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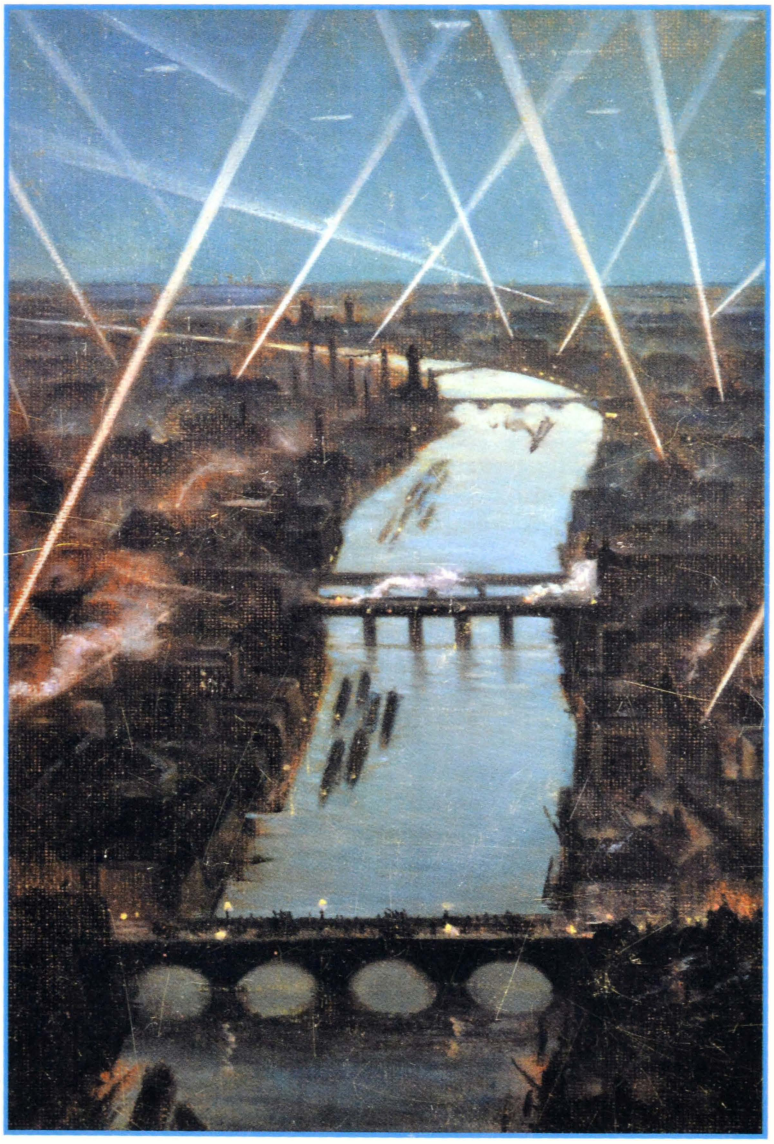

THE YEARBOOK OF THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF HISTORY

HISTORY TEACHING REVIEW
YEAR BOOK

EDITOR: ANDREW HUNT

VOLUME 20 2006

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Cover: *Among London Searchlights* by Nevinson, Christopher Richard Wynne (1889-1946), with thanks to the Bridgeman Art Library, London.

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Editorial

ANDREW HUNT

It is certainly no hardship on my part, on behalf of SATH, to thank all the contributors - both article writers and reviewers - for the contributions they have made to this issue of the Year Book. As usual, apparently by some sort of almost immaculate conception, it has come together at the right time, in the right format, with almost nothing apart from a little administrative effort on my part. I am always amazed that something so solid, comprehensive, challenging and useful can be assembled so readily each year, simply due to the thoughtfulness and good will of so many of our academic colleagues. As usual they are co-operative, punctual and anxious to deliver what will be most helpful to our teaching courses or most stimulating to our minds. My sincere thanks to them all.

With a total of 11 articles in this bumper 2006 edition, that makes it second only to 1992 in size, and one bigger than 2000. The continuing quality of the articles within it is its own best advert when, each year, I come round to persuading more people to contribute to the following year's issue. This year, we see two authors who have written for the Year Book before and happily re-offered their services. Then, there is one other contributor, who made a contribution to the **1979** issue of SATH's History Teaching Review, which was a previous incarnation of the Year Book, when SATH was much younger. It lets you both appreciate SATH's longevity as an organisation, and also the sheer staying power that historians both have and show when it comes to sticking up for their subject and airing their expertise in their own field. There may be the murmurings in the air about 'History in danger' but they'll have to watch out for us 'old guard' first.

This is probably a good place to remind all readers that SATH has now got a fully functioning web site to help further spread the word about what SATH does as a History organisation. SATH members and other interested parties can easily log on and read the public stuff, or go further and register to get access to the member's section. Articles and reviews from previous Resources Reviews and Year Books, plus a range of other teaching resources and materials can be found at www.sath.org.uk.

And now a note about the cover illustration... Readers traditionally expect to see a relationship between the cover picture and an article in the Year Book. This is not the case this year. You might have had a quick glance at the cover and assumed it was related to Dr Sokoloff's article on the historiography of life on the Home Front in World War 2 Britain. You would be mistaken. This lovely, tonal and so well-balanced picture *Among London Searchlights* from Christopher Nevinson was painted in **1916**. This is his view on the bombing of London in the Great War, not the Blitz! It was painted the year before his more celebrated *Paths of Glory* and 3 years before *The Harvest of Battle*. It may well have been the case that I was originally trawling the files to see if there was an illustration with a relevant connection to one of the articles; but when I came across this, it somehow pushed itself forward as 'the one'. So, the illustration is there simply because I am an admirer of Nevinson: it gives me a chance to put one of his not necessarily so well known works into the public eye; and gives the Year Book cover a tone to match the quality of the articles inside it.

The Proslavery Struggle for Missouri, 1849-61

DR WAYNE J. JOHNSON

> The attempt by the North to abolitionise Kansas and make it a slave harbour has aroused the people of these counties to a full sense of their condition, - and events now transpiring on this border may lead to great events. Certainly if Kansas is made a free-state, war will ensue.
>
> Judge William B. Napton, (March 27, 1855).[1]

On May 20, 1856, a heavily armed posse from western Missouri rode over the border into neighbouring Kansas Territory, and halted on a ridge called Mount Oread, overlooking the town of Lawrence, lying in the river valley. They were accompanied by wagon loads of ammunition, and four six-pound brass cannon. This assemblage of nearly 800 men, many of them dressed in the regalia of the many covert political organisations of the time, with blue cravats, and a badge made from hemp threaded through a buttonhole, included amongst them notable frontier lawyers, politicians, and a former President pro tem of the United States Senate. At first glance, this huge gathering may seem just another example of a 'Western' style vigilante group intent on revenge, or the settling of a land dispute: a common enough occurrence on the frontier. But here there was, on closer observation, an ideological motivation, since the words 'Southern Rights' could be seen daubed in blood-red on the banners they carried. These were prominent members of the many protective secret societies: the 'Sons of the South', the 'Blue Lodges'; respected and previously upstanding citizens from the slave counties of Missouri, from Clay County in the west to Calloway County in the centre. What had driven these agitators to act like common outlaws and 'border ruffians', (a phrase coined by the abolitionist press)? What course was so important that they were willing to jeopardise promising professional careers and sacrifice the future of their beloved state to fight defiantly in a violent border skirmish? What actually occurred the following day, on May 21, 1856, was the true beginning of the American Civil War.[2]

The Kansas-Missouri border conflict of the 1850s has often been over-shadowed, dwarfed by the gargantuan struggle of the national Civil War; a chamber piece in comparison to the historical behemoth of the most pivotal event in the nation's history. Moreover, the period 1849-61 was a defining moment in Missouri's history, yet her political history in the 1850s and its contribution to that more enveloping conflagration had been often neglected and most certainly misunderstood. In considering all the issues and failed compromises which occurred to bring about the Civil War in 1861, Missouri was, more often than not, at their political epicentre. The Compromise of 1820 (which had guaranteed slavery in that state, but had then kept the issue out of the political arena for over thirty years) and the discussion of the future of the territorial lands ceded by Mexico after the victorious war of 1846-8, which truly ignited the more immediate sectional tensions that led to war, was extremely heated in Missouri, as the western most state, and which sent more volunteers than any other state. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, the border war known as 'Bleeding Kansas' and the Dred Scott case of 1857, all involved Missouri.[3]

The Inevitability Problem

There are many problems with the way historians have confronted the 1850s. First of all, as David Potter was at pains to state, historians have "treated the decade...as a prelude to something else".[4] Impossible though it may seem, any such study of the 1850s should at least try not to succumb to the urge for portent themes, but instead present the past in a way that for the characters involved, knowledge of an impending civil war is almost universally feared but certainly not known. The

Missouri proslavery response to the settlement of the Kansas territory represents one of the most important (but confusing) political events in nineteenth-century American history, and certainly one of the most violent and disturbing. Historians have constantly been obsessed by the machinations of the Kansas-Nebraska bill which ignited 'Bleeding Kansas' and the subsequent heated political manoeuvrings in Congress. Less well known, however, are the experiences, motivations and feelings of the populace in the very border localities whose future the bill was affecting. Because if any one event or incident did more than any other to bring about the Civil War which engulfed the nation, it was the Kansas-Missouri border conflict.[5]

National versus Local History

This historical confusion has been due to a number of factors, including undoubtedly, the consequences of historians' overdependence on the suspect generalisations of national approaches at the expense of the required but awkward subtleties of state studies. Most paramount, any work which claimed to be offering a local or regional perspective still maintained a national stance. Secondly, studies which purport to offer a unique perspective from Missouri invariably focus more readily on the dramatic situation in Kansas, rather than the political predicament in Missouri.[6] Similarly, the national 'spirit' of the Missouri radical proslavery cause, David Rice Atchison (US Senator from 1841 to 1855), was not a key figure on a day-to-day basis inside Missouri. The views of less well known but far more representative figures are essential to a more accurate and articulate reading of the topic: the so-called local 'frontier lawyer-politicians', such as Judge William B. Napton.[7]

The ignition for the armed conflict on the border of Missouri was the opening up of the neighbouring Kansas-Nebraska territory for settlement in the late spring of 1854, after the petitioning of Congress by citizens of western Missouri, and the subsequent intentions to establish a free state in Kansas by abolitionist-funded emigrant aid companies, (skilfully organised by agents from Massachusetts, with the moral support and financial backing of that state legislature) by registering claims on behalf of subsidised Northern and Middle Western settlers. This perceived organised programme directed against Missouri, together with the North's growing antipathy towards slavery, was seen by the radical proslavery element in Missouri as an overwhelming encroachment, and a blatant attempt to disrupt the democratic process. As a result, slavery was brought back into the public arena, and remained there. In response, thousands of angry western Missourians crossed over the border and likewise filed illegal claims, voting fraudulently in the upcoming elections, and then returning home. One side was simply attempting to counteract the other, but this was the consequence of the futile fantasy that was 'popular sovereignty', involving the willing acquiescence of the US government; to allow 'squatter' sovereignty' to prevail and to let the people decide.[8]

Existing as a slave state, Missouri had a curious history prior to the outbreak of the Civil War; "a slave peninsula jutting out into an ocean of free-soil". Virtually surrounded by free-states and isolated from the other slave states in the South by the Ozark Mountains and the Mississippi River to the east, her geographical location almost totally explained Missouri's fear of ruin by yet another free-state neighbour, "rendering her situation one of extreme peril to her slave property".[9] Subsequently, for proslavery Missourians, the emerging tensions on the border were not simply concerning honour, or the delicate balance which had to be maintained in the Union between slave and free-states, but about the very practical economic issue of slavery. The state's slave population comprised 10 percent of the population by 1860 (or 115,000 slaves worth $50 million), and owned by 25,000 slaveholders.[10] The state's chief product was hemp, used for the bagging of cotton bales, and the 'culture of hemp' defined the area. Indeed, western Missouri was more "wonderfully adapted by nature to its production...than in any other state in the union", and the imminent construction of railroad lines to the north and south of the region would create limitless commercial possibilities.[11] Of immediate concern to slaveholding Missourians was the enticement that yet another free state would provide for slaves to attempt an escape. This was exacerbated by the realities of a radicalised North and Abolitionist sympathisers aiding runaway slaves on her borders.

The Proslavery Aberration

In studying proslavery thought, historians have had to contend with a perceived abhorrent political and moral ideology. The study of the defence of slavery is rightly anathema to a largely liberal contemporary academic community, where it has been at best dismissed and at worst ignored. Proslavery ideology has a necessarily stigmatised existence in the canon of ideas. It sits uncomfortably as an indigenous ideology, but it has recently been seen as a genuine 'American' ideology, and as a vital portal into the southern mind.[12] Maybe John C. Calhoun, the slaveholding South's human syllogism must be seen as one of the founding political minds of the United States, since his ideas were propagated 'on' American soil, and not nurtured by "English republican philosophers".[13] But to attempt to understand the defence of slavery as an ideology is difficult enough on moral as well as intellectual grounds, but to attempt to analyse the working out of that ideology in a particular setting is even further complicated by the impossibility of empathy. As a result, historians have been satisfied to examine proslavery thought simply in an ideological vacuum, rather than to explore the mentalities, the social settings and cultural contexts which gave birth to this American freak. Besides, the task for the historian is not to judge or to condone, but to comprehend. Furthermore, an examination of the motives and activities of the proslavery agitators may shed some light on the psychology of the western Missouri frontier, since the more virulent strain of that ideology was located in that region, and proslavery activities of that state were as much a manifestation of that spirit and that fight as they were a product of the slaveholding South.

A slaveholding mentality emerged in Missouri due to the bulk of her citizens having family ties to, or being born in slaveholding states (mostly Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia), with a strong tradition of Democratic Party allegiance. The Democratic Party, with their absentee state senator leader, Thomas Hart Benton, were the victors in nearly every gubernatorial election from the victory of Andrew Jackson in 1820, until the outbreak of the Civil War. Benton, a disciple of Jackson's all-embracing American unionism, reigned supreme as a 'virtual' dictator in the state until he began to side with the opposition party, the Whigs, in the 1840s on banking and currency issues. Up to that point, proslavery Missourians had been content to bask in the political sunshine which Benton's national prominence gave the state. Figures within the Democratic Party and in the state's press began to seriously question Benton's loyalty to Missouri and by the 1840s an anti-Benton state rights faction of proslavery politicians emerged to control the state. Politics concerns most to those who have much to gain, or the most to lose. In Missouri, these were the frontier lawyer-politicians. Much has been made of the alliance of slaveholders and merchants known as the 'Boonslick Democracy' (named after their location in central Missouri's river region), as the dominant force within Missouri politics during the late antebellum period. The rise of this southern-style 'state sovereignty' faction of the Calhoun element of the Democratic Party in Missouri was achieved as a result of the ousting of Thomas Hart Benton. The political tension between the democratic ideals of Jacksonian republicanism and an aristocratic proslavery Calhounite vision of America would plant a political schizophrenia within the state, however. Although the latter group believed Missouri was a southern state, nevertheless, to maintain their political hegemony, they were forced to espouse a more inclusive message, to appeal to non-slaveholding white Missourians. As firm Calhounites, they were no more earnest in the democratic wisdom of the 'populace' than their mentor had been, but leaving the decision of whether these territories should be slave or free to a distant, federal government was even more unacceptable, and consequently, Calhoun had urged slaveholding state legislatures to introduce proslavery resolutions of their own.[14]

The main political expression of the proslavery element was the introduction in the state senate in January, 1849, of the famous Jackson Resolutions, named after the leader of the Boonslick Democrats, Claiborne Fox Jackson, of Howard County, but in fact written by the most ardent pro-slaver in Missouri, Judge William B. Napton, of Saline County. The series of resolutions were a direct attempt to usurp the tyranny of Benton with his increasingly northern anti-slavery stance, and to establish a favourably southern political clique. The resolutions, which they requested Congressional senators and representatives to abide by, denied Congress the power to legislate on matters pertaining to slavery in the affairs of the state and that any decision to abolish the institution of slavery in any

territory should be left 'exclusively' to the sovereignty of the people at the moment of the devising of a state constitution. Any act in contravention would, the pro-slavers stated, force Missouri to act "in such measure as may be deemed necessary for our mutual protection against the encroachments of northern fanaticism".[15] Secondly, there must be a guarantee of slave property brought into the Kansas territory. Historians have sometimes misread the devising of the Resolutions: it was not simply for external consumption, but aimed directly at exposing political conflict within the State and to get Benton to declare his views on slavery. Benton and his supporters decried the resolutions (which passed resoundingly in the legislature in Jefferson City), believing them to be seditious, disunionist and announced that he preferred the Whigs to control the state than for the resolutions to pass. That announcement, plus the subsequent antipathy created amongst anti-Benton Democrats, ensured a Whig victory (with Henry Geyer, a proslavery Whig) in the Congressional elections in 1852, and Benton's farewell. Once Benton was finally removed from his throne, the Missouri Calhounite Democrats mustered to elect a sympathetic Governor (Sterling Price) in 1852. The proslavery element effectively controlled the state government until 1861.[16]

The Confusion of Border History

According to a notable study of mid-nineteenth century Missouri, the state, like other border states, "joined two distinctive sections of the country and shared characteristics of each"; a sensible, consensual and non-partisan judgment, it would seem.[17] Their distinctive hybrid nature, their blurred political economy, their social confusion, their ambivalent geographical and cultural outlook, has often made any conclusions concerning border states difficult to substantiate. The state's variety "doomed the Democrats to perpetual factiousness and ambivalence".[18] But it also explains the relatively general neglect which border states have received. Missouri was cursed from her very inception. She was created out of the political expediency of the Compromise of March, 1820, and "unnaturally formed for political reasons to reconcile irreconcilable sections".[19] Missouri was admitted to the Union as a slave state but then slavery was excluded from west of the Louisiana Purchase territory, north of the line 36 degrees 30 minutes.

When President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in May, 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise, the legislation suddenly exposed to the possibility of slavery, territory which had hitherto been excluded. It also presented a growing problem of security. While on the one hand rabidly antagonistic and fearful of the labour competition posed by free blacks; free soil emigrants who were flooding into the plains of Kansas still took "every opportunity", on their way through Missouri "to poison the minds of slaves against their masters and make the negroes restless and dissatisfied with their condition".[20] On July 8, 1854, four slaves escaped from farms in Platte County. From that point on, public meetings, the usual arena of frontier democracy, were held all over the western counties of Missouri. A meeting was called in Weston, Platte County in July, 1854, to combat the perceived Abolitionist encroachments of the New England Emigrant Aid Societies. The Platte County Self-Defensive Association was created not simply to expel those Abolitionists in Kansas who enticed slaves to escape, but also to quash non-pro-slavery sentiment within the county. The "aggressive and fanatical spirit" of the Abolitionists, according to a public meeting held in Columbia, Boone County on June 2, 1855, was calculated to "light the torch of servile insurrection and war, and ultimately to dissolve the Union."[21] In July, 1855, a group of the most prominent (including Jackson, Napton and Sterling Price) from over twenty counties gathered in Lexington in Lafayette County, for a "stormy" three-day convention to vehemently protest the disruptive effects of Abolitionist raids into Missouri and the increasing violence of settlers' attacks on Missourians inside Kansas.[22] Under the chairmanship of William Napton, the proslavery convention decried a federal government for abandoning proper conduct and constitutional process. The convention re-affirmed the sovereignty of state rights in declaring that any external threat to slavery was an infringement of state authority and therefore nullified the union amongst the states.

In Missouri, because of her history, this philosophy had special resonance; there had long been a conservative tradition in Missouri, and a ferocious defence of slavery. Those ideas had contained a curious Jeffersonianism, with its implication of an interfering national government over a self-

perceived rural idyll. But in denial of the contradictions inherent within, proslavery agitators would skilfully utilise and manipulate this cherished ideal. For Missouri's own survival, Kansas had to be a slave sate. Thus, Kansas territory occupied an immediate strategic position in the fate of Missouri. It served as both a buffer to the threat of Abolition as well as a stepping stone to the future westward extension of slavery. In the natural order, settlers moved westwards: Kentucky was settled by Virginians, Missouri by Kentuckians, so Kansas should be occupied by Missourians. The spectre of exclusion provoked frenzied hysteria which led to pro-slavers laying siege to the free soil stronghold of Lawrence on that hot 90 degree day in May, 1856, after warrants had been issued with the news that a sheriff in Kansas had been attacked by 'free staters', although the posse only destroyed the printing presses from two newspaper offices, set fire to the Free State Hotel and free soil government house, and ransacked shops. The only casualty had been an accidental death on the proslavery side, although an accurate picture of the "sack of Lawrence" will never be known. But the Civil War was heralded by a different spectre, a war of exaggerated words as Northern and Southern headlines screamed: "CIVIL WAR COMMENCED IN KANSAS" and "LAWRENCE IN RUINS...SEVERAL PERSONS SLAUGHTERED."[23]

Propaganda as History

The most immediate problem confronting a study of the Missouri proslavery struggle is not only the lack of available secondary material but the evidential and interpretive bias of the accounts which already exist. This lack of available material is not surprising in the light of the above. The violence of the border conflict of the 1850s has all too often been viewed by historians through the prism of the North, and particularly the perspective of Abolitionist, free-state literature. Many studies have chosen to favour partisan eye witness (or more accurately participatory) accounts, as if they were truthful authentic and impartial accounts, largely because their zeal outstripped their authenticity.[24] No doubt this was due to the "righteousness of the cause...which discredited their opponents as not only wrong on principle but also morally depraved and personally odious".[25] And as James Malin was correct to assert way back in 1923 "the free state supporters, being the victors, have been the most zealous in the production of propaganda".[26] However, in contrast to the major figures of the Abolitionist movement, and in the wake of the lethargy of defeat, very few proslavery leaders left behind permanent testimony, and few became the subject of any substantial study. The result has been, therefore, to distort reality and to deflect ideological concerns somewhat away from the uncomfortable source of the conflict, namely the manifestation of proslavery ideas in an immediate geographical region of the United States. Consequently, John Brown is better known and his motives better understood than William Napton, or the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society more famous than the Platte County Self-Defensive Association. This is in fact a case not of history as propaganda, but propaganda as history.

The bitter conflict that emerged, of which the 'sack of Lawrence' was an incident, brought condemnation upon Missouri from the northern and Kansas press. Missourians were harangued as brutal frontier savages and southern sinners, harassing the perceived 'legal' eastern free soil, Abolitionist immigrants. The recurring sorties into Kansas, the constant meddling in territorial elections, all revealed to the rest of America the folly of western frontier democracy, out of which Jesse James and his gang emerged. When the Kansas territorial legislature applied for statehood in 1857, the remarkable influx of free soil settlers from mid-western states, who outnumbered the Missourians, ensured that the proslavery element would be ousted from its midst. What was left was a bitterness borne of betrayal: an apparent alliance of Northern and mid-western states against slavery, had in the eyes of pro-slavers, usurped the process of white popular sovereignty and sealed the fate of Missouri. In the process, the borders of Kansas-Missouri had become a "fertile ground for demagogues" parading all manner of sophistry.[27] From that moment on a rapid train of events would lead to war.

According to one historian, "as long as there was a sectional fence to straddle prior to 1861, most Missourians kept their perch on it".[28] But what transpired in Missouri in the decade or so after 1849

was a bitter struggle to oust Benton from his senatorial throne and the free-soilers from Kansas. Rather than the acquiescent fence-sitting of Missourians evoked by that statement, the state was being exposed to subterranean agonies. What happened in Missouri with the subterfuge which led to the deposing of Benton was a state's sleight of hand, an attempt to emerge from the political expediency of supporting Benton to a political transformation from Jacksonian principles to the more jaundiced rhetoric of Calhoun's disciples. But more than that, it was the working out of a crucial border tension between the traditional order of a slaveholding aristocracy of the South and an emerging progressive industrialising North. The one seen as a localised way of life, of political non-interference, which ensured personal independence and economic autonomy based upon colour, the other an alien and more fearful future of wider, forced interdependence and a complex and increasingly incomprehensible web of eternal change and upheaval. However, rather than being fought in the more benign arena of the competing marketplace, this conflict erupted bloodily on the farms of Missouri, and the plains of Kansas.

The inhabitants of a frontier state, in the process of finding their political voice and self-conscious definition, confronted their true allegiance by the most violent means within a democratic nation, and in the process ripped itself apart, as the national government looked on, ironically, since it was a tragedy it had helped to create. Out of this border war emerged a decade-long struggle which eventually engulfed the rest of the nation. When that dust settled, old animosities died hard. The sectional tensions which resulted in the American Civil War had gradually broken up traditional loyalties and associations that had maintained compromise and consensus for seventy years, albeit a fragile one. All that remained after the North's victory at Appomattox were enemies and competitors, and citizens and situations to be exploited; a climate from which outlaws, such as the James gang on the one hand, and the Pendergast political machine on the other, briefly thrived. And outlaws from this conflagration saw the banks (as agents of the distant Federal Government), and the railroad companies, as apostasies against the traditional order and organic community.[29]

What also occurred simultaneously in Missouri with the border war was the transference of power and influence from the 'Boonslick' region of central and western Missouri to the growing metropolis to the east of the state. The population of St. Louis in 1860 was 60 per cent immigrant, more than any other American city.[30] This massive influx of Germans and other European emigrants into St. Louis and the interior counties (including the Ozarks) during the 1850s, had altered forever the state's extreme proslavery outlook. Concurrent with this was an economic entanglement for predominance in the state with the increasingly feverish debates about internal improvements and an "appetite for plunder".[31]

By the eve of the Civil War, Missouri's curious predicament had changed. On the one hand, Missouri as a slave state had a firm bond with the South, but on the other, as a border state, the bulk of the populace earnestly hoped for peace and voted as such. As a result, in the state's gubernatorial election in 1860, Claiborne Fox Jackson, always the malleable Democrat, won a short-lived victory on a ticket of conservative compromise. However, his Inaugural Address in January 1861, "a bitter secession appeal under a thin veil of professed love for the Union", was seen as a failed and last gasp to shunt Missouri into the Confederacy.[32] After the election of 1860, pro-slavers felt let down by an ungrateful populace who, by a minority vote and therefore reluctantly, had elected a Union Democrat, and subsequently chose the status quo. And, as the unsettling political climate within the state and the bloody turbulence and recriminatory violence during the Civil War and beyond would expose, equanimity in a hybrid state meant an ominous future.

NOTES

1 William Napton Diaries, March 27, 1855, *William B. Napton Papers*, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (MHS).

2 *Missouri Republican*, May 30, 1856, University of Missouri, State Historical Society of Missouri (SHSM); T.H. Gladstone, *The Englishman in Kansas or Squatter Life and Border Warfare* (New York, 1857), pp. 26-38; Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union* (2 vols., New York, 1947), vol. 2., pp. 434-7.

3 For general background, see, James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: the American Civil War* (London, 1988).

4 David Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 1848-1861 (New York, 1976), p. 145.

5 See, Kenneth M. Stampp (ed.), *The Causes of the Civil War* (New York, 1991).

6 See particularly, Alice Nichols, *Bleeding Kansas* (New York, 1954) and, James A. Rawley, *Race and Politics: "Bleeding Kansas" and the Coming of the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1969).

7 See for example, William E. Parrish, *David Rice Atchison of Missouri: Border Politician* (Columbia, Missouri, 1961).

8 See, Jay Monaghan, *The Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865* (Boston, 1955).

9 *History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri* (St. Louis, 1885), p.632 (MHS).

10 Mary J. Klem, "Missouri in the Kansas Struggle," *Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, Proceedings, 9 (1917-18), p. 394; Harrison A. Trexler, *Slavery in Missouri, 1804-1865* (Baltimore, 1914), pp. 37-43.

11 *Address to the People of the United States; Together with the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Pro-Slavery Convention of Missouri, Held at Lexington, July, 1855*, p.4 (MHS).

12 See the excellent, Drew Gilpin Faust (ed.), *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1981).

13 Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York, 1948), p. 90.

14 Sceva B. Laughlin, "Missouri Politics During the Civil War", *Missouri Historical Review*, 23 (April and July, 1929), pp. 404-6.

15 *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Missouri, Fifteenth General Assembly, First Session, 1848-1849* (Jefferson City, 1849), p.483 (MHS).

16 Laughlin, "Missouri Politics during the Civil War", p.407.

17 Michael Fellman, *Inside War: the Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War* (New York, 1989), p.3.

18 Paul C. Nagel, *Missouri: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), p.111.

19 Trexler, *Slavery in Missouri*, p.173.

20 *History of Clay and Platte Counties*, p.632.

21 *History of Boone County, Missouri* (St. Louis, 1882), p.378 (MHS).

22 *Missouri Republican*, St. Louis, July 16, 1855, (SHSM).

23 *Missouri Republican*, May 23, 1856, (SHSM); *New York Tribune*, May 28, 1856, quoted in Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union*, vol. 2, p.435.

24 See particularly, Douglas Brewerton, *The War in Kansas: a Rough Trip to the Border* (New York, 1856) and, William A. Phillips, *The Conquest of Kansas by Missouri and Her Allies* (Boston, 1856).

25 Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, p.165.

26 James C. Malin, "The Proslavery Background of the Kansas Struggle," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10 (Dec., 1923), p.285.

27 Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of a Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia, Missouri, 2000), p.205.

28 Fellman, *Inside War*, p.3.

29 See the excellent, T. J. Stiles, *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War* (New York, 2002).

30 Selwyn K. Troen and Glen E. Holt (eds.), *St. Louis* (New York, 1977), p.xxi.

31 *Collection no. 1879, Letter*, William B. Napton to C. F. Jackson, October 3, 1857, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, Columbia, University of Missouri.

32 Arthur Roy Kirkpatrick, "Missouri on the Eve of the Civil War", *Missouri Historical Review*, 55 (January, 1961), p.102.

New Perspectives on Japanese Society and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5

DR NAOKO SHIMAZU

So much of what has been written hitherto about the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 focuses on institutional history, be it the military, diplomatic, political, or financial.[1] The result of such a focus is that we get a top heavy picture of the effects of the war on society. In the study of modern Japan, the historiographical orthodoxy favours the perspective that gives a disproportionately large power to the state, to the detriment of the people who often remained faceless and lacked the power of historical agency. This tendency is particularly overwhelming in the study of the Russo-Japanese War as Japan's seemingly implausible victory against the monolithic Russia had to be explained convincingly. For the most part, historians both in and outside Japan preferred to dwell on the phenomenal success of state-building in modern Japan. The Japanese state by 1904 had become possibly the most highly nationalised state, thanks to the determined efforts of the bureaucrats from the 1870s onwards. They inculcated a sense of nationhood in ordinary Japanese people mainly through education and conscription. So, the argument went, the state and the nation were united in the face of the national calamity, with a sense of equanimity they willingly sacrificed their lives to fight for the country and the emperor.

The above historical trajectory emphasises the one-ness of the Japanese people, all believing in the same national project. The strength of the supposed unity of the state and civil society has resulted in the creation of some of the most enduring myths about modern Japan in the rest of the world – the faceless Japanese for one, and the fearless Japanese warrior for another. Added to this was the contemporary interest in the Anglo-Saxon world in the notion of national efficiency and, through its lens, Japan became the most admired example of that movement.[2]

However, all this seems too simplistic, to the point of veering dangerously towards national stereotypes. My work, which is a social and cultural history of the Russo-Japanese War, focuses on Japanese society at war, bringing to the fore the neglected agency, ordinary Japanese people.[3] One of the main arguments I make is that, contrary to the widely accepted view that state-centred nationalism dominated, civil society played a leading role in organising the war effort behind the lines. In fact, the state was a surprisingly reluctant player, often only latently taking action under pressure from the local elite. Similarly, the image of Japanese soldiers as being fearless and self-sacrificial begins to lose its potency in the face of the actual experiences revealed in war diaries and letters written by the lower ranks. As a result, a more diverse and nuanced picture of Japanese society at war emerges, which does not sit comfortably with the one-dimensional view offered by the proponents of the orthodoxy. In the rest of this article, I illustrate my argument by a brief analysis of how civil society in Japan responded to the war, by focusing on the local elite and the lower ranking soldiers.

In wartime Japanese society, popular patriotism co-existed uneasily with official disdain for extravagant demonstration of patriotic fervour. As the first media warfare of the modern era, the Russo-Japanese war elicited an enormous international interest, with many well-known foreign correspondents descending on Tokyo. Within Japan, many 'patriotic publications', in the form of commercially produced weekly pictorial magazines, excitedly informed the arm-chair patriot with endless accounts of swash-buckling battles in the far-flung fields of Manchuria. From the beginning of the war in February 1904, newspaper and other companies hosted a series of lantern parades in Tokyo to celebrate victories. Yet, the police soon intervened to ban them because of their fear of their lack of control over the crowd, only to overturn the ban in May due to popular demand. However, the ban was lifted on the condition that these processions would now be organised by the state through municipal authorities, with participation restricted to invited guests, thereby excluding ordinary people. Lantern parades were but one illustration of the clash of the two cultures, of the

officialdom (kan) on the one hand, and the people (min) on the other. Moreover, they highlighted the state's difficulty in dealing with popular sentiment, which, with more imagination, could have been more effectively integrated into the nationalist agenda, especially in time of war. In fact, the state remained adamant throughout the war about wanting to project the image of the Japanese and Japanese society as a respectable, sober, and civilised nation.

More importantly, it was the sight of the mobilised soldiers, returning home as the wounded or the 'honourable war dead' (meiyo no senshi), that cast a shadow over the patriotic fervour behind the lines. Much of the work of looking after the war effort on the home front was left to the local elite, who took it upon themselves voluntarily to mobilise their local inhabitants through grassroots organisations such as Martial Associations and the Patriotic Ladies Association. The state believed in the self-help of the people, which meant that any financial assistance was never enough for the destitute. One only had to skim the pages of the socialist newspaper, *The Commoner* (Heimin shinbun), to realise that the poorer sections of Japanese society endured the greatest hardship from the grandiose ambitions of the state to become a 'first-class' nation through the war. The great urban civil unrest known as the Hibiya Riots of September 1905 which marked the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth, is explained by some historians as the beginning of the liberal democratic movement of the Taisho period (1912-1926).[4]

War diaries left by some Japanese conscripts offer valuable insights into their war experiences. For most of them, their primary source of identity remained deeply local and, for the most part, rural as the majority came from rural farming backgrounds. It was less the act of facing the enemy in Manchuria that influenced their self-consciousness as Japanese soldiers, than the process of travelling through Japan en route to Hiroshima where they departed on boat to the Asian continent, that transformed their self-identity from a predominantly local one to a national one. War diaries of the conscripts reveal their 'inner journey': at the time of the call-up, most of them did not profess to exuberant patriotic feeling, but ambivalence. Many were torn between loyalty to the family and loyalty to the state. On their railway journey across Japan, they encountered tens of thousands of other Japanese people who came to see them off, as the trains stopped in many towns and villages along the way. The local elite played a critical bonding role, organising farewell receptions in each and every town and village where all soldiers were treated to drinks, food, songs, and gifts. War diaries show that this horizontal bonding which developed between the soldiers and the people played the most important part in motivating ordinary men to fight for the state.

In addition, the journey allowed the soldiers to visualise 'Japan' for the first time as their trains hurtled past some famous sights of Japan - Mt Fuji, Lake Hamana, Mii Temple, and Himeji Castle - thereby enabling them to identity with the national and geographical space that constituted 'Japan'. I argue that, seen in this way, war diaries can be read as travel writing. Many conscripts experienced their once in a lifetime journey through Japan, and across to the Asian continent, as a result of the war. This newly acquired national identity was further reinforced when they landed in the theatre of conflict in north-eastern China (commonly referred to as Manchuria), and there encountered the Asian 'Other' in the Chinese, Koreans, Manchus and other ethnic minorities, all of whom were denigrated by them as 'uncivilised' Asians as opposed to the 'civilised' Japanese.[5]

Interestingly, Russians as the enemy 'Other' were not subjected to demonisation, at least within the official discourse. The Japanese government was concerned with the 'Yellow Peril' propaganda circulating in some quarters in Europe and the United States which presented the war as that between Christians and heathens, the white race and the yellow race, or between the civilised and the barbaric.[6] It may be of interest to note that the war attracted considerable international attention as the first modern war between Asia and Europe, and Japan's victory inspiring many nationalist movements in the colonial world, notably in the Arabic speaking world.[7] In any case, the utmost effort was made by Japanese officialdom to tone down the domestic representation of the enemy to an appropriately civilised one, with the intention of portraying the war as one fought between two civilised nations. As a testament to this, the 'civilised' treatment of the captured Russian prisoners of war became an important manifestation of moral diplomacy – humanitarian nationalism – for the Japanese government.[8] It is a little known fact that the standard treatment of PoWs set by the Japanese in the

1904-5 war came to be used as an international guideline for the treatment of PoWs during the First World War.[9] Needless to say, practical problems of communication and cultural differences, made the actual day-to-day handling of some 90,000 Russian PoWs a hugely onerous task for the local wardens of twenty-eight camps set up throughout Japan under less than ideal conditions. Hence, the gap which emerged between de jure and de facto treatment of the PoWs underlined yet another dimension of complex reality.

However, the extraordinary metamorphosis of conscripts into highly motivated, consciously national-minded soldiers did not last very long. Once in the battlefield, the ever impending prospect of death, euphemistically termed 'honourable war death' (meiyo no senshi) by the state, brought them back to their basic values which reflected their socio-economic backgrounds. War diaries and letters reveal that Japanese conscripts were no fearless warriors, but just like any other soldier in any other battlefield. In fact, the idealised notion that the Japanese soldier was fearless is the result of the 'democratisation of the samurai values' in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration of 1868.[10] In the ideal world, the Meiji elite had hoped that conscripts from the middle and lower classes would be inspired to identify with the elite cultural values of the former samurai class which stressed the utmost importance of loyalty to one's lord, and its accompanying ethos of death in service. However, that was not to be, as the conscripts remained unfazed by calls from the above to fight for the emperor and the state. For conscripts, these notions remained highly abstract and, more to the point, so irrelevant, as their immediate concerns centred on their survival, their family and their local community.

Arguably, filial piety was the most important core value held by the conscripts. Most of their correspondence and diaries noted their guilt in being not filial to their aging parents for having left them to tend for themselves. Without their principal breadwinner, many of these impoverished families with elderly parents or sickly wives were left to near starvation. What comes across most strongly is the determination of the conscripts to survive the war and return able-bodied, so that they could resume their social role and feed their family. In the light of the harsh economic reality of many conscripts' backgrounds, the official slogan of 'honourable war death' not only sounded hollow but almost amoral. In the end, it was socio-economic factors which determined the extent to which one could profess patriotic sentiment on the battlefield, as officers coming from economically privileged classes, were often the only ones who could afford to do so.[11]

The struggle between the private and the public as expressed through the conflict of individual and collective values continued well after the death of the conscript. The war mobilised over one million Japanese men, resulting in the deaths of approximately 74,000 of them. Commemoration of the war dead, especially of the conscript, reveals an insight into the complex inter-relationship between the state, the local community, and the bereaved family.[12] Contrary to the authoritarian image we tend to have of the Meiji state, the central government did not provide much guidance on how to treat the war dead. The limited experience from the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-5 was soon overshadowed by the sheer number of the war dead repatriated from the battlefields in Manchuria in 1904. In the early days of the war, officialdom was under considerable pressure to invent and implement appropriately dignified funerary procedures to meet the rising number of the 'honourable war dead' (meiyo no senshi) which was a new term invented during the war. Although an Army directive was issued that all funerals and commemorations had to follow the Shinto rites, it went against the grain of most Japanese who wanted to die a Buddhist.[13] Therefore, the reality consisted of 'muddling through' where Buddhism de facto reigned supreme as the preferred religion of the people, and Shinto played a more 'ornamental' role to satisfy the national ideology of the central government. In the end, the central government, too, acknowledged implicitly the centrality of Buddhism, and, not wanting to antagonise the people too much, effectively left the decision to each funeral committee to choose either Shinto or Buddhist ceremony, by detailing instructions for both Shinto and Buddhist styles.

However, the chief responsibility for undertaking the reification of the war dead fell on the shoulders of the local elite, as had been the practice with the central government which tended to delegate much of the responsibility of local administrative matters to the traditional elite of the local community. Therefore, it was the local elite, consisting in the main of powerful traditional local families together with village head, school headmaster, and the like, who orchestrated almost

every aspect of the 'processing' of the war dead. Consequently, during the Russo-Japanese war, the war dead were commemorated principally at the local 'site'. The 'national' site, most notably the Yasukuni Shrine, was still being 'constructed' and, hence, remained peripheral in the imagination of most Japanese.

