific claims. The general claim is that the American policies of 'containment' and 'deterrence' worked. Over the years they served their intended purpose of preventing the Soviet Union from seizing advantage in the cold war. The more specific claims are that American policy in the Reagan years not only prevented the Soviet Union from reaping rewards from the advances it had made in the 1970s (eg: from the invasion of Afghanistan, the promotion of revolution in places such as Angola and the Horn of Africa, and the build up in its strategic nuclear forces) but forced the Soviets to retreat from these positions and ultimately provoked the collapse of the Soviet system itself. What achieved these aims was above all the firm ideological stance of President Reagan, coupled with his determination to challenge Soviet power wherever it reared its head. Reagan's insistence on going ahead with the deployment of cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe (intermediate range weapons designed to match the Soviets' SS-20s) in the face of popular opposition, his refusal to countenance a new agreement on strategic arms which would leave America at what was believed to be a disadvantage, his steadfast support for large increases in the defense budget, and his willingness to support anti-Communist governments or insurgents in Latin America and Africa – all these measures, it was held, served to convince the Soviets that the United States would match them and more in every field. Above all, Reagan's insistence on pressing ahead with the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) finally persuaded the Soviets that a combination of American technological prowess and economic strength was irresistible. In short, in the words of John Lewis Gaddis, one of the major historians of the cold war who has also made a significant contribution to analysis of the end of the cold war, 'hanging tough paid off.'<sup>8</sup>

There are two main problems with this thesis. In the first place, according to an analysis by two political scientists based on interviews with former President Gorbachev and a number of his advisers, American military policy in the 1980s and the Reagan administration's generally aggressive stance had the effect of prolonging rather than shortening the cold war. While it was certainly true, so this line of argument goes, that Soviet defense spending was a serious drain on its economic resources, the Soviet economy had always been subject to such wastefulness: 'the command economy predated the Cold War and was not a response to American military spending.' Furthermore, this analysis suggests, Gorbachev's view that the Soviet Union must make fundamental changes in its internal system and external policies was formed before he became General Secretary of the Party in 1985. In fact Reagan's commitment to SDI was a hindrance to Gorbachev's plans for reform rather than a spur to them, since it inclined hardliners in the Politburo to resist any suggestion that the Soviet Union should make concessions to the United States.<sup>9</sup> A variation on this theme is the argument by Thomas Risse-Kappen that if American hardball diplomacy had been the only or the chief factor in wringing concessions from the Soviet Union, then why did they not yield such results prior to Gorbachev coming to power? Evidently, the influence of Gorbachev's 'new thinking' in international relations was of crucial importance, a subject to which we shall return.<sup>10</sup>

There is a second reason for not swallowing whole the argument that American pressure caused the collapse of communism: namely, that there were some significant changes in American policy in the second half of the 1980s as well as in Soviet policy. The record of Soviet-American diplomacy in the period 1984-91 suggests that, although the United States held many of the key cards and though the Soviet Union under Gorbachev's leadership undoubtedly abandoned principles which had been integral to its existence for decades, the United States made some movement too. For example, on the critical question of Gorbachev's decision not to make agreement to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty conditional on American abandonment of SDI, Gorbachev evidently recognized that SDI was a politically contentious issue in the United States and that he had something to gain by moderating his position. His gamble paid off since, following signature of the INF Treaty the American Congress moved to limit funds for SDI. The Soviet Union was not entirely without resources of diplomatic pressure.

But the key factor making for some movement on the American side was the character of Ronald Reagan. Recent scholarship has emphasized the complexity of his personality and his capacity to surprise. We have to reckon with a Reagan who came close at the Reykjavik summit of 1986 to agreeing with Gorbachev to the establishment of a nuclearfree world, who regarded SDI, with evident

sincerity, as a wholly peaceful (because defensive) initiative which would render offensive weapons redundant once both sides were supplied with it, and who above all, again with evident sincerity, had a visceral hatred of nuclear weapons and an equally strong desire to be rid of them. Indeed according to one carefully argued interpretation, Reagan signalled a historic turn towards a more conciliatory posture towards the Soviet Union in a speech of January 1984, well before Gorbachev came to power. Prompted by a growing horror at the possibility of nuclear war. Reagan evidently became deeply troubled about the theory of nuclear deterrence and its associated concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). On a visit to the US nuclear command centre in the run-up to the 1980 election he had been shocked to discover that the centre could be destroyed by a direct hit from a Soviet missile. Hence his determination to promote the development of SDI which he regarded as pacific in intent. Later revelations about the likelihood of nuclear accidents deepened his conviction that MAD was truly dangerous.<sup>11</sup> In short, like many on the left, but for quite different reasons, Reagan had emancipated himself to a degree from inherited nuclear doctrines even if he never revised his view of the essentially evil nature of communism.

What conclusions can be drawn regarding the external factors in bringing about the end of communism and the end of the cold war? Evidently it would be foolish to deny that American pressure played any role but in the opinion of Raymond Gartoff, author of the most substantial analysis of the end of the cold war, the key factor was a change of mind on the part of the Soviet leadership. “Victory” came when a new generation of Soviet leaders realized how badly their system at home and their policies abroad had failed. What [the American policy of] containment did do was to successfully preclude any temptation by Moscow to advance Soviet hegemony by military means.’<sup>12</sup>

### **Internal Factors**

Such conclusions takes us back to Gorbachev and more broadly the problems of the Soviet system. It is surely here in the realm of internal factors that we shall find the most adequate explanation of the collapse of communism. In looking at internal factors it is useful to make a distinction between structural problems in the Soviet system which were of long standing and causes of more recent origin. The chief long-term problem was economic, though arguably it had political roots, in that economic policies and practices were dictated by ideology. The command economy relied on inflexible centralized planning, failed to regulate supply and demand in a fruitful and productive fashion, and actively discouraged innovation. As a machine for producing large amounts of specified goods to government order — particularly in the sphere of heavy industry — it had some value and may have helped the Soviet Union to survive the onslaught of Germany in 1941-5. The Soviet economy was essentially a war economy. As a means of responding dynamically to changing conditions and technological progress the system had serious drawbacks. In fields, such as defense, where government fiat ran supreme, progress could be maintained but at the cost of starving the wider economy of resources and the means of responding to change. The political imperative of maintaining centralized discipline in the form of Party rule stifled individual initiative and social progress.

However, these features had been present in the Soviet Union from at least the period of Stalin’s rule. What changed to make the Soviet system so vulnerable in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century? One answer is the computer and automation revolution which swept the West in the 1970s and 1980s but virtually bypassed the Soviet Union except in the privileged military sector and even there, wrote a leading Western analyst of the Soviet economy in the late 1980s, the Soviet Union found it hard to keep pace.<sup>13</sup> Serious problems with harvests also appeared in the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, and commentaries in the West during the early 1980s noted a decline in general health and rising death and infant mortality rates.<sup>14</sup> Evidently few commentators in the West believed that the Soviet system was in good health — in the metaphorical as well as literal meanings of that term — but at the same time few, if any, predicted that the system was about to change so cataclysmically. The Soviet system had survived severe internal and external pressures. Why should it buckle now? Indeed only three years before the Berlin wall was torn down John Gaddis published a highly influential interpretation of the cold war which stressed its stability and likely longevity; he termed the cold war ‘the long peace’.<sup>15</sup> In the same year a leading Soviet specialist, Seweryn Bialer, wrote that it is unlikely that ‘the [Soviet]

state is now, or will be in the late 1980s, in danger of social or political disintegration. Thus we must study the factors which made the regime stable in the post-Stalin era and are still at work at the present.’<sup>16</sup> Clearly some further element is needed to explain the timing and nature of the collapse of the Soviet system.

That explanation is to be found in the figure of Gorbachev himself. It took specific initiatives by Gorbachev to turn these systemic problems into a systemic crisis. Of course this was not his intention. In his manifesto *Perestroika* (1988) it is clear that his aim was to purify and cleanse the system, to return it to its Leninist roots, rather than destroy it. ‘*Glasnost*’ or ‘openness’ began as a means of restoring vigour to social and political life as well as a method of gaining public support for reforms which Gorbachev believed necessary but very soon the process went beyond his control. Openness meant that Soviet citizens were now newly aware of rooted problems in their society, and access to the media gave them the capacity to voice their discontent. *Glasnost* increasingly worked against Gorbachev rather than for him.

