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EDITOR: ANDREW HUNT

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Cover: *Turnip Singlers. A Hard Taskmaster* painted in 1883 by William Darling McKay. With thanks to the Royal Scottish Academy (Diploma Collection) for their permission for SATH to use this image.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

DR JOHN E. LAW attended George Watson's College and graduated with an M.A. in Medieval History at St Andrews and a doctorate at Oxford. In 1971 he was appointed to a lectureship at University College Swansea (Swansea University), where he is now a Reader. He is Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and has held fellowships at the British School at Rome and visiting professorships at Harvard University's Center for Italian Renaissance Studies at the Villa I Tatti, Florence. He has served as associate editor and then editor of *Renaissance Studies*, and is currently chair of the Society for Renaissance Studies. In 1989 he published, with Denys Hay, *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, and his interest in the Italian Renaissance and its reception in the British Isles has informed the article in this number of the journal.

DR JOHN MORRISON is Senior Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Aberdeen. He has published widely on Scottish art and cultural history including *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting 1800-1920* (Edinburgh UP), *A Shared Legacy. Essays on Irish and Scottish Art* (Ashgate Press, Aldershot 2005, with F. Cullen) and 'For Covenant and King: Charles II and the Politics of Imagery', *Festivals of the Defeated* (Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbuettel, Germany, 2007) He is currently working on *Painting the People. Land, Labour and Landscape*, a book on Scottish images of rural labour in the nineteenth century.

DR JON LAWRENCE is Senior Lecturer in Modern British Political History at the University of Cambridge and a fellow of Emmanuel College. His book, *Electing Our Masters: the Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair*, was published by Oxford University Press in March 2009. Previous publications include *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), and (with Miles Taylor), *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain Since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997).

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PAUL WARD is Professor of Modern British History and co-director of the Academy for the Study of Britishness at the University of Huddersfield. He is author of *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left, 1881-1924* (Boydell, 2004), *Britishness since 1870* (Routledge, 2004), *Unionism in the United Kingdom, 1918-1974* (Palgrave, 2005) and *Huw T. Edwards: Welsh Socialist* (University of Wales Press, forthcoming). He is currently researching the impact of Americanisation on the United Kingdom in the twentieth century.

DR DAVID MCKINSTRY teaches History in the Humanities Department of Port Glasgow High School, Scotland. His most recent work is *We Shall Overcome: The Politics of Civil Rights, May 1963 to August 1964* (VDM Verlag Dr. Muller, 2008). He is currently researching a follow up to this text *Jobs and Freedom*.

Editorial

ANDREW HUNT

Well... that's it. This is the twentieth *Year Book* I've produced since I embarked on the editorial trail back in 1989, and this issue is my last one. It has been no trouble; in fact almost all of it has been a pleasure and it'll take a bit of time for me to shake myself loose from the set of routines that for two decades have provided a steady backdrop to my year, in making sure the *Year Book* came through on time every June. Eric Summers and John Gilbert both had a worthy stab at the editor's job [for the first three issues] before it landed in my hands a bit like a pass-the-parcel. But it never became that; I was more like a relay runner who refused to pass on the baton; and I have the guilty sense that I've been hogging this job for far too long, depriving younger and more energetic SATH committee members of the chance of getting their teeth into something that they could call their own. I've been lucky that my tenure as editor coincided with the great growth of computers, e mail and dramatically cheaper printing and colour technology to lower production costs; I was able to produce something nicer and cheaper after twenty years doing it, than I could at the start. I wonder what awaits the editor in the next decades.

So, '20 not out' as far as my efforts are concerned, and winding it up with a good looking 23rd volume of the *Year Book*, is a nice figure for me to finish off with, and in the absence of some sort of Yusupovian palace coup to depose me, I'm just going to bow out gracefully. And it's good night from him...

So... enough of this maudlin sentimentality and the search for yet more clichéd metaphors for packing it in!... there are just too many people over the past 20 years who need my especial thanks, for it ever to appear that the *Year Book* was somehow 'my baby' or that this is 'the end of an era' just because I'm stopping doing it. I'll start with thanking former SATH President Danny Murphy for giving me the job in the first place; he could never have imagined how much I would enjoy all the tasks or duties or whatever you would want to call them, associated with getting a publication like this going. Over the years, I've had nothing but positive support from all the members of SATH's committee, some of them glad they hadn't got the job themselves, but others more astutely noticing how it was a niche that was just shaped for me!

Then, of course, 20 years worth of *Year Books* has produced 149 articles and my grateful thanks goes to all the contributors, some of whom wrote more than once, for their insights. They were invariably easy to deal with, punctual and professional, and I enjoyed my correspondence with them and meeting many of them on different occasions. They are the chief reason the *Year Book* reached the quality it did.

The *Year Book* also became more and more a forum for exceptionally written reviews of key historical literature; and the regular appearance of reviews of depth and perception by so many reviewers, but Ron Grant cannot be allowed to go un-named; shows something of the quality of historical thinking that has been found in front of our History classrooms during these last twenty years. We have all gained from this. So, that's it, I thank you all, I hope the *Year Book* has played its part in establishing a public face of what SATH is and does, and it's been my privilege to be a part of that.

The cover illustration of this 23rd volume of the *Year Book* was selected to go with the article by Dr John Morrison on Landscape, Labour and Cultural Identity. This picture is referred to in his article but isn't one of the accompanying illustrations. In his article he also mentioned Millet's wonderful picture of *The Gleaners*, which I was briefly tempted to use, but there is something Scottish and grafting, realistic and unsentimental about the picture of the turnip pickers which drew me to it. Then of course, I couldn't resist that touch of light blue in the sky, and I found I could not take my leave of the *Year Book* without at least and at last having another blue cover!

The Italian Renaissance Court

DR JOHN E. LAW

The importance and interest of this subject should need no introduction. The Italian Renaissance court provided the context for the production of remarkable works of architecture, art, and literature. For example, Federico da Montefeltro (1422-74), lord (1444) and then duke (1474) of Urbino in the province of the Marches in the Papal States, began to build a palace in the city from 1447. A second period of construction was directed by the Dalmatian architect Luciano Laurana from 1465 while a third phase was started by the Sienese architect, Francesco di Giorgio Martini in 1477. This palace later became the setting for the most famous of all evocations of the Italian Renaissance court, Baldassare da Castiglione's *Il Cortigiano* (*The Courtier*), begun in 1508 and published in Venice in 1528.¹

Federigo's cultural patronage was eclectic, embracing a wide range of the arts and scholarship. From the Spanish painter Pedro Berruguete he commissioned (c. 1475) a portrait which depicted him and his heir, Guidobaldo; Guidobaldo was duke but not present in the courtly conversations Castiglione was later to set in his palace in Urbino. Federigo is represented with the ducal *biretta* bestowed on him by Pope Sixtus IV and with the chivalric orders granted him by the kings of Naples and England.² As a soldier, commander of the papal armies, he is partially armed, but he is also represented as studying a manuscript; the library established in his palace was one of the largest in the Italy of his day. The palace also housed a private study, a *studiolo*, whose decoration in paint and wood inlay (*intarsia*), celebrated its owner's personality, learning and achievements. The Florentine bookseller, Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421-98), from whom Federigo bought many of his books,³ recalled the interest his patron also took in Flemish tapestries and northern musicians, if he does not mention the commissions he gave to the painter Piero della Francesca (active 1439-78), commissions which included portraits. Even if aspects of Federigo's cultural patronage were ephemeral, and much has been lost or dispersed – among the latter, his library and the works of Piero della Francesca – the modern visitor to Urbino can still appreciate the scale and magnificence of his palace which dominates the city to this day, and the contribution skilled workers in stone and wood made to its rich decoration.

But Federigo was not unique as a patron of the arts, and he is representative of the rulers whose courts will be the focus for this article: the lords, or *signori*, of late medieval and renaissance Italy. Lordships, *signorie*, became established in the cities of northern and central Italy from the thirteenth century. Their rise can be ascribed in part to negative factors. Rivalry between papacy and empire weakened the authority of both in the Peninsula; the Avignon residency (1307-1377), but more particularly the Great Schism (1378-1417) further compromised the authority of the former, while the late medieval empire was weakened by dynastic disputes, decentralisation of authority and external threats. The cities of northern and central Italy enjoyed wide powers of autonomy and were centres of wealth and government, but they were divided by faction, often related to the papal-imperial confrontation on the wider stage. As contemporaries acknowledged, faction within cities, the instability of communal forms of government, often provided a political opportunity for families aspiring to lordship.⁴

However, lords rose to power through more than the weakness of others. Families like the Montefeltro derived their wealth and prominence from fiefs and properties in the Marches. Marriage and political alliances could enable them to call on support from beyond their own city and its jurisdiction, or *contado*. Military service as mercenary captains – as *condottieri* – with other powers was another means of securing alliances, as well as bringing in pay and providing armed support.

More locally, aspiring *signori* turned to their own vassals, tenants and clients, using them to secure public office and, ultimately, lordship. This encouraged some historians writing in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries to talk about the 'popular' even the 'democratic', basis of signorial power. Now, the rise to lordship is seen more in terms of factional support on a local and regional basis, and in terms of staged acclamation rather than genuine election. Some of these elements can

be seen to have been present when the Gonzaga acquired the lordship of Mantua in 1328. The family was already prominent in the city when Luigi Gonzaga entered Mantua with the support of the Della Scala rulers of the neighbouring city of Verona and his own retainers. The leader of the ruling – and rival – faction, Rinaldo Bonacolsi, was killed and his followers exiled. Luigi then declared his loyalty to the people of Mantua and in turn was proclaimed its captain and lord.⁵

The Gonzaga went on to become one of the most important dynasties in terms of cultural patronage in Renaissance Italy, for example employing the painter Andrea Mantegna – their court artist from 1460 – to celebrate the family and its entourage in the *Camera Picta*, or ‘Painted Chamber’ (from 1465) in their palace in the city.⁶ But their rise to, and maintenance of, power introduces reasons for the court that are far removed from high culture and the polite, witty and erudite conversation assigned by Castiglione to the courtiers of Urbino in his *Cortigiano*.

The court was the place – or sometimes the occasion⁷ – where the lord could display his magnificence, magnificence being conventionally understood as an attribute of the good ruler.⁸ The title of ‘il Magnifico’ was by no means applied only to Lorenzo de’ Medici of Florence (1449-92), and when used in connection with – for example – Rodolfo III da Varano, lord of Camerino in the Marches (1399-1424) it was intended to convey power, wealth and generosity.⁹

But for magnificence to work, an audience was required, and for that reason the court needed courtiers and thus afforded access to the lord. That may seem surprising. Studies of the renaissance court in Italy and elsewhere tend to stress that it expressed the lord’s authority, that it was intensely hierarchic in structure and that only the privileged could approach the ruler and his intimates, his *famigliari*, or familiars. To some extent this was indeed the case. The *Camera Picta* of the Gonzaga palace in Mantua, the *Studiolo* in the Montefeltro palace in Urbino were private spaces used only by the ruling family, chosen advisors and servants and distinguished foreign guests. An elaborate list of ordinances, or *Ordini*, prepared for the ducal household in Urbino – and wherever the Montefeltro were residing – probably in the late 1480s give the distinct impression of an ordered, deferential, hierarchical society with the lord at its apex.¹⁰

However, these *Ordini* also give an impression of the huge workforce, incorporating a wide range of responsibilities and skills, required to attend upon the duke and service his household. Detailed provisions are set out to – for example – care for the duke’s person, to prepare and serve food, to maintain the stables, to keep the palace secure, lit and clean, to distribute alms. Unfortunately, the source is not so detailed as to allow one to estimate with precision the numbers involved, but Baldassare Castiglione likened the palace to a city, conveying an idea of the large numbers working there and the variety of their occupations, and it would probably be correct to say that the court represented the largest employer in Urbino. Moreover, the Urbino ordinances also suggest that the household took care of those of its members who could no longer work. This function of the court, as a source of employment, shelter and poor relief, is confirmed by a report submitted to the Borgia rulers of Camerino in late 1502 or early 1503. The Borgia were advised to re-open the court the Varano had held in the city because: it had been a source of recreation, especially for the young; it had offered warmth and entertainment; it had been a source of news; its lord had hunted and played football with his subjects; its lady had been hospitable to the women of the city; it had provided work for between 250 and 300 people; it had distributed charity.¹¹

That the court did not isolate the ruler but brought him into contact with his subjects beyond a privileged circle, is also suggested by the buildings which housed the court. Beneath the much admired and still elegant state apartments in the ducal palace in Urbino there is a vast substructure of storerooms, kitchens and living quarters which literally supported the court above. Moreover, the building that was erected from the 1440s was not designed as a fortress; the facades facing into the city have wide windows and the twin towers on its south-facing façade, framing balconies or *loggie*, were clearly intended to be decorative rather than defensive. A similar point can be made in the case of the palace which the Montefeltro’s neighbours in the Marches, the Varano, constructed in the centre of Camerino from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. Though intended to impress, it was not a fortress.¹²

Of course, lords like the Montefeltro and the Varano also built fortresses, and some courts were held behind serious defences, as in the case of the Malatesta of Rimini; the principal residence of Sigismondo Malatesta's court was in the Castel Sismondo he had built in his capital at Rimini from 1437.¹³ But that castle or citadel was designed more as a defence against external enemies than as a barrier between Sigismondo and his subjects, and similar conclusions can be drawn from elsewhere. The principal residence of the Este in Ferrara was in the heavily fortified, moated, Castello di San Michele – the Castelvechio – but they also frequented completely unfortified residences in the city's suburbs and countryside.¹⁴ At the centre of the Gonzaga residence in Mantua was the fortified Castel San Giorgio, but the extensive building work to their palace in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was unfortified.¹⁵ When the architect Antonio Averlino, Filarete (1400 – 1469), proposed the ideal city of *Sforzinda* to the duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, he placed a fortress up against the walls, but the duke's normal place of residence was in the centre at the heart of the city's social, economic and administrative activity.¹⁶ Francesco Sforza's father-in-law, and his predecessor as duke of Milan, was Filippo Maria Visconti. He is often represented in a hostile literature as a paranoid recluse, but for the exacting author of the Urbino *Ordini* his court was a model.¹⁷ It is unlikely that this precedent would have been cited without some justification in terms of order, and access to the ruler.

Finally, the court helped the lord to achieve a degree of legitimacy and respectability, both at home and abroad. As has been mentioned, the lordships of northern and central Italy were based in territories in theory subject to the western empire and the papacy. In the cities under their control, the *signori* also replaced communal, republican, forms of government. In terms of political thought, and even more so in the eyes of their political enemies, such regimes could appear to be illegitimate and tyrannical, usurping authority either from 'above' or from 'below'.

It is for that reason that *signori* like the Gonzaga contrived to attain public office and why they sought and valued the imperial titles of marquis (from 1433) and then duke (from 1530). It also explains why regimes like the Gonzaga valued privileges bestowed by foreign monarchs, and marriage alliances with recognised European princely dynasties. They were proud of the heraldic privileges bestowed on them by the king of England in the early fifteenth century, and even more proud of the marriage between Lodovico III and Barbara of Brandenburg, from the house of Hohenzollern, in 1433.¹⁸

The search for legitimacy and acceptance may also help to explain the importance of the court to the lordships of late medieval and renaissance Italy. The fame of Castiglione's *Cortigiano* can distort historical perceptions; in a European and even in an Italian context, the Montefeltro court of Urbino was a late arrival, as were the *Ordini* aimed at the management of its household. The courts of the European monarchies and principalities had a longer history than those of the Italian lordships dealt with here. Only with the Visconti court of Milan in the fourteenth century did an Italian lordship achieve European prominence, measurable in the marriage alliances they established with other European royal and princely families.¹⁹ It is perhaps only with Castiglione's *Cortigiano* that a 'model' based on a north Italian example, entered the courtly consciousness of Europe.

Their relatively late arrival on the scene, and the doubts surrounding their titles to rule, may help to explain why Italian *signori* and their courts were so eager to share the tastes of those of the north; the Gonzaga employed Pisanello to execute frescoes of Arthurian scenes in their palace in Mantua, and a taste for Arthurian literature runs through the courts of northern Italy.²⁰ It may also help to explain the eagerness of Italian *signori* to receive, or claim to have received, honours from northern rulers. Sigismondo Malatesta was proud of the knighthood granted by the emperor Sigismund in 1433.²¹ The Varano of Camerino not only asserted relationships by marriage to the English royal house, but also claimed to have received the Order of the Garter from Edward I!²²

Given the importance of the court to the *signori* of northern and central Italy in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance it may appear paradoxical that it is hard to define the court with precision. It appears as a rather amorphous body, and the words of Walter Map, writing of the Angevin court in the twelfth century, have relevance:

'In the court I exist and of the court I speak, but what the court is, God knows, I know not. I do know however that the court is not time; but temporal it is, changeable and various, space-bound

and wandering, never continuing in one state. When I leave it, I know it perfectly; when I come back to it I find nothing or little of what I left there...The court is the same, its members are changed...today we are one number, tomorrow we shall be a different one. Yet the court is not changed; it remains always the same...a hundred-handed giant...a hydra of many heads...the court is constant only in inconsistency'.²³

In the Italian context, in the period under discussion, and particularly in the fourteenth century, the court appears to have developed from a special occasion designed to impress and generally of a chivalrous nature, into a more stable 'institution' with a more permanent physical presence centred on the lord's residence.²⁴ But in his *Cortigiano*, though its setting is clearly the Montefeltro palace in Urbino, Castiglione sought to discuss the behaviour, accomplishments, education and deportment of the courtier; he did not attempt a definition of what the court was. The earlier Urbino *Ordini* has been described as a 'court treatise', but in it the words 'corte' and 'cortesano' appear only rarely, and when they do they are used without precision.

Its author paid much more attention to those most closely attendant on the lords, his *famigliari*, and had even more to say about the *casa*, the household, the core and central part of the *famiglia*, whose members appear to have been most continuously attendant on the lord. Their proximity and access to the ruler, and their permanence in his household, explains their importance to the author of the *Ordini*. Their ranking, their place in the 'order', is determined not by their social status alone, but also by their 'office' and, as has been mentioned, they serve the lord in a variety of ways, from the spiritual to the physical, from the financial to the secretarial. Throughout, the author insists on the concept and practice of order which seems to reflect the impression Vespasiano da Bisticci gave of the well regulated court that existed in the days of Federico da Montefeltro.²⁵

But Vespasiano was looking back to a golden age which had brought him a great deal of business as a provider of manuscripts for the ducal library. So too was the author of the *Ordini* who was probably writing after Federico's death and during the minority of his son Guidobaldo (1482-1508). So in turn was Castiglione when he published *Il Cortigiano* (1528), and when small Italian states like the Duchy of Urbino – now ruled by the Della Rovere family – were becoming increasingly precarious in the face of a resurgent papal monarchy and the great powers of Habsburg and Valois. Courts were subject to political, economic and dynastic change; for example the internationally famous court created under Giangaleazzo Visconti, lord (1385) and then duke (1395) of Milan, collapsed with his sudden death in 1402 leading to the rapid fragmentation of his state.

However, another cause for anxiety can be detected running through the Urbino *Ordini*, that the household would be badly managed and associated with corruption and disorder. This introduces a *topos* that has a European dimension and one that runs far beyond the Middle Ages and Renaissance, that of the court as a sink of iniquity and a symbol of decadence, with the courtier seen as ambitious, self-serving and deceitful. In the context of the courts of northern Italy this view is revealed in a letter written in 1373 by Francesco Petrarch to Francesco da Carrara, the Elder, lord of Padua from 1350 to 1388.²⁶ On the whole, the tone of the letter is complimentary, but it also has the character of a *Mirror for Princes* and the poet is prepared to offer advice. He distinguishes his own praise of Francesco, and his loyalty to him, to the adulation and inconsistency of others. Later he recommends that Francesco rewards good courtiers, but warns him against the greed, deceit and mockery of others. Still in the Paduan context, the theme of the unreliable courtier appears in the writings of the humanist Giovanni Conversini of Ravenna (1343-1408) who served both Francesco 'the Elder' and his son Francesco 'the Younger', who ruled the city from 1390 to 1405. Though never openly critical of the regime, the stress Giovanni placed on his own loyalty and honesty implied that others in Carrara service were not so scrupulous.²⁷

A negative view of the Italian Renaissance court emerges in the later historiography, in the nineteenth century. The court could be seen as exemplifying the ills of the *Ancien Regime*, expensive, frivolous, unproductive, damaging to the rest of society. The court – and especially that of the Sforza dukes of Milan – was also associated with failures of leadership and blamed for the ills suffered by Italy from the Italian Wars, ushered in by the French invasion of the Peninsula in 1494. For many Italian, and non-Italian, historians in the age of the *Risorgimento*, the heroic and exemplary period

in the nation's medieval past was associated with republicanism and the rise of the communes.²⁸ The study of court life was often left to antiquarians, *dilettanti*, misguided romantics and even courtiers-*manques*. Moreover, in the twentieth century the failure of the Italian monarchy, the eclipse of court society and the disappearance of the noble household made the study of the court and the *casa* appear increasingly irrelevant to 'serious' social, economic and political historians.

However for historians of art, and culture more generally, concerned with issues of patronage and changes in taste, the court has remained of central importance. For the artist, the man of letters, the architect, the musician the court was a magnet, even if for most, working there was neither as free nor as handsomely rewarded and secure as may have been expected. Moreover, in recent years there has been a move among some art historians away from an exclusive interest in 'high art' towards a more inclusive interest in a wider range of art and craft forms. This has been encouraged by a growing realisation that patronage can be seen in terms of consumerism, and thus as a stimulus to economic activity. In Italian Renaissance studies, one of the first to argue for this was Richard Goldthwaite, but the conclusions he drew principally from Florence are being applied elsewhere, to courts as well as republics.²⁹ For example, that Leonello d'Este, lord of Ferrara, (1441-1450) may have commissioned over 1000 medals in the expensive material bronze must have involved a considerable outlay,³⁰ while a recent exhibition in Ferrara that focused on the court of his successor, Borso (1450-71) covered objects that ranged from playing cards to altarpieces, jewellery to tapestries, medals to works in fresco.³¹ The exhibition also revealed the great demand for skilled artists and craftsmen and the active market for objects of perceived value across northern and central Italy in the later fifteenth century.

An aim of this contribution has been to suggest that the courts of northern Italy in the Renaissance were less parasitical than may often be assumed, and had important political, social and economic dimensions. Further research in these areas needs to be undertaken, but that is unlikely to detract from the fact that these courts and the rivalry – friendly or otherwise – between them provided a great cultural stimulus. As has been mentioned, this has long been recognised, and it has helped create a considerable literature which makes the study of the Italian Renaissance court accessible for students and teachers alike.

In English this literature probably begins with the Scottish historian James Dennistoun (1803-55) whose remarkable and original, three volume *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* was first published in 1851 and is still regarded as authoritative.³² An interest in the Italian Renaissance was taken to a still larger public by John Addington Symonds (1840-93), and the success of his work probably prompted the translation into English of Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, first published in 1860.³³

Focusing on the court, Dennistoun's lead was taken up by Julia Cartwright (1851-1926) who contributed pioneering studies particularly on the courts of Urbino and Mantua. Like Dennistoun, Cartwright drew on a wide range of primary sources, and she was followed by her daughter, Cecilia Ady (1881-1958), who also represents a shift in Italian historiography – in the British Isles – from the amateur to the professional historian. Ady taught at Oxford, and contributed studies on, for example, the Sforza rulers of Milan (1907) and the Bentivoglio rulers of Bologna (1937).³⁴

In more recent years, the study of the Italian Renaissance court, in English, has been advanced by some major exhibitions,³⁵ by the translation of primary source materials,³⁶ and by the publication of a number of important monographic studies and essay collections in Britain and the United States.³⁷ It has also been encouraged by the publication of excellent general surveys, the contributions of Mary Hollingsworth and Alison Cole being particularly valuable.³⁸ These in turn helped to inform an imaginative course on the Renaissance offered recently by the Open University.³⁹ The inclusion of this bibliographical sketch has been to support the view that the Italian Renaissance court is of abiding interest to researchers, teachers, students and the wider public.

NOTES

1. Castiglione's work was quickly translated. In 1552-3 an English translation was prepared by Sir Thomas Hoby, though *The Courtyer* was not published until 1563. It remains in print, for example as a Penguin Classic (Harmondsworth, 1967) where George Bull provided the translation and the introduction. For the building history of the Palazzo Ducale, Alison Cole, *Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts* (London, 1995), pp. 73-8.
2. The Order of the Ermine was bestowed on him by King Ferrante of Naples and that of the Garter by Edward IV of England, both in 1474.
3. See his life of Federigo in W.G. and E. Waters, trans., *Renaissance Princes, Popes and Princes* (New York, 1963).
4. The social and political situation in late medieval Italy has attracted a great deal of attention from historians. In English, one of the finest introductory studies of the medieval commune is, Daniel P. Waley, *The Italian City Republics* (Third edition, London, 1988), while John Larner has provided a vivid account of the *signori* in one region, *The Lords of Romagna* (London, 1965). I have tried to discuss the phenomenon of lordship in *The Lords of Renaissance Italy* (First published for the Historical Association in 1981), and 'The Renaissance Prince' in Eugenio Garin, ed, *Renaissance Characters* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 1-21; 'The Italian north' in Michael Jones, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, VI (Cambridge, 2000), pp.442-468.
5. David Chambers and Jane Martineaux, eds, *Splendours of the Gonzaga* (London, 1981), pp. 103-4
6. Above, note 4. The *Camera Picta* used to be known as the *Camera degli Sposi* 'room of the newly weds'; John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1997), pp. 289-292
7. See below n. 24.
8. Louis Green, 'Galvano Fiamma, Azzone Visconti and the revival of the classical theory of magnificence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 53 (1990).
9. To date little has been written in English on the Varano, but see references to them in the third volume of James Dennistoun's *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* (London 1851), and my entry in the *Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London, 1996), and the following contributions: 'The ending of the duchy of Varano' in Christine Shaw, ed., *Italy and the European Powers* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 77-90; 'The Da Varano lords of Camerino as *condottiere* princes', in John France, ed., *Mercenaries and Paid Men* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 89-104; also below, n. 11.
10. The document itself is titled *Ordine* – the singular form – meaning 'order', but it contains a large number of 'ordini', or specific regulations aimed at particular offices and functions, Sabine Eiche, *Ordine et Officii de Casa de lo Illustrissimo Signor Duca de Urbino* (Urbino, 1999).
11. John E. Law, 'City, Court and Contado in Camerino', in Trevor Dean and Chris Wickham eds, *City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (London, 1990), especially at p. 179. Cesare Borgia had overthrown the Varano in 1502, but the dynasty returned in 1503.
12. See above, notes 9 and 11.
13. Joanna Woods-Marsden, 'How quattrocento princes used art: Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini and *cose militari*', *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 3/4 (1989), pp. 387-414. Cole discusses the contrasting patronage, and politics, of Sigismondo and Federigo da Montefeltro, *Renaissance Courts*. pp. 67-92.
14. For a good insight into Este patronage in terms of buildings and monuments, Charles M. Rosenberg, *The Este Monuments and Urban Development in Renaissance Ferrara* (Cambridge, 1997).
15. Howard Burns, 'The Gonzaga and renaissance architecture', in Chambers and Martineau, *Splendours*, pp. 27-38.
16. 'Filarete and his treatise on architecture', in David Mateer, ed., *Courts, Patrons and Poets* (New Haven and London, 2000), pp.98-115. The significance of the location of fortresses within cities is raised in my 'The Cittadella of Verona', in *War, Culture and Society in Renaissance Venice*, David S. Chambers, Cecil H. Clough and Michael E. Mallett, eds (London, 1993), pp. 9 – 27.
17. John E. Law, 'The *Ordine et officij*: aspects of context and content', in *Ordine et Officij*, p. 17, p. 28.
18. Ilaria Toesca, 'Lancaster and Gonzaga: the Collar of SS at Mantua', in *Splendours*, pp. 1-2. For another view, but one which still emphasises the prestige brought by 'northern' alliances and associations, Joanna Woods-Marsden, *The Gonzaga of Mantua and Pisanello's Arthurian Frescoes* (Princeton, 1988).

