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Edited by
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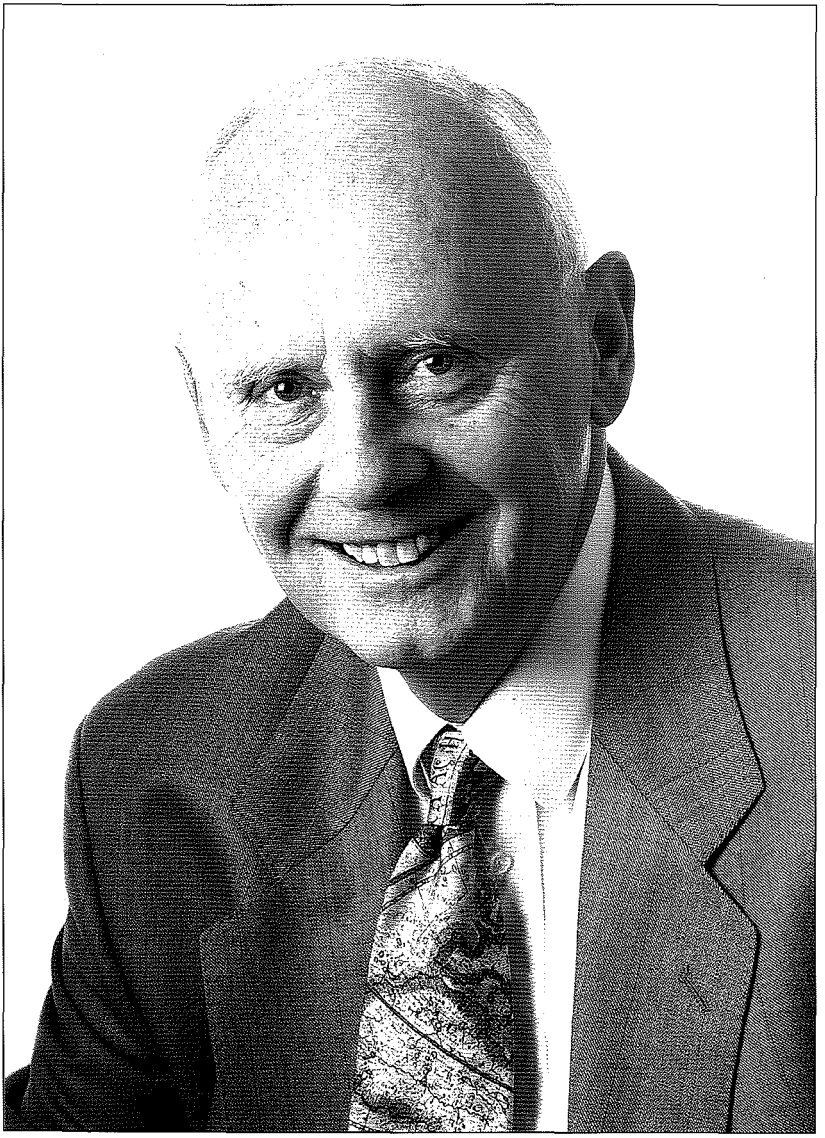

Robin A. Butlin

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PREFACE

This publication arises from a colloquium held at the University of Leeds on 8-9 September 2003 to celebrate Robin Butlin's contribution to historical geography. The colloquium brought together some of Robin's friends and colleagues to mark his retirement and to reflect his own broad interest in the field of historical geography. The Historical Geography Research Series is an appropriate outlet for the papers presented on that occasion, given that Robin was a founding member of the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers. I thank all of the contributors for their cooperation in producing this tribute and the two anonymous referees for their comments on the submitted draft essays. Financial support for this publication provided by the School of Geography at the University of Leeds and by the Department of Geography at Loughborough University is very gratefully acknowledged. The portrait photograph of Robin was taken in 2003 by Bailey-Cooper at their York Studio.

Alan R. H. Baker
14 July 2004

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Celebrating Robin Butlin's contribution to historical geography

Alan R. H. Baker

Context

A colloquium held at the University of Leeds in September 2003 on the occasion of Robin Butlin's retirement from university office and as a celebration of his contribution to historical geography is the origin of this collection of essays. Robin has laboured in the field of historical geography for more than forty years and many fellow-workers have savoured the fruits of his endeavours. Since his first published paper in 1961, Robin has been a productive researcher, an erudite writer and an active editor.[1] In these brief opening remarks I aim to set the context for the papers presented at that colloquium by some of his friends and colleagues and published here as tokens of their appreciation of Robin's contribution to their discipline. It is not my intention to provide a comprehensive and critical appraisal of Robin's significant contribution to historical geography. Dick Lawton spoke to that theme in proposing an after-dinner toast to Robin at the colloquium and a version of his remarks on that occasion forms the second essay in this volume.

Robin's university career began at the University of Liverpool. After graduating in 1959, he completed a Master's thesis on the evolution of the agrarian landscape of Northumberland between 1500 and 1900. Thereafter, Robin held a succession of academic posts at Keele, at University College Dublin, at Queen Mary College (London), at Loughborough, at York and lastly at Leeds. In addition, he has held extended visiting posts at Nebraska (USA) and at Cambridge (UK) and has been a visiting scholar more briefly at universities in Spain and in Germany. This varied institutional experience meant that Robin encountered diverse concerns in, and varied approaches to, historical geography. His own research concerns reflect that enriching career-path. Robin's publications – listed at the end of this *festschrift* – display the catholic nature

of his interests, for they are products of an open and enquiring mind embracing diverse approaches to studying geographies of the past. The Leeds colloquium was – and this present book is - structured around four main themes identifiable in the broad sprectrum of Robin's interests. Such an organisation of the papers is intended to give them a degree of shape and coherence without intending to suggest that they reflect some *grand projet* on Robin's part. Few scholars, if any, have been able to claim convincingly that they mapped out from the start of their careers the bifurcating research paths that took them from postgraduate student to retired scholar. Nonetheless such journeys are not random walks: patterns are discernible within them. The tapestry of Robin's work has within it *inter alia* the four threads of landscape, of Ireland, of environment and of empire utilised here to weave together these celebratory essays. But it must be emphasised both that the essays in this special volume are only intended to be broadly reflective of those concerns, not accurately representative of them, and that the threads are themselves often inter-twined and not separately distinguishable.

Research themes

The first theme addressed is that of landscape studies. Undergraduate field classes in the Somerset Levels and in the Rhone Valley, lectures from Dick Lawton and Brian Harley, and having Clifford Darby as one of the examiners of his Master's thesis laid the foundations for Robin's interest in historical geography generally and in landscape studies specifically. The landscape thread is detectable throughout Robin's work, running from Northumberland and Durham through Ireland and across the East Midlands and Cambridgeshire and into continental Europe. It has been mainly, but not exclusively, of an agrarian hue. It has ranged through time from the medieval to the modern period. In this present volume the essays by Bob Dodgshon and by Tony Phillips relate very directly to Robin's concern with rural landscapes: the former offers some general and provocative thoughts on the history of upland landscapes in Europe while the latter engages specifically with the extensive farm (re)building activity in England during the second half of the nineteenth century. The essay by Neil Roberts reflects Robin's interest in landscape change but its time period – the Holocene – makes it a study not in historical geography *sensu stricto* but in pre-historical geography. Most historical geographers, like Robin, work principally with written, unpublished, sources; some also include archaeological skills and knowledges in their studies of past

geographies; but very few regard the pre-documented past as part of their research territory. While a good theoretical case can be made for studying the transformation of a wholly "natural" landscape or *Naturlandschaft*, or even a wild or primitive landscape or *Urlandschaft*, into an almost entirely "cultural" landscape or *Kulturlandschaft*, most British geographers have focussed their attentions on historical rather than on pre-historical periods. In part, this has probably been because of the different sets of analytical skills required for studying such different periods; but it was probably also in part because of the intellectual context in which British historical geography as a sub-field developed in association with the historical sciences more than with the physical sciences. Robin's collaboration with Neil Roberts, which led to their jointly editing a set of essays on environmental changes in historical times, was a fortuitous and fortunate by-product of their time together as colleagues at Loughborough University.

A nine years' sojourn in Dublin gave rise to Robin's second research theme, the historical geography of Ireland. The architecturally beautiful and historically rich city of Dublin seems to have impressed Robin significantly, for his basic instinct for rural matters came to be paralleled by an interest in urban genesis and development in Ireland. Immersing himself deliberately in Ireland's geographical culture, Robin also published papers on professional geography in the Irish Republic and on Ireland's place within the international system. While in Dublin, Robin developed new academic colleagues and contacts. Three of them have contributed essays which, more by accident than design, are historical geographies of identity. The cultural construction of identities and the relationship between local landscapes and regional and national identities has become a major field of interest for historical geographers. William Smyth examines the visioning of Ireland by English policy-makers and writers between the mid-sixteenth century and the mid-seventeenth century as "empty space", as a *tabula rasa*. Specifically, he explores the involvement of Edmund Spenser – poet, planter and state official – and of his *View of the State of Ireland* in constructing an English imagining of Irish colonial identity. Changing political and cultural power relations in Ireland during the early-modern period are shown by Anngret Simms to have been key processes in transforming both the social and the physical fabric of individual Irish towns. She emphasises their cultural hybridity as part of their contested identity and heritage. Landscapes are inescapably ideological and through struggle and appropriation they can be given new meanings. Brian Graham's essay is concerned with loyalist cultural landscapes in Ulster, a place which he views as a laboratory for identity

formation as unionists and loyalists strove to reconcile themselves with, or conversely to distance themselves from, the political changes that followed the paramilitary ceasefires of the mid-1900s and the Good Friday Peace Agreement of 1998. All three of these essays on Ireland demonstrate the extent to which place histories of necessity are cultural histories. But so, too, are "natural" or environmental histories.

A third theme in Robin's work is that of the historical transformation of physical environments by human activities. Originating, it would seem, in his undergraduate dissertation on the draining of a valley in the Somerset Levels, this has been a more subdued aspect of Robin's contribution to historical geography. His early interest in this field lay dormant for a long while but was reawakened during his year spent in Cambridge in 1986-87. Robin bravely decided to revisit Clifford Darby's work on the draining of the Fens and later organised a series of ESRC funded seminars on the perception and management of historic environments. Historical environmental geographies have a long pedigree and have been joined since the 1960s by the developing sub-field of environmental history. In this present volume, two essays represent that line of enquiry. Both focus on the significance of changing ideas about, and attitudes towards, environmental issues. John Sheail examines the increasing endeavour by public policy-makers in Britain to apply "the scientific method" to environmental problems and pressures in the early-twentieth century. The scale of nineteenth-century urbanisation and industrialisation meant that new ways had to be explored of managing resources, of countering environmental pollution and of limiting environmental degradation. In short, attitudes towards the environment had to be rethought in order to counter the risks inherent in wealth creation and the promotion of social welfare. Conflicts between private and public attitudes towards environments lie at the heart of Hugh Prince's essay on American wetlands in the twentieth century. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the use and management of wetlands were determined by private owners but with the public having rights of access to navigable waterways and clean water. Gradually during the twentieth century, against the opposition of private landowners, public rights were extended by legislation and by executive actions of public authorities. Battling to control the physical environment – by draining and embanking – also inherently involved social conflict, most notably between conservationists (especially bird lovers and hunters, scientists and fishermen) and developers (farmers and recreation-seekers).

Social struggles also underpinned a fourth concern which Robin developed while he was at Loughborough University between 1979 and 1995. It came to be his primary focus as he approached the joy of retirement. Together with Morag Bell and Michael Heffernan, two of his colleagues at Loughborough, Robin developed an interest in historical geographies of imperial expansion and of geographical knowledges. This has now become his major research and writing project in retirement, a panoramic synthesis of the historical geographies of European imperialism. Robin's work here fits into the burgeoning interest in historical geographies of colonialism and imperialism which have come to broaden earlier studies of the historical geographies of specific colonies and of the colonised world in general. The final cluster of seven essays in this volume are reflective of this salient in historical geography and of its close links with both cultural and postcolonial studies. To concerns with the material consequences of colonialism has been added a wide range of issues relating to questions of, for example, identities, meanings and imaginings, as well as to social practices, relations and struggles.

One of the criticisms sometimes made of postcolonial and cultural studies is that they tend towards broad generalisations to the relative neglect of spatial and temporal specificities, in effect to the neglect of particular colonial contexts. The essays presented here aim at a more balanced approach. Thus Philip Howell examines the extent to which British law was conveyed from the metropolitan centre to the colonial margins as Britain established new settlements overseas. He argues that the ethnic, racial, cultural and political diversity of British imperial possessions prevented the possibility of specific British law serving as a general colonial legal system. His case study of Gibraltar during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also emphasises the instability of the colonial legal system, changing in response to new circumstances and ideas. Howell's study of the imperial network in which colonial law was embedded in the nineteenth century provides just one example of the broad theme pursued in Alan Lester's essay which extends his conception of the British Empire as "a dynamic bundle of overlapping and intersecting networks of communication". In this instance Lester focuses on two specific circuits of communication linking Australia, South Africa and New Zealand as well as Britain, one network established by missionaries and philanthropists and another created by bourgeois settlers. Lester's portrayal of colonialism as being both global and local finds resonance in Serge Courville's essay on the role of propagandist literature in promoting colonisation in the British Empire. Courville argues that common themes in that literature created a positive context for emigration and

colonisation from the early-sixteenth century through to the late-nineteenth century in widely separated colonies. But while a common discourse permeated the British Empire as a model, its rhetoric was adapted to suit local circumstances. One general model, Courville argues, had many specific outcomes.

The role of ideologies in the colonisation process is evident in Martin Purvis' study of the Co-operative Wholesale Society's commercial venture into West Africa in the early-twentieth century. The ideological debate in Britain between economic systems based on capitalist competition and those based on mutualist cooperation is shown by Purvis to have found practical expression in a contest for colonial resources and economic territory in Africa. The Society's resistance to capitalism at home was buttressed by its venture into co-operative involvement in the palm oil commerce of Sierra Leone, judged to be necessary in order to defend the interests of British consumers. London was, of course, the commercial heart of the British Empire and its role was stated in its architecture. Iain Black's essay on the building between 1912 and 1922 of the headquarters of the Port of London Authority, close by the Tower of London, deconstructs the edifice as an icon of empire. But just as importantly it demonstrates the significant role of one principal actor – the architect Sir Edwin Cooper – in the dramatic narrative of British imperialism: an individual was able to harness his considerable insights to the social, economic, political and technical milieu of his time. Both charisma and context mattered.

Their dual importance is also demonstrated in Michael Heffernan's study of commercial geography and inter-war French politics. Close links between commerce and geography and between geography and imperialism were part of the European milieu between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth century. Geographical societies provided a locus where those interests could intertwine. Heffernan provides an analysis of the origins of French commercial geography, specifically of the role of the *Société de Géographie Commerciale de Paris* (SGCP) founded in 1876 by a French colonial lobby. His detailed study of the hitherto unacknowledged far-right tendency of the SGCP focuses on the pivotal role of a reactionary conservative, Louis Marin, who joined the society in 1895. Under his guidance, the SGCP became an important part of Malin's campaign to develop a conservative and nationalist case for an expansive French overseas empire.

All of the essays in this section on empire studies rely to some extent on the concepts of connectivity and of diffusion, of nodes and networks. So, too, does

the final essay, by Morag Bell, although it stands apart from the others in terms of its topic. Bell examines the outbreak of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) in Leicester in 2001. She argues that the outbreak is best understood in terms of a range of spatial perspectives, one of which views Leicester as a postcolonial city with imperial connections in which national reporting of the outbreak was grounded in the city's distinctive ethnic composition (specifically, the high percentage of its population of Asian origin who maintained contacts with families and friends in postcolonial territories). The return of TB to Leicester is thus seen as being connected to Britain's imperial history and geography.

The papers presented at the celebratory colloquium in Leeds and published here were selected to represent these four themes identifiable in Robin's work. But this quartet does not embrace the entire spectrum of Robin's contribution to historical geography, as the list of his publications included at the end of this volume demonstrates. At least two other themes are discernible: one relating to the Holy Land, another to theory and methodology in historical geography.

Robin went to Israel twice in the late-1980s, once as a member of a group of British human geographers on a study visit, invited there by Israeli geographers, and a second time to attend the Seventh International Conference of Historical Geographers held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. These encounters led him to develop an interest in the historical geography of the Holy Land and in particular in English and French representations of it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The published papers which flowed from that experience had a landscape focus and might just as readily be placed with his other landscape studies, but they reflect also a distinctive phase in Robin's research trajectory and so merit separate mention.

Far from being a phase, Robin's interest in the general practice of historical geography has lasted for four decades. Specific considerations of historical geography's relation to, and concern with, local, regional and area studies, and of proto-industrialisation, have been complemented by general discussions of theory and methodology in historical geography. This interest culminated in 1993 in his ambitious *tour'd'horizon* of the practice of historical geography. A separate set of papers on methodological issues could have been justified in the programme for the colloquium but, because of the constraints of time, it was decided not to do so. Methodological issues have to be addressed in every research paper, either explicitly or implicitly, and the essays presented here embrace such matters as well as substantive research findings.

In terms of their substance, these essays, like Robin's own work, cover a very broad spectrum of topics and exemplify the astonishing range of specific subjects researched under the general umbrella of historical geography. In terms of their style, these essays, again like Robin's own work, may perhaps be seen as falling into two camps: those in which the author is a 'narrator', telling stories about places and people in the past, and those in which the author is a 'problematist', discussing issues about places and people in the past.

Sorting the major themes and styles of Robin's research in this way is to impose order upon his work somewhat artificially. I am certain that Robin, like other scholars, did not set out such an orderly agenda for himself when entering the academy of historical geography. On the contrary, but again like other scholars, Robin modified his programme in the light of changing circumstances and experiences. Moreover, the picture I have presented so far omits one important aspect of Robin's contribution to historical geography: his entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship

In addition to his own research and writing, Robin has promoted historical geography as an editor and as an *animateur*. I had the good fortune to co-edit with Robin a collection of essays on field systems in the British Isles. That book was published more than thirty years ago. Since then Robin has co-edited a further nine books, including notable surveys of the historical geography of England and Wales and of Europe. He also edited the Croom Helm Historical Geography Series. In addition, Robin was instrumental along with a few others in establishing the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers and in initiating the series of International Conferences of Historical Geographers (the twelfth of which was held in New Zealand in December 2003). At national and international levels these two institutions have contributed very significantly to the development of our discipline and Robin was a key player in their creation.

Historical geography owes much to Robin's steadfast commitment to it for more than four decades. While some historical geographers during that period crossed over to become historians and others moved sideways to profess a new cultural geography, Robin remained faithful to his first love. This book is a celebration of his fruitful and enduring marriage, intellectually speaking, to historical geography.

Note

[1] A list of Robin's publications is included elsewhere in this volume. It is, therefore, not necessary to cite here those of his works referred to in this introductory essay.

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Robin A. Butlin: an appreciation

Richard Lawton

Although Robin has identified a twelfth-century Butlin in York,[1] he is a Liverpudlian: a man of Liverpool, born and bred; married to a Liverpool girl; and still one of that rare and distinctive, if hybrid, breed. His early life bears out that heritage. Long a supporter of "the Reds", though from the safety of the Paddock rather than the hurly-burly of the Kop and the full assault of its sentimental "anthem", he was schooled at the Liverpool Institute, where I suppose a certain Paul McCartney must have been a younger contemporary. There he came under the wise geographical tutelage of John Edwards who encouraged him to go to his local university to read Geography. Fortunately for those of us in the Geography Department of the University of Liverpool who taught him - and for Robin's developing interest in historical geography - it proved a wise choice.

Other than lecturing in the course which Robin took on "The Historical Geography of Britain" and the advanced option on Historical Geography, I had little direct contact with him in his undergraduate years from 1956 - 59, but I did read his final year, prize-winning dissertation on the Somerset Levels, recognized a real research potential and was fortunate enough to supervise his postgraduate work. In those days, long before postgraduate-funding authorities required courses in research techniques, frequent progress reports and the like, this supervisor took the view that research was best conducted through the archives and landscapes of the area of study - and the sooner the better. So, in the long vacation after graduation (why waste time?), Robin was off to the Duke of Northumberland's archives in Alnwick. Seven terms later the Master's thesis was successfully submitted, reported on in papers at the 20th International Geographical Congress in London, 1964 and in *Agricultural History Review*.[2] Already his undergraduate work had borne fruit in publication with his first

foray into agrarian history and a paper on the evolution of the Brue Valley, alongside research undertaken during his time as Tutor at University College, Keele.[3]

These beginnings epitomise Robin Butlin, the scholar: the identification of the problem; the investigation; the publication of findings - all with insight, thoroughness and effectiveness. Moreover, that early work has had lasting value. His research into field systems and agrarian landscapes led to subsequent wide-ranging studies of Britain and Western Europe. In the case of the British Isles the abundant documentary and cartographic evidence that county archives' offices and more general access to private estate records made available in the post-war years had produced a number of studies of field systems by historical geographers and economic historians that added substantially to and, in many cases, changed ideas about their evolution as outlined in H L Gray's classic account.[4] The collection of regional studies brought together under the editorship of Robin and Alan Baker in 1973 not only fleshed out the rich detail of a vital aspect of rural landscape evolution but, in their introduction, mapped out the materials on which such research is based and provided a perceptive conclusion emphasizing the diversity within the British Isles and "the complex of factors ...influencing field systems... rural settlement patterns and farming systems".[5] The book was and remains a major contribution to scholarship.

While Robin's interest in rural landscapes and societies has remained and was later to be the focus of research on the Cambridgeshire Fens in a year spent at Wolfson College, Cambridge as Visiting Professor and Leverhulme Fellow, Robin's horizons widened as his career unfolded. In successive appointments at Keele, University College, Dublin, Queen Mary College, London and Loughborough as well as in a number of visiting professorships in America - notably at Miami University, Ohio (1965) and the University of Nebraska (1969-70) - and Europe he both identified with and usually contributed to research on the area in which he was working. The year in Keele produced the paper on Robert Plot. His time in Dublin saw a significant involvement both with research on the then relatively neglected study of urban origins in Ireland and with geographical education in the Republic and in his association with the Geographical Society of Ireland. Writing in 1976, at a time when archaeological excavation was shedding considerable light on Dublin's urban origins, Robin remarked on the relative paucity of recent research on Irish towns.[6] A generation on, the ongoing studies in the Irish Historical Towns Atlas project and detailed urban studies based on analysis of estate records of some of the

great land-owning families are witness to his view that from both indigenous and "imported" (Viking and Anglo-Norman) origins urban settlements and society were more important in Ireland than had been hitherto generally recognized.[7]

During his time at Queen Mary College (1971-79), where he was promoted to a Readership in Historical Geography in the University of London in 1977, his horizons were considerably widened. Whilst two books on rural England represent a bringing together of much of his previous work, the co-edited book with Bob Dodgshon brought a different approach to the study of the historical geography of England and Wales than the distinctive cross-sections and period pictures of H. C. Darby.[8] Taking "a more interpretative approach to the past" and an essentially thematic view, the various contributors highlighted the changes in the conceptualisation of the subject over the previous twenty years, the impact of the research of young scholars and the efforts of those, not least Robin himself, who helped to promote a "new" historical geography.

Active involvement in QMC's European Studies programme widened Robin's horizons, further enlarged by visiting Professorships in Spain (Madrid and Valencia) and Germany (Gottingen, Marburg and Giessen) and through invitations to many European conferences This led to a variety of publications on rural landscapes and agrarian and pre-industrial economies of Europe which were eventually to bear fruit in a second jointly-edited book with Dodgshon.[9] In both approach and contributors the volume reflects the increasingly cross-disciplinary nature of work on Europe's changing environments, landscapes, economies, cultures and polities.

Significantly, Robin's contribution to that book was a chapter entitled "Geographical knowledge and the expansion of the European world after 1400", hinting at research that followed his appointment in 1979 to a new Chair of Geography at Loughborough University of Technology, a mainly applied science institution. I suspect that its then Vice-Chancellor had to be persuaded of the virtues of Geography. If so he did not have long to wait, for Robin transformed the hitherto teaching-orientated department of a former College of Education into one in which, almost without exception, the staff he inherited, along with the young colleagues he appointed, created a lively and rapidly-expanding Department with a strong research and teaching profile. Despite his much-increased administrative commitments, Robin's research expanded in

two distinct directions: the geography of empire; and human-environmental interactions in ecological change.

The latter was an aspect of landscape evolution, first explored in undergraduate work on the wetlands of the Somerset Levels, that was revived in a sabbatical year at Wolfson College in 1986-87 when he "revisited'" classic territory explored by H C Darby in the 1930s. Robin's study of the Middle Fen around Soham Mere was a timely reminder of the complexity of relationships between environment and man in a long-settled area of changing economic exploitation. The "profound consequences for the natural ecology" was a theme subsequently pursued in a variety of contexts ranging from water control to the changing rural economy [10] that found wider expression in the book based on an interdisciplinary meeting at the 1993 annual conference of the Institute of British Geographers, a book reflecting a mutual concern of a small group of Loughborough geographers about the impact of human activities on landscapes and ecological systems throughout the world. It is also a testimony to the fruitful interaction that Robin had succeeded in creating in his young department.[11]

A reference to "Europe's biological imperialism" in this latter work points to his increasing interest in the geography of empire. Studies of Palestine which began, appropriately for a churchman and chorister, with a paper on George Adam Smith and the historical geography of the Holy Land, were fostered through contact with leading Israeli geographers.[12] Visits to Israel, in particular the Eighth International Conference of Historical Geographers in Jerusalem in 1989, are reflected in papers on changing perspectives on the landscapes and interpretations of Palestine. Alongside studies of Anglophone and Francophone Africa by Loughborough colleagues, reflecting a growing interest in the geography of colonialism and empire, Robin began work on British Imperialism and the process of decolonisation, a new dimension to an already wide-ranging research portfolio.[13]

In addition to his scholarly activity, Robin has contributed increasingly to academic life in general, both in promoting geography in the various institutions in which he has worked over the past 42 years and in the broader field of the humanities and social sciences. He has advanced the study of historical geography both through his wide-ranging research interests and through a key role, nationally and internationally, in its organization. A founder member of the Historical Geography Research Group, he has held all three Offices in it and given a strong lead to its activities and in support of young historical geographers.

Similarly, he has been involved in the impending International Association of Historical Geographers from its beginnings as a UK/Canadian seminar - many of us remember the most enjoyable meeting at Danbury, very much on the Butlin's doorstep in 1979 - to its Eleventh Conference at Laval University, Quebec in 2001, which welcomed over 250 participants from 24 countries.

Robin Butlin has influenced many people during his career. A great "enabler", he brings out the best in others: the joint work with Alan Baker; the two notable books with Bob Dodgshon; the studies of empire with former Loughborough colleagues: all testify to that happy knack. And he has ever been generous in his acknowledgment of the contribution of others, from research students to colleagues in his own universities and in many disciplines both at home and abroad, for their support of his own work. In so doing he has shown a command of his particular fields of research and a refreshingly broad approach to historical geography, an approach grounded in a keen awareness of environment, landscape and culture, rooted in the idea that, as T S Eliot puts it:

> "Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future
> And time future contained in time past".[14]

Those views are set out in Robin's 1993 book which is sub-titled *Through the Gates of Space and Time* - significantly, in the context of his newly-developing research interests, the phrase is that of the French political geographer Y-M Goblet.[15] It places the subject in its classical and modern settings seen from the standpoint of European and New World geographical philosophies, methodologies and sources of evidence, and in relation to the concepts and approaches of related disciplines. Ranging from the earliest impacts of mankind on the natural environment to more recent changes in the landscape, it discusses the evolving patterns of activity - rural, urban and industrial; and the consequences - in power and polity, materially and culturally - for increasingly mobile societies. Offered as "a celebration, critique, and demonstration of historical geography", it is at once a balanced overview of the subject as Robin sees it yet one capable of "many different versions" that remains - in both its intellectual challenge and diversity of approach and range of evidence – an "active, exciting and challenging art".[16]

Published a decade ago, not long before going in 1995 to York as Principal of the then College of Ripon and St John, lesser scholars might have seen that

book as a final statement: not Robin! Living up to his title as Professor of Historical Geography in the College, he set his new colleagues a challenging example in editing and contributing to four substantial books and publishing several papers during his three-year stay. When in 1998 he moved on to the University of Leeds as a Visiting Professor and then Professor of Historical Geography, it was not as a fading star but a big team-player who still knows where the goalposts are. It has been a productive association on both sides.

All this has been part – I suspect a smaller part than he would have wished – of an extremely busy professional life in which at all stages Robin has fully involved himself in teaching and administration within his several universities and also in the many learned societies of which he is a member. In particular he played a vital role as Vice-President of the Institute of British Geographers in 1993 and 1994 and, subsequently, of the Royal Geographical Society from 1995-1998 in reuniting, after a 62 years'-long divorce, Britain's two major geographical societies. No doubt there were times when negotiating the remarriage contract stretched his patience, but a shrewd understanding of two institutions with very different histories and ethos and of people of rather different ideas and priorities helped smooth potential difficulties and lay the foundations for the future. In 1999 the then President, Ron Cooke, in presenting the Society's Victoria Medal to Robin for contributions to research in Historical Geography, a fitting recognition of scholarship, also paid tribute to Robin's major role in shaping the Society's strategic plan and preparing the ground for its reintegration with the Institute, a subject on which we may learn more as his on-going research on the history of the RGS progresses.

Robin's reply on that occasion typifies the man.[17] Characteristically modest, it was full of appreciation for those with whom he has worked over the years rather than of self-praise. Those who know him well are aware of his many qualities as a scholar and friend: modest, unassuming, seemingly unflappable, constant and stalwart, the most agreeable of companions; truly a man for all seasons. I well remember talking with his proud father after the 1987 degree ceremony at Loughborough at which a Higher Doctorate, the degree of D. Litt., was conferred on Robin for his published work in Historical Geography. I remarked that it was a fitting recognition of his achievements: Mr Butlin replied "Oh! But there's much more to come". And so there has been and, no doubt, will continue to be. There are no signs that Robin is about to be put out to grass or of the wheels falling off the research wagon; on the contrary there is abundant

evidence of "time future" in his pursuit of pathways "through the gates of space and time".

But one hopes that the Leverhulme Emeritus Research Fellowship, 2003-2005, for work on geography and imperialism, will also enable Robin and Norma to visit the new home of Katherine, his daughter, in Melbourne. They surely will also be welcomed in universities in Canada and the United States and in many parts of Europe; more time, one hopes, to visit family and friends here and abroad. Robin Alan Butlin's retrospect has been both distinguished and exciting. May the prospect be equally so for him and Norma: a busy, fulfilling and happy retirement; more time to share together their many interests in music, literature and the fine arts; to travel; maybe to visit old haunts in Liverpool and see the odd game at Anfield. And, doubtless, to pursue that most absorbing of hobbies, Geography and the discovery of landscape. And time also for Robin to savour the O.B.E. awarded to him in the 2004 New Year's Honours "for services to Geography".

Notes

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PART I: LANDSCAPE STUDIES

3

Gardeners' world? The cultural landscape of the first farmers in the Near East

Neil Roberts

Introduction

One of the most powerful and pervasive ideas concerning our relationship with the natural world has been the progressive transformation of the Earth's surface to create space for human habitation and agriculture. As Carl Sauer wrote half-a-century ago: "The history of mankind is a long and diverse series of steps by which he has achieved ecologic dominance.... largely he has prospered by disturbing the natural order".[1] This idea is predicated on the assumption that there was at some point in the past when a natural, undisturbed world existed; an Earth not yet raped. Such a Golden Age was certainly a feature of Classical authors such as Varro and Seneca who believed that there had been a time when "man lived on those things that the earth produced spontaneously" and when "the very soil was more fertile and productive".[2] As Robin Butlin has noted, the concept of the primitive landscape – or, as Gradmann described it, "urlandschaft" – was particularly influential in the development of late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century historical geography in Europe.[3]

How far back one needs to go back in time to find the "urlandschaft" depends where one is on the Earth's surface, but in the Old World at least, the process of landscape acculturation has been a long one spanning many millennia. In consequence, even our oldest historical documents, such as the Domesday Survey of England in 1086AD, record landscapes that had already been subject to extensive clearance of the primeval forest.[4] In regions such as the British Isles and the Mediterranean, we consequently have to turn to the alternative sources provided by palaeoecology and archaeology in order to reconstruct long-term environmental histories. In northwest Europe, palynologists

reconstructing long-term landscape history from pollen cores recognise a common pattern in which an initial dense forest cover (represented by high %tree pollen) progressively gave way to an increasingly open landscape (represented by higher %non-tree pollen) during the course of the current – or Holocene – interglacial.[5] Within this it is possible to identify initial clearance or Landnám horizons, usually soon after the appearance of the first Neolithic farmers, with small, localised, and normally short-lived openings in the otherwise near-continuous sea of trees. As human populations grew and technology, such as bronze and iron metalwork, became prevalent, so the process of forest clearance became more and more widespread and permanent. Even if pollen curves sometimes indicate reversals in this process, when cleared land was abandoned back to nature and secondary afforestation took place (e.g. Post-Roman Dark Ages), the overall trend was one that moved away from primaeval wildwood and towards culturally created landscapes. According to this model, therefore, a suitable candidate for a pristine pre-disturbance nature might appear to be during the Mesolithic period of advanced hunter-foragers during the early-mid Holocene.

Distinguishing the natural from the cultural

Whichever time horizon we choose, even supposedly "pre-disturbance" landscapes were rarely devoid of people. The Garden of Eden, after all, was filled not only by the winged fowl of the air and the beasts of the Earth, but also by Eve, Adam and in due course, by their progeny. George Perkins Marsh recognised this, distinguishing "first nature" (truly pristine without people), from "second nature" where some human imprint began to be manifest, however slight. For the most part the human populations who might have lived in a Garden of Eden were hunters and gatherers, fishers, simple "peasant" farmers or nomadic pastoralists, and, like Adam and Eve before the Fall they are assumed to have lived in harmony with nature, as Rousseau's original noble savages. Total human numbers at any one time were small compared to today's 6 billion, and it is generally believed that nature's impact upon them was far greater than the other way around. *Significant* human impacts upon the natural world have been assumed to be the province of complex societies, whether agrarian or industrial.

In accepting this assumption, it has been a short step to accepting also that any environmental change that did take place during prehistoric times, especially

in earlier prehistory, is more likely to have had natural causes than human ones. At face value, this seems entirely reasonable. The first *Landnám* (clearance) phase in NW European pollen diagrams is typically represented by only a handful of cereal-type pollen grains and a fall of only a few per cent in the tree pollen count. These have, quite reasonably, been interpreted as tiny clearings in an overwhelming – and often threatening – forest wildscape.

However, we should be at least open to the possibility that early human populations were capable of altering pristine nature, in some cases well before the accepted baseline time horizons for detecting human disturbance. Examples of major debate over the relative roles of nature and culture in prehistory include the causes of Late Pleistocene megafaunal extinctions, and the impact of aboriginal burning on the Australian landscape.[6] While in both cases, the role of early human populations remains a matter of controversy, the separation of human and natural agencies none the less emerges as a problem even before climate, vegetation and landscapes had taken on their recognizably modern Holocene form.

The origins and impact of Neolithic farming in SW Asia

SW Asia (or the Near East) is one of the world's oldest and most important centres of plant and animal domestication.[7] From the Neolithic farmers of this region we have inherited cereal crops such as wheat, barley and rye, pulses including pea, bean and lentil, and domestic sheep, goat, cattle and pig. This transformation of a selected range of plants and animals from wild to domestic was associated with the beginnings of settled village life. Archaeological field research into the orgins of Near Eastern agriculture has revealed Neolithic mudbrick village 'tells' or 'hüyüks', such as Jarmo and Jericho, with radiocarbon ages in the early part of the Holocene period (Fig. 3.1). Evidence from excavated charred seeds and animal bones indicate that by ca.9000 BC (cal.), during the so-called pre-pottery Neolithic B (or PPNB), the main transition from foraging to farming was complete in the core region of domestication.[8] Wild plants and animals had been intensively exploited in the Near East during much of the preceding Late Pleistocene period, known archaeologically as the Epi-Palaeolithic. The millennia straddling the Pleistocene-Holocene boundary therefore emerge as the critical stage when intensive hunting, fishing and gathering gave way to proto-agriculture and then to full farming. This Neolithic Revolution allowed a substantial increase in total human population and led to

a very different relationship between people and their natural environment. With agriculture came greater cultural control over the relationship with nature, and the widespread creation of cultural landscapes.

On-site archaeological data provide abundant evidence for the human exploitation of natural resources at this time, such as wood, clay, obsidian and other stone materials. Despite this, off-site (i.e. non-archaeological) evidence for prehistoric human impact in SW Asia has remained elusive. This has traditionally been explained by the idea that the earliest Neolithic farming communities in this region practised a relatively intensive horticulture on water-retentive alluvial soils.[9] Such garden-scale cultivation would not have required large-scale clearance of the pre-existing natural vegetation, and these activities would not have impacted greatly on overall vegetation cover at a landscape scale. Consequently, it has been argued that Neolithic vegetation clearance would have been undetectable in pollen sequences unless they were located in close proximity to prehistoric settlements.[10]

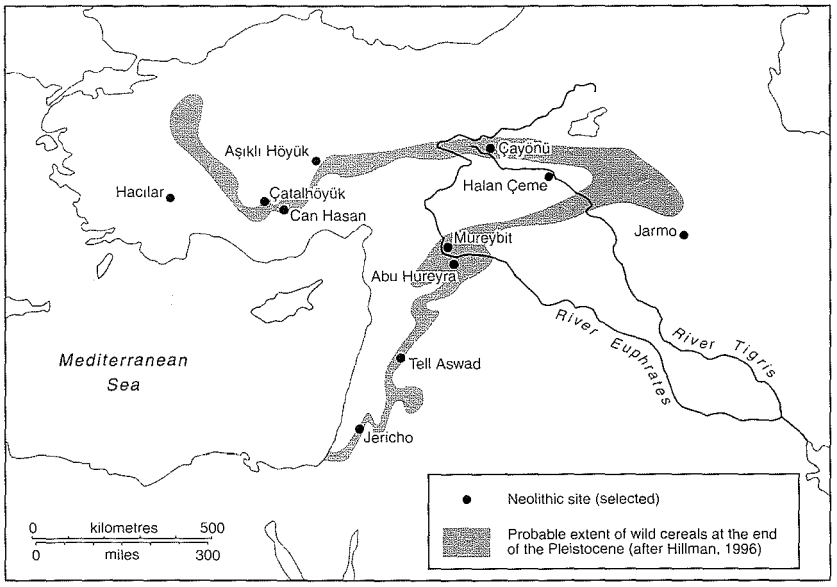

Figure 3.1 Key excavated Neolithic settlements in southwest Asia and the probable extent of wild cereals at the end of the Pleistocene.