As in the West, an important aspect of war commemoration in Japanese society was the construction of war monuments in two phases, first in 1906-7, and again in 1910-12, the latter coinciding with the establishment of the Imperial Reservist Association in 1910. Strikingly, the bereaved family remained outside of all the funeral and commemorative procedures. In order to claim back the war dead to the private familial sphere, some bereaved families constructed private war monuments for their deceased sons on the grounds of their properties. This was a poignant reminder of the private grief experienced by the bereaved families, who had been effectively marginalised in the collective enterprise of war commemoration.

On the whole, I chose to focus on Japanese society at war because the very fact that it has been the most under-researched area of historical enquiry in the study of the Russo-Japanese war has meant that many of the historical truisms supported on the back of the historical orthodoxy remained unchallenged. Once one starts investigating the role of civil society through the agency of the ordinary people, examining their attitudes towards and experience of the war, one immediately begins to realise that a more complex reality was at play. Japanese society in 1904-5 was generally much more pluralistic than meets the eye and, certainly, many of the historical truisms about contemporary Japanese society need to be critically re-examined in the light of the new findings. As the first modern war of the twentieth-century, many of the social conventions and cultural attitudes towards the Russo-Japanese war, at least as far as the Japanese are concerned, offer useful insights into the study of modern society at war generally, and can be applicable in the study of western societies during the First World War. What this study hopefully has shown is that we need a more nuanced study of Japanese society at war, if we are to gain any new insight into the history of modern Japan.

NOTES

1 For example, Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Longman, 1985; Shumpei Okamoto, *The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); more recently, John Steinberg et al, eds, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 2005), much of this volume apart from one section is political, military and diplomatic history. I have limited my references to sources available in English. For a full range of primary and secondary materials, please consult my forthcoming monograph in footnote 3 below.

2 For an excellent study of national efficiency which includes a discussion of Japan, consult G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (London: The Ashfield Press, 1990).

3 For the full exposition of my argument, see my forthcoming monograph, *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

4 The historian, Takayoshi Matsuo, being the best known proponent of this view.

5 A fuller discussion of ideas presented in this paragraph can be found in my 'Reading the Diaries of Japanese Conscripts: Forging National Consciousness during the Russo-Japanese War' in Naoko Shimazu, ed., *Nationalisms in Japan* (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2006), 41-65.

6 Richard Austin Thompson, *The Yellow Peril 1890-1924* (New York: Arno Press, 1978). This has an excellent bibliography on contemporary American literature on the 'Yellow Peril'. Also, confer, Colin Holmes and A.H. Ion, 'Bushidô and the Samurai: Images in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914', *Modern Asian Studies* 14:2 (1980), 309-29.

7 Michael Laffan, 'Mustafa and the Mikado: A Francophile Egyptian's Turn to Meiji Japan,' *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 19:3 (December 1999): 269-86; Michael F. Laffan, 'Watan and Negeri: Mustafa Kamil's 'Rising Sun' in the Malay World,' *Indonesia Circle*, 69 (1996): 156-75.

8 I discuss this briefly in my '"Love thy enemy": Japanese Perceptions of Russia,' in John Steinberg et al, eds, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 2005), 365-84. For a study of the Red Cross Society of Japan, which was a semi-official arm of the Japanese Army, see Olive Checkland, *Humanitarianism and the Emperor's Japan, 1877-1977* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

9 G.I.A.D. Draper, *The Red Cross Conventions* (London: Stevens and Sons Limited, 1958), 4-5.

10 I have explained this in some detail in 'The Myth of the Patriotic Soldier: Japanese Attitudes towards Death in the Russo-Japanese War', *War and Society* 19:2 (October 2001). For a classic work on the samurai ethos from the Tokugawa period, see Yamamoto Tsunemoto, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*, translated by William Scott Wilson, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983). For modern Japanese interpretation of the samurai ethics, consult Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1987), originally published in 1900.

11 See, for example, Tadayoshi Sakurai, *Human Bullets: A Soldier's Story of Port Arthur* (London: Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd., 1907; there is a recent paperback reprint published by the University of Nebraska Press). This is a highly readable, swash-buckling first-hand account by a Japanese lieutenant who was injured in the infantry fighting to capture Port Arthur. It became an international best-seller and went through over one thousand reprints in Japan. It was reputedly a favourite of both Theodore Roosevelt and Kaiser Wilhelm II.

12 The discussion on the commemoration of the war dead is based on one of the chapters in my forthcoming monograph as per footnote 3 above.

13 For a very useful reference source on Shinto, consult Brian Bocking, *A Popular Dictionary of Shinto* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1996).

The British People and the Evolution of Democracy

PROFESSOR KEVIN JEFFERYS

'It is a simple fact', said a newspaper editorial in February 2006, 'that something happened in Britain between 1992 and 2005 that is causing significantly new levels of disengagement with politics'.[1] After holding steady for many years, turnout at the 1997 general election dipped sharply, and four year later fell dramatically to its lowest level since the First World War: less than six in ten people bothered to vote. Governments, parties and politicians were distrusted, it seems, even despised, to an extent that was unprecedented. Phrases such as 'democratic deficit', 'civic crisis' and 'hollowing out' became the stock-in-trade of the chattering classes. Yet despite the strength of contemporary feeling, there are good grounds for believing that concern about 'disengagement with politics' is not a new phenomenon. Ever since Britain became a mass democracy in 1918 every generation has had concerns about low levels of popular involvement and interest in politics.[2] If we are to understand the enduring reluctance of most British people to take an active interest in the political process, we need to look, among other things, at the distinctive historical experience that produced the 'one person, one vote' franchise changes of 1918. This article therefore sets out to reassess the manner – and the lasting implications – of Britain's path towards democracy.

The term 'democracy' has always been contestable and changeable. If its core meaning is that of popular power, then in a long historical perspective it must be remembered that from the classical Greek period through to at least the nineteenth century, democracy – in the words of political scientist Anthony Arblaster - 'was seen by the enlightened and educated as one of the worst types of government and society imaginable'. It was regarded as being synonymous with the 'rule of the mob', a threat to civilised values.[3] Modern western democracy evolved in different guises and under widely varying conditions: in France after the revolution, in the Low Countries, and in America after the Civil War. It was Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States, who coined perhaps the best-known definition of democracy in his address at Gettysburg in 1863: 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people'.

In Britain any movement towards giving power to the people was protracted and uneven. The authority of the Crown had declined substantially by the early nineteenth century, and effective power resided in the hands of a landed aristocracy, whose representatives dominated government and both houses of parliament alike. After pressure from a small but vociferous radical movement, the Great Reform Act of 1832 granted the vote to large numbers of merchants and manufacturers, giving political recognition to professional and trades people by transferring representation from depopulated areas to emerging industrial cities. But this was a far cry from democracy, certainly if that term was equated with voting rights. Only some 20 per cent of adult males were entitled to vote and Radical demands for a secret ballot were refused. In effect the power of wealth had been safeguarded by ceding the right to vote to those who owned property of a certain value.[4]

The idea of a universal franchise was not unknown in the early Victorian period. Chartism in particular was an impressive amalgamation of protest movements aimed at opening up the political system to the mass of workers. But its efforts came to nothing and its ideas were widely derided. One critic, Thomas Babington Macaulay, wrote that 'universal suffrage would be fatal to all purposes for which Government exists...and is utterly incompatible with the very existence of civilisation.... England would fall from her high place among the nations, her glory and prosperity would depart, leaving her an object of contempt'.

Although further franchise reforms followed in 1867 and 1884, political leaders still did not conceive of the parliamentary system as democratic. In the words of the historian Martin Pugh, this was a term that smacked of 'continental abstraction and implied an excess of equality characteristic of American society'.[5] Effective government, it was believed, required a polity that was representative of those considered fit by virtue of their material stake in society, their public school training and

their knowledge to contribute to the nation's affairs. Workers absorbed in the daily grind for survival were not seen as capable of exercising political judgement, and right through to the First World War only six out of ten adult men were enfranchised under complex residency and occupational rules.

At a time when gender divisions appeared immutable, women were also regarded by men as lacking the intellectual and temperamental qualities necessary for politics. This belief was partially eroded in the late-Victorian period following the introduction of local government reforms. Wealthier women ratepayers were permitted to vote for the first time in local elections, and could even serve on certain types of council. But attempts by individual MPs to put forward proposals on women's suffrage for national contests came to nothing. The consensus at Westminster remained that the great issues of empire and war could not be 'exposed to the vacillating and emotional judgements of women'.[6]

In the Edwardian era the women's issue famously forced itself to the forefront. The Women's Social and Political Union, founded in Manchester in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, turned – in a reversion to Chartist terminology – to 'physical' rather than 'moral' force after a bill for a limited female franchise was talked out of the House of Commons in 1905. For several years thereafter, parliamentary debates were interspersed with high-profile demonstrations and attacks on property, producing an unprecedented level of agitation in favour of reform. Some half-hearted measures were introduced by the Liberal government after 1910, but none came to fruition. Ian Machin reflects that the suffragette campaigners achieved much publicity and notoriety, 'but also resistance from an exasperated government and public, and when the First World War broke out in 1914 their demand was still unrealised'.[7]

At first sight, the passage of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 seems to mark a dramatic reversal of attitudes. The legislation, passed with the war still in progress, heralded the creation of a huge new electorate. This was based on a simple residential qualification for men over twenty-one years of age and on more complex rules for women over thirty, provided they were either local government electors or wives of local government electors. Those eligible to vote increased enormously overnight, from 8.4 to about 21.4 million. The act also reduced the number whose ownership of property made them plural voters (previously exceeding half a million) to a business franchise of 159,000.

It would be tempting to conclude, as some have, that a major transformation had occurred in official and public attitudes to democracy. The turnaround was due, it has been argued, to the impact of millions of lives lost during the Great War. To talk simply of duty to one's country seemed an unconvincing justification for such sacrifices, and Britain – along with other countries – fell into line with the rhetoric of the American President, Woodrow Wilson: the war had been worth fighting if it was for liberal democracy, for societies in which most men and women felt they had a rightful stake. 'The world must be made safe for democracy', Wilson told Congress in April 1917. In Britain, any fears about a massive extension of the franchise quickly disappeared. Elections became calmer affairs, registration procedures were improved and when the voting age for both sexes was equalised in 1928 – adding another five million women over the age of 21 to the electorate - 'it caused hardly a ripple on the political millpond'.[8]

All measures of franchise reform stretching back to 1832 had involved – in varying degrees – pressure from below via ginger groups, and willingness to act on the part of political elites in parliament. Many writers have given the lion's share of credit for securing change in 1918 to the suffragettes. The feminist movement was relatively quiescent in the early years of war, with the likes of Mrs Pankhurst putting, in her words, 'patriotism above provocation'. Indeed sterling war service by women, in the munitions factories and as auxiliaries to the armed forces, was cited as a factor in support of a female franchise when the government came forward with its proposals in 1917.

But for feminist writers it was the pre-war campaign that was decisive. Following this line of thinking, Paul Foot in his posthumously published work *The Vote* described the 1918 Act as the culmination of a historic struggle stretching back to the Levellers in the time of Oliver Cromwell, with the emphasis at every stage on the vital role of direct action in overcoming vested interests.

'The militant activities of the suffragettes', he argues, 'loosened the ideological hold of men over women... Just as the vote for most men was won when large quantities of men stepped outside their routine lives and fought for political representation, so, even more certainly, votes for women would never have been surrendered had it not been for the arguments of the Millicent Fawcetts and Lydia Beckers...the formidable, single-minded courage of the Pankhursts, of Annie Kenney, of Emily Davison and of the hundreds of thousands of women who fought for their cause more relentlessly than had any of their male predecessors, and won it.'[9]

Some historians take a more cautious view. Martin Pugh agrees that the suffragette campaign before 1914 prepared the ground, in that the discussion thereafter centred not on *if* women might be enfranchised, but *when* and on *what* terms. Yet there are strong reasons, he claims, for not regarding feminist pressure as the main driving force behind reform. In the first place parliament took up the issue primarily to enfranchise men, not women. So many young men were leaving their normal residences to join the services that the government was faced – owing to the requirements of registration – with the prospect of massive disenfranchisement. It was in the context of proposing simplified residence requirements, leading to virtually full male suffrage, that some votes for women became unavoidable.

Feminist campaigners, secondly, were not closely involved in the talks that led to legislation. In fact male politicians exploited the muted role of the suffragettes since 1914 by claiming – as Asquith did in introducing the bill – that his conversion to the cause was due partly to the absence of 'detestable' agitation; there could be no question of parliament 'yielding to violence'. Pugh also argues, thirdly, that the idea of male prejudice melting away in the face of wartime revelations about women's capabilities cannot be squared with the limited concessions enacted. Most women working in the munitions factories were young and single and so never benefited from the 1918 Act. An age restriction of thirty meant men still outnumbered women in the electorate as a whole, and that those women who were entitled to vote were more likely to be married, to have children and to have little interest in a career – less likely, in short, to promote feminist ideas. Male politicians, it would seem, accepted a partial female franchise without abandoning their traditional view of the 'separate spheres' inhabited by men and women.[10]

It follows that there are dangers in regarding the Representation of the People Act as a decisive break with the past. In the words of Martin Pugh, 'the idea that military necessity revolutionised the attitude of... politicians towards extending the bounds of citizenship is only superficially attractive'. The measure was very much, Pugh argues, an elite-driven measure based on party calculations. It was, in essence, unfinished business from the Edwardian era. Many Liberals had been pushing for a wider franchise (to include women) for many years, while Unionist (Conservative) opinion was divided. Reform developed as a compromise when the two main parties found themselves working together in a wartime coalition.

The Liberals secured a wider franchise, and were sufficiently content not to press the idea of votes for women under thirty, believing in party terms that some sections of the younger age group - for example domestic servants - were highly susceptible to the influence of their Conservative employers. A minority of Unionists remained hostile to any change, but Conservative leaders feared it would be electorally disastrous to adopt a hard-line stance. For their part, Unionists could take comfort from a redrawing of constituency boundaries and the survival of plural votes – considered to be overwhelmingly the preserve of Tory-inclined businessmen. Largely shielded from outside pressure by the wartime emergency, political leaders thus conceived electoral change in pragmatic, tactical terms. If the result went a long way towards the democratic notion of 'one person, one vote' - in place of the idea that voting was related to a stake in the community - parliament had not discussed reform with such an ideology in mind. Indeed according to Pugh the overriding characteristic of parliamentary discussions was the extent to which MPs avoided presenting the issue in terms of principles or theories of representation.[11]

Britain's path towards democracy marked it out in key respects from what took place elsewhere, both from existing models such as the French and American, and the newer democracies created

as part of the peace settlement in 1919-20. One of the most comprehensive academic studies of the evolution of democracy, by John Garrard, argues that in comparison with other states, some devastated by war, the process in Britain took place in 'particularly benign circumstances'. Of the competing influences upon change, from above and below, Garrard notes that even if the political elites always acted for self-preserving or party political reasons, they were ultimately prepared to compromise and allow the inclusion of newcomers in power structures. Unlike in, say, post-1918 Germany, in Britain there was no displaced group removed at a stroke from all authority, waiting in the wings to turn back the clock if democracy faltered. As for pressure from below, there had been a long tradition of civil associations – such as business groups, friendly societies and trade unions – being 'formally inducted into Britain's political system', while at the same time learning to behave in 'democratically appropriate ways'. It also helped – again unlike Germany – that electoral reform took place in a context where liberal freedoms of speech, press, association and religious belief commanded broad approval.[12]

Nor should it be overlooked that, aside from the extension of voting rights, much remained unchanged in Britain. 'The war did not', writes W. D. Rubinstein, 'mark a total break with the *ancien régime* such as occurred throughout Europe, eliminating and liquidating age-old regimes, their symbols and their supporters. Someone falling asleep in Britain in 1912 and waking up in, say, 1925, would find that none of the symbols of pre-war British society and...few of Britain's institutions, had changed markedly, let alone irrevocably and totally, as would immediately strike someone awakening in Moscow, Berlin or Vienna'.[13] The monarchy, the unelected House of Lords, even the first-past-the-post system of counting votes – all survived as reminders of the pre-democratic order.

The 'benign circumstances' to which John Garrard refers underpinned the durability of British democracy between the wars and beyond. In contrast to Weimar Germany, the system was sufficiently robust to survive the economic turmoil that followed the Wall Street crash in 1929. But stability has not always been adequately distinguished from vibrancy, and two further features of Britain's particular experience merit special mention. Franchise reform firstly, we have noted, had been exceptionally long-drawn out, taking place in piecemeal stages for nearly a century stretching back to 1832. Even after the 1918 Act Britain could best be described, in the words of John Ramsden, as a 'near democracy'.[14] It was only after the further reform of 1928 (and even then only in the late 1930s as war again threatened) that it became more commonplace to refer to Britain as among the world's leading democracies, a counterpoint to the fascist dictatorships. The elongated nature of the process was such that in the latter stages it occasioned neither wholesale celebration nor intense, diehard opposition. This lack of passion contrasted with cases – in post-1918 western Europe (and among eastern European states after the later collapse of Communism) - where there were sudden changes of regime.

Britain's low-key path towards democracy was related to a second key characteristic: the fact that at no point had large numbers of 'the people' been greatly involved. Pressure groups such as the Chartists and the suffragettes campaigned noisily and tirelessly, but neither could be described as mass movements, and when it came, electoral reform was shaped ultimately by the prejudices and concerns of parliamentarians. As a consequence of these various factors, as John Garrard concedes, British democracy was one of the 'less demanding, less participatory, and more elite-centred versions on offer'.[15]

The manner in which the electoral system was reformed in 1918, and the extent to which earlier assumptions and institutions survived, had a profound impact on public perceptions of politics. The full force of this point can only be appreciated by again contrasting Britain with other nations. In the words of the renowned political scientist Bernard Crick, '...because in our history citizenship has more often appeared as something granted from on high to subjects rather than something gained from below as in the American, Dutch and French experiences, it has been very difficult for us to see the state as a contract between government and citizens'. France and the United States in particular, Crick contends, have different ideas of citizenship, as derived from their own revolutionary traditions. 'To them the mild word "active" in "active citizenship" should be quite unnecessary.... modern American and French citizens are not a hyperactive ancient Athenian citizen elite; yet they

know there is a kind of official, even constitutional, blessing on being at least spasmodically active; or at least not feeling peculiar if they are'.

In Britain, by way of contrast, the qualifying adjective for citizen has usually been 'good' rather than 'active'. Until the time of the Great War, Bernard Crick notes, politicians' rhetoric usually contrasted the restive American and French republican spirit with the solid qualities of British 'subjects', who knew their place in society and dutifully paid their taxes in return for rights established in law by ministers of the Crown. Only the slaughter on the Western Front, Crick argues, led to a change in official language, from 'subjects of the King' to, 'not quite "fellow citizens", but at least citizens of the realm', although even then the notion of British citizenship was not enshrined in law until the 1948 Nationality Act.[16] Against this backdrop, much of the talk about democracy in crisis at the beginning of the twenty first century appears somewhat overblown. A glance backwards in time reveals that the British people have always been lukewarm about politics; it is not a present-day departure. Although the manner of public involvement has changed in the past forty years – with the small minority who took a strong interest turning more towards joining pressure groups at the expense of political parties – nothing has occurred to shake the priority that the majority continue to give to work, home and recreation, to private ahead of public concerns. The evolution of democracy in Britain was to have a lasting legacy: the people were to remain in the mould of 'good subjects', not 'active citizens'.

NOTES

1 *The Guardian*, 28 February 2006.

2 This argument is developed in the author's forthcoming work *Two Cheers for Democracy. Politics and the People in Britain since 1918* (London, 2007), upon which the following is based.

3 Anthony Arblaster, *Democracy* (Buckingham, 1994 edn.), pp. 6-9.

4 Edward Pearce, *Reform! The Fight for the 1832 Reform Act* (London, 2004). See also Charles Tilley, *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650-2000* (Cambridge, 2005), for an overview of the evolution of western democracy.

5 Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867-1939* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 3-4.

6 Pugh, *Making of Modern British Politics*, p. 4.

7 Ian Machin, *The Rise of Democracy in Britain, 1830-1918* (Basingstoke and London, 2001), p. vii.

8 Arblaster, Democracy, pp. 46-7; J. F. S. Ross, *Elections and Electors. Studies in Democratic Representation* (London, 1955), pp. 191-3.

9 Paul Foot, *The Vote. How It was Won and How It was Undermined* (London, 2005), pp. 236-7. See also Barbara Caine, *English Feminism 1780-1980* (Oxford, 1997).

10 Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1999* (Basingstoke and London, 2000 edn.), pp. 34-41; Machin, *Rise of Democracy*, p. 143.

11 Martin Pugh, *Electoral Reform in War and Peace 1906-18* (London, 1978), pp. 181-2.

12 John Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain. Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 2-7 and p. 41.

13 W. D. Rubinstein, 'Britain's Elites in the Interwar period, 1918-39', in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (eds), *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), p. 197.

14 John Ramsden, *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin 1902-40* (London, 1978), p. 122.

15 Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain*, p. 4.

16 Bernard Crick, *Essays on Citizenship* (London, 2000), pp. 6 and 99.

The Russian Revolution: E.H. Carr, Soviet And Post-Soviet Historians

PROFESSOR PAUL DUKES

In *What Is History?*, E. H. Carr recommended that before studying the subject, one should study its practitioners. Taking him at his word, indeed going beyond it, some of his former colleagues concentrated in their obituaries on the man and his failings to the neglect of his work. In all probability, some of the vitriol was produced by antipathy to his publications. Central to these was his multi-volumed *A History of Soviet Russia*, in which he set out on what he considered to be 'a particularly hazardous enterprise' since he saw himself as 'an Englishman who has neither a Marxist nor a Russian background'. Moreover, Carr believed that the historian of Soviet Russia was extraordinarily conscious of the need 'to combine an imaginative understanding of the outlook and purpose of his dramatis personae with an over-riding appreciation of the universal significance of the action.' [1] For some critics, in pursuit of his own kind of objectivity, Carr went too far. In the preface to the fifth volume of his ambitious enterprise, he made a response to them:

> What I take to be the conventional view of Soviet history in the years after the revolution, i.e. that it was the work of determined men – enlightened pioneers on one view, hardened villains on another – who knew exactly what they wanted and where they were going, seems to me almost wholly misleading. The view commonly expressed that the Bolshevik leaders, or Stalin in particular, were inspired primarily by the desire to perpetuate their rule, is equally inadequate. No doubt every government seeks to retain its authority as long as possible. But the policies pursued were not by any means always those apparently most conducive to the undisturbed exercise of power by those in possession. [2]

This was enough to raise hackles still further.

By the year 1945, when Carr first embarked upon the long road of his major work, his diplomatic, academic and journalistic experience had constituted a thorough preparation. In a *Times* editorial of 6 November 1944, he had noted 'the emergence of Soviet Russia as the greatest Power on the European continent.' This was one of the motives for his ambitious new venture, another being his avowed determination 'to produce something that will really stand for some years to come'. Recording Carr's aspirations, his biographer Jonathan Haslam went on to observe in 1999 that, while the perspective of 1944 lost much of its validity with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, 'it may yet be too early to draw a final balance sheet on the Russian revolution and the regime that it created. The true trajectory of that great country is still undetermined.' Moreover, Haslam rightly points out that the power of his supervisor's example 'undoubtedly opened the way... to the proper study of the Soviet past.' [3] Some of *A History of Soviet Russia* may prove more useful as a reference book than as a master narrative, while, especially in the earlier volumes, it reads more like an official history of high policy than as an analysis taking in social development. Yet, there can be no doubt of the overall achievement which will continue to maintain an important place in the study of its subject long after the work of some of the crueller critics is forgotten.

Possibly, in such a long view, Carr will be seen as a latter-day counterpart to Thiers, who, thirty years or so after the event, wrote of the French Revolution that 'the new society would be consolidated in the shelter of its sword, and liberty would come one day.' [4] Similarly, Carr never ceased to believe that, for all the appalling violence, the Soviet Union (or Soviet Russia as he called it) nevertheless constituted a necessary attempt to construct a new order. Here, his assessment might not have been completely different to that of his near contemporary the Soviet academician I. I. Mints, who survived harsh criticism, even persecution, to remain an optimist concerning the directions taken in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. Carr saw his own faith in the future as part of the inheritance of a scholar brought up before the cataclysm of the First World War. Possibly, that same inheritance

also tended to make his world outlook Eurocentric, although precisely how much of an influence should be attributed to it is difficult to say.

Of course, he himself could be a waspish critic, and therefore helped to provoke at least some of the sharp attacks made on his own work and on himself. However, radical disagreement could come from friends as well as enemies. For example, Isaac Deutscher observed that 'He is steeped in English empiricism and rationalism, his mind is very far from what to him are abstract dialectical speculations, and so he cannot really break down the barrier between his own way of thinking and Marxism.' This put Carr firmly between the devil and the deep blue sea, since opponents often considered him to be overly sympathetic to Marxism, even a Marxist.

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On the other side, in the avowed home of Marxism, or rather of the hybrid Marxism-Leninism, negative reviews could be accompanied by exile, imprisonment or even execution. However, a first point that must be made is that, even after the collapse of 1991, at least some older post-Soviet historians remain genuinely respectful of their teachers. Alexander Kan, an émigré now living in Sweden, has written of the high standards of scholarship and training observed in the 1930s. Moreover, he goes so far as to maintain that 'having been both a new social theory and a new scientific method, Marxism refreshed and enriched humanities, those of Soviet Russia included.' The Bolshevik triumph in 1917, 'opened the doors of the "temple of science" to the new and more democratic, hence literate masses, raised totally new historical research questions, and unleashed a series of debates, of course restrained by the obligatory Marxist vocabulary.' Restraint then became persecution, however, accompanied by misery and deprivation, enough in Kan's view to 'prove the bankruptcy of the Marxist project as a whole'.[6]

While accepting much of what Kan says, I would like to insist that Soviet 'Marxism-Leninism' should not be equated with Marxism. Bearing this in mind, let us look more closely at Soviet historians, beginning with an outstanding example, the already mentioned Isaak Israelevich Mints, who in his later years was the doyen of Soviet historians of the Russian Revolution. At a meeting of an international commission celebrating the seventieth anniversary in Odessa in 1987, he personally showed the participants the very places that he had attacked and defended as a young officer seventy years before, anticipating analysis with participation. But although he dodged the White bullets, he could not evade Stalinist censure. In 1928, reporting on international conferences attended by Soviet historians in Berlin and Oslo, he wrote that 'speeches by the non-party, non-Marxist part of the delegation delivered a powerful blow to the prejudice that in the Soviet Union bourgeois historical scholarship has been abolished and that those who think differently are automatically suppressed.' In 1931, however, possibly with tongue in cheek as well as heart in mouth, he confessed to underestimating the international significance of Bolshevism and approaching his subject 'not from the point of view of political expediency, with the aim of fulfilling this or that purpose, but from the point of view of objectivity, which in no way characterises our political history, and which is a belching-up of bourgeois liberalism.' [7]

How to explain such diversions from academic conventions? To follow E. H. Carr again, 'Before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment.' [8] In the Soviet case, all too obviously, this involved the forcing of the pace, the desperate attempt to catch up with the more advanced industrialised states, accompanied by widespread disruption including the purges. But it also included successive stages in this endeavour, which necessarily brings us on to the question of generations, clearly reflected in the case of Mints, who was also, along with other Jews, suspect for his nationality. Before him, the very first Soviet historians had received their training and even pursued their careers in the last years of tsarism. For example, E. V.. Tarlé had established an international reputation as historian of France before 1917. Even after it, in 1920, he could write about the tasks facing historians without once mentioning Marx or Lenin before being criticised in 1928 for such misdemeanours as underestimating the intensification of the class struggle in the years of imperialism before the outbreak of the First World War in particular and for 'pseudo-Marxism' in general. Then,

in 1930, he was arrested, implicated in a 'plot' to restore the monarchy and sentenced to five years of exile. By 1934, however, the pendulum of favour had swung back and Tarlé took up a most successful career as a Soviet patriotic historian, celebrating the great victory over Napoleon in 1812 and later, the defeat of Hitler in 1945.

The most spectacular rise and fall of the earlier Soviet years was of M. N. Pokrovsky who defined his craft as 'politics projected into the past'. Thus, he transformed Russia before the Revolution of 1917 into a monotonous arena for the class struggle, reducing such national heroes as Peter the Great to near ciphers. Dominating the subject for most of the 1920s , Pokrovsky was perhaps fortunate to die in 1932 before his interpretation was rejected and outstanding individuals returned to historiography. Soviet patriotism was a close companion of the Five-Year Plans, the purges and Stalinism as a whole. In a famous speech of 1931, the Leader himself referred to the fact that 'One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness.' A lag of as many as a hundred years would have to be overcome in ten or the Soviet Union would go under. So all citizens had to put their shoulders to the wheel, so to speak, novelists and poets becoming 'engineers of the soul' while historians were required to do all they could to keep the flag waving through the difficult years up to the great victory of 1945, including the rehabilitation of Peter the Great and other national heroes. In a notorious letter of 1931, Stalin put forward what John Barber has characterised as 'a fixed unchanging (and unhistorical) concept of Bolshevism, with universal principles of its nature extrapolated from specific moments of its unimagined past.' Stalin declared that 'the Russian revolution was (and remains) the nodal point of the world revolution; the fundamental questions of the Russian revolution were at the same time (and are now) the fundamental questions of the world revolution.' As Barber puts it, critical analysis was no longer required: 'confirmation of known "axioms" and denunciation of deviations from them were now the prime tasks of historians.'[9] The heroes of this process were Lenin and Stalin himself, the progenitor of Marxism-Leninism. James D. White makes the point well: Stalin 'wanted to be recognised by historians as the infallible guide on all questions of historical theory; and he wanted to be mentioned frequently in historical works and in a tone of extreme reverence.' [10]

After 1945, the Cold War produced a new conformity, which the post-Stalinist 'Thaw' could not dissipate. Even now, historians could lose their jobs, if no longer their lives, for misinterpretation of sensitive topics such as the Russian Revolution. For such a misdemeanour, in particular for exaggerating the degree of 'spontaneity' among the masses in 1917, E.N. Burdzhalov was demoted in 1956 and P. V. Volobuev was removed from his position as Director of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences in 1974.[11] Nevertheless, especially during the last years of the Soviet period, some of the old 'Marxist-Leninist' formulae seemed to be losing their earlier force.

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And then there were the heady years of perestroika, when a real revival seemed possible before the abrupt collapse of 1991. Understanding better than most the ups and downs of previous periods, historians reacted to the apparently boundless opportunities for self-expression with a degree of wariness. Even now many of them seem to be putting forward their ideas with at least half an eye on the possibility of the arrival of a new orthodoxy. Of the older generation, Volobuev was not alone in finding it difficult to accept the debunking of Lenin and the rejection of Marxism, although he made a valiant effort to encourage a new pluralism. Searching for a new past, moreover, historians in Russia could not be expected to give up entirely the restrictions of the national approach still accepted by most of their fellow-practitioners elsewhere. To a considerable extent, indeed, some post-Soviet interpretation fits without great difficulty into a traditional pattern of celebrating the Russian past from medieval Muscovy onwards. On the other hand, new difficulties arose such as the scholarly rights to pre-Muscovite developments centred on Kiev, which was now the capital of the neighbouring independent state of Ukraine.

At a British conference soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a colleague suggested that the period from 1917 to 1991 should be consigned to oblivion, and that an evolutionary view of history

should pick up the threads of the last years of tsarism. Such advice is not only self-contradictory but also impossible to accept: we cannot pick and choose which parts of the past to take seriously. That is not to say that to make a fair assessment of the Soviet period is any easier now than it was during the years of existence of the Soviet Union. But at least one key to the problem is an understanding of the evolution of post-Soviet historiography, to which two books from R. W. Davies on the subject in the Gorbachev and Yeltsin years respectively have made a considerable contribution. [12]

On the Russian revolution in particular, eighty years after 1917, one of the leading post-Soviet historians, V.P. Buldakov, spoke in Aberdeen in November 1997 about anniversary conferences that he had attended. All of them, in his view, demonstrated some chaos in the mind, but also some directions forward. First, there was a Conference on the October Revolution and history textbooks. There were about forty participants, of whom only one was a dogmatic 'orthodox' Marxist. Buldakov himself had recommended a re-reading of Lenin, who in the years 1917-1921 had advised his comrades to learn from the masses. Secondly, there was a Conference at the Gorbachev Foundation, opened by Mikhail Sergeevich with his own thoughts on the October Revolution, which he believed had changed the world for the better through its promotion of socialism. This might be even more clearly recognised at the 100th Anniversary when the cause of socialism would be very much alive. The second speaker was Buldakov who talked of the revolution as a conflict of tradition with modernism, to a considerable extent between generations. Many of the other speakers, drawn from the leading ranks of politicians and publicists as well as historians, revealed that they knew little about the events that they were discussing, and some became very heated. Aleksandr Tsipko considered October to be less great than bloody, anti-humanistic, unworthy of comparison to the French and English revolutions – a peasant revolt turned to their advantage by the Bolsheviks. Gorbachev interposed that it was rather the case that the Bolsheviks had imposed utopian ideals by force of arms. Viacheslav Nikonov, Molotov's grandson, deemed the revolution an earthquake, a tornado, which could not be approached from a 'humanistic' point of view, and was more appropriately labelled as an example of 'totalitarian modernisation'. Boris Kargalitsky gave emphasis to Russian backwardness, and to its inadequacy as a context for the first attempt to introduce social democracy, while Roy Medvedev looked forward to a movement for a new socialism. Other suggestions were put forward: that Lenin and Trotsky differed from Robespierre only in their primitive coarseness; that October marked a continuation of old Russian sobornost' ('togetherness'), its socialism embodying traditional ideas of justice; and, of course, that Stalin was a counter-revolutionary. Both President Yeltsin and the Communist leader Ziuganov were also widely seen as counter-revolutionary, the President coming under attack for his new ideology even though it was variously labelled as 'social democracy' or 'popular socialism'. There was a call for a new 'third force' which would overthrow both Yeltsin and Ziuganov. The only foreign speaker was Moshe Lewin, who described Stalinism as the head destroying the body, but also suggested that a new generation might regenerate the system through concentration on it – the system – as well as (even rather than) through discussion of new ideas. Expressing a measure of agreement with Lewin, Buldakov thought that perhaps, eighty years on, Russia was achieving a kind of stability that could evolve into normality. Turning to his 'own' Conference, organised by the Institute of Russian History of the Academy of Sciences among other bodies and dedicated to the memory of Volobuev, he noted that the late Academician and he had agreed to try to deideologise and depoliticise the October Revolution. But the degree of their success had been limited: Volobuev had remained a communist, while Buldakov was not. Various kinds of disagreement along these and other lines had been apparent at the Academy of Sciences Conference.

In conclusion, Buldakov made another contrast. Western and Russian historians might agree that the October Revolution consisted of human beings caught up in a crisis of empire in the context of a world crisis. However, many of the former might tend to stress the proletarian revolution while the latter might tend to emphasise the peasant revolution. He himself believed that much understanding could be derived from a comparison of the early twentieth-century smuta (Time of Troubles) with that at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Even towards the end of the twentieth century, the people as a whole looked to the government rather than to themselves: the most important aspect of ongoing modernisation was to change the people's views about power. Education and upbringing were

all-important in the attempt to reduce the gap between elite and people that had bedevilled Russian history and which still existed. In answer to questions about the relations of Russian historians with those from other former Soviet republics, Buldakov said that good relations had been maintained with the Ukraine and some others, the main exceptions being the Baltics with which contacts were now on a private, personal level only. He agreed that a most positive development since 1991 was a new emphasis on the regional history of the Revolution.

As far as the international community of scholars was concerned, at the International Congress of Central and East European Studies (ICCEES) Congress in Tampere, Finland, in July 2000 there was just one panel devoted to the subject, entitled 'The Russian Revolutions and St. Petersburg' [sic]. Was the avoidance of the word 'Petrograd' itself a symptom of new times? Lenin made no appearance in the printed programme, as opposed to Stalin who received at least half a dozen mentions. At the International Congress of Historical Studies (ICHS) in Oslo in August 2000, owing to lack of funds, none of the office-holders of the Commission on the Russian Revolution was able to attend. However, a meeting was attended by about 40 delegates, several of them from China and Japan, and the Commission was kept in existence.

At a time of continuing uncertainty for Russia, which is not without its influence on the West, academics from both sides must take fullest advantage of existing opportunities for exchanges of views leading to greater degrees of mutual understanding. In the Stalin years, such contacts barely existed. Even in the period of the later Cold War, they were by no means easy to establish. The 1990s were a decade of great opportunity still falling short of the optimum degree of realisation. In the first years of the new millennium, as the ninetieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution approaches, there is still room for improvement. To quote E. H. Carr again, 'History is the long struggle of man, by the exercise of his reason, to understand his environment and to act upon it.'[13] Today, twenty-four years after Carr's death, his definition takes on even more resonance for all of us.

Reason, as well as experience, indicates that history is a process of ebb and flow. It would be going too far to assert that the Soviet Union will be reconstituted. Nevertheless, it is worth recalling that Russian frontiers have always been in a state of flux, changing at least every fifty years since time immemorial. They could well change again. As in other states, particularly those without stable borders, there is a need for ideological cohesion. In the case of the Russian republic, the Revolution of 1917 at present plays a very small part. Lenin and the lesser founding fathers of yesteryear have become fallen heroes, even if Lenin himself has not yet been removed from his mausoleum. Perhaps we could make an analogy between the present period and that of the Restoration in France. To be sure, Putin is not a tsar in theory, although some observers have deemed him tsar in fact. But the doctrines of the Orthodox Church and the spirit of the people stemming from attachment to the land have been evoked. This falls short of the Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality slogan of pre-revolutionary days, but strongly recalls it nevertheless, and is unsatisfactory in that respect. Almost certainly, the Revolution will make some kind of comeback in the national ideology.

As it reassumes political significance, the Revolution will become again a matter of historical controversy. Arguably, in the present lull, the opportunity remains for dispassionate treatment of E.H. Carr and Soviet historians, for Lenin, Stalin and other actors in the great drama, for Marxism and Marxism-Leninism. On the other hand, along with distortions and exaggerations, controversy may also stimulate worthwhile discussion and analysis.

Enough of speculation, on to a final recommendation. Readers of *History Teaching Review Year Book* wanting to keep up with recent interpretations and publications may turn with confidence to the journal *Revolutionary Russia*, the organ of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution, British in foundation but international in its membership from the beginning.

NOTES

1 E.H. Carr, *What Is History?*, second edition, (London, 1987), p. 44; E.H. Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923*, Vol. 1, (London, 1950), Preface.

2 E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country, 1924-1926*, Vol. 1, (London, 1958), Preface.

3 Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E.H. Carr, 1892-1982*, (London, 1999), pp. 140, 181.

4 Quoted by Noel Parker, *Images, Debates and Patterns of Thought on the French Revolution*, (London, 1990), p. 124. Walter Laqueur, *The Fate of the Revolution: Interpretations of Soviet History*, (London, 1967), pp. 132-3, takes the comparison between Carr and Thiers further.

5 Haslam, *The Vices*, p. 140.

6 Alexander Kan, 'A Prodigal Son's Return: Post-Soviet Historians in Search of a New Identity' *Storia della Istoriografia*, 44, 2003, pp.94-5.

7 John Barber, *Soviet Historians in Crisis, 1928-1932*, (London, 1981), pp. 34, 132.

8 Carr, *What Is History?*, p. 44.

9 Barber, *Soviet Historians*, p. 131.

10 James D. White, 'The origins, development and demise of M.N. Pokrovskii's interpretation of Russian history', in Ian D. Thatcher, ed., *Late Imperial Russia: Problems and prospects: Essays in honour of R.B. McKean*, (Manchester, 2005), p. 182.

11 See generally Roger D. Markwick, *Rewriting History in Soviet Russia: The Politics of Revisionist Historiography, 1956-1974*, (London, 2001.)