19. For the marriage of Lionel duke of Clarence, son of Edward III and Violante daughter of Bernabo Visconti, see the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and Dorothy Muir, *Milan under the Visconti* (London, 1924), pp. 63-5. For some general observations on Bernabo and England, P.G. Ruggiers, 'Tyrrants of Lombardy in Dante and Chaucer', *Philological Quarterly*, 29 (1950), pp. 445-8.
20. Above n. 18. Borso d'Este, lord (1450) and then duke (1471) of Ferrara was named after one of Arthur's knights.
21. In 1451, Sigismondo commissioned Piero della Francesca to paint a fresco in the reliquary chapel of San Francesco, Rimini, depicting the Malatesta kneeling before St Sigismund.
22. Above, n. 9.
23. Cited by Ralph G. Griffiths in 'The Court during the Wars of the Roses', in Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke, eds, *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age* (Oxford, 1991), p. 67.
24. The court as an event, can be seen in the case of the Della Scala lords of Verona, as described in the catalogue to an exhibition held in the city in 1988, Paolo Rigoli, 'L'esibizione del potere', in Gian Maria Varanini, ed., *Gli Scaligeri* (Verona, 1988), pp. 149-156.
25. Above, n. 3.
26. 'How a ruler ought to govern his state' in Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt, eds, *The Earthly Republic* (Manchester, 1978), especially at pp. 35-6, pp. 61-2 and pp. 65-6.
27. Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, *Two Court Treatises*, Benjamin G. Kohl and James Day eds (Munich, 1987).
28. See the introduction to Rosanna Pavoni, *Reviving the Renaissance. The Use and Abuse of the Past in Nineteenth Century Italian Art and Decoration* (Cambridge, 1997), and the opening observations of Marco Gentile in John E. Law and Bernadette Paton, eds, *Communes and Despots in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, forthcoming. An early and very influential champion of republicanism was J.C.L. de Sismondi whose *History of the Italian Republics* was published in London in an abridged translation first in 1832.
29. Richard Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600* (Baltimore, 1993). Goldthwaite's ideas were developed by the Material Renaissance Project at the University of Sussex (2000-4), two key members being Evelyn S. Welch and Michelle O'Malley.
30. Cole, *Renaissance Courts*, p.122.
31. The exhibition was held from September 2007 to January 2008. The principal catalogue is edited by Mauro Nartale, *Cosme Tura e Francesco del Cossa. L'Arte a Ferrara nell'Era di Borso d'Este* (Ferrara, 2007). An abbreviated, but excellent, bilingual guide was also produced, both of which are to be reviewed in a forthcoming number of *Renaissance Studies*.
32. For James Dennistoun, see the introduction by Edward Hutton in the edition of 1909, as well as entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Grove Dictionary of Art*.
33. For Symonds and his relationship to Burckhardt see John E. Law, 'John Addington Symonds and the Despots of Renaissance Italy' in John E. Law and Lena Ostermark Johansen, eds, *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance* (London, 2005), pp.145-163. Many editions of Burckhardt's work are available.
34. Benjamin G. Kohl, 'Cecilia M. Ady: the Edwardian education of a historian of Renaissance Italy', in *Victorian and Edwardian Responses*, pp. 233-255.
35. For example, *Splendours of the Gonzaga*, above n. 5.
36. For example, David S. Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance* (London, 1970) and Creighton E. Gilbert, *Italian Art 1400-1500. Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, 1980).
37. For example Cecil H. Clough, *The Duchy of Urbino in the Renaissance* (London, 1981); Evelyn S. Welch, *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan* (New Haven and London, 1995)
38. Mary Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy: From 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1994); for Cole, above n. 1. Both contain excellent bibliographies
39. Above n. 16.

Landscape, Labour and Cultural Identity

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National identity in painting is a strange thing. Why should an accident of birth impart some sort of essence into a work of art? Why should the work of a Scot living in 1700 manifest some form of distinctiveness that can be identified again in the creations of another Scot working in 2000? James Paterson, the late nineteenth century landscape painter and a prominent member of the Glasgow School, thought the idea ridiculous. In a short piece for the *Scottish Art Review* called 'A Note on Nationality in Art' he wrote

In the work of artists of former generations, the greatest dissimilarity prevails. The landscapes of Constable, Turner, Gainsborough, and Wilson display widely differing methods of interpreting nature, differences which make it impossible to class them as belonging to a single school, while the portraits of Velasquez, Titian, Rembrandt, Reynolds, and Raeburn show more points of resemblance than are generally seen in the best work of any one country.¹

Paterson's remarks reject the suggestion that national styles ever existed, citing vast differences between past luminaries of English painting and pointing out great similarities between the work of men from five different countries across a period of three hundred years. To further complicate the matter we might consider images of a country, rather than simply images made by a citizen of that country. Are we to believe that there is something qualitatively different about the depictions of the Highlands produced by the English painter Edwin Landseer from those painted by his Scottish contemporary Horatio McCulloch? The Englishman Louis Bosworth Hurt painted Highland cattle in the mist as did the Scot Peter Graham. An argument in support of the existence of a 'Scottish School', on the model attacked by Paterson, would suggest that while Graham actually painted his Highland cows from his studio in London, they were essentially Scottish and somehow authentic in a way in which the creations of L.B. Hurt were not.

These questions will be explored here in relation to nineteenth century Scottish images of landscape and labour. Despite the increasing importance of urbanisation and industrialisation, nineteenth century Scottish art is synonymous with images of the land. Stereotypically these paintings are understood as Romantic and romanticised depictions of landscape and people in the landscape. That stereotype, emerging in the early nineteenth century and fostered by the writing of Walter Scott, has obscured the complexity of these images, their specificity and the nature of their relationship to contemporary English and continental art.

It has been observed that the character of nineteenth century American images of rural labour is largely determined by whether they were created before or after the Civil War. 1861-5 is a watershed event in American society and whatever the influences exerted on American painters through their knowledge of European art, the specifics of the American context are the primary driver. This analysis has not been undertaken for Scotland. In general the over arching Scottish political and social context as a 'stateless nation' runs as a constant bedrock to all Scottish art after 1707. More specifically the consequences for painting of the specifics of Scottish rural societies, both Highland and Lowland, and the realities of labour practices consistently divergent from those in England and Europe, mean that nineteenth century Scottish land based art had its own identity, purpose, meaning and method.

Land based art is ubiquitous in Europe in the nineteenth century. Indeed into the twentieth century radical images of rural labour were being produced across Europe. Scottish artists created such work from the late eighteenth century to the First World War. These are often unquestioningly read as historically irrelevant, simplistic and sentimental kitsch, wholly divorced from the gritty reality of contemporary Scottish existence and largely derivative of the more conservative elements of near contemporary English, French and Dutch painting. Re-examining Scottish rural images, free of *a priori* assumptions about external influences and internal irrelevances, offers an insight into the

meaning of rural imagery in its own right, addresses the problematic issue of national identity in art, and locates the Scottish work within the context of contemporary British and Continental practice.

Examining the Scottish work relative to the specific Scottish historic context is central to developing an approach to interpreting these images. Too often assumptions have been made concerning the primacy of English and continental practice. It has been assumed that the Scots were essentially imitative. Thus in 1983 it was noted that Glasgow School artists painted at an artists colony, Cockburnspath, Berwickshire, 'in imitation of the French example'.² Such unquestioned statements take on a spurious authority and are repeated and elaborated. By 2002 it was claimed that 'in imitation of artists' colonies in France ... the Glasgow School (was) formed and many of these artists gave more prominence to rural figures than the landscape.'³ The entirety of the 'School', a erroneous notion in relation to late nineteenth century Glasgow painting anyway, and 'its' approach to painting is here ascribed wholly to the aping of France. Even those writers determined to redress the balance and treat Scottish painting on its own merits can succumb to casual assumptions of precedence. In a major volume of 1990 it was noted that 'Hugh Cameron ... was certainly influenced by Israels and through him by Millet. ... Cameron treated themes of the hardness of rural life, and the heavy labour borne by women. He softens the harshness of the continental's depiction of such scenes though.'⁴ In this understanding, Cameron's painting is not only said to be derivative of Millet, it is perceived as a watered down version of French painting, a 'softening' of the harsh realities of existence. The problem with this view is that it assumes that the subject, the 'hardness of rural life' which J.F. Millet depicted so powerfully, is the same for the Scot, Cameron. However, in examining Millet and his treatment of female rural labour the importance of understanding the paintings in relation to the particular nature of the French context has been widely noted. For example the painting of *The Gleaners* was frequently read as dangerously subversive when viewed in Paris in 1857. It was understood as drawing attention to a divided rural community and to the impoverished reality of a marginalised and often ignored component of French society. With changed circumstances, by the 1880s the same painting in the same location was likely to be read as nostalgic and gently reassuring, and by 1914 it was appearing in army recruitment posters as an icon of French nationhood.⁵

None of this context is at all relevant to Scotland or to Cameron. Indeed rather the reverse of the French situation is true in Scotland, or at least in certain regions of Scotland. As urbanisation and industrialisation continued to develop very rapidly, rural images in Scotland in 1845-65 were not read as subversive, instead they often carried nostalgic, elegiac messages (J. Phillip, *A Scotch Fair*, 1848 Aberdeen Art Gallery; T. Faed, *The Last of the Clan*, 1865, Glasgow Art Gallery). However by 1880-90, with a 'Crofter's War' (1882-6) in the Highlands and a depression in agricultural prices generally in the period, rural images from that decade were more likely to raise uncomfortable questions for the exhibition - going public than they were thirty years earlier. Even that generalisation must be qualified however as the south-east Lowlands were markedly prosperous right through the 1880s. Agricultural wages in that region were almost entirely unaffected by rural change until World War I, meaning that while Highland imagery in the decade after 1880 was likely to be controversial, images from the East Linton school, W.D. Mackay, R. Macgregor *et al.*, cannot be understood as emerging from a period of unrest and crisis. It is in the exploration of explicit national and regional circumstances such as these that a new reading of this distinctive genre will emerge.

There is another important aspect to the specifically Scottish context which must be considered before going on to examine images of rural labour. By the mid nineteenth century Scotland had a very strongly established visual identity. It was highland. The emergence and power of 'Highlandism' must be understood before considering the imagery of the second half of the nineteenth century. By and large in the nineteenth century Scotland was content to be a part of Britain but also sought to assert her cultural individuality. As Murray Pittock has observed, there was a move 'towards the Victorian duality of localist loyalties within an imperial community'.⁶ That is, Scots came to feel the need for a badge of difference to distinguish themselves from England, their larger, richer, more powerful partner in statehood. This concern led directly to Highlandism, to the fiction that Scotland was Highland and that the Highlands were Scotland.

This fiction developed very rapidly across the whole of the United Kingdom, so that by 1822, when George IV came to Edinburgh, Walter Scott's Highland pageant of loyal rejoicing was broadly

welcomed and endorsed. In part this can be accounted for by suggesting that the rapidly changing social, political and economic climate of the early nineteenth century created nostalgia for the past, while simultaneously the erosion of differences this change necessarily caused, encouraged the pursuit of distinguishing local characteristics which might foster a consciousness of continuity in an uncertain age. Though comfortable with their position within the British polity in the early nineteenth century, Scots were nevertheless fervently looking for something that was distinctive. The Highlands were ideal for this purpose. They were both topographically distinct and were perceived as nurturing a unique society. That society had been a cause of great disquiet in the earlier eighteenth century when the threat of a Stuart restoration was real. More than sixty years on from 1745 however the worry stemming from the proximity of an 'alien' culture and an intractable landscape could safely give way to an interest in the 'curiosities' of the area. Those who would have been alarmed at the possibility of the return of the Stuarts in actuality could now safely embrace 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' and all the cultural baggage which went with him (Highlanders, Tartan, Bagpipes). They could invest such a package with a whole range of romantic notions with only the vaguest link to reality and all for the very good reasons that such notions were now not threatening and were not English. Thus the defeated and powerless Highlanders were assumed to be a single unified culture. The clan chief became an omnipotent being leading a free spirited band which recognised no master but him. The military success of the Jacobites in invading northern England was credited to the Highlanders innate war-like psyche and doctrine of individual valour. The topography of the Highlands and the romanticised culture that was supposed to inhabit it were directly linked. The 'romantic' Highlanders were understood to have derived their laudable if backward, culture directly from the physical environment of their habitat. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the recently derided Highlanders and their locale began to be endowed with iconic status as the heartland of the nation.

Though dealt with more easily in painting genres other than landscape something of the centrality of the populace and their intimate connection to the land is evident in a painting such as Horatio McCulloch's *My Heart's in the Highlands* [Figure 1]. It is an imaginary view complete with mountains, a loch, deer, a castle and a cottage. The title stresses the close attachment of the people to the land. The



Figure 1 – Horatio McCulloch, *My Heart's in the Highlands*, 1860. Oil on canvas, 61 x 91.4 cms. Glasgow Museums: Art Gallery & Museum, Kelvingrove.

painting was originally to be called *An Emigrant's Dream of His Highland Home*, emphasising the people/land bond even more strongly with the added allusion to severance and loss. In visual terms, with its juxtaposed castle and cottage, the painting stresses both the (martial) history of the region and the continuity of culture, two further major facets of Scott's characterisation of the Highlands. Scott drew parallels between the indomitable Gaels with their culture of militarism and loyalty, and the landscape they inhabited. The people like the land were rugged, uncompromising, extreme. The associations of landscape Highlandism were with the specific culture and history of the inhabitants of the region, albeit a largely fantasy culture and a heavily edited history. For those contemporaries attuned to the rhetoric, all this was present in McCulloch's work.

This installation of the Highlands as the 'true Scotland' was gradual and uneven and took place during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Walter Scott did not create the romantic image of the Highlander on his own. He was immensely influential however. *The Edinburgh Review* in a slightly incredulous appraisal of *Waverley* in November 1814 noted the 'incorruptible fidelity, patriarchal brotherhood, and savage habits of the Celtic Clans' and opined that

One great source of interest which the volumes ... undoubtedly possess, is to be sought in the surprise that is to be excited discovering, that in our own country and almost in our own age, manners and characters existed, and were conspicuous, which we had been accustomed to consider as belonging to remote antiquity, or extravagant romance.⁷

Scott was credited not as an imaginative author but as revealing the reality of the Highlands to his contemporaries. His fiction of romance, heroism, militarism and loyalty was simply accepted as revealed truth, and in popular perception the Highlands morphed into heartland of Scottish honour, valour and history.

By mid-century, with Scott's development of a Highland identity for Scotland now forty years old, and following Queen Victoria's unquestioning acceptance and adoption of it, Highlandism was so strongly imbedded that passing references were all that was required to conjure the edifice in its entirety. On occasion, as in Peter Graham's *Spate in the Highlands*, where a washed out bridge stresses the harshness of the environment which contributes so strongly to the inhabitants' unique culture, these ocular prompts were minimal. For an audience attuned to 'the land of the mountain and the flood' they were comfortably sufficient. Painted Romantic visions of the Highlands are clearly central then to the visual identity which Scotland evolved in the nineteenth century. That identity remains extraordinarily powerful today; witness fifty thousand inhabitants of the post-industrial central belt at Hampden singing enthusiastically of their 'wee bit hill and glen'. The phenomenon is now very widespread.

The selfhood which nineteenth century Scots invested in the Highland identity is extraordinary but not unique. The political, social and economic circumstances discussed above meant that a set of signifiers which were both distinct from England and, being partly vested in the actual structure of the land, not susceptible to looming change, was very appealing. In different but not wholly unrelated circumstances, late seventeenth century Scots felt pressured by English claims of political and ecclesiastical suzerainty. At that time Scottish identity was heavily invested in claims of ancient title to the land personified in the Stuart monarchs' theoretically unbroken lineage. Contemporary English authors who doubted the legitimacy of the traditional Scottish telling of the deeds of some forty kings who ruled from 330BC onwards, were seen as striking at the foundation of Scottish nationhood. If the reality of these kings could be questioned, it was felt, then the whole basis on which Scotland's claim to self-governing status was founded was at risk. So fundamental to Scottish identity were these fabled forty monarchs that the King's Advocate in Scotland threatened to have an offending English writer who doubted them tried for treason and executed, were he sufficiently imprudent to set foot in Scotland. By 1800 the forty kings were long recognized as fiction. But the nineteenth century construction of a Highland identity for the whole of the country was internalised by Scots to just as great an extent as the birthright of the Stuarts ever was. If not truly treachery, opposition to Highlandism was without doubt regarded in artistic circles as an intentional assault on the whole edifice of national cultural identity.

That challenge did take place however. As Romanticism was superseded as the progressive language of European art from mid-nineteenth century onwards, younger Scottish artists sought ways to both retain a distinctive identity and respond to contemporary continental developments. It is on that I now wish to concentrate. Across Europe many younger painters of the mid nineteenth century actively sought a new aesthetic and aimed to replace Romanticism with an identity which more truthfully reflected the actuality of their everyday experience. In Scotland however those painters were subject to conflicting pressures. For those Scottish artists conversant with the internationalism of Paris, Antwerp and The Hague, Romanticism was passé, and to persist with it led only to marginalisation and increasing irrelevance. However, the now very well recognized native tradition of Scotland as the Highlands endorsed the convention of Romanticism and laid any non-adherents open to the accusation of disloyalty to the country. Highlandism held a fierce grip on the Scottish consciousness stemming from the immense popularity which Walter Scott's revivification and repackaging of Scottish history enjoyed. Queen Victoria's enthusiastic adoption of Highlandism served to further reinforce its romantic fascination. After 1848, when she bought Balmoral castle, Victoria spent every Autumn in Scotland living among tartans designed by Prince Albert in a capricious fantasy world of 'traditional' Scottish culture. Her obsession with Highland Scotland and its supposed culture helped bring mass tourism to the region. In the forty years following her acquisition of Balmoral, Oban trebled in size as it accommodated tourists engaged in visiting 'authentic', i.e. Highland, Scotland. In these circumstances, with a celebrated and unique aesthetic which in addition brought powerful, growing economic benefits, any resistance to the dominion of Highlandism as Scotland's visual identity, questioned not a set of artistic conventions but the very character of the nation.

Within established Scottish artistic circles there was no support for any young artists who professed an interest in painting from beyond Scotland. 'The Barbarians traditional mistrust and hatred of foreigners' typified the attitudes of the council members of the Royal Scottish Academy, according to George Reid, one of the younger artists beginning to build a reputation at the time.⁸ The R.S.A. was then the overriding artistic force, and its governing body effectively excluded most non-Scottish work from its annual exhibition. For emerging artists the emulation of acknowledged Scottish masters was encouraged. Reid, as a landscape painter, was expected to follow the example of McCulloch and indeed the younger man's early work shows significant influence from the older painter. That was transformed when Reid encountered European, principally Dutch, Realism.

The Aberdeen patron John Forbes White pioneered the collecting of modern Dutch painting in Scotland when he purchased *Drenthe* by Gerrit Alexander Mollinger in London in 1862. The painting was the first of many modern Dutch works acquired by White. By 1866 he had a substantial collection of Hague School paintings which he made a point of showing to contemporary Scottish painters. Other progressive collectors, predominantly those in Aberdeen and the north-east, were influenced to make and exhibit similar purchases. When Reid became a pupil of Mollinger in Utrecht in July 1866, again through the sponsorship of White, the impact on his work was considerable. Reid's subject matter and technique were transformed, in effect he became a Realist landscape painter. When he left for Holland he had 'a special preference for castles, churches and everything in ruins, which he decorates with thunderous effect, such as rainbows and setting suns'.⁹ He was almost a caricature of the typical Romantic landscape painter. By the time of his return to Scotland, his sunsets and ruined castles had been replaced by landscapes of coastal and rural settlement, either plainly shaped by human occupation or, less regularly, populated by diligent citizens.

Two years after Reid's first study visit to Holland the theoretical underpinning of this shift towards Realism was presented in a pamphlet he co-authored with White. *Thoughts on Art and Notes on the exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy of 1868* was presented as an extended critical review of that year's RSA exhibition.¹⁰ In practice the essay proposed a radical shift in Scotland's visual identity. The examination of the RSA exhibition centred around the provincial nature of national vision inherent in Scottish art and sought a corrective to this and a restoration of the country to the mainstream of European thinking and practice. Reid and White did not attack nationalism in art *per se*. Central to their analysis was a belief that a healthy artistic culture was always nationally distinctive.

The art of a nation is part of its life. The form which it assumes is not accidental, but is the outcome of the aesthetic tendencies of the people. These tendencies are themselves the inevitable development of the conditions under which the nation has been moulded into shape.¹¹

It was only Highlandism, as the benchmark of the country's character, that was to be cast off. Specifically under attack was Reid's erstwhile mentor McCulloch. His Highland landscapes were damned for their 'hardness and conventionality' and for their 'most hurtful' influence.¹² The principles of Romantic landscape painting were further condemned in a discussion of Arthur Perigal, McCulloch's follower, with that artist's works rejected as showing evidence of 'the same stereotyped order without a single redeeming feature in them.'¹³

The writers found Scottish painting wanting in true national identity and dedicated the eighty pages of their publication to suggesting exactly how Scottish painting failed and how it might be remedied. Scotland's existing Highland identity was rejected as artificial, and an alternative promoted. The authors' alternative vision emerged from a belief that a country's art must mirror the prevailing 'circumstances of race, of historical manners, of climate, of geographical configuration and position'.¹⁴ Although specifically alluding to the topography of the country as a seminal feature of any identity, the Highlands were downplayed and a far greater import accorded to the Lowland landscape. Claiming to find support for their analysis of 'national' art in any given society, and briefly discussing various examples, they soon turned to the essential function of the publication, viz. the promotion as quintessentially modern, of the Realist images of rural peasantry as found in France and Holland. Reid and White offered up the rural genre works of J.F. Millet and Jules Breton as national images. It was this type of imagery which encapsulated France they felt because 'in no country is the poetry of the simple peasant life more keenly felt' and therefore any perceptive rendering of this theme must inescapably reveal the nature of France.¹⁵ Additionally these images were of present-day life, the only viable modern subject according to the authors since 'the only kind (of painting) that is valuable and enduring, is that of contemporary events'.¹⁶

It was the contention of Reid and White that independent of France and Holland, Scotland too had a strong national tradition of rural life. Despite much modern focus on the industrial and urban central belt, in 1868 rural living was the reality for a large part of the country. So in spite of living in the second most industrialised country in the world (after England), it is not unreasonable that Scots should identify rural images as the epitome of the nation. Furthermore, the increasingly symbiotic connection between country and town meant that 'the rural experience had a political and social importance far beyond any quantitative evaluation of its significance'.¹⁷ For Reid and White this rural identity was to be found most clearly in the country's traditional songs. It was there 'we see mirrored the whole character of the people'.¹⁸ 'The wealth of Scottish song' it was claimed 'makes it an easy task to decipher the national characteristics, for there is no country in which there is a greater outpouring of feeling in regard to the domestic affections, the incidents of simple every-day life, with its pleasures and sorrows.'¹⁹

In 1868 theory was significantly more progressive than practice, and Scottish Realist painting was no more than embryonic at the time *Thoughts on Art* was published. Reid, his contemporaries and successors evolved a Realist aesthetic over the next two decades in an environment of growing European interactions and rising local opposition from the Scottish cultural authorities. Scottish Realist expression is seen developing in Reid's *Montrose* where European inspiration is obvious [Figure 2]. Mollinger painted *Meerkirk* in Utrecht in 1866 during the period of Reid's study with him [Figure 3]. The Scot was later involved in arranging the sale of the work to an Aberdeen collector so he was very familiar with the work and its effect on *Montrose* is evident. In both paintings it is the human impact and use of the land that is emphasised. The largest tonal contrast in both works comes with the silhouetting of the town against the horizon. In addition Reid underscores the town in his painting with irregular light and dark strips. Both works lead the viewer through the foreground and into the painting via a pathway which interrupts a generally strong horizontal emphasis. That path towards the town is accentuated by the presence of figures. The landscape the figures move through has little essential appeal or utility. In both works the town and its citizens is the focus, with very similar contrasts established between the neat thriving settlement beyond and the largely useless



Figure 2 – Sir George Reid, *Montrose*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 83.3 x 102.5 cms. Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum Collections.



Figure 3 – Gerrit Alexander Mollinger, *Meerkirk, Clearing up after Rain*, 1866. Oil on canvas, 41.8 x 61.5 cms. Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum Collections.

saturated foreground. A more generalised Dutch link is seen in Reid's inclusion of a representation of bleaching, with linen seen spread on the ground behind the seated figure. From the seventeenth century onwards in Dutch landscape painting images of bleaching, clothes were a metaphor for purity and honour. Reid utilised the device here to further eulogise the Lowland farming/trading community he depicted. The Scot also exhibits French ties. In the Reid painting there is a visual rhyming established between the standing/seated figure and the church spire/roofscape juxtaposition in the community beyond. This emphasis on the continuity of the people and the town is directly appropriated from J.F. Millet's *The Angelus*, well known to Reid from his study in Paris in the 1860s. The stress on a Lowland rural subject and the evident European Realist links make the departure of *Montrose* from the emphatic emotionalism of Scottish Romantic landscape unmistakable.

The paintings which emerged from Reid's initial Dutch studies were exhibited at the RSA of 1867 and were met with deep antagonism. Reid's principal submission was hung immediately underneath a painting by Mollinger emphasizing his abandonment of the customary Scottish manner. Sir George Harvey, the RSA president called Reid to a meeting and condemned his transformed style. Harvey made it clear that his hostility to Reid's new paintings was more than a matter of personal taste. He spoke, he said, for all the senior academicians in condemning Reid's abandonment of established Scottish subject matter and methods. The principle of foreign study, any foreign study was attacked, and Reid was rebuked for 'looking at nature through Mollinger's eyes'.²⁰ Clearly imitation in itself was not a problem since Reid's earlier works, which were acclaimed by Harvey, were at least as deeply indebted to McCulloch as the latter were to Mollinger. It was his choice of a Dutch master, rather than Scottish, which was his error. All Realist landscape, and Mollinger specifically was condemned. Reid was in no doubt that it was his abandonment of traditional Scottish subject matter that irritated and puzzled the Scottish establishment. He was told that his earlier, Romantic style would lead to success within the RSA but continued pursuit of Realism would result only in 'disappointed hopes'.²¹ Since the 1840s McCulloch had been acclaimed as a 'national' painter and his images of the 'loneliness of mountain sides and great glens' were held to embody Scotland.²² In 1867 any landscape without the stamp of Highlandism simply had no legitimacy as Scottish in establishment eyes. For a Scot to forsake Highlandism and endorse the alien Realism was little short of treachery.

The hostile response was widespread and clearly those who confronted Reid and condemned his study in Holland saw themselves as protecting more than a traditional artistic approach. In their sincerely held views they saw Reid's innovations as jeopardising the very spirit of the nation itself. Reid was written off by the press as 'the Aberdonian who is imitating Mollinger'.²³ Robert Horn, a significant Scottish patron, invited Reid to examine his collection and then used the occasion to reprove him for taking on a Realist style. Horn criticised the foolishness of artists affecting the manner of foreigners and advocated Scottish painters reliance on 'their own native strength'.²⁴

Just as the attack on Realism demonstrates the importance critics placed on Highlandism as the elemental Scottish manner, so the defence mounted by Reid demonstrates that he also was well aware of the broader implications of his new approach. Reid called on Scottish artists to welcome European stimuli; to free their 'minds from the distorting effects of prejudice, and cultivate an honest desire to get at the truth, to respect the efforts, and enter into the feelings, of men whose whole way of thinking and acting lies completely outside our own boundaries'.²⁵ In effect *Thoughts on Art* foresaw a comprehensive shift in the character of Scottish art, calling for an openness from which would inexorably follow the abandonment of Romanticism and the acceptance of Realism. Just as Harvey and the RSA saw all Scotland's individuality endangered by Realism, so Reid saw the transformation as a means of formulating a new self image for Scotland, one which was appropriate to a modern, European nation. In appealing for the opening up of the RSA to European realist exhibits, Reid sought a means of making Scots conscious of the fundamentally provincial character of their own taste. 'We measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves among ourselves, and usually come to the most self-complacent conclusions, refusing, obstinately, to believe that anything better is discoverable than our own narrow provincial views', he claimed.²⁶ European Realism was much

more than a matter of style for Reid. It was nothing less than a method by which Scotland might create for herself a more progressive, more appropriate, truly representative visual culture.

For both sides in the argument it was the fact that Reid's new method had its origins in non-Scottish art that was pivotal. Horn encapsulated the conservative position when he laid out the errors made by young Scottish artists.

They go abroad, they see the works of distinguished foreign artists, they are taken as the bird in the snare of the fowler, they adopt their style and manner of working & often end in being nothing save mere wretched copyists.

There could be no justification 'To go abroad – to look at the works of contemporary artists there, never.'²⁷ Any artist under European influence simply could not be considered Scottish. For Reid, paintings produced by a Scot, in Scotland, and addressing the reality of everyday Scottish life revealed the character of Scottish society, and an artist needed a widespread network of contacts to keep abreast of current developments and avoid parochialism. Reid's conception of identity simply did not rely on cultural exclusivity to survive. For him national identity was not deliberately created or omitted in a work; nor was it established by the subject alone, or the technique. Reid felt that a painting held its nationality automatically and revealed that identity inescapably. In Reid's words there was, an indestructible 'law of parallelism between the national life, literature and art'.²⁸ This conception of identity was current across Europe. Writing four years after Reid published *Thoughts on Art*, Eugène Fromentin said of his fellow French painter Theodore Rousseau 'He represents, in his beautiful and exemplary career, the efforts of the French mind to create in France a new Dutch art; I mean an art as perfect (as the Dutch) while being national'.²⁹ For Fromentin, as for Reid the national identity of a work sprung from its particularity, not its aesthetic forbears. In essence nationalism in art was no longer to be concerned with exclusivity.