On the other hand, the emergence of these first farming communities took place at the very start of the Holocene period, so that a pre-Neolithic base-line "primaeval" vegetation may never have existed, unlike – for example – in Northwest Europe. Consequently it is conceivable that significant human impacts began even before vegetation had completed its adjustment to the major shift in climate at the end of the last glacial period. Pollen diagrams from Southwest Asia show that at the Last Glacial Maximum there was a marked reduction in tree cover.[11] The subsequent expansion in woodland took place earliest in the coastal regions of the Levant and western Turkey, but in interior areas, where the climate is cooler, drier or both, the increase in tree pollen was rather slow, and maximum values were only achieved in mid-Holocene times. Instead of woodland, the glacial-age wormwood-chenopod steppe was replaced in these regions during Neolithic times by open grass-dominated savannah parkland. This lagged re-establishment of trees had previously been interpreted primarily as a result of a slow increase in precipitation during the early Holocene, implying that climatic conditions were drier than at present in Anatolia and Western Iran during Neolithic times.[12]

However, recent work on lake-sediment records from Turkey has shown an apparent disequilibrium between the prevailing climate and the vegetation cover during the first third of the Holocene.[13] Stable isotope and diatom data show that the climate was wetter than today, yet pollen from the same cores indicate a very slow post-glacial re-advance of trees across the dry oak parkland zone in the interior regions of SW Asia. Something was holding up this spreading, and among the prime suspects are Neolithic farmers who would have had every incentive to keep the landscape as an open mosaic of trees and grasses – for example, to encourage grazing for animals, and to grow rain-fed cereal crops. On *a priori* grounds, oak-terebinth parkland is the most likely ecological zone to have been subject to significant Neolithic impact. This is one of the main natural habitats for wild cereals[14] and for many of the animals that came to be domesticated. Relatively intensive human exploitation of this landscape zone is confirmed by the high density of Neolithic settlement sites here (Figure 3.1).

Neolithic impact on the tree cover could have taken several forms, including clearance for crop cultivation, cutting for fuel and timber, and pressure from grazing/browsing livestock. However, as in Australia, the most likely means by which these prehistoric populations were able to manipulate natural vegetation was by the use of fire for controlled burning. The use of fire to clear vegetation

or encourage regrowth is one of our oldest tools of environmental management; the new vegetation growth after a fire increases grazing and browsing potential, and the number animals that can be supported responds accordingly. Fire management is most often associated with societies reliant on hunting and gathering, pastoralism, or shifting cultivation. However, low-temperature ground fires have advantages for any human group wanting to prevent the encroachment of scrub or woodland, and maintain an open savannah-type landscape of grassland with trees. This would be particularly appropriate for encouraging the growth of annual and perennial grasses, well-suited for grazing sheep and other livestock. Fire would also have broken up the soil surface, requiring less use of labour-intensive hoes or digging-sticks, and aiding the growth of seedlings.[15]

Regional fire histories can be recorded through micro-charcoal profiles in lake-sediment cores. Currently few such charcoal sequences exist for Southwest Asia, but those that are available give support to maximum fire frequencies having occurred during the early Holocene.[16] Increased late-season burning in the fire-sensitive oak-terebinth parkland zone during the Neolithic period may thus have played a key role in delaying the re-establishment of wooded vegetation.

The prehistoric landscape of the Konya basin, Turkey

The Konya basin on the Anatolian plateau is well suited for testing past changes in the relationship between environment and culture, because it possesses both important archaeological and natural sedimentary "archives" that cover the period that witnessed the emergence of agriculture. Of critical importance is the Neolithic settlement mound of Çatalhöyük, which was originally excavated in the early 1960s by James Mellaart, and has been the scene of new excavations since 1993 directed by Ian Hodder.[17] These have unearthed abundant evidence of ritual activities such as 'shrines', and a flourishing agricultural economy, dated to around 9000 BC. Among Neolithic archaeological excavation programmes, the site of Çatalhöyük stands out for the exceptional preservation of food waste and other materials and for the wide array of specialist techniques being employed.

Today's climate in the Konya plain is semi-arid, with average precipitation around 300-500 mm p.a., and a substantial seasonal temperature range, winter

temperatures being around freezing and mean summer temperatures >20°C. Çatalhöyük lies on the bed of a former Pleistocene lake near the outer edge of a gently-sloping alluvial fan, and was founded soon after the Çarsamba River started to deposit fine-grained alluvium at this locality.[18] Most other known Neolithic sites in the Konya basin share similar site locations.[19] The location of this large nucleated Neolithic settlement on an alluvial floodplain, with abundant finds of domestic cereal remains and animal bones, initially led to the inference that the Neolithic subsistence economy had been based on intensive exploitation of a small portion of wetland landscape within a few km of the site. However, the new excavations and associated bio-archaeological and isotopic analyses suggest that in addition to locally-available resources (including reeds and tubers, wildfowl, as well as domestic crops and animals), both food and non-food resources from the wider region were exploited systematically.[20] The use of wood fuel for domestic activities (heat, light, cooking) and lime plaster manufacture is testified by macro-charcoal remains from Neolithic sites throughout Southwest Asia. And macro-charcoal remains from Çatalhöyük indicate that the majority of wood-fuel was provided by oak, juniper and other non-wetland trees which had to be transported at least 12 km to the site.[21]

Geomorphological research has shown that the area around Çatalhöyük was subject to flooding during the lifetime of the site that was significantly more severe than that occurring naturally today.[22] Inundation by floodwaters for 1-2 months during spring would have required some activities, such as sheep/goat herding, to move to dry ground more than 10 km away. Flooding at this time would also have precluded the growing of autumn-sown cereal and pulse crops on the alluvial soils. Tentative confirmation that Neolithic cereal crops were farmed in the dryland zone comes from initial analysis of wheat phytoliths found at Çatalhöyük.[23] Pollen analysis of a fill sequence at the edge of Çatalhöyük also gives support to the inference that cereal crops were brought onto the site, rather than being grown locally.[24] In total, the new evidence suggests that the Neolithic population at this and – by inference – other sites in Southwest Asia systematically utilised resources within the wider parkland zone as well as those in local wetland habitats. Major settlement sites such as Çatalhöyük may have provided a home base that was supplemented by temporary seasonal encampments in the oak parkland zone that would have low archaeological visibility.

Conclusions

Each stage in the social evolution of humankind has seen an increase in control over our relationship with nature. As we have evolved from hunting to agriculture to industry and beyond, so human impact upon the environment has increased, seemingly inexorably. On the other hand, even pre-modern human populations were capable of altering landscapes and ecosystems to a remarkable degree, particularly those landscapes – such as savannas - that are intrinsically sensitive to disturbance. It is not proposed here that the earliest Neolithic farmers in the Near East engaged in large-scale clearance of dense, well-established forests. However, by occupying SW Asia's parkland landscapes before tree cover was fully established at the start of the Holocene, early farming groups may have been capable of preventing trees from becoming established, and hence having an environmental impact at a landscape, and not just a garden-plot scale. The exploitation of alluvial valleys for horticulture therefore appears to have only been part of a broader subsistence regime – so 'hortus' may not – after all - have preceded 'ager', as the Romans believed. Evidence, particularly from excavations at the key site of Çatalhöyük in Turkey, implies that – in addition to intensive use of wetlands - Neolithic populations also systematically exploited much larger tracts of the landscape for crop cultivation, exploitation of wild plant resources, and animal hunting and husbandry. If true, this would imply a much larger role for prehistoric human agency in landscape transformation than has previously been recognised, involving the deliberate and systematic manipulation of vegetation and other environmental resources.

This raises the wider question about whether historical models of landscape transformation must always start from a primaeval "urlandschaft" and move to a "kulturlandschaft" over time. The idea that a disturbance regime – partly natural, partly human-induced – regulated the vegetation cover and composition of Southwest Asia's parkland zone during Neolithic times would imply that Mediterranean savannah parkland ecosystems are unlikely to simply represent "degraded forest", but instead evolved as adaptations to long-term conservation management and disturbance by fire and grazing. [25] In reality many of our most valued landscapes, such as the "wilderness" of Dartmoor in SW England, far from being wholly natural, instead owe their distinctive character to particular patterns of land-use or other human actions, in other words precisely to the interaction of people with their local natural environments. Many of them are what – in terms of Clementsian ecology – would be labelled plagioclimax

ecosystems, created and partly maintained by traditional land-use practices such as grazing and burning. The idea that the wilderness should be free of people living and working there, has less to do with successful ecosystem functioning than it has with the romantic ideal of a primaeval nature independent of humans. In all but a few cases, humans have been an integral part of ecosystems since current climates and environments became established early in the Holocene. For most landscapes it therefore seems effectively impossible to study environmental history separate from cultural history and vice-versa.

Acknowledgements

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4

Researching Britain's remote spaces: themes in the history of upland landscapes

Robert A. Dodgshon

I want to explore some themes concerning traditional upland or mountain landscapes. The examples that I propose to draw on will be from the Scottish Highlands but what I will say actually forms part of a larger ongoing project concerning mountain areas across Europe prior to the impact of modern economic change, including tourism. Underpinning the project is the assumption that what we know about the history of rural Europe is largely a history of lowland communities. This is not to say that studies of particular upland areas or communities do not exist, but that they have not been connected into a larger history of mountain spaces. This is all the more surprising because when one considers that whilst there are significant climatic differences between the different mountain areas, notably between continental and maritime areas, they do share common themes and problems. Indeed, I would argue that the history of mountain areas offers considerable potential for conceptualisation, for the working out of common themes. For all their cultural and social differences, mountain communities coped with basic environmental realities that helped bind their history together into a cohesive story.

As a first step in developing a fuller history of such landscapes, we need to engage with a much wider range of themes than has hitherto been considered. At times, one has the impression that the British debate over the history of upland landscapes has been reduced to a history of when they were enclosed, though the more culturally-minded historical geographer might see it solely in terms of when the perception of mountains as wild and forbidding spaces gave way to mountains as landscapes for appreciation. Both these problems involve simple oppositions, between what is enclosed and what is open and what is tamed and what is wild. These are, of course, oppositions that draw on the same underlying root metaphor, but there are other oppositions and other themes that

we need to explore before we can say that we have a rounded understanding of such areas. Using data for the Scottish Highlands, I have chosen three of these themes as illustration for how the debate might be broadened.

The regulation of upland landscapes

The first theme relates to the question of regulation. Within pre-modern Highland townships, what lay within the head dyke and what was beyond it were underpinned by differences in legal status, the one being land private to the farm or township and the other being common land and, potentially, shared with other townships.[1] What makes this distinction between what was within and without the head-dyke particularly interesting in the Scottish Highlands, indeed, in any mountain area, is that the proportioning of the two sectors was quite different from that found in lowland areas. In the Highlands, what lay beyond the head dyke was vastly more extensive than what lay within. If we do some simple tabulations of estate survey data, especially for mainland areas, we arrive at figures for the amount of land outside the head dyke in excess of ninety per cent.[2] With such a disproportionate amount of land beyond the head dyke, and with so much land seemingly beyond the direct surveillance of communities, it might be argued that the distinction between land below and above the head dyke was a distinction between what was regulated and what was without regulation. Of course, for some, this would be an appropriate management overlay for what was tamed and what was nature.

Some might argue that if there is a conceptual framework that most helps us understand how this vast extent of land beyond the head dyke was exploited then it is that articulated by Garret Hardin in his tragedy of the commons.[3] Hypothesising an area of seemingly unlimited space that belonged to no one in particular, Hardin suggested that individual graziers would always been tempted, when faced with pressure for expanding the domestic mode of production (DMP), to add another beast. The addition of this one beast would have had positive and negative components to it. For the individual DMP, it was perceived as a gain of one entire beast, with the entire profits of the animal accruing to it, but the grazing cost of the animal was would have been shared across all households. In this simple equation lay what Hardin saw as the tragedy of the commons. The combination of private gains and public costs encouraged all graziers to freely expand when need arose but, over time, it meant that common land stood at risk of becoming over-grazed by every one.

If we analyse it, such a concept sits uncomfortably with European mountain commons because Hardin does not allow for differences in the way communities dealt with 'common' property rights. In the Scottish Highlands, as elsewhere, we are not dealing with an area of defined property rights beneath the head dyke and an area above it where no defined property or use rights existed whatsoever, a so-called open access system.Both sectors were exploited through well-defined use rights. Whilst we can speak of a step change in the nature or intensity of these use rights as one moved beyond the head dyke, the difference involved were differences of degree not kind. Furthermore, and contrary to what Hardin would have us believe, communities were organised so as to exploit their property interests beyond the head dyke no less than those below it. In fact, when we analyse the acts of court produced by local courts to regulate the exploitation of resources, there were as many acts or byelaws, if not more, targeted at the land beyond the head dyke as below it. In the Highlands, this exploitation was regulated through local barony courts.Surviving court records for the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries show us the kind of regulation involved. Stock numbers were closely controlled[4] as was the calendar of their movements. Because of the relatively short grazing season involved, agreements over when stock should be taken to the hill pastures were an essential part of the regulatory framework governing all townships.[5] Courts were also used to adjust shieling areas.[6]

Quite apart from the regulatory framework that surrounded townships, there were other factors that helped to constrain stocking. Although resident farm populations were at their highest during the decades prior to the sheep clearances, stocking levels were low by modern day standards. The reason why was simple. In mountain environments, there was an exaggerated difference between the potential of what could be carried over winter and what could be carried over summer. In the circumstances, the summer carrying capacity of hill pasture was set by a township's winter carrying capacity and the provision that communities put in place for winter fodder. From a range of sources, and for reasons that I will elaborate on below, we know that Highland townships neglected winter fodder. Reports of stock failing to survive the winter are commonplace.[7] Inevitably, this under provision of winter fodder placed tight restraints on the stocking of hill pasture during summer.

Even more problematic for Hardin's tragedy of the commons, especially mountain commons, is that following the sheep clearances and the privatisation of much mountain pasture in the Highlands through enclosure, stocking levels

rose dramatically as the problems of winter fodder were overcome. If we allow for the increase in breed size, the rate of stocking measured in terms of Standard Livestock Units (SLU) probably increased fourfold at a minimum. If there has been a phase of over-stocking in the Highlands, it has been since the clearances for sheep and the subsequent privatisation of the hills.[8] Clearly, this is the opposite of what Hardin's tragedy of the commons would suppose.

There is, however, a sense in which Hardin's ideas do have relevance. Traditional communities had need of a wide range of resources for fuel, building, etc. In terms of the scale of need, the most significant were timber, peat and turf, along with thatch and bedding material like heather, broom and bracken. All these resources were subjected to some form of regulation, either as to where or when they could be harvested, or in what form. In character, this regulation had a conservationist strand running through it, being designed to curb over-use or mis-use. One finds, for example, regulations over how peat should be cut so as to avoid erosion,[9] though paleobotanical studies suggest that such regulations were not sufficient to prevent peat erosion actually increasing over the early modern period[10] and for some land to be effectively skinned of its surface cover by peat cutting.[11] Similarly, regulations were routinely issued over the cutting of turf, especially on grass pastures, but they were not sufficient to prevent what some saw as serious damage to hill ground in areas like the eastern Grampians.[12] In what was a reversal of the situation concerning stocking levels, more effective restraints on this 'open' resource harvesting only developed as estates began to capitalise their estate resources over the eighteenth century, though the close management of woodland and timber resources began sooner.[13]

Husbandry practices

Moving on to my second theme, whilst historical geographers have shown much interest in researching the history of lowland habitats, like woodlands and fens, they have not shown too much interest in upland habitats other than in establishing when the general habitat category of waste became improved. This is all the more surprising when one considers that habitats like heather moors or upland hay meadows are anthropogenically sustained. They depend on husbandry practices. If we look at surviving species rich hay meadows in the Scottish Highlands, those that have been preserved or designated, we find that they are surprisingly few in number given the role such meadows might

have played within the traditional township economy.[14] A first reaction to their scarcity of number might be to suppose that many have been destroyed over recent decades by land improvement schemes and the drive to increase stocking levels. In fact, there is a case for arguing that their scarcity is more deep-rooted than this.

If we look at traditional hay meadows in other mountain areas of Europe, they have two possible components. First, there are low-lying meadows, close to the settlement. Second, there are high ground meadows, either open range or enclosed meadow, close to where stock are grazed during summer. I have already made the point that Highland townships displayed a lack of interest in gathering or providing sufficient winter fodder for stock. This was not an issue for those on the west coast as they could winter stock out of doors, but it was a serious deficiency for those townships on the mainland that had to winter stock indoors. When we look at seventeenth and eighteenth century data, we can see a number of reasons why there was only a limited interest in hay meadowing. The first is that the period saw a significant extension of arable, an extension that tended to be at the expense of the land that might otherwise have been used as low-lying meadow.[15] Surveys drawn up during the mid eighteenth century, prior to the clearances, show the amount of low-lying meadow land present in townships to be modest, whether measured in terms of the amount per township or per tenant, despite their need to winter stock indoors.[16] Land used as meadow tended to be the wetter marshy ground that would not normally be cropped. In a number of townships, we also find haugh land, terraced ground beside rivers that must once have been productive meadow, being cultivated, even though this put it at risk of soil erosion during floods.[17]

The limited supply of low lying meadow could be compensated for by harvesting hay from high ground pastures or shielings during the summer months. Given the low stocking rates of hill pasture prior to the clearances, taking a hay crop was clearly a way in which more of the summer surge in biomass on high ground could be locked into the farm economy. In fact, there is no evidence that they made any systematic effort to cut hay from open range hill pasture, nor is there evidence that any Highland shielings had meadow enclosures beside them comparable to the Norwegian setervoll.[18] We could put this down to purely ecological factors, arguing that a great deal of high sub-alpine pasture in the Highlands actually made poor meadow, with heather, wet heath or mire predominating. The more fertile basic soils, such as on Ben

Lawers, supported species rich grasslands but the more acid soils did not. Yet even allowing for the low potential of some Highland pastures, Highland townships made surprisingly little effort to cut hay from their hill pastures. The explanation possibly lies in the cycle of labour routines. Most Alpine communities had easy access to timber for fuel so a greater portion of their labour over summer could be devoted to mowing hay. Analyses of alpine labour routines highlight the heavy labour demands of winning hay.[19] By comparison, when we analyse the labour routines of townships in the Scottish Highlands, they are dominated by the heavy labour demands of peat and turf cutting.[20] Without easy access to timber for fuel, townships depended on peat for fuel. Likewise, throughout the central Highlands, turf was extensively cut for both house and field walls and for manure.What we have, then, is a combination of circumstances that meant that under traditional regimes of farming, meadows had a limited role within the township economy. If we wish to understand why so few species rich meadows survive in the region today, this limited role within the traditional or pre-clearance farm economy needs to be noted.

Risk aversion strategies

Turning to my third theme, mountain environments are, by their very nature, risk-laden environments. If we accept recent chronologies for the Little Ice Age, areas like the Scottish Highlands suffered higher levels of risk from the onset of the Little Ice Age ca.1350 down to the end of the Little Ice Age, ca.1900, but especially during the later phases from 1550-1900. Parry's pioneering analyses many years ago presented the problem in terms of the changing climatic limits of cultivation, calculating how changes in growing season would have altered the height at which crops could be grown.[21] If we look at it from the perspective of farmers, the situation was more complex. Climate change is not a graded process, with land being abandoned once simple trip points or climatic contours were crossed. Indeed, one of the features of phases of climatic degradation is its increased variability. Bad times are marked by bad years, perhaps a run of two or three bad years, but not by decades of sustained bad weather. If we look through rentals for the second half of the seventeenth century, a period when climatic degradation is thought to have been at its worst, we actually find very few townships abandoned in any permanent way. Instead, what we find are townships or portions of a township abandoned for one or two years.[22] As I have said, this was partly because poor

seasons rarely occurred for more than two or three years in succession, but it was also linked to the social context of farming. Tenant farmers, the type of occupier who predominated throughout the Scottish Highlands, faced problems as soon as output fell below that which was needed for rent. Owner-occupiers meanwhile, were not forced to abandon land until a much lower level of output, that is, when output fell below subsistence. The point I am making here is that, when seasons were poor, townships held by tenants suffered problems sooner, abandoning land at the point when their pockets became empty rather than when their stomachs became empty.Estates could delay the moment of abandonment by offering an ease of rent [23] but once abandoned, they could reset land in smaller portions or at a lower rent thereby lowering the economic threshold at which land could be occupied.[24] As a consequence, we find that whilst there are examples of land lying waste because of poor seasons, it tended to be only for a season or two before new tenants came in.

Poor seasons and low output were also dealt with in other ways. Like all mountain communities, Highland townships practised risk aversion, buffering themselves against risk through a variety of social and agrarian strategies. I want to draw attention to two of the agrarian strategies practised in the Scottish Highlands that helped to avert risk.The first concerns the basic cropping regime of Highland townships, with its simple mix of oats and barley. Almost certainly, the cropping of barley served as a form of risk aversion. At first sight, this may seem puzzling as oats was the hardier crop, more suited to poor soils, and therefore the crop most likely to withstand harsher conditions. In fact, what also mattered was the respective lengths of their growing season, that of barley being noticeably shorter (on average, as much as 5-6 weeks shorter) than that oats.[25] In effect, it avoided some of the heightened risk that was present during early spring and late autumn. For comparison, we might note that in Iceland, work by Bergthórsson demonstrated that the cropping of oats disappeared entirely during the early stages of the Little Ice Age, farmers relying wholly on barley as the one crop that could cope with the reduced growing season.[26]

We can make another point about the ecology of arable production. When Improvers and other commentators began to visit the region over the eighteenth century, the abundance of arable weeds and the lack of interest shown by farmers in thinning them attracted their unanimous condemnation.[27] Thin sowing meant that grain and weeds competed in equal measure. Indeed, some commentators thought weeds were more abundant.[28] For them, it reflected the indolence of local farmers. In fact, if we look at the issue from the perspective

of the traditional Highland community, the Highlander's tolerance of weeds was part of their risk coping strategies. Whilst severe shortages occurred, on average, only once every 20 years or so, the Highlander faced seasonal or summer-long shortages much more often, some estimates putting it at once every four to five years. The problem for the typical community was that returns on seed, crop yields, were endemically low, barely 2 – 3 for oats and 3 – 4 for barley.[29] It did not take much flux in output therefore, to produce a shortfall. Given that increased climatic variability would have been a feature of the Little Ice Age, we can expect shortfalls to have been more frequent during phases like the second half of the seventeenth century. To cover the gap that could occur between the end of meal supplies from one crop and the harvesting of the new crop, communities relied on a variety of edible plants harvested from both their arable and grassland. Such a strategy relied on having a diversity of plants that had different growth cycles, and which were capable of coping with different conditions. For the farmer, deliberately allowing such diversity to flourish, whether in their arable or in the grassland that routinely re-colonised outfield, was an insurance against risk. The styles of husbandry used, with it relatively shallow working of the soil, would have maximised the diversity of weeds, preserving both perennial as well as annual weeds. Ample reference to communities making use of plants like wild mustard – what were widely referred to as the runches and skellochs – as well as plants like wild carrot, little bistort and wild cabbage from their arable and plants like silverweed, dandelion, and sow thistle from their pasture during scarcity.[30] Maintaining a rich plant diversity clearly served a purpose even if, at times, it blurred the distinction between what was arable and what was pasture and what was domesticated and what was wild.

I have chosen just three from a wide range of themes that we still need to explore if we are to have a sufficient understanding of traditional upland or mountain communities and their landscapes. Running through these themes, and helping to bind their history together into a shared history, are the strategies, both social and agrarian, by which they coped with the ecology of production and survival in such environments. Such communities effectively lived on the edge of a vertical frontier that, when conditions were opportune, offered a potential for growth provided they were prepared to invest their labour at what, biologically, was the most productive time of year in what was the least productive and most risk-laden land. Coping with this paradox, a universal for mountain communities, underpinned most of the management and husbandry strategies, the seasonal

displacements of settlement and farm activity and the perennial risks that characterised their cultural ecology.

Notes

[1] Early land charters awarded a fixed quantity of arable, together with a set of appendaged rights, or pertinents, that included rights of use in meadows, pastures, moors, marshes, peataries and turbaries. See C. Innes, *Lectures on Scotch Legal Antiquities* (Edinburgh 1872) 42-5

[2] An analysis of arable as a percentage of all land throughout the region yielded a figure of 7.8%, see R.A. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords. Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c.1493-1820* (Edinburgh 1998) 16. This average included fertile islands like Tiree and Benecula on which arable occupied 30%. If we restrict the analysis to the mainland, it falls to less than 5%, with arable in areas like Assynt occupying only 2.4%. To this, we would need to add no more than 5% to cover areas of pasture that also lay within the head dyke to produce a measure of the total outwith the head dyke.

[3] G. Hardin, The Tragedy of the Commons *Science* **162** (1968) 1243-8

[4] Partly because of its role in setting their rent, some estates maintained detailed souming lists for each toun, fixing the number of cattle, horses, sheep and goats that could be maintained; see, for example, SRO, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/9/1/3/48, Calculation of the Value of Farms in Netherlorne drawn from the Sowing and Holdings

[5] At Lude(Perthshire), for example, the court records contain the entry that the 'Bailie statutes and ordains that all tenants and cottars within the Barrony send their beasts of all kindes Öto their sheallings on or about the first day of June yearly', SRO, John MacGregor Collection, GD50/159, Barony Court Book of Lude 1621-1806, 1st Nov., 1723

[6] An example is provided by *ibid.*, July 16th, 1630. See also A. Bil, *The Shieling 1600-1840. The Case of the Central Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh 1990) 146-54

[7] See, for example, *Old Statistical Account* (hereafter *OSA*), xi (1791-99) 424

[8] These issues are dealt with in greater detail in R.A. Dodgshon, Livestock production in the Scottish Highlands before and after the Clearances, in I.D. Whyte and A. Winchester (Eds.), *Upland Landscapes*, Society for Landscape Studies, 2004, in press

[9] An example is provided by SRO, Seaforth Papers, GD46/1/278, Articles of Set and Regulations for the Tenants of Land in Lewis, ca.1800

[10] A.C. Stevenson and J.J.B. Birks, Heaths and Moorland: Long-Term Ecological Changes, and Interactions with Climate and People, in D.B. Thompson, A.J. Hester and M.B. Usher (Eds.), *Heaths and Moorland: Cultural Landscapes* (Edinburgh 1995) 224-39

[11] See, for example, F. Darling, *West Highland Survey. An Essay in Highland Ecology* (Oxford 1955) 272-8

[12] The scale of turf cutting was driven by its extensive use for walling, both field and house walls, and as a manure. The main concern of estates was to ensure that tenants did not cut turf from green pasture or pasture within the head dyke, though such regulations were regularly infringed, see SRO, John MacGregor Collection, GD50/159, Barony Court Book of Lude 1621-1806, March 5th, 1702 and December 5th, 1718

[13] Such concern is well illustrated by documents like Lochbuie Muniments, GD174/827, Interrogatorys to be put to the Tenants, 1782. See also, F. Watson, Rights and responsibilities: woodland management as seen through baron court records, in T.C. Smout (Ed.), *Scottish Woodland History* (Dalkeith 2002) 100-13

[14] If we take Upland Hay Meadows, or NVC type MG3, *Anthoxanthum odoratum - Geranium sylvaticum* grassland, there are less than 100 ha in Scotland, mainly in Perthshire and Aberdeenshire

[15] The emphasis on arable within the township economy is dealt with in R.A. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords. Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c.1493-1820* (Edinburgh 1998) 203-27
[16] Mid-eighteenth century data for North and South Lochtayside, for instance, suggested an average of 0.59 and 0.173 hectares of meadow per tenant respectively: M.M. McArthur (Ed.), Survey *of Lochtayside 1769*, Scottish History Society, Third Series, xxvii (Edinburgh 1936)
[17] Examples are provided by SRO, Forfeited Estates Papers E746/79/10 Letter ex Simon Mackenzie of Langwell 1772; *OSA*, vii (1791-99) 163
[18] For example, surveys of two of the most rugged parts of the western Highlands, Knoydart and Coigach, where one would have expected hay to have been cut, each state that no hay was made anywhere on the estate, see SRO, Forfeited Estate Papers, E746/151, General report on the Estate of Cromarty: Coigach; ibid. E788/42 Barrisdale Report c.1755
[19] A calendar of alpine labour routines can be found in E.H. Carrier, *Water and Grass. A Study in the Pastoral Economy of Southern Europe* (London 1932) 319 and 33
[20] Using Hebridean data, Darling calculated that, annually, 18,000 peats were needed to maintain a household in fuel, a scale of usage that required 2-3 weeks of work for cutting, but 4 weeks if one includes stacking and carting, see Darling, *op.cit.* 300. If we add the greater distances involved for communities in the central Highlands, and the labour also required for the cutting of turf, we are probably dealing with 6-8 weeks of labour.
[21] M.L. Parry, *Climatic Change and Settlement* (Folkestone 1978)
[22] Instances of whole townships, or portions of a township, being abandoned but only for a season or so are provided by SRO, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/9/24
[23] Examples are provided by SRO, John Macgregor Collection, GD50/138/4 Menzeis rentals, Rannoch, 1704
[24] The way poor seasons created problems of rent payment and discontinuities in occupation is documented by Cawdor Castle, Campbell of Cawdor, Bundle 721, Rent of Ilay for the Years 1703, 1704, 1705, 1706 and 1707; J.E. Donaldson, *Caithness in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh 1938) 22-3
[25] See, for example, *OSA*, iv (1791-99) 134; *ibid.*, x (1791-99) 396; *ibid.*, xiv, (1791-99) 141
[26] R.A. Bryson and T.J.Murray, *Climates of Hunger. Mankind and the World's Changing Weather* (New York 1977) 76
[27] An early reference to the problem occurs in R. Maxwell, *Select Transactions of the Honourable The Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland* (Edinburgh 1743) 80
[28] Just how weed-infested arable could be is documented by Duncan Forbes of Culloden's letter concerning the Duke of Argyll's estate in Tiree, Morvern and Mull, 24 Sept. 1737, and printed in *Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Conditions of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands*, XXXII-XXXIX (London 1884) 389-92. See also, J.R. Macculloch, *The Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (London 1824) vol. iv 89
[29] Data on yields is discussed in R.A. Dodgshon, Strategies of farming in the western Highlands and Islands prior to crofting and the clearances *Economic History Review* **46** (1993) 173-89
[30] References to weeds that were eaten in times of need are well documented in J. Lightfoot, *Flora Scotica* (London 1792) vol ii 935, 939, 954 and 967; D.M. Henderson and J.H. Dickson, *A Naturalist in the Highlands. James Robertson: His Life and Travels in Scotland 1767-1771* (Edinburgh 1994) 165-6. See also, R.A. Dodgshon, Coping with scarcity: subsistence crises in the Scottish Highlands, 1600-1800 *Rural History* **15** (2004) 15-7

5

Rebuilding rural England: farm building provision, 1850-1900

A.D.M. Phillips

Investment in farm buildings

The nature and structure of rural transformations in the past, particularly in the English context, have formed a major focus in Robin Butlin's research. Farm buildings - the farmhouse and the associated working farmsteading - constitute a central component of past rural economies and landscapes, representing on the one hand the fundamental operational bases for farming practices and on the other key built elements of rural settlement. In examining the provision of farm buildings in England in the second half of the nineteenth century, a period both of extensive farm building activity and of wide-ranging restructuring of agriculture, the present survey is offered as a contribution to Robin's general engagement with understanding and explaining the causes, processes, and patterns of rural change.[1]

The dominant theme of mid-nineteenth-century agricultural literature and parliamentary inquiries into the landed interest was the need for large-scale investment in the infrastructural foundations of English farming, especially the provision of farm buildings and underdraining. In large part such emphasis reflected the far-reaching technical revaluations of both improvements that had been in train from the early 1840s in terms of design, layout and materials, and the impressive productivity gains claimed to result from their adoption. Investment in the refashioned improvements was presented as bringing the dual opportunities of intensifying agricultural output, helping to offset the loss of protection with the repeal of the Corn Laws, and of diversifying farming systems so as to be able to adapt to new trends in the domestic demand for food.

For farm buildings, the case for investment was made at a number of levels. While acknowledging regional variation in its intensity, contemporary agricultural observers of the standing of Philip Pusey, John Grey, and James Caird reported a high level nationally of dilapidation in the existing stock of farm buildings, and making good these deficiencies was urged as an immediate priority. However, the erection of new individual or, even better, suites of farm buildings of prescribed size and design, with arrangement and siting carefully planned, was seen as offering greater rewards. Buildings that were larger and more numerous, with specific purposes, made possible improvement in farm output through the expansion of existing enterprises, the greater ease of the adoption of new machinery, the introduction of new processes of feed storage and preparation, and economies in the use of labour.

Of wider significance, investment in farm buildings was regarded as essential for the effective implementation of changes in farming systems. The mid-century key to improved agricultural prosperity was held to lie in the expansion of livestock enterprises. The keeping of more cattle in either mixed farming or dairy systems provided the opportunity to enhance profits through the production of more meat and other animal goods, and through the production of more manure to increase the yields of the cropped land. Such developments necessitated farmsteadings with more and appropriate livestock accommodation so laid out for the effective collection and conservation of manure.

The farmhouse itself was not excluded from these reappraisals of the stock of farm buildings. Although not a purely working unit of the steading, upgrading the quality of accommodation for the farmer was regarded as a means of attracting enterprising tenants capable of practising the new husbandry systems and of establishing their rising social status in the farming community. For all aspects of the working of a farmsteading, new building provision promised greater convenience, capacity, economy, and livestock accommodation.[2]

While the agricultural advantages of a rationalized, enlarged, and reconstructed stock of farm buildings might have been appreciated, its supply necessitated considerable capital outlay. Mid-nineteenth-century authorities advocated full-scale rebuilding, and costs were normally calculated for entire new farmsteads. Expressed on a per acre basis, building costs were mainly dependent on farm size and farming system. Estimates of the average acreage costs of constructing a farmhouse and appropriate buildings, but excluding labourers' cottages, varied over the second half of the nineteenth century, ranging from £5

by John Ewart, an architect, in 1850, to £7 by the agricultural engineer John Bailey Denton in 1863, and to £9 by Albert Pell, a land economist, in 1887. Few, if any, estates were either able or inclined to introduce a programme of farm building provision based on complete reconstruction of farmsteads. An examination of the reports of Andrew Thompson, a leading inspector of the Inclosure Commissioners, on farm building carried out on 195 farms spread over 71 midland estates financed by loans under the land improvement legislation in the third quarter of the nineteenth century suggests that the more modest practice of combining some full rebuilding of farmsteads with renovation, modification, and piecemeal replacement of others represented the most common response to the need to invest in farm buildings.[3]

Such a policy of partial redevelopment of the farm building stock involved smaller outlays than for entire rebuilding: the figures from Thompson's sample of estates indicate the sum of £3.30 as the average, acreage expenditure for remedying a farmstead's deficiencies. Even at this reduced level, the improvement of farm buildings still formed a major capital commitment, comparable in per acre terms with nineteenth-century land reclamation, enclosure, and underdraining. However, as farm buildings were required for the effective working of virtually all farmland, their proposed comprehensive improvement would have comprised the single largest fixed investment in agriculture in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The role of landlords

Reflecting its central role in the working of a farm and its level of capital outlay, the provision of the farmstead had become recognized by the middle decades of the nineteenth century as essentially a landlord-financed investment. Contemporary commentators were aware that the rate and pace of landlord capitalization of the improvement set the boundaries to the scale and nature of farm building over the period. For mid-century landlords and their agents, however, the supply of farm buildings presented major challenges to the capital resources of their properties. As most estates by mid-century had in place a stock of farmsteadings, the costs of complete reconstruction were likely to be avoided. Building provision became in the main the problem of the occasion for repair, redevelopment, and replacement, less costly as indicated above than full rebuilding, but still entailing a considerable capital expenditure. Even if committed to the proposed new developments in farming systems and of the

part of building provision to achieve those ends, landlords and their agents had to balance the low level but constant outlay on the maintenance of existing stock against the supply of significant doses of capital for fresh structure, although largely free in the short term of running costs. Moreover for such major outlays, most landlords could expect little direct financial return from their tenants. Unlike underdraining, few tenants made a percentage interest payment to the landlord on the cost of new farm buildings. Tenants would normally expect a suitable steading as an integral part of a farm tenancy, and the financial return from such investment for the landlord had to be found in the maintenance of rent levels, the opportunity for a rent increase on a change in tenancy, and the better prospect for the future letting of a farm. For landowners, improvement of farm buildings at mid-century could be characterized as costly, popular, and widespread in application, with limited remuneration.