By the same token, *perestroika* (or restructuring) began as an effort to reform existing political and economic institutions in order to make them function more efficiently but ended in the erosion of the system itself, most clearly visible in the swift demise of the core principle of the primacy of the Communist Party. Although the Party’s privileged position was not formally ended until 1990, a sequence of reforms, culminating in proposals for a new legislature at the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1988, put paid to the leading role of the Party. Economic restructuring was if anything more disruptive of the old system. With the legalization (within specified limits) of private farming and business cooperatives, followed by the Enterprise Law which allowed producers to sell some of their products on the open market, the ground was cut from under the feet of the old command economy without the introduction of a fully functioning market system. The country had the worst of both worlds.<sup>17</sup>

Setting the seal on what can only be described as revolution in the Soviet Union was Gorbachev’s decision to abandon the so-called ‘Brezhnev Doctrine’ — the idea of limited sovereignty for the socialist bloc countries which was used to justify the crushing of the Prague spring of 1968. In one sense he had no choice but to abrogate this claim of intervention because his credibility at home could hardly survive an attempt to suppress change abroad. But another reason for Gorbachev’s reluctance to enforce the Brezhnev Doctrine was that he had made much in his speeches and writings of his vision of a ‘common European home’ which would bring an end to the division of Europe. Furthermore, his ‘new thinking’ in foreign policy ruled out undertaking military interventions at a time when he was trying to persuade the West that he was keen on peace and reconciliation. In short, the end of the Soviet system meant the end of the Soviet bloc, and indeed the people of Eastern Europe seized their chances with alacrity.<sup>18</sup>

### **Interactions between External and Internal Environments**

Explaining the end of the cold war cannot be a matter simply of choosing between internal or external pressures, even if we opt to assign greater significance to one or the other. Despite the numerous books on the subject of the end of communism, historians and political scientists have frequently stayed within their specialities and missed opportunities to look at the end of communism in global terms.<sup>19</sup> In practice, as we have seen, internal and external pressures operated on each other. Gorbachev needed peace — and the fruits of peace which would include trade and aid — with the United States in order to be able to pursue his reforms, which meant that there was a necessary connection between his domestic and foreign policies. It was impossible, furthermore, for Gorbachev to insulate his plans for the Soviet Union from his vision of the European future. The end of the cold war is a classic instance of what has by now become virtually a cliché in political science: the erosion of the boundary between domestic and foreign affairs.

In one sense what we are talking about here is globalization and indeed it is possible to see a crucial weakness of the Soviet bloc as lying in its inability to participate in and profit from the swiftly globalizing economy and culture of the second half of the twentieth century. There was a double problem. On the one hand, Soviet bloc efforts to develop fuller trade links, greater travel opportunities and cultural exchanges with the West exposed the vulnerability of communism to Western economic

and cultural influence rather than strengthening it. Western German TV stations were routinely viewed in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, for example. A trans-European peace movement grew in the 1970s which linked anti-nuclear and pro-democracy forces on both sides of the Iron Curtain. While there is dispute about how far such pressures influenced government policies in the West, it is plausible to assume that they helped to generate ferment in Eastern Europe.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, there were distinct limits to the Soviet bloc's ability to participate in the global economy because of the ideological barriers which were built into the system. To allow too much freedom, too much contact, across the ideological divide would threaten the very existence of the society. Soviet bloc leaders were powerless, however, to control the level and type of communication between East and West.

In the end, perhaps it was the consciousness in the Soviet bloc of growing *relative disadvantage* vis à vis the West which led to the crumbling of communism. The speed with which the citizens of Eastern Europe shuffled off the coil of communism suggests that communist ideology had long been little more than an unpleasant formality. Once that insight had penetrated to the leadership of the Soviet Union there was little to sustain the illusion of a supposed socialist utopia. And the walls came tumbling down.

## NOTES

- 1 Samuel F. Wells, Jr, 'Nuclear Weapons and European Security During the Cold War, in Michael J. Hogan, ed., *The End of the Cold War: Its Meanings and Implications*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 64.
- 2 Raymond Garthoff, 'Why did the Cold War Arise and Why Did it End?' in Hogan, ed., *The End of the Cold War*, 127ff.
- 3 Arthur Schlesinger Jr, 'Lessons from the Cold War,' in Hogan, ed., *The End of the Cold War*, 54.
- 4 See Hogan, ed., *The End of the Cold War* and David Armstrong and Erik Goldstein, eds., *The End of the Cold War*, London: Frank Cass, 1991.
- 5 For a brief treatment of the historiography of the cold war see Richard Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941-1991*, London: Routledge, 1995, 64-72.
- 6 See George Kennan, 'The GOP Won the Cold War? Ridiculous', *New York Times*, 28 October 1992. Kennan, a specialist on the Soviet Union and the intellectual architect of America's containment policy while working in the American diplomatic service and then the State Department in the 1940s, had by the 1980s become an advocate of détente and a fierce critic of America's cold war stance and particularly its nuclear policies. Richard Pipes' letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, November 6, 1992 puts the contrary position. Pipes had been an adviser to President Reagan and was author of a critique of détente which charged that it was a one-way street in the Soviet Union's favour. See *US-Soviet Relations in the Era of Détente*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1981.
- 7 The discussion of 'triumphalism' revolved around the publication in 1989 of Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History?' *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, 3-18. See also Charles Krauthammer, 'The Unipolar Moment,' *Foreign Affairs* 70, 1990-91, 23-33 who argued that with the potential for disorder in the new international situation, the United States must be prepared to 'lay down the rules for world order and be prepared to enforce them.' Among those who rejected triumphalism was Raymond Garthoff in *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1994.
- 8 John L. Gaddis, 'Hanging Tough Paid Off,' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 45, No. 1, January 1989, 11-14. This article cannot be taken as Gaddis' general judgement on the end of the cold war, which in any case had not finally taken place at the time he wrote the article; it refers rather to changes in Soviet policy such as its signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987 and withdrawal from Afghanistan the following year. Gaddis's reflections on the end of the cold war are contained in *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- 9 Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, 'Reagan and the Russians,' *Atlantic Monthly* Vol. 273, No. 2, February 1994, pp. 35-7. A longer version of this article appears as a postscript to their book *We All Lost the Cold War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 369-76.
- 10 Thomas Risse-Kappen, 'Did "Peace Through Strength" End the Cold War?,' *International Security*, Vol. 16 No. 1, Summer 1991, 162-87.

- 11 See Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War*, Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1997, see especially pp.102-111.
- 12 Raymond Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War*, Washington,DC: Brookings Institution, 1994, 753.
- 13 Paul Dobb, *The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies/Macmillan, 1988, 266.
- 14 Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, London: Michael Joseph, 1994, 472.
- 15 John L. Gaddis, 'The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System,' *International Security* 10, No.4, 1986, 99-142.
- 16 Seweryn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline*, New York: Knopf, 1986, 19.
- 17 On the collapse of the Soviet system it is useful to start with two excellent accounts by journalists: Angus Roxburgh, *The Second Russian Revolution*, London: BBC, 1991 and David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*, London: Viking, 1993. A more reflective recent account, which insists that the Soviet collapse must be seen in a longer term perspective, is Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. For economic issues see Marshall Goldman, *What Went Wrong with Perestroika*, New York: Norton, 1992.
- 18 On Eastern Europe see Charles Gati, *The Bloc That Failed: Soviet-East European Relations in Transition*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991; K. Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform: The Great Challenge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- 19 I have tried to give such a global interpretation in *The Fifty years War*, Ch. 13.
- 20 Mary Kaldor, 'Who Killed the Cold War?' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1995, 57-60; and E.P. Thompson, 'The Ends of Cold War,' *New Left Review*, 182, July/August, 139-46.

## Reviews and Perspectives

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### Herbivores and Carnivores

<b>The Social Bases of Nazism</b> Cambridge University Press	£9.95	Pbk	2003	<b>Detlef Mühlberger</b> ISBN 0 52100 372 5
<b>The Coming of the Third Reich</b> Penguin/Allen Lane	£25	Hbk	2003	<b>Richard J Evans</b> ISBN 0 71399 648 X
<b>In Defence of History</b> Granta Books	£9.99	Pbk	2000	<b>Richard J Evans</b> ISBN 1 86207 395 3
<b>Telling Lies About Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial</b> Verso	£14	Pbk	2002	<b>Richard J Evans</b> ISBN 1 85984 417 0

In the Preface to the anthology "On History" (Abacus p/bk 2002 p vii) Eric Hobsbawm provides a marvellous image of the historical profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: "Theoreticians of all kinds circle round the peaceful herd of historians as they graze on the rich pasture of their primary sources or chew the cud of each other's publications. Sometimes even the least combative feel impelled to face their attackers."