Eric Hobsbawm has remarked that 'national identification and what it is believed to imply, can shift and change in time, even in the course of quite short periods.'³⁰ Scotland was on the verge of such a shift in conception in the late 1860s. Unquestionably the construction that was Highland identity was under pressure. 'The conditions under which the nation has been moulded into shape' were not revealed in romanticised images of isolated glens meagrely settled by plaid clad rustics. Neither did such images indicate the actuality of current Scottish society. Though increasingly industrialised, Scotland in 1868 still had more than sixty percent of the population inhabiting settlements of less than 5000 people.³¹ The majority experience was reflected in the Realist subject matter of labour and of rural and coastal townships. If painting were to be national, to shape and reflect Scottish identity in Realist terms, it had to discard habituated renderings of mountains and stags and embrace Lowland farming. Despite constant accusations of manufacturing an ersatz identity, the proposals that first emerged in *Thoughts on Art* evolved and proliferated, initially to those artists associated with J.F. White, but ultimately over the following twenty years to an entire generation of Scottish painters.

Reid himself developed into a highly successful portrait painter which occupied a lot of his time and consequently he produced relatively few images of rural labour. His most ambitious was *The Peat-gatherers*, an accurate record of the tools, costume, and methods of a customary Scottish practice [Figure 4]. It was painted around the time *Thoughts on Art* was written but is now lost and known only in illustration. G. Baldwin Brown, the first professor of Fine Art in Scotland wrote of the painting in the late nineteenth century and endorsed the painter's conception of identity in commenting on how identifiably Scottish the artist remained while learning from his peers on the continent.³² This revisionist understanding of nationalism in painting was significant for the development of Reid's close friend George Paul Chalmers.

For most of his short career Chalmers was one of the group of artists supported by the Aberdeen patron J.F. White, and was introduced to the leading Hague School painter Josef Israels by the collector. Though more commonly a painter of domestic interiors, in the winter of 1872-3 Chalmers painted a labouring subject, *The End of the Harvest*, while living with White in Aberdeen [Figure 5]. The location shown is Hillhead of Hedderwick, an area directly north-west of Montrose, Chalmers birthplace. Rather than a dramatic romantic Highland image, Chalmers chose a locality he knew



Figure 4 – Photograph after Sir George Reid, *The Peat Gatherers*, c.1868, Original painting oil on canvas, size unknown. Photograph published in *The Magazine of Art*, 1892. Location of original unknown.



Figure 5 – George Paul Chalmers, *The End of the Harvest*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 88.4 x 162.5 cms. Private Collection.

intimately and an unpretentious genre subject – potato harvesting. The painting probably documents changing practices in rural labour. In 1894 R.H. Pringle wrote,

Forty years ago, women working on farms had to take what they could get or go idle, for other employment was scarce and factory life was in its infancy. Now the scene is changed, and no educated country girl with a spark of ambition and pride about her need toil among the “tatties” for lack of opportunities to better herself in a different branch of employment’.³³

Chalmers work was painted in the middle of this forty year period and probably indicates his recognition of shifting work patterns in an area he knew well. The painting proposes a national art wholly distinct from Highlandism, an art drawn from the artist’s own awareness of everyday Scottish realities. The work is far from parochial however and is clearly related to contemporary French practice. The subject



Figure 6 – William Darling McKay, *Turnip Shaving, Winter Morning*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 60 x 113 cms. Private Collection.

matter of harvesters, the heroic scale, almost two metres wide, and the metaphoric use of landscape to highlight the sentiment of the image, all reflect the influence of J.F. Millet's famous work of 1857, *The Gleaners*.³⁴ The central characters in both paintings are stooping female figures. In neither work do the figures break through the horizon line, leaving them rooted in the land. Chalmers' figures are shown gathering the last of the potato crop into sacks at sunset, and the end of the day is made to echo the end of the harvest. In the Millet the figures of the gleaners are placed in a shadowed foreground, separate from the affluent harvest taking place behind in a landscape bathed in light. Although there are clear French links, the specific subject matter depicted by Chalmers is his own invention and he may indeed have influenced the Dutch painter Phillip Sadeé who completed a large version of the same potato picking subject the following year. This is exactly the methodology outlined by Reid and White. Though of differing nationalities, dispositions, and aptitudes, Millet, Chalmers and Sadeé all saw significant modern painting as inevitably centring on the portrayal of rural life and labour. Millet almost certainly influenced Chalmers, and Sadeé may have drawn on the Scot as an exemplar, but the 'law of parallelism between the national life and art' produced specific contexts, subject matters, dress and landscapes and led to all three attending to the individual character of their own country. In Reid's and White's terms they all created identifiably national work.

The new approach became very widespread and really any rural genre from the mid-1860s until the end of the century can be argued to derive ultimately from Reid's innovations. Beginning in the 1860s and with mounting regularity from the 1870s the Gifford born East Lothian painter William Darling McKay produced images of rural life and labour. Like Chalmers' Angus subjects, McKay's work depicted a locale with which the artist was thoroughly familiar. McKay exhibited ten paintings at the RSA between 1870 and 1885 which expressly identified East Lothian as the location of the depicted activity. His paintings recorded the life and labour practices of one of the most innovative and successful farming regions in Scotland. The rural cycle of the agricultural lands south of Edinburgh are documented in paintings such as *Cottars Digging Potatoes, East Lothian* (1871), *Stonebreakers East Lothian* (1877), *Hay Time in Upper Annandale* (1880).

East Lothian Turnip Shaving: Winter Morning dates from 1882 and shows figures employed in 'topping and tailing' turnips [Figure 6]. Characteristically this painting is exceedingly particular, both in its title and in the depicted endeavour. While *The End of the Harvest* or *The Gleaners* is not specific as regards location, the title here situates the image exactly. Economic opportunities and

social conditions in agriculture varied widely according to region in late nineteenth century Scotland so particularity of subject was a way of fixing paintings in time and place. Turnip and other 'green crop' cultivation was a noteworthy element of the south east agricultural system and the practice had grown swiftly in the earlier nineteenth century. The acreage of turnips grown in the region multiplied four-fold between c.1800 and the period when McKay began painting, with a number of specific consequences. Firstly their use as cattle fodder allowed farmers to keep more animals which in turn produced more manure, leading to a further yield increase. Secondly they stimulated an increased requirement for farm labour, especially female labour, because their cultivation was very labour intensive. These developments must have had a visible impact on the landscape. In addition to the visual alteration the crop imposed on the countryside, the demands which turnips made on husbandry led directly to the widespread importation of large, readily identifiable groups of women labourers into the south-east from the Highlands and from Ireland. McKay's image dates from the 1880s, and due to urban competition, it was, by then, becoming progressively more problematic to obtain the necessary female labour. In depicting this subject at all McKay was recording a distinct East Lothian phenomenon. In addition although some men, usually permanently employed 'orramen', were traditionally drawn in to turnip cultivation, McKay's depiction of so many men working the crop, probably also comments on the waning of the mainly female gangs of workers. In an earlier sketch for this painting the two figures furthest to the right were represented as a grieve, identified by his straw boater, and a gamekeeper, both exclusively male jobs. The need to note the demise of the all-female labour force may explain the changes McKay made between this initial design and the finished piece. In the exhibited work he increased the ratio of men to women to 4:1, and highlighted the changes in the gender balance of the workforce by substituting two more generalised men involved in the cultivation of the crop, for the two job specific figures. In *Turnip Singlers* of the following year, the figure of the grieve was retained but the same mixed, predominantly male workforce was shown; a sight which must have become increasingly common as the supply of female labour dried up. These works form part of McKay's extended record of the individual practices of a specific agricultural community.

The specificity is central here. These images can only be an account of East Lothian. The titles locate them precisely in place, and with the allusion to shifting labour patterns they are closely anchored in time. In 1885, just when McKay was working, Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo and remarked that paintings of peasants and labourers may have started out as simply another genre in painting, 'but at present, with Millet the great master as leader, this is the very heart of modern art, and will remain so.'³⁵ He was claiming in effect, that in order to be regarded as a relevant contemporary painter in the 1880s, an artist needed to paint rural labour subjects. This was a widely held belief, broadly accepted throughout Europe. The challenge which faced all artists from van Gogh to McKay was to paint peasants without simply mimicking 'the great master' Millet. The solution McKay evolved was to insist on the particularity of his work. These were not pastiche French paintings because the meticulously recorded subjects were incontrovertibly not French. These specific combinations of costume, farming practices and landscape were only to be found in a restricted portion of south-east Scotland and that made the paintings identifiably national. This solution was not itself new. It followed exactly the programme outlined by Reid. It also mirrored certain French practice where, with paintings such as *Blessing of the Wheat in the Artois*, Jules Breton documented changing culture in a manner similar to that which McKay later adopted.³⁶

While McKay's approach was not wholly original it produced paintings which were both conclusively Scottish and identifiably modern, and its possibilities were immediately understood. Robert McGregor and James Campbell Noble joined McKay in East Lothian before 1880 and proceeded to work in a comparable manner. McGregor's *The Last Stook*, for example, treated the idiosyncrasies of local haymaking practice in the same spirit as his mentor had treated turnip growing [Figure 7]. Meanwhile in Glasgow in the early 1880s, a number of younger painters, dissatisfied with the mawkish sentimental genre purveyed by their west coast elders, aggressively pursued a more modern approach. Like Reid before them they deliberately rejected Highlandism, and according to a contemporary 'consciously avoided the romantically picturesque ... Highlands and islands'.³⁷ It was McKay's example they turned to and encouraged by the network of contacts around the older painter, several of the Glasgow artists transferred their painting base to the south-east.



Figure 7 – Robert McGregor, *The Last Stook*, c.1882. Oil on canvas, 41 x 92 cms. Private Collection.

James Guthrie began working in the Berwickshire village of Cockburnspath in 1883. He may have become familiar with the area through his connection to the exile Scot, John Pettie. Pettie, who spent his childhood in East Linton, taught Guthrie in London for a short time and in addition, was a close friend of McKay's associate James Campbell Noble.³⁸ It is possible however that direct knowledge of McKay influenced Guthrie to move east. Cockburnspath is just over the county border from East Lothian and the nature of the agriculture surrounding the village has little in common with the Borders hill farms found in other parts of Berwickshire.³⁹ Rather the working practices and people recorded in Guthrie's Cockburnspath paintings are closely related to McKay's East Lothian subjects. They document similar activities and do so from a comparable position of intimate knowledge of the life and work of the locale. As an incomer, Guthrie had to deliberately attain this information, establishing himself in Cockburnspath in the summer of 1883 and remaining for more than two years absorbed in rural life. He was joined there at intervals by other significant Glasgow School painters, notably E.A. Walton and George Henry, with contemporary reports indicating that the village became a painting ground for large numbers of other artists. In effect Cockburnspath became an artists' colony not unlike Barbizon or Grèz-sur-Loing in France, highlighting the Glasgow painters' links to European practice and thus their synchronicity with the Reid model of Scottish painting.

The influence of the French 'Naturalist' painter Jules Bastien-Lepage has been cited as the primary driver in motivating Guthrie's rural transfer. Bastien-Lepage believed that a painter ought never to attempt subjects with which he was not personally associated and his own work was consistently based on the life of Damvillers, his home village in the Meuse. Certainly he was a hero to many artists throughout Europe who, as van Gogh suggested, were endeavouring to merge modernity, rural subject matter and individuality. It is clear that Guthrie's technique was at least as strongly influenced by the Frenchman's work as Reid's was by his Dutch masters in the 1860s. Partially under the influence of Bastien-Lepage it was fashionable by the 1880s for like minded artists to experience the necessary engagement within their subject by living at least part of the year in a rural haven collecting material for paintings. Certainly the Scottish artists coming to the fore in the 1880s were a part of the European Naturalist movement and Guthrie's founding of a 'colony' was no doubt self-consciously modern. But just as Reid saw no contradiction in seeking to revitalise Scottish painting by studying in Holland, so the Glasgow painters blended continental and home grown influences. Guthrie and his associates were as influenced by McKay and his work in the farmlands of East Lothian, as they were by exemplars from France and there is no need to ascribe all that is innovative in the Glasgow painters to Europe.

It is not common practice to read the Glasgow 'Boys', as they are now popularly known, as artists interested in national cultural identity. Their European links, particularly to Paris, but also to Dusseldorf and Antwerp, and the clear internationalism of their 'Naturalist' approach, serve to play down claims for an overt concern with Scottishness in their work. As noted above, one of their

number, James Paterson appeared to be positively hostile to the suggestion of even the chance of national identity in painting. While *A Note on Nationality in Art* denied such a possibility it did so in terms of technique. The central purpose of Paterson's article was actually to defend the practice of artists studying abroad and it mocked 'the crusade (that) has been conducted ... against what is called "foreign influence"'.⁴⁰ Just as *Thoughts on Art* had defended Scots studying abroad and promoted the superior technique of European painters, so Paterson's piece championed the teaching of Parisian ateliers and the painting of those who studied there. Again, in terms very close to Reid's and White's writing twenty years previously, Paterson condemned the notion that 'the traditions, good or bad, which sufficed the painters of a former generation, ought to satisfy those of today'.⁴¹ Both pieces condemned insularity and satisfaction with the status quo. Both rejected the idea that the outcome of study abroad could only be pastiche. Like Reid, the Glasgow Boys wanted the liberty to learn from Europe, and like Reid they believed that through such freedom they could revivify a Scottish visual culture that in Highlandism had become outmoded and clichéd. Their reinvention of national visual identity failed, in that today innumerable biscuit tins and whisky labels still announce their Scottishness with tartan and stags. Ultimately however the power of Highlandism should not be allowed to obscure the concern for a national identity found in these painters or the modernising nature of their ambition.

NOTES

1. Paterson, J. 'A Note on Nationality in Art', *Scottish Art Review* 1, 1888-1889, pp.89-90.
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3. C. Adams, 'When Tillage begins, other Arts follow: Contemporary Life', in *Love, Labour & Loss. 300 Years of British Livestock Farming in Art*, Carlisle 2002, p. 73.
4. D Macmillan, *Scottish Art 1460-1990*, Edinburgh 1990, p.244.
5. S. Adams, *The Barbizon School and the Origins of Impressionism*, London 1994 p.174
6. Pittock, Murray G.H., *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789*, Basingstoke, 1997, p.135.
7. *The Edinburgh Review* (1814), p.209.
8. Correspondence G. Reid to J.F. White, February 4, 1870. Reid Archive, Aberdeen Art Gallery.
9. Correspondence G.A. Mollinger to D.A.C. Artz, August 12, 1866, Gemeentearchief, The Hague.
10. Veri Vindex (George Reid and John F. White), *Thoughts on Art and Notes on the Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy of 1868*, Edinburgh 1868.
11. Veri Vindex, p.3.
12. Veri Vindex, p.40.
13. Veri Vindex, p.44.
14. Veri Vindex, p.3.
15. Veri Vindex, p.6.
16. Veri Vindex, p.26.
17. Campbell, R. H., and Devine, T., 'The Rural Experience', in W.H. Fraser and R.J. Morris (eds), *People and Society in Scotland, II, 1830-1914*, Edinburgh 1990 p.47.
18. Veri Vindex, p.55.
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20. Correspondence G. Reid to J. F. White, February 20, 1867. Reid Archive.
21. Correspondence G. Reid to J. F. White, February 20, 1867. Reid Archive.
22. Iconoclast (MacLennan, J.C.) *Scottish Art and Artists in 1860*, Edinburgh 1860 p.25.

23. Quoted by Reid in Correspondence G. Reid to J. F. White, February 20, 1867. Reid Archive.
24. Correspondence G. Reid to J. F. White, February 4, 1870. Reid Archive.
25. Veri Vindex, p.54.
26. Veri Vindex, p.54.
27. Correspondence G. Reid to J. F. White, February 4, 1870. Reid Archive.
28. Veri Vindex, p.5.
29. Cited Holt E. G., *From the Classicists to the Impressionists: A Documentary History of Art, Vol. III*, New Haven 1986 p.361.
30. Hobsbawm, E. J., *Nations and Nationalism: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge 1990 p.11.
31. Flinn, M. (ed.), *Scottish Population History from the 17th century to the 1930s*, Cambridge 1977 p.313.
32. Gerald Baldwin Brown was the first incumbent of the Watson Gordon Chair of Fine Art at Edinburgh University (1880-1930). He wrote *The Glasgow School of Painters*, (1908).
33. Pringle, R. Hunter, 'The Agricultural Labourer in Scotland – Then and Now' in *Transactions of the Highland Agricultural Society in Scotland*, 5:6, Edinburgh 1894 p.248.
34. Chalmers visited France in 1862 but did not go to Paris. The Millet was very well known by the early 1870s having been repeatedly reproduced as a print.
35. V. van Gogh to T. van Gogh, July 1885, van Gogh letter no 418. Cited in Roskill, Mark (ed.), *The Letters of van Gogh*, Glasgow 1963 p.238.
36. The ceremony shown was one of a series of sanitised religious festivals introduced by the clergy in the nineteenth century in an effort to replace traditional but suspiciously pagan celebrations. The painting is now in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
37. Caw, James L., *Sir James Guthrie, PRSA, LLD*, London 1932 p.21.
38. Forrest, M. A. 'Realism and Ruralism in Scottish Painting', *Landowning in Scotland* 200 pp.18-19.
39. Robson, M., 'The Border Farm Worker', in Devine, T. (ed.), *Farm Servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland*, Edinburgh 1984 p.74.
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41. Paterson, J. 'A Note on Nationality in Art', p.89.

Democratic politics and the spirit of the hustings since 1867

DR JON LAWRENCE

When Winston Churchill tried to explain Liberal leader Lord Rosebery's failure to realise his full potential, he concluded that Rosebery's greatest handicap had been that he never adapted to the demands of democratic politics. Having inherited an Earldom and over 20,000 acres at the age of twenty, Rosebery, unlike many young Victorian aristocrats, had never cut his teeth on electoral politics. Here, according to Churchill, lay the Liberal grandee's fatal flaw: 'He would not stoop; he did not conquer.' According to Churchill, Rosebery had possessed the skills to succeed, but he knew nothing of electioneering – the 'slatternly foundations' of politics, 'with its disorderly gatherings, its organized oppositions, its hostile little meetings, its jeering throng, its stream of disagreeable and often silly questions.' It was here, Churchill argued, not in grand meetings, that the democratic politician had to prove his fitness to govern. During an election, as Churchill put it, 'Dignity may suffer, the superfine gloss is soon worn away... much has to be accepted with a shrug, a sigh or a smile.' At one level it was a harsh, even unfair, judgement – sitting in the House of Lords Rosebery was effectively barred from meaningful experience of electoral politics. But Churchill was making a larger point – that Rosebery lacked the will and the temperament to cope with the rough and tumble of democratic politics - with the 'spirit of the hustings' - and that, as such, he was bound to fail. It had not always been so. Few front rank politicians had experienced genuine popular elections in the first half of the nineteenth century, and even in the 1890s the Marquess of Salisbury was able to lead the Conservatives, and the country, from the House of Lords having never faced a contested election.¹

But Salisbury was the last Prime Minister to lead Britain from the Lords. In the twentieth century Conservative leaders such as Curzon and Halifax found membership of the upper chamber compromised their claims to the premiership, and in 1963 the Earl of Home famously renounced his peerages and fought a Parliamentary by-election on succeeding Macmillan as Conservative leader and Prime Minister. But was Churchill right to argue that experience of electoral politics had become essential for the modern politician, and, more especially, was he right to stress that it was above all the chastening, even humbling, aspects of electoral politics that represented the vital rite of passage to high office? In my recent book *Electing Our Masters* I set out to answer these questions by exploring the shifting relationship between politicians and the public from that late eighteenth century to the present. One of the key themes of the book is that the 'spirit of the hustings', where candidates came face-to-face with an often irreverent public, has been an enduring feature of the British way of voting. In short, that rituals developed in the eighteenth century to give legitimacy, and a semblance of inclusiveness, to a political system dominated by a small, landed elite, have continued to shape the dynamics of public politics under formal democracy.

To this day, elections represent one of the few moments when politicians and public are routinely brought into direct, face-to-face contact with each other. How (and how much) this happens has naturally changed dramatically since the eighteenth century, but even today politicians routinely meet members of the public in doorstep canvassing, on constituency 'walkabouts' and in broadcasting studios (though for the most part they no longer meet them in that classic location that so appealed to Churchill: the open public meeting). Nor should we assume that the shift from the old hustings and election meetings to new mediated forms of interaction was necessarily retrogressive. There was always a strong premium on boorish masculinity at the old hustings, while even the wittiest, most decorous exchange between heckler and politician rarely managed to elevate debate much above the level of the modern sound bite. Equally, we should not assume that the influence of 'hustings' was necessarily democratic. These dramas of symbolic social levelling were tightly scripted, and often tended to underscore the gulf between politician and public, thereby ultimately affirming the right of the political class to rule.

Nonetheless, the performative aspects of representative politics matter greatly. Theatricality lay at the heart both of classic, face-to-face exchanges between voter and politician on the 'stomp', and of

twentieth-century, mediated forms of campaigning. Until the inter-war period, and the advent of radio and cinema newsreels, it was face-to-face interaction that dominated the theatre of public politics, and all but monopolized electioneering. True, politicians could also reach the public through the medium of the press, with its near verbatim reports of major speeches, but the *theatre* of the platform was always as important as the speech itself (people talked of being ‘Gladstonised’).² Public meetings represented highly charged events that politicians often found taxing and distasteful. Many disliked the need to act a part – to show false humility before the masses, and to dress and speak in a stylized manner (election manuals were full of useful advice about avoiding evening wear, fancy language, and, most of all, condescension). On the other hand, some undoubtedly relished the chance to play a ‘part’. Northern industrialists such as the Blackburn cotton magnate ‘Sir Harry’ Hornby (‘th’ owd Gam’ Cock’) liked to display his command of Lancashire dialect and folklore, while at Newcastle Joseph Cowen appeared in workman’s corduroys and fustian, despite being a wealthy manufacturer fully integrated into county society. There are plenty of well-known late twentieth-century equivalents of such role-playing. Success stories such as Macmillan’s ‘make over’ for television in the late 1950s, or Wilson’s cultivation of a ‘solid’ pipe rather than his habitual ‘flashy’ cigar; but also disasters like William Hague’s baseball cap, or Neil Kinnock’s lapses into the role of boisterous rock-star.³ Indeed, into the twentieth century electoral politics were as much about entertainment as they were about policy. Voters, and especially non-voters, went to meetings to ‘have their say’, but also to have some fun. Patrick Donner recalled a burly navy whacking his tearful young son at the front of a disorderly Islington election meeting in the 1930s, before shouting: ‘What’s the matter with you? Isn’t this better than a cinema?’ (probably not, but it was certainly cheaper).⁴

One thing is clear: from the eighteenth century until after the Second World War, British elections demanded that politicians, however mighty, should humble themselves before open and often decidedly irreverent meetings of their constituents. Down to 1872, the brutal rituals of the nomination hustings were central to British electioneering. Here politicians were obliged to attend an open-air public meeting of their constituents – including non-electors as well as electors – at which their nomination would be confirmed, they would address the gathered multitude, and then a vote by show-of hands would be held. The losing candidate would invariably demand a formal election, confined solely to registered voters, but the nomination day hustings nonetheless provided an important ritual of political inclusion and democratic levelling. Indeed elections as a whole demanded that the high and the mighty should learn to cultivate the ‘common touch’.

The overlap between social, economic and political power was very close throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Not all rich men chose to go into politics, but virtually all men involved in politics were rich. But then politics was an expensive business – MPs remained unsalaried until 1911, and candidates were expected to meet the full administrative costs of an election until 1918. Moreover, the cost of actually fighting an election was higher still – even where a constituency was not manifestly corrupt. Electioneering itself was costly – massively so by late twentieth-century standards – but candidates were also expected to spend lavishly in other ways. Local party organisation needed to be subsidised, full-time agents and their assistants had to be employed, and potentially most expensive of all, constituencies had to be ‘nursed’ through systematic donations to local charitable (and not so charitable) causes. Moreover, many wealthy candidates went much further – winning fame and goodwill in their constituency through extraordinary acts of generosity: endowing a hospital or university, laying out a public park or building a library.

Hence, at one level, nineteenth-century elections can be read as ritualized celebrations of Britain’s unequal, hierarchical society – rich and powerful men spent lavishly on public goods, and in return were affirmed as leaders of their community through the elaborate theatre of a public election. By this reading, people did not so much elect their masters to power as confirm the legitimacy of their masters’ existing power through election. But it was rarely quite so simple. For one thing, elections could be contested – although throughout the period 1867-1945 many were not – so that the affirmation of one ‘natural’ leader necessarily meant the rejection of another. They could also be about more than a candidate’s status as a good, beneficent patron – they could be about *issues* such as political reform, religious freedom or agricultural protection. But perhaps most importantly, if elections ultimately affirmed class hierarchies, they did so by temporarily denying the full, brutal

power of those hierarchies. At the most basic level, candidates were expected humbly to canvass the 'independent voters' for their support – even when open voting (which survived until 1872) meant that many of those voters were far from 'independent' in practice. They were also expected to take part in the public rituals that surrounded the election – rituals such as the ceremonial entry to the constituency, public meetings, the nomination hustings, the declaration and the chairing of victorious candidates, all of which brought them into direct contact with the general public.

Even rituals which appeared to encapsulate unequal, hierarchical relationships, such as chairing, still involved wealthy politicians placing their well-being in the hands of the populace. The nomination hustings might raise candidates physically above the crowd, but they also underlined the strong obligation on them to make a good show of addressing their constituents. Protected from the hurly-burly of the crowd, if not necessarily from stray missiles, candidates were expected to put up with a good deal of derisive and boorish behaviour in the name of 'accountability' and letting the people 'have their say'. And since the hustings could usually be reached only by progressing through the same volatile crowd, candidates also frequently had to put up with a good deal of rough usage both before and after their nomination. In a rigidly class-bound and unequal society, the spirit of the hustings represented a rare opportunity for the so-called 'lower orders' to let off steam at their masters' expense.

But what has all this to do with modern, democratic politics? The nomination hustings and open voting had long disappeared before Britain possessed a fully democratic franchise (in 1918, 1928 or 1948 depending on your definition), but in other respects the class dynamics that sustained the old system remained little altered. The candidate's election meetings now became the principal site for symbolic acts of social levelling, and politicians, such as Lord Rosebery, who shunned this arena, struggled to establish themselves as credible democratic leaders. Things only began to change significantly after 1918. The cost of fighting an election was drastically reduced by the 'Fourth' Reform Act,⁵ and Labour's emergence as a powerful independent force ended any pretence that politics was still a gentleman's closed shop. Indeed, Patrick Donner recalled a senior Conservative, in 1930, asking if he was serious about wanting to be an MP, before warning him that, 'Labour Members cut their toe-nails in the library'.⁶ The class dynamics of elections were similarly transformed after 1918. Elections could no longer be about the symbolic, if temporary, disavowal of class difference when almost every contest involved a Labour candidate. True, few Labour candidates were still at the work-bench by the time they entered politics, but even fewer had been to the manor born.⁷ There had always been room for a few impecunious men of talent in British politics, but henceforth the professional politician became the norm. Initially, the distinctive class origins of many Labour leaders probably obscured this shift. But by the close of the twentieth century few Labour candidates remained plausibly plebeian. In many respects, the class gulf between candidates and voters had been restored – most politicians, unlike most voters, were now professionally qualified as well as professionally political. But it was probably their membership of 'the political class,' rather than the 'upper class', that now most defined their 'otherness'.

Of course Labour's emergence was itself intimately linked to the incremental shift to a fully democratic franchise between 1867 and 1928 (or 1948, when Labour finally ushered in a strict system of one-person-one-vote by abolishing business votes and university seats). It is now generally accepted that the transformation of the electorate in class terms in 1918 was relatively minor, especially compared to the transformation in terms of gender and age.⁸ From the 1880s most male heads of household had found it relatively easy to qualify for the vote, although pauper disqualification and the vagaries of the tenement vote continued to bar the poorest from the vote.⁹ But the 1918 Act abolished pauper disqualification and eased the tough Victorian residency requirements – overnight the politics of poverty were transformed. Henceforth, British elections would be more about the largesse of governments than candidates – a trend that had already begun to take shape before the war, notably with the 'New' Liberals' introduction of non-contributory state pensions and state-supported national insurance (Lloyd George famously sought to refute charges that National Insurance represented a new 'poll tax' on the poor by proclaiming that workers would get 'nine pence for four pence').