The nature of landlords' responses to the demand for farm building investment has attracted little attention. Contemporary agriculturalists were keener to emphasize the amount of farm building still to be undertaken than to assess the extent of that carried out, as typified in the evidence of Caird and Denton, two of the most interested spectators of agricultural advance in the period, to the *Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Improvement of Land* of 1873.[4] Present-day studies have made little progress in making good this failing. Recent discussions of farm buildings in the second half of the nineteenth century have given greater stress to architectural style, to technical developments in design, to exceptional, planned forms, especially the model farm, and to their landscape conservation.[5] Apart from a limited number of illuminating local and regional analyses, the spatial pattern, intensity, and periodicity of farm building provision in the half century have been imperfectly explored. National overviews have placed great reliance on the contemporary literature on farm buildings, translating reported needs, proposals, and expectations into indices of supply. The quarter century, 1850-74, has thus been associated with large-scale landlord investment in farm buildings, with extensive reorganization in the structure, capacity, and layout of farmsteads. The reverse of these trends was considered to mark the last 25 years of the century, with the abandonment of expansive rebuilding schemes, repairs replacing new building, and the neglect of existing steadings. The pattern of landlord investment in farm building has been held to mirror the accepted course of agricultural prosperity in the period, a golden age of high farming followed by widespread depression. And the spatial incidence of this investment and the extent to which the stock of farm buildings was in consequence improved have received scant coverage.[6]

For a more detailed assessment of the importance of farm buildings as an agricultural improvement and their role in agricultural change in the second half of the nineteenth century, more specific data on their spatial and temporal provision are needed. If the absolute record of farm building in England in the period may never be knowable, a more complete picture may be produced of the distribution, intensity, and rate of provision than is currently available.

From mid-century, two ways were open to landlords to finance the supply of farm building. On the one hand, capital could be obtained from a landlord's private resources, predominantly from estate revenues. On the other, a landlord could have recourse to a loan made available under the various land improvement acts that were introduced around 1850: the improvement was financed under governmental regulation. For documentary and logistic reasons, the absolute sum spent on farm building on estates from private resources will never be determined. However, the capital advanced to landowners for the purpose of farm buildings under the land improvement legislation is knowable. Complete records exist of such government-regulated farm building, and they may be used to construct a measure of farm building activity in England over the period.[7]

The land improvement legislation established the principle that landowners were able to borrow to finance agricultural improvement on the security of their estates under the supervision of the Inclosure Commissioners, paying capital and interest in a rentcharge to amortize the loan over a number of years. Although not all landowners used such loans, many preferring to rely on their own resources for the necessary funds, the legislation created a body of capital for farm building that incorporated few limitations or biases. No restrictions were placed on the amounts borrowable, the spatial availability of the loans, or the type of landowner wishing to employ such funds. The first loan for farm building was sanctioned in 1852, and by the end of the century just under £5 million of loan capital had been invested in farm buildings in England, excluding labourers' cottages. Although the sum should not be equated with the absolute outlay on farm building in the country over the period, it represents real and identifiable landlord investment in the improvement.

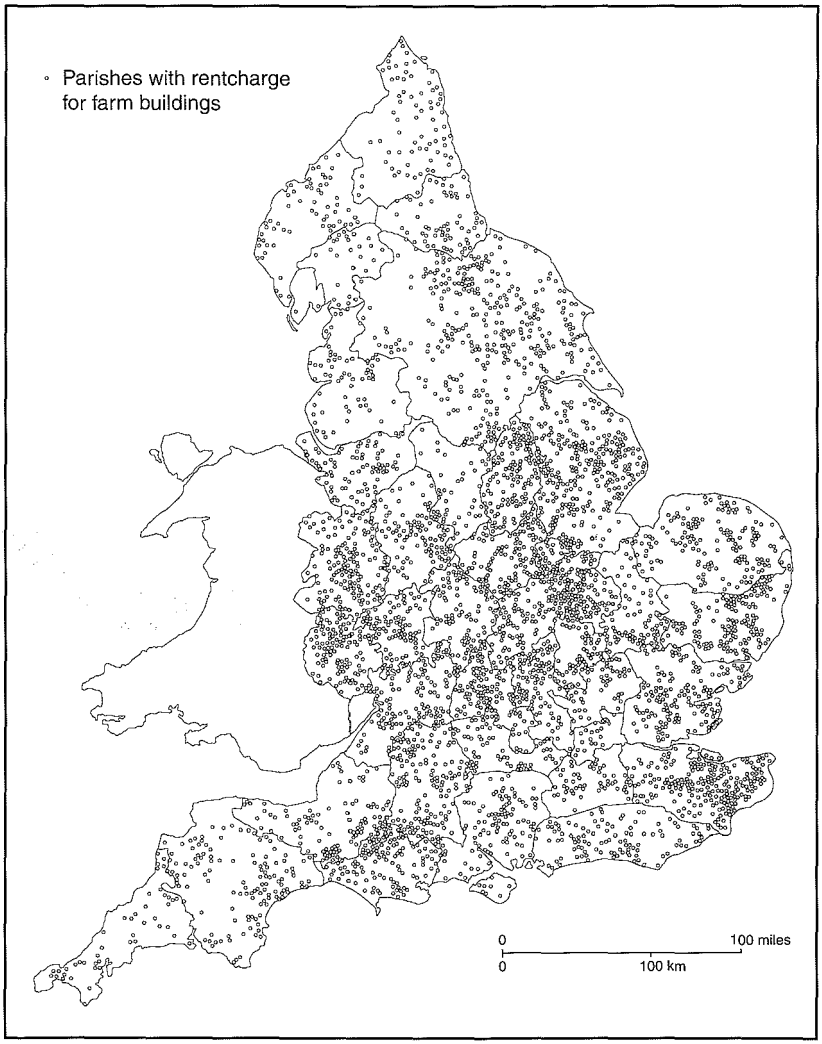


Figure 5.1 Parishes with loan capital for farm buildings 1850-99.
Source: Public Record Office, London, MAF66/1-6, 8-9, 11,13-22,25-39, 43-47: Registers of loans advanced through land improvement companies and under the 1864 Improvement of Land Act.

The spatial and temporal patterns of farm building improvements

In spatial terms, the use of loan capital for farm buildings was extensively adopted throughout the country. Of the 10,000 or so ancient parishes in England listed in the 1851 census, rentcharges for farm building were recorded in 40 per cent. The distribution of these parishes provides an indication of the location of farm building provision in the second half of the nineteenth century (Figure 5.1). Investment by landlords in the improvement was almost ubiquitous. Only a few parts of the country would seem to have been ignored. Upland areas fell into this category, with the Pennines, Lake District, and Dartmoor, for example, having limited provision. In the lowlands, wetlands - the Fens and the Somerset Levels - and less productive districts, such as the Breckland in Norfolk, were also marked by less pronounced loan-financed building activity. Overall, the distribution reveals that over the period the redevelopment and/or replacement of farm buildings were widespread improvements, occurring largely irrespective of major soil types, farming systems, and agricultural land uses.

However, the distribution also made clear that farm building provision was far from uniform. The varying intensity of investment may be demonstrated by calculating loan-capital outlay on farm buildings per 100 cultivated acres between 1850 and 1899. For England as a whole, outlay averaged £20 per 100 cultivated acres. At county level, not always the most sensitive unit of analysis but the finest that can be employed with the data, distinct regional patterns of investment can be discerned (Figure 5.2). The north-eastern counties of Northumberland and Durham, an arc of western counties from Lancashire and Cheshire through Shropshire and Staffordshire to Herefordshire, a group of midland counties including Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, and Huntingdonshire, the south-central counties of Dorset, Hampshire, and Wiltshire, and Kent in the south-east all possessed levels of loan investment in farm buildings above the average. In the remaining counties, rates of outlay failed to reach £20 per 100 cultivated acres, and in the cases of Cornwall, Cumberland, and Norfolk they were well below the national average. To illustrate the extent of the range Cheshire and Shropshire displayed levels of investment four times greater than those of Norfolk, a county long championed for the scale of nineteenth-century landlord farm building provision.[8]

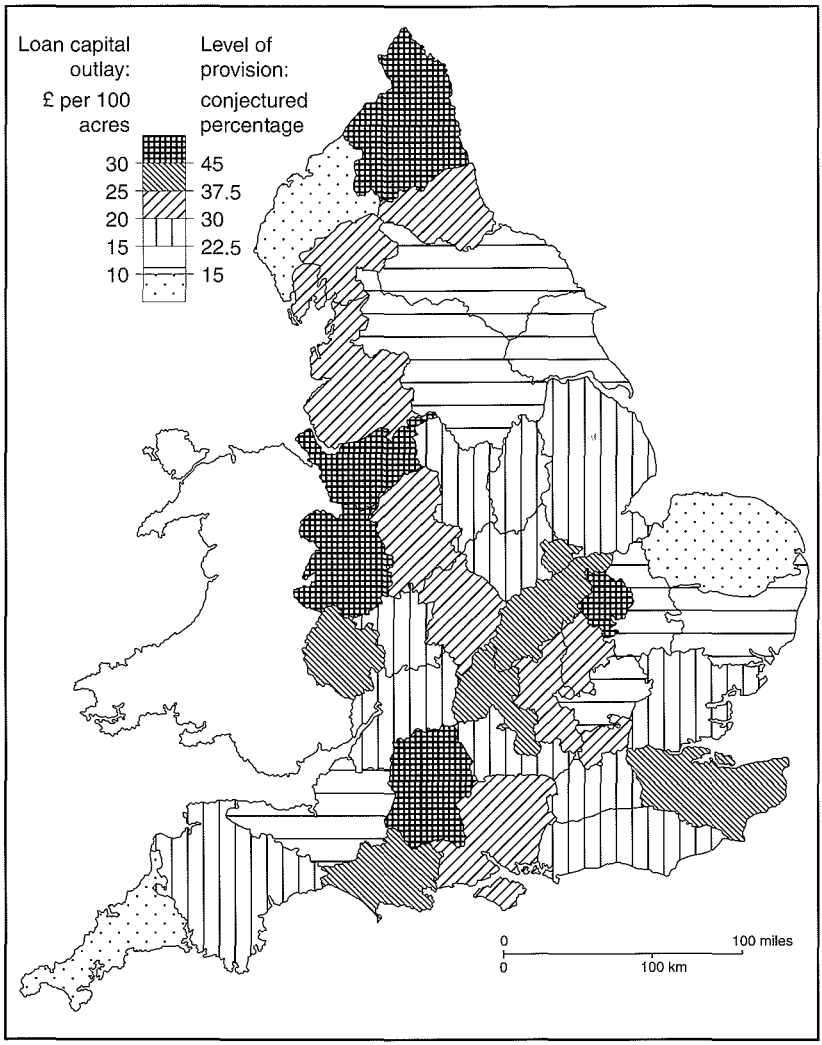


Figure 5.2 Loan capital outlay on farm buildings per 100 cultivated acres, 1850-99, and conjectured percentage level of farm building provision, 1850-99. *Source*: as for Figure 5.1.

To translate these outlays into measures of the scale of farm building activity in the second half of the nineteenth century, assumptions have to be made of the average acreage capital required to improve a farmstead to levels acceptable to both landlord and tenant, and of the representativeness of loan capital of total building expenditure. Analysis of Andrew Thompson's reports to the Inclosure Commissioners has demonstrated that a sum of £3.30 per acre represents a realistic average outlay on many estates for the effective renovation of farmsteadings. Various estimates were given by mid-nineteenth-century agriculturalists of the relationship of loan capital to total capital provision for farm buildings, ranging from a half to a sixth. Examination of the use of loan capital for underdraining has indicted a ratio of loan to total capital of 1:5, and surveys of estates in Devon, Northamptonshire, and Northumberland suggest that this balance would not be too inappropriate for expenditure on farm buildings.[9]

Multiplying loan capital by a factor of 5 to create an estimate of total building outlay, and expressing that enhanced outlay in per cultivated acre terms as a percentage of the average acreage cost of farmstead renovation of £3.30 derived from Thompson's reports, a guide to the intensity of overall farm building provision in the period may be produced (Figure 5.2). On these bases for the country as a whole, the estimated absolute capital outlay would have represented just under 30 per cent of the sum needed for the upgrading of all farm buildings. Levels of provision ran from over 50 per cent of the total capital required for the improvement of all farm buildings in Northumberland and in Cheshire and Shropshire to under 20 per cent in much of East Anglia. Such percentage rates of provision are conjectural, but the exercise does emphasize that the pattern of farm building improvement in the second half of the nineteenth century should be examined in a spatial context. The consequences of such variation in building provision for developments in farm management and farming systems would have been far-reaching.

In temporal terms, the pattern of supply of loan capital for farm buildings deviated significantly from that currently held for the improvement in general. Landlords' use of farm building loans displayed steady growth in the years 1850-69, marked expansion in the 1870s with a peak in supply at the end of the decade, reduction in the 1880s but at levels above those in the 1860s, and decline in the last decade of the century (Figure 5.3). This time series fails to reveal a dominant period of landlord investment in farm building between 1850 and 1874. At the same time, the supply of loan capital makes clear that farm

building provision was not abandoned after 1875. If a farm building boom has to be identified in the half century, present evidence points to it occurring between 1870 and 1889, when over 60 per cent of all building-loan capital was expended. For England as a whole, loan-capital outlay for farm buildings was 39 per cent greater in the period 1875-99 than in 1850-74: the data suggest the possibility that the agricultural prosperity of the third quarter of the nineteenth century may have been achieved without such dramatic transformations of the building stock so often claimed, and the probability that in the last quarter declining agricultural fortunes were accompanied by extensive farm building provision.

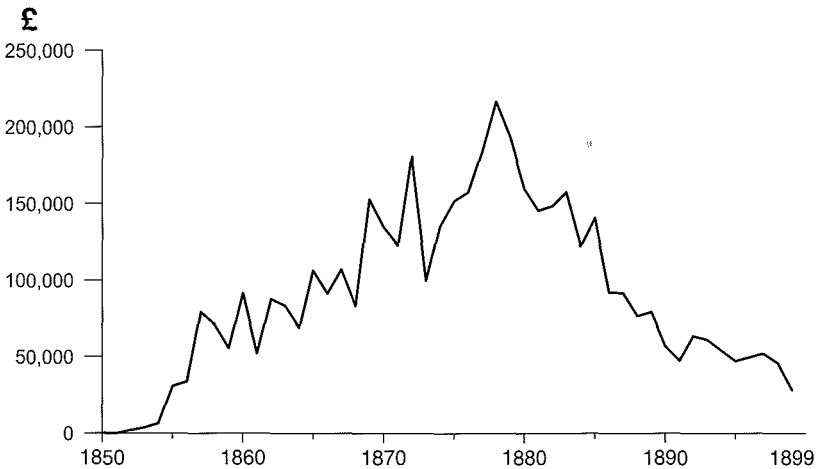


Figure 5.3 Supply of loan capital for farm buildings, 1850-99
Source: as for Figure 5.1

This trend of greater loan investment in farm buildings in the last than in the third quarter of the century was evident in most parts of the country (Figure 5.4). Few counties possessed lower levels of outlay in the later period, and those that did, such as Northumberland, Shropshire, and Wiltshire, were generally characterized by exceptionally high building expenditure in the earlier period. The largest percentage increases in capital supply tended to be found in areas where levels of outlay between 1850 and 1874 were low, as in Cornwall, Cumberland, and much of East Anglia, landlord efforts perhaps to remedy

earlier indifference. In most counties, landlord provision of farm buildings would appear most active in a period when it has been generally assumed to be unimportant.

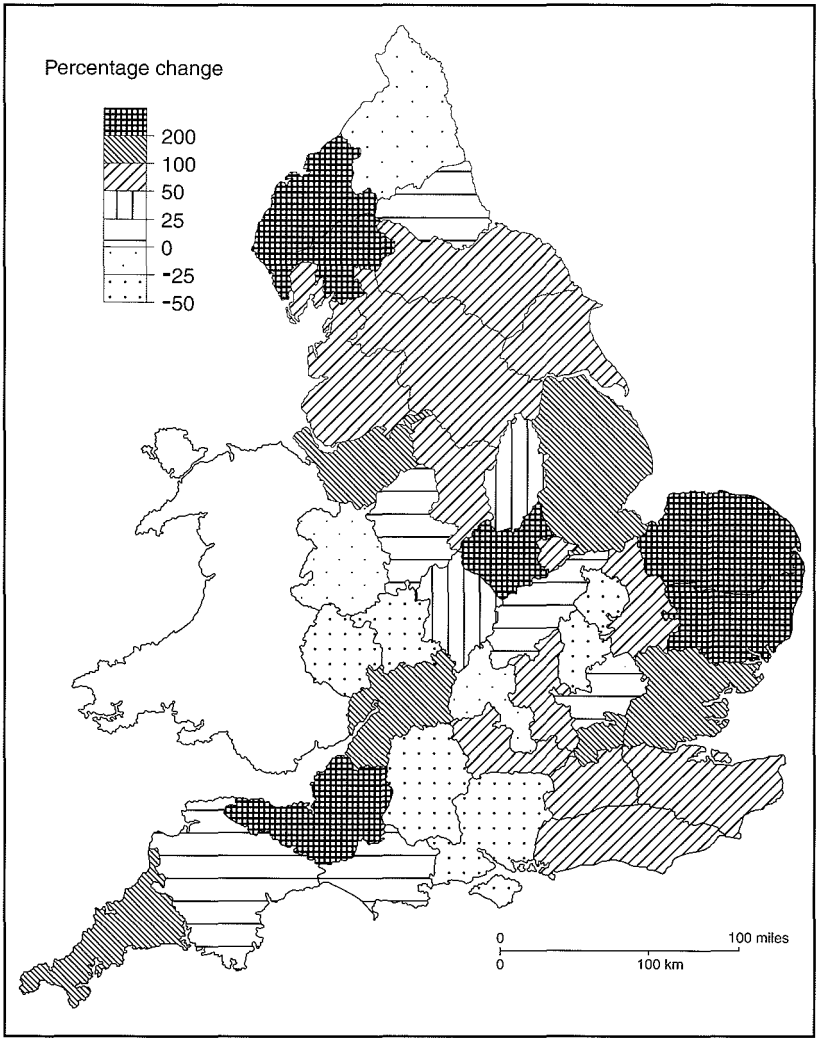


Figure 5.4 Loan capital outlay on farm buildings, 1875-99, as a percentage of outlay, 1850-74.
Source: as for Figure 5.1

Prospect

The loan-capital data provide the most extensive sample presently available of farm building activity in England in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although this study represents but a preliminary examination of that material, it has demonstrated that current views on the improvement and its adoption warrant major reassessment. The data establish that the spatial pattern of farm building, at worst ignored by contemporary and present-day commentators, at best considered to be blanket in provision, was complex, with wide regional disparities in the levels of investment in the improvement throughout the country over the half century: the refurbishment of the stock of farm buildings has to be seen in a spatial context. The impact of such differential farm building investment on the flexibility, capacity, and efficiency of farming systems and on the changing appearance of the built farm environment in the country over the period would have been considerable.

The periodicity of farm building supply identified in the loan-capital data similarly presented a pattern different from that currently favoured in the literature. Rather than tracking positively the course of agricultural prosperity, loan-capital investment in farm buildings tended to run counter to the trend. Although high levels of farm building provision were recorded in the agriculturally prosperous third quarter, loan-capital outlay peaked in the last quarter of the century when agricultural fortunes were beginning to wane. Rather than a commitment to greater prosperity, investment in the improvement in many parts of the country should be seen as rescue capital to protect existing revenues or to facilitate moves into less unprofitable farming systems.

The loan-capital data have revealed the spatial and temporal provision of farm buildings in England in the second half of the nineteenth century to be more diverse with more dimensions than current surveys allow. However, these patterns of provision form but the beginning of the enquiry. To attempt to understand them, the processes in the adoption of farm buildings need to be more fully appreciated. The precise role of the improvement in farming systems and their changing structures, and the management of the improvement from the interests of both the landlord and the tenant appear as major starting points for such an appreciation. In sum, the case for a full revaluation of farm building provision in the period in terms both of its role in the transformation of agriculture and of its contribution to the changing pattern of rural settlement becomes increasingly evident.

Notes

[1] R. A. Butlin, *The Transformation of Rural England c.1580-1800: A Study in Historical Geography* (Oxford 1982) 5-7, 52-7 and *Historical Geography. Through the Gates of Space and Time* (London 1993) 165-98

[2] R. Brigden, Farm buildings, in E.J.T. Collins (Ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales. Volume VII, 1850-1914: Part 1* (Cambridge 2000) 497-504; B.A. Holderness, Investment, accumulation, and agricultural credit, in Collins, *Agrarian History*, 893-907; S. Wade Martins, *The English Model Farm. Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914* (Macclesfield 2002) 112-97

[3] B.A. Holderness, Agriculture, 1770-1860, in C.H. Feinstein and S. Pollard (Eds), *Studies in Capital Formation in the United Kingdom* (Oxford 1988) 11-8; A.D.M. Phillips, Landlord investment in farm buildings in the English midlands in the mid-nineteenth century, in B.A. Holderness and M.E. Turner (Eds), *Land, Labour, and Agriculture, 1700-1920* (London 1991) 191-210

[4] British Parliamentary Papers, 1873, XVI, qq 565-90, 4125-30

[5] S. Wade Martins, Reboiling the cabbage? The present state of research *Journal of the Historic Farm Buildings Group* **16** (2002) 9-47

[6] N. Harvey, *A History of Farm Buildings in England and Wales* (Newton Abbot 1984) 120-206; S. Wade Martins, *Historic Farm Buildings* (London 1991) 60-77; P.S. Barnwell and C. Giles, *English Farmsteads, 1750-1914* (Swindon 1997) 3-7, 146-63; Brigden, Farm buildings, 497-504; Holderness, Investment, accumulation, and agricultural credit, 907

[7] Public Record Office, London, MAF66/1-6, 8-9, 11, 13-22, 25-39, 43-47, Registers of loans advanced through land improvement companies and under the 1864 Improvement of Land Act, 1850-99; for more detail on the land improvement legislation, see A.D.M. Phillips, *The Underdraining of Farmland in England during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge 1989) 50-62

[8] Wade Martins, *Historic Farm Buildings* 101-58

[9] Phillips, *Underdraining of Farmland* 7, 117-21

PART II: IRISH STUDIES

6

Semi-colonial Ireland?

William J. Smyth

Context

Literature about the labyrinthine complexity of English-Irish relationships exhausts the forests – even in the early-seventeenth century King James I was moved to complain that in the English state records Ireland took up as much space and paper as all the rest of the world. I am going to explore only one aspect of that relationship – the seeing of Ireland as "empty space", as a *tabula rasa*, by English policy-makers and writers over the period c.1550-c.1650. I mean the mentality that Sir Henry Sidney displays with regard to English strategy for planting Ireland when he says "the iron is now hot, apt to receive what print shall be stryken".[1] More particularly, I want to explore the involvement of poet/planter/state official Edmund Spenser in such a conceptualisation of Ireland, looking specifically at the content and impact of his *View of the State of Ireland*.[2] We can trace the impact of Spenser's *View* right up to the Cromwellian conquest and plantation of Ireland.

Before I proceed, I need to make one definition and provide some context. Colonialism as a process involves the *intrusion* into and *conquest* of an inhabited territory by representatives of an external power; the *displacement* of the prior inhabitants from resources and positions of power; the subsequent exercise of *economic*, *political* and *cultural control* over the territory and the ancestral population by the intruders and their descendants.[3]

Now a few contextual remarks on Ireland's multiple cultural locations. We need to recognise the stubborn realities of Ireland's island nature, its particular size, topography and ecology and its own cultural formations. We also have to

recognise the impact of other cultural forces which, with varying intensity and at different times, had to be mediated on the island of Ireland: the mainland European (Reformation and Counter-Reformation); the British (with its main English and Scottish subsets); the colonial/Third World context; and the Anglo-American.

Robert Sack – comparing English colonisation in North America and Ireland – has illustrated how more abstract the North American territorial claims were and how more empty the land appeared. North American territories were represented to the European public as a *wilderness*; and, in terms of their social content, as *empty space*. The native North Americans, their customs and land uses were deemed so alien and "their political processes so inconspicuous that many Europeans colonisers concluded that Indians were sub-human; that they could and should to be removed from the land".[4] Defining Indians as *wild or savage* was a critical step in their removal because contemporary Europeans generally held that "to invade and dispossess the people of an unoffending civilised country would violate morality and transgress the principles of international law".[5] In the New World Charters the abstract, geometric lines of territorial authority became sweeping space-clearing and space maintaining devices for European settlers.[6]

In contrast, Sack argues that England's long acquaintance with Ireland and "her begrudging acceptance of the Irish as human and Christian" [7] made it difficult for the English to think of Ireland as an empty space. Rather he sees English plantations there as grafted on to pre-existing landholdings and that such plans often included the interspersal of Irish within the English plantations. Clearly Sack emphasises the specific nature of the English encounter with the peoples of a neighbouring *European* island characterised by long established written laws about landownership and occupation, its own nobility and professional classes and strong regional diversities.

The crucial century for establishing both English and Irish national identities and the construction of Ireland as a possible colony stretches from the 1540s to the 1650s. By the late-sixteenth century, Ireland's cultural geography was complicated, fractured and factional:

Firstly, there was a growing number of *New English* colonists, administrators, soldiers and churchmen; an embryonic Protestant planter class speaking, writing and printing in the Queen's "New English", shaped by such new

sciences as cartography and the "tough" sensibilities of Renaissance England and thoroughly convinced of England's right to rule Ireland and civilise the Irish.

Secondly, there were the old "colonials" of the Pale and port-regions – the descendants of the Anglo-Normans, ancient enemies and shielders of the English frontier against the Gaelic Irish, known by the later-sixteenth century as the *Old English*, headed by the powerful feudal magnates, speaking an older form of English and usually bilingual, potentially Protestant but increasingly alienated as they are pushed out of positions of power in law and government and actively becoming powerful patrons of Counter-Reformation Catholicism. But not all of this group diverged; some conformed to the New English Protestant model.

Thirdly, further away from the Dublin Pale and the old port cities – and now culturally part of a mainly Irish-speaking Catholic world – was a Gaelicised, hybrid *middle nation* of lordships, inland towns, tower houses and hurling – in varying states of allegiance or disobedience to the Dublin administration and the Crown.

Fourthly, over the southwest, the west and the north was a still resurgent *Gaelic* culture, Irish-speaking, characterised by a more traditional Franciscan-led Catholicism, also using Latin as an elite language; clan-based societies with their own lordships, old elaborate laws, systems of territorial organisation, costumes, and settlement structures.

Fifthly, infiltrating into the northeast and feared by the New English ruling class (including Spenser), were frontier *Scottish* settlers – both from the highlands and islands as well as the adjacent western coastal lowlands. With the accession of James I to the English throne, Reformation Scotland becomes a major player in Ireland, the Ulster Plantation follows, as King James blunts the longstanding political and cultural alliances between Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland.

Ireland's cultural geography was, therefore, plural. But its political geography was increasingly represented and simplified as a battle for hegemony between an expansive English/British national culture – and a defensive but resistant Gaelic/Irish world, seeking its own legislative and cultural autonomy. Caught in the middle were the Old English - neither "metropolitan" nor "marginalised

other". By the 1600s, they were becoming surplus to the needs of the expanding English state. So, Sack is correct about Ireland's European complexities.

But what Sack does not pay sufficient attention to is the frequent and profound oscillations and ambivalences in English relations with, perceptions of, and policies towards, Ireland in that early modern era. Policies geared towards a more peaceful assimilation of the human Irish so as to establish English civil norms of social and spatial organisation regularly clashed with counterviews and policies that stressed the alien and irredeemable otherness of the "wild Irish", seen as barbaric, savage, nomadic, even cannibalistic. Ireland is seen as a wilderness, full of woods and woodkern, those mobile "Scythians", making the land impenetrable to authority, eternally challenging a stable and sensible English social and geographic order. As Ireland proved more difficult to conquer, conciliation policies more often yielded to coercive ones – even to ideas of extermination.[8]

In the light of the foregoing analysis we cannot easily think of Ireland as an "empty space", yet we can examine how in English colonial discourse, ideology and fantasy, Ireland could become emptied space, emptied of its people – how it could be conceived of as a *tabula rasa*, a "clean slate", or as Petty called it "a white paper" or in Edmund Spenser's phrase, how Ireland could be made ready for a "new framing as it were in the forge".[9]

My focus here is on written texts relating to this theme. Clearly an English-language representation of Ireland is also being forged by the new geometric surveying techniques used to map Ireland – telling the lie of the land. I take it as given that those maps are also critical instruments of conquest and of "spatial emptying".

Spenser's *View* of Ireland

We first meet Spenser in Ireland in 1580 as secretary to Lord Grey, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, at the beginning of the Desmond Rising/Rebellion and the consequent Munster Plantation.[10] This plantation – initiated in 1583 – represents a deliberate and revolutionary new policy by the state to create a planned "colonial" settlement involving a half a million acres of the best Munster land – to be allocated to a powerful cadre of New English knights, administrators and soldiers. Apart from strong economic motives, control of Munster was seen as

particularly strategic so as to protect England's sea lanes to the New World and ward off Catholic Spain's possible use of its harbours to threaten England.

Spenser in Ireland is a classic borderland figure – an exile and homemaker – anxious about defending his Englishness on the margins – and very much on edge – as he appropriates a Desmond castle for his new planter- mansion and estate which he prophetically called "Hap Hazard".[11] (He was burnt out of his home in the Rising of 1598 and died in London in 1599 "for lack of bread").[12] Cambridge-educated, a widely-read classical scholar, this poet is aware of the qualities and craft of the now outlawed "treacherous" Irish bard-poets and familiar with the Munster landscape of mountains, rivers and streams. In Spenser, who wrote much of *The Faerie Queen* at "Hap Hazard", we see a love-hate relationships with Ireland – loving the land but fearing hibernicisation – seeking to maintain a purified Englishness on the insidious yet seductive Irish frontier. He is already convinced of the "moral imperative" of detaching and, if necessary, eradicating the "wild Irish" and their culture from this "sweet good land".[13]

An abiding theme in Spenser's *View* is the recognition of the fragility of all English conquests in Ireland. He outlines a kind of historical geography of the colonial settlement since the Middle Ages. Spenser emphasises how often the Irish, after retreating with their cattle to the woods, boglands and mountains, reemerged from the "wastes and deserts" - these "wilderness" areas - to attack, erode and drive back the frontiers of English settlement. He eloquently reiterates the prevailing English racist and racialist agenda – which went back to Giraldus Cambrensis – seeing the Irish as an inferior "sundry" "barbarous" people, treacherously interacting with their Catholic allies in Europe to undermine England's "civilising" rule. Spenser's knowledge and experience of Irish resistance in Munster and Ireland generally prompted him to stress the critical role of the Irish landscape in facilitating the Irish capacity for mobility, seclusion and counterattack. To Spenser the *reformation* of Ireland – and reformation is one of the great ambitious themes of Elizabethan writings on Ireland – required a garrisoned, enclosed, geography and the establishment of a visualised landscape where the "wild" Irish are starved out of their woodland/ bogland/mountain fastnesses, and defeated out in the open plains. With conquest achieved, the subjected landscape and population was to be redesigned in the image and ideals of England. Spenser's use of mapping metaphors throughout the text of the *View* goes so deep as to imagine the process of the reformation of the Irish and Irish landscape as the equivalent of drawing a new

map on a blank/empty surface and remodelling the whole terrain, both natural and cultural.[14]

Spenser was convinced that the corollary of maintaining a strong English identity in Ireland was the obliteration of Irish identity. Spenser saw the Old English as providing a fatal bridge to hibernicisation – they were far too prone to assimilation to the "mere Irish". And apart from ferocious Gaelic resistance to New English plantations in their old homelands in the Midlands, *all* the resistance offered to the New English military, administrators cum colonists from the 1530s to the early 1590s came from regional revolts led by Old English magnates, Eustace in Wicklow-Kildare, the Butlers in Carlow-Kilkenny and the Desmond Fitzgeralds in south Munster.

But the great difference between the putting down of the Desmond Rising/ Rebellion and the earlier revolts is the ferocity used by the state and its military officers – a scorched earth policy, a policy of deliberate starvation of the enemy was implemented. Historian David Edwards has recently estimated that the campaign led to the death of at least 50,000 – perhaps one-fifth of Munster's total population.[15] The consequence was severe depopulation in the heartland of Munster – *the emptying of the land for plantation and civilising.*

Rationalisations for this new colonial policy abounded at the time. But the most compelling factor was the survey evidence that the lands in question lay "vacant/empty". Here the Roman law known as *res nullius* was brought into play. This law maintained that "all empty things, particularly unoccupied or underutilised land, remained the common property of humanity until it was brought into efficient use by an enterprising people who might then become its owners".[16] The most blunt statement (by Andrew Trollope), based on *res nullius*, justifying the Munster Plantation depicted the inhabitants of Ireland as "not thrifty, civil and human creatures but heathen or rather savage and brute beasts".[17] People, if defined as subhuman, are thus made invisible in the landscape. The land is "empty" - so it may be colonised and "civilised".

Reading the *View*, one is sometimes lured by its often moderate, subtle and reformist tone – but then comes the shock of Spenser's key recommendations. The *View* is a dialogue between court-based Eudoxus, an urbane experienced English decision-maker on Ireland – and Irenius – an "Ireland man" i.e. an English colonist very familiar with Irish conditions on the ground. At the end of the first section of the *View*, after Irenius details the customs and cultural

inferiority of the Irish, Eudoxus is finally convinced by Irenius that only ruthless violence i.e. the exercise of the sword, will effect change in Ireland. The imposition of English law has not and will not work on its own. To quote Hadfield and Maley, "The case is that in order to protect civilised values from the attacks of hostile savages, savage methods will have to be used ...".[18] These methods were seen by Spenser to be successful in Munster in the early 1580s – and are now recommended in the middle of the Nine Years War of the 1590s to be applied to Ulster and rebellious Ireland as a whole. The scene is set for the intensification of the battle for hegemony between the English and Irish forces.

The most infamous, if highly crafted, passage in the text is as follows:

> "The end [of all-out war and enforced starvation] will (I assure me) bee very short and much sooner then can be in so great a trouble, as it seemeth hoped for, although there should none of them fall by the sword, nor bee slaine by the souldiour, yet thus being kept from manurance, and their cattle from running abroad, *by this hard restraint they would quickly consume themselves, and devoure one another [emphasis added].* The proofe whereof, I saw sufficiently exampled in these late warres for Mounster; for not withstanding that the same was a most rich and plentifull countrey, full of corne and cattle, that you would have thought they should have beene able to stand long, yet ere one yeare and a halfe they were brought to such wretchednesse, as that any stony heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glynnes they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legges could not beare them; they looked like anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eate the dead carrions, happy where they could finde them, yea, and one another soone after, insomuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and, if they found a plot of water-cresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time, yet not able long to continue therewithal; *that in short space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentifull countrey suddainely left voyde of man and beast; yet sure in all that warre, there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremitie of famine, which they themselves had wrought [emphasis added]".*[19]

As Klein argues, in Spenser's/Irenius's view this rich, fertile if sadly underused landscape - once populated by a group of animal-like people ready to engage in a Rising/Rebellion to defend their ancient rights to ownership – is now transformed into the colonial fantasy of an "empty space", open and ready for

English colonisation. Witness the parallel blankness and silences on Lord Burghley's early Munster Plantation maps as well. Spenser's predicted outcome to the whole scene is the transformation of property from "a state of savagery to a state of civilisation".[20] His final comment puts all the blame on the victims. Nothing else has happened. No English scorched policy. No reference to the fact that so many of the Munster planters were firstly implicated in the brutal conquest and depopulation of much of the province. No reference to a policy of deliberate starvation but rather "which they themselves had wrought". Both the map and the narrative had their own dark purposes.

In this context, it is worth noting that Spenser's *View* went to the printer in 1598 but was not published for another 35 years. Nevertheless, it circulated widely at an elite level in manuscript form, read by, amongst others, the Secretary to Lord Mountjoy, Fynes Moryson, poet and legal imperialist Sir John Davies and, later, poet John Milton. There is much debate about its failure to be printed but it is likely the *View* failed to appear in print earlier because the authorities would not allow such a frank discussion of English policy deficiences, such a clear analysis of a coherent Irish culture and, in particular, such radical strategies for conquering Ireland to be aired in public.[21] It is uncanny how so many of his key recommendations across a wide range of activities - from the location of key new garrisons to encircle O'Neill's Ulster, as Mountjoy did a few years later; the carrying on of military campaigns against the Irish and their food supply *in Winter* so as to more quickly starve them out, as Mountjoy also successfully implemented; the planting of many new Protestant borough towns; the importance attached to civil settlements for disbanded soldiers, down to the use of widespread land confiscations, the break up of Irish clans and their transplantation and scattering - were all brought into effect over the following 50 years.

Spenser's *View* brings us right up to the 1641 Rising/Rebellion – the subsequent twelve years of war – and the Cromwellian conquest and plantation. The antiquarian and officeholder Sir James Ware published the *View* in 1633, thinking it was now a historical period-piece, safe to publish in an edition entitled *Ancient Irish Histories*. Instead it drew a highly critical reaction from Irish writers – notably Geoffrey Keating/Seatruún Céitinn, of Old English stock but belonging in his own words "to the Irish tradition". He was, like many others of the Old English by the 1620s, an old colonial becoming an Irish national. Keating wrote the first modern history of Ireland in Irish: *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn – The Foundations of Knowledge about Ireland.* What Keating set out

to achieve – while deliberately countering what he saw as the propagandist tracts of Spenser, Moryson, Davies and others – was to provide the Irish with a sense of a distinguished precolonial past as set against their present conquered status.[22]

On the other side of the frontier, Spenser's *View* was often seen as the foundational text for shaping English thought and action for Ireland in the 17th century.[23] It influenced powerfully poet John Milton – a key intellectual in Cromwellian policy-making – who saw the Irish Papists as "incorrigibly regressive", whom, he forcibly advised Cromwell, should receive no toleration or freedoms under the Cromwellian administration.[24] In editing the text Ware tempers the tone and omits passages which either made severe criticism of important Irish families or contain harsh descriptions of the Irish. The terms "savage", "brutish", "barbaric", "degenerate", "lewd" or "wild Irish" occur well over twenty times in Spenser's original manuscript. In the 1640s propaganda battles, such examples of ethnic stereotyping became the norm and were vehemently reciprocated.

What Ware was not aware of was that he was releasing the *View* to the public at a most sensitive time – it was like releasing another slow-burning fuse into an already explosive situation. Thus, while the new ruling elites still sensed only calm, underneath the surface the pent-up repression and frustration of the Irish was about to erupt.