12 R.W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution*, (London, 1989;) *Soviet History in the Yeltsin Era*, (1996.) Among many other accomplishments, R.W. Davies collaborated with E.H. Carr and prepared the second edition of *What Is History?*

13 Carr, *What Is History?*, p. 134.

The Russian Revolution: Beginnings, Ends and Perspectives on the Soviet Thermidor

DR RONALD KOWALSKI

Some readers may be initially puzzled by the title of this article. It is well known that a Revolution began in Russia in February 1917, which culminated in the abdication of the last of the autocrats, Nicholas II, on 3 March. [1] The old autocratic order was replaced by a self-appointed and short-lived republican regime, the Provisional Government, which in turn was overthrown in October 1917 by the Bolshevik party led by Vladimir Lenin. Many detailed studies too have been devoted to recounting these dramatic events. [2] So what is the problem? Here it is vital to grasp that Revolution in general is not a simple fact of history that can be easily dated. Rather it is a complex and contested construct that historians employ in different ways, and with different periodisations, in an attempt to understand the reasons both why past societies underwent revolutionary transformations, and their eventual outcomes. Let us digress briefly. Arguably it remains essential to avoid reducing the American Revolution merely to the Declaration of Independence of 4 July, 1776, and the French Revolution to the storming of the Bastille on 14 July, 1789. Critical as these moments were (especially symbolically) they capture neither the underlying causes nor the longer term consequences of these Revolutions. A narrow focus on the February and October Revolutions is similarly restrictive. Many historians who have quite properly studied them in depth and contributed much to our knowledge would, I am sure, acknowledge this conclusion.

Beginnings

When to begin a study of the Russian Revolution is far from settled. Two of the more recent and lengthy books on the subject do so in the 1890s. [3] Then autocratic Russia fully committed itself to a policy of rapid and state-sponsored industrialisation. Its purpose was to 'catch up' with the advanced powers of the West and so provide itself with the industrial infra-structure upon which modern military power had become based. The costs of this policy were largely borne by the poor peasant majority and the growing urban working class. In 1905, in the midst of a disastrous war with Japan, they joined with the liberal and socialist intelligentsia to challenge the old order which in varying and often inchoate ways they held to be responsible for their impoverished plight. By a combination of concession followed by brutal repression the autocracy survived the Revolution of 1905. Nicholas II's October Manifesto had promised the establishment of the rudiments of representative parliamentary government in Russia and sanctioned the election of a State Duma. Trades unions were legalised, at least in theory. Radical reforms in the countryside, to convert the peasantry into a prosperous new ('sturdy and sober') class and, so it was hoped, a bulwark of autocratic power, were introduced by the new Prime Minister, P.A. Stolypin, between 1906 and 1911. To some, including P.N. Miliukov, the leading liberal intellectual, it appeared that Russia had taken promising, if yet halting, steps towards transforming itself into a modern, Western polity and society, and the renewed and rapid industrial growth evident before 1914 was seen as another reason for optimism.[4]

Yet all was not as it seemed and Russia's progress towards parliamentary democracy was far from assured. The Duma, whose powers had been constrained from the outset, was increasingly emasculated. The newly legalised trades unions were all too frequently closed down. Political reaction had fuelled the potential for revolution in the towns and cities, amongst some liberals and many more workers who after the bloody repression of striking workers in the Lena gold fields of Siberia in April 1912 swung behind the Bolsheviks' calls for the overthrow of the autocracy. Most peasants also opposed Stolypin's reforms and unrest was growing in the countryside. Despite these growing tensions it would be foolhardy to claim Russia was on the verge of revolution in the summer of 1914 before the onset of the Great War. No doubt, increasing numbers of workers had taken to the streets

of the capital, St Petersburg, chanting anti-autocratic slogans and a mass strike gripped the city in the summer of 1914. Yet this was not tantamount to a revolutionary challenge. This movement was confined to the capital and even there it embraced only about one-quarter of the work-force. While the army remained loyal, as it did then, the prospects for a successful revolution were remote.[5]

Consequently, it is necessary to consider the immediate impact of the Great War as the precipitating cause that led to the collapse of the autocracy. A combination of repeated defeats that cost the Russian peasant armies dear in human terms; of shortages of food and fuel in the cities and towns that bore down most heavily on the workers; and of the intransigence of the autocracy that ruthlessly crushed strikes and refused to contemplate even the most modest demands of the liberals for participation in government to assist in the war effort: all resulted by early 1917 in the spectre that the Foreign Minister, S.D. Sazonov, had cautioned against in the summer of 1915. The regime found itself 'hanging in the air', devoid of popular support. More ominously, elements within the army, the nobility and even the royal family itself had been converted to the need for fundamental political change in order to reinvigorate Russia's halting war effort. It is little wonder that when a serious challenge emerged on the streets of Petrograd (as St Petersburg had been renamed in 1914) in late February 1917 the autocracy found itself vulnerable and swiftly fell.

Within eight months the Provisional Government itself had fallen. Why this was the case again is a highly contentious issue. Since the downfall of the Soviet Union in 1991, what elsewhere I have described as a 'triumphalist current' has re-merged. Nuances notwithstanding, it essentially contends that the Provisional Government was ousted by a coup d'état, engineered by Lenin and carried out by a highly disciplined and obedient Bolshevik Party that adhered to his dictates. Without denying the role that the individual might have on history such an explanation is simplistic. It is equally important to consider the failings of the Provisional Government. It would be churlish to deny the extent and depth of the problems that it had inherited from the old regime when it came to power. But it would be equally facile to overlook its own mistakes. It did oversee the introduction of political and civil liberty in Russia. As even Lenin conceded, Russia was the 'freest country' in the world in 1917. Yet the Provisional Government repeatedly postponed the elections that might have provided it with a popular legitimacy, or mandate. More critically, it failed to reverse the economic hardships facing the urban workers; it procrastinated on any significant measures of reform in the countryside to satisfy intensifying peasant demands for land division; and it continued the war that the vast majority was weary of. Lenin exploited these failings and offered the majority what it most sought: peace, bread and land, which could only be realised, he insisted, by a revolution to place power in the hands of the Soviets (the councils of workers', peasants', soldiers' and sailors' deputies) that had proliferated at the grassroots of Russian society during 1917. In his famous tract, *State and Revolution*, written in the summer of 1917, he also elaborated a utopian vision of Russia's future, when it would become an egalitarian and self-governing society run by the workers (and even peasants) themselves. [6] Instead a murderous authoritarian state emerged from the ashes of the old autocratic order, one that by the end of the 1930s had been culpable for the deaths of millions of its own citizens. It is to this question, of the Soviet Thermidor, that we now must turn.

Ends and the Soviet Thermidor

Thermidor was the eleventh month of the French Republican calendar introduced in September 1793 at the height of the most radical period of the French Revolution by the National Convention. It is a historically significant term as it was during Thermidor (July) 1794 when Maximilien Robespierre and his followers, those who continued to espouse greater egalitarianism as central to the mission of the Revolution, were arrested and guillotined. Since then it has become a term synonymous with the point when revolutions in general begin to abandon their initial ideals and the door to a new dictatorship opens. In particular, many Soviet Communists (as the Bolsheviks had renamed themselves in March 1918) were mindful of the ultimate fate of the French Revolution, which had spawned the dictatorship of Napoleon Bonaparte, and however ineffectually, sought to prevent their own Revolution coming to a similar end.

No one but the most die-hard Communist would deny that the egalitarian and libertarian ideals of 1917 were ever realised. When the possibility of achieving them finally was scuppered is another matter. Here it is necessary to consider a range of possible dates. Geoffrey Swain has pointed out that on the very morrow of the October Revolution Lenin refused to entertain the notion of a democratic socialist coalition government, one which would include more moderate socialists drawn from the ranks of the Right Mensheviks and Right Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs). [7] That the latter intransigently refused to contemplate any coalition including Lenin and Trotsky was an additional stumbling block to the formation of such a government. In November the elections belatedly organised by the Provisional Government to elect a Constituent Assembly did take place. Over 47 million of the 80 million eligible voted. The Bolsheviks received about 11 million votes. The SRs, who polled 19 million, were the apparent victors though the Left SRs, who had reluctantly entered into a coalition with the Bolsheviks, were greatly under-represented. When the Assembly duly convened on 5 January, 1918, it was dispersed by force. This action seemingly was in direct contravention of democratic procedures. Yet there was no mass opposition to its dispersal. Moreover, the Left SRs supported its dissolution. They claimed that had they been allowed to put up more of their own candidates for election then they and the Bolsheviks would have been in a majority and legitimately transferred power into the hands of the Soviets. [8]

A more critical turning-point was reached in the early summer of 1918 when the Mensheviks and SRs were expelled from the Soviets. That they had allied with the counter-revolutionary White Generals, as the Communists claimed, is untenable, although in June the SRs did set up the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly (the Komuch) in the town of Samara with the purpose of overthrowing the Communists and re-establishing the Constituent Assembly. What is undeniable is that in the spring their popular support had recovered markedly as elections to the local Soviets revealed. In the cities, disillusion amongst ordinary workers caused by unemployment and food shortages and the Communists' brutal treatment of worker protest underlay the Mensheviks' revival. In the countryside, peasant opposition to forcible grain requisitioning was the most important cause of the SRs' political comeback. Fearful that that their opponents would secure a majority at the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets scheduled for July the Communists plumped for pre-emptive action. The Mensheviks and SRs were expelled from the Soviets in June. As Vladimir Brovkin concluded, a further significant step towards dictatorship had been taken. [9] The Left SRs soon followed, in July, purged on the spurious grounds that they too were conspiring to destroy Soviet power. A one-party state had emerged, with the Communists prepared to secure their hold on power by capricious and despotic secret police terror as and when necessary. While the resort to overt terror reached its peak under Stalin some twenty years later and thereafter abated, the one-party system survived until the last years of the short-lived Gorbachev era. Thermidor, one might argue, had overtaken the Revolution in the summer of 1918.

No doubt the renewed eruption of an extensive Civil War from the summer of 1918, one which on occasions in the next two years threatened to depose the Communists, served to strengthen their resort to coercion. But even then some voices were raised within the Communist Party itself, critical of the all too evident drift towards a capricious and despotic authoritarianism that ran counter to the emancipatory ideals of 1917. The Democratic Centralists rather inchoately espoused the return to a form of Soviet democracy, while the Workers' Opposition argued for the restoration of economic democracy, with the workers, or their trades unions, charged with the management of the economy. Hence one might argue, as historians both sympathetic and unsympathetic to the Revolution have, that Thermidor was not finally reached in 1918. [10] The problem was that these critics within the Party remained ineffectual. One might add too that in the final analysis their defence of democratic principles was limited. Freedom of thought and opinion was to be confined to the ranks of the Party, and not extended to the 'non-party masses'. [11] Their failure to embrace a broader conception of democracy and appeal to 'the masses' to support them consigned them to impotence, as the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921 was to reveal.

This Congress assembled when the threat of White reaction had been quashed. However, Communist power was still, perhaps even more gravely, challenged by what Oliver Radkey once

described as the unknown civil war. In the winter of 1920-21 many peasants (the 'Greens') had risen in a series of uncoordinated revolts, largely in opposition to the continuation of grain requisitioning that often was carried out with much brutality. In addition, the cities were in the grip of a renewed wave of strikes. Workers protested against growing unemployment, food shortages and the imposition of labour militarisation. More ominously, they also called for an end to the Communist monopoly of power and a return to the soviet democracy promised in 1917. The crisis facing the Communists deepened when the Kronshtadt sailors of the Baltic fleet (the 'pride and glory' of Bolshevism during 1917 and the Civil War) rebelled on 1 March. They demanded the abolition of grain requisitioning; the curtailment of the material privileges enjoyed by the Communists; the elimination of the arbitrary powers of the secret police; and a restoration of civil and political freedoms enjoyed by all socialist parties in the heady days of 1917.

In these perilous circumstances Lenin cajoled a reluctant Communist Party to offer some concessions. Most critically, he browbeat it into abolishing grain requisitioning. Fixed taxes were imposed on the peasants and they now were free to sell their surpluses on a newly legalised free market. Small scale industry was returned to private hands in the hope that it would increase the production of consumer goods sufficiently to entice the peasants to sell their surpluses. This was the core of the system known as the New Economic Policy (NEP). The workers were provided with improved food rations; labour conscription was ended; and trades unions were given a limited, and temporary, degree of independence. In sum, the NEP was a retreat, but one confined to measures of economic liberalisation. There was to be no political liberalisation.

On the contrary, the dictatorship of the Party was immeasurably strengthened. All surviving opposition was mercilessly repressed, in the case of the Kronshtadt rebels and the 'Greens' at the cost of countless thousands left dead or wounded. Moreover, the very nature of the Party dictatorship itself became even more autocratic. Hitherto, debate within it had been relatively open. Since 1918, factions on the Left had repeatedly questioned the authoritarian implications of Lenin's policies, without ever offering a feasible democratic programme of their own. Now free debate within the Party itself was silenced. The Tenth Party Congress approved Lenin's resolution, *On Party Unity*, to ban factions which criticised the policy of the majority on the rather farfetched grounds that any splits would open the door to counter-revolution. Those unwilling to bow to this diktat were subject to expulsion. The very limited democracy that had existed in Soviet Russia, that within the Party, effectively had ceased. Whether Lenin himself had foreseen the ultimate consequences of this ban is unanswerable. What is more certain is that Stalin used, or abused, Lenin's disciplinary strictures to his own ends. After Lenin's early death in January 1924 Stalin exploited his key roles in the Party (and state) machines, especially that of General Secretary of the Party, to ensure that his men (there were few women) colonised all the key positions. Thermidor had come about even though Leon Trotsky and others continued, in vain, throughout the 1920s to resist Stalin's pretensions. In the 1930s Trotsky himself (in his famous book *The Revolution Betrayed*) still harboured the naïve belief that it remained possible for the Revolution to recover its libertarian promises and become a genuine, not degenerate, workers' state.

Explanations

Many reasons have been put forward to account for the emergence of a murderous authoritarian state from the ashes of the old autocratic order, and not the egalitarian and self-governing society envisioned by many (including Lenin) in 1917. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 some historians have revived the old Cold War axiom that it was the product of the monstrous and dictatorial imperatives latent within Marxism. Martin Malia and Andrzej Walicki both stress that Marxist imperatives to abolish private property and the working of market forces inexorably led to the growth of Soviet totalitarianism. [12] That Marx failed to provide a blueprint for the functioning of a democratic socialist society is now generally accepted yet to attribute the horrors of Stalinism to his doctrine arguably is exaggerated. A related school of thought lays culpability at the door of Lenin, not Marx. Lenin's own contribution, as outlined in his famous tract of 1902, *What Is To Be Done?*, when he argued that the Party alone was the only true bearer of the interests of the working class and hence

must assume and exercise power in its name, provided the foundations for Soviet authoritarianism. Robert Service, in his three-volume biography of Lenin, expanded on this theme. Admitting that had Lenin himself lived longer the worst excesses of Stalinism might have been avoided, nevertheless he concluded that Lenin's basic ideas, 'of dictatorship, the one-party state, violence in pursuit of political goals, ... [and] ideological monopoly...' were simply taken to their logical extremes by Stalin. [13] Other historians have contested any simple continuity between Marxism, or Leninism, and Stalinism, and emphasise much more circumstances as critical to the Soviet Thermidor. When world revolution failed to spread as they had hoped it would in 1917 the Communists found themselves in power in a beleaguered and backward Russia. Sheer survival drove them to mobilise, with an often callous ruthlessness, the meagre resources at their command. [14]

A far better explanation was proffered by the former anarchist, Victor Serge. In his *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* he accepted that events – the isolation of the Revolution, the rigours of the Civil War and the disintegration of Russia's weak working class – had greatly influenced the forging of the Communist autocracy. But he looked beyond circumstances. Due heed, he added, also had to be paid to what he termed Lenin's 'proletarian Jacobinism', the belief '[t]hat the Party is the repository of truth, and any form of thinking which differs from it is a dangerous or reactionary error. Here lies the spiritual source of its intolerance.' [15] Whether these Jacobin tendencies would have been triggered had a world revolution occurred is a moot point. They were in revolutionary Russia!

Conclusion

That the Russian Revolution ultimately gave birth to an authoritarian state, not a self-governing society of toilers, is undeniable. The foundations of the system arguably were established by 1921, though its monstrous potential was only realised many years after Lenin died. Stalin transformed the system that he had laid claim to into a murderous one. For almost thirty years he presided over the Soviet Thermidor. Or did he? This question must not be seen as any defence of the scarcely imaginable suffering of the Stalin era. Yet this era did witness a revolution of sorts. Under Stalin the Soviet Union underwent a belated and very rapid industrial revolution, at massive human cost. It did become a modern industrial economy, or at least enough of one, to withstand the challenge of Nazi Germany in the Second World War. Whether this achievement justifies the title of 'socialist', as Edward Carr once suggested, is quite another matter.

NOTES

1 In 1917 the Julian calendar which was 13 days behind the rest of Europe was still in force. The Gregorian calendar was introduced on 1 (14) February 1918.

2 Examples include T. Hasegawa, *The February Revolution: Petrograd 1917* (Seattle, 1981); and A. Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* (New York, 1976).

3 R. Pipes, *The Russian Revolution, 1899-1917* (London, 1992); O. Figes, *A People's Tragedy. A History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1996).

4 A. Mendel, 'On Interpreting the Fate of Imperial Russia', in T.G. Stavrou (ed), *Russia under the Last Tsar* (Minneapolis, 1971).

5 R. McKean, *St Petersburg Between the Revolutions* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 315-17.

6 R. Kowalski, *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921* (London, 1997), pp. 3—8.

7 G. Swain, *The Origins of the Russian Civil War* (London, 1996), pp. 62-9 .

8 R. Kowalski, '"Fellow Travellers" or Revolutionary Dreamers? The Left Socialist Revolutionaries after 1917', *Revolutionary Russia* 11 (2), December 1998, pp.5-6.

9 V. Brovkin, *Behind the Front Lines of the Civil War: Political Parties and Social Movements in Russia 1918-1922* (Princeton, 1994) pp. 220-32.

10 L. Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy. Political Opposition in the Soviet State, First Phase – 1917-1992* (London, 1955), p. 344.

11 Kowalski, *The Russian Revolution*, p. 211.

12 M. Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York, 1994), pp. 8, 499-500; A. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford, 1995), pp. 2, 5.

13 D.W. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin: An Evaluation of Marx's Responsibility for Soviet Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 188-97; R. Service, *Lenin: a Political Life, vol. 3. The Iron Ring* (London and Basingstoke, 1995), p. xix/

14 T.H. von Laue, 'Stalin in Focus', *Slavic Review* 42, 1983, pp, 383-6.

15 V. Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (Oxford, 1967), pp, 133-4.

16 E.H. Carr, *The Russian Revolution. From Lenin to Stalin (1917-1929)* (London and Basingstoke, 1979), p. 187.

'Banal Evil' and 'Cogs in the Machine'. Exploring the Relationship between Atrocity, Bureaucracy and Modernity

DR MARTYN HOUSDEN

Hannah Arendt and Adolf Eichmann

Adolf Eichmann must be counted one of the major 'negative' icons of the twentieth century despite the fact that plenty of Nazis had a pedigree more immediately horrendous than him. For instance Julius Streicher publicised a particularly obscene kind of anti-Semitism and Odilo Globocnik was a more significant driving force behind the achievement of industrialised genocide in Eastern Europe; and yet today the name 'Eichmann' has far wider currency than either 'Streicher' or 'Globocnik'.

Of course the man's life was bad enough. Hanged on 31 April 1962, a specially convened court in Jerusalem had found this former member of the Reich Security Head Office guilty on 15 counts which included causing the deaths of millions of Jews, placing millions in conditions likely to lead to their physical destruction, causing serious mental and physical harm to them, even directing that Jewish women have births banned and pregnancies interrupted.[1] But there was something about both Eichmann's character and the way he fulfilled the role of SS functionary that led commentators to treat him as symbolic of more than just a personal failing. In a modern world increasingly typified by bureacuracy and life in large institutions, Eichmann's career as an administrator-cum-manager of genocide attracted disproportionate attention. It was taken to be indicative of pathological possibilities intrinsic to the modern world and, as such, potentially promised some general insights in respect of contemporary life. So while the likes of Globocnik were dead and buried, their role in Nazi crimes consigned to the History books, discussion of Eichmann took on a marked sense of importance.

Hannah Arendt's seminal commentary on Eichmann's life and trial brought the parallels between past and present into particularly stark relief. Despite the fact that Eichmann had, amongst other things, organised the transportation of whole Jewish communities to, first, inhospitable resettlement sites and, later, extermination facilities, Arendt still interpreted his character as nothing out of the ordinary. As she said:

> '...The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many [perpetrators of the Holocaust] were like him, and that many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal.'[2]

Having noted that Eichmann denied hating Jews (he also said that he was not a 'dirty bastard in the depths of his heart') and that a psychologist found his attitude to friends and family "not only normal but most desirable", Arendt located his failings in psychological terrain arguably less comfortable than implied by the description of Holocaust perpetrators as monsters from some far off time and place.[3] His only clear motive was 'an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement', a careerist mentality which became so overweening that, by the time he was participating in genocide, 'he never realized what he was doing'.[4]

To Arendt's way of thinking, as he set about building a personal career through organising the transportation of Jewish communities around Europe, Eichmann found it impossible to reflect on exactly what he was doing. In this connection, on a number of occasions Arendt's imagery made particularly memorable comparisons with inanimate machines: he was a main conveyor belt for orders, one of the 'mere cogs in the administrative machinery' of the time.[5] The phrases implied he had played no formative role in establishing the mechanism in the first place, no role in deciding its particular application and little control over how the overall process developed. From this position Arendt accused Eichmann of such 'sheer thoughtlessness' that he became 'one of the greatest criminals of that period'. Indeed she was convinced that even if much about her findings was 'banal', nonetheless she had identified a kind of 'thoughtlessness' that 'can wreak more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together'.[6]

And here we have the heart of the matter - the reason why Arendt could interpret Eichmann as basically a normal individual. Inhabiting an institution dedicated to genocidal tasks, he hardly realised that the whole mission which shaped his daily round was as abnormal as it was abhorrent. Unable to stand back from his institutional context, he was committing crimes under conditions that made it impossible for him to 'know or feel' that he was involved in something grossly criminal.[7] Arendt interpreted this quality as a terrifyingly normal response by individuals to life in large institutions and, setting the scene for an important critique of the twentieth century, suggested that perhaps 'every bureaucracy', could 'dehumanize' its staff in an analogous way.[8] Here-in lay 'the banality of evil'.[9]

Zygmunt Baumann and Modernity

Truth be told, something remained rather tentative about Hannah Arendt's theorizing about the modern world; this, however, was not the case in Zygmunt Baumann's text *Modernity and the Holocaust.* Taking up where Arendt left off, from the outset he described the Holocaust as 'a characteristically modern phenomenon that cannot be understood out of the context of the cultural tendencies and technical achievements of modernity'.[10] In his widely-read if overly sociological study, Baumann painted what happened as less a failure of the modern world, more a product of it.

Once again the nature of life in a large organisation was a crucial part of the problem and Baumann contended that 'the bureaucratic mode of action' contains 'all the technical elements' required for the commission of genocide.[11] Not least, to his mind ethical standards are simply irrelevant to the smooth running of a large administrative structure; indeed there is even a strong impression that any employee who experiences a fixed 'moral compass' might become a distinct problem for a large organisation. Here, after all, Baumann maintained that morality 'boils down' to nothing more than being 'a good, efficient and diligent expert and worker'.[12] Hence an institution has to reject any quality that might one day impinge on its strictly functional capacities.

Central to Baumann's argument is the idea that bureaucracies are, above all else, dedicated to the delivery of efficient solutions to perceived problems.[13] This, incidentally, he felt to be reflected in the way Nazi organisations responded to the Holocaust since he believed that the event never came into 'conflict with the principles of rationality'; at no point did it clash with the 'rational pursuit of efficicient, optimal goal implementation'[14] Rather he interpreted a bureaucracy as 'a loaded dice' able to generate a momentum always likely to produce some kinds of outcome rather than others. So once it is given a push in a certain direction, a bureaucracy is always likely to generate, in the end, a kind of 'optimal' solution which emphasises values such as efficiency and cost-effectiveness over humanity and fellow-feeling.[15]

Bureaucratic structures facilitate this trend in a number of ways. For example, there is something about belonging to a hierarchy which makes it easier to do bad things. Take the way orders trickle down from the top to the bottom of a system. Baumann suggested that a communication from a 'superior' tends to carry with it the quality of a moral judgement, particularly since the initiative in question is easily construed as deriving originally from the organisation's ultimately 'single-minded, unequivocal and monopolistic source of authority'.[16] This characteristic becomes all the more powerful when 'superiors' also claim some special expertise denied to ordinary citizens, which purports to give them a unique quality of insight into a given problem. Under such circumstances their views provide a powerful legitimation of acts which employees might otherwise regard as immoral.[17] What's more, being just a single link in the overall process leading from policy genesis to practical implementation brings with it the eradication of a sense of personal responsibility.[18] A mid-level functionary, after all, easily can see him- or herself as simply an intermediary who has neither shaped nor has to deliver difficult policies. Meanwhile the people at 'the sharp end', of course, have the whole weight of the institution bearing down on them. How can they refuse to carry out actions already authorised by so many 'superiors'? In this way, responsibility is passed from one hand to another and becomes too diffuse to motivate an individual's resistance in the face of a bureaucratic whole.

What, then, of the way a modern administration influences those who shape policy in the first place: the ultimate superiors? An organisation can act like a buffer separating the decision-maker from the unpleasant consequences of his or her actions. As Baumann puts it:

> 'Being inextricably tied to human proximity, morality seems to conform to the law of optical perspective. It looms large and thick close to the eye. With the growth of distance, responsibility for the other shrivels, moral dimensions of the object blur, till both reach the vanishing point of moral vision.'[19]

Hence a 'superior' decision-maker in Berlin need not have been confronted by the truly nasty consequences of the proposal as implemented by a 'subordinate' in Poland. Both geographical and institutional space precluded a direct confrontation of 'cause' with 'effect', of 'decision-maker' with 'victim'.

In addition, however, the very nature of developments in the modern world tilted the balance of probabilities towards the worst kind of decisions being made by those in a position of executive power. So Baumann maintained that anti-Semitism in itself could not explain the Holocaust. A kind of racism so comprehensive and complete was inconceivable without the advances of science, technology and state power specific to the world since the nineteenth century. On this basis, Baumann argued, 'racism is strictly a modern product. Modernity made racism possible.'[20] Indeed he depicted the whole quest for a racially pure society in quintessentially rational terms. Such a total goal was only conceivable within the framework of the modern state; it required the conviction that certain kinds of people could never be accommodated in its rational order; it required the pursuit of social perfection with objective and unemotional proficiency rather than the incalculable spontaneity of emotion. Baumann summarised the mood of this new society:

> 'Cancer, vermin or weed cannot repent. They have not sinned, they just live according to their nature. There is nothing to punish them for. By the nature of their evil, they have to be exterminated.... '
>
> 'Rage and fury are pitiable and inefficient as tools of mass annihilation. They normally peter out before the job is done. One cannot build grand designs on them.... Ghengis Khan and Peter the Hermit did not need modern technology and modern, scientific methods of management and co-ordination. Stalin or Hitler did.'[21]

We should just be thankful that Hitler did not have access to computers or nuclear weapons.

Normalizing pathology

Arendt's idea that the Holocaust was related to normal features of the modern world was also reflected in the work of a number of mainstream German historians. Arguably one of the most challenging contributors has been Hans Mommsen. Admittedly at times his discussions can be accused of relying on a kind of mysticism, for instance in his description of the Holocaust as 'a unique and incomprehensible chain of events'.[22] What's more, at times Mommsen has seemed to want to explain occurrences in terms of an impersonal deus ex machina, for example when he characterised the acceleration of anti-Jewish measures as produced by a process of cumulative radicalization which owed something to competition between Hitler's minions which took place in an environment stamped by ambivalent decision-making at the most senior level.[23] But still he has produced one of the most stimulating papers in the area, 'The Realization of the Unthinkable. The Final Solution and the Jewish Question in the Third Reich', and this did 'normalise' participation in the Holocaust by Hitler's bureaucrats.

Initially Mommsen seemed almost baffled that the destruction of life could become a job like any other and, assuming that most who participated were not actually anti-Semites, wondered how the functionaries of the Holocaust lost their inhibitions to participate in murder.[24] His explanation relied on a number of ideas with parallels in the work of Arendt and Baumann. He accepted, for example, that bureaucratic and technocratic means of murder helped individuals suppress their moral potential; then he added to the position.[25] To Mommsen's mind, inhumanity had to become humanity before

Hitler's technocrats could justify and implement genocide.[26] That is to say, before murder could be committed, it had to look a happier outcome for the victim than a life of continued suffering. Hence a quick gassing looked a better fate than slow starvation in a Polish ghetto. To Mommsen's mind, therefore, the Holocaust became mass killing for the best of motives.

The limits to normality

But how satisfied should we be with readings of the Holocaust which emphasise its credentials as the product of 'normal' aspects of the twentieth century, of life in a modern bureaucratic state? It is worth observing that the readiness to see 'normality' in the perpetrators of the Holocaust is also present in David Cesarani's recent biography of Eichmann. As a young man he is described as 'a normal person who had what was for his times a normal upbringing and education... There is no evidence in his youth of violence or brutal Jew-hatred...'[27] But after Cesarani says that this background did not equip him to become a "natural born killer", we start to wonder what exactly happened to Eichmann: why did he become just like one? After all, Cesarani also tells us that there was no logical progression in Eichmann's career from being an expert in Jewish matters, as he was in the 1930s, to a technocrat of genocidal transportation. First he had to learn what it meant to be a 'génocidaire' and then he had to choose to be one.[28] And here's the rub: should we accept that this transition was really 'banal'?

As he explores Eichmann's choices, Cesarani begins to make us think again about Arendt's classic work, and by implication the interpretations which followed. For instance Cesarani is clear that in pursuing the Holocaust Eichmann was not just following orders, because the Nazi system did not work that way. It was not sufficiently organised to produce unequivocal commands, and hence there was plenty of scope for an individual to choose how to develop his particular position in the administration. He also accepts that the bureaucrats of genocide were not actually that insulated from the horrors for which they were responsible. These could intrude into their lives regularly, and Eichmann himself deeply disliked the killings which he witnessed at first hand in the East.[29]

In this light it becomes harder to see Eichmann, and by implication those like him, simply as victims of administrative life. Even in the context of the Hitler State, was it actually possible to suspend all aspects of a moral imagination to pursue a career completely oblivious to its consequences for others? The answer is 'probably not'.

Michael Thad Allen has studied mid-level SS managers who ran Nazi camps. He established quickly that these men were not, in fact, trained technocrats and so at an early point makes us doubt how many generalisations about the nature of career bureaucrats in the modern world actually were applicable to them. They had not been educated for years to fit in with professional adminstrative stereotypes and probably could not have done so anyway. Apparently their efforts at administration were hopelessly sloppy.[30] What's more, they seem to have rejected the possibility of being 'small fry' condemned to pursue someone else's agenda without question. Allen says this:

> 'Far from being cogs in a machine, the SS civil engineers were the big fish in their ponds of regional authority, and they were conscious of their authority.'[31]

Relatedly, they did not sit back and wait to be told what to do, they had autonomy and understood that they were supposed to use it on behalf of their institution and its mission. Furthermore they adopted the mission with zeal since, it seems, their camp paperwork was imbued with Nazi ideology. Consequently Allen concludes:

> 'Any assertion that the crimes of National Socialism were perpetrated by ideologically neutral bureaucrats - mere cogs in a machine - necessarily ignores the activist spirit of these men and foregoes all moral judgment of their ideals and actions.'[32]

In this connection, the career of Hans Frank is instructive too. Frank developed his reputation as Hitler's personal defence lawyer during the Kampfzeit but was sidelined from proceedings after the seizure of power. With the outbreak of war, however, he was assigned the position of Governor General of central Poland. With enthusiasm he tried to develop this as a 'laboratory' exploring how

best to administer the future Nazi Lebensraum in the East.[33] His theory was published in 1941 as a pamphlet *Die Technik des Staates*. This outlined the vision of administration taking the form of an efficient machine: every piece should be in place, fulfilling a specific function without which the whole could not work. Bureaucratic practices had to be precise, rapid and unambiguous. There had to be methodological simplicity, functional clarity and economy delivered through a hierarchical structure. In other words, Hans Frank presented an image of administration very similar to that in which a bureaucrat should become 'a cog' carrying out 'banal evil'.

The fact was, however, that the fulfilment of policy in the Government General never came close to any such model. The place was a maelstrom of bureaucrats (both from the civil administration and SS) picking fights with each other and attempting to pursue policy in a manner consistent with personal rather than common benefit. Hence Hans Frank's family and the senior administrators around the Governor General became embroiled in such a serious set of corruption cases that one bureaucrat was left dead in police custody, others were gaoled for substantial periods of time and Frank personally came under substantial police pressure.

Not only were people choosing from an extensive array of highly unofficial possibilities when it came to deciding how to act in occupied Poland, but the Governor General also made sure he gave his administrative body a distinct ideological content. Certainly he attempted to construct labour, education and judicial systems according to the dictates of a racial hierarchy in which Germans stood at the pinnacle, followed by Ukrainians, then Poles with Jews very definitely at the bottom of the pile. More than this however, he made speeches designed to get an emotional response from his staff. This was why Frank likened Jews to lice, vermin and parasites. He said they wallowed in filth. Most insidious of all, he made jokes. Since they had a history of migration, he said, Jews would not mind migrating again now they were in Poland. The minutes of the meeting suggest the administrators laughed and shouted 'Bravo'.[34] Under the circumstances, we should question the idea that they were dispassionate about their racial agenda.

Without doubt, the history of the Government General shows that the development of policy in the Hitler State was not 'rational' even in a limited technical sense. While the Nazi system was struggling to supply the army during the Stalingrad campaign, the SS pressed ahead with a programme of forced resettlement for Polish farmers in a key transportation zone of Frank's territory. This resulted in a deterioration of the internal security situation in a vital place at a critical time. Moreover, when the discovery of the bodies of former Polish officers near Katyn became public knowledge in early 1943, the finding was not used in a rational way. Hans Frank wanted to publicise the murders by the NKVD in such a way that it might encourage Poles to take up arms against Bolshevism. Riven by the prejudice that Poles were only ever fit to be Germany's proletarian workforce, however, Hitler refused to entertain any such initiative. As a result, manpower was wasted. This trend, incidentally, was underlined in November 1943 when workcamps across the Government General filled with Jews were liquidated. The bizarre action saw the death of very many people who had been busy manufacturing armaments for the German war effort.

A last word

To sum up: administration in the Third Reich was hardly a matter of being 'a cog in a machine'. The environment was always too complicated and challenging for that; it demanded a fuller, more emotionally-draining engagement than images of machinery suggest. On the basis of studies such as that of William Thad Allen and lives such as that of Hans Frank, too often administrators showed themselves dedicated to specifically a Nazi mission in which racial ideology could become counter-productive. In the process they could display a thirst for prestige, a demand for respect and they took advantage of all manner of opportunities for personal gain. Dismissing them as 'banal' does not really do them justice. What's more, even if we accept that bureaucracy is (for the time being at least) one of the more regrettable features of the modern world, there is really no reason why it has to be as inhuman and immoral as the variant described here. Nazism's bureaucracy was too distinctive and too irrational to be truly typical. In the end, the work of Arendt and Baumann does not quite capture the full oddity of the prejudiced environment that Hitler's bureaucrats inhabited.

NOTES

1 H.Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil.* (London: Penguin.) 1994 edition. p.244.

2 ibid., p.276.

3 ibid., pp.25-26.

4 ibid., p.287.

5 ibid., p.153 and p.289.

6 ibid., p.288.

7 ibid., p.276.

8 ibid., p.288.

9 ibid., p.252.

10 Z.Baumann, *Modernity and the Holocaust.* (Oxford: Polity Press.) 1989. p.xiii.

11 ibid., p.104.

12 ibid., p.102.

13 ibid., p.12.

14 ibid., p.17.

15 ibid., p.104.

16 ibid., p.159 and p.165.

17 ibid., p.198.

18 ibid., p.163.

19 ibid., p.198.

20 ibid., p.61.

21 ibid., pp.60-1.

22 H.Mommsen, 'Anti-Jewish Politics and the Implementation of the Holocaust' in H.Bull (ed.), *The Challenge of the Third Reich.* (Oxford: Clarendon. 1986.) p.117.

23 H.Mommsen, 'The Realization of the Unthinkable: The Final Solution of the Jewish Question in the Third Reich' in H.Mommsen (ed.), *Weimar to Auschwitz.* (Princeton. 1986.) p.124 and p.130.

24 ibid., p.225.

25 ibid., p.250.

26 ibid., p.247.

27 D.Cesarani, *Eichmann. His Life and Crimes.* (London: Heinemann.) 2004. p.16.

28 ibid., p.11.

29 ibid., pp.11-3.

30 M.T.Allen, 'The Banality of Evil Reconsidered: SS Mid-Level Managers of Extermination Through Work', *Central European History* 30 (1997) p.267.

31 ibid., p.291.

32 ibid., p.294.

33 M.Housden, *Hans Frank. Lebensraum and the Holocaust.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave.) 2003. p.160.

34 ibid., p.146.

The Historiography of the Home Front in World War Two Britain

DR SALLY SOKOLOFF

During the first quarter of a century after 1945, British historians' discussion of the Home Front of the 1939-45 years focused on its repercussions for politics, social thought, social policy, the economy and culture. A shared evaluation of the war as a fulcrum of change emphasised the extension of state provision and an enhanced sense of social justice. The period was assessed as largely a progressive one, and the shaping historical questions were about how and why change took place. There were few conservative assessments.[1] The war was assessed positively as being a fertile though difficult time. The people's place in this was vital, fuelling a 'people's peace' that offered a welfare state as the reward. These verdicts on the national experience are powerful and are still articulated by historians.[2]

By the mid-1970s a lively historical debate about Britain's war and the meaning of Home Front experience was under way. A revisionist trend queried the older generation's certainties and opened up new subjects for research. Tom Harrisson revisited the Mass-Observation collection that he had pioneered in the 1930s and 1940s, and found that reactions of ordinary British people and local agencies to bombing were nothing like as unified and strong as was usually asserted.[3] Angus Calder also drew on Mass-Observation, official publications and records, and numerous memoirs, producing a checklist of potentially revisionist issues.[4] Arthur Marwick, while unexcited by talk of revisionism, contributed to the growing interest in imagery and the management of opinion by showing how photographs of life and death on the Home Front were controlled by the authorities.[5] Neil Stammers argued that British politicians abandoned democratic principles and practices during the war and that the British state was repressive of political and social opposition to an extent that undermines the idea that this was 'a people's war'.[6] Edward Smithies showed that social and economic crime increased and shaped itself around the opportunities of a controlled economy and bombed cities.[7] Richard Croucher analysed conflict in the engineering factories of the Midlands and dented belief in wartime industrial harmony.[8] Penny Summerfield argued that women's contribution to the war as factory workers had been hampered by hesitant and contradictory government policies, institutionalised inequality, and profound social and individual unease that feared any change in gendered roles.[9]

Home Front revisionists were reacting against the self-satisfaction of British views of the war and emphasised the extent to which its history had been shaped by propaganda, myth and political conformity. One strand probed the political uses to which the national memory of the war was put by politicians and the media, notably during the Falklands War of 1982.[10] Another focused on the question of the character and extent of a political consensus and social contract rooted in the 1940s, re-evaluating the extent of change in the political and social climate of wartime and its impact on the following thirty years as more modest.[11] A third strand focused on individual experiences and the memory of the Home Front, uncovering incompatibilities between personal and group experiences and both popular and historical beliefs about the Home Front.[12] The historical methods and sources of revisionists drew on the opening up of history since the 1960s to cultural and communications studies, feminist questions about the past, sociological theories of nation, and elements of post-modernism particularly those that saw the past as construction.[13]

This article will examine three aspects of recent historical scrutiny of the Home Front. The first part revisits the persistent concerns of revisionists over the last thirty years about the civilian experience's impact on morale. The second surveys some more recent writing on the meaning of nation in relation to unity or disunity on the Home Front. The third considers changed historical issues about Winston Churchill's reputation and provides a conclusion.