But traditions of heckling, disruption and mockery survived both the abolition of the hustings and the rise of Labour. Heckling came to be seen as a cherished, rough-and-ready means of testing

the mettle of would-be MPs, while more disorderly forms of popular intervention were also widely excused as examples of 'high spirited' enthusiasm down to 1914. During the later nineteenth century there developed a widespread belief that the public possessed the right, not only to see their would-be political masters in the flesh, but also to interrogate them on questions of policy and on their personal fitness to govern. What this meant was that elections now obliged British politicians to submit themselves to intense and often deeply disrespectful public scrutiny not once, at the nomination-day hustings, but daily at open meetings across their constituency. Perhaps significantly, Victorian and Edwardian election manuals advised candidates that there was no personal indignity that should not be borne with grim forbearance, or better still, with cheery goodwill, during a campaign. But above all, politicians were not to become 'tainted' by the crowd – they must not abandon the gentlemanly virtues of restraint and self-control that marked them off from 'the mass' and defined their claim to be fit and proper leaders. Hence Rudyard Kipling's injunction: 'If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue/ Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch' ('If—' [1895]). In his mammoth Victorian history of the political platform, Henry Jephson observed that in terms both of language and actions 'a special amount of latitude has always been allowed to the persons participating in [election meetings].'¹⁰ While in 1909, the election expert Seymour Lloyd advised that 'even gross discourtesy' was 'best met by unswerving good humour.'¹¹

The age-old contest between heckler and speaker at British elections can in some respects be read as a highly developed manifestation of class war. On one level, heckling simply under-scored the forced egalitarianism of an election – even the most powerful politicians were expected to answer their assailants' questions, and to do so with civility. But it was also a tactic for testing the sincerity of a politician's self-presentation as a good sport, 'perfectly free of any tinge of condescension.'¹² Candidates were told that they must not be 'above entering the abode of the labourer and asking after the wife and children,' and that they must never put on airs or demonstrate a sense of moral or social superiority.¹³ Like Rosebery, those who failed to display this 'common touch' had limited prospects in British politics by the late nineteenth century. And for every politician who relished the challenges of electioneering, with its constant battle of wits and willpower, there was another for whom it was a grim ordeal from start to finish. Facing his third General Election in 1923, Neville Chamberlain confessed that he hated 'this beastly election campaign', although he was quick to acknowledge that 'it has to be endured with all the indignities & humiliations which it involves'. The following year, facing yet another election, he professed to feel sickened at the prospect of another 'ordeal of humiliation' at the polls.¹⁴

But if electioneering, and especially the rigours of the public meeting, represented an unwelcome ordeal for many politicians, such rituals nonetheless remained a central aspect of British elections so long as constituents demanded them. After the First World War many politicians began to doubt the utility of meetings as a means of mobilising mass support. They also became fearful that the continuation of unruly electoral politics might simultaneously alienate the new female voters and encourage post-war militants who were preaching doctrines of class war and revolution (or fascist counter-revolution).¹⁵ But whilst these years witnessed a concerted effort to reform the disorderly customs associated with pre-war politics, there was no attempt to break with the tradition that the open meeting represented the centre-piece of electioneering. Despite claims to the contrary, the rapid growth of new communication media such as radio and cinema newsreels in the first half of the twentieth century did little to dent popular participation in electoral politics. But things were very different with the rise of television from the 1950s. Even before the BBC ended its self-imposed moratorium on election news coverage in 1959, commentators had begun to bemoan lacklustre election meetings and poor attendances. Despite Aneurin Bevan's sterling efforts, platform oratory was at a discount in the 1950s – most meetings were sober, rational affairs shaped by a powerful ethos of civic duty rather than popular entertainment. With the advent of televised campaigning in 1959, audiences as well as speakers began to question the continued utility of increasingly sober, didactic political meetings. And after Sir Alec Douglas-Home, public meetings descended into televised chaos in 1964, politicians of all parties also became increasingly wary of the risks involved in holding traditional open meetings during an election. By the mid 1960s, electioneering was already being repackaged for the television age, and interaction with the electorate was increasingly confined to carefully choreographed photo-

opportunities timed to catch the broadcast news bulletins. By the 1970s election meetings had become little more than private rallies of the faithful - staged partly to boost the morale of party workers, but mainly as news events for the press and broadcasting media.

However, despite these dramatic changes, the television age did not liberate politicians from the trials of public interrogation. Perhaps most striking was the rise of the television interviewer to take over the mantle of the persistent heckler at public meetings. But the public proper has not been wholly excluded from modern, mediated politics – face-to-face interaction survives in many forms. Public meetings may have all but disappeared, but they have been replaced by new forms of public accountability which are in many respects more onerous for the politician. Well into the twentieth century, most politicians believed that ‘accountability’ required little more than ensuring that an agent replied to constituents’ letters, holding an annual ‘meeting of account’ in the constituency, and maintaining a high public profile during the election. Today, most not only hold weekly local ‘surgeries’ (a fascinatingly pathological term which hints at the unequal, cliental relationship at the heart of these exchanges), but they also spend as much time as possible in local publicity stunts in the hope of gaining positive coverage in the local press and on regional broadcast media. Most also seize every opportunity to be involved in the plethora of radio phone-ins and studio discussion programmes which involve members of the general public. Such programmes are, as one aide to Tony Blair noted in 2005, the modern equivalent of Gladstone’s public meetings.¹⁶ In this sense electioneering has ceased to be something confined to elections. In 2005, with Blair’s political credentials greatly tarnished, the Prime Minister actively pursued bruising encounters with real voters in what came to be known as his ‘masochism strategy’. There was a strong parallel here with John Major’s self-consciously anachronistic rediscovery of the soap-box in the 1992 General Election. In both cases beleaguered Prime Ministers sought to rebuild their credibility by demonstrating their willingness, not simply to listen to voters, but to do so in a context which emphasized both accountability and vulnerability. In such encounters the ‘spirit of the hustings’ appeared to be alive and well in the era of mass media politics. But there is no obligation on politicians to take part in such bruising face-to-face encounters. Like Margaret Thatcher in 1987, a politician sitting comfortably in the polls can still afford to delegate such potentially difficult media encounters to an under-study (Norman Tebbit filled the bill for Thatcher in 1987 until a late ‘wobble’ in the polls brought her into the fray). Moreover, modern, televised forms of political interaction rely entirely on the mediating role of professional broadcasters. It is they who decide whose questions will be heard on a phone-in or studio discussion programme, whose impromptu intervention in the campaign will be covered in the news bulletins, and, of course, who actually gets to sit in a studio audience in the first place. Whereas once it was politicians themselves who helped sustain a public culture of face-to-face political interaction, it is now principally broadcasters who fulfil that role, and it is therefore to them that we must look if we wish to see the ‘spirit of the hustings’ nurtured and developed in modern British politics. But whereas Churchill was clear about the democratic virtues that ran through ‘the spirit of the hustings,’ it must be doubted whether either broadcasters or politicians see this so clearly in the twenty first century.

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NOTES

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Jack the Ripper and the Historians

DR ROHAN MCWILLIAM

In the early hours of 31 August 1888, a prostitute called Polly Nichols was denied access to a local lodging house in Whitechapel in London's East End as she did not have any money. Her response was to say 'Never Mind! I'll soon get my doss money. See what a jolly bonnet I've got now'. She went off into the night to solicit custom. Two hours later she was discovered in Buck's Row with her throat cut from ear to ear.¹ What was particularly shocking was the extent of the mutilation; there were also terrible wounds to her abdomen. A week later, the body of prostitute Annie Chapman was found savagely murdered in a similar way. After this London and indeed the whole of Britain began to take an interest in what were called 'the Whitechapel Murders'. Scotland Yard began to receive letters from people who claimed to be the murderer. One of them contained the signature 'Jack the Ripper' and the name stuck.

On 30 September two prostitutes were murdered in a single evening. Elizabeth Stride, who had been seen earlier speaking to a man in Berner Street, was discovered with her throat cut. Forty five minutes later Catherine Eddowes was seen talking to a man in Duke Street and was subsequently discovered by a policeman, her body savagely mutilated. On 9 November, in the only incident that took place indoors, the corpse of prostitute Mary Jane Kelly was discovered in her room in Millers Court, again with terrible mutilations. After this the killings are thought to have stopped although violence against prostitutes remained relatively common. The number of Ripper murders is usually put at five although some other killings are often attributed to the Whitechapel murderer and the number of victims can run as high as eighteen. The Ripper himself (or herself) was never found.

The Whitechapel murders have remained of compelling interest ever since because they are seen as the greatest of unsolved crimes. The lack of resolution (the failure to definitively identify the culprit) undoubtedly accounts for the continued interest in the case. Moreover, the Ripper is usually thought of as the first modern serial killer and the Ripper industry has helped turn the figure of the serial killer into a celebrity. There have been numerous books and films about the Ripper (including two films that feature Sherlock Holmes solving the case). The most influential fictional treatment was Marie Belloc Lowndes' novel, *The Lodger* (1911), which was filmed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1926 and which shaped many subsequent representations of the case. A pub has been named after the Ripper, there has been a London musical on the subject and even an episode of *Star Trek*. Moreover, every year is guaranteed to produce books claiming to have finally identified the murderer. There have been suggestions that the Ripper might have been a member of the Royal Family (the Duke of Clarence is the usual suspect here), Sir William Gull, Queen Victoria's physician, or a barrister called Montague Druitt amongst many others. This somewhat disreputable industry (part of the so-called 'true crime' genre) has now become known as 'Ripperology'.

But of what interest is this to the historian? In recent years some very distinguished scholars have turned their attention to the Ripper. This wave of academic Ripper studies should be distinguished from Ripperology as it is not concerned with identifying the Ripper (we might call it 'anti-Ripperology'). Rather, it seeks to use the figure of the Ripper as a way into the social history of late Victorian Britain. The increasing prominence of the Ripper tells us a lot about a set of themes that have become increasingly important in social and cultural history. The Whitechapel Murders generated a moral panic that raised issues about gender, ethnicity, psychology, politics and social structure. Symptomatic of this new direction in Ripper Studies was the exhibition 'Jack the Ripper and the East End' that took place at the Museum in Docklands in 2008. Many who came no doubt expected something similar to the 'London Dungeon'. What they got instead was a serious exhibition that introduced them to living conditions in the Victorian East End and forced them to confront the system that drove unfortunate women into prostitution (and still often does). Whilst not innocent of sensation, the exhibition reclaimed the Whitechapel murders as a social and cultural event that

affords a point of entry into the Victorian imagination—something that historians and other scholars have tried to do. This article tracks the academic literature on the Ripper and the ways it has sought to interpret the case.

Significantly, the Ripper scholarship is the product not only of historians but also scholars in Literature, Media Studies, Politics and History of Art. To understand the Ripper case, we need multiple perspectives. Whilst occasional references to the Ripper can be found in academic literature earlier, the modern wave of scholarship is the product of the mid to late 1980s.² This was partly because of the centenary of the Whitechapel Murders in 1988 but it was also caused by other factors. Following the Yorkshire Ripper murders in the 1970s and the politicisation by feminists of all violence against women, Jack the Ripper ceased to be merely the protagonist of a cosy Victorian whodunit (with foggy streets and traces of music hall in the background) but was recovered as an example of male brutality. The cult of the Ripper was increasingly viewed as offensive as it refused to engage with the wider social meanings of the killings and arguably celebrated them.

The modern wave of Ripper scholarship arguably begins with a discussion by Christopher Frayling in a 1986 collection of articles that was about the history of rape.³ Frayling discussed the way in which the Ripper played a part in turning the figure of the serial killer into an almost glamorous character. Literary critic Elaine Showalter argued that the moral panic around the Ripper was part of a broader crisis around sexuality that characterised the late nineteenth century and which featured a fear of women's bodies; hence the increasing interest in the nature of the mutilated bodies which was reminiscent of other contemporary anxieties about doctors, surgeons and dissection.⁴ Significantly, the Ripper was often thought to have been a doctor or someone with medical training. Then, in probably the most influential modern discussion, Judith Walkowitz related the Ripper to a series of 'narratives of sexual danger' that became prominent in the 1880s partly as a way of negotiating the increasing appearance of women in the public sphere.⁵ The Ripper case contained messages that women should stay off the streets. Informed by the recent Yorkshire Ripper killings, Walkowitz suggested that these cases fed into a moral panic that revealed patriarchal gender assumptions. Employing the ideas of Michel Foucault, Walkowitz argued that the Ripper did not increase violence against women but 'established a common vocabulary and iconography for the forms of male violence that permeated the whole society'.⁶

There were other impulses for Ripper scholarship. It emerged partly from the increased interest in the history of London's East End. The Ripper was reclaimed by distinguished local historian William J. Fishman as part of the social history of the area.⁷ He employed his remarkable knowledge of East End streets and locations to interpret the Ripper in the context of local patterns of crime and social tension. Another historian of the East End, John Marriott, argues that the Ripper fitted into a larger mythology about the East End that goes back at least to the eighteenth century. The area had long been portrayed as a site of crime, disease, poverty and disorder.⁸ The East End poor were often imagined by social investigators as a savage race or as the 'dangerous classes'. More recently, it has become clear, especially in the work of L. Perry Curtis, that the Ripper was the product of the media. It was the press that turned a series of murders in London's back streets into a national and international phenomenon. Jack the Ripper sold newspapers. The press deployed images based on gothic horror, rendering Whitechapel as a site of depravity and deviancy. The *Daily Chronicle*, for example, ran an article about the area during the killing, which it titled 'The Eastern Murder Land'. The paper wrote of 'the monster-half-man, half-brute—who is now prowling round Whitechapel like the 'were-wolf' of Gothic fable'. In contrast to these lurid accounts, Curtis found that the East End local press failed to sensationalise the events and insisted on the essential safety of the area.⁹ The coverage of the Ripper killings was an important moment in the development of sensational journalism.

Why did the Ripper case cause so much panic given that violence against prostitutes was not uncommon? The Whitechapel murders took place at the end of a decade when British society appeared to be in crisis.¹⁰ Contrasts were drawn between the glories of imperial expansion and the shocking revelations about the social conditions in London, heart of empire. Contemporaries were appalled by revelations about the East End.¹¹ Andrew Mearns' pamphlet *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883) and George R. Sims' *How The Poor Live* (1889) drew attention to the extent of

squalor, prostitution, crime, disease and overcrowding in areas such as Whitechapel and Bethnal Green that were not far from the corridors of power in Whitehall. In other words, the Victorians had re-discovered poverty. There were particular concerns about families sleeping together in one room, which to contemporaries raised the possibility of incest. The common lodging houses where many of the poor lived became icons of depravity. All of the Ripper's victims had lived in lodging houses at one time or another – houses where people without a proper home sought a bed for the night (which they would often have to share with someone else). Equally shocking for respectable Victorians were the levels of inebriation as all the victims were heavy drinkers. Elizabeth Stride for example, had been fined several times for being drunk and disorderly in the weeks before her murder.¹² In 1885, the journalist W.T. Stead ran a series of articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* under the title, 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon', drawing attention to the extent of child prostitution. Readers were shocked at how easy it was to procure children for sexual purposes and the 'Maiden Tribute' played a part in overturning the idea of innate masculine virtue. The depravity of respectable aristocrats and middle-class men from the West End of London sexually exploiting the children of the East End caused a sensation. It is not insignificant that the Ripper was sometimes believed to an aristocrat or at least a respectable 'gentleman'. 'The 'Maiden Tribute' helped make this link (although the figure of the aristocratic seducer or rapist had been a common figure in popular culture during the nineteenth century, featuring, for example, in many Victorian melodramas).¹³ The Ripper killings fitted neatly into the social anxieties of the period.

Not only was the East End viewed as the centre of crime and immorality, it was also feared because of the extent of unemployment caused by the problem of casual labour; indeed the word 'unemployment' actually entered the English vocabulary in the 1880s. Many dock labourers lost their jobs with the collapse of the Thames shipping industry. In 1886 and 1887, the unemployed rioted in the West End of London and the decade saw the revival of socialism in a Marxist and militant form. There were real concerns that society was falling apart with the Social Democratic Federation claiming that 30% of the population of the East End was living below the poverty line. The philanthropist Charles Booth attempted to disprove this by launching his survey of London poverty but ended by finding that the figure should have been 35%. 1888, the year of the Ripper murders, was also the year when trade unionism began to take a more militant form. The match girls working for Bryant and May in Bow, East London, launched a strike to protest at low pay and the working conditions that caused many to contract 'phossy jaw' (a cancer of the jawbone). The success of their strike paved the way for the London dock strike the following year. As Eric Hobsbawm has said, this was 'Labour's Turning Point' and it led working-class protest to take an increasingly more organised form.¹⁴

The location of the killings in Whitechapel was significant as it was seen in the West End as the gateway to Outcast London. The Ripper symbolised the kind of disorder emerging from the East End. Significantly, Elizabeth Stride's body was discovered near to the Working Men's International Club, a socialist organisation. William Morris, the artist and poet who had become a leading Socialist activist, had given a lecture there the previous week and that evening the Club had listened to a talk on 'Judaism and Socialism'. There were rumours that the Ripper was possibly a socialist or an anarchist committing the murders to draw attentions to the appalling conditions in the locality. *Punch* complained about what it called the 'Nemesis of Neglect' and employed the Ripper to highlight the urgency of social reform.¹⁵ *Reynolds's Newspaper* employed the killings as a vehicle to indict the terrible social conditions which it blamed on the rich: 'the grandeur of the West End could not exist but for the poverty-stricken degradation of the East End'. It drew a sad contrast between the tragic life of Annie Chapman and the comforts of the Duke of Westminster living on his unearned income.¹⁶

In the 1880s the East End was increasingly the object of social reformers. Settlement House workers and the Salvation Army moved into the area in order to help the poor and improve the terrible social conditions. High-minded female slum workers became a common sight.¹⁷ Doctor Barnardo attempted to rescue orphans, whilst institutions such as Toynbee Hall provided soup kitchens and education. The Ripper murders produced demands for improved lighting on the streets. However, the affair was particularly important in creating demands for a new housing policy. The Ripper drew attention to the extent of slums (or 'rookeries') that were thought to breed crime. Local councils were allowed to set up new housing development schemes and to demolish slums such as Flower and Dean Street

as well as providing improved sanitation.¹⁸ There were fewer common lodging houses after 1888 and an increasing number of model dwelling apartments. 3,748 of the latter were built in Whitechapel by 1900.¹⁹ London historian Jerry White argues that 'Within six years Jack the Ripper had done more to destroy the Flower and Dean Street rookery than fifty years of road building, slum clearance and unabated pressure from the police, Poor Law Guardians, vestries and from sanitary officers'.²⁰ We might therefore see the Ripper as contributing to one of the great transformations of the decade. There was a shift from viewing poverty as caused by personal immorality to something generated by cycles within the economy. The 1880s witnessed an increased focus on state-run solutions to promote freedom and combat poverty. In this important change we now realise that Jack the Ripper played a small but not totally insignificant role.

Another focus of anxiety was the way in which the Ripper generated racial tensions. There were suggestions that no Englishman could have committed such brutal murders with their horrible acts of mutilation; the killer had to be foreign.²¹ The East End had become an area for Jewish settlement (usually Russian and East European Jews fleeing poverty as well as pogroms launched in the wake of the assassination of Tsar Alexander II for which they were blamed). The Ripper became a vehicle for anti-semitism. There were allegations that the Ripper was a Jew. A message was scrawled on a wall near one of the murders: 'The Juwes are the men That Will not be Blamed for nothing'. Newspapers accused a Jewish slippermaker, John Pizer, known as 'Leather Apron' (who was believed to terrorise women), of being the Ripper. When he was identified, Pizer was forced to turn himself in to the police to protect himself from the violence of local people though he was later exonerated. Local police found that anti-semitic violence was getting out of hand and additional forces had to be drafted in to keep it quiet. The Ripper played an inglorious role in the development of race relations.

The case also demonstrated the impotence of Victorian policing. Despite an intensive investigation, the police were stumped by the case. There were suggestions that policemen's shoes should have rubber soles so that they could silently creep round the East End or even that policemen should cross-dress and pretend to be prostitutes in order to catch the Ripper. There were calls in the press for more policing and complaints about the breakdown in law and order.²² *Punch* cartoons mocked the police force for their ineptitude and Sir Charles Warren, the Commissioner of Police, was eventually forced to resign.²³ As the detective story came into its own in the 1890s, it is significant that the most popular sleuths were figures like Sherlock Holmes who were not part of the police force. The latter were usually presented as incompetent bumbler.

But what of the poor victims of the Ripper themselves? It is not insignificant that Judith Walkowitz came to the Ripper murders having undertaken a study of responses to prostitution itself.²⁴ We now have a better understanding of prostitution, freed from some of the moralistic interpretations of the Victorians. It is clear that prostitution was not a career for poor women so much as something that they infrequently resorted to at times of poverty.²⁵ Polly Nicholls, for example, had recently been in the Lambeth workhouse. She had become a maid but had then left the family she was working for, stealing £3. She was 42, had five children and was separated from her husband. Many people in the East End were far less censorious of these poor women than the sensationalist national press as they recognised how difficult it was for poor women to survive.

The victims, as Walkowitz shows, were also subject to what we now call 'medicalisation'. The conditions of their bodies after death were heavily discussed. Contemporaries were fascinated by details that came out of the autopsies which led to suggestions that the Ripper may have been a doctor putting his medical knowledge to a perverted purpose (or perhaps seeking organs for medical research). There was already a popular fear of surgeons, which the publicity around the murders served to increase. Prostitutes in any case had long been imagined as pollutants and carriers of disease, which needed to be controlled by the police and by the state. This had, for example, been the aim of the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s, which had only recently been repealed at the time of the Whitechapel murders. The Acts provided for the forced medical inspection of suspected prostitutes in ports and towns with garrisons with a view to preventing the spread of venereal disease amongst the military. Feminists such as Josephine Butler had campaigned against the legislation because of its implicit double standard, blaming women for spreading disease and not their male clients.

Finally, the Ripper may have contributed to an even more fundamental shift. Criminologists and sexologists discussed the murders. The Viennese psychiatrist Richard Krafft-Ebing had recently published his *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), which introduced contemporaries to concepts such as sexual sadism and degeneracy. His case studies of sexual offenders helped make sense of the case and provoked discussion of the Ripper's perverted or degenerate personality.²⁶ In the late nineteenth century, there was an increasing awareness of how complex the human personality was. Claims were frequently made that the Ripper was an ostensibly respectable person who lived a double life. In that sense, the case resembled the plot of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, published just three years earlier in 1885. *The Globe*, for instance, mused that 'Whitechapel is haunted by a demon of the type of Hyde, who goes about killing for the mere sake of slaughter'.²⁷ In the summer of 1888, a dramatised version of Stevenson's novel was enjoying great success on the London stage. The actor playing Jekyll and Hyde was so effective that there were suggestions he might be the Ripper. In any case, the allegation that the Ripper might be a doctor was possibly prompted by the Jekyll and Hyde story. This was not just because of the fact that Jekyll was a doctor but because of the fascination with double lives that was at the heart of Stevenson's story. The possibility that there might be another part of the mind – the subconscious – would soon be explored by Sigmund Freud. We should not overstate this but the Ripper did fit into concerns that haunted the Victorians about the human personality and about the distance between public and private selves.

The Whitechapel murders should not be glorified but they provide important evidence that assists the social and cultural historian of Victorian Britain. In tracking the path of the Ripper, historians have re-established the 1880s as a dramatic moment of social change when social and political debates in something like their modern form began to emerge. Modern images of poverty, the inner city, ethnic tensions, xenophobia, personal security, policing, sexual predators and much else have been partly shaped by the ways in which the Whitechapel murders were presented and discussed in the 1880s. That is why Jack the Ripper has sparked a mythology that continues to resonate in our own times and to demand the attention of scholars.

NOTES

1. The murder of Martha Tabram on 7 August 1888 is often attributed to the Ripper. For the facts in the case, see Paul Begg, *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive History* (London, 2003). A useful collection of primary source material relating to the Ripper can be found at www.casebook.org.
2. Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis (eds.), *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) is an important anthology of the scholarly literature on the Ripper which contains many of the authors discussed in this article. The social history behind the Ripper murders is also treated in Alex Werner (ed.), *Jack the Ripper and the East End* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2008). Other works that examine Victorian causes-célèbres from the viewpoint of cultural history include: Richard D. Altick, *Victorian Studies in Scarlet* (New York: Norton, 1970); Mary S. Hartman, *Victorian Murderesses: A True History of Thirteen Respectable French and English Women Accused of Unspeakable Crimes* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977); Judith Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind: The Murderess and the English Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Angus McLaren, *A Prescription for Murder: The Victorian Serial Killings of Dr. Thomas Neill Cream* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); idem, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Rohan McWilliam, *The Tichborne Claimant: A Victorian Sensation* (London: Continuum, 2007); Kate Summerscale, *The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher: Or, the Murder at Road Hill House* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008). See also Karen Halttunen, *Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
3. Christopher Frayling, 'The House that Jack Built' in Sylvia Tomaselli and Roy Porter (eds.), *Rape* (Oxford, 1986), pp.174-215.
4. Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and culture at the fin de siècle* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991), p. 127.
5. Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992), pp.191-228.

6. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 220.
7. William J. Fishman, *East End 1888: A Year in a London Borough among the Labouring Poor* (London: Duckworth, 1988) pp.209-29.
8. John Marriott, 'The Imaginative Geography of the Whitechapel Murders' in Werner (ed.), *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, pp. 31-63.
9. L. Perry Curtis, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press* (London: Yale University Press, 2001) esp. p. 27, 127-8.
10. The view of the 1880s as a decade of crisis and of social and political transformation is a very common one. See, for example, Helen Lynd, *England in the Eighteen Eighties: Toward a Social Basis for Freedom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945).
11. Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relations Between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) remains the classic study.
12. Louise Jackson, 'Law, Order and Violence' in Werner (ed.), *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, p. 118.
13. Anna Clark, 'The Politics of Seduction in English Popular Culture, 1748-1848' in Jean Radford (ed.), *The Progress of Romance: The Politics of Popular Fiction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), pp. 47-72.
14. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Labour's Turning Point.. 1880-1900* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1948).
15. *Punch* 29 September 1888 p. 151.
16. L. Perry Curtis, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, p. 137.
17. Ellen Ross, 'Deeds of Heroism: Whitechapel ladies' in Werner (ed.), *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, pp. 181-217; see also Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
18. William J. Fishman, *East End 1888*, pp. 224-5.
19. Richard Dennis, '"Common Lodgings and Furnished Rooms": Housing in 1880s Whitechapel' in Werner (ed.), *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, p.177.
20. Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 29-30.
21. L. Perry Curtis, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, p. 115, 243-5.
22. L. Perry Curtis, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, p.133-4, 241.
23. Eg. *Punch* 22 September 1888
24. Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
25. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 200, 215
26. Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 207.
27. Quoted in L. Perry Curtis, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, pp. 118-9.

The Diversity of Suffrage Organisations

PROFESSOR KRISTA COWMAN

The Victorian Campaign

Most historians date the beginnings of an organized campaign for women's suffrage to 1866 when John Stuart Mill presented a petition of 1,499 signatures to parliament. During his election campaign the previous year, Mill had mentioned women's suffrage in his election address. Its inclusion had led to Mill receiving some public ridicule for wishing to see "girls" in parliament. On the other hand, it brought him a large amount of support from the Langham Place Group, a small embryonic feminist body based in London, and the Kensington Debating Society which had grown from this.¹ Barbara Bodichon, one of its leaders, worked keenly for Mill's election. When he was safely in Parliament, Bodichon approached him asking him to raise the issue directly. Mill agreed to present a petition if one could be produced with more than a hundred signatures.² Working through their own contacts and networks the Kensington Society collected almost fifteen times this, and Mill presented the petition on 7 June.

Between the petition's presentation in June and Mill's attempt to introduce an amendment in favour of women's suffrage to the 1867 Reform Act the following May a number of local petitions were collected. Arranging these aided the formation of local suffrage societies which were often based on the friendship networks and political contacts that women had developed in earlier political campaigns. Elizabeth Wolstenholme (later Wolstenholme Elmy) who was a familiar figure in Manchester's radical Liberal circles had joined the Kensington Society as a corresponding member, although she had been unable to attend many of its meetings. She now felt able to initiate a similar group in Manchester, sometime between 1865 and 1867.³ Around 300 signatures were collected for the Manchester petition, an indication of the extent of local support and interest in the question. Jacob Bright, Manchester's MP who took over as Women's Suffrage champion in Parliament after Mill's 1868 electoral defeat was another whose family networks enhanced the national spread of the movement. One of his sisters, Priscilla Bright McLaren, helped to found the Edinburgh society whilst other relatives were involved in groups in Bristol and Bath.⁴ Wider friendship networks spread into other regions; Clementia Taylor, wife of the Leicester MP and suffrage supporter P.A. Taylor, helped establish a suffrage society in Birmingham in 1868 drawing on expertise of friends such as Priscilla McLaren.