In this eco-system of historical research there has emerged a mutual dependency between herbivores and carnivores, between the likes of Mühlberger and Evans.

Many herbivores survive within a small territory: "Anyone who has carried out historical research quickly becomes aware that their knowledge is more complete than that of others.... The materials left to us by the past are so extensive that all the historians who have ever worked have done little more than scratch the surface of the deposits which have accumulated" ("Defence" p48).

Favourable climatic circumstances have seen a remarkable expansion in herbivore numbers. In Britain alone, "The new universities founded in the wake of the Robbins Report in the late 1960s almost all established history departments" (ibid, p171). Similar developments have taken place in the USA, France and Germany.

It is in this environment that Mühlberger and a clutch of researchers have patiently and industriously worked. One question above all others is central to students of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Germany. It is – "Why Nazism?" Why did hundreds of thousands of individuals freely choose to join with Hitler before 30 January 1933? But as Mühlberger states "it is only by identifying as precisely as possible *those who were Nazis* that a meaningful answer can be given." (Mühlberger, p1).

Even before Hitler came to power the view of Nazism as a middle class phenomenon was widely held. Thus Trotsky wrote with seductive elegance on August 1932: "Turning away from the old parties, or awakening to political life for the first time, the motley masses of the petty bourgeoisie have rallied round the swastika. For the first time in their entire history, the middle classes – the artisans, the shopkeepers, the 'liberal professions', the clerks, functionaries, and peasants – all these strata divided by tradition and interests have united in a crusade" (Leon Trotsky, "The German Puzzle", August 1932, in "The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany," Pelican, 1975, p252).

Such a view became the prevailing orthodoxy among both Marxists and non-Marxists. But was such an interpretation impressionistic rather than empirical? Two factors converged to challenge the thesis of Nazism as middle class phenomenon – what Mühlberger describes as "the power of the computer and of ecological regression analysis" (Mühlberger, p11). Computer analysis has enabled Mühlberger and fellow researchers to place the sociography of Nazism on to a solid empirical base.

The rich pastures in which this small herd contentedly chew is a source which, by one of History's accidents, fell into American hands in 1945. Around 10 million NSDAP membership files, stored in roughly 5000 boxes, the cards were used to facilitate justice and de-nazification processes in the post 1945 period. As Mühlberger breathlessly records, "The Master File of the NSDAP's membership has provided very rich results, especially on the longitudinal development pattern of the social contours of the membership of the Nazi Party." (ibid, p15).

Mercifully, Mühlberger elsewhere understands the importance of clarity of meaning for the historian and in his monograph succinctly summarises the significance of two decades of research on this and other sources. There have been scholarly skirmishes along the way. Much of the brouhaha between them has hinged on the terminological inexactitude of occupations recorded by the Party rank and file: "the goal of absolute precision is not attainable." (ibid, p20)

Mühlberger illustrates this through a review of the scholarship of Michael Kater across two decades. In 1971 Kater saw the Nazi Party on the eve of the Munich Putsch as a lower-middle-class phenomenon. In Mühlberger's view this is an unrealistic class model as Kater defines the proletariat in terms only of unskilled workers. But by 1993 in partnership with Jürgen Falter, a writer wedded to the "people's party" view of Nazism, Kater announced his conversion to regarding the NSDAP as a "Volkspartei" (ibid, pp 78/80 and also Bibliography references 38 and 70/76).

Students of the Third Reich period can thus now be fairly confident in answering the question, "Who were the Nazis?" and framing their response across boundaries of class, age and geographical location. But there remain further compelling issues, as Mühlberger himself acknowledges. One key source for researchers has been the 1935 membership census, the Partei Statistik, organised by Robert Ley. While the Nazis had enrolled around 1.5 million members before 1933, only 849,009 of these were still in the NSDAP at census-time. Why did the Party have such a throughput? Did its great rival before 1933, the KPD, also have many birds of passage? And, most important of all, just why did people become Nazis?

Only the carnivores are equipped to deal with such weighty matters. Fearsome of mien and voracious of appetite, devouring and digesting the herbivores and all their works, these awesome creatures dominate their environment. One such is Professor Richard J Evans.

Evans has a mission: to write a trilogy on the history of Germany, 1918-1945. His books "are addressed in the first place to people who know nothing about the subject or who know a little and would like to know more." ("Coming", p(xv)). And why? "understanding how and why the Nazis came to power is as important today as it ever was, perhaps, as memory fades, even more so." (ibid, p (xx)). We need to discover why the politicians of Weimar Germany were unable to feel the earthquake swelling under their feet and why so many Germans embraced Lucifer's blood brother.

Evans possesses many strengths enabling him to tackle this mighty task. In his late 50s he is at the height of his intellectual and reflective powers, a scholar immersed in knowledge of German history and – not least – a writer of Heaven-sent clarity. Witness the trilogy's opening sentence: "Is it wrong to begin with Bismarck?" From here, Evans proceeds to tease out and unravel the legacy of the Iron Chancellor and establish those crucial continuities between the Germany of 1871 and the coming of the Third Reich.

There is, as we shall see, an intellectual consistency to all of Evan's work. He is an historian driven by necessity. The Preface to "The Coming of the Third Reich" should be read by every student of the period and their teachers. In it Evans reviews the canon of writing on Germany 1918-1945. Many previous histories and specialist studies are now either superannuated – next stop the stacks – or have to be read with care. He clearly establishes the necessity in the opening decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for a "broad, large scale general history."

Inspired by the likes of Orlando Figes and Margaret Macmillan, in "The Coming of the Third Reich" Evans emphasises the importance of narrative history and of putting identifiable human beings centre stage. Thus his work is peppered with anecdotes from the likes of the lugubrious diarist, Victor Klemperer and the memoirs of the KPD activist, Richard Krebs. The Goebbels Diaries are for him a rich seam.



A man of the Left, Evans writes persuasively on the catastrophic failure of socialists, reformist and revolutionary, to unite against the Nazi threat. He provides us with a memorable pen picture of the KPD leader, Ernst Thälmann, one of life's bruisers, an instinctive revolutionary but putty in Stalin's crafty fingers.

As befits a writer of his status, Evans' book is meticulously footnoted. (In passing, we must hope that his publishers do not fall into the disgracefully dangerous practice of omitting footnotes from the soft-back version after the fashion of Margaret Macmillan's "Peacemakers"). He writes with judicious precision on Nazism's social base, noting the high turnover in Party membership, particularly among the working class. Evans acknowledges the importance of Mühlberger's work on Nazism in Saxony where the economy was less "modern" than Berlin or the Ruhr: "By the early 1930s, however, the proportion of middle- and upper-class Party members in the Saxon Nazi Party were increasing, as the Party became more respectable. Slowly the Nazis were escaping their modest and humble roots and beginning to attract members of Germany's social elites." (ibis, p226; see also fn 159, p504).

At what stage in their careers do historians like Mühlberger realise that in them there is no big book, no global best seller? At what moment is there acceptance of a life lived under low wattage light bulbs leading to the next archive rather than under the klieg lights of TV studios and film locations? It will be a career providing footnotes and paragraphs for Klio's predator breed.

But fearful and envious as the humble herbivores might be of these lordly creatures they realise their necessity. For it is they who do combat with those who threaten the eco-system from without. It is carnivores of the like of Evans who must be the scourge of those who deny what he terms "the Western rationalist tradition" ("Defence", p241) and those who would tell lies about Hitler.

By the mid 1990s the discipline of History – as most of us reading this review know and understand it – was under siege from a ravaging band of marauders, with Barthes, Foucault and Fukuyama in the van. Consigning History's thinkers like Carr and Elton to the compost heap, the philosopher Hans Kellner proclaimed objectivity dead, long live relativity. Historians and their readers invest documents and history books alike with meaning. There is no meaning there otherwise.

Enter Evans. "In Defence of History" was the necessary counter-blast to the pretentious, pernicious nonsense preached by the post-modernists. Of all the salvoes aimed at his critics the one which should concern us most is that passage in which Evans examines the Final Solution and how the post-modernists would have us view it.