Unity under Ordeal: the Blitz, Morale, and the People

Historians have searched out political opposition to the war, defeatism, individual dissent, and wartime apathy, the very conduct and attitudes that a state involved in total war would seek to sideline. They have also noted the doubts that wartime government and local agencies had about the behaviour and resilience of the population under mass bombing. The London blitz gave some reassurance. The government then, hand in hand with the relatively compliant media, embellished the message that the people could cope and were defiant against bombing. Shelters, and the relief of the homeless, were inadequately funded and organised, but improvements were in place by the time London and surrounding counties faced V1 and V2 bombing in 1944-45. However, study of regional blitzes such as Liverpool's or Southampton's shows that the authorities never lost their suspicion of 'trekking', a nightly exodus from blitzed areas that all sorts of people practised for practical reasons like getting a reasonable night's sleep, but which those in authority persisted in portraying as an indicator of demoralisation.[14] There was never a perfect alignment between public, localised, and private reactions to bombing. Studies of morale in general on the Home Front and morale specifically under the ordeal of blitz remain a key part of the revisionist enquiry, and continue to be found in specialist and regional history journals. Initially revisionism searched for 'bad' or 'low' morale that could counteract the facile assertions of cheerful resilience as the characteristic civilian experience. As Angus Calder argues in *The Myth of the Blitz*, this was unsustainable history because the big picture remained one of survival and victory. However, studies of morale have contributed to a differentiated history of the Home Front at regional and local levels.

Another key war experience where regional and local history has proved its worth in refining a nation-centred version of the Home Front is evacuation. Here regional, class, and urban-rural divides were involved. The mean-spiritedness of some middle-class communities, particularly in the south and south east of England, when faced with urban working-class children, has been documented and interpreted. By 1941 city children in the official evacuation scheme were being placed mainly with working-class hosts, not because the administrators thought this made life more comfortable for the evacuees (though it may have) but because they had given up trying to billet evacuees with those who had the social power to evade this duty. Bombing and evacuation show that social mixing was not always as inclusive or as happy an experience as wartime propaganda or nostalgia says.[15]

Historians have shown how, and in what ways, continuing anxieties caused the state to use propaganda (or 'information') at a significant level and how covert pressure was used to deter opposition, whether pacifist, communist or fascist.[16] The first tactic (using propaganda) was fruitful in consolidating approved versions of Home Front experience, the latter (deterring opposition) was probably unnecessary. The optimism about Britain's resistance to Hitler's threats in 1940-41 was naive though brave, and history has validated people's reactions to bombing as expressions of British defiance. Revisionism has not even tried to present the disparate opposition to the war as more important than previously thought, rather it has scrutinised the policies of the state to evaluate their methods. Civilian strength has been examined by history and endorsed as a central and largely positive aspect of the Home Front.

Morale as a central concept for understanding Britain at war may be out-wearing its historical usefulness. Historians tend to either take 'good morale' for granted, while acknowledging difficult moments on the Home Front, or ignore it because it is too slippery to handle with confidence. Robert Mackay gives more attention to morale than any other recent general historian of the Home Front. In his text book, *The Test of War*, he defends traditional interpretations of the Home Front, weighing up and rejecting the pin pricks of revisionism in the flesh of war experience. Rather as the government came to do during the war, Mackay focuses on the behavioural indicators of good and bad morale, and his specialist study *Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War* is organised around a commentary on morale, while pointing to skilful government policies that buttressed an essentially sound civilian attitude.[17] There remains a 'they did', 'they didn't' character to historical debates about the state of morale on the Home Front. A remarkable film made in the mid 1990s brought together historians with elderly people who had lived through the London blitz to discuss the experience. The alternatives of people's unity and high morale as against a life of

hardship and class inequality was vigorously debated: an able chairman could not restrain the noisy and contentious argument. The blitz veterans were in much disagreement with each other, as were the revisionist and traditionalist historians among themselves. The interpretation of the Home Front was vital to each of the participants not just as a matter of truth or untruth of what happened, but because it underpinned contemporary beliefs about the nation.[18] Knee-jerk evocations of the blitz spirit and national unity in adversity were readily produced within minutes of the July bombings in London in 2005. Although an appreciation of differences of regional experiences, and an understanding of the role of information and propaganda in shaping beliefs and practices, has come out of the study of morale in wartime, the investigation of morale set in motion by revisionism may not be able to get beyond current frameworks without some sort of conceptual breakthrough.

Debating the Nation

Few historians are iconoclastic enough to challenge the remarkable success of the British nation in holding together to survive the war. If nations are constructions forged during defining moments in their history, such as the Glorious Revolution, then World War Two might be such a moment. Certainly, popular history casts the years 1940-41 in this role. Sufficient identity and common purpose was sustained, and no-one argues that the nation fell apart in the war. However, German belief that their propaganda could intensify the national sensitivities of the Scots and the Welsh (not to mention the Irish) by badmouthing the exploitative and hypocritical English had some currency.[19] Historians show the fault-lines and the strains and stresses of wartime Britain and of the idea of being British. There are two products of this scrutiny of the nation. First, it explains sensitivities and heated controversies about the nation during the war and the contradictions within the rhetoric of the Home Front. Second, while accepting that the achievements of the nation were at a historic high point during the war, historians who focus on the tension between hegemonic ideas like national unity and the multiple (and possibly, evolving) identities that the people had during the war can explain how and why change and national decline occurred afterwards.

The importance of local and regional history of the Home Front was marked out by Angus Calder in *The People's War*, the first major work of scholarship that gave an inkling that the Home Front might have been experienced differently in different areas. In *Myth of the Blitz*, Calder showed that the Home Front was perceived differently in Scotland and that regional nationalism was nourished and had long-term political consequences. The Marxist sociologist Tom Nairn, in contrast, placed the explosion of Scottish neo-nationalism in the 1970s rather than the 1940s.[20] However, both these historians drew on new theoretical understandings of nation as an invented tradition and both saw such change as the work of national intelligentsias combined with popular culture. In 2006 a small spat broke out in the media and the public about whether national songs of England, Wales etc. should be played at the start of BBC transmission. This resonates with similar controversies during the war. It was the government's refusal in 1941 to have their Russian ally's communist anthem *The Internationale* played on the radio alongside the national anthems of the other allies that led to the BBC adopting national songs for regular transmission, so that alongside Russian folksongs such as *The Volga Boatmen*, the four British nations' songs were broadcast. The latter were rationalised as an expression of the equality of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland within the Union and became cherished as a symbol of it.

Thirty-five years after Calder's interpretation, there have been two significant contributions in the 'noughties', by Richard Weight and Sonya Rose. [21] In *Patriots*, Weight measures the solidity of the British nation from the spring of 1940. He argues that this rested on latent patriotism released by the circumstances of 1940, a growing awareness of a fascist and not just a German threat, and by the simplicity of the construction of Britain as a country and the British as a people 'alone' in 1940-41. The belief that they stood alone against aggression was fostered by ordinary people and by parts of the media, most memorably by *The Evening Standard* cartoonist Robert Low. It is this self-image of the Home Front that is most celebrated in nationalist stories about the war. Clive Ponting sees this as manufactured and cynically applied by the British state in 1940 and perpetuated since by politicians.[22] More convincingly, Mark Connelly's *We Can Take It* dissects how a simple construction of British

unity in isolation has worked its way through the media, literature, and politics of the postwar years.[23] The 'Alone' image was not an entirely welcome perspective to the government as it knew Britain needed allies or would perish. Churchill himself was at pains to present the defiance of 1940-41 as a struggle shared by the entire British Empire, (although by 1944 he was eulogising Britain's solitary stand in the earlier period of war). The government embarked on a publicity campaign to show what the Empire was doing to help, embellished by carefully constructed images of black people doing their bit for Britain. Weight places a traditional interpretation of the war within his tour de force history of the three-century rise and fall of a confident industrial nation to its current late twentieth-century crisis and dissolution. Despite a relatively triumphalist view of patriotism during the war, Weight places the war within a narrative of twentieth-century decline. In this he is similar to Sonya Rose.

Rose's presentation of the Home Front, as a fragmented entity, scrutinises the cultural sources and expressions of nationality and patriotism during the war, with a particular emphasis on the cross-cutting multiple identities that people could have during the war. While Weight argues that the wartime state did a good job in channelling regionalism and Welsh and Scottish nationalism towards cultural, propaganda and political purposes, Rose depicts regional nationality as one of several severe fractures in the nation. Both these historians, however, share a view that Britain's agenda for contention and change and its uncertainties as a nation in the second half of the twentieth century was shaped by the war years. Both show that the state's attempts to channel and shape regional nationalism for the war effort may have given nationalism more foothold in Scotland and Wales. The Ministry of Information tried to avoid the elision of 'England' with 'Britain': the shorthand use of the term 'England' or 'English' carried assumptions of political and cultural hierarchy within the Union and was insulting to minorities. Despite this, the most iconic visual images of the Home Front are English images. Separate parliamentary debates of Scottish affairs were held at Westminster, the BBC integrated Scottish and Welsh issues into their programmes, and local language programmes were started. Interpretation is vital here: do we see this as the behaviour of a clever and confident state, or as concessions that nurtured Scottish grievance about the treatment of their regiments, exploitation of their industry, and export of their young women to factories in England, and a similar range of Welsh grievances with the addition of being a dumping ground for Liverpool's evacuees and for refugees. Historians as a whole see the war as opening up the ground to challenges to the idea and the arrangements of the British nation and state.

This section has focused on the impact of the Home Front on regional nationalism within Britain. However, in highlighting fractures in the nation, Rose also draws on a disparate range of histories of the Home Front that have appeared in the last twenty years, in respect of gender, class and ethnicity. Mainstream histories of the Home Front can still be relatively blind to what feminist historians posit - a masculine appropriation of nationhood that shaped and controlled women's place in the war through condescension and the offer of a restricted version of citizenship to women. In a lesser form of gendered citizenship, women's contribution to the Home Front was carefully demarcated as the temporary conduct of men's work, a responsibility to uphold family life and to sustain community, and the duty to be both feminine and respectable in their behaviour.[24] Rose sees the tension brought about by the changes in women's lives and by the efforts to contain their effects as a serious one for society. Others assess the potential disturbance to gender relations as much more limited, or as part of a century of evolution in women's lives.

Egalitarian and political aspects of the rise of the working man to a more respected status in society and a more articulated place in national culture are also subject to the same sort of debate by historians. As part of the rise of the working-class, the language of national struggle became democratised and the Labour Party was swept into office in 1945. The class war did not go away but the middle-classes and upper classes, along with the Conservative Party, were temporarily disempowered and had to make an accommodation with egalitarianism.[25] The war also intensified the white British nation's sense of racial and ethnic difference. The customary and casual anti-semitism towards British Jews was compounded by resentment towards the many refugee foreign Jews. Attitudes towards the thousands of black workers and servicemen and women who came from the Empire to assist on the Home Front ranged from patronising to viscerally racist.[26]

Churchill's reputation: the history juggernaut rolls on

Churchill continues to fascinate historians and the reading and viewing public: Churchill still draws eminent biographers.[27] There is a more nuanced view of the linkage between policy-making for the War Front where Churchill was rampant, and the management of the Home Front: Churchill is now seen as rather more than an absentee landlord, though he acknowledged himself that he was out of touch with the domestic public in 1945.[28] Close scrutiny has been given to the first year of Churchill's war government (1940-41) when his power base in the Conservative party and in Parliament was limited but his access to the public ear at its height. A full generation after Churchill's death, a challenge to his place in British history sprang from a number of historians and political commentators, notably John Charmley. In his big biography of Churchill, Charmley pondered the good sense of an early peace with Germany in 1940, arguing that it would have seemed incontrovertible at the time, had Halifax inherited the premiership from Chamberlain, rather than Churchill.[29] Alan Clark, Conservative politician and erstwhile historian, argued that Churchill had subverted the Conservative mission by placing his struggle with Hitler above the maintenance of the British Empire and Britain's Great Power status. Britain's allies, acquired during 1941 painstakingly in the case of the USA but virtually accidentally in the case of the USSR, were anti-colonialist. Churchill knew well by 1941 that the war would jeopardise Britain's economy in the long-term.[30] Far wiser, argue the revisionists, to have made peace with Germany in 1940 or else in 1941 after a winter of successful resistance, allowing fascism and communism to fight it out on the Eastern Front with Germany the likely victor. Continental Europe would be left to the Axis states while Britain would remain a world player with an Empire across the oceans, a navy to support it, and a sustainable economy. These ideas naturally enough raised the hackles of those who cherished Britain's stand in 1940 as the keynote of Britain's postwar moral status, and of those who saw Churchill as a saviour. Clive Ponting attacked Churchill's reputation in a quite different way, arguing that the Prime Minister was indeed ready to include peace talks with Germany within his strategy in 1940 and 1941 against all avowals in his own writings.

The big picture critique has proved untenable. Its counter-factual suppositions about the degree of independence that Hitler would have allowed Britain are easily challenged. Would British extra-European world power have been tolerable to Germany in the long-term? Wouldn't the Nazis have found British Jews an irresistible target and have pressurised the 'independent' British government into state anti-semitism or worse? Try the revisionist view out on a class of students to discover how unallowable an argument it is in moral terms. Examination of the governmental-diplomatic manoeuvres of 1940-41 has provided more ground for re-evaluation. Here Churchill's 'Finest Hour' rhetoric contrasts sharply with his tactics in Cabinet to keep potential appeasers like Butler and Halifax safely confined to a government publically committed to a policy of defiance. Simultaneous with the revisionists' attack, John Lukacs's analyses of 1940 were already reconciling Churchill the master of governmental intrigue with Churchill the great leader of the British people during the 'heroic' phase of the Home Front.[31] Abutting this approach are those who examine the construction of the myth of Churchill at different levels. There is Churchill's own artful war history, careful to maintain the reputation that he sought, and brilliantly dissected by David Reynolds.[32] There are also the constructs of Home Front propaganda – poster, photographic and film images of Churchill, and popular culture's affectionate portrait of 'Winnie' with his cigar, siren suit, pluck, and ambiguous V-sign. Time and change in historical method enables historians to take a distance from the rhetoric, to recognise its purpose, and perhaps to admire its skill. Churchill's reputation has emerged from the scrutiny less hagiographical, more multi-faceted, and, paradoxically, stronger. However, the revisionist controversy shows that Churchill remains part of contested and contemporary history just as does the Home Front itself.

NOTES

1 H. Pelling *Britain and the Second World War* (Collins, 1970) is the best known.

2 Peter Hennessy's *Never Again, Britain 1945-51* (Jonathan Cape, 1992) reasserts the classic progressive interpretations of the war and the entire 1940s; see also H.L. Smith (ed), *War and Social Change* (Manchester University Press, 1996).

3 Tom Harrisson, *Living Through the Blitz* (Collins, 1976).Angus Calder, *The People's War* (Jonathan Cape, 1969)

4 Angus Calder, *The People's War* (Jonathan Cape 1969)

5 Arthur Marwick, *The Home Front, The British and the Second World War* (Thames and Hudson, 1982)

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The British Post-War Consensus: A Concept for all Seasons?

DR DAVID MARTIN

In 1993, surveying the thirty years after the Second World War, Margaret Thatcher was characteristically assertive when defining their main features. She described the period thus:

> Already large and unwieldy after its expansion in two world wars, the British Government very soon jammed a finger in every pie. It levied high rates of tax on work, enterprise, consumption, and wealth transfer. It planned development at every level – urban, rural, industrial and scientific. It managed the economy, macro-economically by Keynesian methods of fiscal manipulation, micro-economically by granting regional and industrial subsidies on a variety of criteria. It nationalized industries, either directly by taking ownership, or indirectly by using its powers of regulation to constrain the decisions of private management in the direction the Government wanted. ... It made available various forms of welfare for a wide range of contingencies – poverty, unemployment, large families, old-age, misfortune ill-health, family quarrels – generally on a universal basis. And when some people preferred to rely on their own resources or on the assistance of family and friends, the Government would run advertising campaigns to persuade people of the virtues of dependence. ...
>
> Such a philosophy was explicitly advocated by the Labour Party. It glorified in planning, regulations, controls and subsidies. ... The Tory Party was more ambivalent. ... The Tories loosened the corset of socialism; they never removed it.[1]

How accurate is this characterisation of the decades before Lady Thatcher became Prime Minister? This article will outline why some historians define the period from the early 1940s to the late 1970s as one of political consensus – though not necessarily concurring that 'the corset of socialism' was in place. In common with all historical terms, it has been subject to changes of emphasis and interpretation. There is too, some debate about definitions, but that of Alan Warde briefly encapsulates the essentials. He defined political consensus as 'a system of beliefs, moral values and social aspirations, held in common by the majority of powerful political agents and institutions'.[2] Probably a minority of those who have studied the period reject the notion of consensus; their case will be briefly stated. Finally, the present writer will offer an opinion of why the post-war years, when considered in a wider context, did seem to have a distinctive character.

The origins of the consensus

It is generally agreed that, as Margaret Thatcher noted, the activities of the British government expanded in the two world wars. After 1918, in spite of wartime promises of reconstruction, summed up in the general election slogan 'a land fit for heroes', the state reverted to a more limited role. The Second World War, even more than the first, compelled extensive state direction. By the general election of July 1945, after almost six years of all-pervasive regulation, public opinion was more inclined to look to the activities of the state to win the peace. That election brought to office, with a landslide majority, a Labour government pledged to the creation of 'a Socialist Commonwealth'. It also reinforced a negative view of the interwar years. According to Labour's election manifesto, *Let Us Face the Future*, 'the "hard-faced men who had done well out of the war" were able to get the kind of peace that suited themselves' – a peace which concentrated 'too much economic power in the hands of too few men', thus resulting in economic slump. Although the manifesto claimed 'the initiative of Labour in Parliament brought about the fall of the Chamberlain Government' in May 1940, it did not seek to apportion blame for the failures of British foreign policy in the 1930s.[3] Others on the left, however, did. Perhaps the most influential indictment of the Chamberlain government was *Guilty Men* (1940), a short book by three journalists, one of whom was Michael Foot (many years later, the leader of the Labour Party). If not creating the myth of the 'guilty men' whose

incompetence left the country unprepared to resist fascism, the book was the single most powerful statement of it.[4] Even when Winston Churchill became Prime Minister of a coalition government, left-wingers remained strident in their criticisms of the Conservative Party.

As well as a decade of failed foreign policy, the 1930s quickly came to represent social and economic failure also. As the demands of war ended a period of chronic unemployment, opinion was resolved that there should be no return to a Britain of the dole queue and the hunger march. There were expectations too of post-war improvement in standards of health, housing and education. As historians have noted, at an early stage of the war, there was a 'new phrase on the lips of speakers: "the people's war"'.[5] Not only in the armed forces was there a need for millions of men and women. The economy too operated largely to support the war effort. This was most evident in the direction of labour, the requisitioning of property, the control of profits and so forth, though all citizens were encouraged to play their part, by means such as taking in evacuated children, fire-watching, 'digging for victory' and making the most of rationed food and clothing. But if victory depended on the efforts of the whole population, then it followed that, with peace, all should be rewarded.

The most notable promise of a better post-war world was the Beveridge Report. Issued in December 1942, it created enormous public interest and can be seen as one of the pillars of the idea that war created a long-lasting consensus. Beveridge linked the national unity created by war with a greater receptivity to social reform. In language unusual for a government report, he evoked the need to vanquish the 'five giant evils' of want, ignorance, squalor, disease and idleness, to be achieved by a state-run system of social security.[6] Politically, Beveridge was a Liberal, but while the coalition government hesitated to endorse his report – Churchill insisted the priority should be to secure military victory – members of all parties and of none believed it was the way forward. For some, there would be no socialist commonwealth without a welfare state. Others held that by remedying social ills the state might simply improve existing structures. Sometimes the imperative was the threat of disorder, as a progressive Tory, Quintin Hogg, told the House of Commons in a debate on the Beveridge Report. Hogg averred:

> Some of my hon. Friends seem to overlook two ultimate facts about social reform. The first is that if you do not give the people social reform, they are going to give you social revolution. The maintenance of our institutions has been one of the principles of the Conservative Party from time immemorial. (17 February 1943, column 1816 of the official report)

There were dissident views, such as those of the Conservative press baron, Lord Beaverbrook who dreamt of market capitalism under the umbrella of imperial preference. But his ideas seemed redolent of a failed past. A consensus emerged that the future lay in the hands of an interventionist, social-democratic state. It was to take some time before such assumptions, forged in an atmosphere of total war, were re-evaluated.

Before peace returned in the summer of 1945, Beveridge's report had been joined by other schemes of social improvement. The scope of the Emergency Medical Service, originally introduced to treat air-raid casualties, was widened to such an extent that it took on some characteristics of a national health service. In 1944 the government adopted a white paper which pledged employment would be maintained at a high and stable level, thus by implication accepting some responsibility for the state's relative indifference to the chronic unemployment of the interwar years. In the same year the progressive Conservative, R. A. Butler, guided his Education Act through Parliament – a measure criticised for the divisive tripartite division of state schools (and for doing nothing to curb the privileges of the public schools) but generally welcomed for the ladder of opportunity it put in place and for projecting an increase in the school-leaving age from fourteen to fifteen.

The post-war settlement

The result of the general election of 1945 appeared to show the level of popular support for developments such as these. The landslide victory of the Labour Party, under the leadership of the wartime Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, suggested a desire for, if not 'socialism', at least a

planned peace and no return to the interwar years. The planks of Labour's programme are well known. In the next few years a programme of nationalisation was designed to rationalise British industry while protecting the interests of the consumer. Wartime food subsidies and rationing continued (and were added to, in the case of bread, first rationed in 1946). A National Health Service intended for the whole of the population was established. Efforts were made to build more council houses. Labour's foreign policy included Indian independence, support for NATO and a continued role for the United States in rebuilding Europe, and the development of atomic weapons.

The advent of the first Labour government, with its large majority of MPs, forced leading Conservatives to reconsider their party's policies. In one area, foreign affairs, the approach of the Conservative Party was probably closer to the Labour government than to many on the left of the Labour Party. But in the domestic sphere there was an acknowledgement that Toryism must, in the tradition of Robert Peel and other leaders, reinvent itself. This process involved the appointment of Lord Woolton, an avuncular, self-made businessman with a long interest in social reform, as party chairman and the establishment of an inquiry under David Maxwell Fyfe into party organisation. In a fairly short period, the Conservative Party machine was improved. Efforts were made to encourage candidates from a wider social background and to imbue the party with more modern ideas. There was a drive, which included setting up the Young Conservatives, to increase membership. Butler drafted an industrial charter, pledging the party to full employment. A few years later, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, recalling in his mind 'the look of hopelessness in the eyes of the men of the 'thirties standing idly on street corners or queuing drably at the labour exchanges' led him to declare 'that those who talked about creating pools of unemployment should be thrown into them and made to swim' – perhaps not the wittiest of remarks, but indicative of the revulsion towards pre-war Toryism.[7]

By the general election of February 1950 the burdens of office seemed to weigh heavily on Labour's leaders. Encouraged by a hostile press and the Housewives' League, rationing became associated more with austerity than fairness. There was little popular support for the nationalisation of the steel industry, and the passage of the bill gave the Conservatives opportunities to harry the government. In the election Labour's core vote remained loyal, but its parliamentary majority was sharply reduced. Another general election was held in October 1951. Labour polled more votes than the Conservatives but nevertheless lost about twenty seats, sufficient to allow Churchill to form a Conservative government.

The advent of 'Mr Butskell'

By then in his late seventies, Churchill made little attempt to reverse the policies of the previous government. Steel was denationalised and rationing (some of which Labour had already relaxed) was gradually dismantled. Many of the new ministers were from the ranks of the progressive wing of the party. Butler was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. Harold Macmillan, the Minister of Housing, set higher targets for council house construction than those achieved by Labour. At the Ministry of Labour Walter Monckton was told not to act provocatively towards the trade unions. He had an emollient manner – another Conservative, Viscount Margesson, called him 'the old oil can' – and some employers soon criticised him for his willingness to grease wage settlements they regarded as too generous.[8]

It is from this period that the classic figure of consensus emerged, Mr Butskell. If the neologism was not his, it was popularised by Norman Macrae, who wrote for the *Economist*. A few lines from Macrae's article gives a flavour of what Mr Butskell then stood for:

> Mr Butskell is already a well-known figure in dinner table conservations in both Westminster and Whitehall, and the time has come to introduce him to a wider audience. He is a composite of the present Chancellor and the previous one (and resemblance to certain other historical characters, such as Sir Robert Peel – or Sir Robert Boothby – is purely imaginary). Whenever there is a tendency to excess Conservatism within the Conservative party – such as a clamour for too much imperial preference, for a wild dash to convertibility, or even for a little more unemployment to teach the workers a lesson – Mr Butskell speaks up for the cause of moderation from the

Government side of the House; when there is a clamour for even graver irresponsibilities from the Labour benches, Mr Butskell has hitherto spoken up from the other.[9]

At this point, Macrae's intention was to emphasise the similarities between the views of R. A. Butler and the previous Labour Chancellor, Hugh Gaitskell. He concluded Mr Butskell had not yet 'shown himself to be a really strong character in the face of adversity', but he hoped for the development of 'constructive Butskellism'.

Although both Butler and, particularly, Gaitskell disliked the term, inter-party agreement did centre primarily on economic policies. Politicians who had feared a return to the large-scale unemployment of the 1930s, shied away from changes that might have risked the availability of work for, virtually, all. Perhaps more than any other leading Conservative, Harold Macmillan, who became Prime Minister in January 1957 (less than two years after Anthony Eden had succeeded Churchill), embraced state regulation as a means of social betterment. In the 1930s he had called for the application of Keynes's ideas – the Macmillan family publishing house had brought out *The General Theory* in 1936 – as well as other controversial measures such as the introduction of a minimum wage and the creation of a publicly controlled National Nutrition Board to distribute essential foodstuffs.[10] As Prime Minister he continued to embrace one-nation Conservatism and to maintain high levels of public expenditure on social services. For example, in January 1958 he resisted pressure from Peter Thorneycroft, his Chancellor of the Exchequer, for a reduction in public expenditure. Such economies, Macmillan noted, would threaten 'a severe cut in children's allowances' affecting 'low-paid homes'. Thorneycroft's resignation, co-ordinated with those of two other ministers, were insouciantly dismissed as 'little local difficulties'.[11]

By the general election of October 1959, when Macmillan was returned to office, the main features of the post-war consensus seemed in place. Macmillan had campaigned in a way that associated the prosperity of recent years with the Conservative Party. The rise in real incomes and opportunities thus provided for consumerism seemed to vindicate 'one-nation Toryism' as the party polled well throughout the United Kingdom, (although the Conservative Party lost a little ground in Scotland, from 36 MPs in 1955 – a majority of the Scottish seats – to 31 in 1959). It was believed that managing the economy was akin to driving a car: should unemployment threaten to increase, demand could be stimulated as easily as an extra touch on the accelerator; if higher inflation was the danger, then a squeeze on the brake would suffice. Economic theory in the form of the 'Phillips Curve' (after the economist A. W. Phillips) seemed to demonstrate how a trade-off between inflation and unemployment operated. Moreover, after losing three consecutive general elections, Labour supporters believed their party was permanently disadvantaged as the government in office could strengthen its appeal by creating a pre-election boom. Deeper analysis, such as that of *Must Labour Lose?* (1960), identified two difficulties facing the party. The first was the gradual decline of its working-class base (these were the years when sociologists refined the theory of *embourgeoisement*). Secondly, according to the authors, Labour's 'promises to conquer economic distress and crises by planning based on public ownership mean little now that the terrible economic depressions of the past appear to have been left behind.'[12]

As well as political and economic issues, consensus has been related to other areas of post-war policy. Conservatism in the 1950s held that the United Kingdom's foreign policy should involve a global presence and nuclear weapons. Even the largely left-wing Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, formed in 1958, failed to convert the leadership of the Labour Party; when Labour was in office again between 1964 and 1970 it retained the nuclear armoury. By the late 1950s both parties recognised that Britain's colonial history was drawing to a close, although some on the right wing of the Conservative Party hoped otherwise. However, the independence of Ghana in 1957 signalled a retreat from Africa, encouraged by Macmillan's 'wind of change' speech of 1960 in Cape Town.

Macmillan gave up the premiership in October 1963, in part as his judgement during the Profumo affair appeared to be at fault. In his twelve months as Prime Minister, Macmillan's successor, Alec Douglas Home, continued with similar policies. Labour's return to office in October 1964, after almost exactly thirteen years in opposition, was accompanied by a barrage of rhetoric suggesting the new government would take the country in a different direction. For months before the election,

Harold Wilson, the Labour leader, accused the Conservatives of a complacent refusal to modernise the institutions of the country. Foreign competitors were said to have become more productive at a time when Britain projected a 'grouse-moor image' (occasional press photographs of Macmillan and Douglas Home, dressed for a day's shooting, fostered this impression). Promising that once in office Labour would harness the 'white heat of technology' and produce a national plan for economic growth, Wilson skilfully created the sense that the two main parties were far apart on the political spectrum.

Yet his years as Prime Minister (1964–70) had more continuity than change. Labour did, almost symbolically, renationalise the iron and steel industry. There was probably a greater willingness to intervene in areas of productivity and industrial relations, but the levels of economic growth, employment and taxation were not greatly different to earlier years. Although published in 1965, the National Plan had virtually no impact. It might be said that the two most notable achievements of the six years were the creation of the Open University and Wilson's resistance to United States pressure for British forces to join the war in Vietnam (although the government's verbal support of America antagonised the left of the party, it was in keeping with the pro-US line of post-war foreign policy). During 1969 an attempt, headed by Barbara Castle, to implement *In Place of Strife* ended in fiasco. The opposition of the trade unions to these proposed changes in the system of industrial relations left the impression of Labour's failure to carry through a key policy in the face of vested interests. By the general election of June 1970 there seemed little reason for the electorate to keep Labour in office. The Conservatives, under Edward Heath, were returned. However, detecting few fundamental differences between the parties, some commentators suggested England's football world cup defeat on the Sunday before polling day had spoiled the 'feel-good factor' in a way that counted against Labour.[13]

Questioning the consensus

Even those who take the view that consensus is a defining characteristic of post-war Britain recognise how cracks developed after 1970. The sense of national decline was seldom absent from political discourse. This applied not only to the supposed superior growth rates of Britain's competitors, but also domestically. Public services were characterised as poor value for the taxpayers' and consumers' money. Unemployment levels were, if at first slowly, beginning to rise. The problem of inflation grew. Taxation rates were, it was widely asserted, too high to encourage initiative and enterprise. The trade unions were charged with fostering restrictive practices and fomenting an increasing number of strikes in pursuit of inflationary wage claims. In response to such concerns while in opposition, Conservative leaders began to realign their party's economic policies to take more account of 'market forces'. As part of this process, they met at Selsdon Park hotel: Wilson sarcastically dubbed the new type of Conservative 'Selsdon Man' (subsequently a clique of right wingers began to meet as the 'Selsdon Group', later earning for themselves the reputation of proto-Thatcherites). Once in office, and in keeping with this changed approach, Heath's cabinet initially resolved to break with the political assumptions of previous governments. 'Lame duck' businesses would no longer to be assisted with taxpayers' money; instead there should be a renewed belief in the capacity of the market to allocate resources. In this way, competition and economic efficiency would be stimulated.

Efforts were made to enforce a new approach. Taxes were reduced. Some of Labour's interventionist machinery, such as the Prices and Incomes Board, was scrapped. An Industrial Relations Act came into operation in 1971. However, just as the trade unions had opposed *In Place of Strife*, they were unhappy with the new legislation. At a time of increasing inflation, wage demands were vigorously pursued, particularly by the miners who believed they had fallen far down the league table of industrial earnings. It was a second miners' strike which in February 1974 led Heath to appeal – unsuccessfully as it turned out – to the electorate. Before then the government, buffeted by a sharp rise in oil prices, which worsened the problems of high inflation and low economic growth, had made a number of U-turns, not least by introducing the statutory control of prices and incomes.

Economists quietly abandoned the Phillips Curve and accepted the possibility of 'stagflation' – the simultaneous occurrence of both inflation and economic stagnation.

In some respects, Heath, a minister between 1951 and 1964, had remained in essence a 'one-nation Conservative'. Within a year of the Conservative defeat in the general election of February 1974 he had been succeeded as party leader by Margaret Thatcher. Harold Wilson's return to office led to a further period of crisis management. His successor in 1976, James Callaghan, inherited both the absence of a parliamentary majority and the now chronic problems of the economy. In speeches and to some extent in the policies of his Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denis Healey, Callaghan signalled the move away from the Keynesianism that had operated since the war. Efforts to control public expenditure led to the so-called 'winter of discontent' which showed one plank of consensus – retaining the support of organised labour – to be in pieces.

The abandonment of Consensus?

However, the advent to the premiership of Margaret Thatcher in the general election of May 1979 is often conventionally seen as the end of the post-war consensus. Campaigning in that election, she declared that Old Testament prophets did not say 'Brothers, I want a consensus' – instead she offered a passionate form of conviction politics. For some, this caesura is a matter of regret, as threatening to reduce the state's commitment to economic and social reform. Those who held that view, including a number of historians, tended to look back fondly on what, in the phrase of A. E. Housman, had become 'the land of lost content'. Thatcherites, however, welcomed the prospect of abandoning what they saw as corporatism and excessive state control. Some historians were to adopt a similar approach. Correlli Barnett, for example, argued that the wartime visions of a 'New Jerusalem' had led to economic and social decline. By 'flinching from reality' the British had failed to deal with a sluggish economy and created 'a segregated, subliterate, unskilled, unhealthy and institutionalised proletariat hanging on the nipple of state maternalism'.[14] Barnett's 'New Jerusalemers' were usually identified as Fabian socialists or Liberal progressives such as Beveridge. Andrew Roberts, another critic of post-war policy, added the Conservative elite to the charge sheet. Their lack of energy and enterprise had reduced Britain 'to her present stature of Italy with rockets'. In the immediate post-war years the ruling class had 'appeased the working-class movement, with ultimately disastrous consequences for Britain's competitiveness'.[15]

Those historians who deny consensus as a useful means of accessing the years between 1945 and 1979 do so for different reasons. There are those who find continuity as a main feature of the political system since 1918, partly due to the co-operation between different economic and political interests brought about by the war.[16] Such an approach does not try to deny that at times there were divisive issues and fiercely expressed antagonisms. But, when viewed in broad terms, and in comparison with changes in other parts of the world, British society and its political institutions can be characterised as stable and harmonious. Thus it follows that the 1945–79 years do not have a character distinctively different from what went before or followed. According to this approach, the main parties shared similar assumptions. They agreed Parliament should function as part of a system of representative government. The House of Commons operated on adversarial principles, with a government and official opposition, but most politicians shared a sense of national – not just class or party – identity. A common pedigree thus runs through the statesmanship of Baldwin, Chamberlain, Attlee, Churchill, Thatcher and Blair. All were part of what a commentator in the 1950s termed 'the Establishment'. From this perspective the Conservative government that assumed office in 1979, once stripped of the Thatcherite rhetoric of 'the lady's not for turning' and 'the enemy within' etc., was not so different from its predecessors (or from the Major and Blair governments that followed). And even if the party in office sought to shift politics much from the centre, the other institutions of the country – the civil service, the judicial and policing system, the armed forces, even the church and the monarchy – would act as counterbalances until consensus again became the norm.

There are some grounds for taking such a position. Despite the arguments of 'free-market' pressure groups, sometimes echoed by ministers – notably Sir Keith Joseph – that the government

should reduce its role, most of the welfare state did remain in place.[17] In some areas the role of the state grew after 1979. This was sometimes unintended, especially the large sums needed to pay social security benefits as a result of high unemployment. But in others, as in the increasing numbers of students entering higher education, it was a matter of policy. Though often regarded as philistine, the government granted public money to the Arts Council at levels above the rate of inflation.[18] Monetarism, however, the much-vaunted alternative to Keynesianism, failed to produce economic stability, low inflation, full employment or reduced levels of taxation (although, according to some economists, this was because its principles were never actually applied). Privatisation was presented as a reversal of socialism, rather than (as Harold Macmillan famously claimed) an attempt to raise revenue by 'selling the family silver', but it was unlikely that most consumers of gas, electricity etc. felt much more, or less, happy when receiving their bills. In any case, by then the Labour Party had virtually dropped its commitment to nationalisation, while some of the party's 'policy wonks' had proposed the sale of council houses to tenants before it became another mainstay of Thatcherism.

Schools of history

This 'continuity school', therefore, plays down the idea that consensus was specific to the post-war decades on the grounds that the periods before and after had more similarities than differences. On the other hand, those who deny consensus was an ever-present feature of twentieth-century politics emphasise the conflicts and divisions both in the political system and in society more generally. According to such an approach, the General Strike of 1926, for example, represented an explosion of the industrial and class conflicts that were never far below the surface of society. In 1940, as noted, Labour propagandists created the 'guilty men' label and attached it to their opponents. Leading politicians, too, could stir up conflict. Churchill in the general election campaign of 1945 invoked the prospect of a Labour government creating a 'Gestapo' to enforce its policies. A few years later, while Minister of Health, Nye Bevan spoke of his 'deep burning hatred for the Tory Party ... they are lower than vermin'.[19] Divisions between the parties were matched by the electorate: turnouts in general elections were high as voters, deeply split between Labour and Conservative, almost squeezed the middle-of-the-road Liberal Party out of existence.[20] From this position, the advent of Thatcherism was merely another, if more combative, phase in an unceasing battle.

It is possible, however, to offer a different perspective. This accepts the existence of a thirty-odd year period of consensus while emphasising other aspects. First, two or three points can be advanced about the significance of post-war nationalisation. Its effect was to free British industry of parts of the economy, notably but not exclusively the coalmines and railways, which were largely run down and inefficient. The former owners received compensation which some at least could use to invest in other enterprises. Meanwhile, the state, assisted by the taxpayer, underwrote any operational deficits in the running of the nationalised sector of the economy. Iron and steel, capable of making good profits, was returned to the private sector. As for the others, Churchill told the Commons in tones of consensus, the government was doing its utmost to make a success of them, 'even though', he added, 'this may somewhat mar the symmetry of party recrimination' (3 November 1953, column 23 of the official report).

Secondly, what was the role in this process of the welfare state? In general, it did not greatly redistribute wealth. Most recipients of benefits paid for them through their (or their parents') national insurance contributions and taxes. Nor was the level of benefits particularly high. Furthermore, the type of 'socialism' Lady Thatcher identified was not unique to the United Kingdom. West Germany and Sweden, for example, both successful industrial rivals of Britain, spent a greater proportion of their national incomes on public sector provision. Most other western European states also introduced systems of social welfare and attempted to manage their economies. One common reason for this seems to be the advantages of having a healthy, educated and well-housed populace, enjoying the security that welfare services can ensure. Such citizens tend to be more efficient workers. In spite of those who have regarded 'welfarism' as stifling initiative, the 1950s and 1960s were period of great expansion of consumer capitalism. In what was the longest economic boom of the last two

centuries, consumers were acquiring goods that had been beyond them. Sales of washing machines, televisions, other domestic appliances, motorcycles and cars were buoyant. There was too, greater expenditure on holidays and other forms of recreation. The arrival of commercial television, from 1955, helped to stimulate this consumer boom – and provided substantial profits for those who took the risks of setting it up. Roy (later Lord) Thomson described his ownership of Scottish Television as 'like a licence to print money'. Not everyone shared equally in the growth of prosperity, and some groups and parts of the United Kingdom remained relatively deprived. Yet Harold Macmillan's claim of 1957, although at the time criticised for its appeal to materialism, that 'most of our people have never had it so good' was broadly true.

Like all booms, that of the post-war years came to an end. Economic problems brought a reassessment of the period. In that process, depending on the views of the author, it was possible to regret the ending, attack as harmful, and deny the existence of the political consensus. This essay has attempted to offer an overview of the issues and to suggest that the nature of the post-war boom, as much as the wartime settlement, validated the policies associated with the concept. It is unlikely, however, that the literature surrounding the debate is exhausted or that historians will arrive at a consensus on the question of the consensus.

Endnotes

A version of this essay was given to the York branch of the Historical Association on 24 November 2005. I am grateful for the audience's questions and comments, which encouraged further reflection and revision.

NOTES

1 Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), pp. 6–7. Although lengthy, this quotation only samples Lady Thatcher's indictment of democratic socialism and 'one-nation Conservatism'.

2 Alan Warde, *Consensus and Beyond: The Development of Labour Party Strategy since the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), p. 4. There is a fuller definition in Dennis Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics: The End of Consensus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 6–7. Other relevant books include David Dutton, *British Politics since 1945: The Rise and Fall of Consensus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Harriet Jones and Michael Kandiah (eds), *The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History, 1945–64* (London: Macmillan, 1996); James D. Marlow, *Questioning the Postwar Consensus Thesis: Towards an Alternative Account* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1996); Peter Kerr, Postwar British Politics: From Conflict to Consensus (London: Routledge, 2001); Scott Kelly, *The Myth of Mr Butskell: The Politics of British Economic Policy, 1950–55* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

3 *Let Us Face the Future* (London: The Labour Party, 1945), pp. 1–2. The phrase about the 'hard-faced men' is usually attributed to Stanley Baldwin, on viewing the new influx of MPs after the first world war.