Ireland's colonial status

The scale of developments in Ireland between 1603 and 1641 (according as a form of "colonial capitalism" was superimposed over late-feudal, quasi-feudal and clan-based systems) was phenomenal. Between 70,000 and 100,000 English and Scottish immigrants flooded into town and countryside: of the 89 chartered towns still existing in the mid-nineteenth century, 70 per cent were newly founded between 1603 and 1641, while new improved farming, a new cattle exporting economy, and a new iron industry added to the fever. Ireland then played host to some of the most radical and racist in English society – people who emphatically assumed the total inferiority of the Irish and their culture. These colonists were not a representative sample of the home society nor did they always implement state policies. Ireland was a classic breeding ground for bourgeois individualism. Private gain invariably overrode the

public good. Colonials in Ireland did not feel as fettered as in the homeland in matters of war or statutes or economy. The Crown displayed much less commitment to active plantation than evinced by its estranged, highly innovative radicals, many of whom ended up on the Irish frontier – from Raleigh, Spenser and Davies through to Cromwell and Petty.[25] And one of the most glaring contrasts between the homeland and colonial Irish space – the woodlands that were coppiced and conserved in England were practically destroyed in Ireland within a century. A more rapacious plantation economy was put in place as cattle colonised the former woodland spaces. The landscape is laid bare.

Falling behind and often operating outside these circuits of power and commerce, the Irish Catholic subjects of Charles I railed at their exclusion from positions of privilege in local and central government, fretted at the continuing legal and plantation assaults on their properties and bitterly resented restrictions placed on the open practice of their now fully-fledged Counter-Reformation Catholicism. The 1641 Rising/Rebellion (in particular the early stages of the popular revolt) has to be seen as an attempt at the recovery and purification of the land by the Irish Catholic masses – this early deeply-felt reaction was to rid or *empty* Irish space of its "heretic" settler-intruders. The deep-seated hatred of their Protestant overlords and tenantry exploded in a fury of robberies, intimidations, some murders and many expulsions which almost toppled the establishment. Ireland's space was about to be emptied of its New English/ British ruling class – but not quite.

Three core areas of resistance emerged: in the mainly Scottish-held areas on the northwest and northeast of Ulster, the Dublin Pale region, and around Cork city. There followed severe military reprisals against exposed minority Catholic communities – and the emptying of space went into reverse gear. After nine years of war stalemate, with the Old Irish and Old English now allied in a Catholic Confederate "government", Cromwell's victories saw a military frontier of conquest run in a classic series of geographical shifts from east to west across Ireland between 1649 and 1653. In these bitter and bloody martial-law years, Spenser's dream (or nightmare, depending on your perspective) of a depopulated wasteland, ready for plantation by a well-ordered New English society, is almost realised.

It is now impossible to know exactly what Ireland's population loss was between 1641 and 1654 but William Petty – then close to the action – put it at 600,000 out of an estimated total Irish population in 1641 of 1.4m.[26] Modern

commentators put the total population in 1641 rather higher at 1.8 to 2.1 million. But the figure of around 600,000 still emerges from other modern sources.[27] This includes up to 80,000 to 100,000 Protestants – those who emigrated, others murdered and particularly those who died from exposure, plague, famine and war. It includes, perhaps, close on half a million Catholic Irish who died from reprisals, from the wars and the war-induced famine and plague which swept through city, town and countryside between 1649 and 1653/4. This represents a traumatic decline of the order of one-fifth to one-fourth.[28] More than 100,000 Irish Catholics were transported, transplanted or had to emigrate in the decade 1650-1660. All of this puts Ireland's mid-seventeenth century population losses, and the pain and memories involved, on a scale that matches the horrors of the Great Famine two centuries later. The 1640s were a great chasm and a great divide in the history of Irish mentalities, polities, language and culture. "1641" represented as "Catholic treachery" as against "Cromwell's curse". Although involved in the most strategic conquest of the cities of eastern and southern Ireland *only*, the English republican hero Cromwell is remembered *everywhere* in Irish folklore and landscapes – a giant demon/destroyer bestriding and *clearing the whole land.*

If Cromwell was responsible for the conquest, it is my view that Petty was the main architect responsible for the actual Cromwellian settlement and plantation. It is well known that he was responsible for the phenomenal achievement of the Down Survey mapping of the island. What is not so well known is that he was also the mastermind behind the delicate and treacherous business of the actual *distribution* and filling in of the forfeited lands, the *cutting up* of the old properties, and the *creation* of newly bounded estates to satisfy the highly competitive Cromwellian officer conqueror class, the London-led Adventurer/ capitalists and the Old Protestants.[29] Well over half the island was transferred to new owners – in one of the greatest single transfers of land in western European history. Indeed between the 1580s and 1690s, almost all the natural and institutional resources of Ireland were taken over by a new intrusive elite and its supporting classes.

When we now look back to our earlier definition of colonialism - and view Ireland after the Cromwellian conquest and settlement - there appears to be little doubt about its colonial status. To paraphrase Spenser, Ireland had been newly framed in the forge, or should one say, the furnace of the Cromwellian conquest. By 1659, Ireland was not so semi-colonial after all.[30]

Notes

[1] N. Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established 1656–1576* (Hassocks Sussex 1976) 101
[2] W. Maley, *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture and Identity* (Basingstoke and London 1997) 48-77 – a highly original and helpful analysis
[3] For a detailed elaboration of this definition, see J. Ruane, Colonialism and the interpretation of Irish historical development, in M. Silverman and P.H. Gulliver (Eds), *Approaching the Past: Historical Anthropology Through Irish Case-Studies* (New York 1992) 293-323
[4] R.D. Sack, *Human Territorality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge 1986) 133
[5] *Ibid.*, 133
[6] *Ibid.*, 134
[7] *Ibid.*, 138-9
[8] See, for example, D.B. Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish* (Ithaca, NY 1966) and C. Brady and R. Gillespie (Eds), *Natives and Newcomers: The Making of Irish Colonial Society 1534-1641* (Dublin 1986)
[9] M. Kelly, *"We doe see the state of that kingdome principally with your eyes": Edmund Spenser, Fynes Moryson and William Petty and the imaginative geographies of colonialism* (unpublished M.Phil. thesis, National University of Ireland Cork 1999) 40, 147
[10] See, in particular, N. Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650* (Oxford 2001) 1-58 and 121-164
[11] D.J. Baker, Off the map: charting uncertainty in Renaissance Ireland, and J.R. Lupton, Mapping mutability or, Spenser's Irish plot, Chapters 5 and 6 in B. Bradshaw, A. Hadfield and W. Maley (Eds), *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict 1534-1660* (Cambridge 1993) 76-92 and 93-115
[12] A. Hadfield and W. Maley (Eds), 1997, *Edmund Spenser: A View of the State of Ireland* (Oxford 1997) xiv and Introduction as a whole xi-xxvi
[13] R.A. McCabe, The fate of Irena: Spenser and political violence, in P. Coughlan (Ed.), *Spenser and Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Cork 1989) 109-26
[14] A. Fogarty, The colonisation of language: narrative strategies, in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* and *The Faerie Queene* Book VI, in P. Coughlan (Ed), *Spenser and Ireland* 75-108; see also M. Kelly, '*We doe see the state*', 40-84
[15] D. Edwards, The demographic impact of war in Elizabethan Ireland: A case-study of the Desmond Rebellion, 1599-83, a paper given at the conference *Age of Massacres: Violent Death in Ireland c.1547-1650*, Dublin, April 2002
[16] N. Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 133
[17] *Ibid.*, 133-4
[18] A. Hadfield and W. Maley (Eds), *Edmund Spenser: A View* xix
[19] *Ibid.*, 101-2
[20] I am indebted to B. Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke and New York 2001) 184-7 for critical insights on this specific passage.
[21] See, for example, Hadfield and Maley, *Edmund Spenser: A View* xxii-xxiv
[22] B. Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating: History, Myth and Religion in Seventeenth Century Ireland* (Dublin 2001)
[23] P. Coughlan, "Some secret scourge which shall by her come unto England": Ireland and Incivility in Spenser, P. Coughlan (Ed.), *Spenser and Ireland,* 46-54
[24] W. Maley, *Salvaging Spenser*, 115-32
[25] *Ibid.*, 129-31
[26] W. Petty, *Political Anatomy of Ireland* (Dublin 1691)
[27] J.S. Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland* (Dublin 1999) 7, 126, 194
[28] P. Lenihan, War and population, 1649-52, *Irish Economic and Social History* 24 (1997) 1-21

[29] T.A. Larcom (Ed.), *The History of the Survey of Ireland Commonly Called The Down Survey by Doctor William Petty A.D. 1655-6* (Dublin 1851)
[30] Much of Robin Butlin's work on Ireland is relevant to this analysis and particularly Irish towns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in T.A. Butlin (Ed.), *The Development of the Irish Town* (London 1977) 61-100

7

Understanding small Irish country towns: contested identity in historical perspective

Anngret Simms

Introduction

In the introductory chapter to a collection of essays on *Provincial towns in Early Modern England and Ireland* published by the British Academy in 2002 the editors (P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot) mention a "benchmark study of Irish urban history by Robin Butlin".[1] They are referring to Butlin's book on *The Development of the Irish Town,* which he edited in 1977, when he was a lecturer at University College Dublin. He himself contributed two chapters to this book, one on "Urban and proto-urban settlements in pre-Norman Ireland" and the other on "Irish towns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries". It was pioneer work. In the preface to this volume Butlin wrote: "It is strange ... that so little attention should hitherto have been given to the towns and cities of Ireland and their historical evolution, for the potential for studies of individual towns, of the Irish urban system as a whole and for comparative studies with urban systems and development elsewhere, is great."

In the intervening twenty-five years Butlin's colleagues in Ireland have taken up the challenge. In this paper I will focus on the smaller Irish country towns. By way of introduction I will attempt to present their morphological typology. My case studies will be taken from the *Irish Historic Towns Atlas* series.[2] My main aim is to show how in the early-modern period the transformation of the social and physical fabric of individual Irish towns was the result of changed political and cultural power relations in Ireland.

When we think about the Irish urban system it is important to realize that Ireland's urban development is more akin to countries in Scandinavia and East Central Europe than to that in England, which had the highest rate of urban population growth in early-modern Europe. By the end of the nineteenth

century, Ireland had only 18% of its population living in towns of over 10,000 people, while Scotland had 50% and England and Wales had 62%.[3]

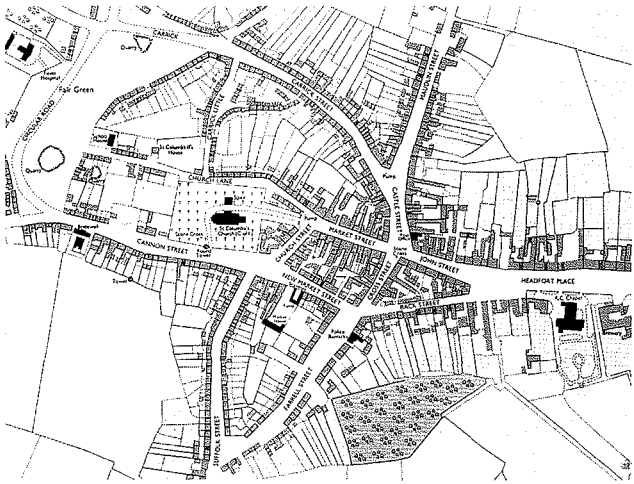
Towns were central to the course of Irish history as they were used as tools in repeated colonisation movements. Their morphology reflects their mode of origin and thereby provides a first step in the interpretation of the Irish urban landscape as the expression of political power. We can distinguish between an "old" and a "new" urbanism, associated with the medieval and the early modern colonisation movements respectively.

Most of to-day's larger towns in Ireland are of medieval origin, either as Viking towns or as Anglo-Norman boroughs, some of which were superimposed on Irish monastic proto-towns, which predated the Anglo-Norman invasion. The new towns founded between the sixteenth and eighteenth century were the result of English intervention in Ireland, either as plantation-towns in the context of the Munster Plantation or Ulster Plantation, or as landlord-towns.[4] The town-plan is, of course, the element that provides the greatest continuity from the time of foundation of the town to the present. I will briefly introduce the major morphological types of Irish country towns based on early-nineteenth century maps which were produced for the *Irish Historic Towns Atlas* project (Fig. 7.1).

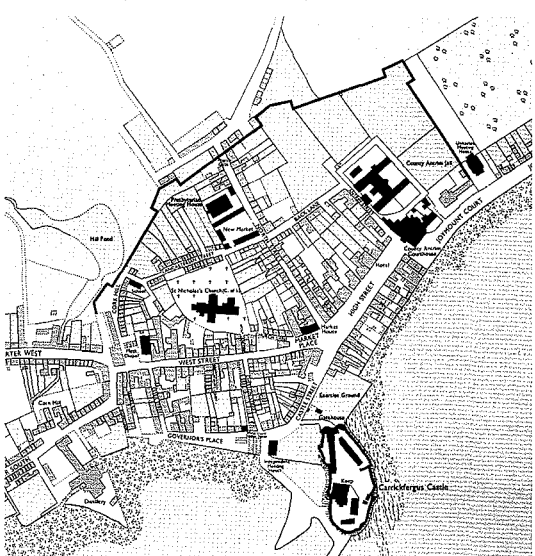
Ethnic differentiation (seventeenth century)

Medieval Irish towns were well acquainted with ethnic differentiation, as they were inhabited by the descendants of Anglo-Norman settlers, who dominated over those of Gaelic descent. But in the early-modern period the ethnic distinction between the new settlers of English or Scottish descent and native families referred to as Old English (descendants of Anglo-Norman families) and Irish (descendants of Gaelic families) was greatly aggravated by religious differences. The changes were all embracing and traumatic. The Old-English feudal world and the old Gaelic world were replaced by the structures of a centralised modern English state. With this change came increasing cultural Anglicisation and the shift in power from a universal church to an established national church, that on the strength of the Penal Laws (passed between 1695-1728) repressed the majority catholic church. Within the former territory of Anglo-Norman Ireland the Old-English elite was replaced by the New English

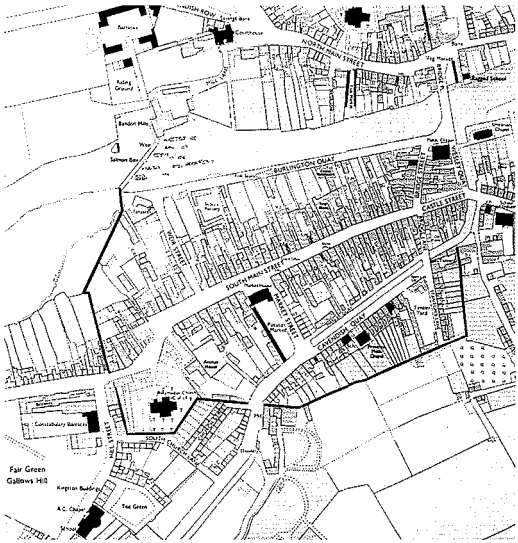
Figure 7.1 Typology of Irish country towns (based on nineteenth-century town plans, 1:25000 produced for the *Irish Historic Towns Atlas* series)



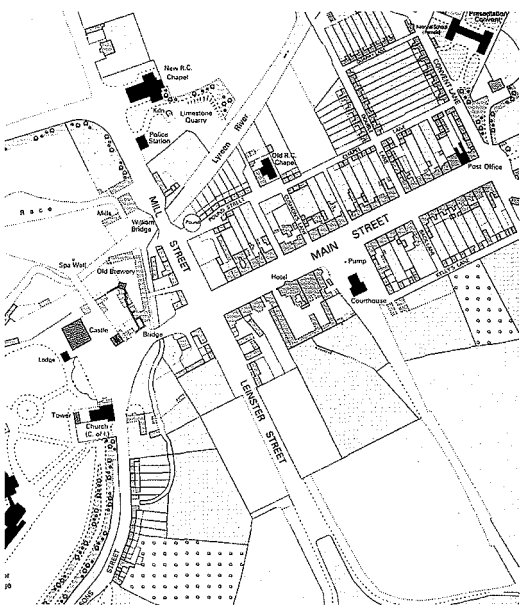
(a) Kells (County Meath): Anglo-Norman borough built in the very early thirteenth century with roots in an Early-Christian Columban monastery, whose circular inner and outer enclosures have been preserved in the modern street pattern. Typically the market was established to the east between the two enclosures (see Market Street).



(b) Carrickfergus (County Down): Anglo-Norman borough founded on virgin ground by John de Courcy, who had built the majestic castle by AD 1178. Typically the medieval town was focused on one principal street with a market cross and one parish church, St Nicholas, located off the main street.



(c) Bandon (County Cork): Bandon is a Plantation town undertaken by Richard Boyle in the early seventeenth century in the context of the Munster Plantation. The town was regularly laid out according to strict bylaws and contained a large number of Protestant churches.



(d) Maynooth (County Kildare): Maynooth is a small estate town laid out on the land of the Duke of Leinster in the eighteenth century. It is located between the ruins of an important medieval castle and the avenue leading to the eighteenth century Palladian estate house. Typically it is aligned along a main street with the focus on the courthouse.

elite, who appropriated the old medieval parish churches and moved into the houses which had to be abandoned by their previous owners. These events caused great resentment under the native population.

We have a chance to encounter the people by name who were personally caught up in the social and cultural transformations of the time, when we look at the contemporary seventeenth century sources for Kells.[5] In 1654 a Cromwellian soldier named Lt Col. Richard Stephens was granted Kells, then in a rather dilapidated state in the aftermath of the Confederate Wars. At first he seemed quite enthusiastic and when in 1657 the commonwealth commissioners in Dublin received instructions to grant leases for a term of 31 years to such persons "being Protestants", who wished to become tenants of houses in any walled city or town of Ireland in the disposition of the Lord Protector, Stephens succeeded in attracting some Protestant settlers who assisted him in the rebuilding of the town.[6] The 1663 Valuation of Kells[7] juxtaposes the proprietors and tenants of Kells in 1663 with those who were there in 1641 (based on the Civil Survey). In 1641 at the start of the Confederate Wars Kells had thirty-two proprietors of whom twenty-three were listed as "Irish papists." There were some Gaelic families but most of the town's proprietors were then of Old English descent. By 1663 their property was confiscated and the new English elite had taken over.

The example of Cross Street in the centre of Kells illustrates the social transformation of the town at street-level (Fig. 7.2). By 1668 the Old English names like Plunkett had been replaced by New English names like Dawson and Jones. Yet, there is enough evidence to believe that some Catholic families living in modest circumstances had stayed behind in the town. For example in Maudlin Street, again quoting the 1668 Valuation, a new tenant called Gabriell Proctor paid six shillings for his stone and clay walled strong house which was lately built, while his immediate neighbours with Irish sounding names like Shane O Gowne, Daniel Leyney and Patrick Geirty lived in hovels and only paid two shillings or one shilling respectively. No doubt, Willie Smyth was right when he wrote in the context of Pender's population census of 1660: "The deep divisions of the post-Cromwellian society were most sharply chiselled into the narrow confines of the urban fabric."[8]

The Records of the Corporation (minute books), which are part of the Headfort Estate Papers, provide evidence for the existence of Catholics within the walls of Kells and even of their official cooperation with Protestant neighbours. They

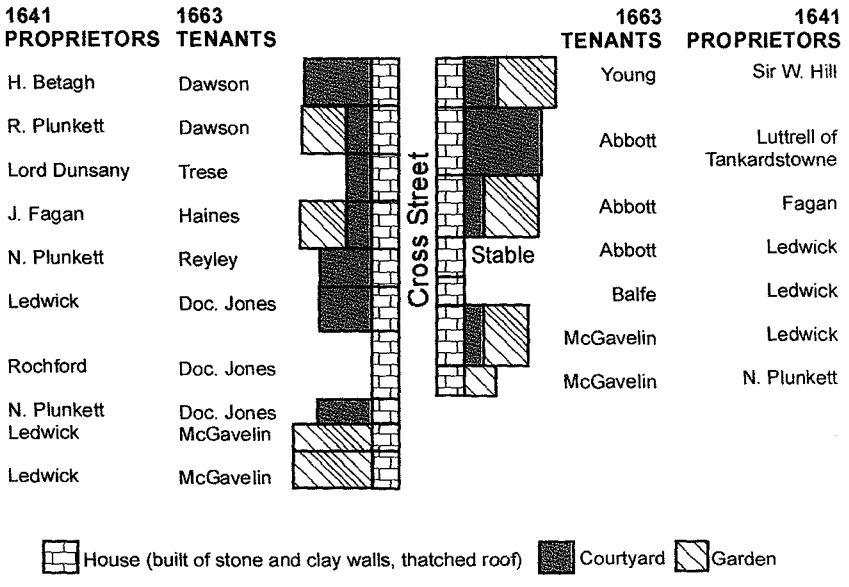


Figure 7.2 Cross Street in Kells, 1641 and 1663: proprietors and tenants (based on Kells Valuation 1663 in *Analecta Hibernica* (1960) 253-5)

record in 1710 "that five men, two Protestants and three Papists and one of the Protestants to be Captain, shall be the nightly standing watch." In 1727 the clerk of the market court decided: 'That James Betagh shall be the Popish constable and Hugh Reily continued as the Protestant constable of the said Corporation.' This kind of negotiation confirms that the Penal Laws, attempting to exclude Catholics from civic life, were not rigorously applied.

By the end of the seventeenth century the main surviving function for Kells was the local market, which was held weekly for corn and cattle and two annual fairs. Colonel Stephens was disappointed with the progress of Kells and in 1706 he sold out his interest within the walls of Kells to Thomas Taylor, thereby ushering in a period when the physical fabric of Kells prospered under the influence of a dynamic landlord family.[9]

Landlord impact (eighteenth century)

In contrast to the open political conflicts of the seventeenth century the eighteenth century was characterised by stable conditions within the framework set by the British government, which caused an economic boom that lasted until 1815, when after the cessation of the Napoleonic Wars the decline began. Brian Graham and Lindsay Proudfoot carried out a large Leverhulme funded research project on the impact of the landlord on the formation of Irish towns and villages, which they published in 1992. For the period between 1700 and *c.* 1850 they identified over 750 towns and villages which displayed evidence of formal planning intent and infrastructural modernisation.

Some landlord villages are completely new creations. Some are former settlements which were radically replanned as Arnold Horner has shown for Maynooth (Figure 7.1), where the transformation of an irregular cluster of houses into a regularly planned village took the landlord over 60 years of manipulating leases. Other places were embellished by the addition of a landlord quarter on the periphery of an existing medieval town. That happened in Kells, where the first Earl of Bective (Taylor) laid out a spacious road with substantial two-storey Georgian buildings with archways and laneways that provided access to stables and formal gardens. A line of trees decorated the road leading into the town from the direction of the estate house. The Earl erected an elegant courthouse in classical style at the end of the new avenue and in 1798, decades before Catholic Emancipation, he gave a plot of land for the building of the Roman Catholic parish church right in the centre of the "ascendancy quarter" in the town. The building was designed by Francis Johnson and the landlord family contributed towards the costs of having it built.

A particularly interesting chapter in the remodelling of Irish estate-towns in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century is the cooperation between landlords and town dwellers. It appears that the enlightenment style of architecture, regularly planned open spaces, uniform house frontages, straight street lines and vistas framed with public buildings diffused from Dublin into the provincial towns. Urban tenants built houses with string-courses, quoining, pedimented windows and Gibsonian door cases. How did the landlords achieve this conformity? They made skilful use of leases, which included stipulations as to which building material was to be chosen, as for example slates for roofs, and which confirmed the building line which had to be maintained.

Figure 7.3 Kells, viewed from the east. Water colour, artist unknown, inscribed "Kells, L.E.W., July 1803" (in private ownership)

The watercolour of Kells from the very beginning of the nineteenth century is a good example of the transformation from one-storey houses with thatched roofs to two and three storey houses with slated roofs (Fig. 7.3). The tower-house castle, which housed the early corporation, is a reminder of feudal times. The corner house is an inn. The spire belongs to the tower of the Protestant parish church which characteristically stands on the site of the medieval church. The soldiers patrolling the street are indicative of latent political tensions and the beggar reminds us that not all sections of the community benefited from the eighteenth century boom. The records of the corporation of Kells for the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show joint efforts between the landlord and tenants to improve the standards of urban life in Kells by modernisation.[10] In 1685 the corporation decided to use part of their revenue to pay "..the present schoolmaster of Kells." In 1694 the town council appealed to Taylor as the sovereign "to alter and model the castle of Kells by making such conveniences therein as a market place, court place, office, and prison." And in 1696 the corporation asked the sovereign "for a good clock for the use of the corporation of Kells."

Low rents and long leases attracted speculative tenants, who acted as middlemen as no restrictions on sub-letting were written into leases. And so they re-leased holdings to undertenants at a profit. In this way Irish towns acquired a complex web of tenures. For example in Kells the 1817 terrier which accompanies the estate-maps distinguishes between lessies (head-tenants) and occupying tenants. There were 203 head-tenants holding 630 separate plots in the town. The fragmentation of property was greatest in the town centre. Market Street in the centre of the town with 20 separate house plots was held by twelve midddlemen, while on the periphery a small number of middlemen held whole street blocks by themselves. Typically the dominant families in 1817 with multi-plot properties were members of the Protestant community.

Irish country towns did not have a strong sense of civic authority because until the early-nineteenth century the Protestant landlord would always have dominated the Council. Also, as Toby Barnard has pointed out, it was the Protestant country gentlemen who were generally depicted as uniquely the agent of civility and not the townspeople.[11] In Kells it was the country gentry who was credited with having saved the precious high crosses from ruin. Of course almost none of the gentry or of the Protestant clergy would have lived in the town, as they preferred their countryseats.

What we have seen here at an entirely local level is on the one hand how the identity of an Irish country town splintered in the mid seventeenth century and on the other hand how complex the situation was. Under the Penal Laws, Catholics were officially not accepted as citizens with civil rights, yet the contemporary corporation records of Kells inform us that in the early eighteenth century Catholics were still a distinct group of citizens in the town who took up duty on the town-walls at night. In the late-eighteenth century the landlord facilitated the building of the Catholic church in Kells right in the centre of the avenue connecting the town with his Palladian mansion, Headfort House. On the other hand there is no doubt that in the eighteenth century the landlord, the town council (exclusively Protestant) and the established church, formed a cultural and political hegemony.

Contested ground

This situation changed gradually during the nineteenth century, facilitated by Catholic emancipation in 1829. By the end of the nineteenth century large

Catholic churches in association with convents as well as school-buildings of teaching orders formed the new Catholic quarters which expressed the identity of the emerging national power in the land. The revitalised Catholic church made the contested ground within Irish towns more visible.

Although Irish country towns were and are very small by comparison with English country towns, their history is anything but straightforward. Their cultural hybridity is part of their heritage. It is encouraging how in the context of the concept of heritage towns Irish country towns are beginning to reassert themselves and celebrate their history, thereby reversing Yeats' judgment on small Irish country towns when he wrote of "some little gaunt Irish town where no building or custom is revered for its antiquity."[12] Irish country towns are indeed multicultural texts. They reflect the dramatic political discourses under which they developed.[13]

Notes

[1] P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot, The English and Irish urban experience, 1500-1800, in P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot (Eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Oxford 2002) 1-28

[2] The *Irish Historic Towns Atlas* series, edited by A. Simms, H.B. Clarke, R. Gillespie and J. Andrews, is part of a larger European Towns Atlas project. For Ireland we have published atlases on 13 towns to date, while the figure for the whole of Europe is 371. For Ireland, see: no 1 *Kildare* by J.H. Andrews (1986), no.2 *Carrickfergus* by Philip Robinson (1986), no.3 *Bandon* by Patrick O'Flanagan (1988) no.4 *Kells* by A. Simms with K. Simms (1990), no.5 *Mullingar* by J.H. Andrews with K.M. Davies (1992), no. 6 *Athlone* by H. Murtagh (1994), no.7 *Maynooth* by A. Horner (1995), no.8 *Downpatrick* by R.H. Buchanan and A. Wilson (1997), no. 9 *Bray* by K.M. Davies (1998), no. *10* Kilkenny by J. Bradley (2000), no. 11 *Dublin, Part 1, to 1610* by H.B. Clarke (2002), no. 12, *Belfast, Part 1, to 1840* by R. Gillespie and S.A. Royle (2003), no. 13 *Fethard* by Tadhg O'Keefe (2003)

[3] Borsay and Proudfoot, The English and Irish urban experience, 21

[4] For a cartographical representation of the complex origin of Irish towns see: A. Simms, Cartographic representation of diachronic analysis: the example of the origin of towns, in A. R. H. Baker and M.Billinge (Eds), *Period and Place* (Cambridge 1982) 289-300

[5] A. Simms, Change and continuity in an Irish country town: Kells, 1600-1820, in Borsay and Proudfoot (Eds), *Provincial towns in Early Modern England and Ireland* 121-50

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Simington, R.C. (ed.).'Valuation of Kells (1663)', with note on map drawn by Robert Johnston, *Analecta Hibernica,* XXII (1960) 231-68

[8] W.J. Smyth, Wrestling with Petty's Ghost: the origins, nature and relevance of the so-called '1659 Census', in S. Pender (Ed.), *A Census of Ireland, Circa* 1659 Irish Manuscripts Commission (Dublin 2002) v-lxii

[9] The sale of Kells to Thomas Taylor is confirmed in: Headfort Estate Papers, Misc. Papers, 2A/12/43/Nr 4, Survey of Parish of Kells. National Archives, Dublin

[10] The records of the corporation of Kells, 1685-1787 are contained in the Headfort Estate Papers. National Library of Ireland, MS 25446(1-8)
[11] T.C. Barnard, The cultures of eighteenth-century Irish towns, Borsay and Proudfoot (Eds), *Provincial Towns in Early-Modern England and Ireland* 195-222
[12] Quoted in: R. Foster, *W.B. Yeats Alive* vol.1 (1997)
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8

Identity, heritage and place in Ulster

Brian Graham

Introduction

Recent theoretical developments in the field of cultural geography have opened up a range of innovative conceptualisations of the cultural landscape. This is being theorized as an arena of contested meanings but also as an important identity resource for political ideologies. Cultural landscapes "are ideological in that they can be used to endorse, legitimise and/or challenge social and political control".[1] This essay is concerned with loyalist cultural landscapes in Ulster, a place which can be viewed as a laboratory for identity formation as unionists and loyalists strive to reconcile with or, conversely, distance themselves from, the fundamental political changes that have followed in the wake of the paramilitary ceasefires of the mid-1990s and the 1998 Good Friday Belfast Peace Agreement. Although the differences are not absolute, loyalists differ from unionists in that their primary identity association is with Ulster (as a culturally and historically vested synonym for the political aridity of "Northern Ireland"), while loyalty to Britain and the union is very much a secondary and highly ambivalent relationship.[2] Loyalist itself is not a coherent ideology. Although there are numerous splinter groups, the most obvious distinction lies between the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), which is aligned with the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). In electoral terms, Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) is the principal loyalist party. Virtually all elements of loyalism, the UVF/PUP apart, are opposed to the 1998 Peace Agreement.

This fragmentation of loyalism reflects the broader failure of unionist identity in Northern Ireland and the further deconstruction of a fragile sense of belonging in the face of the British government's alignment with that of the Republic of Ireland in the Peace Process. Even worse, however, that sense of

betrayal and alienation is internal to unionism itself, compounded by class conflict and the creation of micro-scale community identities constructed on the basis of social exclusion. After decades of use and abuse by their own politicians, working-class Protestants see themselves as "puppets no more". They are far less interested in notions and symbols of reconciliation than in establishing a place for themselves, a place that demands its own past and claim to that past. Before cross-community negotiation comes self-understanding and developing the confidence that stems from a secure identity vested in historical narratives set firmly in place.

In some ways, these processes of loyalist identity transformation can be likened to the debate on revisionism, which has been a dominant theme in Irish historiography for the past several decades. This very complex renegotiation of the meaning of history to the present has occasioned far more nuanced interpretations of the Irish past and the meaning of Irishness. After partition, it was always easy for unionists to depict traditional Gaelic, Catholic, rural nationalism, which excluded them anyway, as other. Once unionist political control disappeared in 1972, however, when Stormont was prorogued, the inadequacies of a cultural identity defined largely by political Britishness meant a loss of the moral high ground to republicanism. Moreover, while failing to respond to the recent reshaping of ideas of Irishness in a newly-confident, Europeanising Republic of Ireland, unionism has also been singularly unsuccessful in coming to terms with a devolving multi-cultural United Kingdom, often maintaining, instead, some sort of time-warped fealty to queen and country. Thus the "revision" of Ulster historiography as an identity resource is very different to the renegotiation of Ireland and Irishness. It is generally informed by the zero-sum characteristics of ethnic nationalism, while the Protestant and Catholic middle classes, who may espouse a British or Irish cultural identity, have opted out altogether to share a similar consumerist lifestyle.[3] "Revisionism" in Ulster is generally beyond the union and emanates, not from the academy or chattering classes (as in the Republic) but from below, from the people.

This essay has three specific objectives in its discussion of this people's history and the ways in which it informs loyalist identity transformation. First, Ulster "revisionism" is placed within a conceptual context that links the two closely related ideas of resistance and subalternity. These are generally implicated in the theorization of progressive, multicultural, hybrid societies and thus to the deconstruction of identities created by reductionist ethno-nationalism. Here,

however, they can be used in a diametrically opposed way. Secondly, the implications of these ideas for the renegotiation of loyalist identities are explored, before the chapter concludes with an examination of the heritage that constitutes the resources for those identities.

The conceptual basis of Ulster revisionism

Resistance is a diverse concept but one that often includes notions of opposition to domination or oppression.[4] Thus implicit within it is the idea of resistant subjects, defined conventionally by race, gender or sexuality, who are shaping their identities outside or beyond the realm of hegemonic groups. The literature on resistance, however, generally elides sexist, racist and, as in this case, violent groups.[5] Gallaher argues that the issue of class seems to have disappeared from the landscape of a left politics preoccupied with race, gender and sexuality. Writing of the U.S. Patriot movement, she identifies poor working-class whites "who can obviously not claim oppression through existing channels such as feminism, black power and gay rights, but who, despite their normative identities, suffer economic exploitation".[6] Elsewhere, she addresses the argument that discourses of patriotism keep patriots from addressing the economic basis of many of their grievances, while buttressing ideas of cultural and racial superiority though "safe" nationalistic coding.[7] I argue here that there are numerous resonances of these conclusions in the identity politics of Ulster loyalists. Some loyalists (notably the PUP) support the Belfast Agreement, which is vested in widely accepted social principles of an open civic, plural society that gives parity of esteem to other people's cultural identities. But most loyalists resist the idea of a society based on consociation and cross-community consensus. They also reject the idea of ambiguous "soft-edged" territorial boundaries, opting instead for micro-scale versions of the zero-sum trap of the ethnic nation-state and the further snare, in Glover's terms, of the vendetta from which the only escape is an awareness of how the stories on both sides were constructed.[8] These dual traps become institutionalised and thus self-perpetuating. In loyalist Ulster, therefore, the resistances go beyond the hegemonic/counter-hegemonic interface to create landscapes of fear, marked by the brutish iconography of absolute territoriality and inviolate edges. These are not contiguous swathes of loyalism (or republicanism) but micro-communities often of no more that a few streets and juxtaposed with each other across hard lines on the ground ("peace lines"). Thus loyalist resistance is fundamental to an identity that is linked to unwavering communal devotion,

perceptions of ethnic purity, self-reflexive interpretations of power, and narratives of violence.[9]

Loyalists are also involved through their identity authoring in challenging the republican claim to the hegemony of victimhood. This chimes with the concept of subalternity, which derives from Gramsci, but has its widest currency in colonial and post-colonial studies. The idea, however, that official or state-sponsored historical narratives erase various oppressed and/or marginalized groups has a powerful resonance for working-class Ulster loyalists who, seemingly, seek positively to embrace subalternity. Seen by the world beyond as oppressors themselves, their self-imaging, in contrast, centres on the neglected memory of the Ulster working class, its interests suppressed by those of the Stormont unionist government. Fundamental to the transformation of their identities is the idea of "people's history", directly analogous to E.P. Thompson's "history from below" and its drive to recover the collective agency of exploited, marginalized and oppressed groups.[10] This is a discourse of betrayal and alienation, of being "sold out" as oppressed victims of unionism and the world opinion that bought the Sinn Féin message. It is this subalternity which legitimates the "right" to resist the imposition of a pluralist consensus and leads to regressive, reductionist interpretations of identity which define place in absolute terms. Notions of hybridity and diversity are rejected and places are created as loci of resistance in which their subaltern status is overtly glorified. The message is, "keep out".

The renegotiation of loyalist identities

The interconnections between resistance and subalternity establish the basis of loyalist identity reformulations since 1994. These are defined as much by their opposition to traditional unionism as to republicanism and depend on subaltern ways of thought and action consciously constructed to disrupt and perhaps deconstruct the formerly hegemonic "middle" unionism. The revisionist nature of these two concepts intersects with two other dimensions to the emergence of loyalist identities. These are: the role of heritage in defining territory and symbolic cultural landscapes; and the nature of those identities themselves. As already observed, loyalism has a very strong spatial consciousness. This is indicated, for example, by the importance of territorial markers at interfaces between loyalist and republican areas. Most obvious in the urban context, these include an array of flags, emblems, wall murals and graffiti. However, the same

battery of markers is also used to demarcate territories within loyalist areas, most obviously those held by the rival paramilitary organizations. Whichever, the cumulative result is that spatially the claims are very finely grained and the iconography is often inner directed to those micro-communities, as much as in opposition to republicanism. The scale of Northern Ireland – itself a relatively small space but with very large physic distances – is remote and, in many ways, the wider claim to Ulster is to an entirely imaginary place.