In a campus climate of political correctness and hyper-relativity, "Holocaust denial" can gain credence, stature and legitimacy. If there is no historical objectivity, if history can be constantly revisited what makes revision of the Holocaust any different, say, from debate over the Rise of the Gentry in 17<sup>th</sup> Century England?

Evans noted how Holocaust deniers cloaked themselves in academic gowns – a respectable title for their network, the "Institute for Historical Review", a journal with footnotes and references. To his alarm a post-modernist such as Diane Purkiss appeared to simply shrug her shoulders – "Their use of .... scholarly apparatus ... and their insistence that they are telling the objective truth, demonstrates in Purkiss's view the 'dire consequences' of such a scholarly apparatus, the bankruptcy of such a belief in objectivity and truth." (ibid, p242). Much in the style of a latter day Dr Johnson refuting Bishop Berkeley, Evans will have none of this: "the point is that the *pseudo-scholarship* of the Holocaust deniers is easily unmasked as a sham." (ibid, p242)

In 2000 the seed bed to the sequel to "In Defence of History" was sown. Evans was employed as the key expert witness for Penguin Books in the David Irving Holocaust Denial libel trial. With hindsight he might just reconsider his use of the word "easily". For the task he was set was to strip Irving bare of any credibility as an historian, to show him to the world as a sham. With two research assistants, Thomas Skelton-Robinson and Nik Wachsmann – Evans spent "all of 1998 and much of 1999" investigating "into Irving's way with historical documents" ("Telling Lies", p193). He had to read, line by line, the published works of a prolific author across four decades and pore over all the Discovery Documents released by Irving.

Central to his account of this is his chapter on the bombing of Dresden. Irving had created a reputation for himself as a revisionist historian with the publication in 1963 of “The Destruction of Desden” (refer “Telling Lies”, p300, fn 6, for a full list of the book’s many editions). Evans shows how “Irving had massaged up the death toll from the Allied bombing raids in Dresden long before he began to argue that Hitler had been a friend of the Jews, and more than two decades before he started to deny the existence of the gas chambers”. (“Telling Lies”, p185).

Given that this was a High Court libel trial it would be necessary for Evans to utterly destroy Irving. “Telling Lies about Hitler” is thus the record of a brutal mauling. By the time of his Closing Statement in the trial was Irving punch-drunk? Evans tells us that Irving “inadvertently addressed the judge as ‘Mein Fuhrer’” In a rare glimpse of mordant humour, Evans opines: “Perhaps the slip was a consequence of Irving’s unconscious identification of the judge as a benign authority figure.” (“Telling Lies” p231).

Judgement Day came. Mr Justice Gray found that Penguin Books and author Deborah Lipstadt, had not libelled Irving. Irving faced ruin both in terms of his personal finances and whatever scholarly reputation he had had. But beyond this the judge had delivered a crucial verdict on historical objectivity: “An objective historian is obliged to be even-handed in his approach to historical evidence: he cannot pick and choose without adequate reason.... I accept that historians are bound by the constraints of space to edit quotations. But there is an obligation on them not to give the reader a distorted impression by selective quotation” (“Telling Lies”, p235).

Irving had been left pitilessly exposed but equally significantly so too had been the intellectual and moral poverty of the relativists and post-modernists. Who among them would have had the stamina and the stomach for the fight that Evans won? All of us with a place in Klio’s eco-system, herbivores and carnivores alike, recognise his necessity.

RON GRANT

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**Hunt Tooley**

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This book looks quite small in size, but is in fact a fairly substantial volume on the First World War; it’s certainly got much more in it than just the Western Front. The opening sections cover the obvious issues concerning the origins of war; the industrial and technological growth; the growth of national liberalism as a factor influencing the aggressiveness of states; social attitudes towards war, and the paradox of the European generals believing in the power of the offensive [the morale effect of the attack] whilst at the same time being well aware that defences were getting ever stronger. Other factors that the author covers, which don’t normally get much of a mention in my teaching, include the greater interest in psychology [Jung, Nietzsche etc] which were significant in creating greater national assertion; and the rise of the popular press and interest in novels, where wars were seen as ‘*dangerous larks*’ and therefore not necessarily to be avoided. All this helpfully builds up to an explanation why everyone one thought the war was inevitable and would be brief; ‘*a set of short preliminaries, then a colossal battle of decision.*’ He makes the interesting point of the synonymy of ‘*mobilisation*’ and ‘*war*’; one meant the other, because ‘*if a state mobilized its resources, it had to mean it.*’

The introductory sections therefore contain nothing really new or particularly provoking, but nevertheless cover some fairly detailed explanation of the pre-war events, and analyses the effects of the actions of the different states at that time.

The chapter on the attitudes of the belligerent nations questions the notion of widespread enthusiasm; was it more just an urban phenomenon? He questions why were so ready to go to war, so innocent. He develops many of the issues that Jay Winter and Fussell have raised in their books. Everyone at the time seems to have had the ‘lofty ideals’ approach commented on by Lloyd George, and therefore war became a sanitised illusion dealing only with acts of gallantry, rather than the hell in the mud that it really was. The book contains some fairly detailed analysis of the operation of the

Schlieffen Plan and its failure; the role of Liege, the Belgian army, and the BEF. He asks whether the battle of the Marne was '*Joffre's trap*'? Now that's an interesting spin on an event where I normally contend the French got the best of a draw out of a tight situation. I've never under-estimated Joffre's imperturbability, but I've never seen him as a high strategist.

The author moves on through the fairly routine stuff of the impact of war on soldiers; their uniform, boots, weight of equipment; and also the question of why they fought; patriotism, shame, propaganda etc. There is quite an extensive section on the Bryce Report into the Belgian atrocities and the use of propaganda in general, and in influencing the USA to enter the war. He also develops some ideas on the enormous economic implications of the shortage of manpower caused by going to war; how governments tried to maximise their income from 'popular' sources of public money, and tried to hide how they were taking it from the less popular.

The author raises interesting discussion on the problems raised by the 'stalemate' on the Western Front, and indeed, if the word *stalemate* is really even applicable when so many new tactics were being tried. A few little sloppy bits that copy readers could have picked up around this section were St Juliens [p84 and p123], 51<sup>st</sup> Highlander Division [p119], '*first gas attack of the war in March 1915*', [p123; it should have read April.] Any book like this, making a consistent attempt to cross-reference the inter-linking strands, may face a problem of repeating bits of information that are needed to re-set the scene. The proof readers should be able to watch out for wholesale 'lifts' from one chapter into another though.. and spot when a paragraph on p171 on 'live and let live' attitudes is being rehearsed on p186 and then just about word-for-word repeated on p201.

In Chapter 5 the author discusses 1916 and the notion of a 'turning point'. This concept could be justified on the basis of the development and application of new technology, the rise in the losses and the move towards the idea of attrition, and the emergence of 'strong men' in just about every nation to lead the war effort. These issues let the author further develop his underlying point that all aspects of the war [home front, fighting fronts, diplomatic fronts] are inter-linked. The Verdun and Somme offensives obviously get a mention... although Henry Rawlinson, the leader of the British 4<sup>th</sup> Army, and somewhat more culpable for the operational failings of the Somme battles than Haig, doesn't.

The chapter on 1917 covers the rise and use of the somewhat more specialised battlefield tactics and training, the role of the Nivelle offensive in linking home and front in France, and Passchendaele. The author wonders how it was that Nivelle got the sack after the Chemin des Dames, but Haig kept his job after Passchendaele. This chapter sees a digression off onto the Russian Revolution, to further develop the idea, as the author nicely puts it; of the *reductio ad absurdum*, in dealing with the possibilities and trends of what could happen to any of the warring powers under the pressures and strains of that war.

Chapter 7 develops ideas on the paradox of the rise of the 'repressive society' during the war; compared to the allied war aims of 'making the world safe for democracy'. This leads to some good discussion of blacks in America, and the unbending regime inside Australia, as exemplars. There is a section on the cultural resonances on art and literature which started off looking brief; but then blossomed into a very interesting section on the great literary heroes of our time who had the roots of the existence of their ideas in the trenches... Tolkien, Dr Doolittle, Winnie the Pooh, Narnia etc.