The next two decades brought steady if slow growth in suffragism. From 1867 local societies grouped loosely into a national body, the National Society for Women's Suffrage. Provincial societies were free to arrange their own work, whilst the National Society was largely responsible for co-ordinating work towards Parliament. There were some moves towards consolidating the movement's organisation but also some divisions within the group of individuals who comprised the movement's informal national leadership. In 1871 Jacob Bright established a Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage although many members of the London National Society refused to join this. The main focus of the division was a strong difference of opinion between the group which Sandra Holton has termed the Radical suffragists and others in the movement.⁵ Many Radical suffragists were keen supporters of Josephine Butler's organisation the Ladies National Association which was engaged in a tireless but controversial campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts whereas the more conservative suffragists feared the effect that associating with such a cause might have had on their own campaign. The London Society returned to the larger body in 1877, but disagreements over direction continued. In 1888 the NSWS voted to drop its opposition to accepting affiliations from party political organizations enabling local Women's Liberal Associations to join. There was sufficient opposition from some members to provoke the formation of a separate organization retaining the name of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage whilst the remaining body became the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage. The

similarity in names led to both groups being more commonly referred to by their addresses of Great College Street and Parliament Street respectively. Suffragists also disagreed over exactly what sort of franchise they wanted. A key point of disagreement was whether or not to call for votes for married women. More conservative campaigners felt that the vote ought only to be given to single women or widows who met the appropriate property qualification. The more radical wing of the movement, largely based in Manchester, felt that married women should be included in their demands. In 1889, Elizabeth Wolstoneholme Elmy, Alice Scatcherd and Harriet McClquham formed the Women's Franchise League which explicitly included married women in its demands.⁶

In 1896 there was a concerted effort to unite the numerous suffrage groups into one national campaign. A conference was held with representatives from all suffrage societies in attendance, and the decision was taken to establish a National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). This was formally inaugurated the following year. One inspiration for this may have been the formation of the Women's Liberal Federation in 1887. This was established by Sophia Fry who was aware that a number of local Women's Liberal Associations had formed and was convinced that they would be far more effective if they co-ordinated their campaign on a national scale. Within the leadership of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies were several Liberal women including Millicent Garrett Fawcett who led the group from its formation. The NUWSS did not initiate formal ties with the Liberal Party, however, but remained neutral in party-political terms. It also officially limited its objectives to the vote, which it demanded on the same terms 'as it is, or may be granted to men'.

Edwardian campaigns and militancy

The NUWSS followed the pattern of campaigning that had been established half a decade previously with petitions, quiet lobbying and occasional public meetings. Then, in 1903, another suffrage group, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was formed. This was on the initiative of Emmeline Pankhurst and a small group of women from the Manchester branches of the Independent Labour Party. Mrs Pankhurst had a long record of involvement in suffrage groups (including the Women's Franchise League) and in socialist politics (her first arrest was not for suffragette activities but during socialist agitation over the right to free speech in Manchester's parks in 1895). She was becoming increasingly sceptical about the real extent of the ILP's commitment to women's suffrage, and determined on a new, independent society as the best means of achieving the vote. Most of the WSPU's first members were in the ILP and its earliest campaigns mirrored socialist tactics holding street corner meetings or addressing union or socialist groups. Then, in October 1905, the WSPU initiated a new policy of political militancy. Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney, a recent recruit with a background in Lancashire textile trades unions, went to Sir Edward Grey's election meeting at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. The women unfurled a banner with the words 'votes for women' and attempted to elicit Grey's views on the subject, whereupon they were ejected. Outside the hall Christabel, who had studied law, committed a "technical assault" spitting at the policeman who was charged with moving them on. Both women refused to pay a fine, and were sent to prison for a week.

The publicity attracted by this action helped the Union to grow rapidly. Grey's meeting was part of an election campaign during which all major Liberal meetings accessible from Manchester were targeted by the WSPU's growing band of hecklers. Although there were no more arrests, the Union was frequently in the news. When the election ended in 1906 Christabel Pankhurst decided that the only way to retain such a high profile was to follow newly-elected ministers to London. A WSPU branch was thus formed in the capital which became the Union's national headquarters. As the campaign grew, so did its national network. Local branches were set up throughout Britain, co-ordinated by a network of paid district organizers. A further tranche of organizers were employed at Headquarters, co-ordinating the WSPU's large national demonstrations or planning by-election campaigns. The Union published its own newspaper, *Votes for Women* and supported a publishing house, the Women's Press. It also produced a host of fund-raising goods, many of which were sold in shops run by local WSPU branches throughout the country. At the same time the NUWSS was also increasing its membership and organisation. It too developed a national network of branches and employed paid organizers to co-ordinate its campaigns.

The WSPU remained distinguished by its militancy. This altered during the course of the campaign, but the older forms of public disruption always remained an important tactic. The most high-profile militant events were the Women's Parliaments which the Union organized in London from 1907. These were timed to co-incide with events such as the state opening of Parliament or with Private Members' Bills on suffrage, and were attended by volunteers from WSPU branches throughout Britain. After listening to speeches, a small number of women would form a deputation which would take a petition or resolution from the meeting to the House of Commons. Numerous arrests would follow. Policing of the deputations was initially lenient but increased in violence leading two suffragettes, Mary Leigh and Edith New, to smash government windows in June 1908 in protest. This tactic was taken up by the WSPU and employed on a larger scale in later demonstrations. Suffragette militancy continued in prison where women undertook a number of protests ranging from refusing to keep rules on silence to hunger striking in protest at not being given the status of political prisoners. From November 1912, militancy expanded further to encompass other forms of criminal damage such as attacking pillar boxes, works of art and sports facilities and burning empty buildings. Government measures against the suffragettes increased. The hunger strike was combated by the so-called 'Cat and Mouse Act' under which hunger strikers were released on licence to recover and were then re-arrested. Many women went on the run to avoid re-arrest, helped by a clandestine network of supporters and "safe" houses. By the time that war broke out in August 1914, historians sympathetic and opposed to militancy concur that the Union's membership was exhausted and reacted to the decision to suspend militancy with some relief.⁷ The WSPU leadership gave themselves over to an intensely patriotic campaign during the war, recruiting women to war work, but retaining within their rhetoric a sense that this was an opportunity to prove women's fitness for citizenship. Members who dissented from the policy of stopping public campaigning put their energies into other suffrage organisations, described below, or into two other groups, the Independent Suffragettes and the Suffragettes of the WSPU both of which attempted to retain the WSPU's name and identity as a suffrage organisation.

The WSPU also pursued a rigid policy of political independence. This drew criticism in its early years because of its close association with the Independent Labour Party. Matters came to a head at the Cocker mouth by-election in the summer of 1906. Christabel Pankhurst and Teresa Billington announced their intention to work in the campaign and arrived in Cocker mouth where they were given hospitality in the homes of local ILP members. As both women were in the ILP and as Billington had only recently stopped her job as an ILP organizer it was expected that they would be working on behalf of the Labour candidate, Robert Smillie. Instead, Christabel used the election to unveil the WSPU's new by-election policy which was to oppose the Liberal candidate rather than to support a pro-suffrage one from whatever party. The women subsequently resigned from the ILP although in some local branches relationships were not severed quite so definitively.⁸

Oppositional to WSPU tactics within the movement

Not all suffrage campaigners agreed with the WSPU's tactics. Even before the public dissent caused by the leadership's response to the war other suffrage groups had formed from within the WSPU, born out of political disagreements. The best known of these (and the longest lasting, continuing as a feminist campaigning organisation until 1961) was the Women's Freedom League.⁹ This was set up in 1907 and originated in a disagreement amongst leading WSPU members as to how the Union should be organized. The League's founders, Teresa Billington Grieg, Charlotte Despard and Edith How Martyn, wished to see a more formalized democratic structure with regular elections to the National Committee. Dissent culminated in 1907 when Mrs Pankhurst decided to cancel the WSPU's annual conference. Billington and her supporters organized a conference in the WSPU's name which was attended by representatives from thirty-one WSPU branches. For a short period there were two opposing WSPU committees in existence but the dissenting faction eventually relinquished their claim to the Union's name and became the Women's Freedom League. Although the League refuted the WSPU's autocracy it did not disapprove of militancy. Rather its members undertook a number of militant protests. It was particularly active around the issue of tax resistance and also initiated a number of protests in police courts, not connected with suffragette appearances,

which emphasized the gendered nature of Edwardian justice. League members Muriel Matters and Helen Fox achieved a degree of notoriety when they chained themselves to the grille that separated the Ladies' Chamber (where women were allowed as spectators) from the House of Commons (the grille was subsequently removed). The League did not endorse the more violent forms of militancy practised by the WSPU, however.

A further split in the ranks of the WSPU took place in 1912 when the treasurer, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and her husband Frederick were effectively expelled from the Union. The reasons for this are unclear, but were preceded by the Government's decision to issue warrants for the arrests of the Pethick Lawrences, Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst and Mabel Tuke after the WSPU carried out a large window-smashing raid in West London in March. Christabel Pankhurst fled to Paris where she remained until the First World War broke out but continued to organize the Union from a distance. There is some suggestion that she feared that the Pethick Lawrences were taking too much power in her absence, and the couple also disagreed with Christabel and Emmeline as to the form and direction of further militancy. Publicly all four cited 'political differences' as the reason beneath the split. The Pethick Lawrences were allowed to retain control of the *Votes for Women* newspaper which they had founded and edited. However, both remained broadly loyal to the WSPU or at least to the notion of a united militant campaign and, although Emmeline recalled how several people appealed to her to begin a new organization, they determined to put the movement first. What they did do was form a loose affiliation, the *Votes for Women* Fellowship, which was conceived as a network to unite many members of other groups beyond the divisive labels of 'militant' or 'non-militant'. Fellowship branches formed in many parts of the country and held regular meetings. These differed from other suffrage meetings in that they were aimed more at education and conviviality than making new recruits. Meetings typically comprised a reading and a discussion with campaigning largely limited to raising sales of the paper which was now without official organisational backing.

The *Votes for Women* Fellowship was largely supplanted by another body, the United Suffragists, (US) which was set up in 1914. Because much of its activity took place during the war, historians have tended to overlook its origins. These lay in the success of the *Votes for Women* Fellowship which convinced some suffrage campaigners that there was room for a new body which would unite the militant and constitutional wings of the movement, particularly now that some militants were increasingly working underground. The US was intended to be 'an intermediate party... with a stable organisation that remains above ground and intact for constitutional agitation'.¹⁰ It was open to men and women (so could recruit from the Men's League for Women's Suffrage) and militants and non-militants and was prepared to accept joint membership with other societies. One of its interesting achievements was its ability to recruit quite well-known public figures who had not previously been associated with suffrage groups, largely because of its separation from the long and complex controversies which surrounded many other suffrage societies by this date. Its potential was interrupted by the outbreak of war (which co-incided with the date set for handing over *Votes for Women* to become the US official paper). After this is continued low-key suffrage campaigning but was less necessary as the militant campaign collapsed.

Religious suffrage societies

Not all of the organisations campaigning for the vote were the result of splits within larger groups. There were a number of religious suffrage societies which recruited men and women as members. In the Anglican Church, a Church League for Women's Suffrage (CLWS) was founded in 1909 by the Reverend Claude Hinscliff who acted as its secretary for many years.¹¹ The League's primary aim was, of course, the vote, but it also wished to emphasize what it referred to as 'the deep religious significance of the women's movement' and also to promote suffrage within the Anglican church. The CLWS held special communion services for its members each month, and was involved in some broader movements for equality within the Church, for example in helping to draft recommendations for a new version of the marriage service. The CLWS never attempted to develop a mass membership or a high profile campaign like the NUWSS or the WSPU. Nevertheless, it had over 100 branches and 5,000

members by 1913. It was not a particularly radical association, and steered its members away from contentious issues within the Church such as the ordination of women. Nevertheless, it was not afraid to take a strong stand on other issues, and refused moves to expel or condemn individual members who participated in militancy in 1914 although this lost it some prominent members including the Bishop of Worcester. The League continued a low level of suffrage campaigning during the First World War, then became the Church of the Church Militant, devoted to broader campaigning for equality within the Church. Catholic women were represented by the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. This was formed in 1912 by two catholic members of the WSPU following a chance encounter at mass.¹² It was less supportive of militancy than the CLWS, but otherwise served a similar function in promoting the suffrage cause amongst Catholic congregations and organisations. It had fewer branches than the Church League, being largely limited to Liverpool and the South East of England. In Liverpool in particular it involved itself in broader welfare work, reflecting the working-class nature of many Catholic parishes which it continued during the First World War. At the end of the war, the CWSS reformed as the St Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

Other faiths were also represented. For non-conformists there was a Free Church League for Women's Suffrage (FCLWS) which was set up in 1910 and a Friends League for Women's Suffrage (FLWS) whose records appear to have been accidentally destroyed in the 1920s.¹³ The FCLWS has not as yet been the subject of sustained historical enquiry, so little is known about its activities beyond the more prominent of its members which included the Pethick Lawrences. In common with other religious societies it published its own newspaper, the *Free Church Suffrage Times* which offered an account of its provincial work and continued until 1920 (known as the Coming Day from 1913). Jewish suffragists also had their own organisation, the Jewish League for Women's Suffrage which was partly formed due to a belief that Jewish suffragists would join a specific society more readily than a non-denominational organisation.¹⁴ The Jewish society was more directly involved in militancy than other religious societies, with some of its members interrupting synagogue services on Yom Kippur in 1913. Each of these societies complemented the work of the main militant and constitutional groups. Although they each recruited a distinct membership who were not involved in other bodies they also enjoyed considerable overlap with the NUWSS, the WSPU and the WFL, but allowed religious members of these groups to press their claims in different arenas, asserting spiritual claims which were as important to them as political ones.

Political suffrage societies

Although the suffrage campaign was intensely political, the main societies steered clear of party politics. Neither the Liberal nor the Conservative Party would officially take a position on women's suffrage making it likely that any successful measure would be achieved through a private members' bill with supporters from all parties. Yet by the point at which the WSPU formed many women had developed quite successful identities for themselves as party-political activists. The Liberal Party had established a Women's Liberal Federation in 1886 whilst Conservative women had organised through the Ladies Grand Council of the Primrose League since 1885. By the beginning of the 20th century, women were a familiar sight during election campaigns where they worked as canvassers. In local government they were even more active having the right to stand as candidates for a number of bodies including School Boards and Boards of Guardians which they often did on behalf of political parties. For some women suspending party political activity in favour of suffrage work was too great a sacrifice, so in both the Liberal and Conservative parties specific suffrage groups were initiated. Many Liberal women suffragists saw their campaign for the vote as an intrinsic part of their Liberal philosophy, but were divided as to how best to attain their end. Whilst 'Progressives' within the Women's Liberal Federation were keen to see the organisation commit to women's suffrage, 'Moderates', who were largely Gladstonian, were more cautious. Progressive opinion won in 1892 forcing the Moderate wing to withdraw into a separate body, the Women's National Liberal Federation. Progressives then attempted to make the issue of suffrage into a 'test question' at elections, arguing that the WLF ought not to be campaigning for men who would not press for their enfranchisement when elected. Anna Maria Priestman set up the Union of Practical Suffragists within the WFL in 1893 as

a means of advancing this issue. The UPA wound up its campaign in 1902 when the WFL supported a resolution on the test question, but later felt that they had stopped work too soon as the measure which was passed at WFL council still allowed for a degree of freedom of action by individual local branches. Consequently another group, the Forward Suffrage Union, was begun by Eva McLaren in 1907. Like the UPA this was restricted to WFL members and worked almost exclusively within the Federation to enhance its commitment to women's suffrage. Women Liberals were in an increasingly difficult position over the issue as the militant campaign in particular was directed against a Liberal government. Organisations such as the FSU offered them an important location where they could work as Liberals and suffragists without accusations of party disloyalty.

Things differed slightly within the Conservative Party. Conservatives were able to capitalise on suffrage hostility to the Liberal government, hence the somewhat ambivalent presentation of suffragette militancy in much of the Tory press. Suffrage was not without support within the Conservative Party, and there was also a feeling amongst those who were less committed to the issue that, as mounting public pressure was making its introduction inevitable, it was better to take some sort of initiative to control the limits of what was passed. Conservative women were prominent in both the militant and constitutional suffrage camps, but were also concerned at what appeared to be a hardening of opposition, demonstrated through the formation of a national Anti-Suffrage League in 1908. In the same year, Conservative suffragists formed their own body, the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association. Like the FSU this worked within the Conservative Party, although it developed a slightly wider remit than its Liberal counterpart. It began as a small London-based committee, but had expanded to 1,500 members the following year with a network of branches. Activities were restricted to Party-based events, with members acting as Conservatives to convince other Conservatives of their cause. The CUWFA was committed to constitutional methods, but did not preclude its members from participating in militancy in the name of other suffrage societies. Its membership was also boosted by the NUWSS' decision to set up an election fighting fund to help Labour candidates at elections, which drove some prominent Conservative constitutional suffragists out of the Society and into the CUWFA.

Socialist women were less inclined to form separate suffrage bodies. All socialist parties were broadly in favour of women's suffrage negating the necessity for their suffragist women members to organise in order to influence party opinion although as the formation of the WSPU demonstrates some stronger suffragists did feel that their parties could be doing more. Nevertheless the main debate amongst socialist women was what sort of franchise to campaign for rather than the principle of women's suffrage. The central issue was whether socialists should campaign for votes for women on the same grounds as they were currently given to men, accepting the property qualification in the short term or whether they ought to press for an adult suffrage measure which would enfranchise both women and the large numbers of working-class men who were currently voteless. Whilst some socialist women believed that a limited franchise would only benefit better-off women (who they also believed were less likely to be socialist in their voting behaviour) others felt that the principle of women being debarred from sharing in government cut across socialist commitment to equality and thus required immediate challenge. An Adult Suffrage Society (ASS) which had formed in 1904 under the presidency of women's trades union leader Margaret Bondfield attracted a number of prominent women from the Marxist Social Democratic Federation as well as from the ILP. It also took some of the WSPU's prominent socialist members including Dora Montefiore when the latter organisation's anti-democratic methodologies became apparent. Yet there was also some suspicion of the ASS as it undertook little in the way of public activity. Keir Hardie condemned it as a society which 'holds no meetings [and] issues no literature' and it had little influence in broader suffrage debates. A more lively campaign was led by the People's Suffrage Federation (PSF) which was set up in 1909 by socialist and Liberal women. This quickly gained the support of a wide range of groups including the Women's Labour League and several local ILP branches. The input of socialist women convinced the PSF that it could support some limited suffrage measures for tactical reasons, making it more attractive than the harder-lined ASS whom many feared was merely postponing the suffrage question.¹⁵

'Professional' suffrage groups

As well as groups which sought alternative methods of organising and campaigning to the two main suffrage organisations and those catering for suffragists of a particular religious denomination or political persuasion, there were a number of suffrage bodies aimed at a more restrictive membership. Many of these centred around particular careers, and some were able to direct members' professional skills for the benefit of the broader suffrage movement. The radicalism of suffrage attracted large numbers of the more bohemian sections of Edwardian society, so unsurprisingly there were a number of small suffrage societies associated with the arts. These were mutually beneficial. All suffrage societies had their own colours (purple, white and green for the WSPU and red white and green for the NUWSS) and made great use of visual display at their meetings and in public demonstrations. The Artists' Suffrage League which formed in 1907 did much valuable work, largely on behalf of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies with its adherence to constitutional approaches being reflected in its slogan of "Alliance not Defiance". Its membership, which comprised many professional artists and illustrators, donated their services free of charge and produced large numbers of fundraising postcards as well as illustrated advertising posters for the cause. The ASL is probably best known for its work in producing around eighty colourful and elaborate banners which were first used in the NUWSS's mass demonstration in London in June 1913, many of which were designed by Mary Lowndes. Such banners were invaluable in creating the public spectacle essential to a successful demonstration. Militant suffragettes received similar help from the Suffrage Atelier, which formed in 1909 and described itself as an 'Arts and Crafts Society Working for the Enfranchisement of Women'. Unlike the ASL which donated its services to the cause, Atelier members were supposed to promote suffrage through their work, but were expected to offer such work to the Atelier in the first instance, receiving a percentage of any profit it raised with the remainder going to the movement. The Atelier, like the ASL, made posters and postcards which were used for fundraising purposes along with banners for WSPU demonstrations. It also worked with the Women's Freedom League, and helped decorate halls for WFL fundraising events.¹⁶

Larger suffrage societies also benefited from the work of the Actresses' Franchise League which formed in 1908. This worked on behalf of militant and constitutional societies producing entertainments for meetings (such as singers and recitations) for a greatly reduced rate. Some of the AFL's better known members including the actresses Cicely Hamilton and Edith Craig were also involved in the production of plays and performances intended to raise income for the cause. The best known of these was Cicely Hamilton's *Pageant of Great Women* which was first performed in a production by Edith Craig in 1909. The pageant reflected the suffrage movement's use of history and involved the allegorical character Woman demanding redress from Justice and presenting a number of well-known historical women as a means of legitimising women's current claims for greater public participation. The popularity of the pageant resulted in similar performances at WSPU and WFL branches throughout Britain. The AFL also produced more broadly feminist plays which dealt with wider issues of gender inequality than suffrage, particularly with the sexual double standard and the problems facing working women. In 1913, partly due to the popularity of the League's work, a 'Woman's Theatre' was set up in 1913, but only managed one season before the outbreak of war. Unlike the ASL and the Suffrage Atelier, the AFL carried on work during the war. One of its members, Lena Ashwell, initiated the 'Women's Theatre Camps Entertainments' which travelled behind the lines on the Western Front providing entertainment for wounded or resting troops.

The organisations described here represent only a small fraction of the overall total, although they do give some indication of the broader philosophies underpinning the diversification of the campaign and the different interest groups to which suffragists belonged. Just before the First World War broke out, *Votes for Women* listed the contact details of fifty three separate suffrage organisations.¹⁷ These included all those mentioned above as well as other groups for Welsh, Scottish and Irish women, for teachers and writers, some separate organisations for men (who were not welcomed as members by all suffrage societies) and other much smaller bodies whose details have become obscured. Collectively they serve to remind us that 'votes for women' was far from being a minority interest area in Edwardian Britain. It attracted thousands of women who were also involved in other areas of

Edwardian life; the arts; newer professions; religious or political bodies. This complexity is poorly represented by focussing only on the 'militant' or 'constitutional' divide.

NOTES

1. For the Langham Place group see particularly Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Days*, chapter 1; Jane Rendall, 'Friendship and Politics: Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes' in J. Rendall and S. Mendus, (eds) *Sexuality and Subordination*, London, 1989; Jane Rendall, 'A moral engine? Feminism, Liberalism and the *English Woman's Journal*' in Rendall, ed, *Equal or Different?* Oxford, 1987.
2. For the petition see Ann Dingsdale, 'Generous and Lofty Sympathies: the Kensington Society, the 1866 women's suffrage Petition and the development of mid-Victorian feminism'. PhD thesis, University of Greenwich, 1995
3. E S Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 30; H Blackburn, *Women's Suffrage. A Record of the Women's Suffrage Movement in the British Isles with Biographical Sketches of Miss Becker*, pp. 55 – 6. For an explanation of the discrepancy between these accounts see Holton, *Suffrage Days* p. 254 fn 25.
4. Holton, *Suffrage Days* 24
5. See Holton, *Suffrage Days* for a further explanation of this term.
6. See Holton, 'Now you see it, now you don't: the Women's Franchise League and its place in contending narratives of the Women's Suffrage Movement' in June Purvis & Mary Joannou, eds, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* Manchester, 1998.
7. See for example June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, London, Routledge, 2004; Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage, 1866 – 1914*, Oxford, 2000.
8. On this point see K Cowman, "'Incipient Toryism?'" The Women's Social and Political Union and the Independent Labour Party, 1903 – 14.' *History Workshop Journal* ,53, 2002, pp. 128 – 148.
9. There is still no full-length history of the League. For details of aspects of its work see Claire Eustance, *Daring to be Free: The Evolution of Women's Political Identities in the Women's Freedom League 1907 – 1930*, University of York D.Phil thesis, 1993; Claire Eustance, 'Meanings of Militancy: The ideas and practice of political resistance in the Women's Freedom League' in Purvis and Joannou, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*; Hilary Frances, 'The Women's Freedom League and its Legacy' in June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton, eds, *Votes for Women* London, 2000
10. Cited in Cowman, 'The United Suffragists' in Purvis & Joannau, *The Women's Suffrage Movement* p. 79
11. For the Church League see Brian Heeney, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England*, Oxford, 1988.
12. For the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society see L de Alberti, 'History of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society', *Catholic Citizen* XIV, 9, October 1928; F. Mason, 'The Newer Eve: The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society in England 1922 – 1923' *Catholic Historical Review* 72, October 1986
13. Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, London, 1999, p. 233
14. AJR, ed, *Women's Suffrage Annual and Who's Who*, London, 1913.
15. Hannam & Hunt p. 123.
16. More detail on suffrage and the decorative arts can be found in Lisa Tickner *The Spectacle of Women*, London, 1987.
17. 6 February 1914. This number had been largely unchanged for the previous 2 years.

The End of the British Empire and the Break-Up of Britain: Cause and Effect?

PROFESSOR PAUL WARD

It is natural that the devolution of power to the parliament in Scotland and the assembly in Wales in 1998 should encourage historians to consider the causes of what has been described as the break-up of Britain. The 'unravelling of the United Kingdom' is the subject of contemporary debate as well as historical argument and there a number of causes for the break-up of Britain upon which most agree. The list of explanations is long and compelling, encouraging the view that devolution is part of the process of the dissolution of Britain and Britishness. The list includes the decline of British power in economic and diplomatic terms, the rise of the United States as a superpower, the development of European integration and the rise of non-white immigration. Again and again, though, in an explanation that borders on obsessive neatness, historians, sociologists, political scientists, journalists and pundits of all kinds have found something particularly appealing about the idea that it is the decline of Britain's Empire that has caused Britain's own decline.

In the 1970s Tom Nairn wrote his influential book, *The Break-up of Britain*, in which he described what he called 'the twilight of the British state' and forecast the demise of the United Kingdom.¹ Nairn considered that there was a close and causal relationship between the demise of the Empire and the rise of nationalisms in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which, he argued, would pull the Union apart. Following Nairn, many others have drawn attention to this causal relationship. David Marquand, for example, has seen end of empire as the crucial factor forcing the questioning of the Union and what it means to be British. He has argued that 'The British state was, by definition, a global state ... whig imperialist Britain was Britain ... Empire was not an optional extra for the British ... it was their reason for being British as opposed to English or Scots or Welsh'.² Richard Weight, in his major work on British national identity since 1940s, has considered that 'The United Kingdom was primarily established to further the quest for Empire. When the Empire disappeared, the original *raison d'être* of the United Kingdom disappeared too.'³ There are therefore many who would support the argument that the end of empire entailed the inevitable end of what has been called the internal colonialism of the English over the rest of the other nations within the United Kingdom.⁴

Of course, there are also those who dispute such a direct or mono-causal link. Keith Robbins, a prolific writer on themes of integration in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has been more sceptical about the link between the decline of the British Empire and the emergence and strengthening of nationalism in Scotland and Wales. He argues that while decolonization was 'a disorientating experience,' 'the fact that two developments seemed to be happening at the same time does not, in itself, establish a connexion.'⁵ This essay is an attempt to guide readers through the complexities of the discussion of end of empire as it relates to the apparent decline of the United Kingdom at the end of the twentieth century.

Of course, this is but one part of the historiography of the end of empire. Historical writing has most often been on the causes of the end of Empire rather than its consequences in metropolitan Britain. The multi-volume, long term project to collate and publish British documents on the end of Empire related to causes of the dissolution of empire, focuses on government and civil service in London and relations with individual colonies.⁶ A recent and thorough work based on this approach is Ronald Hyam's *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968*.⁷ Recently there has been a trickle of discussion of the metropolitan impact of decolonization. Stuart Ward's edited book, *British Culture and the End of Empire* ranges widely, covering themes such the persistence of empire in metropolitan culture, the satire boom of the 1960s as a post-imperial phenomenon and imperial nostalgia.⁸ Krishan Kumar has considered the impact of the end of Empire on the development of English national identity in the post-imperial age, arguing that while England was on its imperial mission, it found little need for a distinct English as opposed to British identity, but with the end of that mission questions of

Englishness have needed addressing.⁹ Paul Gilroy has explored the impact of the end of empire on multi-ethnic, multi-cultural Britain. He argues that one outcome has been 'conviviality' or 'the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multicultural an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere.'¹⁰ Hence while discussion of the impact of the end of empire in the United Kingdom is in its infancy, there is already quite a range of perspectives. This essay seeks to consider but one area – relating to the notion that decolonization of the external empire has been succeeded by the dismantling of the internal English empire.