Thus representations of place are defined by their exclusivity but also by micro-communities that image themselves through representations of oppression and self-sufficiency. Their territories powerfully symbolize overlapping axes of exclusion – economic, social as well as cultural – and consequently epitomise the cult of victimhood. The sense of exclusion and alienation is further compounded by the irrelevance to the loyalist working class of globalising neo-liberalism and its technology and knowledge driven economies. The traditional industries of Northern Ireland's modernization, which created the Protestant working-class, are no more. Northern Ireland therefore has its vertical division along sectarian lines but also a horizontal divide between a relatively contented embourgeoised majority and a socially excluded *lumpenproletariat* living in marginalized, polarized housing estates festooned with ethnic territorial markers. There is no sense of hybridity or multi-culturalism in these identities: indeed, they are overtly and violently resistant to hybridisation. Thus loyalist identities are fractured and often, if not necessarily so, opposed to the principles of social democratic civic society. They are informed by a variety of ideologies extending from Marxism through fundamentalist Christianity to racism, depend on representations of cultural, economic and social exclusion, and are often violent, sexist and homophobic.

This second triangular relationship between resistance/subalternity, territory and identity defines the three dimensions to the subject matter of loyalist self-imaging. In the first instance, the territory - resistance/subalternity axis defines claims to space and place that disrupt both the old dominant ways of thinking about Ulster – British, union – but also the pluralist, consociational principles embodied in the Belfast Peace Agreement. The resistance/subalternity – identity axis in turn defines the characteristics of those new identities, which, as we have, are often regressive and defiantly anti-pluralist. Finally, the territory-identity axis points to the exclusivity of these relationships in local places that are geographical compounds of economic, social and cultural exclusion, "gated communities" for the loyalist *lumpenproletariat*. And it does well to remember

that the war (or the Troubles) was largely fought by the working classes in these working-class ghettos, both loyalist and republican. These are the actual sites of resistance and belonging.

The heritage resources for loyalist identities

Heritage is seen here as a socially constructed negotiated knowledge, set within specific social and intellectual circumstances. It follows, therefore, that its meanings can be altered as texts (including the landscape) are re-read in changing times and circumstances.[11] Heritage in the sense of using the past as a resource for the present is also a key element in identity formation and change. Moreover, it helps fix identity in place, to encapsulate a people's image of itself and validate their rights or claims to those territories. That the images may be brutish and crude does not negate their role. Essentially, heritage in Northern Ireland is being employed in a competition for the ownership of victimhood as the key element in a subaltern self-imaging. Republicanism always played this card and it is still fundamentally important in Irish America. But as we move on to consider the heritage resources for loyalist identities, we return again to the "darkness of the past" and its meanings for a people who are close to reifying a self-image of oppression and exclusion.

This interaction of heritage and identity is creating a representation of a place that is more Ulster than it is British and which is certainly not Irish. It can be argued that unionists in general always viewed the union as highly conditional. Now, however, underpinned by a strong sense of British betrayal, mounting alienation from the Peace Process, and self-imaging as "victim", loyalism, through its representation of Ulster's cultural and historical separation from the remainder of Ireland, is drifting towards the logic of a Protestant Sinn Féinism. In this "ourselves alone" discourse, alienation from Britain is compounded by a sense of betrayal from within. To a considerable extent, loyalist politics can be read as an attempt to reclaim the history and identity of the Protestant working classes from its subaltern position in the unionist state. Loyalists are less than interested in middle-class imagining of a common ground, nor are they prepared to celebrate the diversity and plurality of Northern Ireland. Rather, they seek to establish a place for themselves, one that demands its own past through which loyalism can achieve validation and legitimation. In line with the idea of an identity that sanctifies the status of victim, the six elements of the subject matter that defines this "place" is indeed a "dismal heritage".

First, of course, the traditional iconography of unionism depends on blood and/or betrayal, mixed, whenever possible, with Catholic duplicity. Critically, however, as Walker argues, this traditional unionist and Orange history reduces the past to little more than a series of events that are lacking any sense of historical narrative to match the linear continuities of the Gaelic nationalist origin-myth. [12] These disconnected moments include: the 1641 Rebellion, when Protestant settlers were massacred by Catholic rebels; the Siege of Derry in 1689; The Battle of the Boyne in 1690; the defiance of Home Rule between 1912-1914 and the Ulster Covenant; the 1st of July 1916 when the 36th (Ulster) Division was decimated on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme; the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985; and finally the betrayal of the 1998 Belfast Peace Agreement. This is the stuff of Orange banner and wall murals alike, depicting the history of the Protestant people as an endless cycle of conflict, fear of betrayal and sacrifice, "one that appears to have stopped in its tracks at the moment of its supreme expression of collective identity, the sacrifice of the Somme".[13]

The sectarian connotations of unionist and Orange historiography mesh with a second resource, that of Protestantism as a theology. It is important not to underestimate the role of religious belief in defining current trends in identity formation in Northern Ireland. There is much to be said for the argument put forward by John Dunlop, a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, that IRA violence was based on a fundamentally flawed analysis of the Irish problem. In deciding to fight the British, the Provisionals failed to recognize that the problem was actually their dissenting neighbours.[14] Thus Bruce claims that loyalism saw itself as being engaged in a religious war,[15] which was sometimes grounded in Old Testament, fundamentalist ideas of revenge, and often informed by diasporic linkages to fundamentalist sects in the United States. These can shade into an anti-ecumenical, anti-Papist, anti-pluralist discourse, which is further antagonistic to Europe, the left, feminism and gays, and can have resonances with the racism of right-wing groups elsewhere, including the National Front in Britain and the British Israelites. But even if most Protestants would reject such extremes, it is apparent that the Troubles have heightened the Protestant perception of victimhood.[16]

A third, if not very powerful, heritage resource is provided by Northern Ireland's history of industrialization and modernization although this too is double-edged. The traditional industries that employed the Protestant working classes – shipbuilding, rope works, textiles – are largely gone, replaced (if at

all) by the technology and knowledge-driven outputs of the new economy, which may have little relevance to working-class loyalists thereby accentuating the senses of betrayal, alienation and exclusion. Industrialization and modernization is thus largely elided from loyalist iconography, being used instead as a catalyst for urban regeneration. The White Star liner, "Titanic", is claimed as the most potent symbol of Northern Ireland's industrial heritage and the site of Belfast's Harland and Wolff shipyard is being reconfigured as the "Titanic Quarter". Development agencies seem curiously immune to the irony of relaunching Belfast on the back of the most famous shipwreck in history.

The Troubles themselves provide a fourth source. Loyalist iconography often links the Somme with the Troubles – the defence of small nations, the remembrance of the dead, the return from war. The burgeoning commemorative landscape marking the activities of paramilitary organizations, with its gardens of remembrance, "war memorials" and murals, is a powerful example of the role of symbolic landscapes in constructing these localized expressions of identity. Optimistically, the construction of commemorative landscapes by both loyalists and republicans is one of the most potent signs that the war is over.

Fifthly, commemoration of the Troubles is often conflated with the revision of the Somme mythology. In the first three days of the Somme offensive, which began on 1 July 1916, the 36th (Ulster) Division, raised from the ranks of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) which had been formed to, if necessary, fight for Ulster against the imposition of Home Rule in Ireland, suffered around 5,500 casualties. Some 3,000 of these were fatalities and perhaps 2,000 Ulstermen were killed on 1st July alone. Subsequently, the Somme became the *leitmotif* of Ulster's blood sacrifice for the British crown and state and the debt that Britain owed. More recently, and particularly since the ceasefires, this role has changed and the Somme has now become an integral part of people's history and central to the imaginative narratives of memory underpinning new formulations of working-class, loyalist self-identification.[17]

The "ownership" of the Somme mythology – not entirely uncontested – lies with the present UVF, a paramilitary organization founded in 1966. For the UVF, the Somme has been reborn as an unofficial "people's history", a part of the Ulster past that owes little to bourgeois official unionism. In symbolizing the suffering and exploitation, but also the pride of Ulster working-class people, the Somme bears no shame nor is it tainted by Orange sectarianism. Above all, the Somme reflects the beliefs of some paramilitaries returned from

the war (that is, released from prison) and firmly committed to the idea that only self-help and education can empower the working classes in the search for their own secure identity. It is key to a narrative designed to subvert previous readings of communal devotion, belonging and fealty to the British/unionist bourgeois establishment. Thus the Somme symbolism is crucial to the shaping of a robust – and inherently anti-British – sense of loyalist communal memorialisation. The Somme has become part of the process through which a fusion of real and imaginary space is being used to impose an identity, and therefore social control, on loyalist enclaves, while simultaneously being a central icon in the act of resistance that this constitutes to the ever-more fragmented realm of unionism and to the British state.

Finally, the Ulster-Scots movement represents a very different form of historical revisionism and marks, perhaps, the increasingly jaundiced attitudes held by loyalists towards the union. It concerns Ulster's relations with Scotland, emigration and the rebirth or invention (depending on perspective) of the Ulster-Scots language and culture. At its most developed, the Ulster-Scots movement seeks an overreaching sense of identity for Ulster that transcends the localism of loyalist history. It is, however, inherently anti-British and often can be profoundly anti-Irish. As with unionism in general, it is difficult to generalize because the Ulster-Scots movement is itself fragmented. It has origins, perhaps, in ideas that the boundary between England and Scotland can be extrapolated westwards to demarcate an Ulster that historically has always been separate from the remainder of Ireland. Hence, its principal cultural associations lie in what has been termed a Dalriadan Sea cultural province. Several writers, most notably Adamson, have gone so far as to extend this idea into the creation of an Ulster origin-myth linked to the tales and sagas of the Iron Age.[18] Gradually, the original inhabitants of Ulster were pushed back by Gaelic tribes from the south, ultimately being forced to retreat to Scotland. Consequently, the seventeenth-century Scottish Plantation of Ulster can be depicted, not as a confrontation of alien cultures, nor the oppressive colonization of the Gaelic myth, but as a re-unification and reconquest by an Ulster-Scots people once expelled from their rightful territory by the invading Gaels.[19]

This process of identity creation or revival – depending on one's ideological viewpoint – was officially recognized in the 1998 Peace Agreement, which created an Ulster-Scots Agency. This is responsible for the Ulster-Scots language and for the promotion of Ulster-Scots history, heritage and culture. As Mac Pólin remarks, there can be a depressing sense of *deja vu* about the

Ulster-Scots movement because it can be read as an analogy to traditional Irish ethno-nationalism in which the Irish language became the "green litmus test".[20] Conversely, Irish and Ulster-Scots can be portrayed as elements of a complex shared culture and clearly certain emblems of Scottishness are very important in Northern Ireland.[21] These include sport and Presbyterianism, together with the lowland Scots linguistic tradition (Ullans in Ulster). The status and integrity of that language remain controversial, with an apparently irresolvable debate as to whether it is a language or a dialect. It is this focus on the language that does seem to push Ulster-Scots towards traditional reductionist ethno-nationalism. It is clearly a loyalist rather than a unionist mindset, one response to a definite sense of inferiority among Protestants that they are excluded from "Irish" culture or even worse, rendered subservient by it. The danger is that in aping the isolationist and exclusive nature of traditional Gaelic nationalism, some in the Ulster-Scots movement are merely compounding the republican claim to an exclusive hegemony over Irishness.

Conclusions

If loyalist place in Ulster can be interpreted through the concepts of resistance and subalternity, and the ways in which they are interconnected through heritage with territory and identity, it is apparent that new formulations of place and belonging are taking place that largely deny old and traditional unionist perspectives on Northern Ireland. The dominant theme linking this iconography is of a people alone, alienated, betrayed and reliant only on their own resources. In 1996 Ruane and Todd commented that cultural differences among Protestants were much more apparent than were political variations, noting that "there is no agreement on their construction of ethnic or natural identity".[22] This process seems to be accelerating as the interconnections between resistance and subalternity combine to further deconstruct unionism and loyalism into beleaguered and regressive constructions of place. This bears out Gallaher's contention that in a politics which elides class and economic exploitation, "certain people can find no progressive categories with which they can identify".[23] Again, even though the details are different, the identity constructions of Ulster loyalism since 1994 bear distinct similarities to U.S discourses of patriotism in that they are antagonistically defined, foster exclusive views of identity, heritage and place, and promote a rigid, sectarian definition of territoriality.[24]

Consequently, the overtly progressive postmodern or postcolonial concepts of resistance and subalternity, resonant of hybrid and multicultural societies and the creation of "alternative spatialities from those defined through oppression and exploitation",[25] can be suborned by groups who are ideologically opposed to recognizing or even celebrating difference but who see the material world in terms of hard-edged and absolute conceptualisations of space. Essentially, at the micro-scale of the community, these are analogous to the ethnic nation-state and its underlying assumptions of cultural homogeneity or even purity. Loyalist subaltern resistance, with its themes of oppression, exclusion, betrayal and victimhood, is linked to an identity authoring that denies principles of consociation and consensus and takes the form of absolute conceptualisations of territory defended through violence. In replicating the zero-sum characteristics of ethnic nationalism, the logic of this subaltern "history from below" is both anti-Irish and anti-British and, as such, is the very negation of the principles of the 1998 Peace Agreement.

It does seem profoundly depressing that Ulster loyalists seem intent on reinventing micro-scale versions of the zero-sum trap of the ethnic nation-state more than a century after Gaelic nationalism began its evolution into the ideological basis of the post-partition and exclusivist Catholic Irish state. Nevertheless, this may be a necessary process. The failure of Northern Ireland as a political entity shows that the forces of cultural identity, and the dissonances which they create, cannot be assimilated within almost purely political structures. It also demonstrates the enduring power of place-centred identities and the ways in which people continue to locate themselves in clearly demarcated territories, often marked by an iconography that portrays their resistance to hybridisation. Academics can be accused of observing such processes to their own advantage, but there is more to it than that. The engagement with what socially excluded people define as their material world is part of the process of ending the "vendetta", of explaining, as Glover powerfully argues, that the only escape from ethnic absolutism is an awareness of how and why people construct such stories in the first place.[26]

Notes

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PART III: ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

9

"Science in public affairs": an early twentieth-century environmental perspective

John Sheail

Much of Robin Butlin's writing has focused on how individual persons and their respective communities perceived the world in which they lived and worked, and strove at times to effect change. Context might be all important. Attitudes toward the East Anglian Fens of the seventeenth century were, for example, profoundly affected by the availability of Dutch engineering skills and Adventurers' capital. The twentieth century has been characterised by Hal Rothman, in his environmental history of the United States, as 'the regulatory century', in the sense that government defined ever more closely personal relationships with the immediate physical world.[1] Within the UK, central government became increasingly involved in determining the scope and limits of enterprise, setting the priorities, for example, as to investment in the public sciences required for helping to create wealth and improve 'the quality of life'.[2] Whole bureaucracies became immersed in the detail as to realising these twin goals. As a Government Spokesman expressed it, 'Just as soldiers might scan the horizon with binoculars, we are scanning the horizons of science, looking for important issues that have just come into view'.[3]

In a sense, the twentieth century ended as it began. Then too there was debate, albeit in more rudimentary form, as to the relevance of what was called 'the scientific method' in achieving and, where necessary, reconciling economic and social ends. As Stephen Mosley wrote, Victorian Britain was 'the workshop of the world', and Manchester, arguably its leading industrial centre, 'the chimney of the world'. Although there were technical obstacles to mitigating

such pollution, the authorities could have done more. Even by their own criteria, the Victorians did not use 'the best practicable means' to secure abatement. There was never the groundswell of popular indignation required to effect improvement. Decades of shared experience in the mundane aspects of everyday-life had created a powerful collective association of such pollution with employment and better times.[4]

If shared experience counts for much, in weighing up the various risks inherent in wealth creation and social wellbeing, it also highlights the role of such figures as John Ruskin, who attacked Manchester as the spiritual home of air pollution.[5] A contemporary characterised Patrick Geddes as 'a seedplot of ideas' and 'a pioneer in the great task of applying learning to life'.[6] The purpose of this paper is not however to focus upon those persons who pressed so self-consciously their particular expertise, but rather to shift attention towards those more deeply immersed in actually applying such expertise to the policy-making processes of government. How could those, already convinced of the need to break the mould of shared experience, apply the potential of 'science' in public affairs'?

Science in practice

A century of statutory land-use planning might soon be celebrated. The words 'town planning' were first used in official documents in 1906, and given statutory effect three years later. The genesis of such innovative policy-making may be seen in the engineering works by which a predominantly urban population was lit, paved and sewered.[7] Robin Grove-White has suggested another level of explanation. Something much more than simply objective, scientifically-specifiable, problems were at stake. Such environmental issues were themselves a response to historically-embedded tensions and faultlines as to how the physical world, and those who populate it, might be understood and managed.[8]

The historian might represent such tensions and faultlines in Edwardian Britain as a many-faceted crisis in national confidence, stemming from both pride and unease as to the scale of nineteenth-century achievement. An edited volume of 1906, *Science in Public Affairs*, pressed the urgency of applying a 'more systematic and ordered knowledge' to public affairs. As the editor explained, the mechanical and electrical appliances of science had more than merely

transformed the detail of material life. As their effects reacted and combined with one another, the whole complexion of society was transformed. Where Britain had been one of the most rustic of civilised peoples, it had become 'one of the most preponderatingly urban'.[9] The ramifications of such change were explored in a preface to the volume by Richard B. Haldane, philosopher, lawyer and, within a few months, Minister of War. He wrote of how Britain had been rudely awakened from its 'dogmatic slumber'. Such stock-taking as prompted by a new century and monarch had been powerfully reinforced by fears of military and economic decline. The inadequacies highlighted by the Boer War were sharpened by awareness of how a second generation of industrial powers was overtaking Britain as a manufacturing nation.[10]

It was one thing to invoke the use of 'expert' knowledge and understanding in public affairs, but another to deploy it within the evolving ideologies of 'liberalism'. Experts might not only threaten the very essence of 'limited' government, in wanting to meddle in matters better left to local and private enterprise but, in so far as such specialist insight was beyond the comprehension and, therefore, control of even the most intelligent 'layman', it made ministerial responsibility a pretence and parliamentary scrutiny a sham. The challenge was therefore to find ways of accommodating such expertise within the administrative processes of local government, itself functioning within the permissive framework set by parliament and ministers (or rather their officials).[11]

Local precedent might be found, for example, in the water-resource management of the West Riding of Yorkshire. The county boroughs were the principal sources of river pollution, both in their abstraction of water for public-supply, and, more particularly, their discharge of waste, but they also had the greater incentive and means to pioneer improved methods of waste treatment. Over half the treatment works of the Riding used land irrigation. Although generally considered the most effective form of purification, the built-up nature of the characteristically-narrow valleys meant however there was often insufficient land for such irrigation. Trials were conducted by the Leeds and Sheffield authorities in the 1890s, taking advantage of recent advances in bacteriology to develop 'artificial' substrates through which the sewage and trade effluents might pass.

Such local insight and experience might be collated and appraised by official enquiry. A Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal, appointed in 1898, concluded that artificial filters, that occupied a considerably smaller area, could

be as effective as land irrigation in purifying domestic and trade wastes to the degree required. The trials instigated by the Commission itself, and dissemination of their findings, were of such utility that it became, in all but name, a standing body. The intention was not so much to impose a general Act, based on such expert findings, but rather to incorporate such guidance in the administrative process. The fact that sanitary authorities required the statutory consent of the relevant government department to a loan being raised for the construction or modification of treatment works meant such research findings could be debated and, where found relevant to the particular instance, embodied in the conditions laid down by the minister's approval. The prerogatives of elected members and officials in local and central government were protected, whilst drawing upon the evolving expertise in water-resource management.[12]

'Quality of life'

In pursuing such instances of administrative accommodation to the findings of 'the scientific approach', questions arise as to the primary concerns of those making such judgements. Far from being ignored, military preparedness and industrial competitiveness demanded that some consideration was given to 'the quality of life'. Ideas of Social Darwinism, coupled with the model of German social reform, emphasised the importance of a fit, healthy nation. Much was made of the fact that recruiting officers found only 2,000 of the 11,000 would-be volunteers from Manchester fit for actual military service in the Boer War. There was further alarm as to the physical unfitness of recruits in 1914. The new Health Insurance Scheme further highlighted the economic loss to industry from sickness and disability which earlier diagnosis and specialist treatment could have prevented.[13]

Local geographies, or rather the most active figures in local government, continued to exert powerful effect. In evidence to the inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, Thomas Coglin Horsfall, a leading figure in the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, warned of how, unless suburban development was regulated, there was grave risk of the 'squalid slums' of the city centres being reproduced on the outskirts too. More positively, the Committee recognised, in its report, that by showing 'judicious foresight and prudence' in the design, layout and location of building (along the lines that Horsfall had found in Germany), the newly 'urbanised' districts might

acquire some of 'the attributes of an ideal garden city'.[14] A section of the eventual Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act of 1909 sought

> to ensure, by means of schemes which may be prepared either by local authorities or landowners, that in future land in the vicinity of towns shall be developed in such a way as to secure proper sanitary conditions, amenity and convenience in connection with the laying out of the land itself and of any neighbouring land.

Even land-owning interests appeared to accept a curtailment, albeit extremely modest, in their freedom to develop land as they wished. As Anthony Sutcliffe noted, the key to such consensus was probably the realisation that such town-extension provisions might not only protect amenity, but even enhance the value, of the land. They further reduced the possibility of slum development affecting neighbouring properties.[15]

'Wealth creation'

The Great War most famously emphasised the relevance of 'the scientific method' both to military success and its industrial underpinning. Where Germany had been comparatively well-prepared for war, there were immediate shortages of some of the most basic supplies for the British army. In pressing for an Exchequer grant towards longer-term scientific and industrial research, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education warned, in July 1915, of how:

> we have more to fear from scientific organisation in this War and the application of science to industry in the commercial war with Germany, than anything else.[16]

The critical war situation also meant there could be no distracting controversy as to how that grant aid was given. The Government resorted to what Chester and Willson called that 'ancient and flexible body', the Privy Council. An Advisory Committee of distinguished scientists, under the aegis of the Privy Council, decided how Exchequer grant-aid should be disbursed. Its constitution, as embodied in a Department of Scientific and Industrial Research', became the precedent for the establishment of a Medical Research Council in 1919.[17]

Not only did the shortfall in industrial preparation and performance imply lessons had to be learnt, but the war brought to power and gave greater prominence to those impatient of inefficiency.[18] Such persons were appointed by the Cabinet's Reconstruction Committee to a Coal Conservation Sub Committee, in July 1916, under the chairmanship of Lord Haldane (shortly after his resignation as Lord Chancellor). The appointment of such an 'expert' enquiry as to ways of achieving greater fuel-economy sprang typically from lobbying by a learned or professional body, in this case the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Its representations followed its annual meeting in September 1915 and the Presidential Address of William A. Bone, Professor of Chemical Technology at Imperial College London. Some 189 million tons were consumed in 1913. Not only might very large direct savings be made in 'our colossal coal-bill' but, as Bone emphasised, 'a purer atmosphere and healthier conditions' might be generally achieved 'in all our large industrial areas'. That same meeting of the British Association heard of how the Manchester Corporation had appointed an Air Pollution Board, with the object of reducing smoke pollution through propaganda and research. It was estimated such pollution caused over £1 million of damage annually, in addition to 'the innumerable evil effects of smoke and fog upon public health'.[19]

The report of the Coal Conservation Committee, published in January 1918, covered both the extraction and use of coal. There was technical and legal insight into how wastage could be significantly reduced in the mining process.[20] The layout of the 1,200 individual collieries was often intricate, with large barriers of valuable coal left between each, often to avert the risk of underground flooding. It was recommended that the proposed Ministry of Mines and Minerals, as advised by those with local mining-experience, should have the powers to reduce such wastage through, say, requiring combined drainage systems to be installed.

The most pressing need was, however, to identify more efficient ways of converting the 80 million tons of coal consumed annually into motive power and, therefore, electricity for industry.[21] Electricity might be generated and distributed by the *individualistic* method, whereby each user supplied its own needs for energy. The other, the *collective* method, served an entire industrial area. In practice, a compromise had developed, where the whole country was divided into over 600 districts, each with its own public or private undertaking. The average size of plant was only 5,000 horse-power. Where such small-scale enterprise might have helped establish the industry, the rising volume and

fluctuation in demand, soon outstripped the capacity of plant intended for individual towns and the boroughs of expanding conurbations. Amalgamation was however inhibited by technical diversity (there were ten different frequencies in use), and often the pride of the municipal electricity committee in its local independence. The counties of Northumberland and Durham illustrated, however, what could be achieved by way of economies of large-scale interconnection, based on supra-large plant. As the largest in Europe, the NESCo network was a proving ground for what could be achieved in terms of lower energy costs in other compact, urbanised areas. As also in Chicago, the Rand and parts of Germany, there were economies in both capital investment and operating costs, in so far as it became easier to manage fluctuations of individual load demand. Revenue was sufficient to employ a highly-trained, technical staff. The Coal Conservation Committee recommended the division of the country into 16 districts, each with a single authority responsible for ensuring all available sources of power were utilised, so as to meet such demand as made.

The Committee estimated that, by such means, the consumption of coal for industrial motive-power could be reduced by over two-thirds or, if present consumption-levels were maintained, there would be three times as much power. Powers supplies might become so cheap as to permit electric heating, cooking and cleaning in the home on such a scale as to enable a further 35 million tons of coal to be conserved annually, thereby further contributing to the reduction of coal-smoke pollution in town and city.

The Coal Conservation Sub-Committee's recommendations, as reinforced by enquiries of the Board of Trade, were embodied in an Electricity (Supply) Act of 1919, whereby Electricity Commissioners, namely three 'experts' and two appointed for their public standing, were appointed, charged with subdividing the country into provisional districts and securing, by voluntary means where possible, such co-ordination of supplies as to provide 'an abundant and cheap supply of electricity'.[22]

The institutional environment

Writing of British science some half-century later, Geoffrey Crowther emphasised the role of social change in providing the inspiration and resources for science and technology.[23] The technical innovation and operational research

associated with the Second World War have often been cited as evidence of the impact of such stimulus. Robb has similarly drawn attention to the unprecedented stature of science in the earlier Great War.[24] Yet to be effective in times, say, of national crisis, scientists or, more precisely, their spokesmen within policy-making circles, had to be alive to the opportunities offered. It was in such a context that Tizard claimed Haldane had exerted a greater and more lasting influence than any other British statesmen of the early twentieth-century in 'bringing science to bear on national affairs'.[25]

Yet if public figures like Haldane were to show such acumen, the respective scientists must themselves display the necessary awareness and assertiveness in soliciting such patronage within government. The point was well made by Sir Norman Lockyer (an astronomer and administrator) in his presidential address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1903. Whilst science in its combined use of the material gifts of Nature, coal and iron, had made Britain the richest country by the mid-nineteenth century, the comparative failure to further that scientific spirit among all classes, and along all lines of activity, risked losing the competitive advantage. In the struggle for existence', the nation was a gigantic workshop, and the more 'the scientific method' replaced 'the rule of thumb', the greater the competitiveness of the workshop. In obtaining that end, scientists must themselves emphasise the extent to which the universities, scientific bodies, and 'everything which conduces to greater brain-power', were essential parts of 'a modern State machinery'. It was as important for the State to support them as any naval building-programme. Only by collectively asserting direct pressure upon the political process, both in central and local government, did Lockyer believe science would attain that greater primacy.[26]

As Crowther further remarked, the endeavours of later twentieth-century governments to define a scientific policy that more adequately met national needs made imperative a closer understanding of the interaction of science with society. The editor of a self-consciously scientific treatise, published in 1910 on the natural and human history of part of Scotland (himself a physical anthropologist), acknowledged how some might still perceive science as some 'special preserve'. Practising scientists however, and those who really understood the object of such enquiry, had long recognised how 'the whole knowledge field and all recorded time' fell within its purview. To be successful, local businesses must follow 'the scientific method'. Farmers must resort to science in raising crops and livestock. Fishermen must know their fishing grounds, in

terms of relating the habits of fish to weather conditions and food supply. Far from being a thing apart, 'the scientific method' was the only means to a successful conclusion, whether for the individual, social class or the State.[27] For Haldane, that approach ranged well beyond physical technology to encompass what he called 'the tremendous question of production' and, therefore, the more rigorous thought and reasoning required before any action was taken.[28] The goal was nothing less than a transformation in the purpose of government. As Sir Eric Geddes, a businessman charged with reshaping the transport system, wrote in a Cabinet memorandum of February 1919, government must extend beyond regulation and restriction. Military victory might have been achieved, but 'the war against obsolete and inefficient industrial and social conditions' was just beginning.[29]

In striving for a more integrative form of management, as implied by 'the scientific method', much valuable experience was obtained in the environmental field. An increasingly urban society was both troubled and excited by the spectrum of concern that extended from personal health, through public health, to the health of the physical environment generally. As the author of a book, *The Destruction of Daylight*, observed, engineers had developed the necessary techniques for abating smoke pollution. The 'cure' now rested with ordinary manufacturers and citizens. The intention of the author (himself a physicist at Manchester university) was to illustrate how fortunately 'cleanliness, health, economy, efficiency all pull the same way'. Economic circumstances were causing many minds to turn 'gravely to the waste of our national capital in coal'.[30] As Sidney and Beatrice Webb observed, shortly after the Great War, the whole concept of 'environment' had to encompass more than such physical manifestations as climate and famine. It also encompassed the very institutions society generated to cope with such issues, and the way they moulded mind and body. Thus in establishing an educational system, a new research body, or business agency, to anticipate and thereby mitigate such material impacts, government was not merely 'changing machinery' but, through such intervention, was having as great an effect on human life as any physical force. By such means, local authorities were increasingly responsible for the whole mental and material environment, say, in their town planning and protection of the dwindling spaces between towns, or in preventing 'the defilement of the ground and streams'.[31]

Where Edwardian Britain prided itself on responding to such issues of wealth creation and human well-being, without recourse to anything more revolutionary

than Exchequer grant-in-aid, Royal Commissions and Acts of Parliament, these very institutional devices raised profound questions as to the optimal limits of a more pro-active and interventionist stance on the part of government. Where once it was enough to extend house and street drainage, approve the architect's drawing for further housing development, and sanction private or municipal provision for electric lighting, there was now the expertise to unify the sanitary provision of whole districts, envisage even larger suburban incursions into hitherto rural districts, and make national provision for conserving coal stocks. The effect was to make a myriad human activities increasingly specialised, diverse and skilled.[32] The parliamentary and local-government franchises might have been further extended, but the future seemed to belong more to the professional expert than to the 'common' person.

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10

Changing attitudes to American wetlands in the twentieth century

Hugh Prince

In the USA at the beginning of the twentieth century, the prevailing view was that it was right and proper for landowners to drain wetlands for agriculture or fill them in order to build on the sites. Public authorities encouraged draining as a means of eliminating malaria. Laws protected some public interests in clean water and unimpeded waterways. In the second half of the century, new voices called for the protection of wetlands as absorbers of floodwaters and as waterfowl refuges.Many landowners resisted efforts to prevent draining. Boundaries between private and public interests and between utilization and conservation were redefined. American attitudes changed in different ways from those in Europe.

In England and other European countries, wetlands have been used for many centuries. Before draining, parts of the English fenlands were used for summer grazing, hunting ducks, fishing eels, collecting honey, cutting reeds and digging peat. Robin Butlin has described how medieval villages situated on higher ground, practising open field cultivation, began to add to the area under crops by taking in and draining meres and fens.[1] Whereas the English fens have been successfully cultivated for more than 300 years, drainage districts on peatlands in central Wisconsin were abandoned 30 years after they were first established. American pioneers underestimated the length and severity of Wisconsin winters and failed to anticipate the sudden onset and depth of the agricultural depression in the 1920s.[2] On the other hand, the draining of heavy soils in the USA was better timed and much more profitable than in Europe.

In England, the collective term 'wetlands' is used less frequently than in the U.S.A. Coastal marshes, river flood-plains and peat fens are identified as separate entities. Communal interests in marshes, meadows and levels have a

long history and public rights of access and use of water are customarily respected. Conservation is a twentieth-century concept. As far as wetlands are concerned, it affects the way wildlife, aquatic vegetation and, to a large extent, landscape beauty are valued by individuals, voluntary groups and public institutions. In 1949, the government established the Nature Conservancy to protect important wetlands in England and Wales as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Since 1987, other wetlands have been scheduled as Environmentally Sensitive Areas.[3] Generally, voluntary bodies, including private landowners, have initiated and led conservation activities in England and, as a last resort, the state has been called upon to protect wetland environments.

A broad view of American wetlands

In 1997, my account of wetlands in the American Midwest was published. In the same year, Ann Vileisis published a history of wetlands that dealt with the whole of the USA and made a strong appeal to conservationists[4] The book examined fundamental issues posed by attempts to regulate private use of wetlands and defend public interests. These debates caused me to revise some of my ideas. I want to review the political questions raised by Vileisis, in particular, her analysis of conflicts between attitudes of federal government agents and opinions held by wetland owners.

The title of the book, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, may puzzle some European readers. Europeans would not need to discover the Fenlands as an unknown landscape.[5] Seasonal flooding of washlands and the presence of old place-name elements such as "fen", "marsh" and "mere" are constant reminders of the inherent character of the area. Tony Phillips' study of underdraining farmland in England deals with soils that were not permanently waterlogged.[6] His history recalls surveys of wetland areas carried out in 1855 and 1883 by J. Bailey Denton.[7] Denton classed about half the area of England in 1855 as wet, including land which "has been drained or remains to be drained with advantage."[8] Denton's wetlands covered not only waterlogged peat and alluvial deposits but also stiff clay soils, which were effectively dry after tile drains had been laid. In the USA, an inventory of wetlands compiled by the federal Fish and Wildlife Service in 1956 estimated that 45 million acres of native wetlands had been lost since the 1780s.[9] That estimate, like Denton's, was based on acreages of drained farmland recorded in the U S Census of Agriculture.[10] The presumption was that wet prairies in the Midwest and other

hard-to-drain soils were waterlogged before they were tile drained. In 1979, the Fish and Wildlife Service classified wet prairies as "non-wetland"; they were written off as dry.[11]

Private property and rights to water

Wet prairies were not the only parts of the American landscape that disappeared. Why other aspects of wetlands remained 'unknown' until recently raises important questions about American law, science and politics. Attitudes to wetlands were mirrored and manipulated by politicians. William Lewis asserts that wetlands science and regulation "develop in an atmosphere that is highly charged politically."[12]

The theme of Vileisis' book is the discovery of water as the distinctive and problematic constituent in wetlands. For much of the year wetlands are saturated. Water flows in and out, carrying effluent and sediment, occasionally flooding, sometimes leaving neighbouring properties without water. She argues that "although by customary law a citizen may survey and purchase a parcel of wetland and consider it private property, the very wetness of wetlands means that there will always be a 'commons' component to them. This commons may be a public nuisance or it may be a public good."[13] Vileisis presents a history of America's wetlands as a struggle between landowners' interests and public concerns about clean water, flood prevention and wildlife conservation.

American landowners regard land as private property which they may use and dispose of as they think fit. Government regulation is viewed as an infringement of freehold rights, restricting opportunities for individual enterprise. The legal problem for the management of wetlands is that water does not belong exclusively to individuals. It has to be regulated for the benefit of all. Vileisis follows the trail of increasingly difficult disputes over water use. During the nineteenth century, the federal government encouraged draining and law courts defined the scope of public interest narrowly. Public health and safety were promoted by schemes that eliminated breeding grounds for mosquitoes and alligators. Clean water laws prohibited the discharge of raw sewage and toxic wastes into wetlands. The US Army Corps of Engineers raised banks of major streams to keep navigable waterways open.

Private owners opposed most government legislation on wetlands but many welcomed laws that established public drainage and levee districts because boards were given powers to compel all landholders within a district to share in the costs of digging ditches, raising banks and maintaining works. All participants had to contribute according to the size of their holdings, but they did not have to share their profits equally. Some individuals earned large profits and others were unable to pay their rates.

The organization of drainage and levee districts had adverse consequences. It led to the occupation and settlement of bottom lands that were previously open to periodic flooding. At the height of the draining boom in the 1920s, nearly two-thirds of the flood plain of the lower Illinois River was embanked and artificially drained. Repeated floods by the constricted river and financial difficulties caused widespread distress. A few districts were taken over by public agencies including the State of Illinois and designated as flood-crest storage areas and as game and fish reserves.[14]

After 1930, law courts in the USA began to treat public interests in water more generously, limiting landowners' freedom to drain, dredge and fill wetlands. While courts deliberated on the boundaries of private and public rights, presidents appointed and dismissed executive agencies concerned with wetlands and Congress introduced and amended bills to redefine what belonged to private owners and what fell within the public realm. Generally, Republicans upheld private interests and Democrats extended public control but two Republican presidents took leading steps to protect wetlands. In 1985, President Reagan withdrew federal subsidies from new drainage projects and in 1989, George H. W. Bush, 41st President, announced that "from this year forward, anyone who tries to drain a swamp is going to be up to his ears in alligators."[15] Bush's policy was "no net loss"; every acre drained would have to be matched by an equivalent area restored to wetlands. The directive was widely evaded and President Clinton had no greater success in stopping wetlands destruction. During the 1990s, draining slowed down as returns from all agricultural investments declined.

Voices in Washington and the country opposed to wetlands conservation

Washington did not speak with one voice. Different federal agencies pursued different objectives on behalf of different groups of citizens. From the early

nineteenth century, the Army Corps of Engineers was responsible for maintaining and improving navigable waterways. Army engineers developed techniques and machines for dredging, embanking and pumping that were used by civil engineering contractors to protect floodplains and drain wetlands. Attempts to coordinate navigation and flood control systems were insufficient to prevent recurrent flooding; generally, efforts by drainers increased flood hazards. The Corps of Engineers did not seek powers to stop risky projects. When floods occurred, the Corps successfully applied to Congress for supplementary funds and manpower to raise the height of levees and construct new diversionary channels.

Until the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Corps showed little sympathy for wetlands conservation. Environmentalists opposed the building of dams to impound floodwaters and demanded modifications to the design of the Atchafalaya floodway in order to reduce damage to coastal swamps in Louisiana.[16] The Corps was powerful enough to win these contests. It relied on the backing of millions of people living under threat of floods from the Mississippi and other great rivers. The alternative of acquiring wetlands to soak up floodwaters instead of building reservoirs was learned in the Charles River catchment in New England in the 1970s. The Corps' engineers reluctantly agreed that a non-structural solution was cheaper and more effective than building dams.