The author's description of the various parts of the 1918 Ludendorff offensive gets a bit disorganised on p237; with offensives labelled '*St Michael*', '*Georg*' and '*Operation -*' [was this blank space intentional?] for what we generally know as Michael, Georgette and Gneisenau; or Somme, Lys and Aisne if you want the rivers. Then I think the text reads the opposite of what it meant to read on p249, by stating of Ludendorff that '*His call for a change of civilian government was shaped by his usual inability to blame anyone but himself for his failures.*'

So, this is a book that tries to give a bit of width to the perspectives of the impact of war on both combatant and civilian society at the time, and in more countries than just the winners. While the twenty pages of footnotes suggest the scholarship, the horizon of the author is far wider than the title would suggest, and this is probably the real virtue of a book like this. It moves into a few new areas that haven't really been explored elsewhere in the main literature. When you add in an approachable, common-sense writing style, it makes an engaging read.

ANDREW HUNT

## **The Army of Northern Virginia: Lee's Army in the American Civil War, 1861-1865** **Philip Katcher**

Fitzroy Dearborn [Routledge]      £65.00      Hbk      352pp      2003      ISBN 1 57958 331 8

Having spent much of the summer of 1997 following in the footsteps of Lee's army, this book brought back many memories of that long-held ambition to visit some of the Civil War sites in the Eastern theatre of war. From First Bull Run, the Peninsula campaign, the Seven Days Battle, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness Campaign and Cold Harbor and from there to the trenches of Petersburg and the final surrender at Appomatox, this book chronicles the triumphs and losses of the Army of Northern Virginia.

The book is part of a series dealing with the great armies of the world, trying to explain why some units bond to form an effective fighting force. This is attempted by looking at the component parts of an army and how they fit together and, most crucially, how they are then led and the fellowship which develops between the fighting men and their leaders.

The book is divided into four distinct, yet interlocking parts. The first deals with the causes of the war. Needless to say in a book of such length and with its primary focus on how the Army of Northern Virginia fought, this section is quite brief. Nonetheless it does give a general overview of the issues, and in particular, the impact which John Brown's raid had on the South, galvanising many Southern States to look more closely at the State militia. In Virginia, this led to the creation of five new regiments and six battalions by the April of 1861. There is also an explanation of how the Southern States seceded from the Union and their justification for same, the defence of states' rights. The creation of the Confederate armies in the spring and early summer of 1861 is also developed and there is discussion of the problems that such an exercise presented. One of the features of the text is the inserts which develop issues in slightly more detail. In part one, for example, there are inserts on the crucial part to be played by Virginia in the Eastern Theatre and extracts from relevant primary sources. Interestingly, the book also highlights some of the problems that would beset the armies of the Confederacy throughout the war – the issue of local control and the voting for officers.

The impact of technology on the war is also shown for example the impact of the development of the Minie Ball and this is accompanied by lavish illustrations showing how tactics did change as a result of this. From the standard attack in column, this evolved into attacks in wave formation and finally the "Indian rush" in an attempt to reduce casualties. These are all shown in diagram format that this reader found very useful. Also shown in this format is the organisation of the infantry from regiment to army level, and how both cavalry and artillery were also deployed in the army. These additions are certainly one of the strengths of the book. The discussion on logistics was quite illuminating as it highlighted the enormous problems that the South faced in trying to equip her armies and how competition between State and Confederate agencies often left the South paying a far higher price than was necessary. Napoleon stated that 'an army marches on its stomach' but for the South one of the most pressing issues was the lack of footwear and indeed the great three day battle at Gettysburg was initially due to a Southern raiding party looking for shoes in the town and running into a Federal cavalry column. This illustrates how small details can have important consequences. Such a theme is returned to several times throughout the book and clearly the author sees in this the seeds of ultimate Confederate defeat.

Part two, entitled 'The Years of Attack', details the fighting that the Army of Northern Virginia was engaged in to 1863. It is remarkable how small was the difference between success and failure and this section shows how important was the role of the railway to both sides at several times during the conflict. As a record of the fighting this section is mostly narrative, using many contemporary documents to flesh out the point being made by the author. Ironically in a book subtitled 'Lee's Army in the American Civil War', it is not until page 127 that Lee actually takes command of the army. However, his leadership skills were soon to the front when repulsing McClellan's painfully slow progress towards Richmond during the Seven Days campaign. However, Katcher is right to point out that Lee's naturally aggressive instincts could cost the army dear, as shown by his attack on well-defended Federal positions at Malvern Hill. Nonetheless, Lee used this as a springboard for an invasion of the North,

knowing that he could not sustain his army in the North indefinitely. He was of a mind to carry the attack to 'those people' in the hope that the futility of the Northern attempt to coerce the South back into the Union would force a compromise peace. This campaign would culminate at Antietam in September 1862, and Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation that changed the whole nature of the war. Nonetheless, Burnside, described as "decisive in action but tactically inept" would hand Lee his most one-sided victory at Fredericksburg. Having walked up from the Rappahannock River through the streets of present day Fredericksburg and stood in the 'Sunken Road' and looked down from Marye's Heights where Confederate forces were well dug in, even this reviewer could see that such an attack, where every move of the Federal Army could be observed, in the midst of winter, would be a disaster. Another insert leads into a debate about why Lee did not follow up such an overwhelming victory and shows the different viewpoints held within Lee's staff on the issue. Chancellorsville, Lee's greatest victory, is dealt with in considerable detail but this was achieved at considerable cost. The death of 'Stonewall' Jackson is viewed as a turning point. Until that point, "The Army of Northern Virginia's morale had been sky high. But with Jackson's death, especially when coupled with the bad situation on the home front which soldiers were becoming aware of, it began a steady decline, starting with the lowest ranks and working up". Similarly, as would be expected, the Battle of Gettysburg, is also analysed in detail, with another insert looking at the issue of J.E.B. Stuart's missing cavalry until the evening of the second of July. This marked the high watermark of the Confederacy and never again would Lee's army be in a position to mount an aggressive campaign again.

In Part Three, 'The Nature of the Army' this is where Katcher attempts to show how all the components combined to make the Army of Northern Virginia such an effective fighting force. This is developed by a critical analysis of Lee and his senior command structure and how this impacted upon the rank and file. Finally there is an assessment of the relationship between the State and Confederate governments.

The hypothesis is that "Lee was the glue that bound the Army of Northern Virginia together". The author also adds that "Had Joseph E Johnston remained in command of the army defending Richmond in 1862, chances are that the war would have ended that year or the next, even with McClellan in command of the opposing army". Of course, this is impossible to prove, much like Potter's assertion that had the North and South exchanged Presidents, the South might have won her independence. However, Katcher does avoid the hero worship of the likes of Douglas Southall Freeman and adopts a position closer to that of Emery Thomas in his recent biography of Lee. His faults are pointed out and his insistence upon attack as the best means of defence led to spectacular victories that "bled his army to death". Indeed, on reading this book, the old Latin saying that "Rome has lost many battles; but has never lost a war" is brought to mind. For despite Lee's undoubted successes, ultimately he failed to deliver the victories necessary to achieve the Southern war aim of independence. Despite this, his relationship with the rank and file was one of the strongest in either side's armies. Grant may have led the Union armies to ultimate victory, yet there would be no other general who could, on speaking to his men after the repulse of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, have received such overwhelming support from his defeated troops.

Katcher does point out that Lee's command style- "He rarely gave direct orders, making suggestions instead"-left too much discretion in the hands of his senior commanders and this was to cost him dear after the death of Jackson and was vividly illustrated by the failure of Ewell to carry Cemetery Ridge on the evening of July 1 at Gettysburg. However, Katcher is prepared to forgive, Lee arguing that "Lee was the heart and soul of the Army of Northern Virginia" and draws the analogy of Napoleon's relations with the Old Guard.

There are some interesting thumbnail sketches of Lee's senior commanders and of the bickering that went on between them. All of this group comes in for criticism for their slack staff work, failure to follow explicit commands and the petty jealousies that they harboured against one another. Yet again however, Katcher absolves them for the guilt of defeat claiming that "they built an army from scratch and held off the Army of the Potomac during four years of campaigning". It is this approach that I found least satisfactory. Nowhere is there an attempt to apportion blame for the ultimate defeat of the Army of Northern Virginia – it just happened.

Drawing upon the pioneering work of Bell Irvin Wiley and the later work of James McPherson, the

author tries to get into the mind of the rank and file soldier of the army. He also notes that the introduction of conscription had a negative impact on soldiers already serving in the army, especially the exemption system that led to complaints of a 'rich man's war and a poor man's fight'. Another common theme is that Southerners made good fighters but poor soldiers, concluding that "to the end, the Army of Northern Virginia was never as well disciplined a unit as its opponents". What held this army together was loyalty – to the white race, to the South, as a defender of the South against Northern aggression and to each other. Here Katcher's use of primary material is at its best with many sources used that are new to this reviewer. It was another aspect of loyalty that was the Achilles heel of the South- loyalty to family and home. As ever increasingly desperate families on the home front wrote to their men-folk in the army, this had a negative impact upon the men in the field, many of whom would desert in the last months of the war.