A brief summary of the arguments of David McCrone provides a good starting point for such a discussion. McCrone is a leading academic commentator on post-devolution identities and he has given substantial thought to the relationship between Empire and identity. While others leap to the conclusion that there must be a relationship, McCrone establishes with care his conviction that Britannia was unmasked by imperial decline. He suggests that, 'If we accept that in essence Britishness was an imperial identity, then the loss of Empire eroded that identity at home and abroad.'¹¹ By surveying a range of factors in the formation of British national identity in the eighteenth century, he argues that Britishness was a supranational form of identity and was therefore inherently weak.¹² Drawing on Linda Colley's seminal book *Britons*, he suggests that Britishness was 'forged' as by a blacksmith melding together different elements but he refers also to the counterfeiter's forgery, that Britishness was false.¹³ The weakness and artificiality of British national identity is a common theme and has encouraged the view that even at the moment of its inception, Britishness was unstable and in terminal decline.¹⁴ Hence McCrone suggests of the formation of the Scottish National Party in 1934 that, 'While the SNP did not make an electoral impact until the late 1960s ... it had begun its long political march. Ireland, Scotland and Wales were flexing their national muscles as the British Empire lost its force.' He refers also to the formation of Plaid Cymru in 1925 and suggests that 'What these political movements showed was that layers of the British imperium were peeling off – first, the white Dominions (being white and British was a *sine qua non*), then the so-called Celtic countries: Ireland above all, and the threats from Scotland and Wales to secede have their roots in this period.'¹⁵

It is certainly the case that many historians see imperialism being central to British society and identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the mid-1980s John MacKenzie argued that British patriotism was transformed into an imperial patriotism in the late nineteenth century, and that what it meant to be British became intricately associated with the Empire.¹⁶ MacKenzie suggested that many and various social forces and interests mounted a sustained propaganda campaign that constituted an 'ideological barrage' from which there was no escape for a public faced with this onslaught in almost every aspect of their lives. MacKenzie wrote specifically about the Scottish case arguing that the Empire allowed Scottishness to be expressed globally, that in India, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Scotland, imperialism provided a vehicle through which Scottishness could be expressed.¹⁷

If the impact of Empire was so profound on Britishness, then it could indeed be presumed that the impact of rapid decolonization between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s was equally profound, and coinciding with the first sustained political successes of Welsh and Scottish nationalism (in the by-election successes of Gwynfor Evans in Carmarthen in 1966 and Winnie Ewing in Hamilton the following year), the relationship has been interpreted as cause and effect. Yet there are major problems with such a thesis.

The first is that the impact of imperialism on British society and identity might well have been exaggerated by historians like John MacKenzie. Bernard Porter has recently argued that the impact of imperialism on British society was minimal. He therefore concludes that 'Impacting as little as this domestically in its lifetime, it is probably not to be expected that the empire would have left much of a residue when it died.'¹⁸ Porter's interpretation has been challenged strongly, partly because of his narrow definition of imperialism as the will to dominate and rule other peoples.¹⁹ None the less, Porter's desire to sift through evidence for the claims that empire profoundly affected British society should act as a corrective to bold statements about the impact of the end of empire on national identities in Britain. Historians must take care not to leap to assumptions.

Despite Porter, evidence for the substantial contribution of the British Empire to British society and national identity seems overwhelming. The threads of Empire ran through many areas, sometimes

with more and sometimes with less meaning, from street names to imperial literature.²⁰ But the threads were embroidery upon the wider fabric of British society and identities rather than the seams that held the country together. Britain was more than just empire and Britishness was more than just imperialism. The fabric made many of the British feel better about their 'imperial clothes' and they earned much confidence about themselves from looking so fine. But Britishness had many aspects. It was not only imperial. It allowed the different parts of the British to express their identities in different ways. Empire did not subsume other identities – of place, of class, of gender and so on. In fact it allowed the emphasis to be placed on such other identities. As we have seen, this was most obvious in the case of the Scottish, who exported their Scottishness within the framework of the empire. Hence MacKenzie's argument does not lead him to the conclusion that the end of empire resulted in the end of Britishness, since he recognizes that the logic of his argument is that the Empire did not prevent the expression of Scottishness (and Welshness), so its end ought not to be seen as 'the precondition for the rekindling of suppressed nationalisms of the so-called regions of the British Isles, heading them towards their referenda.'²¹

Others also utilised the Empire to express distinctiveness. John Grigg, biographer of Lloyd George, has argued that 'To him, the British Empire and the United Kingdom did not restrict, but on the contrary enhanced, Welsh nationality.'²² Others presented imperialism in terms of civic competition. British cities could express their imperial identities, London most obviously but other cities also emphasized their links to empire, as did smaller towns and even villages.²³ Men were able to assert a particular form of imperial manliness and women did not hold back in using empire to develop femininity and feminism.²⁴ The Empire was an opportunity for the sons of the aristocracy to assert their usefulness, and for the middle class to establish that they were part of a great enterprise rather than atomised individuals. For some socialists and many workers, the Empire had promise as a place of employment or as contributor to the development of the good sense of the British that would ultimately result in socialism.²⁵

Empire was everywhere and important but its impact was uneven. Andrew Thompson has concluded his recent book on the matter very sensibly:

The empire, then, was a significant factor in the lives of the British people. It was not, however, all-pervasive The 'big theory' behind this book is that there is no 'big theory': no uniform imperial impact, no joined-up or monolithic ideology of imperialism, no single source of enthusiasm or propaganda for the empire, no cohesive imperial movement.²⁶

Empire did give greater sense of self and confidence that being British was best. But it was not the only prop to British society. Other factors also contributed to Britons' belief in their own greatness. The monarchy and parliament pleased conservatives and liberals alike.²⁷ Socialists mostly accepted the former and celebrated the latter. They saw both as popular and British and saw them being linked in such a way that did not make it worthwhile politically to attack the monarchy.

Across the nineteenth and twentieth century, Britishness was strengthened. The Empire certainly played a role but it was not in isolation from other issues. In the nineteenth century British imperialism was considered a liberal force civilising the world and freeing foreign peoples from slavery (literally and metaphorically), but it was the genius of the British rather than imperialism that was held responsible, for weren't foreign empires riven with cruelty? The British people were seen, by themselves at least, as playing the greater role in defeating the Kaiser's Germany in 1918 and Hitler's Germany and Japan in 1945, and this also strengthened Britishness. The Empire had contributed but the British contribution was seen as more essential (even when actually the Russians, the French and the Americans were so important to victory).²⁸ In the late 1940s, India was granted independence but in the same year the National Health Service, the centrepiece of the welfare state, became the new jewel in the crown of British national identity. The Labour government elected through a combination of patriotism and the desire for social change, led by Major Attlee, established the welfare state. Tom Devine has pointed out that this happened at a significant moment for the Scottish. The Empire about which Scots cared most was the empire of the white dominions, whose moment of independence arrived between the wars, while Scottish nationalists remained imperially-minded. In those years, the dreadful state of the Scottish economy and the inability of the Empire to provide

succour discouraged imperial sentiment. Devine points out that after 1945, Labour's welfare state and economic plan came to be seen as Scotland's hope. Hence he argues that

The age of empire may have passed, but, ironically, the Union was now even more important than before. As one of the poorer parts of the United Kingdom, Scotland was likely to gain more than other regions from the introduction of an interventionist social and economic policy which was being implemented in the very decade that decolonisation accelerated through the independence of India.²⁹

Devine therefore suggests that the impact of the end of empire was actually a force strengthening the Union.

Other embellishments also helped to fill the loss left by a crumbling empire. Some were more or less ephemeral, such as the British contribution to pop music. The 'British invasion' of America in the 1960s resulted in the Beatles being awarded OBEs by the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson in recognition of their contribution to the economy and national status. The Beatles were no less popular in Scotland and Wales than in England.³⁰ Even the end of empire was turned into a victory rather than a defeat. Many of the British convinced themselves that they had always meant to deliver self-government to the peoples of the Empire. British withdrawal could therefore be displayed as success and honour – the British had stuck by their words.³¹ The establishment of the Commonwealth provided some additional consolation that Britain's global role would continue, and when the Commonwealth did not fulfil its promise, the sense of loss of Empire seemed at more than one remove. There was therefore no major trauma associated with the loss of the British Empire. Keith Robbins offers a variety of reasons for the absence of political conflict over decolonization. There was no British equivalent of the French war in Algeria; it was the Conservatives who presided over the crucial period of decolonization between 1951 and 1964; there never was a single empire and so opposition to the loss of its parts was diverse and disunited.³²

There was always a temptation by some to be embarrassed by the imperial past and the loss of Empire, but these were isolated voices or could be ignored. Across the political spectrum, people could be found to speak out for the imperial past, to recognize and celebrate its contribution. The Conservatives celebrated Empire, most famously and divisively as Margaret Thatcher declared that victory in the Falklands in 1982 showed that the British remained the people who had governed such a vast empire.³³ But from Labour too came voices calling on Britons not to forget their imperial past, with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown just the most recent in a line of socialists for whom empire was not a dirty word.³⁴ Even nationalists in Scotland and Wales have been prepared to praise the Commonwealth as a progressive force, despite its obvious origins in empire.³⁵ Across the late twentieth century, imperial nostalgia has formed an important component of British culture, on film and television, so that Salman Rushdie can conclude that Britain has never rid itself of the 'filth of imperialism'.³⁶

This combination of elements made the loss of empire a much less traumatic experience for the British than for those being liberated from colonialism in Asia, Africa and the West Indies. But it is also an experience that does not fully coincide with the emergence of nationalism in Wales and Scotland. It is essential to locate the moment of the rise of nationalisms in Scotland and Wales if we are to identify causes of the break-up of Britain. The welfare state encouraged support for the 'British' political parties in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1950s, in the midst of a global economic boom, the Conservatives, still known as Unionists, were able to win a majority of the vote in Scotland. Labour too did very well in Scotland and Wales and nationalists were firmly confined to the margins of politics, no more than fringe groups, occasionally making the news but not making much political headway.³⁷ Even in 1970, with the collapse of British power being confirmed by the Labour government's devaluation of the pound and its decision to withdraw British forces stationed 'east of Suez', and much trepidation from Labour and Conservative politicians that the nationalists' time had come, the SNP and Plaid Cymru secured only just over eleven per cent of the votes cast in their respective nations. The 1970s were not a decade in which the end of empire figured prominently among the series of industrial, political and economic crises and it was in these years that the nationalists performed best in elections, until the failure of devolution in the referendums of 1979, when both nationalist parties suffered substantial setbacks.

This therefore begs the question as to what did cause the break-up of Britain, or rather the rise of demands for the political recognition of Scottish and Welsh nationality, in the late twentieth century? Devine's conclusion is that a nationalist consensus emerged only very late in the century, caused not by the end of empire but by the experience of Conservative government in the 1980s. The consensus, he says

was fashioned not by any nostalgia for lost imperial glory but by the profound economic crises of the 1980s, the 'democratic deficit' caused by the cleavage between Scottish and English voting patterns and perhaps, above all, by growing opposition to the social policies of a succession of Conservative governments. Mrs Thatcher has an infinitely greater claim to be the midwife of Scottish devolution than the factor of imperial decline.³⁸

This is a sensible but not wholly welcome conclusion. Nations are supposed to emerge from historical destiny rather than from the accidental election of a particular government at a particular moment. The apparent co-incidence of the end of the British Empire with the 'break-up of Britain' it would appear, is, in fact, coincidence. The impact of empire clearly did have an impact on Britain. Murray Pittcock has argued that 'the ideology which developed the notion of a unitary Britain was that subsequently used to endorse a unitary imperial purpose. Thus the dissolution of the illusion of imperial solidarity has a symbiotic relationship with tensions over the notion of unitary Britishness itself.'³⁹ Such claims must be treated with caution. The 'unravelling of the United Kingdom' is not the result of a single cause, however neat and tidy it would be if that were indeed the case.

NOTES

1. Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London, 1977).
2. David Marquand, 'How United is the Modern United Kingdom?' in Alexander. Grant and Keith Stringer (eds), *Uniting the Kingdom: The Making of British History*, (London, 1995), p. pp. 287-8.
3. Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (London, 2002), p. 727.
4. Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London, 1975; 1999).
5. Keith Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (London, 1993), pp. 230, 283.
6. The volumes are published by The Stationary Office.
7. Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968* (Cambridge, 2006).
8. Stuart Ward (ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester, 2001).
9. Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge, 2003). See also Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939-1965* (Oxford, 2005).
10. Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London, 2004), p. xi.
11. David McCrone, 'Unmasking Britannia: The rise and fall of British national identity,' *Nations and Nationalism*, 3 (1997), p. 592.
12. McCrone also discusses the importance of social class in British national identity, particularly the integration of the working class into the democratic process through the Labour Party (p. 590). See also Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left, 1881-1924* (Woodbridge, 1998).
13. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, first published 1992, second edition (London, 2005).
14. See for example Robert Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford, 2002)
15. McCrone, 'Unmasking Britannia,' p. 593.
16. John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984).
17. John M. MacKenzie, 'Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, VIII (1998), pp. 215-31.

18. Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2004), p. 299.
19. Stuart Ward, 'Echoes of Empire,' *History Workshop Journal*, 62 (2006), pp. 264-78. For the continuing debate see Bernard Porter, 'Debate: Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness,' John M. MacKenzie, "'Comfort" and Conviction: A Response to Bernard Porter,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36 (2008), pp. 101-17 and pp. 659-68.
20. There are about 40 published books in the Manchester University Press series 'Studies in Imperialism,' edited by MacKenzie, which speak volumes for the evidence of the impact of Empire.
21. MacKenzie, 'Empire and National Identities,' p. 231.
22. John Grigg, *Lloyd George: From Peace to War 1912-1916* (London, 1985) p.110. See also Aled Jones and Bill Jones, 'The Welsh World and the British Empire, c.1851-1939: An Exploration', in Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (eds), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 57-81.
23. See for example Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (London, 2001); Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster & Nicholas J. White (eds), *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester, 2008).
24. The literature on imperialism and gender is extensive and growing. See for example Clare Midgley (ed.), *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester, 1998).
25. See for example Paul Ward, *Unionism in the United Kingdom, 1918-1974* (Basingstoke, 2005) for the imperial socialism of Tom Johnston in Scotland and Harry Midgley in Ulster.
26. Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow, 2005), p. 241.
27. Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London, 2004), chapter 1.
28. Sonya Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain* (Oxford, 2003). There is no book length study of Scotland's role in the Second World War. See Catriona M.M. MacDonald, 'Wersh the Wine O' Victorie': Writing Scotland's Second World War,' *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 24 (2004), pp. 105-112.
29. T.M. Devine, 'The break-up of Britain? Scotland and the end of Empire,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 16 (2006), pp. 163-80. Quote on p. 180.
30. Weight makes much of the importance of pop culture to Britishness, see part 5 of his *Patriots*, entitled 'Swingers.'
31. See John Darwin, 'The fear of falling: British politics and imperial decline since 1900', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 36 (1986)
32. Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (Harlow, 1998), pp. 302-7.
33. Margaret Thatcher, Speech to Conservative rally at Cheltenham, 3 July 1982, <http://www.margareththatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=104989> [Accessed 3 March 2009].
34. For Blair see e.g. Labour Party annual conference, 1 Oct. 1996, in J. Arnold et al (eds), *History and Heritage* (Shaftsbury, 1998), p. 155.
35. See Susan Condor and Jackie Abel, 'Romantic Scotland, tragic England, ambiguous Britain: constructions of 'the Empire' in post-devolution national accounting,' *Nations and Nationalism*, 12 (2006), 453-72.
36. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (London, 1991).
37. Ward, *Unionism in the United Kingdom*.
38. Devine, 'The break-up of Britain?', p. 166.
39. Murray G.H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester, 1999), p. 42.

The Kennedy Administration and Civil Rights: Rhetoric versus Reality

DR DAVID MCKINSTRY

John F. Kennedy is forever associated with the civil rights movement. He is portrayed by many historians as a fallen leader, slain by an assassin's bullets as he was fighting for the cause of racial justice.¹ This image of Kennedy as civil rights advocate is partly derived from his response to the Birmingham crisis when, on June 11th 1963, he used the new medium of television to address the nation and frame racial justice in starkly moral terms. Kennedy stated that: 'We face a moral crisis as a country and as a people.'² However, aside from Kennedy's eloquent rhetoric, what has to be asked is, was the president's assumption of a moral position on civil rights motivated by a desire to fulfill long-term commitments to the cause of racial justice, or was it part of a purely political response to civil rights? This article will focus on events leading up to the Birmingham crisis and its political aftermath which led to President Kennedy making his famous speech. It will employ primary sources from the period making particular use of memoranda from within the administration to shed new light on the political calculations of Kennedy's handling of the civil rights crisis in the spring of 1963.

Martin Luther King on the Eve of the Birmingham Crisis

By the early 1960s Martin Luther King's role as the symbolic leader of the civil rights movement was already being challenged from several quarters within the black community, as the movement began to shift its stance from one of moderation in the 1950s to one of more militant direct action in the early 1960s. By early 1962, the national press was commenting on King's increasing lack of credibility among young black activists. In January 1962, *Time* reported:

King was once the idol of young Negroes but now many are turning against him. They charge that King is far more interested in making speeches across the U.S. than head-on action.... These little conflicts are inevitable. They arise as part of a shift in emphasis from the legal area to non-violent direct action. These students are helping deliver the rights that have been declared.³

In February 1961, James Baldwin articulated the mood of many black activists in an article, 'The Dangerous Road Before Martin Luther King'. Baldwin argued that the middle-class leadership that King represented was 'perhaps the most unlucky bourgeoisie in the world's entire history, trapped, as they are, in no man's land between black humiliation and white power.'⁴ King's credibility among civil rights activists was further damaged in 1962 by the tactical miscalculations of Albany, Georgia, where the movement had met its first defeat, failing to gain local concessions from the white power structure and, more importantly, failing to force federal intervention. *Time* reported the sentiments of one Albany resident, which encapsulated the feelings of many civil rights activists regarding King's increased loss of credibility in the black community: 'Martin comes in wearing his spiritual halo and blows on his flute and the money comes pouring in. But he doesn't speak for the Baptist ministry let alone 20 million Negroes.'⁵

By early 1963, then, King's non-violent theoretical foundations and his methods of confronting discrimination in the South were increasingly challenged from within the black community. The Kennedy administration, meanwhile, had enjoyed successes in the mid-term elections and the continued success of its southern voting rights strategy. This strategy strove to make the newly enfranchised black vote a vital component of a reconstituted Democratic Party, whilst not unduly antagonising white southern Democrats on issues of segregation.⁶ This meant that King was a far less important political ally in early 1963 than he had been in October 1960. Branch accurately summarised King's image after Albany as being one of a 'reluctant and losing leader.... He appeared a worthy symbol from the 1950s who had overreached himself trying to operate as a full-fledged political leader.'⁷

King, under increasing pressure from challenges within the civil rights movement and disillusioned by the disinterest shown by the White House, began to lose patience with the Kennedy administration. Also, the administration's dealings with King, particularly at Albany, where it behaved like an impartial observer, led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to believe that it could not rely on the administration to take action on its behalf. Moreover, President Kennedy's failure to follow up his civil rights message of February 1963, with firm legislative proposals, meant that many activists saw a danger that the administration might even retreat from its limited civil rights agenda. King bemoaned the fact that 1962 was 'the year that civil rights was displaced as the dominant issue in domestic politics... the issue no longer commanded the conscience of the nation.' King partly attributed this to the black population's willingness to accept Kennedy's well-orchestrated campaign of racial symbolism, involving the appointment of African-Americans such as Robert Weaver as administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency and the appointment of other African-Americans to senior positions in the federal government, as evidence of genuine progress in civil rights.⁸ In response to this, the SCLC began to reposition itself from its moderate stance, in which it was believed that discrimination could be resolved with the help of liberal politicians, to a more radical position, in which it actively sought confrontation with segregationist institutions in the South.

By late 1962, King's aides persuaded him that the creation of a dramatic conflict on civil rights was the best method of gaining the nation's attention and thereby forcing the administration to use its federal powers to intervene. However, it was reasoned by King's aides that, to highlight to the nation the reality of segregation, and compel federal intervention, they would have to stage their campaign in a city that was regarded as a bastion of southern segregation. They chose Birmingham, Alabama, which *Time* had observed in May 1962, a full year before the SCLC's campaign, was the most racially segregated city in America.⁹ Unlike previous protests, the Birmingham campaign was subject to meticulous planning by the SCLC. One of King's close aides, Wyatt Walker, who spent months working exclusively with the local black population, prepared the campaign which was dubbed 'Project C' – C stood for confrontation. 'Project C' began on April 3rd, 1963, but throughout April it received little local support or national media attention, in spite of King's jailing, during which he wrote his later famous 'Letter From Birmingham Jail.' Moreover, the infamous police chief, Eugene 'Bull' Connor, acted with uncharacteristic restraint.¹⁰

The Kennedy Administration on the Eve of Birmingham

The president and the attorney general were aware of the Birmingham demonstration, but were determined to keep their distance from the situation. Robert Kennedy also opposed the SCLC's campaign on the grounds that it disturbed the administration's long-term plans to remould the Democratic Party in the South. Schlesinger observed that voting rights remained the Justice Department's primary objective. Its lawyers were first committed to mediation and, if this failed, lawsuits would follow. Both Kennedys believed that equality could be achieved gradually and with the minimum of confrontation if the obstacles to black enfranchisement were removed. They reasoned that once blacks obtained the franchise they could enter the political mainstream and state officials would become responsive to their demands for equality. Moreover, this could be achieved by mediation and suits at the local level without the need for overly intrusive federal interference into states' internal affairs. Underpinning the administration's civil rights policy was the belief that racial equality could be achieved by the extension of the franchise without requiring drastic changes to the federal system of governance. Also, the need for politically dangerous confrontations with state officials would be reduced because federal initiatives would be restricted to the extension of the franchise by use of mediation and, if necessary, litigation at the local level.¹¹

Six months before the Birmingham campaign began, the attorney general had arranged to meet the governor of Alabama, George Wallace. The meeting was ostensibly about school segregation in his state, but it was also to court political support from a politician who was deemed by the Kennedys to be a potential ally in the South.¹² Robert Kennedy's calculations regarding his brother's wider need to court the support of influential southern politicians took precedence over his duties as the attorney general.¹³ This was evident in his actions during mid-April. On April 12th, King was jailed for defying

a county court judgment against the civil rights demonstration. In spite of King's incarceration, the attorney general was still intent on courting Wallace's support. On April 17th, Robert Kennedy sent Wallace a letter which stated: 'I will be in Montgomery of Wednesday night, April twenty-fourth and Thursday morning and would be pleased to pay you a visit if you will be in the city and it would be convenient for you.'¹⁴ The meeting proved fruitless because of the Birmingham demonstrations. Kennedy vented his frustrations not at the city, nor the city's officials for failing to make concessions in their segregationist structure, but at King. This was because it was deemed by Robert Kennedy that the ill-timed Birmingham campaign had upset his delicate political negotiations.

The political decision of the Kennedy administration to avoid federal intervention in civil rights issues where possible was also supported by the constitutional position adopted by the staff of the Justice Department. This was evident in the weekly Monday Civil Rights Reports to Robert Kennedy by his assistant attorney general, Burke Marshall. On April 23rd, Marshall informed Kennedy that:

Fred Shuttleworth [a Birmingham activist] came to Washington and conferred with me about the Birmingham situation. I told him that there was no legal basis upon which the federal government could take any action at present... Nevertheless the situation in Birmingham continues to be dangerous. The Negro population has no confidence at all in the local police....¹⁵

On April 30th, Marshall stated:

The position of the Department of Justice has been the court order should be obeyed, although the court order in Birmingham raises unique questions because (1) it bridges to some degree the basic constitutional right of free speech; (2) its validity is therefore in question; and (3) its constitutionality has not been adjudicated.¹⁶

In the same memorandum Marshall also informed the attorney general that racial protests and white violence were also occurring in Georgia and Mississippi and involved all the major civil rights organisations including CORE, SCLC and SNCC.¹⁷ What these reports indicate is that on the eve of the Birmingham crisis, which was to permanently transform race relations across the South, the Kennedy administration was determined to keep its political distance from civil rights. Also it was intent on using what was, arguably, a conservative interpretation of its federal powers within the constitutional framework to justify its inaction. The Kennedy Justice Department was imbued with an ethos that meant that it was determined to leave policing powers to the states.¹⁸

The Children's Crusade

The political and ideological positions taken by the Kennedy administration meant that it was determined to view civil rights as a local issue and not to become embroiled in the issue of southern segregation. However, this position, combined with the lack of local support and disinterest from the national media, forced King and his aides to adopt more radical tactics to secure federal intervention. In late April, much to the consternation of many of his supporters, King sanctioned the 'Children's Crusade.'¹⁹

The 'Children's Crusade' involved allowing children as young as six years of age to confront 'Bull' Connor's police force and if necessary go to jail. The 'Children's Crusade' was launched on May 2nd, and had the desired effect; the Birmingham police force responded with characteristic brutality against the marchers. Connor's men used police dogs and fire hoses against the children exercising their First Amendment rights. The media attention, which the police actions received, brought national and international condemnation. On May 10th, *Time* reported the events in Birmingham to a shocked nation which previously knew very little about the realities of southern segregation. It reported the events in Birmingham on its front cover and, using both photojournalism and articles, described the events of early May. *Time* reported the full horror of the events to a stunned nation:

'Look at 'Em Run.'.... Black booted firemen turned on their hoses. The kids fell back from the crushing streams. The water pressure increased.... Children fell back bleeding. The church march stopped.... But Negro adults from the park began muttering, then shouting threats at Connor's cops. Furious, the commissioner roared for his police dogs. The crowd edged back; some hurried away. 'Look at 'em run,' yelled Bull. He saw an officer holding back a crowd of white people

near by 'Let those people come to the corner, sergeant', shouted Connor. 'I want 'em to see the dogs work. Look at those niggers run.'²⁰

The symbolic images of well-dressed black children on a church march to exercise their First Amendment rights whilst being attacked by water cannons and police and being verbally degraded by 'Bull' Connor framed the Birmingham struggle in starkly moral, religious and constitutional terms. Northern whites were repulsed by the naked aggression that underpinned segregation in the South and demanded action. The country saw the photograph of a white policeman holding his German shepherd dog as it lunged into the abdomen of a submissive well-dressed black youth. As Andrew Young, one of King's key aides and strategists at Birmingham, recalled, the month-long media strategy 'to craft a concise and dramatic message that could be explained in just sixty seconds' was explained in just one photograph.²¹

The police brutality towards civil rights protesters at Birmingham and the media coverage given to it provided a catalyst which gave ordinary blacks a new-found sense of political and social power and gave them the confidence to use direct action strategies to confront white discrimination. Blacks took to heart the message of Birmingham; if discrimination could be defeated there, it could be challenged in thousands of other 'little Birminghams' across the nation. Birmingham acted as a catalyst which helped spread demonstrations across the nation. By the end of the summer the Justice Department had reported a total of 1,412 separate demonstrations.²² These demonstrations were given widespread media attention and this coverage had the effect of fuelling further demonstrations. On June 3rd, *The New York Times* reported that by the end of May the demonstrations had spread north and west and had become a nation-wide phenomenon. It commented:

The geographical spread has been more recent. The impetus appears mainly to have come from Birmingham.... Across the country in the past month perhaps 75,000 Negroes have turned out in the protest demonstrations and rallies. The overall pattern has been one of bitter struggle in segregationist strongholds of the South and is growing to show Negro discontent in the North.²³

Kennedy's Response

Blumberg commented on the significance of the events in Birmingham, asserting, 'Connor blundered into the hands of the Negro demonstrators by using tactics... that went beyond "polite oppression" which America had become accustomed to.'²⁴ The actions of Connor's police force had transformed Birmingham from being a local dispute into a national dilemma that required national solutions. The demonstrations and the media attention which they received began to put pressure on the Kennedy administration to act. However, throughout the May crisis the administration responded in a hesitant and reluctant fashion.²⁵ Birmingham was also responsible for exposing President Kennedy to political attack for his lack of moral and political leadership on civil rights. On May 8th, the day after the most serious bout of police oppression and black rioting in the city, the president was still intent on maintaining his distance from the issue. He stated:

We have, in addition, been watching the present controversy to detect any violation of the Federal civil rights or any other statutes. In the absence of such violation or any other Federal jurisdiction, our efforts have been focused on getting both sides together to settle in a peaceful fashion the very real abuses too long afflicted on the Negro citizens of that community.²⁶

Kennedy's statement failed to show presidential leadership on the issue and, more dangerously for the administration, he seriously miscalculated the public mood on the issue. The attack on protesters, particularly children, had produced a sense of national outrage which led to calls by white Americans that the federal government intervene to secure the civil rights of southern blacks. After a week of televised scenes of the reality of segregation, many Americans were turning to the White House for presidential leadership on the issue. However, the administration reacted in a stuttering and indecisive fashion.²⁷ This indecisiveness and failure to grasp the full dimensions of Birmingham and its aftermath were reflected in presidential pronouncements throughout May 1963. In mid-May, *The New York Times* carried the headline, 'President Warns of Negro Racists.'²⁸ On May 17th, *Time* published the

comments of Erwin Griswold, a member of the Commission on Civil Rights and a Harvard dean. Griswold articulated the opinions of many Americans when he publicly admonished the president, stating: 'It seems clear to me that he hasn't even started to use the powers available to him.'²⁹

Among white Americans there was a growing consensus that the racial crisis gripping the country required some form of presidential leadership. Instead they received dispassionate pronouncements aimed at getting the demonstrators off the streets and back into the established political channels. At Vanderbilt University's 90th anniversary celebrations in Nashville, Tennessee, the president gave a speech aimed at a southern audience and in the presence of George Wallace. Kennedy said, 'This nation is now engaged in a continuing debate about the rights of a portion of its citizens.'³⁰ However, he never once mentioned the word Negro. On May 22nd, when the president announced that he would be asking Congress for civil rights' legislation he delivered the news in the same detached and legalistic manner:

I would hope that we would be able to develop some formulas so that those who feel themselves, or who are as a matter of fact, denied equal rights would have a remedy.³¹

On June 7th, *Time* lukewarmly commented on the Kennedy's performances: 'Despite disappointments in the President's failure to rally the great moral and political force his office and prestige can command, Negroes could count some breakthroughs last week.'³²

From within the administration itself, the attorney general was being advised by his aides on the redundancy of the administration's two-and-half-year policy of trying to obtain local voluntary solutions to civil rights problems. Additionally, they were beginning to call for federal intervention to protect the constitutional and socio-economic rights of African-Americans. On May 15th, Ramsay Clark, the assistant attorney general for Lands in the Justice Department, sent the attorney general a memorandum which stated:

Basically I think we must have strong Federal executive power and leadership and drastic action. We will see whether a free people within a framework of our Constitution can effect major social transformation of a problem that no civilization has mastered at a time when it must be mastered for both the domestic and international welfare under the rule of law.³³

Clark's memorandum to Robert Kennedy who was his boss and the president's key political advisor is significant in a number of respects. Firstly, his call for federal intervention to protect the rights of civil rights activists suggests that Birmingham and its aftermath were responsible for a degree of policy reassessment by aides within the administration. Secondly, calling for federal intervention was conceding the redundancy of the administration's voluntary and local solutions in the aftermath of Birmingham. Thirdly, in stating to the attorney general that what was required was presidential leadership, Clark was implying that the president had not used his presidential prestige or powers sufficiently to address the situation. Such criticism would not have been done lightly. Fourthly, by placing emphasis on the international reaction to the domestic crisis, Clark shows that he understood the potential implications for the administration's foreign policy agenda. Within the context of the Cold War, in which the president had assumed the mantle of leader of the Free World and was committed to winning allies in Africa and Asia, any suggestion that the president was lax on racism in his own country was likely to be used as a propaganda tool by the Soviet Union.³⁴

The administration's concern with how it was perceived internationally was also evident in other internal memoranda within the Justice Department. One document, entitled 'Reaction to Racial Tension in Birmingham, Alabama', stated:

There is extensive and apparently growing coverage of the Birmingham developments... [including] prominent news coverage in the press of Egypt, Greece, Turkey, India and Pakistan. In all five countries the press featured pictures or headlines about the use of dogs against the Negroes. Critical editorials appeared in all these countries....³⁵

Throughout the 1963 Birmingham crisis the international headlines were even more condemnatory than the domestic media. Moscow's *Pravda* declared: 'Monstrous Crimes of the Racists in the United

States.' Paris's *Liberation* ran with the headline, 'Savages in Alabama.' The racial crisis in the nation was in danger of undermining America's moral authority to lead the free world in the eyes of the international community.