Another powerful organization in federal wetland management is the US Department of Agriculture. It was established in 1862 to promote agricultural development by collecting and circulating information useful to farmers. In 1898, the Department set up a Soil Conservation Service to survey soils, advise on cultivation and inform farmers how to prevent soil erosion. As the farmer's friend, the Department circulated information about draining, advised local drainage districts and subsidised approved drainage schemes. It also fought hard to maintain price support for crops and livestock. The Department's soil conservation policy clashed with the aims of wetlands conservation. The Department's field staff resisted the Swampbuster provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill which withdrew farm support payments and tax allowances from new drainage schemes.[17] By way of compensation, farmers were offered subsidies to take wetlands out of cultivation and put them into a Wetlands Reserve Program.

Federal officials were not simply obedient servants of their political masters. They worked on behalf of flood-plain residents and farmers whom they regarded as clients. In a material sense, the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Agriculture benefited from flood emergencies and farm crises. The occasional sufferings of flood victims and distressed farmers justified appeals by federal agencies for larger budgets and additional staff. Most officials were inclined to defend the status quo. Environmental lobbyists were unable to wring concessions from these well-established institutions until they had a federal agency of their own.

Public interests in waterfowl habitats

The campaign to save wetlands in the USA began at the end of the nineteenth century when both ornithologists and duck hunters expressed alarm at the diminution of stocks of birds. Scientists, amateur bird watchers, sportsmen and other concerned citizens joined together to form the Audubon Society in 1886. A year later the society had recruited 39,000 members and by 1901 state Audubon Societies were established in 35 states. The states raised money to purchase refuges for migratory birds and urged Congress to protect endangered species of waterfowl. The Migratory Bird Act of 1913 set a new precedent in recognizing that migratory birds belonged to the nation as a whole and that it was in the public interest that they should be saved from extinction.[18] At the beginning of the twentieth century, almost all conservation activities were directed by local associations. A federation of women's groups secured nearly a thousand acres of Florida swamps in 1916, but not until 1934 was a small part of the Everglades declared the first wetlands National Park.[19] The struggle to protect wetlands was spearheaded by voluntary organizations.

In the first decade of the century, under the leadership of President Theodore Roosevelt, the federal government and all state governments set up bureaux of biological or natural history survey. The bureaux collected data, conducted scientific enquiries into natural resources and reported their findings in published bulletins. The federal Bureau of Biological Survey also administered hunting laws and protected migratory birds. The work of the Bureau was boosted in 1934 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who appointed Thomas Beck, journalist, Jay N. Darling, cartoonist, and Aldo Leopold, ecologist, to a new committee for wildlife restoration. As a means of obtaining funds to purchase wetlands wildlife refuges, the Bureau started to sell Duck Stamps to hunters.[20]

In 1935, a windfall of $6 million was received from Congress and this helped to buy Horicon Marsh in Wisconsin and Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast.

In the 1930s and 1940s, hunters were the most active advocates for preserving wetlands. A new pressure group, Ducks Unlimited, was formed in 1937 by New York sportsman and philanthropist, Joseph Palmer Knapp. The group aimed to speed up the acquisition of threatened wetlands by collecting subscriptions and donations from private individuals and corporations, by asking Congress to tax sales of shotguns and ammunition and calling for duties on imported sporting goods. In 1938, Congress directed that a new tax on firearms and ammunition be devoted to acquiring wildlife refuges. By 1947, membership of Ducks Unlimited reached 40,000 and by 1997, it had risen to 600,000 members.[21]

Recognizing the dominant interest in waterfowl and wetlands, the Bureau of Biological Survey was renamed in 1940 the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The FWS represented a broad spectrum of environmental conservationists from scientists to sportsmen. It conducted surveys, beginning in 1954, culminating in the most detailed National Wetlands Inventory in 1983. It monitored wetlands losses and administered the Duck Stamp fund, the Wetlands Easement Program, the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program and the Endangered Species Acts. Its most valuable role was consultative. It shared responsibilities with the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Agriculture for implementing the Drainage Referral Act in 1962, the National Estuarine Protection Act of 1968 and the controversial Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 1972. These acts gave the FWS opportunities to review most proposals for draining, dredging or filling wetlands.[22] The FWS held the ultimate power to buy up threatened wetlands under the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. In the 1980s, the work of the FWS was widely applauded by a large number of people concerned with environmental questions and it enjoyed the confidence of many Democrats and Republicans in Congress.

Because it carries out interventionist and restrictive functions, the FWS has not achieved a secure position among federal agencies. It remains under the control of the Department of the Interior and two of its departmental heads tried to undermine its effectiveness. Douglas McKay, appointed Secretary of the Interior by President Eisenhower in 1952, cut its budget, diverted Duck Stamp revenues to other departmental accounts, dismissed leading scientific staff and

began to sell permits to drill oil in wildlife refuges. In the face of rising congressional opposition and widespread public indignation, McKay resigned. A later attempt to wreck the FWS by James Watt, President Reagan's Secretary of the Interior, followed a similar course. Wildlife refuges were opened to economic development, including gas and oil drilling, appropriations for acquiring and protecting refuges were reduced.[23] With mounting evidence for economic gains to be won from preserving wetlands and shocking evidence for continued losses, Congress passed the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act in 1986. Preservation was to be ensured by purchasing wetlands and a small amount of money was earmarked for this purpose.

Defending private property

In the 1980s the policy of wetlands conservation promoted by the Fish and Wildlife Service, backed by Congress, met with fierce resistance from farmers in the pothole region of North and South Dakota and Minnesota. Families in that region, remote from large cities, struggled to make a living from the land. They considered small hollows or potholes were simply impediments to the efficient use of machinery and ought to be drained and filled in. Draining with the aid of grants from the Soil Conservation Service was their last best chance of avoiding bankruptcy. They particularly resented the Swampbuster provision of the 1985 Farm Security Act because it discriminated against farmers who had missed an earlier opportunity of draining wet prairies and did not qualify for exemptions enjoyed by farmers in Iowa and elsewhere.

Some owners who were content to leave their potholes uncultivated felt no obligation to act as unpaid custodians for endangered species that happened to stray in their direction. Many regarded ducks which ate their crops and puddled land around ponds as a nuisance. The Dakotas were too far from great cities to attract duck hunters as paying guests. The state governments and local agricultural advisors shared farmers' anti-federal opinions and together they conspired to frustrate regulations sent from Washington.

Farmers who drained believed they had every right to do so. They owned property, tended the soil, produced cheap food and incurred huge debts in renewing plant and machinery. If the federal government ordered them not to drain, they required compensation for value lost to their property. They raised the objection that wetlands regulation "takes" private property values in

violation of the Fifth Amendment to the U S Constitution. A property rights movement sprang up in the prairies in the 1980s and spread across the USA in the early 1990s. It sought to reduce the power of government, encourage free enterprise and protect private property.[24] Above all, it demanded that farmers be treated no less fairly than other citizens.

Another group of property owners who felt aggrieved by federal wetlands regulations were residents in flood plains of the upper Mississippi and its tributaries. These areas suffered extensive damage in the 1993 floods. Artificial levees were breached in many places and soil was covered with deposits of sand and silt up to depths of six feet. Flood victims received relief assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and also claimed money from the National Flood Insurance Program. Damages were inspected and assessed by state and county officials and sometimes independently by charities and welfare organizations. Victims complained that different valuations were given by different assessors. More fundamentally, they objected to conditions imposed on payments.

Badly damaged structures were ordered to be demolished or rebuilt on elevated platforms or on stilts. Some owners were told that levees and other flood protection structures would not be replaced and that a flood plain would be left open to future inundations. Others learned that no further flood or crop insurance would be offered. The injustice of these rulings was that flood plain residents who had taken reasonable precautions to protect their homes were flooded in spite of their efforts. As more and more of the river had been embanked, the diminishing flood plain became too small to hold floodwaters. Old-established settlers tended to suffer at the expense of those who sheltered behind newly-built high levees. Most prudent settlers had set up drainage and levee districts and paid out of their rates for the construction and maintenance of defence works. Drainage districts were properly constituted public bodies that ought not to be dissolved arbitrarily and their members could not be legitimately dispossessed and expelled.

Some who had been made homeless could not afford housing on the uplands with the small sums of money awarded as compensation. Valmeyer in Illinois was the only large village to carry out planned relocation to a new site on a bluff above the old settlement and that project received special grants from the federal government. Individual applicants for flood relief endured long delays while claims were examined and settled. In the end, some were forced to leave

their homes and businesses. Buildings acquired by states and local authorities were pulled down and lands were leased to neighbouring farmers. Beyond the question of injustice, the process of clearance was humiliating. It showed lack of care and consideration for the sufferings of property owners.

From an opposite viewpoint, in December 1994 a House Bipartisan Task Force on Disasters recorded an opinion of some federal legislators, that local officials wasted taxpayers' money. "If state and local governments believe that the Federal Government will meet their needs in every disaster, they have less incentive to spend scarce state and local resources on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery."[25] Some observers thought that those who chose to live in hazardous areas should expect to suffer the consequences. People who returned to flood plains after experiencing a flood disaster deserved even less sympathy, yet the National Flood Insurance Program reported that 40 per cent of payments were made to properties that had claimed on two or more occasions.[26]

Expanding public interest: diminishing private rights

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the use and management of wetlands were securely in the hands of private owners. The public had rights of access to navigable waterways and clean water. Public rights were extended and enlarged little by little by legislation and directives from executive departments. Most new bills were opposed by landowners and their representatives. The two questions in dispute concerned the scope of public interests and rival claims by private individuals and public authorities to control water. The first question was whether the public at large suffered real losses from the drainage of wetlands and whether the conservation of wetlands benefited anyone. The second set of questions about ownership of water and wetland habitat was not resolved in the twentieth century.

Among the few laws that landowners supported were those setting up drainage and levee districts. In forming these districts, members created private enclosures from which fishermen, hunters, wild rice gatherers, moss collectors, cranberry growers and other wetland users were excluded. The embanking and draining of wetlands also increased the height and frequency of floods that endangered all flood-plain occupiers. Districts gave advantages to some individuals but penalised others.

The most contentious issue in wetlands management was the question of wildlife conservation. The conservation movement united people who held widely divergent views: bird lovers and hunters, scientists and fishermen. They worked together to defend wildlife and wetland habitats against those they described as destroyers. On the other hand, landowners thought that their rights as proprietors and their welfare as citizens ought to take priority over the lives of ducks. Farmers and developers regarded conservationists as special interest groups whose views were unrepresentative of the opinions of a majority of the public. Water sports enthusiasts, ice skaters and golfers held different opinions about the conservation of wetlands and their interests were disregarded. Another troubling question was why ducks should be accorded special protection. If they were an endangered species, it might be asked whether that was because there were too few ducks or too many hunters. Starlings, crows and other migratory birds were given no protection. It was difficult to decide whether particular conservation measures served the wider public interest.

An equitable solution to some problems was for conservationists to buy out wetlands required for waterfowl refuges. Purchases would be funded from voluntary contributions, Duck Stamp revenues and government grants and loans. Where wetlands lay in river flood plains, the Corps of Engineers would decide where levees were built and to what height. In 2001, the Mississippi valley suffered another flood disaster and the need to throw open extensive areas of bottom lands for periodic flooding appeared urgent. Budgetary constraints would determine the extent of evacuation schemes. Relocation of settlements from floodplains to uplands would avoid flood hazards, rehouse displaced people and reconstruct village societies. It is a very costly operation and has not been widely carried out. For those who remain in floodplains, insurance charges, related to increasing levels of risk, have to be raised. Since 1993, successes have been achieved by mitigating wetland losses where developers have restored equivalent areas to wetland in the vicinity of losses. Aquatic flora and fauna have rapidly colonised newly waterlogged sites.

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PART IV: EMPIRE STUDIES

11

Colonial law and legal historical geography: an argument from Gibraltar

Philip Howell

Introduction: how portable is law?

Peter Karsten's new book on the tensions between British colonial law and the norms of settler societies begins by asserting that "Colonists have always carried their own laws with them, observing these formal rules in the new settings to which they have migrated".[1] Never mind the relative fragility of the formal law in the face of popular expectations: this observation simply restates the long-established British legal doctrine that law was *conveyed* from the metropolitan centre to the colonial margins as British men and women established new settlements.[2] At least as far back as the eighteenth century it was a commonplace that Englishmen [sic] took with them the common law of England, along with every statute passed in its affirmation.[3]

The conceit that English law travelled does not of course amount to suggesting that it was simply replicated in the colonies. Frederic Madden made the point very clearly in arguing that British law should not be thought of as being *exported.* It was never intended to introduce the entire structure of English law: as Madden puts it, the English Common Law "lacked that simple portable quality which a code like that of Moses, Justinian or Mahomet possessed."[4] In fact, the doctrine of men carrying their law with them is palpably absurd, and was repeatedly recognised as such by imperial legislators as well as legal historians. Only those laws as were applicable in the context of a colonial society were assumed to have travelled. At the beginning of the twentieth century Francis Taylor Piggott wrote that "even our own doctrine that settlers take with them so much of the Common Law of England as is adapted to their

new conditions of existence, with such modifications as may be necessary, serves, after all, only as the root from which infinitely varying legislation ultimately springs."[5]

Whilst an impression of uniformity was in many cases desirable, only in a very few was anything substantive ever attempted in this line. For one thing, the sheer variety of British imperial possessions hardly lent itself to legal homogeneity. Race, culture, ethnicity and political expediency – all disturbed and prevented, in their particular dispositions, any possibility that the law of England could serve as the law of empire. As late as 1937, for instance, an edition of Edward Jenks's *Government of the British Empire* could make explicit the point that colonies, unlike dominions, "are in the main inhabited by people who have not the deep-seated instinct of the Anglo-Saxon for self-government, nor his long traditions of the way to exercise it."[6] This is not just a matter of the contrast between enlightened and 'primitive' societies or peoples, however. The distinction between ceded or conquered, as opposed to settled, colonies, was taken to be just as decisive. In territories conquered from peoples or regimes with what were recognised as sophisticated cultures, the laws of the conquered were assumed to be in force until such time that such possessions became Crown Colonies. Above all, though, it was the ever-growing encouragement of colonial self-government, however circumscribed, that introduced great legal diversity. Colonial legislatures providing for their own circumstances were actively promoted, and their subjection to metropolitan review was increasingly light. The vague but appealing formula of 'repugnancy' asserted the subordination of colonial legislation to the fundamental principles of the English common law, but the relaxation of these provisions was encoded in the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865: 'repugnancy' was not a dead letter, but colonial legislation could not be invalidated unless such laws went against imperial statutes *expressly* applicable to a colony.[7] The whole tenor of imperial legal thinking went against legal uniformity.

The fitful and spasmodic nature of imperial legislation, its 'absence of method', makes the very notion of 'colonial law' distinctly problematic, but there was nevertheless a colonial legal system. Figure 11.1, in which the distance between the metropolis and the colony is measured horizontally, whilst something of the temporal dimension is plotted vertically, is intended to sketch the imperial legal network in which colonial law was embedded in the nineteenth century, and specifically around the time of the passing of the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865.[8]

Metropolis		Colony
		Lex Loci (*conquered territories only, up to Crown Colony status*)
(*Colonial Office*)	←→	Proclamations, Ordinances, Orders in Council
English Common Law (*if applicable*)	→→	
Imperial Legislation	→→	
(*Colonial Office Review*)	←→	Colonial Legislation (*if not 'repugnant'*)
Imperial Legislation (*if specifically intended*)	→→	

Figure 11.1 A system of British colonial law

To say that Englishmen carried their laws with them is therefore no more than a conceit: at best a formulation insisting on the priority of the principles of English common law. In practice, sometimes the English law was inapplicable, inadvisable, or politically inexpedient. Sometimes other, older legal systems took priority, if only for a time. Sometimes, colonial law meant legislation arrived at by British colonists themselves. What we have is a potentially very complex and dynamic legal cartography.

Gibraltar: a place apart

It was also an unstable system, lacking in clarity and vulnerable to challenge. To try and draw out some of the problems inherent in British imperial legalism this essay turns to the small and unprepossessing colony of Gibraltar. Gibraltar is especially illuminating because in the imperial scheme of things it is hard to place. Though it was clearly a colony of conquest rather than of settlement – it

was taken from the Spanish in 1704, ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, and never had more than a few hundred British-born residents – its status as a Fortress ensured that it was from the start run on authoritarian lines rather than being governed by the law of Spain.[9] The civilian population were in the main neither settlers nor indigenes: they were mostly immigrants from the Spanish mainland and from the rest of Europe, and all but a few were unwelcome to the Rock's Governors, concerned with overcrowding and imperial security.[10] Secondly, although Gibraltar became a Crown Colony in 1830, it lacked representative institutions and could never be considered on the path to dominion self-government. The direct link to Parliamentary authority was also weak. In conquered colonies like Gibraltar, as Sir Henry Jenkyns pointed out, the Crown has absolute power by Order in Council. In places like these 'the King is a more prominent link than Parliament between the United Kingdom and the British possession'.[11]

For these reasons, Gibraltar cannot be very easily placed in the diagram of colonial and imperial law sketched above. As everyone acknowledged, Gibraltar was a place apart, with its own particular problems. The fact that it was at the same time a Fortress and a Colony indicated something of the peculiar difficulties faced by its rulers. Ruled by ordinance, law meant little more than the governor's directive, according to what was presumed necessary for the defence of British interests. This is not to say that the law was unimportant, buried under military necessity and sovereign authority. Law and sovereignty, *contra* some readings of Foucault, are not the same thing, and conflict between them is an important part of the story of law and its geography.[12]

One notable area here is the criminal law relating to the control of the civilian population. In Gibraltar, British authorities depended on powers of registering non-British subjects to reside and work in the colony only on temporary and rescindable permits.[13] Under this law, for instance, prostitute women who refused or neglected to submit to regular examination for signs of communicable venereal disease could be expelled from the colony. They were, not euphemistically but precisely, 'public visitors' authorised and inspected by the garrison's authorities. They were 'aliens' whose legal status as temporary residents made the regulation of prostitution in Gibraltar possible.[14] Law, in the shape of the ordinances regulating work and residence, was fundamental to the exercise of British power and authority in Gibraltar.

The problem with the permit system, however, useful as it was in controlling the civil population, was that it applied only to 'aliens'. Under *English* law, automatic right of residence had to be granted to those born in Gibraltar itself or married to British subjects. The presence of these 'natives', inalienable and irremovable, constituted a kind of demographic time bomb with the potential to subvert the authority of the colonial power. As their numbers rose, so the Governor's power over the civilian population diminished. This is why it was essential for the authorities to regulate the spread of British citizenship, through controls on marriage, and through an insistence that 'alien' women should leave the colony for their accouchements.[15] But the powers of registration and removal had been applied inconsistently, or had fallen into abeyance. By the 1860s, the role of the local ordinances as the basis for protecting the health and security of the Fortress had never looked so insecure.

Legal deadlock

This was definitely not the time to question the entire structure of legal authority in Gibraltar. But this is exactly what happened in 1866, immediately in the wake of the passing of the Colonial Laws Validity Act. Whilst that Act was intended to decisively clarify the position of colonial legislation vis-à-vis English law, we can see that in Gibraltar it simply led on to further problems. Its immediate effect was to plunge the colony into a kind of legal crisis, with the colony's two principal legal officers entirely at variance. In one corner was the Chief Justice Sir James Cochrane, and in the other, Frederic Solly Flood, Attorney General and Police Magistrate. These two men were, by 1867, no longer on speaking terms – a matter of 'scandal' according to Governor Sir Richard Airey.[16] The argument between them concerned, in the Governor's words, the important point 'whether Imperial Acts passed since 1830 were binding in Gibraltar, though not made expressly applicable to that place either by local ordinance or Orders in Council'.[17] That is, did the structures of English Common Law and the statutes of Parliament continue to apply, or did the colonial charter of 1830 usher in a new colonial era in which British statutes passed after that date did not apply?

Cochrane first raised this question in 1862, but the point was only decided upon after the passing of the Colonial Laws Validity Act. The empire's law officers

reported decisively that Gibraltar was a 'possession' falling under the authority of 28 & 29 Vict.c.63 and no British Act passed since 1830 applied to the colony. This judgement straightforwardly followed the formula of the 1865 act, that unless expressly intended and specified, no Parliamentary Statute held force. But whereas this was intended to reduce conflict with colonial legislatures, in Gibraltar this ruling only created further difficulties. What it meant in Gibraltar was that the period between 1830 and 1865 became a legal limbo. After 1830 law officers, without a representative legislature, had acted on the assumption that changes to English statutes were binding. Now it appeared, retrospectively, that they had been acting illegally. Practices that had arisen in Gibraltar seemed to have no legal basis whatever.

For Flood, seeking to reassert the Governor's legal prerogatives, this was a disastrous situation, threatening the entire structure of British authority. Just on the matter of prostitute registration alone, Flood argued that the present situation confirmed "the right of infamous alien women ... to lead an abandoned life and set the Police Regulations at Defiance and fill Gibraltar with their bastards."[18] The hostility of the civilian population of Gibraltar, increasingly assertive about their rights, threatened not only the moral, medical and military functioning of the colony but also the rule of law and British sovereign authority:

> For some few years past there has gradually been growing up a determination on the part of extraneous authorities, practically to take the Government of Gibraltar out of the hand of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and to dictate to Her Government, the mode how the Civil Affairs of this Fortress may be administered, as if it was a dependency of a Foreign Government, and for the benefit of any interest except that of England.[19]

Flood wished to revise the criminal law to restore the authority of the permit system. Landholders, merchants and traders in Gibraltar all objected, however, to his proposed legislation, on the grounds of it being inconsistent with English law. The memorial of the Exchange Committee and Chamber of Commerce refers for instance to the 'most important and vital question' as to 'whether the Inhabitants of Gibraltar are entitled to the benefit of the Legislation of the Imperial Parliament? - in other words, whether Gibraltar is to be governed by English Laws or not?'[20] Tellingly, they objected to principles and enactments in Flood's draft ordinances (such as banishment, the cornerstone of British authority over the population) as being 'repugnant' to the English law.

These representations, along with acrimonious personal attacks, were seen by Flood as part of a conspiracy 'to secure the disregard of English law by English officers through the hands of the British Government itself'.[21] In the context of sanitary crisis, legal confusion, and civilian opposition, Flood felt that this was nothing less than a question as to whether the people shall be governed with or without law. He maintained that British sovereignty, gained by right of conquest, made British military and colonial interests paramount. Legislation could not be based on civil considerations, nor could the population be treated as British citizens. The rights of the civilian population – "of whom not one tenth is capable of comprehending the nature of the English Constitution or laws of even understanding a word of the English language" – made the application of English statute law quite impossible:

> The exceptional condition of Gibraltar as a part of a foreign kingdom acquired in War and held for Military and Imperial purposes only and not as an English garrison with only a few hundreds (about 400) English out of a population of 18,000 of whom not one is capable of comprehending the nature of the English Constitution or laws or even understanding a word of the English language, is such, that the general introduction of English statute law would be unintelligible to the masses and be received only as concession to clamour, would give additional energy to the democratic element ... and be fatal to peace order and good Government.[22]

For him, English law meant not the transferral of English privileges but the retention of sovereign authority. His answer was to go into a kind of legislative overdrive, producing draft ordinance after draft ordinance to replace the existing, legally dubious statutes.

Despite the apparently decisive intervention of Crown's law officers, Chief Justice Cochrane refused to budge from his view that English law still applied. His view, approximating to the discredited doctrine of uniformity of law, was that all English Acts applicable to Gibraltar were in force without any specific ordinance:

> In a community in which foreign languages habits and feelings are so prevalent, it is not insignificant that it should be considered with respect to its laws, to be an integral part of the United Kingdom.[23]

Flood of course vehemently opposed this proposition. Cochrane's proposal would only foster 'the delusion that Gibraltar governs the Governor and that the Governor does not govern Gibraltar'.[24] Flood warned that:

> The Queen in Council and the Governor should by a single stroke of the pen be deprived of all legislative power whatever, and that laws which Parliament never intended to bind Gibraltar, which the Queen in Council and also the Governor may think in the highest degree practically inexpedient, and which the community may unanimously consider injurious shall, without any previous notice, be put in execution by means of ex post facto decisions of the judge for the time being if he should happen to think them in a legal sense applicable.[25]

We have the spectre here of a conflict between law and sovereignty, between Gibraltar's status as Colony and Fortress, and between metropolitan forms and local necessity.

As I have noted, Cochrane's proposal went against the grain of English colonial office thinking, and the Colonial Office wrote to Governor Airey to recommend that the proper mode of proceeding was Flood's: to pass particular laws by ordinance, and to incorporate as much English law as possible. But whilst they did agree that legislation was necessary Flood was never well favoured – 'not a prudent man' was the colonial office's cautious assessment.[26] The Governor remarked that 'The great and undiminishing unpopularity and mistrust of Mr. Flood, with this generally most peaceable community, is I regret to say, a source of great difficulty in arriving at satisfactory legislation on any one subject'.[27] The revision of Gibraltar's legal system depended on more than the passing of new ordinances, and there seems to have been something of a compromise between Cochrane's argument for uniformity and Flood's argument for particularity. As far as the Colonial Office saw it, in considered summary, there were four possibilities open to legislators:

> (1) enactment of substantive law corresponding mutatis mutandis to each English Improvement – this is the best method of maintaining laws but needs efficient staff;
>
> (2) enacting that such & such English laws shall be in force with such & such alterations – this is similar but less workmanlike;
>
> (3) by enacting from time to time the law of England – a fresh starting point being taken;

> (4) by enacting as is supposed to have been done in Gibraltar, that the law of England is *for the time being* in force – this being objectionable because two separate authorities – Parliament & the Queen in Council – are legislating for the same place concurrently, Parliament being in fact ignorant of so doing. ...It is indispensable that the law of England should be so applied wholesale, but with an indefinite qualification ("so far as applicable &c.") when the colony is started or at some subsequent period of its existence; - but it is desirable if possible that all subsequent modifications should be made by an authority which will consider how far and in what shape those modifications are really fitted for the Colony.[28]

The Colonial Office official who drafted this memo went on to argue that whilst strategy (4) is plainly bad, and strategy (3) is but a modification of (4), strategy (3) should nevertheless be adopted because Gibraltar has operated on principle (4) up to now and it would be disturbing to challenge it. Moreover, he noted, without efficient staff or legislature it is the only practicable solution. This would simply retrospectively validate the colony's proceedings. It would compel the local government and legislature to adopt what they think ought to be adopted, and to compel the courts to apply no English law not so expressly adopted.

Conclusions

The practice of legislative updating eliminated the necessity of constant and specific revisions.[29] It represents a sort of compromise between uniformity and local legislation, or perhaps a kind of dynamic uniformity, periodically reasserting the primacy of not just the principles of the English Common Law but also of all applicable parliamentary decisions up to that time. This solution to the problem of the portability of the law, to the difficulties involved in its portage, is notable because of its contrast with the general trend of colonial policy. Rather than progressively loosen the grip of formal English law on the colonies, this tactic seems to have hung on to elements of legal uniformity.

It is salutary that this should have happened not just at the same time as the Colonial Laws Validity Act, but in direct response to it. The act may well be seen as an ultimately progressive measure, with its recognition of the differences in colonial situations, and its support for indirect rule. In Gibraltar, though, what it seems to have done in the first instance is to have prompted a host of legal

worries and a flurry of legislative activity. Gibraltar was rather hastily shored up against possible legal challenges by a compromise between legal uniformity with the metropolis and the particular legal needs of the colonial administration. Gibraltar's legal system took this path because of the need to hang on to authoritarian control of a vital naval base and garrison. In the case of Gibraltar's policing, the passing of local ordinances was able to circumvent much of the danger posed by the civilian population and its troubling tendency to increase through intermarriage and immigration. Governor Airey could certainly agree with Flood that Gibraltar's "character as a Fortress should be more regarded than that of a Colony": "I do not anticipate any difficulty in Laws being framed which would effectually in the first place, secure all necessary military control and power, and yet would not press vexatiously on the civil inhabitants, or prove detrimental to commercial interests."[30]

It is a mistake though to equate greater amounts of uniformity with authoritarianism and greater amounts of localism with liberalism. Neither uniformity nor the concession to local circumstances is a liberal or authoritarian strategy in its own right, and too long has the constitutional argument been put in these terms. In Gibraltar, representatives of the civilian population could take their stand behind English law as a defence against colonial discipline; authoritarians like Flood, on the other hand, wanted local ordinances to shore up that disciplinary control. In the end, the story of law and the legal relationship between colony and metropolis is not really a liberal story of enlightened imperial rule. The complexity that exists here rests moreover in something more than the contrast between the formal law of the metropolis and the expectations and experiences of colonial populations. It goes beyond the contrast between direct and indirect rule, and the general progression from the former to the latter. In a more general sense we should link the story of the law's portability to an historical geography of the extension of and the limits reached by a host of cultural concepts and practices. In any event, the doctrine of the portability of English law deserves more attention from both legal and historical geographers.[31]

Notes

[1] P. Karsten, *Between Law and Custom: 'High' and 'Low' Legal Cultures in the Lands of the British Diaspora – the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, 1600-1900* (Cambridge 2002) 1

[2] Note Clark's 1833 opinion that "the common law of England is the common law of the plantations and all statutes in affirmance of the common law passed in England antecedent to the settlement of any colony are in force in that colony, unless there is some private Act to the contrary, though no statutes made since these settlements are there in force, unless the colonies are therein mentioned" (quoted in D. B. Swinfen, *Imperial Control of Colonial Legislation, 1813-1865: A Study of British Policy Towards Colonial Legislative Power* (Oxford 1970) 55

[3] See T. O. Elias, *British Colonial Law: A Comparative Study of the Interaction between English and Local Laws in British Dependencies* (London 1962) on the migration of the law

[4] F. Madden, Some origins and purposes in the formation of British colonial government', in K. Robinson and F. Madden (Eds) *Essays in Imperial Government Presented to Margery Perham* (Oxford 1963) 1-22, 4

[5] F. T. Piggott, *The Imperial Statutes Applicable to the Colonies, Volume 1, Statutes of General Application* (London 1902) x

[6] E. Jenks, *The Government of the British Empire* (London 1937)

[7] D.B. Swinfen, *Imperial Control of Colonial Legislation 1813-1865: A Study of British Policy towards Colonial Legislative Powers* (Oxford, 1970)

[8] A. Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London 2001). For "absence of method" see Piggott, *op.cit. x*

[9] Elias, *op.cit.*, 79: "when the English first settled in places like the West Indian islands, Gibraltar and Malta, they took with them so much of English law as was necessary to regulate their lives there. There was then no immediate question of the recognition of indigenous law, since the natives formed only a small proportion of the local population"

[10] "In the military outpost of Gibraltar, strange to relate, some 80 per cent of the population are British Subjects and only about 5 per cent are Spaniards in a territory which the present Spanish Government claims for Spain. The laws of Gibraltar are therefore as English as local circumstances permit": Elias, *op.cit.* 15

[11] H. Jenkyns, *British Rule and Jurisdiction Beyond the Seas* (Oxford 1902) 12. Jenkyns also notes that "The old practice of a law having no effect until confirmed by the Crown has ceased except in Gibraltar" (15) and "In a fortress like Gibraltar legislative power of the Crown may be used for aiding its defence" (95)

[12] On this theme, see A. Hunt and G. Wickham, *Foucault and Law: Towards a Sociology of Law as Governance* (London 1994)

[13] See D. A. Burke and L. A. Sawchuk, Alien encounters: the *jus soli* and reproductive politics in the 19th-century fortress and colony of Gibraltar *History of the Family* **6** (2001) 531-61

[14] See my unpublished paper, 'Sexuality, sovereignty and space: law, government and the geography of prostitution in colonial Gibraltar'

[15] Swinfen, *op.cit.*, 69-73, recognises that areas of the law in which uniformity were thought eminently desirable included the questions of colonial marriage laws, naturalisation and the status of aliens. These same questions, in Gibraltar, mandated special legislation.

[16] Public Record Office CO 91/289, Airey to Duke of Buckingham & Chandos, 8 July 1867

[17] *Ibid.*, Airey to Sir John Pakington, 13 April 1867

[18] CO 91/285, Flood to Airey, 9 November 1866

[19] CO 91/285 Flood to Colonial Secretary Freeling, 17 September 1866

[20] CO 91/289 2 April 1867. See also *Minutes of the Public Meeting held in the Exchange Room, Gibraltar, on Monday, 4th February 1867* (Gibraltar 1867) in CO 91/283

[21] CO 91/285 Flood to Freeling, 17 September 1866
[22] CO 91/289 Flood to Freeling, 12 August 1867
[23] CO 91/285 Cochrane to Airey, 4 December 1866
[24] CO 91/289 Flood to Freeling, 16 May 1867
[25] CO 91/285 Flood to Acting Colonial Secretary, 25 December 1866
[26] CO 91/289 Holland to Barrow, 26 June 1867
[27] *Ibid.*, Airey to Buckingham, 8 September 1867
[28] *Ibid.*, memorandum to Holland, 8 July 1867
[29] See Jenkyns, *op.cit.*, 6. Elias, *op.cit.*, 18
[30] CO 91/289 Airey to Buckingham, 23 August 1867
[31] Nevertheless, for good recent work in the field of colonial law, see L. Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge 2002) and D. Kirkby and C. Coleborne (Eds) *Law, History and Colonialism: the Reach of Empire* (Manchester 2001)

12

Trans-imperial networks: Britain, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand during the first half of the nineteenth-century

Alan Lester

This essay begins by outlining the trajectory of research that has led me to conceive of the British Empire as a dynamic bundle of overlapping and intersecting networks of communication. Having briefly contrasted this conceptualisation with others that have informed a great deal of writing about the British Empire, it then focuses on two particular circuits of communication between distant colonial sites: that maintained by missionaries and their philanthropic allies, and that created by predominantly bourgeois settlers. It argues that an historical geography of these circuits enables us to better comprehend the constitution of colonial culture and discourse in Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, as well as in Britain itself.

A research trajectory: The Cape and Britain

In a recent book, I examined the ways in which the Cape Colony figured in a post-emancipation globalisation of British humanitarian concern. The book focused largely on southern African missionaries' and metropolitan philanthropists' imaginations of that particular colony.[1] However, in researching the book I could not avoid encountering again and again the ways in which these philanthropists' vision of proper authority in the Cape was bound up with their impression of other spaces – of North America, India, Australia, New Zealand and even the slums of London and Glasgow.

Of course, this trans-global range of reference was much more explicit in the writings of metropolitan-based reformers than it was in the records of the Cape-based missionaries with whom they corresponded. These metropolitan activists were the recipients of communications from missionaries in other colonial and

metropolitan spaces as well as the Cape, while missionaries in the Cape itself were rather more preoccupied with events on their own particular mission stations and within the colony at large. Nevertheless, even isolated missionaries on the colonial frontier were aware that they were thinking and writing for metropolitan consumption, and that their words would thus be interpreted in a more global light. Furthermore, they knew that missives from the Cape would be collated and disseminated by their home societies to missionaries and their supporters in other colonies. They were also men, and women if we include their wives, who had volunteered for service in God's cause regardless of where their Society intended to send them, so their imagination from the outset ranged across a multitude of potentially fruitful sites. Even once they were preoccupied with local affairs, they never lost sight of the fact that their labours were one tiny component of an enterprise aimed at reforming and redeeming the world at large.

In my research for the book, however, I generally brushed aside those passages where these missionaries and their correspondents cast their gaze across these other expanses of colonial territory. I saw them as interesting but irrelevant for my particular study. Similarly, when I trawled through the minutes of the Select Committee on Aborigines of 1836-7 to find out what parliamentary philanthropists thought of British colonisation in the eastern Cape, I skimmed over the extensive passages dealing with Australian, Canadian and other non-South African spaces. But ultimately I had to admit that this selective reading was doing violence to a deeply inscribed and laboriously constructed philanthropic imagination – one that transcended modern national boundaries. In the vision that bound colonial and metropolitan philanthropists together, the Cape and its people were unavoidably framed in relation to other places and peoples, just as those other places and peoples were themselves framed in relation, in part, to the Cape.

Aside from governmental despatches and local official records, the other main material informing this research was that written by Britons of both sexes and from diverse class, regional and religious backgrounds who had emigrated to the eastern Cape in 1820. These records, and especially the newspapers that they printed and read, convinced me that a surprisingly strong and emotive reaction against the philanthropic critique of their actions had been one of the main motivations for settlers to create new, unifying identities as South African Britons.[2] My concentration in reading the settlers' records was on their representations of local missionaries and their metropolitan allies. I pointed to

the ways in which the settlers constructed a common narrative, in which these humanitarians were naively and dangerously interfering with a finely balanced colonial society, that only the settlers themselves understood.[3]

Again, though, this act of concentration led me to ignore the settlers' own, wider geographical range of reference. Returning to the settlers' newspapers after I had completed the book, and investigating some contemporaneous Australian and New Zealand papers, it became clear that British settlers in each of these colonies corresponded through the press. Each colonial community thought of itself in relation to other settler communities, especially in terms of the struggles that they faced in legitimating their activities against a common humanitarian critique. Turning to the established historical literature on British colonialism, however, it is surprising how little of it addresses these kinds of interconnection.

Modes of writing the Empire

Broadly, there seem to be two main perspectives on imperial history. The first is from a vantage point at the metropolitan "centre", gazing outwards and surveying a range of colonial terrains insofar as they have been shaped by decisions made, capital sourced and soldiers sent from Britain. Most recently, Cain and Hopkins' "Gentlemanly Capitalism" thesis does this.[4] London's commercial and financial interests here are the hub from which ideas, capital, power and people radiate outwards to the periphery rather like the spokes of a bicycle wheel.