The problems of State and Confederate governments Katcher sees as arising from the way the South was created. "State governors often saw their states as the single building blocks of the Confederacy, essentially independent nations banded together under a government with little more real power than the national government under the Articles of Confederation had". Ultimately, the defence of state's rights "the very thing that created the Confederacy, was certainly a factor in its ultimate destruction".

The final part of the book, 'The Years of Defense', assesses the fighting after mid-summer 1863, the author arguing that the North missed several opportunities to finish the war off early for a variety of reasons. During the winter of 1863/64, Lee fully realised that all of the North's resources would now be employed against the Confederacy and that "Lee would never again undertake a major strategic move again, but would largely react to those of his enemy". The struggle between Lee and Grant is analysed in detail but the most important outcome for Lee of the stalemate that developed from mid-summer 1864 was the fact that the very causes of his triumphs, the ability to manoeuvre in front of his enemy, had now been eroded and that as his army "became immobilised, numbers became the all-important factor, and the number game was one that the Confederates could never win". As the siege around Petersburg took hold, Lee's army began to disintegrate as men put themselves first due to the need for survival and the growing realisation that the cause was lost. The book concludes with Lee's last address to the Army, General Order Number 9, April 10, 1865, which has become the classic Southern defence of why they lost the war ever since, that "the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources".

So does the book answer the points made for it? Does it explain how the separate components of Lee's army combined to produce an effective fighting unit? Does it provide answers to the question what is required to make an army a battle-winning force? Does it show how an efficient supply system; a good chain of command; effective tactics; good equipment; high morale; and fine leadership interacted to produce an effective fighting force? For this reviewer the answer has to be no. The various sections do not hang together. The author has become immersed in the detail and has not taken the bigger picture into account. Ultimately does it answer the question why did the Army of Northern Virginia hold out for so long against a superior (in terms of numbers and resources) enemy force – alas no and this is the great disappointment of this book. It had the potential to explain what makes a great army and a great leader but fails to deliver. Given the cost, at £65.00, it would not be top of my must-have book list.

JIM MCGONIGLE

## **Lenin and Revolutionary Russia**

Routledge

153 pp

£7.99

Pbk

2003

**Stephen J. Lee**

ISBN 0 415 28718 9

Stephen Lee is himself a school history teacher and his course books on modern German history will be familiar to those doing the Germany 1919-1939 topic at Advanced Higher. This book is a companion to his *Stalin and the Soviet Union* and, with its clear issue-based structure and emphasis on historiography, should prove invaluable to any teacher or student doing the Soviet Russia topic at Advanced Higher. It should also be useful for teachers of the Russian topic at Higher and even provide some much needed stimulation for those teaching the Russian topic at Standard Grade.

Right from the start Lee's approach is historiographical with a brief opening chapter on *Why do historical interpretations differ?* This starts with a short survey of general historiographical approaches which will help students towards a deeper understanding of the nature of history, and then goes on to outline the changing face of Soviet historiography. This is followed by an *Overview: the Bolshevik party and regime, 1903-24*, which, like each of the subsequent chapters, is divided into four parts. The first part of each chapter, *Background*, provides a very brief summary of events; the second part, *Analysis (1)* analyses the events themselves in terms of a major issue, e.g. *Why were the Bolsheviks able to overthrow the Provisional Government in October 1917?* (in chapter 5 on the October Revolution); the third part, *Analysis (2)*, analyses and compares the different historiographical approaches to the issue(s) identified in *Analysis (1)*, e.g. *Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the different interpretations of Bolshevik success in 1917*; the fourth and final part of each chapter, *Sources*, consists of a selection of primary and secondary source extracts relating to the historical and historiographical issues analysed in the chapter, with accompanying questions, one of which is supplied with a worked answer. These questions, even if they are not always along the lines of those in part 2 of the Advanced Higher exam, are similar in that they tend to use the source(s) as a starting point for a wider analysis and/or comparison using recall.

Following the initial overview, the period itself is divided into 5 chapters: *The Origins and growth of Marxism in Russia to 1905* which focuses on the split in the RSDLP between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks; *The Bolsheviks between 1903 and March 1917* which focuses on different views on the Bolsheviks' role leading up to the February/March revolution; *The Bolsheviks and the October Revolution* referred to above; *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Civil War, 1918-22* focusing on how and why views have changed on the origins and scope of the Civil War as well as on why the Bolsheviks won; *The Bolshevik regime, 1918-24* dealing with different interpretations of the nature of Bolshevik rule and their political and economic policies. Finally there is a chapter on *Which Lenin?* analysing and comparing different interpretations of Lenin's role and importance in Russian history.

Because the background summary at the start of each chapter is so brief, this book could not stand alone as a course text-book but could be used in conjunction with others such as those by Lynch and/or Corin and Fiehn – especially as the brief narratives provided at the start of each chapter are very superficial and sometimes include things stated as facts which are the subject of dispute, and even significant errors such as having the October Revolution carried out “*by the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Duma*” (p9, emphasis added) instead of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, or the statement that “*The Communist Party Central Committee also dominated all the executive organs of the state, including the Central Executive Committee and Politburo*” (p10, emphasis added) when, as any fool no, the Politburo was itself the Party's supreme ruling body consisting of the leading Party members. There are also one or two irritating typographical errors, e.g. “*Tsariam*” instead of *Tsarism* on p. xiii, and “*RSPLD*” on p22 despite the fact that in the very next line it is correctly referred to as the “*RSDLP*”.

But such flaws are too few and far between to undermine the value of this book as a summary, analysis and comparison of the different historiographical approaches to the issues arising from the Russian Revolution. As those who have tackled the topic at Advanced Higher will know only too well, the historiography can be complex and difficult for students to follow at times. Lee manages to summarise and compare the various ‘schools’, in particular the Soviet, liberal and revisionist approaches to history ‘from above’ and ‘from below’, elegantly and succinctly without too much oversimplification and also making it clear that they are neither mutually exclusive nor the only possible views. And, while his analysis is scrupulously balanced, he is not afraid to strike out on his own such as when he is considering the extent to which the policy of War Communism may have been the result of pressures ‘from below’ as well as of ideological and/or pragmatic decisions ‘from above’ (p112). The Select Bibliography also provides a useful run-down of works under different headings – *primary, historiography, background reading, Soviet and Western non-Soviet, revisionist* – and graciously acknowledges his debt to Edward Acton's *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (London 1990) for the structure of the historiography in his own book.

DUNCAN TOMS

The chapters which make up this volume are the final 'written up' versions of the contributions made at the conference on 'Scotland and the Great War', held at Glasgow Caledonian University in late 1997. There is the welcome addition of a couple of articles that should have been presented at the conference but the speakers were indisposed on the day. Each article is about 25 pages long and continues the trend of writing about the war with the focus on issues rather than narrative; looking at the nation as a whole, or at various groups, sub-groups or classes and assessing how the war impacted on them. These articles are therefore reflections on some of the underlying themes of a nation at war; they are not wildly revisionist but attempt to remind us of the importance of the different perspectives we could hold when we study this topic.

The first article (an over-arching view that wasn't presented at the conference itself) is Clive Lee's view on the economic impact of the War on Scotland. He shows how the war accelerated industrial growth (output and profits) and indeed just about saved Beardmore's from bankruptcy. There was also a great importation of American technology and methods, which often sat uneasily with traditional Scottish working methods. He goes on to discuss the impact on agriculture, with the surprisingly small increase in cultivated land (about 5%) but a big increase in the output of oats (40%)! The fishing industry was affected in a big way, although the first impact was on the Aberdeen fish curing industry's loss of the trade from the 32 German trawlers based in the North east. They had speedily returned to Germany. Once the war started the industry was hard hit. By 1917, 1143 boats from the Scottish fleet were engaged in admiralty work and less than half of the pre-war fishermen were still in their old jobs. He argues that there was greater loss and disruption on the East coast than the West. Dundee however had good gains for the jute industry, which made most of the sacking for our sandbags. (Lee doesn't give a figures for how many or how much they were worth in total; I've always wondered if there was any profiteering in sandbags.) In other areas, he argues that the war caused a big drift of women into the distributive sector, which has been overlooked by the concentration on the big draft of women into munitions.