Conclusion

By late May 1963, Birmingham and the nation-wide racial protests that followed in its wake, focused attention on President Kennedy and exposed him to questions regarding his executive leadership on a moral issue which went to the very heart of the American constitution. The administration's strategy of devolving civil rights away from the office of the presidency was by early June redundant. Sorensen more pointedly summarised the effects of Birmingham on the administration's strategy: 'The essence of Kennedy's civil rights strategy since inauguration had been to keep at all times one step ahead of the evolving pressures, never to be caught dead in the water, always to have something new.'³⁷ But grassroots events and the push of the movement in Birmingham and across the nation outran the administration's ability to stay one step ahead of events. Moreover, President Kennedy's executive leadership on the moral issue of civil rights was called into question. It was these political realities which forced President Kennedy to adopt the rhetoric of morality on civil rights. However, in reality, racial justice was only one of many pressing domestic issues which the administration had to address. Indeed, throughout the remainder of his administration, President Kennedy, in spite of his moral rhetoric, did not deviate from seeing civil rights as a mere political problem.³⁸

NOTES

1. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (London, 1965), pp.731-751; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy And His Times* (New York, 1979), pp.286-367; Theodore Sorensen, *Kennedy* (London, 1965), pp.520-61.
2. Radio and Television Report to the American People on Civil Rights by President Kennedy, June 11, 1963, cited in Edmund Ions, *The Politics of John F. Kennedy* (London, 1967), pp.99-104.
3. *Time*, Jan. 12, 1962.
4. James Baldwin, 'The Dangerous Road Before Martin Luther King', (Feb. 1961), cited in Calvin Hicks, Exec. Sec. Open Letter, The Monroe Defense Committee, (1962), Folder: North Carolina, 1961-1963, Box 71 'Civil Rights Movement', August Meier Papers, Schomburg Center for the Study of Black Culture (Schomburg Center).
5. *Time*, Aug. 3, 1962.
6. *Time*, May 2, 1963.
7. Taylor Branch, *Parting The Waters: America in the King Years, 1963-1965* (New York), p.709.
8. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p.731. Dallek noted that President Kennedy in his first two years conducted a highly effective strategy of racial symbolism which included the appointment of Clifford R. Wharton as ambassador to Norway, the first African-American to become the top American diplomat in a predominantly white country. Moreover, Dallek also noted that the president thought the lack of African-Americans in the federal government hurt America's interests abroad. Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy: An Unfinished Life* (London, 2004), pp.330-32.
9. *Time*, May 4, 1962.
10. Branch, *Parting of the Waters*, pp.131-32.
11. Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and his Times*, p.301
12. Robert Kennedy to George Wallace, April 17, 1963, Folder: General Correspondence, 1960-1964, Box 9, Personal Papers of Robert F. Kennedy, JFKL.
13. Harris Wofford, *Of Kennedy and Kings* (New York, 1980), pp.137-38; Carl M. Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction* (New York, 1977), pp.152-53.
14. Robert Kennedy to George Wallace, April 17, 1963, Folder: General Correspondence, 1960-1964, Box 9 'Civil Rights', Personal Papers of Robert F. Kennedy, JFKL.

15. Burke Marshall to Robert Kennedy, Monday Report, April 23, 1963, Folder: Monday and Wednesday Reports, Dec. 1961-Nov. 1963, Box 16 'Civil Rights Division Reports', Personal Papers of Burke Marshall, JFKL.
16. Burke Marshall to Robert Kennedy, Monday Report, April 30, 1963, Folder: Monday and Wednesday Reports, Dec. 1961-Nov. 1963, Box 16 'Civil Rights Division Reports', Personal Papers of Burke Marshall, JFKL. However, the memorandum did not mention the NAACP. Rosenberg and Karabell observed that a meeting was held on Birmingham, on May 21st, 1963, which included President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, John Macy, Lawrence O'Brien and others[who were unspecified]. The attorney general stated: '...the NAACP, which had been strongly against him going in there [Birmingham] and having these demonstrations, they started to feel that they had to support him [Martin Luther King] because they were losing everything to him. And finally you start getting more and more people who come his way. And then he hit upon the idea of having children come out and that's when thousands of people started coming together.' Rosenberg and Karabell, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Quest for Justice*, p.107.
17. Burke Marshall to Robert Kennedy, Monday Report, April 30, 1963, Folder: Monday and Wednesday Reports, Dec. 1961-Nov. 1963, Box 16 'Civil Rights Division Reports', Personal Papers of Burke Marshall, JFKL.
18. Miroff, *Pragmatic Illusions*, p.245.
19. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, p.735.
20. *Time*, May 10, 1963.
21. Andrew Young, *An Easy Burden: The Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America* (New York, 1996), p.208.
22. James A. Colaiaco, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Apostle of Militant Nonviolence* (New York, 1988), p.70.
23. *The New York Times*, June 3, 1963.
24. Rhoda Lois Blumberg, *Civil Rights in the 1960's: Freedom Struggle* (New York, 1991), p.120.
25. Herbert Haines, *Black Radicals and the Civil Rights Mainstream, 1954-1970* (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1988), p.150.
26. President Kennedy, May 8, 1963, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy, containing the Public Messages, Speeches and Statements of the President, January 1 to November 22, 1963*, (Washington, D.C., 1964), p.407.
27. Haines, *Black Radicals*, p.150.
28. *The New York Times*, May 15, 1963.
29. *Time*, May 17, 1963.
30. John F. Kennedy, May 18, 1963, in *Public Messages, Speeches and Statements of the President*, p.407.
31. John F. Kennedy, May, 22, 1963, *ibid.*, p.423.
32. *Time*, June 7, 1963.
33. Ramsay Clark to Robert Kennedy, May 15, 1963, Folder: General Correspondence, 1960-1964, Box 9 'Civil Rights', Personal Papers of Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General, JFKL.
34. Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, p.331; Mann, *Walls of Jericho*, p.351.
35. Memorandum, Unsigned, circa early May 1963, Folder: Attorney General, July, 1961-September 1964 and undated, Box 8 'Special Correspondence', Personal Papers of Burke Marshall, JFKL.
36. *Pravda* and *Liberation*, cited in Mann, *Walls of Jericho*, p.350.
37. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p.494.
38. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, pp.731-751; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy And His Times* pp.286-367; Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy*, pp.520-61.

REVIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES

Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions That Changed the World 1940-41

Ian Kershaw

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‘The Economic Influence of the Developments of Shipbuilding Techniques, 1450-1485’ – ‘It was the perfect title in that it crystallised the article’s niggling mindlessness, its funereal parade of yawn-enforcing facts, the pseudo-light it threw upon non-problems.’ [Kingsley Amis: *Lucky Jim* 1954, 1962 edn. pp14/15]

Might Ian Kershaw have pursued the academic career of a real-life (but emphatically more principled) Jim Dixon? His first post was a lecturer in the medieval section of Manchester University’s History faculty; he ‘still dabbles in the history of monasticism in Yorkshire during the Middle Ages’ [Ian Kershaw; *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis*. 2000, 2001 edn. p(xxi)]. In the 1970s he planned a book on peasant protest in later Medieval Europe and travelled to Germany to learn the language. A study of Thomas Müntzer, the ‘plebeian revolutionary’ of Engels’ *The Peasant War in Germany*, might have been a career highlight rather than a study of Boston Priory.

But a chance encounter ensued with an ex-Nazi, an anti-semitic; “It got me thinking”, Kershaw told John Crace (*The Guardian* 5 June 2007). He became increasingly interested in modern German history, powerfully influenced by Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen “who opened my eyes to the ways research into the society and structures of the Third Reich could be carried out” [“Questions to Ian Kershaw”, Ron Grant, 17 December 2000]. Kershaw had made his “fateful choice”.

His career from that time became that of the historian as mountaineer. His first works were in the Cairngorms and Cuillins of Nazi history, fulfilling the historian’s task to explain, contextualise and make concepts such as “the Führer image” and “the Hitler myth” readily understood by his readers. In 1993 the phrase “working towards the Führer” entered into popular use as an explanation of the nature of the Hitler dictatorship, “a literal description of the behaviour of individuals and groups working towards goals set out by Hitler in only the vaguest terms”. [Anthony McElligott and Tim Kirk: *Working Towards the Führer: Essays in Honour of Sir Ian Kershaw*, 2003, pp6/7]. In 1997 Kershaw acted as historical consultant to the BBC tv series “The Nazis: a warning from history”.

History’s Himalayas now beckoned. The erstwhile Munro-bagging medievalist now produced a vast two volume biography of Hitler, dwarfing Norman Stone’s 240-page *Hitler* (1980). *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (1998) and *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (2000), a rich mix of social and structural history within a conventional biographical casing were Kershaw’s K2 and Everest.

But how does a historian who has conquered the highest peaks follow such a triumph? Can new challenges be found? In 2004 Kershaw published *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain’s Road to War*. Londonderry, the aptly-named (and somewhat inept) Air Minister in MacDonald’s National Government, attempted to act as a go-between the Nazi elite and the British Government who might broker a fair and just accord between the two powers. Kershaw had used this Wodehousian figure as an entry point into an investigation of how the British governing class responded to the bizarre phenomenon of Nazism. *Making Friends With Hitler* was “a walk upon England’s mountains green” rather than a hard slog across the roof of the world. Had Kershaw, now in his 60s, left his best work behind him? *Fateful Choices* is an emphatic answer: it is a triumphal ascent of Kangchenjunga.

Wearisome to the reader this mountaineering metaphor might be, but in it there is a purpose. Scaling the highest peaks is not for the amateur. It involves detailed planning, research of the terrain, understanding the environment and climatic conditions, resourcing and – crucially – teamwork. It is likewise with bringing ideas for a historical study to fruition, as we may see when we examine the structure of *Fateful Choices*.

The book embraces the nineteen months between Spring 1940 and December 1941 when two separate wars in different hemispheres became one, when what we lazily label “The Second World War” became truly such. This war “the most awful in history – took its shape largely from a number of fateful choices made by the leaders of the world’s major powers” within this period (p3). It is an absorbing study in leadership, decision-making (thus should be required reading even – or particularly? – for the most philistine of head teachers) and the role of the individual and the exercise of freewill.

Kershaw dismisses counter-factualism – “a harmless but pointless diversion” (p471) – instead focusing on a review of the options available to each leader. After all, he argues, “it could fairly be claimed that historians implicitly operate with short-range counter-factuals in terms of alternatives to immediate important occurrences or developments” (p6). He assesses how much freedom of action was available for each of the “great men of history” studied by him.

Unsurprisingly, given that he was the main author of a war costing upwards of 50 million lives, a monster who ensured that “genocide” entered the language, Hitler is the book’s dominant figure. To him, three chapters are devoted: his decisions to launch Barbarossa, to declare war on the USA and to kill the Jews. Two chapters are given over to F D Roosevelt and his decision to lend a hand to Britain and to wage undeclared war on Nazi Germany. If the book has a hero it is FDR, a politician who at all times took America’s pulse. Running him close is Churchill, who in the dark months of May and June 1940 chose to fight on: “Churchill put into words what most British people – no, what the British people – then felt”, according to a most unlikely supporter, E J Hobsbawm (*E J Hobsbawm On History*, 1997, 2002 edn., p305).

In the months before 22 June 1941 – surely the most decisive single day in the war – Stalin decided: “Khozyain (“The Boss”)” knew best. Hitler would not invade the Soviet Union. It was a monumental miscalculation. As Stalin later confided: “Lenin left us a great legacy, but we, his heirs have f---d it up” (p243). Remarkably he survived this catastrophe and ended the war as “genial’nyi polkovodets” (military genius).

For this reviewer the book’s two most fascinating chapters are on Japan and its leaders’ decisions first “to seize the ‘Golden Opportunity’”, to expand to the south, forge a military alliance with Germany and Italy and run the risk of war in the Pacific with the UK and USA. This was in July 1940. Then in autumn 1941 Japan decided to risk war against the USA. In their audacity the plans of Tokyo’s army and navy leaders matched those of Hitler. Like his, they were equally flawed.

The remaining fateful choice fell to Mussolini. In the summer and autumn of 1940, the Duce – having committed Italy to unconditional backing of Germany (p136) – plunged his country into the invasion of Greece, into what became “an unmitigated military disaster” (p176) Italy was hopelessly ill-equipped and unprepared for major war. The braggart, Mussolini, lacked the caution and prescience of his fellow dictator Franco. Wooed by Hitler at their meeting in October 1940, the Caudillo chose to stay neutral and retreat into isolationism.

The book is a long, painstaking climb. Every step taken by its author is carefully secured. There are 1739 footnotes, an average of over 170 per chapter. Some of them are in themselves mini-histories and, as such, required reading. As an example we may take Kershaw’s discussion of the “massive shock” of Pearl Harbor (p374). Footnote 152 of p560 in 15 lines encapsulates the scholarship which dispatches the conspiracy theory (an ever-present in American life - *vide* post 9/11?) that Roosevelt knew of the impending attack but chose to do nothing, let the attack take place and thus be able to justify the USA entering the war.

Like all great mountaineers Kershaw depends on team work. We are always aware of those on whom he has relied to assist his ascent. Not a reader of Russian, he was greatly assisted by Molotov’s biographer, the late Derek Watson. Pages (xv/xvii), “Acknowledgements” bear witness to the author’s collegiality. Significantly, however, the concluding “Afterthoughts” contain no footnote references. It is pure, undiluted Kershaw, the view from the top. Though he emerges from a different background; a Catholic education, an English university, Kershaw is the embodiment of what the Scottish philosopher, George Elder Davie, many years ago labelled as “the democratic intellect”. In the ancient universities of Scotland there was respect for sources, scrupulously detailed textual

analysis and a sharing of knowledge. We are many miles distant from the intellectual arrogance (and snobbery) of the likes of Trevor Roper.

Fateful Choices is unmistakably a book about the dominant male. No women were involved in the decision-making processes described by Kershaw. The only woman to play any significant role was Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress, the single Representative opposed to the declaration of war by Congress on 8 December 1941. Surprisingly, the macho posturings of the decision-making circles of this period, democratic and dictatorial, seem thus far to have eluded feminist analysis.

It is, then, a book about the leadership styles of small, close-knit groups of “great men”. The fateful choices of 1940-41 were made by a handful of politicians, military chiefs and advisers. It is quite intriguing to compare these groups. Indeed, here’s a test for SATHists – or, alternatively, one they might wish to give to their leaders in school.

Below are six descriptive labels penned by Ian Kershaw. Match up each leader/ship to the descriptive labels:

Factionalized authoritarianism ...the popular image of a monolithic system of rule under the command of _____ greatly distorts reality 1	A system of highly personalized rule 2	He is surrounded by a very small group and is in effect, inaccessible to most people 3
In these myriad competing agencies and this administrative anarchy _____’s power was supreme 4	His hold on authority, soon to become unchallengeable was still tenuous 5	Though his power was not absolute, it nonetheless expanded massively to the point where it approached that of an “absolutist prince” whose decisions were subject to no effective control 6
A) Churchill	B) Emperor Hirohito	C) Hitler
D) Mussolini	E) Roosevelt	F) Stalin

The answers will be found at the foot of the last page of this *Year Book*.

The 21st Century has been boom time for History in the UK, witness the success on TV of “celeb-genealogy” features and the Snows, father and son, recreating epic battles, while sales have soared for the books of Kershaw and his peers, Beevor, Evans and Figs. Why? In part, put it down to the human condition. A sense of the past is in our genes: “History is inescapable. We carry our past with us: the burden of humanity. But the past does not own us, we own it.” (Rowland Manthorpe, *The Guardian*, 1 July 2006) Anyone can write history and they do. Anyone can label herself/himself “historian” and write history. Most of these works are worthy and harmless. But some “historians” present distorted versions of the past. One recent example is the American Nicholson Baker and *Human Smoke*.

Before 2007 Baker was best known for a range of novels, one of which, *The Fermata* explored the erotica of excreting. [Andrew Anthony, *The Observer*, 23 March 2008] But in *Human Smoke* (2008), he projects a pacifist’s perspective on the fateful choices made in 1940-1941 by Churchill and Roosevelt. In Britain to promote his book Baker helped Andrew Marr to *Start the Week* (Radio 4, 9.00-9.45, 19 May 2008).

“This is a book of extracts, excerpts, I could almost call it ‘polemic by collage’,” said Marr. “... I suppose the most radical suggestion, or implication, hanging over the book was that it would have been better, perhaps, had Britain not fought on, had the Germans conquered France, done whatever they were going to do on the continent and the war had not spread to America, to Britain and become a world war ...”

In response, Baker said, “Well I think it’s worth at least asking whether it’s right to think of Hitler as a perpetual motion machine or whether you have to accept that some sort of ... negotiated truce would have allowed ... the people who were actually trapped and suffering – the Jews – to escape from where they were trapped.”

Human Smoke is certainly the quirkiest among recent publications on the Second World War. While

there is some merit in Baker challenging comfortably embedded notions of the war as one in which virtue triumphed over unspeakable evil, his portraits of Churchill and Roosevelt as warmongers cloaked by democratic respectability are mischievous distortions, as Kershaw makes abundantly clear.

With Britain in a seemingly hopeless position, Churchill in early summer 1940 had to live down his past failures of judgement. He fought in the War Cabinet for a policy of no surrender. Fighting on was the lesser evil: "We should get no worse terms if we went on fighting, even if we were beaten, than were open to us now." (Churchill to the War Cabinet, found in Kershaw, p43).

Hitler was thus unable to end the war in the west. His options were reduced. He would now have to lay plans for the war he had always wanted, the war in the East, with Britain undefeated and with Churchill ardently wooing the USA for support. As Kershaw shows, Churchill's courtship of Roosevelt endured many disappointments and several estrangements.

In his assessment of "F.D.R." Baker follows the well-trodden path of the conspiracy theorists who maintain that the US President provoked the Japanese into war, letting Pearl Harbor happen in order to swing even the most hard-bitten isolationists behind him in going to war. Kershaw surely consigns such views to History's dustbin in a nuanced, rigorously objective assessment of American diplomacy before Pearl Harbor.

To any reader under the age of 50, having lived in the epoch of US hegemony, the parlous state of American forces and what Roosevelt's contemporary, Walter Lippmann labelled "the emasculation of foreign policy", will come as a shock. "From 1937 ... until ... Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt struggled with the problem of making our bankrupt foreign position solvent." (Walter Lippmann *US Foreign Policy* (1943, 1944 edn. p27). Roosevelt well understood the threats to US security posed by a resurgent Nazi Germany and brutal Japanese imperialism. But dismantling isolationism, which had become more entrenched during the eight years of the New Deal, would be painfully slow; changing popular "mentalities" would be a huge task for the leader of the world's largest democracy. Of all the leaders scrutinised by Kershaw "F.D.R." was the most cautious. His achievement in winning the war for American minds by December 1941 was colossal, making Kershaw's chapters of Roosevelt utterly absorbing.

With patience and skill the President, in the face of angry isolationist resistance, led Americans towards policies of aid to Britain and preparation for possible war, involving the creation of the sinews of war, making the USA a mighty military-industrial complex. A supremely gifted politician, Roosevelt needed no tuition in the art of dissemblance; witness his manipulation of the incident involving USS "Greer" and U-Boat 652. Here he isolated the isolationists, to begin the escorting of convoys of ships of any flag across the Atlantic (p321).

On 30 October 1940 on the stump, seeking re-election for an unprecedented third term, speaking to America's moms and dads, Roosevelt had told them: "Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign war." (p184) Just over 400 days later he won massive approval for his declaration of war on Japan (p375). It was one of History's more principled U-turns, surely one that needs to be studied by Scottish school students in our own forthcoming "New Deal" for History.

Roosevelt's justified anger at the infamy of Pearl Harbor provokes reflections on Japan's plunge into the abyss. Kershaw develops a series of parallels between Japanese and Nazi aggression. An ideological consensus was shared by Japan's elites. The goal of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" mirrored the quest for "lebensraum"; the euphemism of "the China Incident" resembled that of "the Final Solution". Such bland labels concealed the most foul crimes by Japanese soldiers against Chinese citizens. And, like the Nazis, the Japanese war mongers took massive military gambles. Just as Hitler went to war with Britain with no coherent strategy on how to defeat the UK, so Pearl Harbor – for all its dramatic immediate impact – was not followed up: "an indication of the barren strategic armoury of the Japanese in their attempt to inflict a decisive defeat upon the United States". (p374)

Imperial Japan is ideal terrain for exploration by a "structuralist" historian. Kershaw assiduously documents the emergent dominance in Japan's ruling circle of the army and navy commanders. He establishes that their ambitions were shared by the political elite, by such as Prince Konoe *and* by the broad masses. News of Pearl Harbor was greeted by applause in the streets of Tokyo, unlike the mute acceptance of war in both London and Berlin (p374).

Japan had been embroiled in China for almost a decade when Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa. What next? Take advantage of the USSR's woes and seek revenge for the defeats of the "Nomonhan Incident" of 1939 and strike north, or pursue a southern strategy towards Dutch, French and British colonies in the quest for oil, tin and rubber? The fateful choice made was the southern option which placed Japan on a collision course with the USA and the UK.

Japanese war plans matched those of the Nazis in their audacity. Within eight months at most Imperial forces would, it was hoped, attain dominance in south-east Asia and the western Pacific, which would be "needed to combat the United States over a lengthier period or to force a negotiated peace to her advantage" (p366). But unlike Hitler and his inner circle, Japan's leaders were plagued by profound fears. Theirs was a mindset qualitatively different from that of the British and Americans. "Japanese sanity cannot be measured by American standards of logic," opined US Ambassador to Tokyo, Joseph Grew in November 1941 (p556).

Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, the planner of Pearl Harbor, had said in October 1940: "It's out of the question! To fight the United States is like fighting the whole world. But it has been decided ... Doubtless I will die on board the 'Nagato'" (p125). Perhaps Piers Brendon has captured this characteristic: "Fatalism combined with activism is one of the most bewildering Japanese characteristics." Like Surrealists they "believed in the certainty of chance" (Piers Brendon: *The Dark Valley: a panorama of the 1930s*, 2001 edn, p187).

One of the strengths of *Fateful Choices* is that each chapter is both "stand alone" and inter-linked with the others. Thus Pearl Harbor in its audacity appealed to Hitler: "It was his sort of move. And, grossly overestimating Japan's war potential, he thought its effect was far greater than it turned out to be. ... Japan and America at war was exactly what he wanted" (p423). On 11 December 1941 Hitler announced Germany's declaration of war on America to the Reichstag.

The chapter on the Führer's decision – it was very much his own – to declare war on the United States is evidence of Kershaw's professionalism. Given the success of the biography of Hitler he may well have inclined to recycle parts of it for *Fateful Choices*. To his credit we are spared caul kail het up. This chapter owes much to the ground breaking study of *The Wages of Destruction* by Adam Tooze (see Ron Grant's review in *History Teaching Review: Year Book 21*; 2007 pp56/61). Thus Kershaw traces the development of Hitler's attitudes to the USA (as late as November 1937 it is not mentioned in the Hossbach Memorandum): by 1939 "after years of near irrelevance in German policy formation, the United States had now to be viewed strategically, not just ideologically" (as the centre of 'Jewish power') (p394). If we may borrow the image used by Karl A Schleunes – *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz* – in his book on Nazi policy towards German Jews, 1933-1939, Hitler took a twisted road to world war. "London and Washington had, as it were, to be defeated via Moscow." (p396) Many years ago, Alexander Solzhenitsyn attempted in *Lenin in Zurich* to get inside Lenin's head. Kershaw in *Fateful Choices* shows a similar determination with the mind of Hitler.

His success makes *Fateful Choices* essential reading for every committed History teacher. This is "big History" pointing up the cruciality of the Second World War being properly studied in Scottish secondary schools. Since late 2007 there has been a welcome debate on the place of Scottish history in the new Higher. But equally the chance must be seized to have "the war of the century" (Laurence Rees) properly studied and examined at National Qualifications level. It is essential for 21st Century school students to know the causes, course and consequences of "the Thirty Years War" of 1914-1945. Compared to the savagery of the war in China, the epic of Barbarossa, the dramas of Pearl Harbor and Dunkirk; the Darien Scheme, the Act of Union and the antics of "a parcel of rogues" seem small beer, earnest – yes – but, whisper it, dull and boring?

As for Ian Kershaw, he is clearly not yet ready for walking the dog to the paper shop then back home to slippers and cardigan. History's peaks still beckon the craggy mountaineer. What next, then? *The Fateful Choices* of 1945 when Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin met? And some day, perhaps, that book on primitive rebels of medieval times might be written.

RON GRANT

The Victorian Studies Reader**Kelly Boyd and Rohan McWilliam [Eds.]**

Routledge

439 pp

£22.99

Pbk

2007

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Historical identity was conferred on 'the Victorians' remarkably soon after the death of their eponym thanks largely to the reaction of their 'Edwardian' successors such as Lytton Strachey as well as the great watershed of the 1st World War. Despite relatively recent atavistic and anachronistic attempts to resurrect 'Victorian values', the general impression has remained fairly consistently negative in the public mind. Like the Romans, they are viewed, if not necessarily admired, as great organisers, achievers, builders, imperialists etc., but it is difficult to feel much fondness or empathy for them. While the Romans are criticised for their brutal tastes in entertainment, hypocrisy is seen as the quintessential vice of the Victorians, their humanity repressed beneath heavy layers of 'respectability', their bodies hidden by multiple layers of clothing and their homes full of junk. This is likely to remain the popular image however much historians work at deconstructing the stereotypes and generalisations - up to and including the extent to which 'the Victorians' is even a useful historical category or label. Although this collection, aimed at the specialist student, is hardly popular reading, the sort of research and analysis it represents will hopefully percolate through the public consciousness and help to challenge preconceptions at every level.