4 Cato [Michael Foot, Peter Howard and Frank Owen], *Guilty Men* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1940).

5 Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics in the Second World War* (London: Cape, 1975), p. 18. In spite of his title, Angus Calder's *The People's War: Britain 1939-45* (London: Cape, 1969) is sceptical about the extent to which collectivist ideas changed the attitudes of most civilians.

6 *Social Insurance and Allied Services: Report by Sir William Beveridge* (London: HMSO, 1942), p. 170.

7 R. A. Butler, *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), p. 61–2.

8 Lord Birkenhead, *Walter Monckton: The Life of Viscount Monckton of Brenchley* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 275; Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), p. 243.

9 'Mr Butskell's Dilemma', *Economist*, 13 February 1954, p. 440.

10 Harold Macmillan, *The Middle Way: A Study of the Problem of Economic and Social Progress in a Free and Democratic Society* (London: Macmillan, 1938).

11 Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm 1956-1959* (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 368, 373.

12 Mark Abrams and Richard Rose, *Must Labour Lose?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 119.

13 Philip Ziegler, *Wilson: The Authorised Life of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993), p. 352; Ian Gilmour and Mark Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservative Party since 1945* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), p. 244. It was, however, perhaps not a reason for Conservative gains in Scotland.

14 Correlli Barnett, *The Audit of War: The Illusion and Reality of Britain as a Great Nation* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 304.

15 Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians*, pp. 3–4.

16 Brian Harrison, 'The Rise, Fall and Rise of Political Consensus in Britain since 1940', *History*, vol. 84, April 1999, p. 303.

17 Joseph, for example, in an apparent riposte to those Tories like R. A. Butler whose ideas were affected by the interwar years, asserted: 'We talked ourselves into believing that those gaunt, tight-lipped men in caps and mufflers were round the corner and tailored our policy to match those imaginary conditions.' Speech of 5 September 1974, quoted in Jeremy Paxman, *Friends in High Places: Who Rules Britain?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 83. But, once in office and soon dubbed the Mad Monk by the press, Joseph found his views tempered by the pragmatism of other ministers.

18 The Arts Council's parliamentary grant rose from £63m. in 1980 to £175m. in 1991 (figures from the annual reports of the Arts Council).

19 John Campbell, *Nye Bevan: A Biography* (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1997), p. 204. For Churchill, see A. J. P. Taylor who noted, in his *English History 1914-1945* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 722, he 'zestfully turned against Labour the talent for vituperation which he had previously reserved for Hitler'.

20 This, and similar points, were made by Ben Pimlott in 'The Myth of Consensus' in Lesley M. Smith (ed.), *The Making of Britain: Echoes of Greatness* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 141. However, in the case of the Liberal Party, it could be argued that, if there was in fact a good deal of common ground between the main parties, voters would have seen less reason to support a third centrist party.

Richard Nixon and the Origins of Affirmative Action

DR KEVIN YUILL

Richard Nixon remains an enigmatic and fascinating character, an icon for a dark period of American history. Books such as *Nixon's Shadow*, published in 2004, indicate that, 12 years after his death and more than 30 years after the 37th president left office in disgrace, his image is imprinted in the public imagination. As more and more tape recordings are released, a steady drip feed of information ensures that discussion about this historical period is kept alive and that Nixon survives in the public consciousness.

Books on Nixon, often containing fresh revelations, constantly appear. Yet, despite the fact that, as Joan Hoff noted, Nixon's administration will probably be the best-documented administration in U.S. history, mysteries remain.[1] One of those is why this Republican and avowedly anticommunist president sponsored affirmative action. Affirmative action, of course, refers to the practice – of dubious legal status in the United States and the United Kingdom – of effecting racial or gender balance by preferential hiring, college admissions or contract awards.

Republicans in recent times, of course, often lead the charge against affirmative action. Ronald Reagan attacked affirmative action, announcing in 1981 that contractors would no longer have to comply with affirmative action programs. George H. W. Bush held up the 1991 Civil Rights Act for nearly two years after calling it a "quota bill." More recently, his son George W. Bush came down on the side of the plaintiffs suing the University of Michigan in the landmark affirmative action case, *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003). Add this to the rhetorical attacks on affirmative action by Republicans and it appears odd, to say the least, that a Republican president got the ball rolling. Yet it was Nixon – not his more liberal predecessors Lyndon Johnson and John F. Kennedy – who, as historian Dean Kotlowski termed it, was the "sire of affirmative action."[2]

Many historians regard as anomalous Nixon's defence of the Philadelphia Plan, which set a range of percentages of minority hirings with which contractors would be required to make a "good faith" effort to comply. But Richard Nixon also oversaw the introduction of other programs that, in the end, proved more important in providing models for affirmative action than did the Philadelphia Plan. The aim of this article is to re-establish the links between Nixon and affirmative action and to indicate the real reasons for the growth of this policy.

The postwar liberal perspective on affirmative action

Affirmative action as a way of redressing racial imbalance had been known about since just after the Civil War.[3] The fiercely partisan views that Nixon and affirmative action inspired obscure the important transformations happening in the early 1970s. Between the end of World War II and the late 1960s the United States operated on what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. termed "certain operational optimism with a certain historical and philosophical pessimism."[4] Though it had few philosophical answers to charges from the Soviet Union and other critics from the left, the constant economic growth of the postwar period served as an answer. The prospect of never-ending growth became an inspiration to an entire generation of liberals, a way out of all their difficulties and, as Kennedy economic advisor Walter Heller observed, "the pot of gold and the rainbow."[5] Daniel Bell, in *The End of Ideology* (1960), went as far as blaming the liberal regard of communism for what he felt was an overemphasis on economic growth: "And in this appeal, Russia and China have become models. The fascination these countries exert is no longer the old idea of the free society but the new one of economic growth."[6]

Affirmative action as a remedy for racial inequality was known about but not considered. Why? First, race was seen as an excrescence on American life, chiefly emanating from the South. Existing American institutions were basically good, the structure sound. Second, the problem of race was

essentially a white problem. White prejudice, rather than any flaws within the black community, was to blame for all racial problems. Blacks, as historian Kenneth Stampp put it in the 1950s, were simply "white men in black skins;" their culture was simply a reaction to their exclusion from the mainstream.[7] Third, race prejudice was a product of irrationality, usually at a low rather than a high level of society. Thus, race problems were best attacked by education and increased contact aimed at showing the irrationality of racism. Fourth, most Americans – even those in the South – knew that race prejudice was wrong, even if they resisted change. Affirmative action, given these terms, was simply not an appropriate measure. Rather than bringing the races together, it would have solidified the divide. It would also exacerbate prejudice amongst the lower – laboring – classes, lending a rationale to racism.[8]

Furthermore, after the war, many of the tensions that the elite feared between "haves" and "have nots" were alleviated by constant economic growth. The demand for labor, many Americans then reasoned, would soon force even the most prejudiced employers to take on Black Americans without forcing the issue. American capitalism, they then thought (and had some reason to think), would automatically begin the process of integrating all Americans.

What "affirmative action" there was before Nixon, accordingly, was voluntary, more an attempt to convince and perhaps cajole employers to hire more African-Americans than a mandatory program. John F. Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925, ordering that contractors take "affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin."[9] Little was said, however, about enforcement.

Lack of enforcement was, it should be stressed, not necessarily because governments of the time were remiss or uncaring about the fate of African-Americans. Instead, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations subscribed to an optimism about American race relations barely recognizable today. They hoped that white Americans would be divested of their racial prejudices. Giving some indication of the experimentalism of the time, an obscure Civil Rights task force from the Bureau of the Budget, set up after Johnson's Great Society speech on May 22 1964, worked on prescriptions for race relations problems. Captured in their suggestions are both the expansive confidence and the naivety of the 1960s. They called for federally sponsored model new cities on the urban periphery that *required* integration by both race and economic class, federal sponsorship of "voluntary 'bridge' organizations where people would sign up to go to church together, exchange visits at home, and play together." New federal programs might reduce the geographic concentration of blacks ("Quotas? Housing requirements? Relocation allowances?") Perhaps a joint, federal-state foster-care program could encourage whites to adopt black children.[10] Martin Luther King agreed with this spirit of optimism, arguing that "(t)hough the arc of the moral universe is long, it bends toward justice."[11]

At the end of the decade, the hapless Johnson saw his dream of a Great Society moving further and further away. Caught in the quagmire of Vietnam and damaged in the ghetto disturbances that rocked nearly every major U.S. city in the long hot summers of the late 1960s, the hopefulness and confidence of the earlier postwar era broke down. A shadow of pessimism darkened the American future. Already, integration had been rejected by a new generation of civil rights activists, impatient with the appeals to white liberals by Martin Luther King and the older generation of activists.

However, even these new activists failed to call for affirmative action. The most radical sect, the Black Panthers, united with those moderate Republicans and Democrats in the Kerner Commission, which was charged with investigating the inner-city violence of the riots by President Johnson. The Kerner Commission Report, published amidst great fanfare in March of 1968, sold over 1.6m copies between March and June 1968.[12] Its keynote theme was that "white racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II."[13] However, just as notable was its highlighting of the importance of job creation. Under "Goals and Objectives" the report lists nine topics, the first of which mentions growth and job creation "so that there will be jobs available to those who are newly trained, *without displacing those already employed*."[14] Similarly, the Black Panther Party made full employment the second demand of their party platform when they organized themselves into a political party in October 1966.[15]

Enter Nixon

If John F. Kennedy, with his optimistic activism, his immense confidence and his high hopes for the future of the country, personified the bright side of American liberalism, Nixon was surely its dark, cynical side. Kennedy exuded effortless confidence and élan just as Nixon, with his ill-fitting suits, perspiring brow and nervous glances, personified liberal anxiety. Yet, if Kennedy led a charge into the future, Nixon covered the resulting retreat more effectively. As Walter Lippman observed, Nixon's role was "to liquidate, defuse, deflate the exaggerations of the romantic period of American imperialism and American inflation. Inflation of hopes, the Great Society, American supremacy - all that had to be deflated because it was beyond our power."[16]

Nixon's personal perspective on the capabilities of African-Americans continues to create controversy amongst scholars and others. How are we to judge Nixon on race? The fact that he used racial epithets – proved on tape – shows little. After all, Nixon came from a background where expressions like "nigger" – now supremely offensive – were commonplace. The question reflects a modern preoccupation with etiquette.

Nixon could claim a racially liberal background. During the 1940s and 1950s his Quaker heritage and his espousal of anticommunism ensured that he was on the right side of the civil rights struggles. Before 1960 Nixon claimed better credentials than John F. Kennedy, though Kennedy's call to Martin Luther King in prison (and Nixon's refusal to do so) tipped the balance in favor of Kennedy.

In office, the evidence shows that Nixon, in common, perhaps, with most Americans, drifted from the hope that African-Americans were equal to the suspicion they were not. An oft-repeated accusation regarding race was first aired by his aide John Ehrlichman in his memoirs of the Nixon years. Ehrlichman remembered:

> Twice, in explaining all this to me, Nixon said he believed America's blacks could only marginally benefit from Federal programs because blacks were *genetically inferior* to whites... Blacks could never achieve parity... but, he said, we should still do what we could for them, within reasonable limits, because it was the "right" thing to do.[17]

Questions over the accuracy of Ehrlichman's memory have created something of a controversy amongst historians. No one has yet found any mention in the documents released by the Nixon Presidential Materials Project (NPMP) to back up Ehrlichman's memory of the phrase "genetically inferior." Nevertheless, there is enough evidence now to suggest that Nixon did express the sentiments repeated by Ehrlichman. Nixon's other right-hand man, H. R. Haldeman, published his daily diaries of life in the Nixon White House. The entry for Monday, April 28 1969 seems to back up Ehrlichman's recollections. In it Nixon claims that the "whole problem" of welfare was "really the blacks." Nixon ruminated that "there has never in history been an adequate black nation, and they are the only race of which this is true." "Africa is hopeless," he claimed, "the worst there, is Liberia, which we built."[18]

Nixon also showed an interest in racial theories. He asked his chief adviser on racial problems, Pat Moynihan, for thoughts on an article in *The Atlantic Magazine* by Richard Herrnstein entitled "I.Q." (Herrnstein would later become infamous for co-authoring with Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve*). Moynihan's response, released in October 1996 after originally being withdrawn, shows that Nixon brought the subject of black inferiority up at a cabinet meeting when discussing the infamous article by Arthur Jensen published in the *Harvard Education Review*. Jensen claimed that the differences between black and white IQ test scores were more likely to be heritable rather than environmental.[19]

The advice that Moynihan gave him in this letter was perhaps more important than what either of them thought of the articles, and Nixon took it. Moynihan treated race as an issue that had to be managed, not resolved "Frankly, I don't see how a society such as ours can live with this knowledge. ...I need not go on: the "danger" of this knowledge is self-evident."[20] Underlying this advice was fear rather than optimism about racial issues. The major decision, one that Nixon, in asking for the comments, must have been considering, was how much effort should be put into programs based on

the assumption of racial equality and how much should be going into those that simply attempt to "contain" racial issues. In an earlier memo, Moynihan gave advice about crime. He expressed his opinion about the difficulty of the issue. The advice, which Nixon underlined and marked beside it, "Correct," would have been apposite for race relations: "What you can't control, you had better not draw attention to."[21]

Richard Nixon and Race Relations Policy

Whatever Nixon's personal feelings about race, Nixon's policy decisions – made right at the top – drifted away from the earlier hope that African-Americans could be made equal, and towards an accommodation to the reality of racial inequality in the United States. In fact, rather than representing a secretly liberal Nixon, as some texts seem to imply, Nixon's espousal of and, as we shall see, creation of affirmative action policy represented a move away from Martin Luther King's oft-cited hope that his children might be judged by the content of their character rather than the colour of their skin. It is this negative context within which the first affirmative action policies grew.

During his first year in office, Nixon dithered between continuing the Great Society programs of his predecessor and ending them. He had been elected partly due to what was commonly referred to as "white backlash" against the civil rights demands of African-Americans. However, after four years of serious rioting in American cities, he had to be careful about which programs – especially those touching on the sensitive issue of race – to dismantle.

Part of Nixon's answer was to provide Republican answers to the questions that civil rights activists asked. In the run-up to the 1968 election Nixon highlighted "black capitalism" in a bizarre appeal that attempted to unite those on the right with militant black activists. He also adopted the Philadelphia Plan – devised during the Johnson administration but, in the face of union opposition, never put into action. The Philadelphia Plan sought to force seven of the highest paid unions in the construction trade to take on black workers. Employers hired from a union "hiring hall." The unions worked on a referral system, whereby members referred new trainees, who were usually relatives or friends, producing the no-doubt egregious sight of lily-white construction teams working in black inner-city areas. The Philadelphia Plan stipulated that contractors with more that $500,000 worth of contracts must stipulate "numerical goals and timetables" of minority workers they would hire.

Nixon espoused the Plan for all the right Republican reasons. Providing jobs seemed a much more conservative method of assuaging black demands than did housing or school integration. Although unions were angry, integrating the workplace created less backlash than did attempts to integrate neighborhoods or schools, the big issues of the day. As Nixon said in a message to Congress defending the Philadelphia Plan: "Nothing is more unfair than that the same Americans who pay taxes should by any pattern of discriminatory practices be deprived of an equal opportunity to work on Federal construction contracts."[22]

Indicating how different the times were, conservative businessmen argued in favour of affirmative action whereas liberals and civil rights activists were divided on the issue. Nixon planned to lobby civil rights organizations in favour of the Plan, such was their indifference. When the issue of affirmative action emerged again in 1972, Democrats voted overwhelmingly for a motion that would have made affirmative action illegal, stipulating that government agencies "shall be prohibited from imposing or requiring a quota or preferential treatment with respect to numbers of employees or percentages of employees of any race, color, religion or national origin."[23] The motion, while not successful, shows how it was only later that the familiar sides of the argument developed.

After winning the battle in Congress in 1969, the Department of Labor announced to a largely-uninterested country that Order No. 4 would force all federal contractors with $50,000 or more worth of government contracts to stipulate "goals and timetables" for minority hiring. An even more obscure Revised Order No. 4 issued in late 1971 included women amongst the "affected groups," making affirmative action applicable to two-thirds of the American working population.

However, there is very little evidence that the Philadelphia Plan worked. First, in its initial two years, less than 100 minority workers were hired as a result of the Philadelphia Plan. Second, Order No. 4 and the Philadelphia Plan, though they could be enforced, required only that employers make a "good faith effort" at achieving the goals. Consequently, despite reports that "violation of the Philadelphia Plan is very wide-spread,"[24] not one employer had even the mildest of sanctions imposed.[25] The Philadelphia Plan was, at best, a stepping stone between the voluntaristic efforts of Kennedy and Johnson and the institutional affirmative action of the United States today.

Other efforts by Nixon proved more effective in shaping modern affirmative action. First, in 1970 Nixon stopped dithering and took action on civil rights. Evidence shows that Nixon rationalized civil rights efforts, calling existing efforts a "hopeless holding action at best." "Let's limit our public action and $ - to the least we can get away with," he told aide John Ehrlichman.[26] Rationalizing civil rights efforts meant concentrating on a smaller part of the black population – the black middle-classes.

Nixon's then-policy muse, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, wrote to his boss suggesting that the issue of race might usefully undergo a period of "benign neglect." Nixon made it clear that instead of neglect, federal efforts would be rationalizing. Notes taken by H. R. Haldeman show that Nixon called for a "[s]hift of policy [towards] helping and backing the strong – instead of putting all effort into raising the weak." Nixon also wondered aloud "how to give the black middle class cultural legitimacy."[27]

Nixon's other policy initiatives are seldom mentioned by historians but played a bigger part in initiating modern affirmative action. In 1969 Nixon dusted off a Johnson Executive Order calling for affirmative action but never enforced by him – EO 11246 – and extended its remit to local government and educational institutions, the sites today of the most vociferous. Though Nixon backed away from his much-ridiculed "black capitalism" promise, he created the Office of Minority Business Enterprise, which "set aside" contracts for firms headed by minority entrepreneurs. After being ignored in 1969, it grew steadily from 1970. With the Revenue Sharing Act, a dull-sounding plan to give grants through elected local officials instead of directly to local interest groups, the newly created Office of Revenue Sharing gained power over all aspects of the program being funded through nondiscrimination provisions in the Act. For example, if federal money was used to buy police cars, nondiscrimination provisions of the Revenue Sharing Act then also extended to employment practices, police protection services, treatment in jails and other functions of the police department. The Act provided for auditing including "possible failure to comply substantially with the civil rights provisions of the law." It was the first federal agency to include civil rights matters as part of regular audit requirement.[28]

These initiatives presented, for federal officials, much more attractive methods of enforcement. Instead of being negotiated very publicly in smoky rooms filled with rancorous citizens groups, affirmative action could be quietly enforced behind the closed doors of boardrooms. Officials controlled a financial sword of Damocles over the contractors at a time when the end of the Vietnam War meant contracts were scarcer.

NOTES

1 Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (Basic Books, 1994), x.

2 Dean Kotlowski, *Nixon's Civil Rights: Politics, Principle, and Policy* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 97.

3 The concept of quotas for addressing black inequality was first voiced in 1871 by Major Martin Delany, a black unionist soldier who later joined the Democrats. Cited in Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double Edged Sword* (London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1996), 312n.

4 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Boston, MA: The Riverside Press, 1949), 256.

5 Cited in Godfrey Hodgson, *In Our Time: America from World War II to Nixon* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 82.

6 Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960), 373.

7 Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964, ©1956), 8.

8 The perspective on race relations in the postwar period was carved out by Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish sociologist hired by the Carnegie Corporation to conduct a thoroughgoing survey on African-Americans and their problems. The resulting massive two-volume tome, *An American Dilemma: the Negro Problem and American Democracy*, (Harper & Brothers Publishers: New York, 1944), set the tone for discussions about race relations until the 1960s. See David W. Southern, *Gunnar Myrdal and Black-White Relations: The Use and Abuse of An American Dilemma*, 1944-1969 (London: Louisiana University Press, 1987).

9 The full transcript of EO 10925 is available at http://www.eeoc.gov/abouteeoc/35th/thelaw/eo-10925.html.

10 Graham, *Civil Rights Era*, 155.

11 Martin Luther King, *Stride Towards Freedom* (New York, Harper and Row, 1958), 107.

12 Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (London: University of California Press, 1995), 216.

13 *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Rights* (hereafter *the Kerner Commission Report*) (New York: New York Times Publications, 1968), 10, 2.

14 *Kerner Commission Report*, Chapter 17 "Recommendations For National Action," p414-15.

15 Cited in Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Black Panthers Speak* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1970), 11.

16 Cited in Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon: Volume Two: The Triumph of a Politician* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 251.

17 John Ehrlichman, *Witness to Power: the Nixon Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 222, 223.

18 H. R. Haldeman, , *The Haldeman Diaries*, (Sony CD-ROM, 1994), April 28 1969, H Notes Jan - June '69 [Jan - April 1, 1969] Part 1, Haldeman Notes, Box 40, White House Special Files (WHSF): Staff Members and Office Files (SMOF): Haldeman: Haldeman notes, Nixon Presidential Materials Project, (NPMP), National Archives at College Park, MD, U.S.A.

19 Letter to Jensen from Moynihan, April 2 1969, [Ex] HU2 Equality - Beginning 4/2/69, White House Central Files (WHCF); Subject Files HU [Ex] HU, NPMP.

20 Memorandum for the President from Daniel P. Moynihan, September 20 1971, President's Handwriting, December 1 thru 15 1971, Box 2 (Folder 2), WHSF: SMOF: President's Own Files (POF) Nixon Presidential Materials Staff: Presidential Materials Review Board: Review on Contested Documents (hereafter Contested Documents):, NPMP.

21 Memorandum for the President from Daniel P. Moynihan, November 13 1970, President's Handwriting November 1970, Box 1 [folder 1](boxes 1-13), WHSF, SMOF: POF, Contested Files, NPMP.

22 Cited by Gerald Ford in CR, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, 40906. See also Robert P. Schuwerk, "The Philadelphia Plan: A Study in the Dynamics of Executive Power," *University of Chicago Law Review*, Vol. 39, 1971-72, 723-760, 749.

23 CR, 92nd Congress, Vol. 117, Part 24, September 15 1971, 31984.

24 United States Civil Rights Commission, Federal Civil Rights Enforcement (1970), 209.

25 Herbert Hill, "The Construction industry: Evading the Law," *Civil Rights Digest: Quarterly Publication of the United States Civil Rights Commission* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, April 1975), 78.

26 Annotated News Summary, no date [it is likely to be, from its place in the file, early January of 1970], News Summaries - January 1970 Box 31, Annotated News Summaries, Folder 2 of 4, Contested Documents: WHSF: SMOF: (POF), NPMP.

27 Handwritten Notes 2/28, Folder 1 of 25, Documents from Boxes 1 to 45, H Notes Jan- March '70 [Feb. 21 - March 31, 1970], Part II Box 41, WHSF: SMOF: H. R. Haldeman, Contested Files.

28 *United States Civil Rights Commission, Making Civil Rights Sense out of Revenue Sharing Dollars* (Washington, DC: USCRC Clearinghouse Publication 50, February 1975), 39.

Mikhail Gorbachev and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

DR STEVEN MOREWOOD

Mikhail Gorbachev, the final leader of the Soviet Union, is inextricably linked with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Soviet communism. His 'new thinking', as embodied in his political (perestroika) and economic (glasnost) reforms, set him apart from all his predecessors. Indeed, he only became General Secretary on the casting vote of longstanding Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, who remarked reassuringly that Gorbachev possessed a 'nice smile but iron teeth', belying the trauma that would follow his appointment. Gorbachev soon replaced the conservative Gromyko with the radical Edvard Shevardnadze and together they set about convincing the confrontational Reagan administration in Washington that a superpower war was now inconceivable. They succeeded beyond all expectations: Gorbachev ('Gorby') became popular in the West as intermediate nuclear forces, the central cause of the 'New Cold War', were removed from Europe (IMF Treaty, December 1987) and the Brezhnev Doctrine (November 1968) was overturned, allowing Soviet bloc countries to break free, culminating in the Bush-Gorbachev Malta declaration (2 December 1989) that the Cold War was over. Within two years the Soviet Union itself was no more as resurgent nationalism tore it asunder.

The Gorbachev era (1985-1991), then, is an extraordinarily tumultuous period in Soviet history. Not surprisingly, its central character has generated a vast literature that veers from sympathetic to ultra-critical.[1] All agree that Gorbachev was not a typical Soviet leader. Dynamic and hard working (his routine kept him up into the early hours), he made himself accessible to the people through extraordinary walkabouts in factories and on the streets. He also allowed parliamentary debates to be televised in which the leadership was berated by an increasingly vociferous opposition. Hitherto, Soviet leaders' wives had only appeared in public at their funerals. With Gorbachev, his wife, Raisa, was usually at his side wherever he went, acting as a Soviet 'first lady'. At 54, Gorbachev was the youngest Soviet leader since Stalin and only the second, after Lenin, to be university educated. Previous Soviet leaders based policies on their experience of the Second World War ('Great Patriotic War') and its Cold War aftermath. Gorbachev, by contrast, only reached adulthood after 1945, was influenced by his grandfathers' chilling experience of Stalinist repression, and considered he was a 'man of the sixties'. During that seminal decade Gorbachev visited Western Europe, marvelling at the higher living standards and happy faces he encountered, concluding that the ogre of capitalism could not be all bad.[2]

When Gorbachev became Soviet leader there was a sense that something had to be done to address a raft of problems bequeathed to him. 'On taking office', he notes in his memoirs, '...I was immediately faced with an avalanche of problems.'[3] Gorbachev derided the late Brezhnev period as 'the era of stagnation' when economic growth came to a virtual standstill. During the 1970s the Soviet Union and its satellites in Eastern Europe embarked on a disastrous policy of import-led growth, taking advantage of East-West détente to purchase western technologies, looking to repay debts incurred to western lenders through greatly increasing manufactured exports to the West. The policy backfired spectacularly: western equipment was not easily assimilated into rigid command economies; the resulting goods did not find ready markets; and the end result was a mountain of debt and associated problems in servicing it.[4] The anti-Soviet Reagan administration, which came into power in 1981, deliberately forced the Soviet Union into a new arms race it could ill afford. Estimates vary, but it seems that Soviet inefficiencies meant that between 30 to 40 per cent of resources were devoted to military production, four to five time greater than the American figure.[5] The shortage of consumer goods, arising from this imbalanced emphasis on weapons manufacture, helped to produce worker apathy, as reflected by growing alcoholism and falling male life expectancy, which was unprecedented for a developed country. Brezhnev's policy of the 'stability of cadres' kept political leaders in the Politburo (whose members' average age was 70 despite Gorbachev's presence), the Soviet republics and

satellites (where 'shadow Brezhnev's' reigned) for decades. One outcome was corruption, a situation also reflected in the country at large, with a mushrooming shadow economy dealing in embezzled state goods and desirable Western consumer durables.[6]

There are various interpretations of Gorbachev's original objectives when he became the seventh General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in March 1985, following the death of three geriatric leaders in quick succession (Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko), whose ill health mirrored that of their country. Some Western academics see Gorbachev as a pragmatic reformer learning as he went along; others as being driven by popular pressure down the road of more radical reform; or, as Archie Brown, his most sympathetic critic, portrays him, as a secret social democrat who, fearing he might be ousted by the old guard as Khrushchev had been for rocking the boat too much, only dared to gradually reveal his true ambitions.[7] Promoting his memoirs in 1996, Gorbachev conceded that the collapse of Soviet communism had not been his intention at the outset.

> When I became General Secretary, I admit I was not free from the illusions of my predecessors. I thought we could unite socialism and democracy and give socialism a second wind. But the totalitarian model had relied on dictatorship and violence, and I could see this was not acceptable to the people.. .I wanted to change the Soviet Union, not destroy it.[8]

Influenced by the short-lived Prague Spring (1968) in Czechoslovakia, Gorbachev equated communism in its pure form with brotherhood, justice, equality and world peace and sought to return to these ideals. Through economic transformation, which would raise living standards, he believed that he could secure for the CPSU a popular mandate to rule, thereby justifying its leading role. He sought ideological justification for his economic reforms in the late writings of Lenin and his New Economic Policy (NEP), when capitalism co-existed with communism, a period which was seen through rose-tinted spectacles as a golden age. Moreover, President Roosevelt had borrowed elements of socialism to produce the New Deal, which rescued America from depression but without renouncing capitalism. Gorbachev sought a hybrid of the two systems – a 'socialist market economy' or 'market socialism' – which would remain within the bounds of party ideology.[9]

Gorbachev swept in with a new team of young advisers and set hares running in all directions. A slogan, 'acceleration', embodied their desire to kick-start the moribund economy; an anti-alcohol campaign sought to improve worker productivity; new superstructures were created to inject life into the command economy's over-bureaucratised system; modernisation of plants and equipment was envisaged; a new state committee, Gospriemka, was created to enforce quality control. The end goal was to end shortages and double the output of consumer goods by the year 2000. All these initiatives foundered for one reason or another. The anti-alcohol campaign, for instance, merely fuelled an underground moonshine industry, which led to sugar shortages and deprived the state of much needed tax revenue. Moreover, Gorbachev's popularity suffered its first major dent as he was derided as 'lemonade Joe' and 'the mineral water secretary'. Again, the quality drive led to such a high percentage of rejected output that it quickly became unsustainable.[10]

Undoubtedly Gorbachev faced determined opposition from within, from conservative diehards who cherished their privileged positions. Seeking to frustrate their resistance, from 1986-87 he combined 'democratic socialism' with economic reform to appeal over the heads of the bureaucrats to the population at large. Some of his economic initiatives, therefore, can be considered as much political gestures to grab the headlines and fire people's imaginations. It was far easier though to identify problems than to prescribe practical remedies. Gorbachev delighted in slogan making but concrete results were much more difficult to achieve. To understand why there was eventually an implosion it is important to recognise that glasnost became more far-reaching than perestroika. Intended to run in parallel, in practice they deviated widely. Thus by March 1989 a new parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies, had been created through the first democratic elections since December 1917 and within a year republican leaders were subject to popular election. In contrast, capitalist vigour struggled to find a voice in the system: western companies were deterred from entering joint ventures with Soviet partners by problems arising from the legal ownership of assets, the repatriation of profits and the frequent taxing of supposedly duty free imports of materials; new co-operatives, harking back to NEP, were tainted through association with criminal gangs and the

black market, their prices often beyond the willingness or capacity of the average citizen to pay.[11] Gorbachev's fundamental problem was that dissent, hitherto repressed, rose to a crescendo at the same time as his economic reforms led the Soviet Union into the worst recession in its history.

Unlike his floundering economic reforms at home, Gorbachev continued to make waves abroad in foreign policy throughout his tenure. Gorbachev renounced the notion of an inevitable conflict with capitalism and visited Washington more frequently than any previous Soviet leader. Indeed, American opinion polls showed him to be even more popular than President Reagan. In 1988, when the American president visited Moscow, *Time* magazine feted Gorbachev as 'Man of the Year' and two years later bestowed an even greater accolade, naming him 'Man of the Decade'. Brezhnev had engaged in expensive incursions into the Third World arena in a largely vain effort to expand Soviet influence. Gorbachev reined-in such ventures and grasped the nettle of the 'bleeding wound' of Afghanistan to mount a staged military withdrawal between May 1988 and February 1989, notwithstanding the odour of defeat this entailed.[12]

The Soviet Bloc, previously considered sacrosanct by Soviet leaders, was increasingly viewed as a drain on resources. It has emerged, for instance, that the military regime of General Jaruzelski in Poland, was subsidised to the tune of $2 billion in hard currency and many billions more in roubles.[13] Again, as the Soviet Union itself ran into economic difficulties, it could ill afford to bail out its satellites as before. Already, in December 1981, under Brezhnev, the Soviet Union had withdrawn from acting as a guarantor for the external debts of bloc countries that they incurred through import-led growth. Under Gorbachev, the lost earnings arising from subsidised energy exports to satellites were clawed back as the pricing formula was adjusted to more truly reflect the world market price. Gorbachev tried to export his reformist agenda, visiting bloc capitals to spread his message. He also privately warned bloc leaders that they could no longer count on Soviet military intervention to maintain them in power. He met with a mixed reception, enjoying most success in Hungary and Poland already well down the reformist road, and the least in East Germany and Romania which maintained retrogressive Stalinist outlooks. Efforts to reform the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and induce the bloc to produce high quality manufactured goods for Soviet consumption, rather than the third rate fare accepted hitherto, failed lamentably.[14]

Gorbachev did not believe in the Iron Curtain, which divided Europe, but spoke repeatedly of a 'common European home'. In essence, the two halves of the Continent should be brought together as one. The signal for revolution in the 'outer empire' came in December 1988 when, addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Gorbachev announced a withdrawal of 500,000 troops and 10,000 tanks from bloc members over two years. The key sentence of the speech was: 'Freedom of choice is...a universal principle and it should know no exceptions'.[15] In a roundabout way, Gorbachev was renouncing the Brezhnev Doctrine that threatened military intervention if there was unacceptable deviation from the socialist path. Nevertheless, the true meaning of Gorbachev's words was missed at the time and their significance only resonates in retrospect. To quote John Lewis Gaddis:

> What no one understood, at the beginning of 1989, was that the Soviet Union, its empire, its ideology – and therefore the Cold War itself – was a sandpile ready to slide. All it took to make that happen were a few more grains of sand. The people who dropped them were not in charge of superpowers or movements or religions: they were ordinary people with simple priorities who saw, seized, and sometimes stumbled into opportunities. In doing so, they caused a collapse no one could stop. Their 'leaders' had little choice but to follow.[16]

The slide began with Hungary and Poland. The latter formed the first non-communist government in June as Gorbachev indicated his disinterest. In another landmark speech, this time to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 6 July, Gorbachev spelled out that the political path of bloc countries was 'entirely a matter for the people themselves'.[17] Once Hungary and Poland were allowed to break away the rest of the bloc soon followed domino fashion. Gorbachev gave a helping hand in East Germany, where he visited in October to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of its founding, and inspired the population to rise up, leading to the collapse of the infamous Berlin Wall, with citizens hacking away at its hated structure. Nor could Bulgaria or Czechoslovakia avert 'velvet revolutions' as people

power overwhelmed their despotic communist governments. The only serious bloodletting occurred with the final revolution, in Romania, where the despised dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, were executed after a kangaroo court found them guilty of crimes against the people.[18]

What Gorbachev failed to recognise was that events in the 'outer empire' were bound to influence the 'inner empire' whose republics soon began clamouring for independence. In 1987 he had blithely proclaimed that the nationalities issue was resolved, little realising that glasnost had poked a sleeping snake in the grass and it was soon to bite back with venom. Through instigating popular elections for the leaders of the fifteen republics, Gorbachev unwittingly gave a hostage to fortune. Nationalist politicians were bound to put local interests first to court popularity and ensure their re-election. Determined to retain their own resources and tax revenues, nationalist politicians instigated internecine economic warfare with the centre. The existing system required republics to meet delivery obligations to central government regardless of local consequences. The greater political autonomy accorded to republics fatally undermined the old arrangement. Known as 'the war of laws', it was a contest central authorities were bound to lose given Gorbachev's continued refusal to countenance the use of force.[19] His patience finally exhausted, in April 1991 Gorbachev issued a decree giving the republics a week to rescind their decrees obstructing exports to the centre. But without the threat or the actuality of military intervention his decree was contemptuously ignored.[20]

Mounting internal and external budget deficits further undermined perestroika's ability to deliver higher living standards. Gorbachev blamed extraordinary factors – falling world energy prices, the Chernobyl nuclear reactor catastrophe, the Armenian earthquake, lost tax revenues arising from the anti-alcohol campaign. These did not help but the truth was that more enduring explanations were at work since the deficits kept on rising inexorably. Inefficient enterprises were still bailed out by state funding; massive subsidies, which were judged politically expedient, remained to keep food prices down (by 1989 costing 110 billion roubles annually); the Congress of People's Deputies introduced a costly pensions law and the reimbursement of 1.6 billion roubles to farmers for their rising electricity bills. With enterprise managers now free to set wages and anxious to satisfy workers who now elected them, earnings rose faster than productivity, stoking up inflation. Moreover, strikes, hitherto almost unknown in the Soviet Union, became much more frequent, with two extended miners strikes proving especially damaging to economic performance. Adding to these woes, the black economy – ironically the most dynamic growth area – lost the centre untold millions in lost tax through undeclared income.[21]

The situation was exacerbated by a precipitate decline in export earnings. In 1989, when imports exceeded exports, the trade deficit reached $5.4 billion and within a year had virtually trebled. Increasing extraction difficulties compounded the falling world price of oil and gas, which accounted for 40 per cent of export earnings. Imports, by contrast, showed no signs of diminishing, reflecting continued domestic shortfalls in food production and light industry's need to procure around 40 per cent of its inputs from abroad. The Soviet Union was compelled to turn to Western capital markets to foot the import bill and service foreign debt. In 1985, when Gorbachev entered office, external debt was around $16 billion. Within three years it stood at $42.3 billion and by December 1991 touched $90 billion by some calculations. More export earnings were devoted to service the external debt with the debt service ratio rising from 22 to 50 per cent between 1988 and 1991. Indeed, by 1990 three-quarters of hard currency borrowings were being devoted to servicing the external debt, leaving little spare capital for direct investment in the economy.[22]

What also emerged under Gorbachev's economic mismanagement was the 'shortage economy'. Although shortages had existed under his recent predecessors, the population felt confident that their basic requirements would be met by the state. Such stoicism evaporated with perestroika and from 1988, facing ever-longer queues for increasingly scarce basic necessities, people began hoarding, turning their flats into makeshift warehouses.[23] The big cities, such as Leningrad and Moscow, suffered most. In May 1990 Moscow City Council resorted to a rationing system with Leningrad following suit within six months. There was even talk of a Stalinist famine. Consumer goods production also fell with the result that by 1991, of 1,100 types only twenty were routinely available. Producers' inability to receive their allotted supply of inputs lay at the heart of the shortfall. A hard currency

shortage from 1989 limited factories' access to foreign-induced inputs, also restricting the amount of consumer goods that could be imported by the state to compensate. By early 1991 excess demand, fuelled by inflationary wage rises by state enterprises, was estimated at 250 billion roubles, providing a ready market for black marketeers to flourish. By 1991 the size of the black economy was put at 130 billion roubles (compared with only 5 billion roubles in 1960), representing around 30 to 40 per cent of GNP with no less than 20 to 30 million citizens believed to be involved in illicit trading activities. In 1989 the Department to Fight Organised Crime was established in the Soviet Interior Ministry which also oversaw the Department for Combating Embezzlement of Socialist Property and Speculators. Both were fighting an uphill losing battle given the sheer magnitude of the problem.[24]

In the slipstream of Gorbachev's reforms there emerged a more radical leader to challenge him - Boris Yeltsin.[25] Enraged by Gorbachev's dismissal of him from the Politburo in February 1988 for daring to suggest that glasnost and perestroika were not being pushed to their logical conclusion - full blown democracy and a market economy - Yeltsin took his revenge by establishing an alternative power base in Russia, the most powerful republic, whence he undermined Gorbachev at every opportunity. This sniping intensified once Yeltsin was voted president of Russia on 12 June 1991. As its elected leader, Yeltsin banned the CPSU and became a social democrat.[26]

He and other radical republican leaders of his ilk considered Gorbachev an increasing irrelevance as they sought independence from the Soviet Union. Gorbachev finally bowed to their pressure in July 1991 when a new Union constitution gave republics the right to secede. In turn, conservatives were alienated by the prospect of a break-up. Gorbachev vacillated between the two factions as he sought desperately to cling to office. Once he relinquished the CPSU's monopoly on power (March 1990), as enshrined in the constitution, his authority waned even further. His answer was to create a new executive position, the president of the Soviet Union. But he refused to subject himself to popular mandate and instead chose the safe route of election by the communist-dominated Congress of People's Deputies.[27] Critics suggested this was akin to trying to be Luther and the Pope.