Writing on the losses of men due to the war, the author provokingly claims that Scotland's losses were not much different to the national average, and that '*the demographic effect of the First World War was not great*', arguing that it did little more than continue a set of processes (young men emigrating) that had been happening in the years before 1914. He further contentiously added that we shouldn't blame the decline in Scotland's inter-war economic position, on the war itself; most of the problems had existed in 1913!

This article gives a good flavour of the overall quality of argument and width of discussion that can be found in the other articles in this volume. They are also all equally well foot-noted.

In the second article, Iain Hutchison reflects on the impact of the war on the Scottish political situation. His article couldn't possibly do justice to the live act: a bravura performance with Iain at his best, barely a note in sight and talking to some headings on the back of an envelope, that he'd made up 5 minutes before he went on; but then delivering a speech with clarity and a convincing analytic thread. His argument is that the war really did shake up the political parties and left a lasting mark on the political geography of Scotland. The Liberals were '*wiped out*' and became only the spokesmen of the rural middle class, leaving Labour to pick up '*the beacon of progressive social reform*' (despite only having 6 MPs at the 1918 election) while the Tories recovered from their poor pre-war position. Iain made interesting comment on the Tories' use of candidates with military titles (46%) compared to the Liberals (10%) and Labour (none). The role of the church ('*virtually solid endorsement for the war from the Presbyterians*'), the politicisation of women during the rent strike, the growth of socialism and the attitude of the Co-op movement are all political aspects of the impact of the War which invited the author's comments. He continued with the question of whether the war diminished or sharpened the demand for Scottish home rule. In his lecture he posed it more as an unanswerable question whereas in the book he has come down more on the side of '*the experience of war seems also to have*



*reinforced the identification of some Scots with the UK and the Empire.'*

Some readers will remember the contribution of labour historian Bill Kenefick to our *Year Book* in 1997. In that same confident style, his contribution to this volume gives an ILP perspective on anti-conscription and conscientious objection. Since many of the records of the tribunals will not be available until 2018 (*I got that from the lecture but it's not in the book!*), a better place to look for attitudes towards resistance to conscription would be in the two main ILP magazines; '*Forward*' and '*Labour Leader*'. These would give valuable insights into the thinking of the main social group who would be opposed to it and the author brings out some very illuminating stories about unjust behaviour at the tribunals. The two ILP publications were '*anti-conscription all the way*' and therefore very much *contra* the mainstream of the British press. Indeed, '*Forward*' felt it had a hard time swimming against the tide of feeling about it, since other major Scottish papers like the *Glasgow Herald* and *Daily Record* were in favour of conscription before it was even introduced! However, the efforts of the ILP were not in vain. They thought that their anti-war message would be misunderstood, but the way they put it over and showed how it fitted with their socialist beliefs; led to an increase in membership by the end of the war.

The next article by Cameron and Robertson looks at the relationship between tradition and promise in the recruiting of soldiers from the highland area. The Highlands already had a strong military identity, but the events of the 19th century (especially the Clearances) had done much to disturb traditional relationships between chiefs and their clans. The question was, would there be enough vestigial authority of the landlords to rekindle the martial enthusiasm, or would there have to be new promises made to keep up the supplies of willing manpower?

The answer was that a combination of both worked, although the promise was chiefly a misconception, (not quite a lie). You might have thought that the clan chiefs would have had a hard job camouflaging the treatment that they'd dished out over the previous century, but they heroically rose above it: one clan chief even reminding his men of the brutality [and nationality] of the forces of Butcher Cumberland and comparing the events of 1746 with the events in Belgium in 1914! This was accompanied by a good dose of 'the gallant highlander' rhetoric which seemed widely believed at the time.

It was also the case however that recruitment was boosted by the belief that there would be land redistribution. This belief was reinforced during the war, by the work of the DORA committee who were charged with getting more arable land under cultivation. They returned deer forest to arable land and made local people tenants. This encouraged a wide belief that there would be a later, bigger resettlement. The shock came in 1918 when the tenancy arrangements were terminated at the same time as DORA. The problem was that a loose national promise to look at the land issue, was converted (by the wartime circumstances and in the minds of the soldiers at the time of recruitment) into a specific local promise where the highlanders had a particular [possibly long-standing] interest in recovering ownership of a piece of land. It is easy to see, in this perspective, why the highland soldiers felt betrayed when the property rights of the landlords were re-established with the full force of law and they got nothing.

In the next article, Ian Wood investigates the background and attitudes of the Royal Scots Territorials, an Edinburgh regiment. He opens with some interesting debate on the class nature of territorial recruitment (drifting towards working class, to the horror of some, but the middle class weren't as interested as they had been). The author then turns to the nature of recruitment itself; in some cases little short of blackmail with recruiting sergeants asking; '*Are you suffering from apronstringitis laddie?*' The analysis of the motivation for joining moved onto a more conventional military narrative of the first actions of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> battalions in Gallipoli (following on from the Gretna rail disaster). This article was written in a more reverential and poignant style than the others in this volume. It became a tribute to the Edinburgh citizenry, more in the style of an admiring eulogy to their sacrifice and loss, than an analysis of the war's impact. It doesn't suffer from this but I was glad the whole book wasn't written in this style. It becomes apparent in the last paragraph why it takes this approach; the author's father was personally involved, being one of the 150 survivors of the 4<sup>th</sup> battalion's 970 Edinburgh men who had set out for Gallipoli.

The next article is by Gordon Urquhart. Due to the illness of another speaker, he stepped in on the

day of the conference to give his own views on the importance of the war in highland identity. In the article in this volume however, he pursues a different theme; the impact on its Scottish readership of Ian Hay's book *The First Hundred Thousand*. Urquhart considers how far it can be seen as a 'letter home', preparing the reader to better understand the realities of war.. and he also considers the importance of metaphor in reinforcing the veracity of this account.

The use of public school boy expressions, recognised locales and humour, the colloquialisms but also constant sense of respect for one's betters; all these features conferred on its readers' minds an acceptable vision of what life at the front could be like. The pawky humour and informality of the prose left the reader in no doubt that this was something their boys could handle. These stylistic 'comforts' let Hay give the story of a real battle, Loos, with all its huge losses of men and small gains, in a way which didn't encourage a mass refusal to fight. Truth and fiction became blurred and his book became a powerful propaganda tool for recruitment. The next article, by Catriona Macdonald, also wasn't given at the conference, but is a welcome written addition to the volume; a discussion on the attitude towards the alien residents in Scotland in 1915. How were they treated, and why, in specific cases, was there bad treatment? This account particularly interested me because among the list at the start was Albert Becher, Pork butcher from Alloa. He was mistreated as an alien and ostracised in 1915, and had his windows broken by the Alloa mob. All this is well documented in the *Alloa Advertiser* of the time. Yet he didn't desert the town, and his grand-son rose to be dux of Alloa Academy in 1955 and is still well remembered by some of the older present staff members who were pupils alongside him.

It seems that the main mistreatment of alien residents on Scotland (only 3232 Germans in Scotland in 1901) occurred in May 1915 and it only occurred in Dumfries, Greenock, Alloa, Perth, Edinburgh and Leith. Was there a common factor behind the stirring up of the local population only in these 6 localities? The author makes an interesting survey of general factors, including what may have happened in England, but is forced to deny the possible effect of the Belgian atrocities, [far too early], the sinking of the Lusitania [*'unconvincing'* although it was just a week earlier] or the scurrilous press, [not read widely enough by the perpetrators]. Although she does see the press as contributing to the 'idea of the local enemy' for the home front to focus on, seeing as the real enemy was a bit too far away to actually hate. So, she comes down on the side of the impact of war casualties [April casualty figures for the first gas attacks at Ypres were just coming through] tied in with economic envy [since all the attacked aliens were relatively prosperous] and drunk/rowdy youths who suspected they would soon be facing call up. Like a lot of the articles; the view here is that there is a distinctly Scottish side to the experience; it may be a part of a bigger British thing but was also different from it.