An alternative perspective derives from a stance from the "periphery". There is an enormous number of discrete, parochial, histories of each former British colony, in most of which modern national borders are set as the spatial limits of investigation and the "birth of the nation" is the dominant motif. Originally associated with twentieth century nationalist historiography in each Dominion site and indigenous nationalism in India, this mode of history writing characterises many recent texts, including the majority of chapters in the *Oxford History of the British Empire*.[5] Although useful in insisting on the particularity of any given colonial society, such work can encourage us to overlook the ways that their histories were nonetheless co-constituted by trans-imperial flows of ideas, personnel and material.[6]

The mode of history writing that really should allow for these kinds of spatial transactions is, of course, comparative history, which is aimed directly at the examination of multiple sites.Yet this too generally fails to examine interconnection. Skocpol and Somers identify three main "logics" informing the majority of work in comparative history.[7] The first is to demonstrate the effectiveness of a theory by applying it to more than one spatial and historical context.[8] The second is to use differently located cases to show how processes work out differently in different contexts,[9] and the third is to conduct a rather positivist "Macro-causal analysis ... which manipulates groups of cases to control the sources of variation in order to make causal inferences ... about a large number of cases".[10] None of these 'logics', though, quite addresses the actual *articulations* between places. A more networked account would focus on the circuits through which particular discourses and practices travelled *between* these 'cases', constituting identities and practices differentially within each of them.

Far more conducive to my project than metropolitan– or colony-centred imperial history, or the comparative method, has been an interdisciplinary body of work lately described as "new imperial history". This writing, by Ann Laura Stoler and Catherine Hall, for example, has been influenced by the contemporary politics of feminism and postcolonialism, but at the same time it tends to be fastidious in its historical research. It treats the discourses of class, race and gender as mutually constituted and contingently intersecting, and it also connects colonial and metropolitan spaces, exploring their reciprocal configuration. [11]

Although the focus of this work has been on transactions between a specific colony and its metropole, whether it be Jamaica and Britain or Java and the Netherlands, much of it demonstrates an awareness that these particular interactions were components of more extensive networks connecting multiple colonial and metropolitan sites. Others have recently focused directly on discursive circuits that connected different colonial spaces together, sometimes via the British metropole, but sometimes not. Tony Ballantyne, for instance, has researched ideas about Aryanism and racial difference that circulated directly between India and New Zealand as well as much further afield.

Preferring the term 'web' to 'network', Ballantyne argues as follows:

> The web metaphor has several advantages for the conceptualisation of the imperial past. At a general level, it underscores that the empire was ... a complex fabrication fashioned out of a great number of disparate parts that were brought together into a variety of new relationships ... The web captures the integrative nature of ... cultural traffic, the ways imperial institutions and structures connected disparate points in space into a complex mesh of networks ... Empires, like webs, were fragile (prone to crises where important threads are broken or structural nodes destroyed), yet also dynamic, being constantly remade and reconfigured through concerted thought and effort.[12]

Yet it is insufficient to conceptualise a single web of communication, no matter how complex and intertwined its strands. The interpenetration of *different* webs is particularly evident in the way that many interests, each dispersed across the imperial expanse, shared and contested the same specific "nodal points". Of these points, perhaps the Colonial Office in London is the most obvious. Overworked clerks here received petitions from settlers, appeals from missionary directors and lobbying from merchants from every site of colonial governance and through channels of communication peopled by opposed configurations of interest.

While they intersected at such key nodal points, however, each of these configurations of interest had its own distinctive geography of connection. To give some examples, colonial officials elaborated a trans-imperial discourse of governmentality through ties of patronage centred both on the Colonial Office and on Army headquarters at Horse Guards;[13] a growing body of scientists developed a modern, global environmental discourse with Kew Gardens as the most significant metropolitan "centre of calculation" and subsidiary centres in colonial botanical gardens;[14] missionaries and evangelical philanthropists enlarged upon their vision of benign imperialism not only on their colonial mission stations, but also in rallies at Exeter Hall and in the London and provincial headquarters of their societies,[15] and colonial settlers corresponded with each other through "local" nodal points such as Cape Town and Sydney, with family and friends in Britain, and with London-based parliamentary lobbyists. The remainder of this paper focuses solely on the networks established and contested by missionaries and their philanthropic allies on the one hand, and colonial settlers on the other.

Interconnections: New South Wales, The Cape, New Zealand and Britain

Humanitarian networks

In December 1834 an alliance of Xhosa chiefdoms waged war in an attempt to reclaim land appropriated by British settlers on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. This became a critical moment in the formulation of post-emancipation philanthropy. Dr John Philip, the London Missionary Society (LMS) Director in the Cape, ensured that news of the frontier war and its causes was dispatched to Thomas Fowell Buxton, Wilberforce's successor as leader of the antislavery movement in the House of Commons. Buxton saw the events on the eastern Cape frontier as an opportunity for parliament to enquire officially into the activities of free British settlers on the expanding fringes of the Empire as a whole. Buxton's endeavours resulted in the establishment of the Select Committee on Aborigines in 1836 to investigate colonial policy in southern Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, as well as British North America. The Committee summoned and questioned witnesses from each of these colonies and its final Report wove their testimony into a narrative of individual and national guilt.

Within this narrative, the atonement that Britain had achieved through the abolition of the slave trade was being jeopardized by abuses such as the usurpation of indigenous people's land, the seizure of their property, the "debasement of their character" and even their outright murder at the hands of British colonists. When, inspired by the Aborigines Committee in London, John Saunders launched the Sydney-based Aborigines Protection Society in 1838, he declared that he did 'not select individual delinquents' among British emigrants to New South Wales for castigation, but rather he "impeach[ed] the nation".[16]

The Committee's Report was translated during the 1830s and 1840s into policy interventions at each colonial site. Its authors had described the effects of free British settlement in New South Wales as "dreadful beyond example, both in the diminution of [the Aborigines'] numbers and in their demoralization".[17] They saw the lamentable fate of Tasmania's Aborigines as heralding the future for mainland Aborigines too, unless settler activities were checked. The man responsible for the remaining Tasmanian Aborigines' removal to Flinders Island, George Robinson agreed. "We should fly to their relief", he urged. "We

should make some atonement for the misery we have entailed upon the original proprietors of this land".[18] In 1839, Governor Gipps issued a public notice declaring "that each succeeding dispatch from the Secretary of State, marks in an increasing degree the importance which Her Majesty's Government, and no less Parliament and the people of Great Britain, attach to the just and humane treatment of the aborigines".[19]

It was by no means only metropolitan campaigners who brought a more philanthropic oversight to the Australian colonies. Just as John Philip had done from the Cape, local missionaries such as George Robinson and Lancelot Threlkeld lobbied extensively within Australia itself and through their metropolitan contacts.[20] Partly as a result of their efforts, the Aborigines Committee recommended that Protectors of Aborigines be appointed to each of the Australian colonies. They were to attach themselves to specific tribes and "protect them as far as they could ... from any encroachments on their property, and from acts of cruelty, oppression, or injustice, and faithfully represent their wants, wishes, and grievances" to the colonial government.[21]

While metropolitan and colonial philanthropists intervened against British settlers and on behalf of Aborigines, they also attempted to represent convicts in Australia. In response to horror stories emanating from New South Wales' penal settlements they began the campaign for the abolition of transportation, which meshed well with Buxton's domestic prison reform activities. The "respectable" settlers who came to be known as the Exclusivists in New South Wales, however, had an interest in maintaining the free convict labour supply, and this additional philanthropic intervention was a further reason why they felt obliged to mobilize against colonial philanthropy.[22]

Across the Tasman Sea, the new, largely "respectable", emigrants brought out to New Zealand by Wakefield's Company were developing their own grievance against local missionaries and their metropolitan correspondents. The most active missionary body in the new colony was the Church Missionary Society, whose local Director was Dandeson Coates. Just like his counterpart in the Cape, he travelled to London to give evidence before the Aborigines Committee, and his testimony, alongside lessons learned from the Cape, was crucial in moulding the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty established Maori title, reserved large areas for exclusive Maori occupation, and required that the Company had to go through state-registered channels to purchase land before allocating it to settlers. The new settlers saw its supporters as placing the needs

of Maori "savages" above those of fellow Britons, who were, they asserted, simply trying to carve out a new terrain for British commerce and new lives for their families.[23]

In the Cape, humanitarian intervention was resented especially bitterly by most of the British settlers who had taken assisted emigration. As a result partly of the evidence taken by the Aborigines Committee from John Philip, the Khoikhoi Andries Stoeffels and the Xhosa Dyani Tshatshu, land seized from the Xhosa during the 1834-5 frontier war and intended for settler sheep farms was handed back. This, as settlers were keen to point out, was despite the fact that the Xhosa had just launched an attack on the colony and on the British settlements in particular.[24] Here, philanthropic intervention, both local and metropolitan, was seen as a distressing betrayal of fellow Britons facing a dangerous enemy.[25]

In areas of new colonial settlement in New South Wales, New Zealand and the Cape during the 1830s and 1840s, then, there were real and meaningful conflicts between settler communities on the one hand, and well-connected colonial and metropolitan philanthropists on the other, about the proper treatment of indigenous peoples, subordinate classes and land allocation. In defining the ways that Britons could and should behave towards colonised others, philanthropists like Buxton, Threlkeld, Coates and Philip, from their different sites of Empire, were in effect cataloguing those actions that would render emigrants from Britain's shores no longer entitled to metropolitan support. This, of course, was of no little concern given settlers' vulnerability in the early stages of colonisation and especially in time of war. The imperative to combat the humanitarians' global reach was, I would argue, one of the most important influences prompting settlers in distant sites to forge their own lines of communication and create rival trans-imperial networks.

Settler networks

As Benedict Anderson has argued, colonial newspapers in the nineteenth century helped to create new identities within each site of colonization.[26] But I would add that they also helped to bind settlers located in different colonial sites into a broader collective imagination based on the idea of a trans-global British settler identity. The *Sydney Morning Herald* certainly upheld the very existence of colonial newspapers as an index of a peculiarly British middle

class culture and civilization being forged on multiple fringes of the expanding empire. Its editor wrote:

> A few years ago scarcely a newspaper was to be seen in the Southern hemisphere: now they abound, as in Europe ... Nothing serves more decidedly to mark the progress of enterprise than [this fact], trivial though [it] may in [itself] appear. [It marks] not only the increase of British population at this part of the Globe, but the increase, also, of that intelligence which leads to prosperity and power ... An unbounded field of exertion has been already marked out and prepared for emigrants; and let it but be occupied and the prospect of a 'New Britannica in the southern world' is no visionary prospect.[27]

The gaze of the early nineteenth century British settler press, then, like that of missionary philanthropists, was far from parochial. Only through a definition of Britishness as a globalising phenomenon, rather than a metropolitan monopoly, could settlers at any one site of colonization assert their continued claim to material and moral support from the metropolitan centre. From New Zealand, the *Nelson Examiner*'s editor explained that:

> we feel it is our boast, our best claim to notice as a community, that we are part and parcel of the great British empire ... our sympathy with its glory, our interest in the splendour of its name, is not to be extinguished or dimmed by a change of hemisphere or oceans intervening ... we know the value of national pride, of a sensitiveness of national honour, as the fertile source and mighty nurse of noble and disinterested deeds, without which, indeed, we are slow to believe in the possibility of any lofty, generous emotion.[28]

From 1834, such newspapers could be sent by packet boat from colonies to Britain or to other colonies free of postage duty. This facilitated the maintenance of well-traversed circuits of information between each community of settlers and the British reading public. Bundles of settler papers were continually sent to subscribers in Britain including newspapers such as *The Times*, and also, as Simon Potter has discovered, the provincial papers, which extracted much of their colonial news from the settler press.[29] As the *Nelson Examiner* exhorted, it was important for local settlers to correspond with the paper so that through such conduits it, in turn, could appeal to those in Britain "who never took an interest in [New Zealand] before". The paper's editor realized that, alongside parliamentary debates, commissions of enquiry and missionaries' reports,

settler newspapers were a medium through which the metropolitan reading public indirectly created an imagined geography of empire.[30]

However, the trans-imperial circulation of newspapers also allowed for inter-colonial, rather than just colony-metropole communications. In the mid-1830s for instance, the *Sydney Morning Herald* regularly carried extracts from, among other papers, the *Perth Gazette* at Swan River, the *Launceston Independent* and *Hobart Town Courier* in Van Dieman's Land and the *South African Commercial Advertiser* in Cape Town. Through the reciprocal extraction of articles, settler communities in the southern hemisphere used each other as benchmarks for levels of metropolitan government support, degrees of self-government and approaches to 'native policy'.

This settler press network became particularly significant during the late 1830s and 1840s as it responded to the powerful humanitarian critique. Given the extensiveness and interconnectivity of humanitarian networks, certain prominent philanthropists were seen by settlers at a number of sites as a common enemy. Editors in New South Wales and the Cape, for instance, coordinated their representations of the longstanding Undersecretary at the Colonial Office, James Stephen. The *Sydney Morning Herald* declared:

> While "Liberal" dispatches and other communications have received prompt attention [at the Colonial Office] and marked official approbation, documents of a different political hue appear to be consigned to oblivion when read – if even they are read at all ... we wonder that the Cape of Good Hope Colonists have not, ere this, petitioned the Home Government for [Stephen's] removal. He has been the real author of all the measures that affect their interests – being one of those kind-hearted "Liberals" who bestow so much of their pity on devastating and murdering savages, that they have none to spare for the white people ... documents which would throw much light on the affairs of this Colony have [also] been suppressed in his office.[31]

Such New South Wales "affairs" included "respectable" settlers being called to serve on juries in the trials of convicts or freed convicts who were not their peers, landowners being unable to get hold of assigned convict labourers and wealthy farmers being accused of maltreatment of indentured Indian workers. When Gipps appealed to New South Wales landowners to take responsibility for rehabilitating these labourers, the *Sydney Morning Herald* insisted that, just

like the Aborigines, "the people for whom he bespeaks such sympathy can only be ruled by terror".[32]

The settler press's attack on humanitarians such as Stephen was thus simultaneously an attack on the notion that all races, and especially in the case of New South Wales, all classes, were essentially equal. Accordingly, the campaign against philanthropic interference was a campaign for the recognition of irredeemable racial and class difference. And this essential human difference was present across the same range of imperial frontiers that the Aborigines Committee itself had surveyed. The *Sydney Morning Herald* argued:

> The sympathies of our statesmen, particularly those of the Colonial Office, have long been awake to the evils inflicted by white men upon savages, whether Caffres of South Africa, Negroes in the West Indies, or Red Indians in North America. But they do not seem to have much compassion for the suffering of their own countrymen, whose occupations unavoidably expose them to the outrages of these various barbarians.[33]

Not all of the settler press's targets were static. Some "meddling humanitarians" moved through the Empire and were tracked between sites. The liberal Irish Anglican, Sir Richard Bourke, for instance, became a contemptible figure for settlers both in the Cape and in New South Wales. As Acting Governor of the Cape in 1828, Bourke was responsible for the passage of Ordinance 50. John Philip had agitated for this piece of legislation, which freed Khoisan people from the legal requirement to work for colonial farmers and gave them equal rights to the colonists. The Ordinance was celebrated by Philip and Buxton as the "Hottentot's Magna Charta". But it was detested by British settlers, who saw it as a license for the criminally–disposed "coloured" classes to roam and plunder through the colony.[34]

When Bourke was subsequently appointed as Governor of New South Wales, the Cape's settler press ensured that he would carry his reputation as a sentimentalist reformer with him. The *Sydney Morning Herald* had already carried extracts from the *Graham's Town Journal* condemning Bourke while he was in the Cape. As soon as he arrived in Australia, the new governor was met by a stream of contributors' complaints about his expected "leniency" towards the convict population, and his "excessive" regard for Aboriginal rights. He was thus immediately made to fit within a prior anti-humanitarian scheme derived from the Cape. "We say", wrote the editor of the *Sydney*

Morning Herald, "let him take his *liberal* principles elsewhere; he is not a fit governor for Botany Bay ... he can never carry on the government with satisfaction to the respectable colonists".[35]

Bourke was confronted in New South Wales not only by a prior antipathy to his philanthropic leanings, but also by the animosity of a Tory civil service to a Whig governor.[36] When he finally resigned in frustration, discussion of the event moved through the same imperial circuits. As the Cape's *Graham's Town Journal* claimed, in an article subsequently extracted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Sir Richard ... is a mighty theorist – one who scorns to descend to first principles, or to view human nature as it really is; hence he has carried his experiments to such a length that even Lord Glenelg [the humanitarian Colonial Secretary] has been obliged to check his career". The two newspaper editors agreed that Bourke should "submit with good grace to the wholesome lesson now taught him – and which indeed may be studied with great advantage by all our philanthropic experimentalists, who happen, for a time, to be invested with rank and power".[37]

Conclusion

Catherine Nash has argued that we need to "work through the tension between understanding colonialism as general and global, and particular and local, between the critical engagement with a grand narrative of colonialism, and the political implications of complex, untidy, differentiated and ambiguous local stories".[38] Suggesting ways in which "respectable" colonists in three distant sites positioned themselves in relation to, and communication with, diverse interests across a broad imperial expanse, this paper has tried to address one part of that agenda – the part that focuses on colonisers rather than colonised. It also expands that agenda by being sensitive to the effects of connections between dispersed localities across a globalising imperial world. It recognises that each community of settlers had its own particular configuration of interests and difficulties, while insisting that each found a way of furthering those interests through trans-imperial connection. Settlers in each colony were able to configure their politics and identities in different ways, embedding themselves in their specific colonial landscapes, whilst still participating in systems of representation and contestation, especially around issues of "native" reclaimability and social difference, that transcended any one colonial space. Our imperial histories need to reflect these geographies of connection.

Notes

[1] A. Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (London and New York 2001)
[2] A. Lester, Reforumlating identities: British settlers in early nineteenth century South Africa, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* **23** (1998) 515-31
[3] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 45-77
[4] P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (Harlow 1993)
[5] P. J. Marshall (Ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford 1999), A. Porter (Ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford 1999)
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13

"Born in Canada, in the British Empire": diffusing colonisation ideas in the nineteenth century[1]

Serge Courville

"There is room for one million people", claimed the Catholic Church of Quebec about the inner valleys of the Laurentides, in 1883.[2] Nearly forty years and thousands of miles apart, the Australian Million Farm Campaign Association advertised "A Million Farmers on a Million Farms".[3] The colonisation propaganda was everywhere the same, based on themes and arguments long before defined by earlier propagandists. The purpose of this paper is to show how close colonisation ideas were in the nineteenth century, as shown by the pamphlets, brochures, advertisements and other such documents that were published in Europe and in the colonial worlds in support of emigration and colonisation movements. These writings are well known to national scholars. However, since they have been less studied in an international and comparative perspective, this makes them an exceptional source of information on emigration and colonisation propaganda.

Of course, few emigrants made use of this documentation, more being influenced by rumours or letters coming from parents and friends who were already established in the New Worlds.[4] However, because these writings were largely diffused among emigration and colonisation societies, charity associations, and other such organizations, they contributed to create a positive *ambiance* for emigration and provided local and colonial propagandists their themes and rhetoric. And indeed, by comparing this documentation over time and space, one quickly realises that if there were many discourses on emigration and colonisation, all valued a set of arguments defined as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by English propagandists. Moreover, although these arguments were used to promote the colonisation of the British settlement

colonies, they were everywhere influential, as shown by the early American propaganda and the French Canadian propaganda of late-nineteenth century.

The asylum of mankind

Apart from Benjamin Franklin, one of America's most popular promoters was Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a former Frenchman who established himself in the American colonies after the British Conquest of New France. His *Letters from an American Farmer*, published in London in 1782, were so praised by European readers that when Benjamin Franklin published his French version of his *Avis* to the European emigrants in Paris in 1795 (written at Passy in 1784), he found it wise to suggest to his readers to read St. John's *Letters*, as a useful testimony to the true conditions of life in America.

Although St. John and Franklin warned their readers against the false ideas many had about America, both favoured emigration to the new Republic, which, they said, was truly a land of hope, liberty and opportunities. By coming to America, claimed for example St. John, the European emigrant will transform into a new man, a process that will begin at sea and will later adapt to the virtues of the new environment. [5] This mutation will make the emigrant an "American", a citizen of the most fascinating country in the world, where land was abundant and cheap, natural resources were diverse, and the farmer was a freeholder, living on his own farm. In America, added St. John, there was no king, no aristocracy and very little differences between the rich and the poor. And although the country was still in its infancy, and quite different from England, it was well organised and industrious, There was no doubt that it would soon become a place for the Arts and commerce. However, there were some conditions to success. According to St. John, only sober, honest and hard working persons would prosper in America. Moreover, emigrants would have to obey the laws, accept to protect the country and its government, and keep faith in the future. If they agreed to these conditions, they would soon live in ease and independence. [6]

Franklin had similar views. To those who believed that all Americans were rich, or that all learned immigrants would find work and be well paid because the Americans were too ignorant to work in public administration, he stated that this was pure imagination. So were the rumours concerning the financial assistance that the American governments would give for the transportation or

the establishment of the European emigrant. On the contrary, Franklin claimed, although few people were so miserable as the poor of Europe, there were few Americans, if any, who were wealthy enough to be called "rich". In fact, most people were living in a general and a happy mediocrity. There were few great proprietors and few tenants, most Americans being their own master. Very few, also, were wealthy enough to live idly upon their rents or incomes, or to pay the high prices given in Europe for paintings, statues and works of art, which Franklin qualified as more curious than useful. Besides, most American artists made their living in Europe, where they could be more suitably rewarded. Finally, although literature and mathematics were popular in America, what the country really needed were "useful" persons, such as farmers, labourers, artisans, handicraftsmen, etc. America was a working country and not what the English called a *Lubberland*, and the French, a *Pays de Cocagne*.[7] Even "strangers" (not British born) would be most welcomed in America, and Franklin promised that they would be protected by the laws until they acquire the rights of all other citizens, after living two or three years in the country. In America, Franklin added, religion was a personal matter and education was well established. If immigrants were sober, intelligent and cautious, they would succeed. As for the natural advantages of the Republic, they were numerous: America was still an "empty" country, covered by forests, where land was abundant, fertile and cheap, and where the climate was as good if not better than anywhere else in the world. And since there were more natural and agricultural resources than needed, this would rapidly provide comfort and easy living to everyone.[8]

True or not, these promises were made to give a positive image of the young Republic, in order to accelerate its colonisation. They greatly influenced the discourse of future promoters, and especially of British landowners and propagandists. Many of them, like Morris Birkbeck[9] and William Cobbett [10], referred to St. John's and Franklin's arguments to better convince their countrymen to come and buy lands in their American estates. However, it would only be after the end of the Napoleonic Wars that massive emigration would begin. Over the course of the next hundred years, more than 35 million people would leave the British Isles, most of them for America. In 1815, for example, at least 58 % of the emigrants who embarked in British ports sailed to the United States. In 1816, that proportion rose to more than 72 %, a level that would not be reached again until the late 1840s.[11]

This posed a major problem to British interests. Indeed, how could the economic base of the nation and of the commercial empire be reconstructed without peopling Britain's own colonies? Hence the debates about emigration and colonisation, at a time of great social distress in Great Britain. [12] Population growth, fear of poverty and vagrancy, unemployment, requests for political and land reforms, critiques about the management of the Poor Laws, debates over slavery, and new scientific ideas about free trade as a means to stimulate commerce and extend markets, all these factors explain the British response to the American propaganda. Certainly, no other country in the world contributed more in defining the colonisation propaganda in the nineteenth century than did Great Britain. Not only because it was the first European country to enter into the Age of Emigration, but also because it had a long colonisation propaganda experience.

The past as model

When Thomas Robert Malthus[13] suggested in 1798 that emigration to the colonies could relieve the problems related to demographic growth, he merely relayed the views of past propagandists, who had long since presented the colonies as places to send Britain's redundant population. Until 1815, little was done as emigration was viewed as a threat to the security and the economic stability of the country. It was only a matter of time, however, before emigration became a centrepiece in the commercial policy of the Second Empire, and a means of extending Britain's sway over rich regions that promised sustained economic growth. In an effort to increase access to markets and natural resources, Parliament embraced the concept of free trade and agreed to engage in a more "systematic" colonisation of its overseas possessions along with legislative measures and state-aided programs for the protection and the transportation of emigrants.[14]

The trend was established. Although the era of "systematic" colonisation ended after only a few decades, discourse in favour of emigration and colonisation continued well into the late noneteenth and early twentieth centuries, through volumes of literature propaganda to which virtually every influential group in society associated itself, some because emigration and colonisation would help solve the country's economic problems, many because they were lucrative businesses. One interesting aspect of this propaganda was that it rooted itself not only in the current arguments about free trade, but also in the writings of

those who, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, defined the goals and principles of active colonisation, providing virtuous and patriotic attributes to emigration, and arguing that the colonies would also be economic tools of England. For example, it was the English sacred mission to bring religion and civilization to the New World, as was its destiny to grasp the riches God had placed on Earth, and make them accessible to other nations through commerce and trade. Hence the appeal to the wealthy segments of English society, including the merchant class, to be involved in this process. Such concerns explain the often interminable lists of trees, fruits, animals, and minerals often appended to the colonization literature of this period. Such lists were proof, *ipso facto*, that colonization was a profitable endeavour, worthy of State aid and protection.[15]

From the debut of European colonisation until the nineteenth century, the discourse of colonisation changed little over the course of nearly 200 years. It was only from 1815 and more specifically 1830 that it became more "systematic", and more oriented towards the *ordinary man*. At the same time, it became heavily influenced by late eighteenth century economic theories,[16] the progress of natural sciences and philanthropic ideas. These promptings lent significant weight to those who viewed emigration as a solution to the problems of poverty and unemployment created by unheralded population growth and cyclical economic crises. Thanks to emigration, many propagandists argued, it was possible to maintain the existing social order while constructing a new economy, providing that "Britain [does not] enrich the United States by allowing a rival power to appropriate the best part of her strength. Has she not her own Colonies?"[17] Furthermore, the propagandists began to associate human happiness with free trade, positive morals, scientific discovery and British values and traditions. Such conditions could be best maintained, they continued, through the "creation" of markets and trading partners - in this case the new colonies. And since the mass movement of thousands of emigrants was, in itself, a market in need of many services, propagandists enthusiastically tried to convince the population to emigrate.

Along with those active in lobbying Parliament and British society of the benefits of "colonising emigration", there were also a rising group of theorists who supported a "scientific" approach to emigration, based on new understandings about free trade and economic *laisser-faire*. One of the most passionate supporters of this stance was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who argued that a successful colonisation program must balance the weight of three

interrelated factors: land, capital and work,[18] and of whom it was said that he greatly influenced British emigration and colonisation policies in the nineteenth century. Although his role in British emigration and colonisation policies has been largely exaggerated,[19] Wakefield did influence the British colonisation propagandists – and even some theoreticians such as Herman Merivale[20] – who used his ideas to promote their goals.

Wakefield's theories were made public in the early 1820s, and formalised by the 1830s. They were praised by all those who sought more "systematic" programs of emigration and colonisation. These "new" propagandists especially appealed to the "ordinary" man, and did much to extend the concept of "Promise Land" from North America to every British colony. At the same time, they revived the sixteenth and seventeenth century themes of virtue, fame, glory, Providential mission and manifest destiny, and grafted these themes with scientific progress, morality, and republican ideals of liberty and independence, relating happiness with free trade and prosperity.

While virtue, fame and duty were consistent undertones in the colonisation discourse, propagandists also supplied a steady stream of material that played on the adventurous dreams of the emigrant, promising vast fertile areas of land where all of the benefits of British civilization (sense of honour, respect of the law, religious worship) would be recreated from the wilderness. The recreation of British society in the settlement colonies was important, and propagandists continually emphasized the importance of this fact when counselling and often persuading emigrants to avoid the United States and go instead to the British colonies where they would contribute to the strength and expansion of the Empire and British civilization. *Greater Britain, but Britain all the same!,* as Sir Charles Dilke would soon prompt.[21]

The colonial relay

This appeal in favour of a more systematic colonisation of the British colonies would greatly influence the propagandists of the New Worlds. Despite its national or regional particularities, their discourse was everywhere alike. Built around early-nineteenth-century century themes, it favoured science and agriculture, without neglecting commerce and industry, when trying to convince the redundant British population to emigrate. Moreover, it presented colonisation as beneficial to the emigrant, the dominion and the motherland. Even in the

early-nineteenth-century United States, where colonisation was still dominated by British interests and propaganda, American emigration authors valued the same issues, portraying the rich states of the Northeast as the metropolis of the still undeveloped western hinterlands.

Arguing the advantages of colonial life, the promises of colonial propagandists often multiplied geometrically, attempting to convince emigrants that a second Eden awaited them, equal to any other country, but without their defaults.[22] For example, if the Canadian Prairies were "gently undulated", the mountainous townships of Quebec were no less so; if Australia was in some places a "desert", its climate was said to be superior to that of England; in Georgia and in the Eastern Townships, the temperature was comparable to that of Southern France; in Texas, one was reminded of Italy. As for those who believed that the hot summers of Australia, the United States or South Africa were unsuitable to the British and European constitution, or that it brought fevers, others answered that it was much more diversified than that. For, while it was true that some areas could be hot and humid, other nearby places had air perfectly fit for persons suffering from lung diseases. The Canadian propagandists would adopt the same argument about winter, portraying the crisp northern air as "invigorating".

As the colonisation discourse followed the opening of new settlements, it happened that some themes became more popular and more inflamed with the arrival of the first speculators.[23] For example, numerous were the nineteenth-century propagandists who portrayed the English countryside as a "garden". What could be more convincing to the British emigrant, then, than to portray the colonial countryside as a verdant garden? This garden theme appears as early as the turn of the nineteenth century in Canada, in the 1840s in the central United States, and at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Australasia, South Africa and French Canada. The same use was made of the word "granary" for good wheat and grain producing regions. One can trace its use back to the 1840s in the Upper Mississippi Valley, in the 1880s in the Canadian Prairies, and in early twentieth century to describe the Lac St. John region in Quebec, which was presented as the "Great Granary" of Eastern Canada. Finally, numerous were the authors who made reference to fruit culture, especially the melon, to prove the quality of the soil and the climate, either in the United States, the British colonies or in northern Quebec.

Finally, most propagandists praised the noble and patriotic character of emigration to British colonies. As many repeated: it was only by valuing the ideals and institutions of the motherland, and by keeping faith in progress and future, that the emigrant will build the New Worlds. Betraying this obligation would result in failure, or worse, in degeneration and rejection. Hence the high personal qualities requested of emigrants. In Britain and in the British colonies, emigrants were to continue this tradition, remaining loyal to the Crown; in the United States this theme would be modified to upholding the honour of the Constitution; and later, in French Canada, reference would be made to upholding the honour of pre-Revolutionary "Catholic and civilising" France.

In other words, the references and geopolitical context could change, but the principles of allegiance would remain the same. This explains why, in Quebec, the colonisation discourse was so similar to the others. Not only would it present the new areas of settlement as "Promised Lands" sufficient to assure physical and spiritual regeneration of French Canadians, but also as places for a new beginning, perfectly fit to those who dreamed of liberty, success and happiness. It also presented colonisation as a remedy against the evils of the time, beneficial not only to the colonists but to the entire province, and, ultimately, as a means of preserving the French race in North America.

Part of the same dream

When the "systematic" colonisation of the Laurentides (north shore of the St. Lawrence valley) was launched in the late nineteenth century, most of Quebec's political and religious leaders were afraid that the Province would lose its political weight and place in the Canadian Confederation. One main reason for this fear was the increase in French Canadian emigration to the United States, which deprived the province of hundreds of thousands of its people.[24] Meanwhile, because Manitoba and Ontario had just gained part of the immense northern lands which once belonged to the Hudson Bay Company, the French Canadian elite thought that their Province too should extend its jurisdiction north of its current boundary, by colonising first its doorstep, the Laurentides plateau. This would sustain and improve the economy of the south, and create new opportunities for the people who were leaving or shifting from agriculture to other sectors of activity. Hence the idea of launching large colonisation programs in order to convince the farmers, the unemployed and even the

European emigrant to come to the new colonisation regions. It was there that they would find their "true California".[25]

Like their Canadian counterparts, Quebec propagandists presented the land to be colonised as a "Poor Man's Country," worthy of immigrants capable of farming and with some financial means. At the same time, the French Canadian propagandists made the same special appeal to capitalists, seeking to attract the necessary capital to develop mining and forestry, industries which could aid colonists to gain some money for their own establishments. They also promoted the building of railroads as a means of accelerating colonisation and attracting European immigrants. And, since most European immigrants preferred to go to the West, either to the Canadian prairies, or worse, to the United States, the Quebec propagandists emphasised to colonists the low price of land in Quebec, the government services available, the help given by colonisation societies, the presence of agronomists and agricultural societies, the possibilities to find work and the close proximity of urban markets in which to sell agricultural surpluses. As to the suitability of northern land for colonisation, the French Canadian propagandists echoed the Canadian Pacific experiments on the Prairies and the Ontario propagandists on behalf of the unsettled areas of their province, and eventually New (northern) Ontario, which would be said to be as fit for agriculture as was the southern parts of the province.[26]

Even the idea of launching interior colonisation programs directed by the Church or the State was not original to Quebec. As a wide reading of the propaganda literature reveals, it was inspired by the British *Home Colonisation* propaganda, which came itself to Britain by way of Holland and Java, and whose goal was to create colonies for the poor on the marginal lands of the kingdom, where small agriculture could feed hundreds of people.[27] Even the Church of England engaged itself in this "national remedy to poverty", planning the creation of self-sufficient villages where hundreds of poor families could be established in cottages specially built for them on heretofore marginal lands that would be worked in common.[28] Although this plan took a different path in the New Worlds,[29] Quebec would also engage in this form of colonisation, launching internal colonisation projects that would transform the Laurentian plateau into "colonies" of Southern Quebec. To these colonies would go the redundant population of the St. Lawrence lowlands.[30] And in return from these colonies would come the natural resources needed by the growing urban centres and markets of the St. Lawrence Valley.

Finally, even in Quebec the provincial government tried to attract British emigrants.[31] Moreover, it was to oppose Federal propaganda and that of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. on behalf of Manitoba and the Great Canadian North-West that Quebec propagandists promoted certain areas of the Laurentides, and not in reaction to the American West as is commonly thought. Some of these areas, such as the Ottawa Valley, became "Our Grand Provincial North-West,"[32] others, like Lake St. John, "The Great North-East of Canada".[33] In these cases, inspiration came from Ontario and Atlantic provinces, which were also struggling against western propaganda. This competition was not particular to Quebec or Canada. Even in the United States, New England had similar problems.[34] In the late-nineteenth century, the debate even existed in the Southern States. They too tried to convince the railway companies to divert newcomers from northern and western destinations in order to bring them to the South. [35] In other words, similar problems called for analogous responses, except that in Quebec the reference was the Canadian West, and for the south of the United States, it was the rich Yankee country, and the Promised Lands of Oregon and California.

To sum up, if there were different ways to present colonisation in the nineteenth century, there was basically one general matrix, around which elements could be arranged according to time, place and prospective readership. Nevertheless, the attributes of this discourse remained sufficiently similar that most can be traced back to the same origin and sources. This can be easily seen in the guiding principles of the emigrants' guides, immigrants' manuals and other propaganda brochures that were published in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to bring people to the New Worlds. This is the same philosophy that filled the treatises periodically published after 1840. No matter the author or the place of publication, all emphasised Wakefield's proposals and the theories of British economists, even in France.[36] This is to say that elements of the British discourse permeated emigrant literature everywhere that open land, people and colonisation ambitions were present. In this light, it is much easier to explain the strong presence of British ideas in Quebec, along with Canadian, American, and French influences.

Conclusion

That the French Canadian propagandists took such examples from other propagandists in composing their own materials does not lessen its originality.

One must not lose sight that these writers were promoting their province and its place in the Canadian Confederation, and ultimately the Empire. Too, they were anxious to extend Quebec's sway northward, promoting its economy and creating new opportunities for the internal movement of people who were moving to the cities, shifting from agriculture to other sectors of the economy. This is not to deny American and French influences on Quebec, numerous examples prove that to be the case.[37] However, it would be an error to believe that in achieving these goals the partisans of colonisation in Quebec could invent a discourse free of external influences. On the contrary, they themselves were open to such influence, especially given the fact that many first worked as immigration propagandists for the Canadian federal government. This was the case with Stanislas Drapeau, J-B Proulx, and even the celebrated nationalist *Curé* Antoine Labelle, the apostle of the northern colonisation in Quebec, who proudly asserted the province's place in Canada and the British Empire.[38] They used the current discourse that permeated the British Empire as a model, adapting it to their own local preoccupations. Hence the similarities of their proposals with those of the Anglophone propagandists of Quebec, many of whom were British officials or clergymen. These Anglophone propagandists had a telling influence on their French Canadian counterparts. This fact is an important linkage, or "reception facility," that permitted the external discourse that would later come from the neighbouring provinces, states and empire (at first mainly Upper Canada with which Lower Canada was united in 1840) to more easily penetrate the French Canadian discourse.

This mimetic behaviour is at the roots of what has come to be called *"Québécitude"*; integrating external influences in order to tame the territory and make it a place of survival as well as a place for new beginnings. This is the heart of the propaganda literature of the nineteenth century. It shows that far from being turned inward on itself, Quebec society was on the contrary well embedded in the international currents of its epoch, criss-crossed by the same desires and the same utopian ideas as the other colonial societies, viewing its hinterlands as places to create and build its own "Promised Lands".

Of course, there was a dichotomy between the views of the French Canadian elite and the actual popular response, which preferred city life and industrial work in the St Lawrence valley to self-sufficient agriculture in these new Edens. However, to *Curé* Labelle, the results of the colonisation movement would be "outstanding", not only "for Montreal's commerce and prosperity", but also "for the peace and happiness of our families".[39] It would be in some

ways, but more in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth, and thanks to mass tourism more than colonisation. By then, the colonial dream had since long vanished, and the local settlers have been replaced by urban newcomers, who transformed the old landscapes into new ones. The collective memory did the rest, by selecting the facts and presenting the Laurentides as a true formative place of identity for "French" Quebec, as if the settling of the northern townships was the result of a simple four-hundred years continuation of the French colonial experience on the shores of the St Lawrence river. But is it not the essence of identity to be built upon perceptions, as well as fragments of history?