By 1990 among the reformers there was an emerging consensus that a move towards a market economy was desirable but no agreement over the timing or form. The Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov proposed a five-year transitional plan to a 'regulated market economy' wherein key prices would still be fixed to preserve jobs and there would be no convertible rouble. Gorbachev rejected this as too conservative. Pressed by Yeltsin, Gorbachev then authorised some radical economists to investigate the position. The resulting '500 Day Plan' or 'Shatalin Plan' envisaged a rapid decontrol of prices, the privatisation of state-owned industries, and large budget cuts. Gorbachev deemed this too drastic, leading him to come up with another plan, in October, which represented only a partial commitment to a market economy and whose timing was left vague. In the end, there was no radical economic restructuring because of Gorbachev's vacillation, his drift to the right to protect his position, and the people's indoctrinated fear of unemployment, capitalism's curse, in a transition phase.[28]

1991 saw first the removal of Gorbachev in an August coup by the conservatives, then his restoration to power, and finally the break-up of the Soviet Union and with it Gorbachev's resignation as president. Under Gorbachev the Soviet Union came in from the cold and joined the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, but the international community remained ambivalent towards his growing cries for more aid. The G7 summit in London, in early summer, with the USSR in attendance for the first time, was split in its attitude towards Gorbachev's begging bowl: the French and Germans wanted to fill it, the Americans and British wished to wait for meaningful economic reforms, especially a true market economy, before responding. By now, too, Western leaders, while not entirely abandoning Gorbachev, increasingly viewed Yeltsin favourably, more especially as he was a democratic free marketer who could complete the process that Gorbachev had begun.[29]

It was Yeltsin who rescued Gorbachev from the coup that followed his unsuccessful outing to London. But in truth Gorbachev had become purely a symbolic leader with Yeltsin calling the shots, forcing him to read out a list of coup conspirators before the Congress. Gorbachev also felt compelled to resign as General Secretary of the CPSU (24 August), which had become marginalized. The Baltic States had taken advantage of the coup to declare their independence. Between 24 August and 21

September nine other republics followed their example.[30] In the meantime, Yeltsin seized total control in Russia, both of its economic assets and armed forces. As Tony Judt perceives, 'The Soviet Union was now a shell state, emptied of power and resources.'[31] Even the instrument of the police state, the infamous KGB, was abolished on 24 October. A dejected Gorbachev suggested a treaty on the economic community of sovereign states but no republic was interested. Soon his bitter rival Yeltsin forced through the devolution of the Soviet Union, conspiring with Ukraine and Belarus to denounce the Union Treaty of 1922 and leading to the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Gorbachev officially stepped down from the presidency on Christmas Day and the famous Hammer and Sickle flag was lowered from the Kremlin for the last time on New Year's Eve as a triumphant Yeltsin took over his rival's office.[32]

Given his objectives, Gorbachev must be judged a failure. The Soviet Union became even less internationally competitive during his tenure, while his political reforms and tinkering with the command economy incapacitated the system without creating a true market economy to replace it. His great successes on the world stage – verifiable nuclear arms control, the coming together of the two halves of Europe including divided Germany, the end of the Cold War – were lauded abroad but this reverence was not echoed at home. There the economic catastrophe he precipitated meant that when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for ending the Cold War it was said, with heavy irony, that it would have been better had this been given for outstanding economic performance. In a bizarre way, their subjects increasingly viewed the Gorbachevs as anathemas: Mikhail for his designer suits, Raisa for her extravagant shopping trips to New York. Resentment towards the woes that Gorbachev inflicted through his well meaning but flawed reforms lingered. In 1996 after, finally, he subjected himself to a popular vote in the presidential elections, he polled less than 1 per cent. When he was in power, opinion polls suggested a rapid fall from grace as Gorbachev was constantly berated and humiliated in the televised sessions of the Congress of People's Deputies. Regarded as a boring speaker who never quite got to the point – especially when measured against the spontaneous, instinctive and crude debating methods of Yeltsin – Gorbachev removed too many pillars of the Soviet system for it to survive. He did succeed in ending the Cold War, telling Reagan that now America must find a new enemy, but the anticipated peace dividend, a substantive transfer of resources from the military to the civilian sector, failed to materialise at the anticipated speed. It remains an open question whether the Soviet Union could have continued but for Gorbachev – for example, by embracing the Chinese communists' progressive economic reforms route, begun in 1978, while clinging tightly and repressively to power.[33]

There were systemic flaws in the Soviet model but the timing of dissolution must be laid at the door of Gorbachev. Gorbachev's efforts to revitalise the Soviet Union were awash with contradictions and doomed to fail. 'Gorbachev', Philip Hanson wryly observes, 'was the first Soviet leader who, if one may judge by appearances, did not understand the Soviet system. He was therefore the last Soviet leader.'[34] Echoing this view, another authority writes:

> The collapse of the state was most total where its pretensions were greatest. Like all empires, the Soviet Union was based on coercion, and broke up when it lost the will and means to coerce its subjects. However, while the collapse of the colonial empires of this [twentieth] century left their economic systems intact, the collapse of Soviet rule brought down the Soviet economy too. This was because Soviet Communism was a system of economic as well as political monopoly. The Soviet economy could not function were it not centrally commanded, for it existed to fulfil a central plan, not to satisfy market demands. When Communist Party rule collapsed, the central planning system collapsed. When the central planning system collapsed, the economy collapsed. There was no one to tell it what to do.[35]

Short term, as much as long term factors, should be accorded equal prominence in explaining why Soviet communism collapsed between 1989 and 1991.[36] As it turned out, Gorbachev was the most humane leader the Soviet Union ever had. His dogged refusal to resort to military coercion was commendable[37] but in the end doomed the Soviet imperial edifice to collapse.

Today, Gorbachev resides in Moscow, runs the Gorbachev Foundation, has tired of watching

American movies and is bringing out another history of his time in office, *Understanding Perestroika*, in a further effort to retrieve his reputation. The United States under George W.Bush is seen by Gorbachev as having a 'victory complex' and suffering from the delusion that democracy can be imposed, especially in Iraq, rather than be home grown. Gorbachev also worries that the United States has gone back on agreements he signed with presidents Reagan and Bush undertaking not to use nuclear weapons in a first strike.[38] Gorbachev regards the Yeltsin period (1992-2000) as an aberration, a time of corruption and selling off state assets at bargain basement prices, creating multi-millionaires overnight. Gorbachev sees Vladimir Putin, the current Russian president, as reinstating his economic reforms while conceding that in the political arena 'some authoritarian methods [are] being used [which] are not in the interests of the people'.[39] Finally, the point needs to be made in Gorbachev's favour that his grand vision could never succeed in one political lifetime. Reversing Stalin's famous speech calling for a hundred years progress to be made in a decade, Gorbachev pronounced recently:

> Anything can happen. There will be rollbacks and we may stumble, but Russia will never turn back, Russia will move forward. We want to have democracy. But what you [the West] did in 200 years, we cannot do in 200 days.[40]

Only time will tell.

NOTES

1 See, for example, David Pryce-Jones, *The War that Never Was: The Fall of the Soviet Empire 1985-1991* (London: Weidenfeld, 1995), Jonathan Steele, *Eternal Russia* (London: Faber, 1995), A.Yakovlev, *The Fate of Marxism in Russia* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1993), S.Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted. The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

2 See Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (London: Bantam Books, 1997), Part One.

3 Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, p.219.

4 For further details see Derek Aldcroft and Steven Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe since 1918* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1995), chapter eight.

5 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, London: William Heinemann, 2005), p.592.

6 For further details see Martin McCauley, 'From Perestroika towards a New Order, 1985-1995', in Geoffrey Freeze ed. *Russia. A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

7 Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). For an overview of the debate see Orlando Figes, 'Sheep or Wolf?', *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 May 1996, p.6 and Jeremy Smith, *The Fall of Soviet Communism 1985-1991* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.1.5.

8 R.Seitz, 'The Forgotten Man', *Daily Telegraph*, Weekend section, 5 October 1996, referring to the launch of Gorbachev's memoirs.

9 For Gorbachev's thinking at this time see his million selling polemic, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (London: Collins, 1987).

10 See Anthony D'Agostino, *Gorbachev's Revolution 1985-91* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), chapter four.

11 Further details can be gleaned from Jerry F.Hough, *Democracy and Revolution in the USSR 1985-1991* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), chapters four-five.

12 See Raymond L.Garthoff, *The Great Transition. American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1994).

13 Z.A.Medvedev, 'Russia's Redundant Revolutionary', *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 3 May 1996, p.18.

14 See Karen Dawisha, *Eastern Europe Gorbachev and Reform. The Great Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), second edition.

15 Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, pp.592-97.

16 John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), p.238.

17 Quoted in Judt, *Postwar*, p.632.

18 See Geoffrey Swain and Nigel Swain, *Eastern Europe since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), third edition, chapter eight.

19 Although there was bloody military intervention in Lithuania this was short-lived and almost certainly not authorised by Gorbachev who argued that it arose from a secret KGB order.

20 On Gorbachev and the nationalities issue see Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, chapter seven.

21 See Judt, *Postwar*, chapter XIX.

22 Alan Smith, *Russia and the World Economy. Problems of Integration* (London: Routledge, 1993), chapter nine.

23 The best source for the shortage economy is W.Moskoff, *Hard Times. Impoverishment and Protest in the Perestroika Years. The Soviet Union 1985-1991* (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1993).

24 For the best recent overview of the failures of Gorbachev's economic reforms see Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy: An Economic History of the USSR from 1945* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2003), chapter seven. See also Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus, *The Soviet System. From Crisis to Collapse* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), revised edition.

25 For the Gorbachev-Yeltsin relationship see Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, chapter ten and George W.Breslauer, *Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Gorbachev might have sent Yeltsin abroad as an ambassador to nullify his threat.

26 Yeltsin left the CPSU in July 1990.

27 A third of the seats had been reserved for CPSU candidates.

28 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, chapter eleven.

29 President Bush had met Yeltsin a few weeks before the August 1991 coup.

30 Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Tajikistan and Armenia.

31 Judt, *Postwar*, p.657.

32 The dramatic events of 1991 can be followed in Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *The End of the Soviet Empire. The Triumph of the Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

33 President Putin has restored a large degree of authoritarianism while allowing capitalism to flourish.

34 Hanson, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy*, p.117.

35 Robert Skidelsky, 'The Collapse of Communism: The Political Economy Context' in Robert Skidelsky ed. *Russia's Stormy Path to Reform* (London: Social Market Foundation, 1995), p.141.

36 Smith, *Fall of Soviet Communism*, p.112.

37 Gaddis, *Cold War*, p.257, considers Gorbachev 'the most deserving recipient ever of the Nobel Peace Prize'.

38 'Gorbachev, Man Who Ended Cold War, Marks 75th Birthday', http://www.mosnews.com/news/2006/03/02/gorbyanniversary.shtml

39 '10 Questions for Mikhail Gorbachev', *Time*, 10 April 2006, p.21.

40 Gorbachev, 'U.S. has "Illusions of Omnipotence', http://mosnews.com/news/2006/04/06/gorbyonus.shtml

Using History To Understand Contemporary Conflicts

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It often seems as if the strategic environment in which we live is changing at a dizzying pace. Over the past two decades alone, the world has seen two epoch-making events which apparently transformed the strategic landscape out of all recognition. The first was the end of the Cold War at the start of the 1990s, which brought an end to the bipolar great power confrontation which had preoccupied us for over a generation, and ushered in a new focus on state collapse, 'wars of choice', and peace enforcement operations. This 'post-Cold War' era was itself rudely terminated by the Al Qaeda attacks on the United States on September 11th 2001, puncturing the sense of security which Western states themselves had enjoyed since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and triggering a 'War on Terror' which has come to dominate strategic discourse just as the Cold War once did, but in a very different manner given the very different nature of the adversary. These far-reaching changes in the political context of strategic affairs have been complemented by equally rapid developments in technology, with the much touted 'revolution in military affairs' being just one aspect of the way in which information, communication and bio-technologies are transforming our everyday lives.[2]

Given this seemingly unprecedented pace of change in the strategic environment, it might be thought that 'learning from experience' is now distinctly *passé*, and that the only way to understand the strategic context properly is to analyse it from first principles, rather as the 'classic' strategic theorists of the early Cold War years sought to reason out from scratch the novel dynamics underlying nuclear deterrence and 'Mutually Assured Destruction'. However, if this is true, it is a profoundly worrying prospect, since it goes against the whole basis of experiential learning which has traditionally helped humans make some sense of the complexities around them. One need only reflect on the *naiveté* and abstraction of some of the ahistorical theories produced by Kahn, Schelling and others in response to our previous nuclear dilemmas, to feel distinctly uncomfortable about relying purely on analysis from first principles when deciding what to do about our current strategic preoccupations.[3]

Fortunately, things are not quite that bad. However fast technology may develop, and however quickly the political context seems to change, the fact that warfare is a deeply and abidingly ***human*** endeavour means that there remains plenty of scope for the more familiar experiential approach. Although developments in bio-technology do raise the prospect of significant changes in the not too distant future, the fact remains that natural evolutionary development proceeds at a truly glacial pace compared to the revolutions discussed above. That is why the strategic insights of ancient writers like Thucydides and Sun Tzu remain so fresh and intelligible today, nearly two and a half millennia later, at a time when the weaponry and the political entities they describe have become matters of purely antiquarian interest.[4] The intrinsically human character of warfare means that experience continues to offer a useful guide, even at times of dizzying change such as our own.

Two approaches in particular stand out as worthwhile. The first is obviously to learn from our own past. This need not involve recourse to long distant events – one 'mixed blessing' of our own era is that we have much more immediate experience of involvement in actual conflicts than during the deterrent stand-off of the Cold War years. The various involvements of Western states in the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere over the past 15 years in themselves offer a very rich menu for experiential learning. However, we should not assume that earlier experience is automatically irrelevant. Continuities in the human character of conflict tend to be greater than may at first seem apparent, and our preoccupation in the 1970s and 1980s with the technical military confrontation which the Cold War had by then become should not blind us to the fact that the ideological struggles, terrorist bombings and 'nation building' interventions which preoccupy us today have plenty of antecedents throughout the politically charged, religiously motivated and often imperialist history of our own states.[5]

The second useful approach is to follow Bismarck's advice and to learn from the experience of others.[6] Europe had a rather different strategic experience from the world as a whole during the Cold War era, and one can perhaps discern more useful parallels to our present situation by adopting a more global perspective. The American and Soviet involvement in Vietnam, Afghanistan and elsewhere offers one obvious source of insight, but purely regional conflicts also have something to contribute. The experience of Israel, in particular, seems especially apposite, since (for better or worse) the strategic challenges which that country has faced in recent decades seem increasingly similar to those currently facing Western states in general.[7] Although the stance adopted by some states may be anathema from a liberal Western point of view (Russia's conduct in Chechnya being a prime case in point), one should not discount the extent to which justice and legitimacy are very much in the eyes of the beholder, and in any case, there may well be similarities in strategic dynamics, regardless of the motives involved or the degree of restraint displayed.[8]

In this article, I will first outline what I see as the key enduring characteristics of our strategic environment – factors which have been present for a long time, and which seem likely to persist well into the future. I will then identify a number of established trends – factors which one can trace back long before September 11th, and usually well into the Cold War era, but which have been getting stronger over time, and which appear unlikely to be entirely reversed anytime soon. These characteristics and trends are unavoidably highly general and often rather obvious, but it is still worth outlining them in order to derive at least a minimum sense of orientation within the complexities of our strategic situation. I will then discuss what I see as the principal dilemmas and trade-offs to which this combination of factors gives rise – first for Western states themselves, and then for their actual or potential adversaries.

ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS

The first long-standing and well established feature of the modern strategic environment is *diversity*. Conflicts may last weeks, like the Falklands and 1991 Gulf wars, or may drag on for years, like the Iran-Iraq war, the Afghan war in the 1980s and 1990s, or the Bosnian civil war. They may involve the latest high technology equipment, or be waged with knives as in Rwanda and Algeria. They may take the form of a set battle between opposing armed forces, a fight between ethnic militias, a struggle between guerrillas and counter-insurgency forces, or a coercive duel of sporadic terrorist bombings and punitive airstrikes like that between Israel and Hamas or between the USA and Al Qaeda. There is little sense that this diversity is diminishing over time – van Creveld's claim 15 years ago that modern 'conventional' weapons were becoming too blundering, indiscriminate and escalatory to use in practice has been comprehensively disproved by the increasingly precise employment of such weapons in the conflicts which have occurred since.[9] If anything, the diversity is likely to increase rather than decrease, with the growing potential for 'cyber warfare' taking us even further away from the traditional situation where battles were limited to duels between military forces along a clear 'front line'.[10]

The second enduring characteristic of the strategic environment is *unpredictability*. Military personnel have long warned that surprises like September 11th are routine, and that the conflicts which occur are almost never those anticipated in previous planning.[11] What is not often enough pointed out is that there are deep-seated strategic reasons for this unpredictability – namely that those scenarios which states *do* anticipate and prepare against, they often manage to deter, thereby making them into a 'self denying prophecy'. British naval officers used to make great play of how the Falklands conflict in 1982 showed the dangers of discounting unpredictability and focusing force planning on North Atlantic defence rather than expeditionary operations, as the previous year's UK defence review planned to do; what they did not say is that (given the choice) it was distinctly preferable to deter the Warsaw Pact even if this meant failing to deter Argentina, rather than the other way around![12] The 2003 Iraq war might appear to show that nations can reduce unpredictability by seizing the initiative and focusing on active strategies like the long-cherished plan to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime – however, the rude shock of the subsequent insurgency, for which the invaders

were far less prepared than for their stunning initial *blitzkrieg* – shows that strategy remains very much a two-sided affair, and that the consequent unpredictability remains an inevitable concomitant of this dialectical process.[13]

The final well established feature of the strategic environment is *constraint*. This became a *leitmotif* of the Cold War, when the situation was contrasted clearly with the total commitment seen during the World Wars, and theories proliferated about the dynamics of limited warfare and 'escalation' under the shadow of the mutually suicidal nuclear threat.[14] The resulting 'gradualism' was never popular, especially given the frustrations experienced by the United States in Korea and Vietnam, and it might be expected that the end of the Cold War would have allowed the gloves to come off and would have permitted states once again to use unrestrained force to defeat their adversaries.[15] In practice, however, the purely pragmatic and 'realist' motives for restraint which dominated thinking during the Cold War masked the parallel development of a web of 'softer' constraints which proved more enduring than raw nuclear deterrence, as illustrated during NATO's 1999 war in Kosovo.[16] September 11th might be thought to have ushered in a less restrained age, in which 'anything goes' in the quest to inflict or to avert the kind of mass civilian casualties suffered in the World Trade Centre. However, the very concept of a 'War on Terror' places constraint on the means of violence at the heart of strategic discourse – this is a markedly different situation than in World War Two, when the overriding goal of overthrowing the Axis made indiscriminate incineration of hundreds of times as many civilians in Germany and Japan seem acceptable as a means to that end.[17]

ESTABLISHED TRENDS

Alongside these enduring features of the current strategic environment, there are a number of trends which have become especially prominent in recent years, but whose development may be traced back significantly earlier. I will now talk briefly about seven of these established trends.

The first is *asymmetry*. 'Asymmetric warfare' has become such a commonplace of modern strategic discussions that it is well to remember how recently we were thinking in very different ways. The later Cold War, in particular, witnessed what was perhaps the high point of symmetrical strategic thinking, in which arms controllers focused on evening out whatever numerical imbalances existed between the missile and tank arsenals of the two blocs, as if the whole confrontation were some sort of ritualistic and artificial game.[18] Meanwhile, in real world conflicts, asymmetries increasingly abounded, and the end of the Cold War made these even more stark by removing the previous balancing effect of competitive superpower sponsorship. In the modern world of enormous variation in the size and power of states, and in a situation where technological and tactical advantages can turn even superficially 'balanced' military contests into one-sided walkovers (as in Israel's smashing of Syrian air and air defence assets in Lebanon in 1982), asymmetry has become very much the norm.[19] However, it is very important to note that 'asymmetric' does not necessarily mean 'imbalanced'. Instead, there may well be an indirect balance of offsetting asymmetries, often one in which the technical military dominance of one adversary is counterbalanced by the much greater commitment of the other to endure sacrifice and martyrdom to attain whatever goal is at stake. It was already amply illustrated by the Vietnamese and Afghan conflicts during the Cold War that victory did not always go to the militarily more powerful side, and the US humiliation in Somalia in 1993 showed that this was not just a consequence of intervention by the opposing superpower.[20] Such offsetting asymmetries are now routine, with antagonists often fighting under very different rules and constraints, and with victory often going to whichever side is more successful in dictating the terms on which the contest is fought.[21]

The second strategic trend is *sensitivity*. Whereas success in war used to be measured in terms of overall statistics such as relative enemy and friendly losses and the amount of territory captured, the much less conventional character of modern conflicts has combined with the growing dominance of televisual imagery to switch more and more attention to anecdotal indications of success and failure. General Sir Rupert Smith has described modern military operations as 'being viewed by a partial and factional audience, comfortably seated, its attention focused on that part of the auditorium

where it is noisiest, watching the events by peering down the drinking straws of their soft-drink packs – for that is the extent of the vision of a camera'.[22] This was illustrated in the 1991 Gulf war, when Iraq's Scud bombardment commanded as much air time as the vastly more 'effective' Coalition air campaign, and it has continued into more recent conflicts, via the 'disproportionate' media focus on individual mishaps such as the loss of a single plane or the bombing of a single inappropriate target.[23] Since it is far easier for television viewers to empathise with such individual cases than for them to grasp abstract statistical arguments, adversaries have become increasingly preoccupied with generating (and avoiding) such heart-rending and visually striking anecdotes, and even the historically miniscule levels of casualties which Western forces now sustain have become neuralgic pressure points when distraught relatives routinely parade their grief in millions of living rooms around the world.[24] Terrorism has, of course, long focused on exploiting this magnificatory effect of media anecdotalism, and it is hardly surprising that the suicide bomber has become the classic vehicle for militarily weaker adversaries to demonstrate how far their own self-sacrificial commitment and ruthlessness contrasts with the timorous sensitivity of their opponents.[25]

A third important trend is *controversy*. It used to be expected that involvement in conflict would suspend domestic disputes, as people 'rallied round the flag' and supported 'their boys' in action. However, the very essence of limited warfare is that polities must strike a balance between their commitment to the cause at stake and the costs and risks they are prepared to shoulder to achieve it, and so Cold War conflicts such as Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan became the focus of bitter and traumatic internal debates within the societies involved as to whether the game was worth the candle. Over time, these controversies have become even more fundamental, since the complexity of the changing strategic situation is such that disagreements revolve not just around costs and benefits but around basic issues of right and wrong. Depending on one's view of the world, operations like the invasion of Iraq in 2003 may be seen as the overdue liberation and pre-emptive disarmament of a tyrannical and threatening regime or as naked aggression driven by a cocktail of economic and religious motives reminiscent of the worst excesses of Western imperialism. Where once such fundamental disagreements might have been more firmly aligned with nationalism and ideology, and so more evident between than within established states, today most Western polities are split down the middle about what justifies the use of force, and even such external influences as the Madrid train bombings by Al Qaeda in 2004 and the similar London bombings in 2005 may lead different people to very different conclusions about the best responses to adopt.[26]

This leads me to a fourth established strategic trend, namely the growing focus on *intervention* operations. The end of the Cold War and the growing military dominance of Western nations defused fears of a concerted attack on their home territories by other states, but at the same time it freed their military forces to resume a more active and interventionist role in other parts of the world. This more interventionist and 'expeditionary' stance was motivated in part by an altruistic desire to right wrongs and relieve the suffering so vividly 'brought home' to Western publics by television imagery, but it was also prompted (especially after September 11th) by a self-interested desire to head off potential threats by dealing with them at their source.[27] Other conflicts have also tended to assume a more interventionist character, because challenges to established state authority have tended to prompt the employment of military force against separatist local populations (as with the Russians in Chechnya, the Israelis in Gaza, the Serbs in Kosovo, and the Turks and Iraqis in 'Kurdistan'). For whatever reasons, the contrast between 'locals' and 'outsiders' has become an increasingly common element of modern conflicts, and it is one to which I will return at length later in this article.

The fifth, closely related, strategic trend has been *politicization*. War has always, of course, been intimately bound up with politics, as Clausewitz so rightly emphasized.[28] What has changed is that conflict now revolves more and more around people rather than territory. Although nationalistic attachments to particular pieces of real estate (such as the Falklands, Kosovo, Kashmir and Taiwan) do remain very strong, and may even be accentuated in future by growing pressure on access to natural resources such as water and hydrocarbons, it is the *human* geography of conflict areas which now tends to play a greater role.[29] The most intractable conflicts tend to be those in which opposing population groups are intermingled, as in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, the West Bank and Rwanda, often

giving rise to the horrors of 'ethnic cleansing'. War is focused increasingly on heavily populated areas such as Gaza, Mogadishu and Fallujah, and the growing prominence of asymmetric strategies such as terrorism erodes any clear dividing line between combatants and non-combatants. Hence, military personnel can no longer concentrate on fighting a technical military duel with similar adversaries, but are increasingly being drawn into 'constabulary' and 'nation building' roles among ordinary populations, often under the full glare of the media spotlight.[30] Rupert Smith sees this trend as of particular importance, arguing for a radical shift of paradigm from our old image of interstate industrial war to a new vision of 'war amongst the people...in which the people in the streets and houses and fields – all the people, anywhere – are the battlefield'.[31]

The sixth, and widely recognized, trend in strategic affairs is *globalization.* I have already mentioned the role of the modern media in 'bringing home' vivid images of conflict to living rooms around the world. The increasing mobility of populations creates a further ripple effect in the shape of waves of refugees and the mobilization of *diaspora* communities. Insecurity and state collapse in one region can have adverse consequences for all, whether through the uncontrolled spread of arms and drugs or through the shocks inflicted to an increasingly sensitive and interconnected global economy (as was clearly illustrated after September 11th).[32] Although the end of the Cold War reduced the impact of one form of ideological globalization, the current tension between militant Islam and the US crusade to spread its own brand of freedom and democracy provides a more than equivalent substitute.[33] Technological progress and the rise of asymmetric strategies are also serving to expand conflicts from a local to a global level, and it has become routine for terrorist groups to attempt attacks in cities thousands of miles away in order to draw attention to local grievances in Saudi Arabia, Chechnya or wherever.[34]

Alongside this globalization, though, runs an equally powerful final trend of *fragmentation.* The weakness of many states (especially in conflict areas), and the erosion of traditional nationalist unity, has prompted a haemorrhage of power to the local level, with the rise of local warlords and other strongmen and the increasing independence of particular tribes, ethnic groups or religious factions. The result (as in Bosnia, Somalia and Sudan) is a confusing patchwork of local interests and allegiances, with conflict routinely becoming multi-sided rather than simply bilateral, and with political wheeler-dealing becoming more important than traditional military strategy. Sometimes this fragmentation can be exploited by interveners (as in the swift overthrow of the Taliban regime), but it then makes it very difficult to reach any definitive resolution of the conflict, as the Israelis found in Lebanon, and as the West has discovered more recently in Afghanistan and Iraq.[35] Instead, intervening powers often find themselves in the middle of a vicious civil war, with far less at stake than the locals and so with limited ability to influence the course of the conflict.[36]

DILEMMAS FOR THE OUTSIDERS

A useful way of exploring the impact of these various overlapping trends and characteristics of the current strategic situation is by identifying the dilemmas and trade-offs which they create for the antagonists in particular conflicts. As I have already discussed, the growing prominence of intervention and asymmetry as features of modern conflict have produced a dominant paradigm very different from the much more symmetrical duels of the World Wars – namely, the use of military force by 'outsiders' to try to influence the behaviour and well-being of poorer armed but often more committed 'locals', whether it be in Northern Ireland, former Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Gaza, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sierre Leone, or wherever. Hence, I will employ this generic distinction between outsiders and locals to structure my discussion of the strategic dilemmas involved.

The first key trade-off for the outsiders is between *deterrence* and *denial.* In the early Cold War, the West faced the choice between 'containing' communism and trying to 'roll it back' before Soviet and Chinese nuclear capabilities became too strong.[37] Even after the acceptance of the deterrent alternative, reliance on 'Mutual Assured Destruction' remained uncomfortable, as shown by the pressure for alternative defensive approaches during the ABM and 'Star Wars' debates.[38] Today, concern about 'rogue states' and the 'axis of evil' is raising exactly the same difficult choices, in the

context of worries about the further proliferation of 'weapons of mass destruction'.[39] Is it safe to rely on rational restraint on the part of regimes seeking access to such technologies, or should they be prevented from doing so by force, with the risk that such 'counter-proliferation' may in itself trigger armed conflict with such regimes and hence make them more likely to do their worst? Israel's air strike on Iraq's nuclear facilities in 1981 was an early illustration of this dilemma, and since then it has become a central feature of international relations, as seen in the tangled history of bombings and weapons inspections in Iraq since 1991 and in the continuing threats and blandishments surrounding the North Korean and Iranian nuclear programmes.[40] The war against Al Qaeda has seen the emphasis swing very firmly towards denial rather than deterrence, because of the suicidal fundamentalism of the terrorists and their lack of any equivalent assets which may be 'held hostage'.[41] However, the kind of existential threat demonstrated on September 11th only serves to sharpen the dilemma of whether possible *state* support for the terrorists is best avoided through rational deterrent bargaining or through pursuing regime change as in Afghanistan and Iraq.[42]

A second important trade-off for the outsiders is between *influence* and *self-determination.* The classic model of non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states has always been honoured as much in the breach as in the observance, as rival ideologies have prompted major powers to intervene on different sides in civil wars, as in Spain in the 1930s and in Korea, Vietnam, Angola, Central America, Afghanistan and elsewhere during the Cold War. Since 1991, interventionist pressures (at least in the west) have focused more on the urge to save local civilian populations from the depredations of war or tyranny, as in Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Rwanda and Iraq.[43] However, the increased emphasis on spreading freedom and democracy creates tensions of its own, since outside intervention inevitably distorts the local political process, and since self-determination does not guarantee that locals will choose policies favourable to the outsiders, especially if they are perceived as occupying powers rather than liberators.[44] Recent elections in Iran, Iraq and the Palestinian territories have shown that Islamic fundamentalism has considerable popular appeal, and have dashed liberal hopes that greater democracy would yield more tractable and consensual administrations.[45] If western states acquiesce in authoritarian rule as a counterweight to such popular radicalism, as in Algeria, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan, this may cause further alienation and hence store up greater trouble for the future. The USA and its allies are now suffering the same problems in Iraq as Israel has long had in the West Bank and Gaza (and as Syria has recently found in Lebanon), namely how to convert a military occupation into a stable local regime which is strong, popular and compliant enough to allow the outsiders to adopt a more 'hands off' approach.[46]

This leads on to the third generic dilemma for the outsiders, namely the tension between *creation* and *destruction* of local infrastructure and institutions. The process of military intervention inevitably tends to shatter physical infrastructure such as bridges, communications and power generation facilities, in order to reduce the capacity of the locals to resist. This is especially true if the interveners are unrestrained (as in Chechnya) or if destruction is used as a calculated coercive tool (as in Gaza). The trouble is that it is hard to win hearts and minds if infrastructural collapse makes the locals worse off after their 'liberation' than before, as illustrated by the political damage which the Coalition has suffered in Iraq from failing to restore reliable power and water supplies. The same logic applies to the outsiders' attitude to local political institutions – leaving existing structures and strongmen in place as in Afghanistan makes seizing control easier but radical reform harder, whereas sweeping away the past as in Iraq leaves former regime officials dangerously unemployed and the new local rulers weak and inexperienced.[47] The United States makes much of its successful rehabilitation of the former Axis powers after World War Two, but similar problems were found even then, and the challenges are in some ways greater today because of the inherent weakness of the states involved and the less clear cut sense of who is in the wrong.[47]

This again leads on to a fourth dilemma for the outsiders, namely how to balance the imposition of *justice* against the risks of creating *martyrdom.* When faced by insurgency, it has always been a fine judgement as to whether 'taking the gloves off' will cripple the opposition or merely create even more recruits for their cause, and this tension is especially prominent in the case of insurgent leaders. Britain has faced such contradictory pressures throughout its struggle with Irish separatism, ever since

its execution of the ringleaders of the 1916 Easter Rising. Israel has encountered similar tensions in its long conflict with the Palestinians, as illustrated by its tortured dealings with Yassir Arafat and its messy assassinations of numerous Hamas figures as it prepared to withdraw from Gaza.[49] All these examples show the importance of world reactions as well as the impact on the insurgents themselves – a factor which is equally evident from the media focus on the treatment of US detainees at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. The emerging ideal seems to be to put malefactors on public trial to demonstrate the fairness of the penalties imposed, but the cases of Milosevic and Saddam Hussein show the considerable delays and pitfalls involved, even if the individuals can be captured in the first place – not an easy task, as the elusiveness of Bin Laden, Karadzic and others amply proves.[50]

A fifth, and related, dilemma for the outsiders is the clear tension between the degree of *commitment* to active interventionist measures and the degree of *consensus* which such measures command. As I have already argued, controversy has become endemic in modern intervention operations, and it is very hard to get several major powers to agree on what should be done. One response is to 'go it alone', as with Britain in Northern Ireland, Russia in Chechnya, Turkey in 'Kurdistan' and Israel in the Occupied Territories, but this tends to attract international opprobrium and so undermines the legitimacy of the action, a key factor in the battle for hearts and minds. The opposite alternative, as in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, is to intervene under the banner of an established international organization like the UN or NATO – this carries much greater legitimacy, but leaves the USA in particular fuming at the frustrations of being hobbled by the misgivings of weaker partners.[51] Hence, the intermediate compromise of an *ad hoc* 'coalition of the willing' has emerged as the dominant framework for interventions, especially in the Middle East. As with any compromise, this rarely offers the best of both worlds, and the recriminations it produces between the interveners and those states which refuse to take part may actually be harsher than in the case of purely unilateral operations, as the rows between the USA and France, Germany and Turkey over the recent Iraq war serve to demonstrate.[52]

The final generic dilemma for the outsiders is between *engagement* and *escape*. Modern asymmetric campaigns are less like a boxing match between equally matched opponents, and more like Brer Rabbit's duel with the Tar Baby – the risk is less being knocked out than it is having one's limbs become so entangled in sticky goo that one's continued fighting capacity is fatally undermined.[53] If there is any single lesson to be drawn from the many and various conflicts over the past six decades, it is surely that it is almost impossible to achieve swift decisive victories which allow true military disengagement from the conflict arena. Even the stunning *blitzkriegs* of 1967 in the Middle East and 1991 in the Persian Gulf sowed the seeds of future entanglement in years of insurgency and sporadic bombing raids. When interveners have managed to escape from quagmires like Vietnam, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Somalia, this is usually more because they have given up than because they have achieved the ends desired. Western forces have been remarkably successful in defusing the civil wars in Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia, but in the process they have become such an integral part of the political equation that it is very hard for them to disengage without jeopardising all that has been achieved.[54] Although the actual casualties suffered by interveners during these open-ended commitments are fairly small in historical terms, the risk is more that their ever smaller professional forces will become bogged down and so unable to cope with future challenges in other theatres, especially as the adverse publicity from these unglamorous entanglements undermines recruitment figures and challenges the episodic model of conflict on which reliance on part-time reservists is based. As Rupert Smith has observed, 'modern military operations are in practice dealt with as one amongst many activities of our states and can be sustained nearly endlessly: they are timeless'.[55]

DILEMMAS FOR THE LOCALS

It might be thought that, with so many difficult trade-offs to be addressed, the outsiders are at a significant disadvantage in the asymmetric conflicts and confrontations which dominate the current strategic environment. However, such a view would be one-sided, since it neglects the fact that the locals too face serious overall dilemmas when trying to find ways of resisting outside intervention.

I will now outline several of the dilemmas concerned.[56]

One problem for the locals is balancing *asymmetry* and *flexibility*. Historical experience clearly suggests that interveners with superior air power have most problem tackling elusive light infantry forces, as in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Somalia, former Yugoslavia, and now Iraq. Conversely, when the locals field their own panoply of heavy weapons like tanks and aircraft to try to fight the outsiders on their own terms, they tend to suffer swift and one-sided defeats, as in 1967, 1982, 1991 and 2003. The trouble is that there are real disincentives for regional states to deny themselves conventional military hardware and to focus on creating asymmetric force structures. For one thing, the political clout of local military leaders may make it dangerous for regimes to deny them the latest high tech 'toys', given the pervasive risk of military intervention in politics. Moreover, conventional military hardware may be a very important 'force multiplier' in circumstances other than resistance to a technologically superior opponent. Iraq, for instance, found its tanks and helicopter gunships very useful against Iran in the 1980s and against its own internal rebels in the 1990s, however much of a liability they may have proved against the US-led coalitions in 1991 and 2003. The alternative option of guerrilla resistance is very much a counsel of despair, and although it may sometimes prove more effective in the end, this is only after enduring sacrifices which will test the commitment of the entire population to the struggle.

A second key dilemma for the locals is how to achieve *deterrence* without also creating *provocation*. One obvious response of regional states to their conventional military inferiority *vis-à-vis* opponents like Israel or the USA might be to acquire weapons of mass destruction to deter intervention by threatening unacceptable damage, but as I have already discussed, such proliferation is as likely to act as a lightning rod as it is a deterrent umbrella. The long development period for these capabilities creates particular vulnerabilities (as Iraq discovered), and even if a state such as North Korea or Iran does manage to build the weapons concerned, this does not change the fact that its economic and political weakness makes pariah status hard to sustain even if overt military intervention can be avoided.[57] Exactly the same tension applies to the use of less apocalyptic means to deter foreign interference. Terrorist attacks have become a key weapon with which locals can try to increase the costs of intervention, as seen in the actions of the IRA, ETA, PKK, Hamas, Hizbollah, and Al Qaeda. However, the resulting outrages serve in themselves to trigger reprisals from the target states, thereby establishing an endless spiral of violence. In extreme cases, terrorist attacks can actually provoke the invasion and occupation of entire territories, as happened to Lebanon in 1982 and to Chechnya and Afghanistan more recently. Even hostage taking does not easily create the *conditionality* of risk which is necessary for proper deterrent bargaining, since it is hard for locals to hold hostages indefinitely without attracting the kind of opprobrium suffered by Saddam Hussein in 1990 and the Bosnian Serbs in 1995, and if the hostages are executed as has often happened more recently in Iraq, this only serves to justify the use of force against such cold-blooded frightfulness.[58] In the final analysis, locals may be able to encourage restraint by exploiting sympathy or by exploiting fear, but it is very hard for them to do both at once – hence the recent renunciations of violence by the IRA and ETA after prolonged terrorist campaigns.[59]

A third intractable trade-off for the locals is between *activity* and *endurance*. The best way of minimizing losses to the superior military power of the interveners is usually to hide away and 'lie doggo', but this hands the initiative entirely to the other side and allows them to continue the campaign at their own pace. Hence, although the Iraqis in 1991 and the Serbs in 1999 adopted a much more circumspect posture than the Syrians in 1982, and so minimized the rate of loss of their air and air defence forces, the end result was the same, as the interveners continued the campaign for as long as was required. In order to force the issue and pursue strategic success and conflict termination, the locals need to launch an offensive of their own, but this makes their exposed forces horrendously vulnerable, as the North Koreans and Chinese found during the Korean war once the surprise of their initial onslaughts wore off.[60] The major Vietnamese offensives of 1968 and 1972, and the Yom Kippur attack in 1973, were all heavily defeated in purely military terms, and such eventual success as they enjoyed came more through the political shocks they delivered to their previously complacent opponents. The trouble with relying on such political shocks is that they can trigger

belligerence as well as accommodation, as the Argentines found after seizing the Falklands, as Iraq discovered after invading Kuwait, and as Al Qaeda learnt after September 11th. It thus requires a complex and careful blend of activity, endurance and diplomacy if the locals are to achieve their aims despite their military inferiority.