The last article in the volume is from Callum Brown; a SATH favourite for both his contributions to the *Year Book* and his SATH conference presentation. His assured article reviews the relationship between piety and the conditions of war. He asks how the war affected the religiosity of men at the front and what impact did it have on the women that were left behind? Did the myth of feminine piety endure through the war? He discusses the way Protestant religion seemed on the rocks with no hope of recovery.. being ditched even by women who were moving towards a changing morality due to war circumstances. But then shows how a massive revival in 1916-17 aimed to save the myth and re-invent the piety of women. By 1920 there had been wholesale changes in many parts of Scotland in attitudes towards gambling and temperance, and women had been 'recovered' as the main bastions of the pious church, so much so that by 1925, church attendance was at its highest for 20 years.

The war might have ended 85 years ago, indeed, a different century ago; but articles and books like these show just how much unfinished business there still is in making sense of this part of our past. There are still rich areas left untapped. Exposing these sorts of new ideas and issues (and indeed the sources, photos and posters which illustrate the book) to a wider audience is essential, and I applaud the dual role played by the university department and the publishing house in this task. This is an excellent production.

ANDREW HUNT

This review first appeared in SATH's *Resources Review* March 2000

For a teacher or student seeking to understand the dynamics of the reign of Louis XIV, Sturdy's new book, published as part of the *European History in Perspective* series, provides an illuminating background. Although Sturdy acknowledges the danger of slipping into the 'great man' approach to history, one cannot escape the fact that the history of 17th century France is dominated by 3 individuals – Richelieu, Mazarin and Louis XIV. The two cardinals are 'among the political giants of that century'. Richelieu in particular is 'a figure of towering political importance'. This book examines the careers, qualities and achievements of two very different men, and the legacy they handed on to the Sun King, finding both parallels and contrasts in the way they handled the challenges facing them as principal ministers to the French monarchy.

Sturdy identifies key features of their era, which contained 'some of the most tumultuous decades in French history' before the Revolution, with violence as an abiding backdrop. He suggests that Richelieu and Mazarin were part of a wider 17th century European phenomenon, the emergence of principal ministers who drew criticism for unpopular policies away from the monarch they served, and in so doing placed themselves in considerable danger as the targets of conspiracies by the disaffected. The attraction of having such a first minister 'in a kingdom whose five most recent rulers had died either prematurely or violently' must, Sturdy points out, have been obvious. Both ministers also responded 'uncompromisingly' to threats from another European phenomenon of the time, that of the royal favourite.

Sturdy provides an admirably clear account of the structures of central and provincial government in France that the cardinals had to work through, with a degree of useful detail that enlightens without boring or confusing the reader: for example, we learn that *vénalité d'offices* [the sale of positions] accounted for almost 40% of royal income at the time that Richelieu took charge. The writer emphasises the fact that royal councillors at this time were essentially part of a network of clients attached to a powerful royal minister, whose careers were dependent on his continued command of royal favour. Sturdy interweaves the story of Richelieu's rise to political prominence with an account of the complex political intrigue that characterised the regency of Marie de Medici and the period when her son reached maturity. Richelieu's own transfer of allegiance from mother to son involved his skilful outmanoeuvring of political rivals; even when secure in the king's confidence, his position still depended on the successful destruction of those who challenged him and the promotion of his own family and supporters within the administration, creating 'a web of alliances to uphold his own influence at court and in the provinces'. His accumulation of staggering wealth [20 million livres at his death] was essential to maintain this network of political dependents. He possessed 'masterly political skills, not only of survival but of advancement'. His relationship with his royal master became one of 'mutual political dependence', rather than friendship. Sturdy stresses the difficulty Richelieu faced with Louis XIII's 'unpredictability', pointing out that the king, contrary to the traditional view, did apply himself to the detail of government, and that Richelieu had to work hard at persuading Louis to adopt his policies.

Richelieu has always been a controversial figure: a Catholic cardinal who tolerated Huguenots, as long as they remained loyal subjects, and pursued a foreign policy that involved making war on the Catholic Habsburgs in alliance with Europe's Protestant powers. Was his intervention in the Thirty Years War motivated by a high-minded desire to promote a 'peace and equilibrium corresponding to the harmony of the heavens' in Europe? Or was it rather that the war guaranteed his own personal political survival? Sturdy also highlights the paradox between Richelieu's twin aims of challenging Spain and overcoming social divisions within France; by giving priority to the first, he made it impossible to achieve the second. Sturdy is of the opinion that Richelieu's religious faith was deep and genuine, a constant guide to his conduct. His interest in theology and philosophy meant that he approached government with a thought-out strategy, based on 'logically consistent principles'. His ideas were explained in 'an extraordinary volume of literature', which helped to make the 1620s to 40s a period of very active political debate, extremely rich in the production of political literature of all sorts.

Sturdy identifies the influence of the new scientific thought on his policies, where Richelieu saw

France and its problems in terms of 'Mechanical Philosophy'. However policies that might appear to be constitutionally significant, in his dealings with the Parlements, the nobility, the *pays d'états* and the taxpayer, were dictated not by theory but by overriding financial necessity. Sturdy allows Richelieu credit for his significant patronage of writers, scholars and architects, while pointing out that high culture was a valuable political tool: the royal printing press he founded at the Louvre produced government propaganda at a time when Richelieu was imposing ever stricter censorship on his critics.

It is astonishing to learn that this 'formidably domineering person' who achieved so much was throughout his life a martyr to ill-health, a hypochondriac who suffered from migraine, insomnia and depression. Towards the end of his life he headhunted for his master's service the Italian diplomat, Giulio Mazarini: there was great mutual admiration between these two skilled political operators, and Richelieu secured for Mazarin both a cardinalship and a position in France. After the death of both Richelieu and Louis XIII, the regent Anne of Austria appointed Mazarin first to the royal council and then to the principal minister's position. Sturdy points out how unlikely it was that an Italian should reach the pinnacle of political power in France, but suggests that the personal attachment of the regent to the handsome, charming Italian combined with his independence from the different court factions made him seem the ideal choice to replace Richelieu, particularly when his diplomatic skills could be used to guide France through the last stages of the Thirty Years War.

The war had engendered increasing financial chaos in France, however. Oppressive financial expedients adopted by the government contributed to the outbreak of resistance in Paris in 1648 that was just the start of 5 years of civil war. Sturdy picks his way through the tangled tale of the Fronde rebellion with admirable dexterity, analysing the contribution and motivation of the various elements involved – the Parlements, the great aristocracy, the Paris population. He tries to explain why the gracious and diplomatic Mazarin should be the object of such hatred: another Italian manipulating a susceptible foreign, female regent? Or perhaps the aristocracy was taking retrospective revenge on Richelieu by attempting to destroy his protégé? The revolt was undermined by the fact that it was never, unlike what was happening in England at the same time, directed against the person of the king. As long as Mazarin commanded the trust of his godson, the young Louis XIV, his revival of fortune was going to happen in the end. Sturdy stresses the influence Mazarin had on the training of the young king, suggesting that it was the cardinal who advised him to dispense with the post of first minister in part because the role had attracted such resentment. He also speculates that the fall of Fouquet soon after Mazarin's death might be less because of his aspirations to be the next principal minister, more that Louis XIV and Colbert felt he knew too much about financial malfeasance in the amassing of Mazarin's 'gargantuan' fortune and had to be silenced.

Sturdy concludes his book with a section comparing the two cardinals. Both were central to the evolution of Bourbon monarchy. They were in charge of government at a critical time when France had a new ruling dynasty, two minorities, a range of complex social, political and religious problems, and a threatening international situation. Their personalities were very different, but they pursued a common policy of promoting royal authority at the expense of groups who threatened to undermine it. Sturdy refutes the argument that they presided over a 'ministerial revolution' or a 'bureaucratic government'; instead they aspired to 'restore an idealised past' where the king's authority was universally obeyed. Both had a significant impact on France's international position; both failed to manage burgeoning financial malaise. Both acquired huge personal wealth at a time when the government struggled to raise necessary finance. Both used that wealth in major patronage of the arts and the promotion of their own families. But while Richelieu eliminated the Huguenot threat by acceptance and toleration, Mazarin mistakenly perceived Jansenism as being at the root of the Fronde rebellion, and conveyed his fears to the young Louis for whom Jansenism would become a recurrent target for persecution.

I enjoyed reading David Sturdy's book. For those of us who love to visit Paris, to walk from the Institut Mazarin across the Pont des Arts to the Louvre, to explore the arcades of the Place des Vosges or the Palais Royal, both places where Richelieu had his residence, Sturdy's book helps to illuminate an exciting and important period in French history. This is a worthy companion for his earlier book in the same series on Louis XIV.

FIONA ROBERTS