Readings from the past 20 years or so by some 30 historians focus on a wide range of issues. Some of these are from well-established areas such as the economy and science, society and class, morality and religion, politics and monarchy but with new ideas and approaches based on fresh research and analysis. Others are on relatively new areas of investigation such as consumerism and material culture (the invention of modern 'shopping'), the use and significance of public space, gender and sexuality, and race, empire and national identity. Like the Victorians themselves, the volume covers a wide variety of styles and approaches but is generally informed by the increasing interest in cultural history and cross-disciplinary studies of recent decades. Given the nature of the volume as a collection of readings and the very detailed focus of many of the extracts (e.g. mesmerism, barmaids, Ripperology), the overall picture would be disjointed rather than coherent - especially for the non-specialist reader - if it were not for the editors' substantial introduction 'Rethinking the Victorians'. This analyses changing perceptions of the Victorian era from the 'Age of Recrimination 1901-1945' ('disdain and contempt') through the 'Age of Evaluation 1945-1980' ('class and economy') to the 'Age of Representations 1980 - the present' ('identity, performance and the self'). They also provide each extract with a preface placing it in its wider context along with brief details about the author and suggestions for further reading. In addition the first reading - 'Should we abandon the idea of the Victorian period?' by Richard Price - provides a very useful analysis of issues of change and continuity between the pre, early, middle, late and post-Victorian periods.

In terms of school work this volume will only be directly useful for one or two articles on politics and gender which tie in with the Modern Britain option at Higher. 'The Victorians' as such is quite a popular topic at primary school, however, and it would be good if some of the re-thinking represented by this book came to inform the teaching of the topic to younger pupils as well. By coincidence, however, just as the reviewer was finishing the book, it was revealed in the press that an official report is suggesting that primary schools in England stop teaching the Victorians (and the 2nd World War) and teach the kids how to use 'twitter' and 'wikipedia' instead. This was accompanied by the usual denials and accusations of distortion etc. (similar to claims that integrated social subjects and the 'flexibility' of Curriculum for Excellence are no threat to history and other subjects?). Yet, as this book shows, for better or for worse, like all good history, the Victorians have a great deal to tell us about ourselves.

DUNCAN TOMS

In an era of equality with regards to gender and ethnicity it is hard to imagine such a time when one of the world's superpowers was facing a crisis of racial discrimination and increased pressure on Presidential administrations to prioritise the issue on their political agenda. *We Shall Overcome* by History teacher David McKinstry is an in-depth account of a period in time, 1963-64, when America was experiencing radical change and there was growing support by citizens and pressure groups for President Kennedy and his successor President Lyndon B. Johnson to address the issue of civil rights and create an ethos that saw the generation of legislation such as the Civil Rights Act in July 1964 and the Economic Opportunity Act in August 1964.

A lengthy book of just over five hundred pages, McKinstry aims to explore the reasons behind such radical changes at a time when previous Presidents Roosevelt and Truman had sought to achieve a safe distance on the issue of race; and to discover how Kennedy and Johnson came to realise that they had to respond to demand. Split into two sections, the book contains seven chapters that adopt a chronological approach of events making it a relatively straightforward read and contains a table of abbreviations which allows you to cross-reference any you are unsure of.

Part one sets the agenda at the start of the 1960s during the time Kennedy was beginning to emerge as a Democratic candidate for Presidency and explores the civil rights movements which existed and the reserved approach which Kennedy initially adopted. From there the book further explores how Kennedy capitalised on the civil rights movement as an electoral strategy and once inside the White House, following on from the African American support during his campaign, chose to publicly support racial integration and civil rights, going so far as to intervene and secure the early release of Martin Luther King from jail. Subsequent chapters seek to explore the initial years of the Kennedy administration, including proposals that would later become the Civil Rights Act 1964 and his involvement in applying pressure to Federal Government to employ more African Americans, successfully witnessing forty senior Federal positions, five of which were Federal judges, during his brief time as President.

McKinstry also examines how Lyndon B. Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy as President following his assassination in November 1963, continued to campaign for civil rights and was responsible in designing 'The Great Society' legislation that included civil rights laws and the 'War on Poverty' that aimed to administer Federal funds targeted against poverty. Furthermore it aims to explain the barriers which the administrations faced; such as the Birmingham crisis of 1963 when demonstrating African Americans clashed with the police, forcing the Government to speed up legislation in response to the feelings of change that were running high, and the political relationships that strengthened in order to secure civil rights legislation.

There is no doubt this book is thorough and whilst it only details events in the short space of a year, it successfully manages to address the issues facing the Government and capture the mood of the period. This book was an enjoyable read that explored civil rights in a way that is perhaps less documented and familiar to the general reader. Examining Federal decisions and the external factors that prompted the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to address the issue of race and influenced their policies, going so far as to suggest that had Kennedy not been assassinated would we have seen more significant changes under a second Presidential term, generated a new interest to a topic where the association of civil rights and Martin Luther King are more commonly recognised. The only criticism of this text is that it takes time to settle into. There is a substantial amount of time spent setting the scene at the start (34 pages worth) as to what primary and secondary sources McKinstry used and where he sourced them, including footnotes, which may have been better put as part of an appendix as this gives it a slight dissertation feel. This book is not for the beginner, not because of the language or indeed the subject area, rather it analyses the decisions behind civil rights and there is the assumption that the reader holds some previous knowledge making it a clever read for perhaps someone at Advanced Higher level but certainly suitable for a university candidate and those with an interest in tracking the history of the civil rights movement.

G FREELAND

This is a short book which attempts to achieve a great deal in its 150 pages. Southern Africa is a huge area geographically, and the widely varying nature of the history of its peoples and nations make it difficult to draw 'region wide' conclusions. Whilst acknowledging the great differences between the states of the southern part of Africa which have achieved independence since 1974, Jonathan Farley nevertheless draws a series of far-reaching and often sobering conclusions.

As part of the Making of the Contemporary World' series published by Routledge, this book inevitably concentrates on the very recent past of states as different as South Africa and Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Indeed, despite taking a thematic approach to the region, dealing with social, economic, political and foreign policy issues, the sheer variety of the historical experience of the countries involved means that a 'state by state' analysis is unavoidable. Designed primarily for undergraduates, Farley's study offers a very sound introduction to the problems facing Southern Africa, whilst placing them in something of their historical context. The 'history' however, is dealt with necessarily briefly, offering little more than background before moving on to deal with the sort of more contemporary material of interest to the student of international relations.

Farley's central thesis is that the countries of southern Africa differ from their northern counterparts as a result of the much more determined attempt by the European powers to create 'settler' colonies in the region. The recent history of the area has been dominated then, by the experience of White rule and White supremacy and the response of the independent states to the legacy of minority rule.

One of the most fruitful products of comparing the colonial experience of the southern African countries is the realisation that the highly varied nature of White rule has had a lasting impact on the development of nation states. Farley argues that the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola have been able to develop largely unencumbered by the racial politics which have so afflicted South Africa itself. He identifies the relatively relaxed view the original Portuguese settlers took to intermarriage and to racial issues generally. The Portuguese, unlike the Dutch, had arrived without wives and families. By contrast, the strict Calvinism of the tight knit Boer communities led to an increasingly rigid separation of the races, culminating in the racially motivated policies of the apartheid era. One of the consequences of these profoundly different cultural interactions has been the response of governments, often formed from the liberation movements which won independence, to the problems caused by decades of economic inequality. One of the conclusions that Farley draws is that economic power remains largely in white hands throughout the region, though only in Zimbabwe have attempts to redress the imbalance led to widespread, state sanctioned violence.

In addition, the recent past has been shaped not only by localised responses to the differing forms of colonial control, but also to the broader ideological and economic currents which shaped so much of the 'developing' world during the Cold War. Farley points out that the socialist inspiration of many of the liberation movements, including South Africa's ANC, for all its wariness of communism, led to the adoption of the strictures of the command economy. The collapse of this model in the Soviet Union in the early 1990s has led to a wholesale re-evaluation of the role of the state in economic development. Even so, Farley argues that governments which emerged from the liberation struggle still cling to important vestiges of their now much romanticised past. South Africa's close links with the likes of China and Cuba under President Mandela were, Farley argues, little more than gestures of gratitude to comrades in the fight against apartheid. On the level of economic policy, the countries of southern Africa must decide whether to continue with the 'liberation policies' of the past or to adopt more economically orthodox 'reform' policies. This debate has been one of the issues which has torn the ANC apart in recent months, though the creation of COPE and the ANC's victory in the recent election have occurred since the publication of the book.

Nowhere, perhaps, have the dilemmas of the post-colonial states been more sharply focused than in Zimbabwe. In a balanced and thoughtful appraisal of that country's descent to 'rogue nation' status, Farley offers a timely reminder that Mugabe's regime was regarded until the mid 1990s as a model of

political compromise, economic propriety and rising prosperity. However, internal political difficulties coupled with the slow pace of land reform have shown that Mugabe remains a liberation fighter at heart, whose confidence in his mission has resulted in increasingly flagrant violations of the laws even of his own country. Once again, Farley's 'regional approach' throws up valuable comparisons and warnings as South Africa ponders its own vexed questions concerning land redistribution.

The great disparities of culture, economy and political system nonetheless disguise certain common features which Farley identifies. From South Africa's fledgling democracy, to the apparent stability of Botswana and the almost medieval autocracy of Swaziland, there are common problems to be faced. Vast differences in wealth remain, and in many countries the Black population remains largely excluded from the 'formal' economy. HIV/AIDS is an enormous catastrophe, and a subject on which Farley holds trenchant views, exhorting African men to be aware that "the wages of fornication and adultery are likely to be illness and premature death, the short term pleasure notwithstanding". In particular, he notes the tendency of the liberation movements to form enduring governments, though the effect of this on the creation of mature liberal democracies has not always been beneficial. In summing up the nearly four decades since majority rule was first won in southern Africa, Farley applauds the achievements of the liberation struggles, but urges that the shibboleths of the past be replaced by a more pragmatic politics of reform.

This is a book which provides a useful context to those students studying the 'South Africa' topic at Advanced Higher; a reminder that the South African experience in the 20th century was neither inevitable nor universal, as well as showing how the issues which created such fissures in that society stubbornly refuse to go away. This book will never be a substitute for the well known and more exhaustive texts on the subject, but it will certainly broaden the horizons of any serious student.

PR FISH

The Third Reich at War. How the Nazis led Germany from Conquest to Disaster Richard J Evans

Allen Lane £30 Hbk 925pp 2008 ISBN 9780 713 99742 2

"... the Third Reich will not go away, but continues to command the attention of thinking people throughout the world long after it has passed into history." [p764]. Evans' epic production of a trilogy on the rise and fall of Nazi Germany is at an end. Ahead of the challenging opening of his first volume – "Is it wrong to begin with Bismarck?" [*The Coming of the Third Reich* p2]- written at least six years earlier, were to lie 1937 pages and 4792 footnotes. In these statistics lies a clue to Evans' achievement.

The text of *The Third Reich at War* and its companion volumes is consistently accessible. As Evans told Andrew Marr: "Well, one of my predecessors at Cambridge, Geoffrey Elton, said that the way to write history was narrative thickened by analysis and that is what I try and do. I try and incorporate discussion of meaning, causes, consequences, ramifications as I go and tell the story." [transcript of *Start the Week*, Radio 4, 27th October 2008] In this way his work attracts a mass readership still lured by Hitler's and Nazism's magnetically malign power over imaginations.

But each quotation and every paragraph is meticulously footnoted, enabling students, teachers and academics to delve further into issues and historiography. *The Third Reich at War* and the earlier books thus easily enter the category of 'essential reading' for any student of the Third Reich.

If Elton, an earlier Regius Professor at Cambridge, is one model for Evans, others are Simon Schama and Orlando Figes. Over a decade ago he wrote of their ability to "tackle big 'traditional' subjects, but both of them interweave small incidents and personal histories of the famous and the obscure, into the broader narrative, with a constantly shifting focus" [*In Defence of History*, 1997, 2000 edn, p245]. As we shall see, this is the approach taken by Evans. But in going down this path

does he still ensure that argument, interpretation and analysis remain prominent?

And how should *The Third Reich at War* be read? Certainly, it can, and will be, read on its own, and rightly so. But to have *The Coming of the Third Reich* and *The Third Reich in Power* alongside it is a joy, enabling the reader to track backwards and forwards, as the author himself does. This may be seen in the frequent references in *The Third Reich at War* to the potency of the great myth of 1918, the legend of the ‘stab in the back’, in the minds of Hitler and his inner circle.

In the book’s opening chapter, ‘Beasts in Human Form’, an unblinking account of 1939-40, of Poland’s Golgotha, of the origins of the Task Forces [*Einsatzgruppen*] and of the T-4 “euthanasia” killings, Evans describes the intensified violence set in motion by war. “The ultimate rationale for such policies”, he argues, “was to make Germany fit for war by removing the supposed threat of a Jewish presence and thus forestalling the possibility of a ‘stab-in-the-back’ from subversive elements on the Home Front such as they believed had lost Germany the First World War.” (p104). The footnote accompanying this passage refers us back to p61 of *The Coming of the Third Reich*. Indeed, a major theme of *The Third Reich at War* is that the peculiar ferocity of Nazism’s wartime crimes cannot be understood unless we recognize that they “followed logically on from (their) peacetime policies...extending them and intensifying them in new and terrifying ways.” (p105). The message for the writers of the new courses that are to be taught in Scottish schools is that study of German history **must** extend beyond 1939. The time to start planning these changes is now, especially with the scholarship of Evans and Ian Kershaw acting as lodestars.

Evans sets out to explore a series of issues and questions, one of which is to find an explanation for the fairly rapid disintegration of German civilian morale. The popularity of Hitler and his regime peaked in June 1940. As France lay prostrate there were “spontaneous demonstrations on the squares of numerous German towns” with the SS Security Service, the SD, reporting that “admiration for the achievements of the German troops...is now felt even by people who retained a certain distance and scepticism at the beginning of the campaign,” (p135). In two years the rot had begun to set in. The humiliation of Stalingrad was one factor but the author argues that equally significant was the Allies’ mass bombing of German cities, beginning with the fearsome “firestorm” raids on Hamburg.

Popular fury was vented not on the RAF but on Göring – “Herr Maier” (p459) – and the Luftwaffe for their failure to repel the raiders and on the Party for not providing sufficient air raid shelters and for poor levels of support for survivors of the raids. There now occurred what might be termed the strange death of Nazi paternalism. Germans had “got used...since 1933 of having the regime kind of cocoon them and look after them and do everything for them in many ways, and suddenly it was completely failing them” (Evans in *Start the Week*, 27 October 2008). “The People’s Community” (Volksgemeinschaft) lay buried in the debris of Germany’s cities: “The more the fabric of Germany’s cities was destroyed, the more the fabric of German society began to fall apart. In 1943 it began the transition from a ‘people’s community’ to a ‘society of ruins’. It was to end in 1945 in a state of almost complete dissolution.” (p458).

The intoxication of power, the refusal to accept limits, the failure to listen, messianism, in a word, “hubris”, characterised Hitler as war lord. *The Third Reich at War* makes it abundantly clear that from 1941 Germany was fighting an unwinnable war: “At no point in the war was the ratio of the GDP of the Allies to that of the Axis countries, including Japan, less than 2:1, and by 1944 it was more than 3:1.” All of Speer’s innovations “were fundamentally, irrational undertakings that ignored the basic impossibility of Germany out-producing its enemies.” (p372).

So where stood the German business community in this? A “vulgar Marxist” interpretation might equate the huge use of slave labour from the empire of the camps as an attempt to maximise instant profits. Evans is more subtle: “By 1943, most business leaders realized that the war was going to be lost. They began to look ahead and position their enterprises for the post-war years. The safest way of investing was to acquire real estate and plant, and ...get more armaments orders from the government.” (p370). By definition this required more workers. Since German civilian labour, male and female, could only provide a small percentage of the total required, it was the SS who were to act as the straw bosses. It would take half a century for survivors of this cynical collaboration to win

compensation...as the post-war German “economic miracle” unfolded.

In his chapters on the German wartime economy Evans clearly acknowledges the importance of the work of Adam Tooze (refer SATH History *Teaching Review Year Book*, Volume 21, 2007, pp56-61 for a review of Tooze’s *The Wages of Destruction*). But he does not swallow Tooze whole. One point of difference is on the Wannsee Conference. Tooze argues that at the meeting, Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Service, the man chosen to administer the “Final Solution”, “referred neither to gassing nor shooting as means of disposing” of the Jews. “Instead, he proposed that they should be evacuated eastwards in giant construction columns.” (Adam Tooze *The Wages of Destruction*, 2006, p476). Evans argues that this distorts the main concern of the conference by claiming that it was not really about mass murder. He proceeds: “Given the labour shortage under which the German war economy was increasingly suffering, using Jewish workers seemed unavoidable; but this was not in the end an alternative to killing them”. (p265). Similarly, he rejects Tooze’s view (Tooze, op cit, pp538-45) that “growing food shortages in the Reich were what prompted an acceleration of the killing programme (of Jews)” from summer 1942. Evans argues that there is no evidence suggesting such a direct causal link: “Security considerations remained uppermost in the minds of the Nazi leadership.” (p279).

By training and – possibly – inclination, Evans is not a military historian, but his account of the war’s campaigns is illustrated by a succession of eyewitness accounts from soldiers of all ranks such as the stormtrooper, Gerhard M, the officer Wilm Hosenfeld and from civilians such as the Polish doctor, Zygmunt Klukowski. These are integral to his interpretation of the war on the Eastern Front. Here the fighting cannot be separated out from the Nazis’ murderous racist policies against fellow-Germans, Poles, Slavs, Russians, gypsies and Jews. Indeed it is their determination to kill every Jew in their control that is the book’s main theme.

Relentlessly, the author tracks the unfolding of the Holocaust, identifying the ever-widening circles of guilt from the architects – Hitler and those close to him – to the managers and fixers, to the apparatchiks and labourers. Remorselessly, Evans describes the manner in which the regime perfected the techniques and technology of mass murder, beginning with the T-4 programme “to eliminate ‘degenerates’ from the chain of heredity” (p77), through the shootings and machine gunning of the *Einsatzgruppen* to the death factories: “No other genocide in history has been carried out by mechanical means – gassing – in specially constructed facilities like those in operation at Auschwitz or Treblinka.” (p315).

On page after page murder rules. So – paradoxically – can the reader experience moral fatigue? The philosopher Raymond Geuss put the issue thus to Evans: “some historians are very analytic, yours is very narrative.... I have a sense that narrative can sometimes have a kind of soothing effect on people, so that even if you have a narrative of something that’s horrible, the fact that you’re narrating it can give you a kind of distance from it...” (*Start the Week* 27 October 2008).

In this reviewer’s experience of that Horrible History for adults, Simon Sebag Montefiore’s *Stalin: the Court of the Red Tsar* (2003) one does become numbed, plodding through its gore-steeped pages. Evans rebuts Geuss, denying that his narrative is in any way “comforting...least of all the kind of narrative that I deal with, which I do try and make very explicit...because I think it’s too easily glossed over and sanitised, so I would hope that my narrative would actually be rather disturbing and in some places even shocking...” (*Start the Week*, 27 October 2008). And, he stays true to the Eltonian approach of “narrative thickened by analysis”.

In Evans’ analysis of the Holocaust, Hitler is at its heart: “Overriding all other motives in Hitler’s mind was that of security: in his memory of 1918, the Jews had stabbed Germany in the back” (p248). This is what drove him to decide, in December 1941, that the time had come for the annihilation of Jewry. It was the corollary to his declaration of war on the USA, the centre of world Jewry, as he saw it. It was a mentality shared by his inner circle, particularly Himmler, Heydrich and the SS leadership, men only too willing to implement the Fuhrer’s wishes in the most radical fashion. The circles of guilt radiated outwards reaching the rank and file, the “ordinary men” in the killing fields and then the death factories. Any notion of these individuals as pawns or prisoners at the mercy of a poisonous ideology is insufficient explanation. Evans will have none of it: “What kept such men

going was a belief that they were doing Hitler's bidding, and killing the present and future enemies of the German race." (p316). In the "Wild East" tens of thousands of these men became addicted to killing and sadistic brutality.

Both Richard J Evans and Ian Kershaw address the issue of awareness. For all the euphemisms spawned by the largest of them all – the "Final Solution" – there was a realisation, a knowledge in German civil society of what was going on in the East. In the last fifteen years or so soldiers' letters home have become available. These same men came home on leave; many of them took photographs (see Illustration 13 between pages 302/3, captioned "Atrocity tourism...")

As early as 16 March 1942, his ears finely tuned, the retired Jewish professor, Victor Klemperer, living on the edge in Dresden's "Jew's House", picked up on the existence of Auschwitz. By autumn he labels it "a swift-working slaughterhouse" (*To the Bitter End: the diaries of Victor Klemperer 1942-45*, UK edn 1999, pp27;148).

Knowledge of dark deeds in the East was thus widespread. But to what extent was there understanding? Ian Kershaw has commented: "Turning that into comprehension and understanding what we know subsequently about the scale of the genocide and what was going on in detail is a different matter altogether, and few people – I think had that sort of insight, including Jewish populations as well" (transcript of *Start the Week*, Radio 4, 23 June 2008). One is reminded of the Western Front 1914-18. A soldier in a sector of the trenches soon knew the dangers daily faced. But his view was confined to one small sector, say, part of the Ypres salient. His knowledge of other sectors and of the nature of the fighting was limited. And did he necessarily see himself as one of the "lions led by donkeys"?

Kershaw also speaks of the "moral indifference" of many Germans concluding that, "many people – how could it be otherwise really? – had plenty of things on their mind in the middle of a war. They were being bombed out, they had relatives at the front and so on; they were worried about day to day issues – rationing and so forth. And the concern of a minority group – and an unloved minority group, which had been unloved in the democracy that preceded the Nazi dictatorship – was not, to my mind, a high point on the agenda, for most people, most of the time" (*Start the Week*, 23 June 2008).

As, in summer 1944, the war entered its final phase, this moral indifference almost certainly intensified, particularly as Germany experienced night after night of fearsome air raids, (pp 698/705). Dresden is the best known of these, but no town was safe. Berlin, Gelsenkirchen, Essen, and Hamburg were battered. In a savage irony, many of the victims in these cities and towns were working-class, the very people who, before 1933, had been Nazism's most resolute opponents.

Readers are thus faced with what might be termed "a moral audit". If it is accepted that state-sanctioned race hatred and planned persecution then genocide of Jews and others deemed as "*untermenschen*" was criminal, does this make the war a just one? If the answer is "yes", how far was that noble purpose eroded by the use of area bombing by the Allies?

A decade before, Evans emphasised the pitfalls of historians seeking the moral high ground: "A historian who uses terms like 'wicked' or 'evil' about a person or persons in the past will only succeed in looking ridiculous." Moral vocabulary is "transient". The temptation for the historian to take a moral stance when writing of devastation, destruction, death has to be resisted. (Richard J Evans *In Defence of History*, 2000 edn., pp51/52). In *The Third Reich at War* he adheres to his earlier arguments. Of the bombing raids he writes: "Even if one does not accept that the entire bombing campaign was unnecessary, then it is at least arguable that it was continued longer than was strictly necessary, and conducted...in a manner that was too indiscriminate to be justifiable." (p463). His footnote to this passage refers readers to Anthony C Grayling *Among the Dead Cities* (2006), which "effectively marshals the moral arguments against the bombing campaign" (p814).

In the chapter, "The Final Solution", Evans similarly shows disciplined self-restraint, refusing to reveal his emotions. He leaves it to his readers to make moral judgements for themselves. In a new departure, the trilogy's final volume includes jokes which do go some way to relieving the constant horrors encountered in the text. Most of these were collected by the Reich's SD, Security

Service, making editor Heinz Boberach's *Meldungen aus dem Reich: Die geheimen Lageberichte der Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1938-1945*, 17 volumes, 1984, one of History's unluckiest bumper fun books. Several of these jokes came from the war's last months as losses from air raids mounted and the fast-dwindling armies of the Reich fought desperate rearguard actions. Telling jokes was hazardous as the Nazis increasingly turned on their own people. As the remarkable 15 year old Ulrich S wrote in his diary in the aftermath of the failure of "Valkyrie" (20 July 1944): "The Nazis want to sacrifice an entire people just to postpone their own downfall a little longer" (p649).

After an air raid of 3 February 1945 had destroyed most of his apartment it was no longer safe for Hitler to remain above ground in the Chancellery. He took cover in the Führerbunker below it. From strutting the corridors of power he shuffled along the dank corridors of his underground lair, detached from reality but even more consumed by hatred of his enemies. "Obsessed to the end with the imaginary precedent of 1918, Hitler did not want another 'stab in the back'." (p687). All the remaining enemies in the custody of the Reich were to die and "far from deciding to bring the death and destruction to an end, Hitler was determined if anything to make it worse." (p715). The tragic irony for Germany was not that the trauma of 1918 was repeated; the catastrophe of 1945 was infinitely worse as "the violence at the core of Nazism... (was) in the end... turned back on Germany itself." No Nazi partisans fought on after the Führer had killed himself. Germany was utterly crushed. The privations and sufferings lasted on after May 1945. The war would have its eighth winter in 1947.

Having begun his trilogy with an exploration of the historic role of Bismarck, Evans returns to him towards its end, in the words of the Hamburg diarist, Luise Solmitz: "Bismarck could restrain himself, one of the few who resisted being swept away by the power of success, a man who opposed his own internal law to the kind of law of nature that carried the conqueror away." (Solmitz's diary entry of 8 September 1942 found on p703).

In post-war Germany *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ("coming to terms with the past") proved difficult. Many Germans saw themselves as victims – of the bombing, of the invading Red Army and the expulsions of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe. It was to prove a self-image of remarkable resilience which fostered a kind of moral relativism that took shape in 2002 with the publication of *Der Brand: Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940-1945* ("The Fire: Germany in the Bombing War, 1940-1945") by the freelance historian Jorg Friedrich. 200,000 copies were quickly sold with Friedrich exploiting this with his next effort, an illustrated history full of grisly horrors and accusing the airmen of war crimes. In 2003 the lectures of WG Sebald "On the Natural History of Destruction" were published. In them he used terms such as "annihilation" and "extermination" to encapsulate Allied policy. It was the Nazis' language of genocide. Eichmann's biographer, David Cesarini, was in despair at this juxtaposition of memory of the bombing with memory of the Holocaust. History was being turned on its head. (David Cesarini in *The Independent* 13 February 2004).

Evans, however, is more optimistic in the concluding pages of the trilogy. In particular he is encouraged by the opening in Berlin on 8 May 2005 of the "Central Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe" and the making of Germany's concentration camps into museums; "to be German in the second half of the twentieth century meant something very different from what it had meant in the first half:... (it was to be) peace-loving, democratic, prosperous and stable and... having a critical attitude towards the German past, having a sense of responsibility for the death and destruction that Nazism caused, even feeling guilty about it ." (p763).

In his account of the crucial part played by Evans in the demolition of the so-called historian, David Irving, in the libel case brought by Irving against Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books, the American writer, DD Guttenplan drew a mean-spirited picture of Evans: "A pedant's pedant, there is not an ounce of banter in the man"; "a curmudgeon...(the)sworn foe of 'fashionable' cant" (DD Guttenplan *The Holocaust on Trial*, 2001, pp219:290).

This will not do. Courteous in correspondence, collegiate (for example writing of the resistance organisation, the "League", he tells us "The League's story is told in the brilliant and moving book by Mark Roseman *The Past in Hiding* [London, 2000]" (pp627/8; 828)), Evans is possessed of a dry wit. Thus he writes of Education Minister, Bernhard Rust, committing suicide on 8 May 1945 "finally

belying the reputation for indecision he had acquired during his years of office. (p730).

His scholarship is imbued with a sense of duty. Aware of cinema's apparent obsession with the Nazis, when it comes to "Hurrah for Hollywood" he gives at most two cheers, wary as he is of the way movie-makers simplify moral complexities and show "ordinary Germans" as being rational, reasonable and humane "whereas Hitler and just a few people around him... are seen as absolute raving maniacs" (*The Times* 22 December 2008). By contrast "what I try and do by quoting so many different diaries and letters in the book, of ordinary Germans from Field Marshal down to private, and women and so on. It's just to show the sheer complexity and variety of human behaviour" (*Start the Week* 27 October 2008). For any teacher trying to explain that weasel word "nuance" to students, look no further.

To the very end of this magnificent example of the power and appeal of narrative history, Evans eschews any tendency to moral superiority: "The Third Reich raises in the most acute form the possibilities and consequences of the human hatred and destructiveness that exist, even if only in a small way, within all of us." (p764). In the year of Homecoming the words of this Heav'n-taught historian ought to be remembered by us all, lest we join the ranks of the "unco guid".

RON GRANT

[Fateful Choices Test - 1 = B (p102); 2 = F (p296); 3 = E (p236); 4 = C (p60); 5 = A (p24); 6 = D (p142)].