A fourth dilemma for the locals is that different individuals and groups will have very different views on the best balance to strike between *independence* and *accommodation*. This is a perennial problem for societies subjected to outside military intervention, as seen during the Nazi occupations in World War Two – some people will try to minimise the damage by cooperation, while others will continue armed resistance, thereby provoking retribution affecting the entire community.[61] The result is often that the locals suffer the worst of all worlds. On the one hand, interveners may be assisted by the divisions among local factions, as with the Croats in Bosnia, the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, and the Kurds and Shias in Iraq, all of whom gave passive or active support to the outsiders.[62] On the other hand, vengeful die-hards make overall accommodation hard to achieve, and can prolong conflicts even when the interveners are anxious to reach a settlement and withdraw. This happened with the 'Real IRA' in Northern Ireland, Hamas in Palestine, and the insurgents in Iraq, all of whom undermined the efforts (and often threatened the lives) of more moderate leaders striving to bring an end to the violence. Although outside intervention can sometimes have a unifying effect on local polities which have the strength to resist the intervention, the opposite is usually the case when the asymmetry of power becomes as great as it typically is today, and the resulting fragmentation prejudices the strategic coherence of the response which the locals can make.[63]

This leads on to a final difficult trade-off for local leaders, that between *control* and *decentralisation*. Regional states often strive to overcome their political weakness by concentrating decision making in the hands of a single charismatic leader such as Castro, Gaddafi, Kim Jong Il, Mugabe, Milosevic or Saddam Hussein. Such leaders tend to be reluctant to trust subordinates with excessive authority lest they become rivals for power, and so the trend towards centralisation is accentuated. However, centralised command structures make ideal targets for disruption by intervening military forces equipped with modern technology, as demonstrated during the 1991 Gulf war.[64] Hence, the locals may be better able to resist if they move more towards a decentralised, cell-based infrastructure like that adopted by Hamas or Al Qaeda. Saddam Hussein clearly recognised this trade-off before the 2003 invasion, and his uncharacteristic willingness to devolve power in the face of this extreme situation has allowed the insurgency to continue despite his own eventual capture. However, not only does such a response make it even harder to avoid the consequences of political fragmentation which I discussed above, but it also erodes the authority of the individual leader concerned.[65] This may help explain why Gaddafi has become so much more accommodating than in the past, having seen the difficulties encountered by other tyrants who continued to defy the west.[66]

Both the locals and the outsiders thus face a number of intractable and inter-related dilemmas in the intervention-based conflicts which predominate in the current strategic environment. Which party prevails is not fore-ordained, despite the clear military asymmetries involved, because this is just one of the many and complex factors which bear upon the outcome. The one unfortunate certainty of modern wars is that individuals on all sides and at all levels will face very difficult trade-offs, as they strive to reconcile the often conflicting demands of self-preservation, morality, and achieving the political objectives they desire.

CONCLUSION

Although we live in a world of unprecedented change, we should resist the temptation to abandon historical experience as a guide to understanding current policy challenges. As I have tried to show, all parties to conflicts now face intractable dilemmas and trade-offs which cannot simply be resolved from first principles, and which are rooted far more in the enduring complexities of human interaction than they are in the latest technological advances. Hence, a knowledge of historical experience is invaluable in helping us come to grips with the policy problems concerned. This does not mean sticking to outdated concepts and paradigms. Martin van Creveld and Rupert Smith, two of the most

insightful commentators on the current strategic predicament, have rightly emphasized the dangers of continuing to view modern conflict through the lens of the industrial wars of the early twentieth century.[67] However, both writers have also made extensive reference to past experience stretching back to Napoleonic times, in order to set the development of our current very different strategic situation in its proper historical context. General Smith, in particular, argues that von Clausewitz's famous theories from the early nineteenth century continue to apply, especially those relating to the trinitarian relationship of state, people and armed forces, the primacy of politics, and the nature of conflict as a clash of wills at least as much as a trial of military strength.[68] Since modern conflicts are not the antiseptic robotic duels that some technologists predicted but are instead if anything more deeply human than they have ever been, history seems likely to remain a key means of understanding what on earth is going on.

NOTES

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The Third Reich in Power					**Richard J Evans**
Allen Lane	£30	Hbk	941pp	2005	ISBN 0 713 996 498

Nazism, War and Genocide: Essays in Honour of Jeremy Noakes					**Neil Gregor [Ed]**
Univ. of Exeter Press	£35	Hbk	226pp	2005	ISBN 0 85989 745 1

How to Read Hitler					**Neil Gregor**
Granta Publications	£6.99	Pbk	119pp	2005	ISBN 1 86207 725 8

Boycott, Bradman, Lara. As a historian, Richard J Evans can be compared to these great cricketers. In his scholarship he displays the transcendent qualities of these master batsmen: intense concentration and stamina, superb versatility of technique, the art of timing and the ability to attack with confidence.

Great sportsmen and women are dedicated to their craft. So it is with Evans. His goal is huge: to write a three-part history of the Third Reich, in its coming, in its ascendancy and in its destruction. He is now two thirds of the way there. Some statistics from his second book indicate the gigantic scale of this task. *The Third Reich in Power* extends for 941 pages, has 1639 footnotes and its 74 page bibliography refers to over 1500 sources in German and in English.

How are great innings remembered? Some can say "I was there and saw pretty well most of it." Others might confess, "I saw bits of it but spent too much time in the hospitality lounge." Most will admit that their reminiscences are based on reportage, on the highlights, on the dvd/video footage.

It will be thus with Evans' latest volume. Given the demands of the job, few History teachers will have the time to plough through this vast work. Many teachers will skilfully search the text for its key passages using the 41 pages of its index as their start point. Similarly, this is how, in future years, teachers and students will make reference to Evans as a historian, by searching for excerpts and extracts in up-dated editions of texts like *Hite and Hinton: Weimar and Nazi Germany.* (While this text book retains its authoritative status, such is the volume and quality of academic work that has been published so early in the new century that already it stands in need of enhancement).

Evans is quickly into his stride as he charts the rapidity with which the Nazis created a police state. He writes confidently on a familiar theme: 'As the chaos of the seizure of power in the first half of 1933 subsided, the Third Reich was left with a mass of competing agencies across the board.' (Evans, p47) He writes 'finis' to the superannuated notion that the Nazi state was a smoothly functioning apparatus. Instead, there existed in 1933 the 'normative state', the institutions of the *ancient regime* and alongside it, the 'prerogative state', 'an essentially extra-legal system that derived its legitimation entirely from the supra-legal authority of the Leader.' (ibid p45)

The tension may be seen in the tug-of-war for Hitler's ear between the top civil servant Hans Heinrich Lammers and the Brown Eminence, Martin Bormann. When the Fuhrer was in Berlin, a city he disliked, Lammers might exert influence. But away from the capital, and especially in Hitler's beloved Berghof, Bormann held sway. In the conflict between the 'normative' and the 'prerogative' there could only be one winner.

Evans illustrates this through the episode whereby in December 1934 Hitler named Göring as his successor, instructing the civil service, the army, the SA and the SS to swear an oath of personal allegiance to him immediately after the Führer's death. Germany 'was now a fully fledged dictatorship in which the leader could do as he wished, including naming his own successor without reference to anyone else.' (ibid p50)

Evans deploys his vast experience as a writer to telling effect. While his line of thought and argument is always rock solid, he has the master historian's eye for apt anecdote and incisive quotation. In particular, he introduces letters, diaries and journals, a methodology which sees History's little people reflecting on bigger issues. Old favourites Victor Klemperer and Luise Solmitz reappear but one intriguing newcomer is Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen. [In describing Reck, Evans makes the tiniest of stylistic slips, using the label 'disillusioned journalist' twice (ibid p105, p154)]

Like Hitler, whom he utterly loathed, Reck was not all that he seemed to be, claiming aristocratic origins and a past life that were not wholly authentic. Reck sailed close to the wind. His 1937 biography of the Munster Anabaptist Bockelson, a rabble rousing fanatic, bore obvious parallels with Hitler. Had his diaries been found by the Gestapo, Reck would have been in the deepest trouble. Evans uses one excerpt from Reck's diaries to fine effect. Reck lambasts the boorish behaviour of the younger generation of the nobility for betraying their heritage by accepting commissions and advancement in the SS. The extract enables Evans to develop an analysis of the fate of the German aristocracy in the Third Reich. (ibid pp414-7)

Also particularly successful are Evans' pen pictures of the B and C lists of Nazi celebrities. While EH Carr warned many years ago about the dangers of historians becoming hanging judges, Tim Mason argued that 'if historians have a public responsibility, if hating is part of their method... it is necessary that they should hate precisely.' (found in *Neil Gregor: Nazism, War and Genocide* p10). Evans follows Mason's advice, providing his readers with a gallery of devastating portraits of corrupt, morally bankrupt apparatchiks such as the indecisive, incompetent Education Minister, Bernhard Rust and the-literally-deadly bore Alfred Rosenberg, Nazism's self-proclaimed philosopher.

It is likewise with the paganist Agriculture Minister Richard Walther Darré, who took over as Agriculture Minister from the hapless political ingénue, Hugenberg, in summer 1933. Darré peddled absurd myths of a medieval golden age of the German race, with the peasantry at its head. 'Blood and soil', a phrase used by Darré in a book of 1929 bewitched Himmler and impressed Hitler. Career advancement followed. But his plans for the peasantry to become the new leadership caste had little success. Darré's 'anti-urban animus' (the neat encapsulation is Louis L Snyder's) could not overcome secular trends in the German economy, such as the flight of farm hands to the towns and cities (the mantra of 'push and pull' we teachers have so often intoned in our Standard Grade courses). Routinely anti-Semitic and Polonophobic, Darré escaped execution after the War.

Nazis like Rosenberg and Darré who gazed back into the mists and marshes of Teutonic myth enjoyed little clout. Power lay with what might be labelled as 'the modernisers', men such as Fritz Todt, Reich Minister for Armaments and Munitions who on 30th June 1933 was given the task of building what was to become one of the Third Reich's totemic symbols, the motorway system. 'Liker other professionally qualified men in the Party, Todt saw it as a decisive, energetic, modern movement that would ... impel Germany into a new future based on the centralized application of science and technology to society, culture and the economy in the interests of the German race.' (Evans p323)

For Hitler and confidants such as Goebbels, the revolution of 30th January 1933 was not in essence social or economic. Rather it was a cultural revolution at the head of which was to be what the Propaganda Minister defined as Germany's 'spiritual mobilization'. Evans is at his very best when, as a music lover, he describes this in the chapter *From Discord to Harmony*, elegantly scoring the absurd excesses and contradictions of Nazi music policy.

Inevitably Jewish composers were attacked. Mendelssohn was pernicious, incapable, as a Jew, of creativity; he resorted to copying the real thing, German music. Mahler stood for degeneracy and decay, while 'Schönberg's atonal music disrupted the idea of a harmonious German community with its dissonance.' (ibid p191)

When he does evaluate the significance of the Berlin Olympics of 1936, in the process debunking the notion that a furious Hitler deliberately snubbed the black American Jesse Owens, Evans has little to say about Sport in the Third Reich. But, curiosity sharpened by the basic thrust of his analysis of 'the mobilization of the spirit' and given that this is World Cup Year, this reviewer googled in 'Football in the Third Reich'. One result was a fascinating article from Wikipedia.

The growth of sport and sporting facilities in Weimar Germany was integral to the Republic's welfare state policies. But despite the formation of a German Football Association, 'German football held on to an idea of amateurism built round local sports associations which felt that professionalism would diminish sportsmanship and local participation in the game.' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundesliga-(football)

After 1933, this notion of 'the game for the game's sake' vanished. Football was coordinated into the National Socialist Reichsbund für Leibesubungen under Reichssportsfuhrer Heinz von Tschammer und Osten. It was to be one of Nazism's successes. 'This was the beginning of the process of consolidation of the myriad of small regional leagues that would culminate in a stronger, unified national league structure'.(ibid p4) Schalke 04 from Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr emerged as the dominant club. A central question for any potential researcher is this: did the Nazis kick start a football revolution or did their policies only accelerate a process that was already under way?

An earlier review by Neal Ascherson has celebrated Evans' mighty effort to make sense of the Third Reich 1933-39 and the Nazis' efforts 'to purge, transform, energise and rearm the German nation' (review found in *The Observer* 1st January 2006). But Ascherson argues that 'If there's a lack... it's that Evans leaves Nazi Germany in an isolation ward.' Well, up to a point Mr Ascherson. One wonders if he has fully read the section *Towards the Racial Utopia* and in particular the chapter, *In the Spirit of Science.*

Here Evans takes his readers through the sordid story of sterilization of those judged by the Nazis and supporters of the ghastly notion of 'racial hygiene' to be inferior or unfit. But in pursuit of the goal of ridding society of such 'ballast' the Nazis were not untypical. Such policies were pursued in Sweden and many American states. As Evans points out, 'The real difference was to emerge only later, when the war began, as the Nazi regime turned from sterilizing social deviants to murdering them.' (Evans pp514-5)

This is the book's bleakest section. The author relentlessly rolls out his indictment of untrammeled Nazi state power for its barbaric treatment of the most vulnerable. They ranged from the so-called 'Rhineland bastards' (mixed race children born at the time of the occupation of the Rhineland in 1919, and the Ruhr in 1923, by French colonial troops) to homosexuals and to Gypsies and Jews.

By December 1938 the Nazis had 'card-indexed' its gypsy population into separate categories of 'pure', 'mixed race' and 'itinerant (non-Gypsy)' 'Pure' gypsies were not perceived a threat, the real menace were those of 'mixed race', many living in slums and seen as posing a threat to society as criminals and work-shy. It was, as Evans points out, yet another contradiction in the corpus of Nazi racial policies. 'Pure' Jews by contrast were seen as a threat to the Aryan race, part-Jews less so. The special ID cards given to gypsies from this time as part of what Himmler chillingly called 'the final solution to the Gypsy question' showed the Third Reich's barbarism to be well advanced. (ibid p527)

But in the Nazis' quest for 'racial purity' it was Germany's Jews who were its principal target. In March 1938 the so-called 'Jewish question' assumed new dimensions post-Anschluss. Greater Germany had a larger problem demanding solution. In his account and analysis of the events leading up to Kristallnacht (9-10th November 1938) Evans is supremely sure-footed, having researched the pogrom as part of his utter deflation of David Irving in the libel trial Irving v. Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books in 2000. (See SATH's *HTR Year Book 2004*).

He labels this pogrom a 'milestone'. There had been no 'meaningful opposition' to these crimes: 'the Nazis knew that they could take whatever further steps against the Jews they liked, and nobody was going to try to stop them.' (Evans p589) In his evaluation of the significance of Kristallnacht, Evans links together several of his key themes. Nazism was on the road to war, a war to establish German racial supremacy. As the Führer attested, this time the war would be won. The enemy within, the Jew, would be an inevitable casualty. And this war would see the triumph of a new technologically advanced Reich.

Evans is at pains to set these events in context. Anti-Semitism, it has been said, is like the poor, always with us. But in the devil's decade of the 1930s it formed an angry welt across Europe.

Polish historians have a duty to search out its manifestation there; it is likewise with scholars from the successor states of the 1919 Settlement. But unquestionably for anti-Semites, it was the Third Reich that was the role model.

Central to *The Third Reich in Power* is an evaluation of the mindset of what historians have labelled as 'ordinary Germans'. Evans argues that by 1938, especially among the young, visceral hatred of the Jews was widespread. The task for professional historians is to extend their work into other key strands of Nazi governance. Which of these core policies were accepted, rejected, consciously or unconsciously absorbed, internalised? We enter the realm of identities and mentalities, fascinating but daunting terrain for scholars. It is a Himalaya. Even the most experienced and rugged of mountaineers like Evans and his peers, historians such as Kershaw and Dick Geary, might admit that thus far they have only traversed the foothills.

This may be seen as one of the most fascinating sections of The *Third Reich in Power*. 'Building the People's Community' in which Evans investigates the Nazis' attempt to create a symbiotic new Germany in which the people would identify with state and race, regardless of gender, age, economic status, hitherto accumulated values and beliefs. Altered mentalities was the outrageously ambitious target. Failure was inevitable, as Evans – a good hater in the Masonic sense – gleefully records in a dissection of the hubristic arrogance of the German Labour Front and its subsidiary Strength Through Joy. He is at his very best when he regales his reader with rollicking anecdotes that reveal the utter dysfunctionality of Robert Ley, the man entrusted by Hitler to win the hearts and minds of German workers. In any history of the politician as drunk, Robert Ley would challenge for top billing.

Nazi propaganda made much of the innovative Strength Through Joy cruise ships. But, argues Evans, class antagonisms were often fuelled on board by the contrasting spending habits of middle class and working class tourists. In addition, regional rivalries often surfaced as Rhinelanders and Westphalians brawled with the much reviled Silesians. Each vessel had its Gestapo agents anxiously snooping on the behaviour of known former Social Democrats in foreign climes. These worthies were equally appalled by the willingness of Aryan women to consort with lower racial types on shore. The worst behaved of all were the Labour Front functionaries, especially Robert Ley who lived up to his name by boarding with a bevy of blondes for companionship and who was usually so drunk that he was flanked by two sailors on deck in case he fell overboard. 'No wonder a popular nickname for Strength Through Joy was the 'big wigs' knocking shop' (Bonzenbordell)' (ibid p472). Through the simple artifice of anecdote, Evans portrays the ultimate failure of this key Nazi strategy.

In the book's final hundred pages Evans does not weary on the 'Road to War', assessing Hitler's central role in foreign policy, making his position in the intentionalist/structuralist debate clear. His stance on Hitler's leadership style is Kershavian: Hitler 'was erratic rather than lazy in his working habits.. it was without question Hitler, personally, who drove Germany towards war... subordinating every other aspect of policy to this over-riding aim.' (ibid pp614/5) He will have no truck with interpretations of the Third Reich that explain it in terms of 'ceaseless radicalisation driven on by inherent instabilities in its system of rule, or by constant competition for power between its satraps and minions', On the contrary, Hitler 'was in the driving seat, determining the general direction in which things moved.' (ibid p712)

Was this to change as the Third Reich descended into the abyss? What was Hitler's role in the Final Solution? How complicit were 'ordinary Germans' in Nazism's war crimes? Teachers, students and a global readership must be patient in awaiting the last part of Evans' mighty venture. Unlike Bradman in his last Test on English soil, he is unlikely to disappoint us.

With Neil Gregor the sporting analogy changes. Footballers' testimonials frequently disappoint. Fans pay handsomely to watch a game played at half pace at minimal risk – no crunching tackles, few daring headers. The participants are frequently past their prime with a stately waddle or two down the wing or a cumbersome double-shuffle the summit of their exertions. There is little coherence or game plan. Festschrifts for retiring historians can sometimes resemble such benefit matches. The contributors have little to say that is new or challenging, essays can be wreathed in obscurity and there is little or no commonality of theme.

Neil Gregor, as editor of the festschrift for the great researcher Jeremy Noakes, will have none of this. For their £35 readers will expect value. Gregor ensures that they will not be disappointed. Under his editorial direction his eight-strong team write on aspects of the Third Reich which have been so diligently explored by Jeremy Noakes. The result is a richly-defined overview of the historiography of Nazi Germany in the early 21st century, which reveals how the focus of historical investigation and evaluation of issues have changed and developed since Noakes' first published article of 1966. For every History department throughout Britain, *Nazism, War and Genocide* is a horn of plenty.

Neil Gregor leads by example with a thought-provoking first chapter, *Nazism – a Political religion?...* He argues that the Third Reich was 'a genuinely integrative regime', strong not simply on account of its coercive capabilities, 'but also from the attractive offer of inclusion in a community, whose 'enemies' were defined as much by 'healthy popular sentiment'.. as by the ideological obsessions of a minority of radicals'. (Gregor p8) Both Gregor and contributor Norbert Frei (in *Auschwitz and the Germans*..) describe a historiographical shunt away from narrow 'intentionality' to a model of active mass participation in the new barbarism of Nazism.

In the second half of his article Gregor launches a blistering attack on 'the leading scholar' of Nazi euthanasia, Michael Burleigh. Burleigh is surely one of Thatcher's children. In *The Third Reich: a New History* (2000), he takes every chance to snipe at radical historians and revels in being politically incorrect. He writes of gypsies much in the manner of an enraged letter writer to the *Daily Mail*. This is a step too far for Gregor who proceeds to dismantle Burleigh's methods and explanatory model of Nazi brutality.

Gregor argues that in seeking to integrate 'popular fanaticism' into the history of Nazism's crimes, and by making the 'impulsive radicalisation of 'the mass' or 'the mob" central to his explanation, Burleigh over-simplifies the issue. The whole thrust of recent German historians investigating just who were the perpetrators of Nazi crimes has been to place them from the 'very centre' of German society, not its 'fringes'. The explanatory model for the killings, the mass murder, the genocide of the war years rests on infinitely more complex factors than that of Nazism as a political religion. (refer ibid pp13/14/15)

Such complexity may be seen in Norbert Frei's outstanding contribution, one of searing honesty. He begins with deceptive simplicity using extracts from the memories, recorded in 1999, of a school teacher Marianne B, who taught some of the children from families of the thousands of SS men and workers who had settled in Auschwitz. Her explanations 'serve as a key to the question of what Auschwitz represented to the Germans, during the Second World War and in the succeeding decades.' (ibid p149)

Auschwitz-Birkenau was exceptional on account of its double function as death camp and as concentration camp; it mirrored both the racial policy and the economic policy of Germanisation. The exploitation of the damned by the 'robber barons' of IG Farben has long been known. But now historians such as Frei and his colleague Sybille Steinbacher focus on the 'ordinary Germans' who settled in Auschwitz. For thousands of German workers and their families, for the families of the 7000 SS personnel who served there, Auschwitz was an attractive place to live once one became accustomed to the smell of roasting human flesh. Living here in the East there were tax concessions for Reich Germans, work was plentiful and immigration to Auschwitz, in the Reich Silesian 'air raid shelter' increased as Allied air raids over the Old Reich intensified in the second half of 1943. (ibid pp158/9; see also Sybille Steinbacher *Auschwitz: A History* 2004; UK edition, 2005, pp72/8)

Frei's message is thus stark. Auschwitz was no secret shared only by SS personnel bound by their organisation's honour code. Thousands of civilians, whom he ironically dubs 'the normal population', remained unaffected and indifferent. To Frei this 'indicates the effectiveness of anti-Semitism and other elements of the ideology ('people's community', 'racial purity', 'living space', 'Germanisation') that the National Socialists had been propagating since well before 1933.' (ibid pp159/60) The chain of knowledge and, by extension, guilt, was a long one.

Frei and his German peers have sought a painful epiphany. In a sense they have created their own 'Truth Commission'. Frei's concluding pages dwell on the theme of Auschwitz and the

collective memories of Europe. Auschwitz means many things to many different peoples, be they Polish, Jewish, Russian, Gypsy, German, French and British, He has gnawed at the complexities of a problem, pondering over the creation of a unified European approach to historical memory. A meaningful task for Euroclio?

On a par with Frei's tribute to Noakes is the contribution of the veteran labour historian Dick Geary on *Working Class Identities in the Third Reich*. He has long maintained that the German working class movement enjoyed only two years of power and influence between 1918 and 1920. From 1930, devastatingly damaging divisions between the SPD and KPD weakened workers. Its leadership decapitated and with militancy forced underground, could German workers remain immune to Nazism? Could class solidarity survive in a regime which dramatically and rapidly appeared to have solved the economic crisis and to have replaced former working class organisations with new bodies such as DAF and KdF to satisfy workers' representational needs? Cadres of historians (including fellow contributor to this volume – Robert Gellately) have advanced arguments that working class identities were thus qualitatively altered.

Geary urges caution and patiently dismantles the arguments of those whom, for shorthand's sake, we can call the pessimists. The issue is enormously complicated: 'we have long known that multiple and even contradictory identities, such as those of nation and class, can co-exist simultaneously.'(ibid p51) And to think of a single monolithic German working class is a chimera, best left to the imaginings of the crudest Marxist romantics. Class solidarity is only infrequently found on the shop floor, usually a place of many skills and demarcation differentials. And attitudes among workers could shift and zigzag often bewilderingly.

But perhaps the most significant aspect of what Geary investigates is the post-1945 history of the German labour movement. The 'brown tan' of the DAF quickly faded and as in 1918-19 there was a wave of 'traditional' strikes as old forms of organisation reappeared with remarkable speed. Especially startling was the revival of the KPD in the British Rhineland zone of occupation; 'the Third Reich had not extinguished German Communism. The Cold War was to do that.' (ibid p54)

In focusing readers towards post-1945 German history, Geary reminds us that we must look beyond the Third Reich to both the years before it and after it.

It is a notion also referred to by Jane Caplan in her essay on *Political Detention and the Origin of the Concentration Camps*.. She emphasises the interaction between continuity and change in the initial period of Nazi rule. They faced an enormous challenge in implementing their pledge to place their political enemies, those they deemed subversive, into 'protective custody' (schutzhaft). She reminds us 'that there are no 'ex nihilo' creations in complex bureaucratic states. Some threads however frayed, tie even the most radical innovations to the past.' (ibid p26) A period of improvised enactment ensued before the transmutation into the qualitatively different SS empire of camps. In her review of the burgeoning historiography of the camp system she calls into question the analysis of Hannah Arendt of the camps as material expression of Nazi elementalism, 'as sites of aimless, irrational violence, of the sheer exercise of power'. (ibid p25) In this sense she is in harmony with Gregor in his dismantling of Burleigh's construction of Nazism as the political religion of the mob.

With contributions from a range of other scholars that are zestful, original and fastidiously footnoted, Jeremy Noakes has received a wonderful testimonial. Ian Kershaw (*Did Hitler Miss His Chance in 1940?*), Robert Gellately (on *Social Outsiders*), Nikolaus Wachsmann (on the Nazi legal terror, 1939-45), Jill Stephenson (on foreign workers in rural southern Germany) and Mark Roseman (*Wansee and the Unfolding of the Final Solution*) are the other scholars honouring the great pioneer. The quality of scholarship in this festschrift makes it a volume which should be a compulsory purchase for every History department across Britain.

The editor of *Nazism, War and Genocide*, Neil Gregor, has further enhanced his reputation as an energetic, cerebral and radical historian whose time will come, as, in their turn luminaries such as Kershaw and Evans receive their testimonials. Proof of his talents is further provided by the lively little book *How to Read Hitler*. At requisition time, teachers should budget for the purchase of several copies of this most accessible text, which might be sub-titled *Why to read Hitler*. The author

argues that 'the move away from a one-sided stress on institutional conflict as the principal motor of National Socialist radicalisation in favour of a renewed emphasis on the importance of human agency, and on cooperation and 'shared understanding' between actors, suggests a need to return to the basic tenets of National Socialist belief.' (Gregor, Hitler p4) In addition, *Mein Kampf* is part of the profound socio-political and cultural shock brought about by the catastrophe of the Great War.

Gregor provides commentary and interpretation of key passages both from *Mein Kampf* and the much less well-known *Second Book* of 1928. Perhaps mercifully, *Mein Kampf* is stupefyingly soporific, but as Gregor shows, even its first two paragraphs flag up Hitler's pre-occupation with issues of race, military expansion and empire. In the rage and fury expressed in the two books, Hitler was little different from other racists and extreme nationalists in Germany and elsewhere in the years after 1918. Power came to him, not on account of these unstructured rants, but once in power and authority, Hitler's writings assumed enormous significance. On this basis, teachers and lecturers will be able to use Neil Gregor's reader as the basis for discussion and tutorials which will greatly enhance students' understanding of Hitler's and Nazism's core beliefs

RON GRANT

Queen Margaret of Scotland **Eileen Dunlop**

NMSE Publishing	£7.50	109pp	Pbk	2005	ISBN 1 901 66392 2

Queen Margaret of Scotland lived an astonishing life by any standards. A daughter of the Anglo-Saxon royal house, her story has acquired the trappings of legend. She is remembered as a royal saint who arrived in Scotland a refugee from Norman England, destined to tame a 'barbarian' king through marriage as well as modernising his kingdom and its Church. Such has been the popular appeal of Margaret through the centuries that the historical figure has largely been lost; she has become one of those powerful icons whose lives have been seen through the prism of national consciousness in the canon of 'heroic Scots'.

The tendency to view this period of Scottish history in symbolic terms began with the medieval chroniclers themselves, whose interests lay in presenting easily comprehensible archetypes to which all sorts of aspirations could be attached. Perhaps surprisingly, the ready acceptance of half-truth and cliché has persisted long into the modern era, something which Eileen Dunlop notes in her timely reappraisal of Scotland's most famous medieval queen. That legend should obscure reality is a great shame for, as Dunlop shows, the truth of Margaret's life (insofar as it can be established) is at least as interesting and significant as the myth. In this respect, Dunlop's work is a valuable addition to the studies of other national talismans such as Wallace and Bruce. Wallace's reputation has suffered not at all from being rescued from the likes of Blind Harry and Mel Gibson – so it is with Queen Margaret.

Dunlop is keen to set Margaret's life in its wider historical, political and sociological context. Her Hungarian upbringing, her Anglo-Saxon background and her involvement in the intrigues of Anglo-Norman politics are a reminder of the importance of the broader European milieu; an aspect of Scottish medieval history which has been emphasised in recent years. Margaret was a product of a cosmopolitan west European elite united by blood, culture and religion, if not by language. Her dismay at finding the Scottish Church out of step with the rest of Western Christianity should not surprise us.

Equally, Dunlop's pacy and lucid narrative paints a vivid picture of what it was to be an aristocratic woman trying to live a life of piety in eleventh century Scotland, yet she never tries to make the limited number of primary sources bear too much interpretation. Her conclusions are cautious and measured; she credits Margaret's lasting mark on the church as being the reforming work of her sons, especially King David I, rather than achievements in her own lifetime. She is also realistic

about the likely extent of the Queen's influence on her fiery husband, King Malcolm III, holding no illusions about the real position of a woman in a medieval court.

Nevertheless, the woman that emerges from the pages of this book remains an impressive figure. She was, Dunlop argues, a queen who invested as much time in secular matters as the strict demands of her self-imposed Benedictine regimen would allow. She managed two royal households (at Edinburgh and Dunfermline) and was conscious of the need for a queen to cut an imposing figure for her subjects. Margaret lived her life at a time when the Scottish kingdom found itself at a crossroads, facing the threats and opportunities involved in coming to terms with the new Norman rulers of England. As sister to Edgar Atheling, the Anglo-Saxon heir, and as wife to the Scottish King she was bound to be at the centre of momentous political events. That she should have carved out a position for herself which has given her a legacy better remembered than that of her husband is no small measure of the strength of her personality.

Too many women in history are remembered in stereotypical or largely symbolic terms. Eileen Dunlop has done a great service, therefore, in affording Queen Margaret her proper place in Scottish history. This book is a piece of careful, disciplined research, but it is also a gripping yarn well told. Who needs legend when history is this good?

PR FISH

British Civilians in the front line.
Air raids, productivity and wartime culture, 1939-1945 **Helen Jones**

Manchester University Press £45 Hbk 217pp 2006 ISBN 0 7190 7290 5

Another book about the blitz experience? Yes, but one with a difference this time, in that it focuses on the experience of those employed in vital war industries and why they frequently worked on after the air raid siren had gone. This therefore, is not a standard book on civil defence or the practice of "trekking" and other such civilian responses to bombing raids, but a quite specialised analysis of the pressures faced by industrial workers to continue working when their instinctive reaction was to head for cover.

Helen Jones has made significant use of primary sources to produce a fascinating account of the psychological impact of saturation bombing on industrial workers, and the political imperatives which drove factory owners and government departments to demand continued working during raids to solve the problem of falling productivity.

Along the way, this new work serves to dispel some of the widely held beliefs about the extent to which civilians did seek cover when an air raid was imminent, and confronts us with the Mass Observation statistic that by Sept. 1940 as many as 71% of Londoners slept in their own homes during a raid whilst as few as 4% used public shelters. To those familiar with the work of Dr Nick Tiratsoo and more recently that of Stuart Hylton in his book *Their Darkest Hour*, this would come as no real surprise given the inadequacy of deep shelter provision in places like the East end of London, but what is surprising about Jones' research is the extent to which Government and Industry, in collusion with the BBC and friendly press, were prepared to go to impress upon workers in vital war industries that it was their moral and patriotic duty to stay at work even after the air raid siren had sounded, until it could be ascertained whether or not the German bombers were, in fact, heading in their specific direction. A significant amount of the book is devoted to the development of the practice of employing roof spotters in specific factories to chart the flight path of the bombers and to alert the workforce below as to whether production had to be stopped and cover sought. In the pursuit of this practice, Jones reveals the dramatic change in official government policy which took place by the summer of 1940 whereby the official line of publicly encouraging people to stay safe at all costs when the siren went, changed to castigating those who needlessly interrupted vital war production by heading for shelters at the first indication of an impending raid. On Oct 8th the Junior

Minister, Hoare Belisha publicly condemned armaments workers who went to shelters during work time by saying "The implication of the statement that we are all in the front line is that we ought to behave as if we were in the front line"

It is little wonder then that the already strained industrial relations of the period which saw more days lost from strike action in 1944 than in 1934, took a turn for the worse, with unions negotiating additional payments for members taking such risks, and hard-nosed employers laying down specific rules on compensation payments for work time lost and the time at which these lost hours had to be made up. Intriguingly, some unions like the mineworkers used the promise of working on during a raid as a lever to extract better shelter facilities and ARP arrangements for their families at home.

What emerges from Jones' work however is a fascinating insight into the resilience of countless thousands of ordinary families in the face of danger and adversity and the extent to which provincial cities like Plymouth, Brighton, Bristol and Southampton were indignant at the media coverage of the London Blitz and were desperate to have accounts of their suffering made public in the press to show that they were "part of it all" as well. When raids became common place, it was the establishment of an uninterrupted routine which most helped people to cope, and this preservation of a semblance of normality even extended to many working class families ignoring raid warnings on a Sunday morning since going to the shelter would waste the gas being used to cook Sunday lunch.

Jones goes into some detail on why the public were reluctant to use public shelters and goes some way to eradicating the image of those cheerful cockneys offering up a rendition of the "Old Bull and Bush" by informing us that shelters were very often seen as places to be avoided at all costs because of the high crime rate associated with them, their association with illicit sex and drunkenness and the profane language and other anti-social habits displayed by many of the occupants. For many, sheltering under the stairs of their own home was not only safer, but more wholesome.

Overall, I learned as much about the actual experience of ordinary civilians and workers from reading this book, than I have in a number of more sanitised accounts and I would thoroughly recommend it to Advanced Higher students of the *Britain at War and Peace 1939-1951* field of study if the myth of the blitz is an area they are focusing on.

J. McDONALD

The Cold War **John Lewis Gaddis**

Penguin: Allen Lane	£20	333pp	Hbk	2006	ISBN 0 713 99912 8

Let's be optimistic about the future. Despite philistine heidies and preening politicians, four hundred years hence there will be a vigorous intellectual discipline called History. So how, in 2406, will the Twentieth Century be seen? Undoubtedly it will be viewed as a century of horrors in which The Bomb was invented and used, a hundred years of strife with two global wars and a third, the Cold War. The Enlightenment dream that humankind could progress to liberty, contentment and freedom from want was cruelly mocked by experience. Atavism and barbarism intensified 'against the background of the lunacies of the Cold War, a period which will one day be as hard to understand... as the witch craze of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.' (EJ Hobsbawm *Barbarism; a User's Guide* (1994) in *On History* (1997; 2002 edn. p346))

Surveying the massive historiography of the strange etiolated phenomenon we label *The Cold War*, our future historians will note the frequency with which the name of John Lewis Gaddis appears. Gaddis is now well into his fourth decade of Cold War studies, a historian able to write both for an academic and a non-specialist audience, he was a consultant for the CNN-BBC blockbuster of 1998, *Cold War*. An able communicator with a neat line in wisecracks, much of his latest book reads like the kind of highly polished lecture notes hungrily devoured by his Yale students. Particularly when a paperback version of *The Cold War* appears, it will become a standard text for courses on the Cold

War. Gaddis has ably and entertainingly responded to his publisher's request to provide a short, comprehensive and accessible book embracing the four and a half decades since 1945.

But in a very real sense this is, as defined by EH Carr, 'victor's history'. The pivotal episode is the breaching and destruction of the Berlin Wall, the Holy Rood of liberal capitalism and 'freedom'. Our historians of 2406 will perhaps have worked out that were all the purportedly authentic fragments of the Wall to be assembled, they would in fact stretch from Stettin on the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic.

There is, then, a danger that the readership targeted by this text might swallow Gaddis whole. This would be unwise – far better to temper one's reading with the insights and perspectives of two other historians who sought to make sense of the Cold War, EJ Hobsbawm and EP Thompson.

In *Age of Extremes: The Short History of the Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (1994), Hobsbawm, who in 1956 decided against tearing up his Communist Party membership card, provides an overview of the Cold War decades more familiar with features peculiar to Soviet realities and mentalities than Gaddis.

Thompson's radicalism drew its sustenance from two centuries of thought and commitment stretching back to Paine, Shelley, Cobbett and the Chartist Ernest Jones. His greatest work, *The Making of the English Working Class* appeared in the early 1960s. But by the early 1980s Thompson had committed his historian's skills and talent for polemic to the movement for European Nuclear Disarmament (END). We were thus robbed of any sequel to his magnum opus and can only ponder what might have been its title and themes. Instead, Thompson gave us what he himself described as 'a pig of a book', *The Heavy Dancers* (Merlin Press) 1985. The *heavy dancers* of his title are the image-conscious public persons who crowd the media of the world 'summoning up the ancient spirits of the tribe as they prepare us for the ultimate war.' [p.vii]

As a tank commander in the British army, Thompson had witnessed the origins of the Cold War in the Balkans, and was profoundly affected by the coming of The Bomb as may be seen in this fragment of his poem *The Place called Choice* (1950) and its nightmarish vision of that god 'forming outside me in the shape of a mushroom with vast blood-wrinkled spoor on the windswept snow.'

In his pamphlets and polemics of the 1980s, Thompson displays a gift for characterisation and analysis which frequently eludes Gaddis. Witness his pungent encapsulation of Andropov and Reagan: 'We know now that throughout last autumn... power lay in the hands of two elderly men, one of whom was on a kidney machine and half dead from the neck down, and the other of whom... was on an autocue machine and half dead from the neck up.' (Thompson p55)

Thompson brought his understanding of structures and mentalities (along with Marxism, European 'imports' enriching 'traditional' British historiography) into his analysis of just who the *heavy dancers* were: 'The American formation is a whole configuration of interests: financial, commercial (or corporatist) and extractive (the search for reserves of fossil fuels, uranium and scarce minerals): military (the alarming thrust of the arms trade, with its crazily insecure financial underwriting...): political (the establishment of hegemony not by direct occupation but through the proxies of parasitic ruling elites in the client nations): and ideological'. (*Heavy Dancers* p45) Alas, we look in vain for such insights in Gaddis. Just where is any analysis of the 'military-industrial complex' that profited so much from the Cold War stasis?

Gaddis argues that while the causes of the Cold War are readily identifiable, 'It is difficult to say precisely when the Cold War began. There were no surprise attacks, no declarations of war, no severing even of diplomatic ties'.(Gaddis p27) A pivotal moment was certainly at Yalta in February 1945, a full three months before the downfall of the common enemy, Nazism. At Yalta, Stalin played his hand well, skilfully taking advantage of differences between Churchill and Roosevelt to maximise Soviet gains in Europe.

The Red Army had advanced, in Thompson's phrase, 'with its burden of grief and anger'. For all his deep seated loathing of Stalin and Stalinism, he could not 'in the end rid myself of some kind of very deep affirmative feeling towards 'the Soviet Union' as the country whose valour saved all of

us from a future of Euro-Nazism.' (Thompson p123) Inevitably, Stalin and the Soviet ruling circle sought security, neatly defined by Gaddis as 'the equation of blood with influence' (Gaddis p25). The crushing and division of Germany ensued, and the Poles had a pro-Soviet government imposed upon them. God's playground was to be patrolled by Red Army auxiliaries for the next generation of history.

Given Stalin's unblushing assertion at Yalta that the USSR was interested only in 'the creation of a mighty, free and independent Poland' (Antony Beevor: *Berlin. The Downfall 1945*, 2003 edn. p420), it is all too easy to depict Yalta as a triumph for Stalin and the Soviets and to argue that 'Stalin's goal...was not to restore a balance of power in Europe but rather to dominate that continent as thoroughly as Hitler sought to do'. (Gaddis p14) Crucial to Gaddis' argument is that Stalin, as Lenin's most faithful disciple, believed in the inevitability of a crisis within capitalism. So Stalin 'could simply wait for the capitalists to begin quarrelling with one another, and for the disgusted Europeans to embrace communism as an alternative.' (Gaddis p14)

That this did not happen, argues Gaddis, was due to the vision of two men. In February 1946 George F Kennan cabled Washington from Moscow in the 'Long Telegram'. It was necessary for the USA to implement a policy of firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. There thus ensued the European Recovery Programme of June 1947, better known as the eponymous Marshall Plan. And so, Stalin 'fell into the trap the Marshall Plan laid for him, which was to get him to build the wall that would divide Europe.' (Gaddis p32)

The Berlin Blockade of 1948 was Round 1 of the confrontation between the two superpower heavy weights. All the score cards read 'Winner – USA' as the success of the airlifts to beleaguered Berlin made Stalin look brutal and incompetent. Gaddis has Stalin trampling sour grapes: 'Scoundrels, it is all lies... it is not a blockade but a defensive measure.' (Gaddis p34)

But was the old monster not at least partly right? With Gaddis are we are not back again at 'victor's history'? Thompson argued that the true historical meaning of 'Yalta' is far more double-sided than it suggests: '...the 'Yalta' settlement did not only licence the Soviet military presence in East and Central Europe. It also licensed a very powerful hegemonic United States presence in Western Europe.' (Thompson p174) America drove a hard bargain. In Britain, in return for economic aid, sixty B-29 bombers were deployed in Britain. Whose finger was on the trigger?

In Hobsbawm's view, what he describes as 'apocalyptic' State Department professionals ratcheted up Cold War tensions. A prime culprit was Kennan: 'Communism ... in his opinion made the old Russia more dangerous by reinforcing the most brutal of great powers with the most ruthless of utopian, i.e. world conquering, ideologies (EJ Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p233). Kennan will be the subject of a biography by Gaddis. It is to be hoped that he will recognise the influence on Kennan of his father who in the 1880s and 1890s travelled to Tsarist Russian prison colonies and published best selling exposés of their horrors.

In arguing that Stalinist Russia was not expansionist, Stalin's policy of 'Socialism in One Country' meant just that. Hobsbawm shares the same bed as those Trotskyists whom as a loyal CPGB supporter he once called pox on. Stalin was 'as risk averse outside the territory he controlled directly as he was ruthless within it.' (EJ Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* p232) At Yalta Roosevelt had dithered over the direction post-war American foreign policy would take. Would it retreat into isolationism as it had done post-1918? By 1948, and with the Atom Bomb at its disposal, President Truman had given an unequivocal answer to this question.

By this date Europe's global domination was at an end, its superpowers either reduced in the case of Britain and France, or broken, as was Germany. A superpower condominium had emerged. But while Europe remained stable, Asia was the most volatile of continents. Here the Cold War threatened to blow hot in the Korean War of 1950-53.

There are eerie elements of continuity between the diplomatic history of the 1930s and that of the Korean War. 'A far away country of which we know nothing' sighed Chamberlain in September 1938 over Czechoslovakia. 'Never heard of the bloody place' grumbled Churchill of Korea. This

time, there would be no Munich mistake. Stalin must be confronted and the League's successor, the United Nations, given teeth. A dirty little war was the result. Reading of it in Gaddis one is reminded of Orwell's description of the Spanish Civil War as a bad copy of the Western Front. But this time there was a nuclear option. In a clever piece of counter-factual history which will doubtless fool many young students at the first time of reading, Gaddis succinctly sums up Korea thus: 'The only decisive outcome of the war was the precedent it set: that there could be a bloody and protracted conflict involving nations armed with nuclear weapons – and that they would choose not to use them.' (Gaddis p48/49; p50)

In February 1956 the politics of the Cold War assumed a qualitatively new dimension. NS Khrushchev, one of history's ram-raiders, resolved the struggle for power that had existed in the CPSU hierarchy since the death of Stalin three years earlier. On the one hand he proclaimed the possibility of peaceful co-existence; 'There is no fatal inevitability of wars. Today there are powerful social and political forces which dispose of serious means of preventing imperialists from unleashing wars.'

Of equal significance was Khrushchev's assault on Stalin and his place in history. In a marathon speech to the 20th Party Congress he excoriated Stalin and the cult of personality. The impact of his denunciation was remarkable inside the Soviet Union, among its satellites and among Communist Party members across Europe. In the view of Gaddis, the genie had been let out of the bottle: 'A movement based on science had little place for confession, contrition and the possibility of redemption. The problems Khrushchev created for himself and for the international Communist movement, therefore, began almost the moment he finished speaking.' (Gaddis p107)

Dissent in Poland was successfully silenced but this was not to be the case in Hungary. In October 2006 we will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising, in its imagery the Tiananmen Square of its generation. Before 1956 most Britons' knowledge of Hungary was confined to the beautiful game and its peerless practitioners Puskas, Hidegkuti and their team mates. We watched aghast as they and their fellow countrymen and countrywomen fled before the Soviet tanks. In Britain EP Thompson and thousands of party members showed the CPGB the red card.

But Hungary was left to its fate, the re-imposition of Soviet hegemony. America and the NATO powers huffed and puffed in moral outrage... and sat on their hands. The Kennanite policy of 'containment' prevailed. In any case, America and its friends, Britain and France, had to act to heal the rupture in their relationship provoked by the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, the last gasp of old-style gung ho colonialism.

Fear has many dimensions. In October 1962 as the Cuban Missile Crisis unfolded, foreboding was global. How can 'grand peur' be measured? One enquiry route for the researcher of 2406 might be the study of suicide statistics for October 1962 and birth rates for the summer of 1963. We watched helpless as Kennedy and Khrushchev engaged in blinksmanship. The events of that terrible month are well known (though Gaddis might have told his reader of the antics of *heavy dancers* such as General Curtis Le May; perhaps a future edition will do so). In their evaluation there is agreement between Gaddis and Hobsbawm, between the 'bourgeois historian' and the Marxist. The former opines 'it persuaded everyone who was involved in it... that the weapons each side had developed during the Cold War posed a greater threat to both sides than the United States and the Soviet Union did to one another. (Gaddis p78) Eric the Red's view is that Cuba 'almost plunged the world into an unnecessary war for a few days and actually frightened even the top decision-makers into rationality for a while.' (Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p230)

Within the confines of this piece it is impossible to review all the subsequent frequently hair-raising events of the Cold War. Instead we may look at the ending of the Cold War; victory for America and catastrophic defeat for the USSR and Marxist-Leninism. For Gaddis the last phase of the Cold War began in 1989. By that date the Soviet Union was in crisis, '...a sand pile ready to slide. All it took to make that happen were a few more grains of sand. The people who dropped them were not in charge of superpowers or movements or religions: they were ordinary people with simple priorities

who saw, seized and sometimes stumbled into opportunities. In doing so they caused a collapse no-one could stop.' (Gaddis p238)

But leadership in this last act of the Cold War was to be focused on a handful of actors. These characters became the channel for the emotions, opportunities and fears of the masses. The lead was taken by the poet, playwright and Polish Pope, John Paul II. Human dignity embodied in Karol Woytila invaded and scattered the sterile *status quo* and the amoral politics and politicians of détente. The Pope had prepared a place on History's stage for Reagan and Gorbachev.

It was the Russian leader who seized the time in December 1989, addressing the first George Bush: 'We have managed to avoid a large-scale war for 45 years, [but] Cold War methods have suffered defeat. We have recognised this. And ordinary people have possibly understood this even better.'

Gaddis argues that Bush's predecessor, the former Hollywood actor Ronald Reagan locked into the new post-détente morality. His assessment of Reagan is certainly startling: 'as skilful a politician as the nation had seen for many years, and one of the sharpest grand strategists ever. His strength lay in his ability to see beyond complexity to simplicity.' (Gaddis p217)

And so the Cold War ended with the 'Evil Empire' of Reagan's rhetoric in ruins and with Gorbachev, in the author's somewhat ungracious jibe, left to preside over a think tank. (Gaddis p259) Gaddis has certainly to be admired for the audacious simplicity of his overview of the Cold War's final chapter. But is his focus on a handful of 'actors' enough? In what circumstances did the players act? And who were the prompts? How much of the archives, the minutes, the position papers, correspondence and diaries remain as yet unseen? Are we too near the last act of the Cold War to fully understand it? Do we understand Yalta 1945 better than Malta 1989? Is it one of History's peculiar features that we more confidently assess it as it becomes more distant?

Gaddis has, then, to be admired for the manner in which he has risen to the challenge of writing a pioneer overview of the Cold War with economy and lucidity. But our future historians will see it as precisely this, a first survey, and one perhaps flawed by being written from inside the victor's camp.

RON GRANT

Towers in the North: The Brochs of Scotland **Ian Armit**

Tempus Publishing	£15.99	Pbk	176pp	2002	ISBN 0752 41932 3

Inevitably, the study of pre-history relies upon interpretation of settlement. Nowhere else is there such a wealth of evidence for the way of life and structure of society. Brochs are uniquely Scottish structures, predominantly found in the Highlands and Islands. The most complete of the surviving structures exists in Shetland at Mousa. These imposing round towers with their internal stairs and galleries have invited wide interpretation. Yet, even the best structures are incomplete; weather and plundering for building materials having done their work, which invites speculation as to what the original building would have looked like, when they were built and what their function was.

Such questions have been looked at in detail by the hardworking Ian Armit of Queen's University in Belfast. Dr Armit is a prolific writer on Iron Age Scotland: his book on *Celtic Scotland* being an excellent introduction to the complexities of the whole period. In this comprehensive work he looks at the Broch in detail. The problems of defining exactly what a broch is occupies an important section at the beginning of the book. Armit takes a broad view of the broch and places it in a 'spectrum' of complex roundhouse structures which existed in the period before the arrival of the Romans. However, rather than being the norm he recognises that the broch is 'remarkable' within this broader tradition.

There is an excellent survey of the interpretations of broch excavations from the earliest amateur antiquarian beginnings. All is placed in the broader context of important changes in how archaeological

material was collected, catalogued and interpreted. The introduction of the three age system [Stone, Bronze and Iron] from the mid nineteenth century was contemporaneous with the development of more professional archaeology. Scottish archaeologists recognised that the broch was a unique Scottish phenomenon, rather than a Viking import. The twentieth century saw the introduction of state funding and growing professionalism. The importance of Gordon Childe's invasion [diffusionist] theories is discussed as is Sir Lindsay Scott's incisive challenge to the prevailing view of brochs; arguing that most were not towering defensive structures, but were more akin to farmsteads. The introduction of scientific techniques and the growing knowledge that sites saw phases of occupation, and that structures evolved over time is discussed. It was not until the 1970s that the diffusionists were seriously challenged as part of a broader, more complex, interpretation of how societies changed. Instead of invaders as innovaters, bringing ideas and new buildings; trade, exchange and social interaction were the generators of change. The rest of the book is an explanation of where the specialised study of brochs is today. It is at the cutting edge of current thinking and emphasises the importance of 'local innovation and structural evolution.'

This evolution is explored in chapter two where the tradition of constructing roundhouse structures prior to the rectangular forms from the Roman period is explored. Roundhouse structures were the favoured British form of settlement for 2,000 years. Broch towers are part of the 'Atlantic Roundhouse tradition', which Armit says is, 'characterised by massive stone walls.' Such structures are looked at in their various forms across Scotland until we come to an exploration of the excavation of Bu in Orkney, carried out by John Hedges in 1978. Bu had many of the features of a broch. It had both inner and outer walls for example, yet it was clearly not a tall building as there were no intra-mural cells, galleries or stairs. Bu was designed to be a modest height. This realisation meant wholesale reinterpretation of the available evidence. Structures which previously had been assumed to have been towers which had collapsed had to be looked at again in light of the Bu excavation. These early roundhouses [we know this from radiocarbon dating] were isolated, unenclosed farmsteads with relatively simple structures, though their internal dimensions related well to earlier Bronze Age settlements. From around 500BC more complex roundhouses emerge in Atlantic Scotland. Armit looks at this through the study of Crosskirk in Caithness, the complex roundhouse settlement in Howe of Howe, near Stromness in Orkney and Dun Bharabhat in Lewis. The geographical spread and similarities between the structures lead Armit to the conclusion that the complex roundhouse had, 'become a common feature of the landscapes of Atlantic Scotland by the middle of the first millennium BC. It was from this background that the broch towers appeared.'

Chapter three looks at the Anatomy of a Broch Tower. The various features of broch architecture from the shape, size, and height to the hollow wall, intra-mural stairs and entrance passage and doors, are looked at in lavish detail with supporting labelled photographs. The internal features of the so called 'guard cells' as well as the scarcement ledge and its purpose are explored. What the roof may have been like is looked at in detail with various ideas explored. I must confess that I found this section rather dry, though it is necessary to understand this when Armit starts drawing conclusions from the evidence. He looks at how these various elements draw together to provide a functioning building, drawing on the ideas proposed by John Hope, in particular with reference to how the building interacted with the elements of wind and rain. This was extremely interesting as Armit recognises that the Hope model may not fit all roundhouses, but does provide an excellent reference point. As with other writers on this topic Armit speculates as to whether there was a group of specialist engineers and masons who sold their specialist services of design and construction.

The real strength of this book became evident in the later chapters where Armit brings his wider knowledge and experience to bear in looking at brochs and how they interacted with the landscape and the people of Iron Age Scotland. What a broch implied in terms of organisation of the land and settlement patterns is looked at with an exploration of the idea of 'broch territories'. Studies in Shetland show that brochs with related territories could sustain a variety of different sized communities. Studies in the Western Isles suggest broadly similar patterns, and above all show that brochs were not just the buildings for the social elite. There were far too many of them for this. Armit looks at the evidence of the way of life; the animals which were kept, the crops which were harvested and the wild resources used as well as goods found, from the spindle whorls to the clay moulds for casting

fine bronze vessels. There is a fascinating little section on religious life and the burial of bones from animals and humans which seem to have been deliberately deposited in particular parts of the settlement.

The evolution of the broch from individual settlement to village occupies chapter five. Complex village structures where a number of families lived show a transformation in function and social organisation. Such events happened in the last few centuries BC. The settlement at Howe in Orkney for example, underwent a transformation with a total redesign. The classic broch village of Gurness is looked at in this section. Reasoned conclusions as to the relationship between the 'villagers' and why humans decided to live together in this way are explored. Does this imply greater social organisation and stratification? Was communal life preferable? Did the inhabitants have to band together for protection? I found this the most satisfying chapter in terms of my own interest and was impressed by Armit's mastery of his subject, the available evidence and above all his ability to provide a synthesis which still gave me a good idea of his own views.

The final chapter looks beyond the Atlantic to the south of Scotland where a small number of broch towers are known to exist. In particular he looks at the settlements and their interaction with Rome. We do not know if more broch towers exist and the implications of their presence in the south leads to some rather speculative conclusions, such as the idea that broch building took place within a context of social change engendered by the Roman invasions. In building brochs the powerful among the southern elites were expressing their power and non Roman credentials by embracing northern architectural styles. As with much in pre-history we can speculate and Armit certainly gives a variety of explanations here.

In epilogue, the use of brochs declined in the first century BC and the wheelhouse emerged as its successor. Brochs still existed, of course, and mention can be found of them in the Viking sagas and the many tourists who travel to see the finest physical examples of a uniquely Scottish phenomenon.

Towers in the North: The Brochs of Scotland is lavishly illustrated with both photographs and diagrams. For an understanding of Iron Age Scotland settlement, its people and life it is undoubtedly invaluable. If you have an interest in this period it is fascinating. As a textbook for the *Northern Britain* field at Advanced Higher, it is of more limited value, though I would buy a couple of copies for dissertations and to encourage the students in their wider reading. Armit is one of the writers who has popularised this vital period of Scottish history. His latest text will continue to enhance his reputation.

SIMON WOOD

The Soviet Union: A Documentary History
Volume 1 1917-1940 **Edward Acton and Tom Stableford**

University of Exeter Press £14.50 Pbk 496pp 2006 ISBN 0 85989 581 5

Professor Acton asked us in 1990 to *Rethink the Russian Revolution* and he has been unfailing in his mission since then to continue the debate. Immediately here we are reminded that the post glasnost period has been *'extremely exhilarating'* in terms of research, and that the aim here is to provide us with *'a taste of the intellectual feast that is underway'*. Professor Acton does that and more. He quickly engages the reader in every significant debate that has emerged about the period 1917-40. As he presents the phases of the first 'socialist' experiment, this documentary history is interlaced with narrative commentary which delivers cogent analysis with obvious wholehearted enthusiasm and an icy perceptiveness that clarifies and enriches our understanding in equal measure.

In the February Revolution and the Civil War, key documents are given comments, and further reading on specific topics is suggested in footnoting. And here the range is extensive, whether the memoirs of Sukhanov or news reporting, to the historians Hasegawa, Figes or Read. Old and new, in every sense, are employed to present the fullest picture possible. The issues involved in February are explored through precise choices and each provokes consideration. While the players are discussed

the balance of reasons is considered. For example the disillusionment of the army tends to be taken as read. Here Acton chooses a source which considers the fraternisation which took place. And so our perception is changed. The journey of the soldier to support a Bolshevik peace is then considered via the April Theses and a letter from one soldier '*Why should I sacrifice my life*?' The debate over the July Days is followed by a thorough evaluation of the events from the State Conference to the Kornilov Affair, and then to the fragmentation of the Provisional Government.

In the story of the Bolshevik seizure of power we are shown how the '*popular impatience*' of September is replaced by '*popular militancy*' in October, and Acton confirms the view that the drive to act comes from Lenin himself. The days of October are portrayed using the published article in *Novaya Zhizn* of 18th October highlighting the debate over the insurrection, and by selecting the memoirs from Mal'kov and letter from Lunacharsky he gives us vivid accounts of the 'moment' itself.

The sense of the fierce debate and precarious nature of the governing forces is then shown by examining Lenin's first weeks in office. In five sources Acton succeeds in clarifying a complex period of time and really brings to life the immediacy of events. This continues with the section on the Constituent Assembly as he notes the differing view of SR, Menshevik and Bolshevik. 'Peace' is deftly managed using Trotsky as the main frame of reference. He cites the Comintern as the '*catalyst which turned division...into enduring schism*' for socialist parties abroad, by introducing the world revolution.

Religion was always the thorn in the side of Bolshevism. Faith endured when status through class could be at least disappeared. However Acton shows us the extent of religious conflict by choosing a letter from a schoolgirl to Lenin. She asks that they no longer '*have to study Holy Writ*' in her '*bourgeois*' school, and she asks for a reply, of any nature at all. You do feel that even an autographed photograph would do. From that very personal mood he moves on to present in detail the facts on the disestablishment of the Church, the undermining of patriarchy, and the emancipation of women. And he does note, significantly, that the application was uneven – rules, law and reality often differed at local level.

He then turns to the Land Decree and the problem of grain requisitioning. Here he centres on Lenin's belief that social differentiation in the village was enough to allow class warfare to emerge, thus creating peasant solidarity with the proletariat. And of course on a practical level, heavy penalties were imposed on 'speculators'. Interestingly he clearly points to the failure of the Poor Peasants Committees, and that class divisions were not that obvious. Indeed he shows just how counter productive they were as the food supply situation became worse. Throughout we are made aware of Lenin's line of thought that '*he was in line with the flow of history*', hence War Communism is confirmed as a step towards socialism.

In considering the significant features of the period of the Civil War, he quickly assesses the potential challengers to Bolshevism. While the 'Third Way' may not have been successful, the outcome of the demise of *komuch* in the form of Kolchak certainly impacted on the shape of the war and beyond. Acton advises further reading (e.g. Mawdsley) and examines all as he draws his own conclusions. He affirms that the Whites' social policies were substantive in their demise, but he also cuts to the essence of the matter – that the Reds were *'saved by the preference of the vast majority of the population, including most of their socialist critics'*.

The '*system of rule*', which the Terror became, is shown as integral to the success of the Bolshevik regime. That this was applied by all 'sides' is stated from the outset. But here Acton draws our focus to the key difference – the military and the political – the former used by all and the latter by the Reds. The reasons were varied, from assassination to attempts on Lenin's life to '*a clamour for blood in the Soviet Press*'. The demand for violence is also clearly illustrated by the article in the Cheka Weekly concerning the treatment (or lack thereof) regarding Bruce Lockhart in '*Why are you being soft*?'. As Acton puts it '*the unvarnished endorsement of torture*' is baldly reported, ironically leading to the closing of the paper and the appointment of Stalin and two others to examine the activities of the Cheka. And while there was criticism of the Cheka, from Patriarch Tikhon to Martov, the attitude to

and the consequences of the terror among the Cossacks was somewhat different. The White terror was equally meted out, which of course included the Cossacks. The sheer brutality of this is shown in the last document in this section, an eyewitness account of the pogroms carried out by Grigor'ev, the notorious semi-bandit leader who supported almost all sides at one point or another.

The crisis of War Communism is presented in the context of opposition and denunciation at the Congresses. The SR opposition to the cajoling of the peasantry is made plain and leads the discussion to the crisis in agriculture. The documents explain both peasant revolt and urban unrest. And in spite of Gosplan we see the U-turn at the 10th Party Congress.

For many NEP will always be a contradiction. That it was so quickly adopted and accepted is also a mystery given that avoiding the word 'trade' seemed vital and as Acton states, *'emotional resistance ran deep'*. However, as he notes in the chosen documents, the 'gloss' of 'smychka' was attempted, and after the disease and famine of 1921 it seemed to succeed. Furthermore in spite of the 'scissors crisis' industrial production in the mid 20s was good. In this chapter the conflicts in ideological stances, in interpretation of the outcomes and in the roles of key figures (Stalin, Bukharin) are presented. The documents flag up the constant debate. It is very interesting to see that *'more jaundiced views of the entire experiment with state-owned industry'* could still be expressed in 1927. Nonetheless the crisis that occurred would ultimately be resolved by the 'revolution from above', and state criticism would then be perilous.

Then there is the fierce debate over the re-integration of the independent Soviet Republics and the policy adopted by centres on the belief that loyalty to class and party supersedes national identity. Stalin's position is clearly given, to absorb the five republics, but Lenin disagreed and the USSR was the result. The issue of the allegiance of the national minorities is also set against the backdrop of Stalin's personal ambition and Lenin's response in his *Testament*, certainly indicates his feelings. Moreover Lenin's view on decentralisation in all but military and diplomatic areas highlights the differences between the two men, and is another indicator that Stalin may not be the follower of Lenin as he purported. As we know there is the vexed question of identity for many today, but in those countries in the 1920s it is interesting that it was not the central issue, class would dominate – and there was to be no Russification rather '*korenizatsiya*' in the '*Affirmative Action Empire'* at this time.

The defeat of Trotsky and the United Opposition are given full consideration. The latter is extended to include threats outside Russia and these, like the 1927 Chinese massacre, became the challenges which led to Stalin's '*socialism in one country'*.

When we think of the Leninist period we tend to include the idea of 'free' expression, maybe because the 1930s and onwards were so restrictive. From this viewpoint Acton shows us those who criticised, those who appreciated and those who came to terms with the regime. Among the reconciled is included the collection of essays entitled *Smena vekh (Change of Landmark)*. The toleration of the '*smenovekhovsty'*, whose expression may have been alien to the Bolsheviks, meant they played their part in endorsing the system, debates were allowed and some books and pamphlets published. Schools and universities were, on the whole, worked with, although *'undesirables'* were dealt with, as the documents show in the case study on Berdyaev. The level of involvement of the Politburo is demonstrated by the selection of Lenin's comments on the senior Menshevik Rozhkov. As ever, Acton links sources to those previously cited in order to create the fullest picture possible. Here he considers the role of the *'fellow travellers'*, those non-party intellectuals allowed to publish, their role and the party role in the formation of the Proletkul't. The debates and conflicts are presented in views given by the best known intellectual PN Sakulin, Bukharin and the Central Committee itself. Again a very full picture is the result.

Church and State is not the easiest area to find resources and this section is an excellent addition. The resilience of the Church is agreed and the limited impact of the League of the Godless is affirmed as Lenin's cautious approach is outlined from the start. Yet, as is explained, the famine of 1921-22 necessitated the confiscation of property, and the condemnation of Patriarch Tikhon gave Lenin the reason needed to legitimise his actions. And we then find that divisions in the Church allowed what

Trotsky called *'an ecclesiastical NEP '*which further confused matters. Indeed after Tikhon's death in 1925 Metropolitan Sergiy all but accepts the regime, as his address in 1927 shows. But Acton resolves the mystery by noting that this is the time of the war scare. In Chapter 16 he continues the discussion with the 'cultural revolution' when attacks became more significant in number. The (now) League of Militant Godless was growing in membership and the number of churches closing growing steeply. The sources portray the extent and the debate is recorded in the 1930s using 'Ezhov's Instruction. We are given a clear indication of the numbers in the priesthood and the victims in all religions. In the end the census of 1937 shows more believers, and the Great Patriotic War would ensure the survival of faith.

When he turns to Soviet society under Stalin, we are made aware in vivid terms of the forced *'radical 'proletarian' orthodoxy'* of 1928-32 in which forced collectivisation caused famine and forced Five Year Plans caused deprivation. The balance which may have been attained by 1936 was followed by the Terror and imbalances causing intense resentment.

He discusses collectivisation and the Stalin/Bukharin split and while recognising the usual reasons for Stalin's victory he points out that those who were for Stalin *'were not simply placemen willing to endorse whatever course he cared to choose'*. In fact Stalin's views were those of the majority – whether he was genuine in his beliefs is quite another matter. Sources selected here explain in detail the conflict that was to end in the *'great turn'*. He then provides detail to show the pace and extent of collectivisation, the discussions over the *'kulak question'* and the decree of August 1932 looking at the *'application of the highest degree of social protection'*, the death penalty. And when *'the scale of urban migration amounted to a virtual social revolution'* the introduction of internal passports was the result. The regime denied the famine and here we are given the only documentation going some way to acknowledging the truth which aims to *'stop the escapees'*. And Acton presents comprehensive documentation which provides the detail of the callousness, brutality and helplessness when faced with nepotism and incompetence. Furthermore he shows us the organisation and system that was imposed to try to establish order in 'dekulakisation'. He again brings this vividly to life by including a schoolgirl's letter, a 12 year-old pleading for help. It is somewhat chilling to read this heartfelt plea because all she says is interlaced with the sentiment, *'thank you, Comrade Stalin, for a happy childhood'*. This, throughout, makes for a stark contrast with her reality. Another contrast is presented as he concludes this section by considering the problem of peasant apathy and the real problem if supervising collectives and dealing with a lack of motivation.

There is the constant debate about the extent of the totalitarian regime. This is addressed here by looking at the extent to which forced labour prisoners were used for 'social construction' and clarifying the extent of the Gulag system and the numbers involved. He also informs us of those who bought into the regime, and that the shock workers were resented. Workforce output was not as great as expected and here he notes that the disparity between the notions of omnipotence from the leadership (as in the collective farms) and the reality changes our viewpoint of the totalitarian regime. The sources are evidence that splits in groups within the working class were beginning to show and that these groups indeed retained some autonomy. The frustrations felt are fully documented. He then considers the 1936 Constitution and the labour decrees if 1938 and 1940, but examines the extent of both evasion and of collusion.

In considering the 'cultural revolution', Acton takes the Shakhty case as a starting point, presents the events and the many reasons for the outcome. He then looks at the revolution which followed and its various promoters- whether the radical young activist intellectuals or (not surprisingly when it came to history and the social sciences) the party leadership. He examines the role of cinema and literature and looks in particular at the censoring of historians. By selecting documents on the show trials of 1930-31 he illustrates the pressure on the technical intelligentsia: the *'Industrial Party'* when eight were accused and the *'Menshevik Union Bureau'* where fourteen were accused, were key figures in all aspects of industry and state organisations. These trials are significant in their motivation and in directly demonstrating Stalin's personal involvement. To that end, the three documents point out Stalin's mindset and his intention – the ascendancy of his role in all of this. However, the change in approach in the 1930s is noted, in order to stabilise the specialists. Alongside this came the return

of more traditional family values and, of course, centralised party control in the form of '*socialist realism*'.

One of the most testing areas to analyse is the Great Terror, and here Acton ensures that the debate is constantly at the forefront of his commentary. At the outset he covers, in a most succinct and effective manner, the main views. After dealing with the conditions which made the Terror possible he looks at a range of possible motivations. And herein lies the difficulty to '*construct a narrative which gives due weight to each*'. But he does so by presenting extraordinary sources which serve to refute or to confirm the findings of historians. The debate over Kirov is highlighted and the Conquest and Arch Getty theses are considered. The consequent 'in camera' decree leads us to believe that protest was well-nigh impossible. Here Acton includes a particularly fascinating source. While it appeared on a washroom wall and is supposedly the work of first year students it does set out a convincing case in '*do not let socialism be built of the bones of the proletariat*'. The criticism of the regime is undeniable. The major components of the Great Terror are presented and the arguments are evaluated. In 1936 what may have been intended as political in nature was very much diluted at local level and eventually was driven by fear. So the rationale at this level was incompetence or abuse of power. Another favoured reason is the threat of war, which Acton considers and refutes as the main purges were enacted for other reasons, and as at '*the end of 1938, the international scene was markedly darker*' this was when '*the carnage was curtailed*'.

He includes the '*notorious*' NKVD order 00447 over which there is still difficulty in understanding the timing, and the inclusion of '*scattered and dispossessed peasants*'. All the key historical interpretations are given along with comprehensive footnoting. The numbers of national minorities executed are also noted. This 'ethnic cleansing', accounting for one third of executions, would become even more brutal by the1940s and after the Great Patriotic War. And Bukharin's letter to his wife (15 January 1938) humanises the raft of numbers just given. Although Acton shows us that the '*scattered voices of opposition*' still existed, he notes that there was no dissent at party level and that the 'History of the CSPU(B) Short Course' would go a long way to deaden intellectual activity. And the personal deadening of the spirit and the body is made clear by including VE Meyerhol'd's declaration, addressed to Molotov in January 1940. This record of his spiritual, psychological and physical torture which destroyed him and then killed him makes chilling reading.

As you can probably tell I think this book is certainly a welcome addition to the documentary histories of the Revolution, and would merit inclusion in your class library. Professor Acton has provided valuable insights in his narrative and a range of sources which enhance our understanding. To complement this he has also given extensive footnoting, biographical, place and general indexes, suggested further reading and a glossary of Russian words. He tackles '*the multi-faceted forms of lower-class evasion and resistance*', the extent of killing, the Church, and the '*mutation of Marxist-Leninist ideology*'. In particular he brings to light the regional dimension and the issue of national identity. But this book is more that a sum of its parts. His selection of sources and his commentary readily engages you with the major debates and with the big themes, but it also takes you to the personal and the local. In doing this Professor Acton makes you feel part of the ongoing discussion, provokes you to consider again the issues and takes you to new interpretations.

MD SHARP

Nineteenth Century Europe **Michael Rapport**

Palgrave Macmillan £18.99 422pp Pbk 2005 ISBN 0 333 65246 0

Those of us experienced enough to remember the old, traditional Higher, would welcome this book. It provides the broad sweep of History that is so often lacking in today's compartmentalised curriculum. The author takes a broad definition of the term 'nineteenth century', arguing that there is a continuum from the 1780s, with the success of the American Revolution, to 1914, and the outbreak

of the European Civil War. Further, his overview encompasses all parts of Europe, not just the Great Powers and thus the reader begins to see the inter-action of forces at play during this 'long' century. His justification for such an approach as found in the preface, with the author arguing that,

"It is anchored at either end by the astonishing collapse of the French absolute monarchy in 1789 and the eruption of the First World War in 1914. It is marked by a dramatic economic and social transformation, which in turn engendered serious political anxieties and tensions".

Thus, the start of the period is signified by the emergence of the people as 'sovereign' but the tragedy was that this failed to make much of an impact on the general European population. 1814 thus marked "a pivotal moment because it was a Europe-wide event in which many countries witnessed popular participation in politics for the first time". The last decades of the nineteenth century posed a problem for the established regimes as they sought to accommodate the new mass, educated and increasingly able to vote, electorate into the existing political structures with varying degrees of success across Europe. Finally, the very existence of such a political force in turn placed obligations on the regimes, both in terms of domestic and foreign policy.

The text is divided into four parts, dealing with, in turn, Revolutionary Europe from 1789 till 1815; Conservative Europe, 1815-1850; A new Era?, 1850-1870; and the Emergence of Mass Politics between 1879 and 1914.

The book takes an overview of late eighteenth European social and political structures, identifying important features such as geography, rank and occupation as being determinants of social position. Yet, there was a challenge emerging to these criteria, particularly population growth. The first section is dominated by the impact of demographic growth and population distribution as elements weakening the old regimes' hold on power. Added to this was the increasing pace of industrialisation and urbanisation, although this varied greatly across Europe. As Rapport notes, "The first blows to the traditional social order, therefore, came not from revolutionaries but from royal governments seeking to enhance the power of the state at the expense of the traditional, corporate society".

Such tensions were to culminate in France with the outbreak of revolution in 1789. Unsurprisingly, this event merits a chapter to itself, such was its importance for the rest of the nineteenth century. Whilst acknowledging the long-term changes that the Revolution had wrought within France, the author insists that its "main impact was political: it was one of the great founding deeds of modern politics, both democratic and totalitarian".

This involved the mass of the people in politics for the first time and, "The bitter divisions left long and deep social scars which made consensus an elusive prize for most of the nineteenth century".

The impact of these events in France in Europe is looked at from the perspective of an attempt by the other great powers to prevent French domination of Europe: "The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were less a conflict about ideological differences than about the balance of power". The irony was that, in order to defeat the French threat, the great power leaders "unleashed popular, patriotic energies". Thus the period 1789 to 1815 defined the political arena for the rest of the century.

The period 1815 to 1850 was marked by attempts from the old regime to reverse the trends that had emerged earlier. What all leaders now sought, with the exception of the Tsars of Russia, was to strengthen the state, even if this meant some form of mild reform. This in turn gave rise to increased liberal demands for yet more reform, a demand that could not be met satisfactorily. The great strength of this text is that examples of this are drawn from Spain, the Italian states, the Baltic, as well as the traditional great European powers. Thus, the reader is guided into seeing how each of these countries dealt with the challenges they now faced. The greatest of the latter was the need for social reform, originating from rapid population increase and economic development. The populations were not easily fooled by the limited reforms introduced, being aware that these were drawn up with one aim in mind, the maintenance of "social order". This impulse permeated all European governments. This led to the increased politicisation of the workforce in the face of seemingly indifferent governments, and is most associated with the growth of socialist ideas in mid-century.

Amongst attempted diversions was the claim that Europe indulged in a period of empire building as a way of distracting the local population from domestic concerns. However, it is shown that the motives behind early nineteenth century European imperialism were far more complicated than that, involving trade, political, social and religious factors.

The period 1830 to 1848 is taken as one period, tracing the evolution of revolutionary upheaval in Europe in 1848 back to the failed revolutions of the 1830s, particularly that in France. Add to this heady brew the emerging forces of liberalism and nationalism, and the time was ripe for revolt. However, the very diversity of the reasons for mass support for action in 1848 also contained the seeds of its ultimate failure. Political, social and economic grievances could be dealt with one at a time, enabling the governments to buy off one section of opposition and divide the others. This was clearly seen in the machinations of the Austrian government which was prepared to use the nationalist card to divide its subject peoples in an attempt to thwart the Magyar threat to its empire. "Ethnic groups struggling for self-rule or unification were reluctant to concede much to other nationalities, let alone collaborate".

Such duplicity was repeated across Europe. Whilst buying time for the present, such tactics stored up trouble for the future.

Although appearing to have failed, there were some plusses from 1848-1849. One of the most important was the survival of many of the constitutions that had been forced from the reluctant hands of rulers everywhere. The other was the involvement of the mass of the population in politics, many for the first time. The legacy of 1848 was constitutionalism, nationalism and the issue of social reform and, "these were all issues which the conservative victors could not ignore for long".

Thus, as Michael Rapport concludes part two of his book, "In many respects, therefore, European politics in the second half of the century were concerned with the shadows and legacies of 1848".

The period between 1848 and 1879 was the emergence of a 'new realism' "driven not just by a fear of revolution but also by the new instability in international affairs. The decades after 1848 witnessed a breakdown in the old certainties of the Vienna system, whereby a tacit assumption that war and revolution were inter-connected led the great European powers to act with restraint".

The spur, again, was the upturn in the trade cycle, with ever increasing industrialisation and urbanisation and the disruption in European great power relations caused by the Crimean war. "The real beneficiaries were France, Piedmont and Prussia. Austria was the real loser of the Crimean War". This, in the long term, was to benefit the creation of both a united Italy and a united Germany, though, as the author wryly concedes, "Their creation [Italy and Germany] was less the expression of the popular will than of the power of hegemonic states – Piedmont and Prussia – and the political elites". The success in central Europe also encouraged other nationalist groups in south-eastern Europe, although their efforts were to be thwarted by the actions of the great powers, pursuing their policies of a balance of power in Europe. "In the years to come, the overlapping irredentist goals would be a source of tension and conflict, not only between these countries but also among the great powers.....South-eastern Europe now emerged fully as one of the great stress zones in international relations".

In domestic terms, this period was marked by attempts at reform across Europe; even Tsar Alexander II liberated the serfs in 1861, though under crushing redemption terms. This let the conservative forces within Europe retain control of the power structures within their own countries, some more successfully than others! In both Britain and France, governments sought to detach the skilled workers from the lumpen proletariat, as exemplified by the 1867 Reform Act in Britain. This was the beginning of the emergence of mass politics. This in turn would influence the actions of established authorities for, along with political power, new awareness of the causes of poverty and the visible differences between rich and poor so evident in the urban areas, put new pressures on the authorities to convince all their citizens that they did have a direct stake in the existing political structures in order to deflect them from supporting more radical solutions.

However, it was not just in politics and the economy that there was tension. Conflict emerged between organised religion and science with the development of ideas like natural selection and

a scientific rationale for human development. Such theories were to be bastardised by politicians seeking their own self-advancement with tragic consequences for Europe before and after 1914. There developed an idea that Europeans were superior to all other races and this was evident in their treatment of their colonial possessions acquired after 1880. Another feature of this period was the development of state-organised education. This was due, in part, for the needs of industry for a more skilled workforce (some things never change) but this also caused conflict between church and state as to what should be taught and how it should be controlled. This was matched by the advance towards mass literacy, as shown by the development of the popular press which in turn tended to erode differences between sections within the one country and produced a more homogenous population.

The period after 1879 was marked by the rise of new political doctrines like anarchism, feminism and socialism. The author seeks to show how each of these trends developed and the impact that each had on existing political structures. There is a sub-section dealing with the emergence of socialism in Russia and the response of the Tsarist regime to this new threat.

This age also witnessed the emergence of nationalism as a political force with which to be reckoned. This was sponsored by governments as it tended to wean the populace away from socialism and syndicalism but unleashed new forces within Europe. Examples are drawn from such diverse areas as Ireland and the Ukraine and the experience of the Baltic states, reinforcing Rapport's theory that all European states experienced similar pressures as the century drew to a close. It is interesting to note that the British were as intolerant of Irish nationalism as the Tsars were of Ukrainian nationalism, though the Irish were to be spared a British version of Russification. The inability of the Tsarist regime to deal effectively with nationalist demands would reach a crisis in 1905 when, "the Russian empire cracked open".

Similar problems beset the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary and it too was powerless to meet the competing demands of its subject peoples. This was exacerbated by the crumbling power of the Ottoman Empire and the competition between the great powers to benefit from this or to limit the gains of their opponents.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was marked by a conservative reaction across Europe. Liberalism was under attack from many quarters and seemed to offer little in its own defence.

Once more, Europe turned outwards, in a burst of imperial expansion never seen before or since. Again, the author goes into detail to show that the impulse behind this second wave of imperial acquisition was very complex and not just a response to domestic problems. "If European imperialism was driven partially by international competition, then strategic concerns, such as the defence and cornering of markets and the protection and consolidation of trade routes, would also have been important".

Thus, "Governments may have exploited imperialist attitudes when it suited them, but in doing so they were unleashing a force which they could not always control".

The final chapter assesses the reasons for the outbreak of war in 1914, showing how all the European powers contributed either through their actions, or their reactions to the policies of others, and denying the simplistic assertion of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles. Michael Rapport concludes that,

"The industrialised furnace of the First World War brought the social antagonisms and political extremes boiling violently back to the surface, ensuring that, for the next three decades at least, twentieth-century Europe would be a dangerous place".

The strength of this book was the scholarship which underpinned it. The author has succeeded in drawing a picture of a continent ill at ease with itself both domestically and internationally. The new threats posed to the existing order had to be accommodated, bought off or repressed, and it mattered not whether you lived in Britain, Russia or Turkey. The forces unleashed by industrialisation, population growth and distribution would challenge the leaders of conservative Europe and force them to sail into uncharted waters which would culminate in the destruction of Europe between 1914 and 1918 and set it on a new course for the first half of the new century.

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