Notes

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[2] Sociétés de colonisation des diocèses de Montréal et d'Ottawa, *Au nord* (Saint-Jérôme 1883) 3

[3] Joseph Carruthers, *A Great National Purpose for Australia and How to Achieve It. A Million Farmers on a Million Farms* (Sydney 1921)

[4] Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke (Eds), *A Century of European Migration, 1830-1930* (Urbana and Chicago 1991)

[5] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (London 1783) 44-5

[6] St. John de Crèvecoeur, *op. cit.*, 65-6

[7] Benjamin Franklin, *Avis à ceux qui voudroient aller s'établir en Amérique* (Paris 1795) 150-60

[8] Franklin, *op. cit.*, 174-9

[9] Morris Birkbeck, *Letters from Illinois* (London 1818), *Extracts from a Supplementary Letter from the Illinois* (New York 1819)

[10] William Cobbett, *The Immigrant's Guide in Ten Letters to the Tax-Payers of England* (London 1829)

[11] Stanley C. Johnson, *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America, 1763-1912* (London 1913); Helen I. Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America. The First Hundred Years* (Toronto 1961); Dudley Baines, *Emigration from Europe, 1815-1930* (Cambridge 1995)

[12] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Histoire Èconomique et sociale de la Grande-Bretagne,* vol. 2: *De la révolution industrielle à nos jours* (Paris1977); Marjorie Harper, *Emigration from North-East Scotland,* vol. 1: *Willing Exile* (Aberdeen 1988); Andrew Porter, *The Nineteenth Century*, in Wm. Roger Louis (Ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 3 (Oxford 1999)

[13] Thomas Robert Malthus, An *Essay on the Principle of Population and a Summary View of the Principle of Population* (London 1798)

[14] Fred H. Hitchins, *The Colonial Land and Emigration Commission* (Philadelphia and London 1931)

[15] Howard Mumford Jones, The Colonial Impulse. An Analysis of the 'Promotion' Literature of Colonization, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* **90**, (2) (1946) 131-61.

The arguments of the French propagandists were similar, concerning themselves with the riches of the New World, the need to curb Spanish expansion, and the benefits of colonization for emigrant, seignior and king. They too insisted on the virtuousness of colonisation, asking for men of good character, hard workers confident in God and the future. However, when France finally succeeded in establishing a durable colony in the St. Lawrence valley, the English colonies were already significantly more peopled.

16 Adam Smith, An *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London 1776)

17 John Crawford, *Employment for the Million or Emigration and Colonization on a National or Extended Scale, the Remedy for National Distress* (London 1842) 5

18 Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia* (London 1829); *Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australasia* (London 1829); *A View of the Art of Colonization* (London 1849)

19 Harper, *op. cit.*; Ngatata Love, Edward Gibbon Wakefield: a Maori Perspective, in The Friends of the Turnbull Library (Eds), *Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream: a Reconsideration*, (Wellington 1997) 3-10; Ged Martin, Wakefield and Australia, *Ibid.*, 20-44

20 Herman Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies Delivered before the University of Oxford in 1839, 1840, and 1841* (London 1839, 1841, 1842)

21 Cited in Hugh Edward Egerton, *A Short History of British Colonial Policy, 1606-1909* (London 1950) 11-2

22 The following examples come from Serge Courville, *Immigration, Colonisation et Propagande. Du rêve américain au rêve colonial* (Québec 2002)

23 *Ibid.*

24 For example, of the 2.3 million people who left Canada for the United States, from 1870 to 1930; more than 720 000 came from Quèbec. In 1871, the total population of the province was 1.2 million people; in 1931, it was 2.9 million. Yolande Lavoie, *L'émigration des Canadiens aux États-Unis avant 1930. Mesure du phénomène* (Montréal 1972); Paul-André Linteau, Les migrants américains et franco-américains au Québec, 1792-1940: un état de la question, *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française* **53** (4) (2000) 561-602

25 Sociétés de colonisation des diocèses de Montréal et d'Ottawa, *op. cit.*, 10

26 Ontario, *Emigration to Canada. The Province of Ontario: Its Soil, Climate, Resources, Institutions, Free Grant Lands, &c. &c. for the Information of the Intending Emigrants*, (Toronto 1869); *Northern Ontario Canada, a New Land Nearby, Climate, Soil, Bush Life, as Viewed by the Settlers*, (Toronto 1917)

27 John Thomas Law, *The Poor Man's Garden* (London 1830); Anonymous, *Poor Colonies at Home!* (London 1831)

28 Church of England, *The Church of England Self-Supporting Village, for Promoting the Religious, Moral, and General Improvement of the Working Classes, by Forming Establishments of Three Hundred Families on the Land, and Combining Agricultural with Manufacturing Employment, for Their Own Benefit* (London 1850)

29 One can trace back these philanthropic ideas through their influence on the utopian projects of New Harmony, founded by Robert Owen on the Wabash river in Indiana, and the Community of Icarie at Nauvoo in Illinois, created by Étienne Cabet, and in the practices of certain speculators (for example, Morris Birkbeck in Illinois) and some Land Companies who built houses and cleared land for emigrants (for example: the Holland Land Co. in the United States; the Canada Land Co. in Upper Canada). However, most of the utopian projects ended in a more or less forlorn state, being replaced by the idea of a more systematic approach to church and state aid for emigrants. This was the case with J.F. Boyd, who suggested in 1883 a program that could bring some 200,000 British emigrants to the Great Canadian North-West, most of them being poor families who would be obliged to repay the government after their successful re-establishment. The project did not work but tells much about its influence on

19th–century Quebec. J. F. Boyd, *State-Directed Emigration. With a Preparatory Letter from His Excellency the Right Hon. the Earl of Dufferin*, (Manchester 1883).
[30] Ironically, demographical pressure was actually lowering at this time in the valley. Serge Courville, Jean-Claude Robert and Normand Séguin, *Le pays laurentien au XIXe siècle. Les morphologies de base* (Sainte-Foy 1995)
[31] Québec Government, *The Province of Quebec and European Emigration* (Québec 1870); *Happy Homes in the Province of Quebec for European Settlers in Canada* (Québec 1915)
[32] G. A. Nantel, *Notre Nord-Ouest provincial. Étude sur la vallée de l'Ottawa* (Montréal 1887)
[33] Quebec and Lake St. John Railway, *Lake St. John and the Great North-East* (Québec 1883)
[34] Calvin Colton, *Manual for Emigrants to America* (London 1832)
[35] Frank J. Warne (Ed.), *Immigration and the Southern States, from a Railway Standpoint* (Philadelphia 1905)
[36] A. Bordier, *La colonisation scientifique et les colonies françaises* (Paris 1884)
[37] Yvan Lamonde, *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec, 1760-1896* (Montréal 2000)
[38] Antoine Labelle, *Pamphlet sur la colonisation dans la vallée d'Ottawa au nord de Montréal, et réglements et avantages de la Société de colonisation du diocèse de Montréal* (Montréal 1880) 18-19
[39] *Ibid.*, 18

14

Evading the octopus clutch of the monopolists: co-operative ventures in West Africa

Martin Purvis

Leave-takings at Liverpool

In October 1913 a party of six sailed from Liverpool for the British West African colony of Sierra Leone.[1] At its head were three somewhat unlikely ambassadors; one had first worked down a Yorkshire pit, another was a former Lancashire cotton operative and the third was a Methodist lay preacher from County Durham.[2] All were then serving as directors of the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS), a major British commercial concern, but also a distinctive mutual enterprise ultimately owned by working-class consumers who shopped at co-operative stores throughout England and Wales. The party's business in Sierra Leone was to secure "the acquisition of a site by the Wholesale Society for its first factory on the African continent".[3]

What follows is an exploration of this particular venture, but it is also an account that casts a broader light upon the nature of the British co-operative movement; upon ideological, as well as commercial, strands in the early-twentieth-century engagement with empire; and upon contest for colonial resources and economic territory in Africa. It is important to acknowledge the scale of co-operative ambitions and the movement's perception of the growing need to carry opposition to private capitalism into the international sphere.[4] It is this sense of the enlargement of the purpose of co-operation that helps to explain the seemingly incongruous involvement in colonial systems of production and trade of a movement espousing equity and mutuality. Co-operation's African ventures, and purchases of tea estates in Ceylon and India, were largely inspired by wider debate in early-twentieth-century Britain about the effects of change in the scale and structure of commercial activity.[5] Co-operative leaders were concerned that the rise of monopolistic businesses, trusts and cartels presented

a particular threat to their members' interests, not only by increasing the vulnerability to exploitation of individual consumers, but also in hindering co-operative access to supplies of key raw materials. They argued that in response co-operation must find the confidence and the capital to increase its own involvement in international trade and commodity production. In practice, this led only to modest acquisitions of colonial property, but there is evidence, nevertheless, of an ideological motivation for investment overseas that should not be ignored. To resist capitalism effectively at home, co-operation, it was argued, must secure its own 'place in the sun'. Indeed, in the specific instance of Sierra Leone the analogy with the larger process of imperial territorial division is particularly appropriate. Here the co-operative movement's quest for raw materials led to involvement in an attempt to establish exclusive commercial territorial concessions. As Hopkins has noted the commercial partition of Africa, which accompanied its political dismemberment by the European powers, has received rather less attention than its importance merits.[6] Any single case study is only limited compensation for this general neglect, but a focus on the co-operative presence does highlight an ideological dimension of the process that is undocumented elsewhere.

The Colonial Office and a soap firm's proposals

The specific goal of the co-operative delegation of 1913 was to secure guaranteed access to supplies of palm oil. This was a commodity on which – to quote T J Alldridge, an authority on Sierra Leone retained as an advisor and agent by the CWS – the "whole life of the country and its value to the world at large depend".[7] Yet despite the natural abundance of the oil palm in West Africa, concerns were increasingly expressed that supply was not keeping pace with rising demand in Europe as commercial uses of palm oil multiplied.[8] Industrial purchasers of palm oil thus began to argue for change in systems of trade and production. Prominent amongst them was W. H. Lever, the all-powerful chairman of Britain's largest soap manufacturer. Lever viewed existing indigenous systems of oil production, which rested largely on the harvesting and domestic processing of palm fruit from naturally growing trees, as inefficient. He was also fearful that he was being exploited by the established European trading companies and brokers which dominated the trade in oil exports. For Lever, the solution was obvious; he must secure access to oil supplies by direct investment in the modernisation of palm oil production. The commercial and political machinations surrounding Lever's plans for

involvement in British West Africa have been detailed elsewhere.[9] A brief review of these proposals and the reaction they engendered is, however, a necessary preliminary here.

Lever had dispatched representatives to investigate the West African palm oil industry as early as 1902. It was not until 1907, however, that he made a definite approach to the Colonial Office for a grant of land in Sierra Leone on which to establish palm plantations and mechanised plant for oil extraction. The proposal, however, ran foul of official policy opposing the alienation of African land and concerns about its implications for the welfare of the indigenous population, whose status might be reduced to that of wage labour. Moreover, the project would have had few friends amongst existing merchant companies, whose political influence was potentially significant. In response, Lever advanced a more limited scheme, based on the introduction of powered mills in place of traditional manual methods of oil extraction. Such mills would require much less land than the proposed plantations and it was suggested that supplies of palm fruit could be purchased from native producers, thus maintaining, or even improving, existing livelihoods. Yet the proposal retained a territorial element as Lever asked not simply for permission to erect his own plant, but also for the definition of a surrounding zone, 20 miles in radius, within which no other powered mills could be established. This, it was claimed, was necessary to ensure a sufficient supply of palm fruits and thus protect the company's "very great outlay of capital".[10]

This use of territory to establish a commercial monopoly became a controversial aspect of Lever's plans. It prompted horse-trading between Lever Brothers and the Colonial Office about the scale of territorial concessions deemed acceptable, not just in Sierra Leone, but also in the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria. Agreement was subsequently reached that any exclusive territory would be restricted to a zone only 10 miles in radius and that an initial grant would run for 21 years, not the 99 years requested by Lever.[11] Thus revised the Colonial Office was prepared where necessary to give a legislative basis to the establishment of exclusive concessions, in the shape of the much-debated Palm Oil Ordinances, first introduced in the Gold Coast in 1913.[12] But there were also official voices raised against the principle of such concessions. Although his arguments were rejected in London, the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Hugh Clifford, remained convinced that resultant local monopolies in the purchasing and processing of palm fruits would undermine the existing native economy and, in the longer-term, prevent African producers from themselves

adopting new technologies for oil extraction.[13] Self-interest further dictated that many commercial concerns involved in the export trade in palm oil would be hostile to Lever's plans. Particularly magisterial was the Manchester Chamber of Commerce which claimed that exclusive concessions "would harass and hamper the commercial operations of traders ... and, in the long run be most prejudicial to the well-being of the Colony of Sierra Leone".[14] Such opinions also reflected the news that while continuing to pursue his ambitions in British West Africa, Lever had in 1911 secured land for substantial oil palm plantations in the Belgian Congo.[15] This expanding commercial empire thus appeared a real threat to existing interests in the palm oil trade. In the context of wider debate about the growing power of the largest companies and cartels it was possible to believe that Lever's ultimate aim was to establish a stranglehold over oil supplies.

To conquer the supply of raw material

Such is the context against which co-operative involvement in the palm oil trade should be viewed. Co-operative leaders would have been aware that they were proposing to enter a controversial trade. Yet it was precisely this controversy that justified the extension of co-operative activity. Moreover, the movement had particular reason to be wary of Lever's intentions. His company's aggressive expansion to a position of dominance had created growing tensions within the British soap industry. One outcome of this was the attempt in 1911 to prosecute 22 co-operative retail societies for fraud, on the grounds that they had substituted CWS-produced soap for Lever's branded products in a series of "trap orders" placed as an act of provocation by the latter's agents.[16] The legal action was dismissed, but it reinforced perceptions that Lever not only personified capitalist avarice, but was also determined to break the co-operative movement. This rendered his moves to acquire exclusive rights to raw materials especially sinister.

Considerable detail about Lever's dealings with the Colonial Office was revealed in 1912 with the publication of the relevant correspondence as a Parliamentary Paper.[17] The *Co-operative News*, the movement's weekly newspaper, reacted vigorously, publishing a series of series of substantial articles under a common headline: "How Raw Materials are Monopolised". These condemned both Lever's "extraordinary" plans and the claimed readiness of the British government to support them.[18]

To highlight concern about the territorial basis of the projected monopoly concessions co-operators were invited to imagine

> that when the C.W.S. opened a butter factory at Banbury, the committee had approached the Government, stipulating as a condition of erecting the factory, that no other firm should be allowed to erect butter-making machinery within twenty miles of Banbury.[19]

What was self-evidently outrageous in the domestic context, it was argued, should not be countenanced elsewhere. Moreover, given Lever's track record his interest in the palm oil trade could only be viewed as a new means of "crushing trade rivals".[20] While the published material related only to relatively few territorial concessions "the principle at stake is of tremendous significance, in the light of the modern tendency for the supplies of food and raw materials to be controlled by trusts and rings".[21] Indeed, from this perspective Colonial Secretary Harcourt's statement that there was no official intention to grant concessions only to Lever Brothers offered little comfort:

> Far from improving the position, it worsens it, for it opens up a prospect of the whole palm-bearing area of Africa under British protection being monopolised by a few firms–with an ultimate possibility of these firms amalgamating to control prices.[22]

An ability to control, or rather raise, prices was seen as necessarily opposed to consumer interests. Worse was the prospect that private cartels would deny raw material supplies to the co-operative sector, undermining the movement's role as an independent producer in trades such as soap. "Of what use", asked the *News*, "will be the co-operative movement if raw materials are to be monopolised in this way?"[23]

Dangerous times thus demanded retaliatory action. The *Co-operative News* adopted an unusually marshal vocabulary to argue that "It is as essential to our development to conquer the supply of raw material as it is to establish stores for the distribution of the manufactured article"[24] As the main hub of the movement's own system of production and wholesale distribution the CWS was the obvious agency to lead this stand against monopoly capitalism. "Many co-operators", the *News* reported, "are anxious to know what is going to be the policy of the C.W.S. in the direction of securing ample means for the supply of

raw materials necessary to the manufacture of soap".[25] The society was already engaged in direct international trade, chiefly in foodstuffs purchased from producers, some of them co-operative, in Europe and North America. There were also precedents for the acquisition of a stake in colonial production. In 1901 and 1902 concerns that producers and dealers were colluding to raise wholesale tea prices had encouraged the CWS, together with its Scottish counterpart, to purchase the first of its Ceylonese tea estates.[26]

Ten years later the threat to palm oil supplies seemed to justify even the appropriation of methods devised by 'monopolists' such as Lever, in the defence of consumer interests. Publicly the *Co-operative News* maintained its condemnation of the principle of exclusive territorial concessions in palm-producing regions as "entirely vicious".[27] Yet simultaneously the CWS was preparing its own application for such a grant. As its first approach of April 1913 made explicit, the CWS sought a concession of equal scale to that obtained by Lever Brothers, with "like rights, privileges and conditions".[28]

Six weeks later the society dispatched a representative to Sierra Leone to begin the process of selecting a site for their oil mill and territorial concessions.[29] As a co-operative, however, the CWS could not commit itself to further action without the sanction of its membership, in the shape of representatives from the local retail societies which it supplied. Expenditure of up to £25,000 on detailed site investigation and other preliminary work was thus discussed at a series of meetings in September 1913. Sadly, surviving reports do not convey a full sense of the reception given to the proposal. The *News* admitted that "Possibly the venture will meet with a little doubtful criticism".[30] Some delegates were certainly angered by the scale of the projected special payments to the six members of the planned CWS delegation to Sierra Leone. But those who addressed the principle of a co-operative stake in the palm oil trade were reportedly unanimous in its favour. A representative from Exeter, for example, was happy that the initiative "would do much to checkmate those who would like to see the productive side of the movement crushed out of existence".[31]

Another link in the great human chain

Later in 1913, while the CWS delegation was in Sierra Leone, the co-operative press was used to encourage wider interest in the palm oil venture. Increasingly the emphasis shifted from a principled presentation of its rationale to a

recitation of the commercial advantages that might be obtained. West Africa was presented, in a manner that had many contemporary counterparts, as a region with enormous, but largely untapped, natural wealth.[32] "Vast quantities" of palm oil were claimed to "run to waste each year through the lack of means for bringing them to the ports".[33] European-directed modernisation was therefore necessary to remedy the situation. The CWS would, of course, represent a distinctive presence in that it would tap the region's natural resources not to make "the rich richer" but for "the common good".[34] Nevertheless, the *Co-operative News* struck a distinctively acquisitive tone: "a vital point to us now is, what can the C.W.S. expect to get from Sierra Leone?". The answer was not just palm products, but also exports of kola nuts, ginger, gum, copal, rubber, timber and cotton.[35] The prospect was also raised of a return trade in manufactured items, including cotton textiles, hardware and cutlery.[36]

This is not to suggest, however, that ideals of morality in trade were entirely marginalized. Indeed, individual co-operative leaders, at least, were convinced that the moral dimension of their involvement in Africa extended beyond a concern for British consumers. Speaking on the eve of departure to Sierra Leone the members of the CWS delegation were keen to imply a distinction between their own motives and those of private capital. They were primarily

> "going out to West Africa in the interests of co-operators at home; but ... it is not our intention to exploit the poor natives ... for the sake of pecuniary profit. The mission was full of promise, and should be the means of forging another link in the great human chain".[37]

Amongst the party the CWS director William Lander seems to have been particularly affected by his experience of Sierra Leone. Speaking on his return in support of funding for charitable work in India Lander noted that he had observed first-hand "the disgraceful position of many black men in our colonies". This he attributed to the neglect of its "duty to the colonies and protectorates" by the "British nation". He called, therefore, for compassion and generosity towards "these brothers and sisters in the colonies who were in abject poverty" so that they might "improve their physical and mental conditions ... [and] take their proper place in the Empire."[38]

Lander's words make clear the extent to which he accepted the existence of empire. In his subsequent lectures about Africa Lander again echoed mainstream

liberal thinking about the relationship between colonisers and colonised.[39] Elsewhere, the co-operative press, though strong in its hostility to the crudest theories of racial inferiority, offered little to contradict the image of Africans as child-like and in need of the firm guiding hand of the 'civilised' white man.[40] It was wrong, co-operators were told, to brand the indigenous West African population as "lazy"; rather they were "a slow, simple and easy-going race".[41] Aspects of African culture also drew uncomprehending comment. The colour and design of both male and female dress, for example, was such as to "persuade the great Harry Lauder he had still much to learn in the way of burlesque and get-up".[42]

None of this, however, was incompatible with the repetition of the message of duty and fellowship towards the colonised. African populations could and should be imbued with 'civilised' European values. Moreover, the co-operative movement had a responsibility to participate directly in this process to ensure that its own positive values prevailed over the false claims of competitive capitalism. Through bestowing the great gift of co-operative institutional forms, which had so improved the lot of British working people, the movement might secure equivalent advances in the social and material condition of colonial populations. Indeed, parallels might be perceived between Britain's role as the 'mother country' of a worldwide empire and its maternal role to an international co-operative commonwealth. Again Lander articulated this co-operative gloss upon the wider sense of the civilising mission of empire. Spreading co-operation amongst the inhabitants of "these dark places" would, he noted, "give them light in a way that would feed them, educate them, and place them on an equality" with Europeans.[43] But the assumption of the superiority of European ideas is clear here too. 'Native' populations might exhibit their own indigenous forms of mutuality, but this could not be an effective foundation for social progress.[44]

The possibilities of Empire

Some co-operators, at least, felt a genuine belief that engagement with colonial commerce was beneficial for all directly involved. If the millions of co-operative consumers at home were to be saved "from the octopus clutch of the monopolists" the movement must act both to increase its productive capacity and to secure supplies of key raw materials. The CWS must, therefore, plan to become the owner

> of coalmines in England and Wales; of oil fields in America; of cotton plantations in Africa; of wheat fields in Canada and elsewhere. It will smelt iron from co-operatively-owned iron fields; it will make leather from the hides of cattle bred on its ranches in Argentina; it will produce wool and mutton on its sheep farms at home and in Australia.[45]

But there was also an expectation that such international economic links would yield additional dividends, both in forging progressive social and political alliances between working people throughout the European-settled world, and in encouraging new and positive thinking about development within the wider colonial sphere. There are parallels here with the idea of the dual mandate, which achieved a wider currency in British colonial policy during the inter-war years.[46] Leading co-operators, however, argued specifically for the extension of mutuality and co-operative organisations as a basis for international development. Only in this way, they claimed, could true progress be achieved; as distinct from the false promise of capitalism, where a disproportionate share of any new wealth was claimed by a handful of privileged individuals.

Set against this ambitious agenda it is perhaps inevitable that achievement in practice appears limited. In June 1914 the Colonial Office granted the concession requested by the CWS for the erection and operation of a powered oil mill, the latter to be sited close to the inland terminus of the new rail link between Rokelle and Makene.[47] Over the coming years, however, both co-operators and private companies struggled to establish their mills as viable concerns. It proved difficult to guarantee sufficient supply of palm fruits and this, combined with the volatility of commodity prices, made profitable operations virtually impossible. As a result the CWS allowed its concession to lapse, turning instead to the export of oil extracted by traditional domestic means and palm kernels, which were processed in England.[48] Entry into the palm oil industry was not, therefore, a springboard for the widespread introduction of co-operative principles into the economic and social life of West Africa. Trade in oil itself was conducted on conventional lines. The CWS established retail stores linked to both its inland plant and its depot in the port of Freetown, but while these stocked some of the society's own goods, they were not co-operative in the sense of being collectively owned by their customers. More generally, inter-war attempts to foster co-operative organisation amongst agriculturalists and other primary producers in Britain's African colonies originated with governmental authorities, rather than the co-operative movement.[49]

If events thus exposed the lack of any real substance in co-operative approaches to international development, they also reveal a continuing determination to maintain a stake in colonial trade to serve the interests of co-operative consumers at home. During and after the First World War the CWS established and extended a series of coastal depots for the export of both palm products and cocoa; not just at Freetown, but also at Accra in the Gold Coast and in the Nigerian centres of Port Harcourt and Lagos.[50] Together these depots handled exports worth £244,643 in 1927.[51] Over the same period further purchases were made of tea estates in Ceylon and India, and the inter-war years saw attempts to cultivate closer trading links with co-operative movements in the white Dominions as a distinctive facet of the general promotion of empire trade.[52]

Previous accounts of the politics of the British left have revealed something of the range of attitudes exhibited towards empire. Far from opposing the maintenance of Britain's imperial role, some liberals and radicals sought active engagement with this wider realm in an attempt to reshape the empire and imperial policy to their own reformist goals.[53] This is the tradition to which much of the co-operative initiative discussed above belongs. Yet little attention has been paid in this context to the unique character of the co-operative movement, recognising that it embraced both the worlds of commerce and of ideological debate. Co-operation was thus more than a source of well-intentioned ideas about the introduction of mutual institutional forms that would transform a hierarchical empire into an equitable commonwealth. It was also engaged in the practice of colonial trade; through its acquisition of overseas depots and estates the movement gave its working-class membership a direct stake in the ownership of colonial property that has no obvious parallel; and, as the example of the palm oil concessions demonstrates, it was drawn into an attempted commercial partition of colonial territory. This co-operative presence did, in part, reflect conventional commercial considerations, but it was also rooted in the belief that the extension of co-operative activity was necessary to defend the interests of British consumers. Viewed from this perspective colonial trade and the acquisition of raw material supplies take on a distinctive character as an extension of the domestic contest between co-operation and private capitalism. This was, of course, very much a minority understanding of the nature of empire in early-twentieth-century Britain, but it is one which merits closer attention.

Notes

[1] *Co-operative News* 18 October 1913
[2] P. Redfern, *The New History of the C.W.S.* (London 1938) 570–71, 576, 581
[3] *Co-operative News* 8 November 1913
[4] P. Gurney, *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, c.1870–1930* (Manchester 1996) 88–110
[5] H. Mercer, *Constructing a Competitive Order. The Hidden History of British Antitrust Policies* (Cambridge 1995) 10–2, 36–9
[6] A. G. Hopkins, Imperial business in Africa. Part II: Interpretations, *Journal of African History* **17** (1976) 274–81; P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, Second Edition (Harlow 2002) 573.
[7] T. J. Alldridge, Sierra Leone Crown Colony and Protectorate, in A. J. Herbertson and O. J. R. Howarth (Eds), *The Oxford Survey of the British Empire: Africa* (Oxford 1914) 391–2
[8] M. Lynn, *Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa: The Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge 1997) 188; J. F. Munro, *Africa and the International Economy 1800–1960* (London 1976) 95–101
[9] K. D. Nworah, The politics of Lever's West African concessions, 1907-13, *International Journal of African Historical Studies* **5** (1972) 248–64; C. Wilson, *The History of Unilever. A Study in Economic Growth and Social Change. Volume 1* (London 1954) 159–87
[10] *Correspondence Respecting the Grant of Exclusive Rights for the Extraction of Oil from Palm Trees*, P.P. 1912–13 LIX 657–714, Letters 1 and 3; Wilson *op. cit.* (Note 9), 165–7
[11] P.P. 1912-13 LIX (Note 10), Letter 6
[12] D. Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana* (Oxford 1963) 46–8
[13] Palm Oil Grants in West Africa: Correspondence, PRO CO 879/115/8, Letters 15 and 40; see also H. A. Gailey, *Clifford: Imperial Proconsul* (London 1982) 73–81
[14] P.P. 1912–13 LIX (Note 10), Letter 38
[15] Wilson, *op. cit.* (Note 9) 167–79
[16] Gurney, *op. cit.* (Note 4), 204–08; Redfern, *op. cit.* (Note 2), 54–5
[17] P.P. 1912–13 LIX (Note 10)
[18] *Co-operative News* 8 February 1913; 15 February 1913; 22 February 1913; 1 March 1913
[19] *Co-operative News* 15 February 1913
[20] *Co-operative News* 8 February 1913
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Co-operative News* 1 March 1913
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Co-operative News* 6 September 1913
[25] *Co-operative News* 15 March 1913
[26] *Co-operative News* 23 March 1901; *Wheatsheaf* November 1902
[27] *Co-operative News* 1 March 1913
[28] PRO CO 879/115/8 (Note 13) Letter 21
[29] PRO CO 879/115/8 (Note 13) Letter 39
[30] *Co-operative News* 6 September 1913
[31] *Co-operative News* 20 September 1913
[32] Cf. Alldridge, *op. cit.* (Note 7) 386–404
[33] *Co-operative News* 1 November 1913
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Co-operative News* 29 November 1913
[37] *Co-operative News* 18 October 1913
[38] *Co-operative News* 27 December 1913

39 Gurney, *op. cit.* (Note 4), 108–9
40 On race see *Co-operative News* 19 January 1907, 23 March 1907
41 *Co-operative News* 1 November 1913
42 *Co-operative News* 22 November 1913
43 *Co-operative News* 27 December 1913
44 *Co-operative News* 1 November 1913
45 *Co-operative News* 20 September 1913
46 P. Hetherington, *British Paternalism and Africa 1920–1940* (London 1978) 45–60
47 PRO CO 879/115/8 (Note 13) Letter 149
48 Redfern, *op. cit.* (Note 2), 90
49 Fabian Colonial Bureau, *Co-operation in the Colonies* (London 1945)
50 Co-operative Wholesale Society, *People's Yearbook 1929* (Manchester 1929) 65, 79–81
51 M. Digby, *Producers and Consumers. A Study in Co-operative Relations* (London 1928) 68
52 Co-operative Wholesale Society, *op. cit.* (Note 50) 175–204
53 Hetherington, *op. cit.* (Note 46), 15–17, 36–38; S. Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics. The Left and the End of Empire 1918-1964* (Oxford 1993)

15

Icon of empire: the Port of London Authority Building, 1912-22

Iain S. Black

Introduction

Although the City of London has always been in more or less a continual state of rebuilding, a number of key periods of sustained transformation of its built environment can be identified, giving some coherence to an historical interpretation of its changing landscape. The rebuilding of the City following the Great Fire in the seventeenth century is one such period, as is the demolition and rebuilding of the Georgian City in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, in response to the forces of sustained commercial expansion and engendering sustained residential depopulation.[1] A third wave of rebuilding, and one providing the context for this paper, can be identified in the period from c.1880 to 1940. In this period, the growth of corporate capital, with significant increases in the scale of business and the administrative hierarchies required to run it, produced a need for new forms of corporate architecture in the City. The growth of branch networks in banking and insurance, and the separation of management from sites of production in maturing industrial capitalist enterprises, gave further stimulus to these trends in the desire to commission imposing landmark headquarters buildings which were increasingly seen as part of the competitive struggle for markets, power and influence. Technological change in building, especially the development of the steel frame and expertise in lift construction, changed the scale, if not always the style, of what was possible in commercial architecture. Paralleling the growth of this new corporate culture were the changing political realities of British imperialism, which shifted from the confident High Imperialism of the Edwardian years to the uncertainties of a late-imperial age in the interwar City. Despite, or perhaps because of, such anxieties in the post-war years, the rebuilding of the central commercial and financial City gathered pace, resulting in a large-scale reconfiguration of its

built environment. Each of the specialised groupings of business in the City saw extensive rebuilding, including bank, insurance and trading company headquarters, the head offices of leading industrial corporations and a variety of public authorities with business interests in the square mile.[2]

This paper will focus on the building of the headquarters of the Port of London Authority in Trinity Square. Located in the south-eastern quarter of the City, close by the Tower of London and the Thames, this headquarters building had a long gestation. Conceived at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the building was started in 1912, only for future progress to be severely hampered by shortages of labour, capital and materials following the onset of war. Work proceeded slowly until the cessation of hostilities, when activity picked up, though the building was not completed until 1922. Due to these particular historical circumstances, bridging the Edwardian and interwar years, an analysis of the design and building of the Port of London office is especially useful in indicating changing trends in the commercial architecture of the metropolis between the 1880s and the 1940s. The paper also brings into focus the work of Sir Edwin Cooper, a key architect in the wider rebuilding of the City between 1900 and 1940. Despite his prodigious output and contemporary critical acclaim, recent scholars have largely overlooked his achievements. By placing a close analysis of the design and building of the Port Authority headquarters within the context of Cooper's wider architectural practice, the paper will link the specific story of the building with a broader interpretation of the City's landscape as the commercial heart of empire.

The Port of London Authority Building

The major dock systems of nineteenth-century London were owned and controlled by private companies. Towards the end of the century though, the government became increasingly concerned that the conflict inherent in such a fragmentation of control was proving inefficient in planning for and controlling the greatest port in the world. As the centre of imperial trade in physical commodities, as well as the associated flow of capital, banking, shipping and insurance services, London required a modern system of organisation for the huge operations associated with international commodity flows. Thus in 1900 a Royal Commission was established to investigate the problem of ownership and management of London's docks. The Commission reported in favour of unification under the control of a public body and the idea of the Port of London

Authority was born. A Government Bill authorising the creation of this new public authority was passed in 1908 and the authority was formally established in March 1909.[3] From the outset it became clear that a new headquarters building would be required to house the executive functions of the new organisation, formed as it was from a diverse group of private companies. Running alongside these practical needs was a desire to establish the presence of the new authority in built form as an unmistakable landmark on the skyline of the City of London.

Figure 15.1 shows the site area secured by the Authority for the new headquarters project. The nucleus of the site was the ground occupied by the Crutched Friars Warehouse (one and a half acres) taken over by the Authority from the London and India Dock Company at the time of its creation. Subsequently, the Authority proceeded to acquire interest in adjacent leasehold and freehold sites, comprising approximately 60 separate property units. Total costs of site

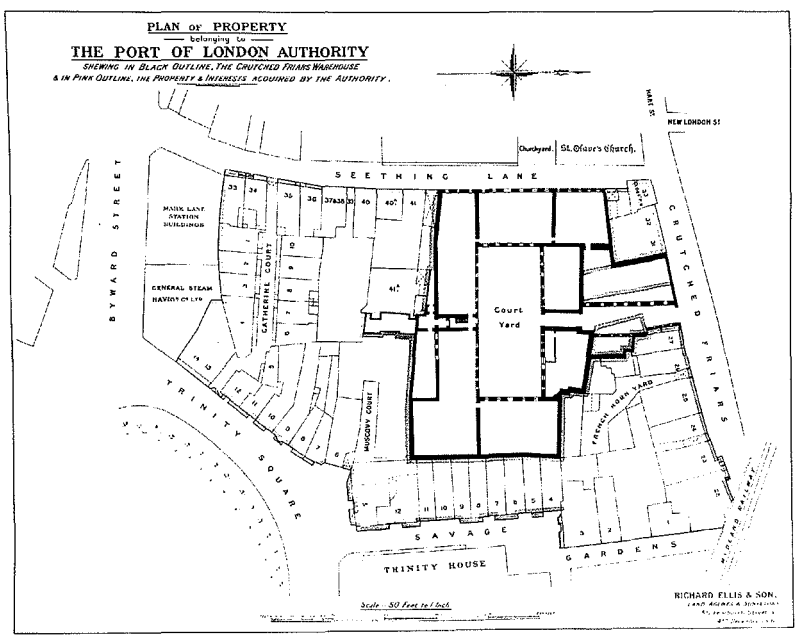

Figure 15.1 Plan of the site area acquired by the Port of London Authority for the new Head Office building, 4th December 1926. *Source*: Museum of London, PLA Collection.

acquisition came to £463,304, giving a total site area of 140,500 sq. ft.[4] The final freehold of the estate exceeded three acres. The important frontage to Trinity Square afforded a special opportunity for a fine architectural composition. The question was: who would design it?

The architectural competition

Due to the status of the new Authority as a public corporation it departed from the usual City practice of choosing architects via intimate personal networks and connections. In November 1911 an open architectural competition was announced, to be assessed by the distinguished architect Sir Aston Webb. The requirements were not simply for a new headquarters building. As the Conditions and Particulars of Competition noted "competitors are recommended to leave as much land for development as is compatible with the provision of the Authority's Offices on a sufficiently ample and dignified scale and with due regard to their lighting facilities and convenience of access."[5] In short, this was a major piece of land development in the City. With reference to the aesthetics of the new scheme the Conditions remarked that the proposed style would be left to competitors to decide upon, though "its grouping with Trinity House, the Square, and the surroundings generally ... should be carefully considered ...[also] the exterior should be executed throughout in Portland stone, be dignified and monumental as befitting its purpose, and it is thought that there should be some feature visible from the river".[6] Total internal accommodation, arranged over five floors, plus basement, should comprise 138,110 sq. ft.[7]

Of the 170 designs submitted in the initial round Webb, in consultation with the Port Authority's Board, selected six for the final competition. Those successful were Robert Atkinson, J. A. Bowden & T. Wallis, Edwin Cooper, Lanchester & Rickards, J. Reginald Truelove and Ernest W. Wray.[8] Each was required to submit further, more detailed, designs. On 11 July 1912, the Board received a report from Sir Aston Webb recommending Edwin Cooper's design, which was duly selected.[9] Webb noted how "the elevations are monumental and dignified, and would proclaim their public and official importance among the surrounding buildings ... [whilst] the circular Central Hall would be a fine apartment and gives cohesion to the Ground Plan".[10] Such comments would have delighted Cooper who, in his own private notes on the design indicated how "the Authority building should dominate all other[s]" and that he agreed with Inigo Jones that "a public building should convey to the eye a masculine

appearance, full of strength; yet leading the imagination to surmise pleasure and surprise inside."[11]

The architectural competition and the final six designs submitted to the Port Authority Board received extensive coverage in the contemporary specialist press. On 19 July 1912, *The Builder* remarked:

> No competition of recent times has evoked more attention and interest among architects that that just decided for the Head Offices of the Port of London Authority. The opportunity given to design a building for purposes so closely connected with the commerce of the greatest city in the Empire, the unique position of the site next to Trinity House and the Tower of London, and the very difficulties of the subject have attracted an unusually wide response from the architectural profession.[12]

Commenting on Cooper's winning entry, *The Builder*'s correspondent continued:

> the best design has been chosen, whether from a point of view of plan, which is masterly ... or of architectural treatment, which is dignified, architectural, and logical. The scheme is one which will, when executed, be worthy of any city in the world ... and we have little doubt that in Mr. Cooper's hands the building will rank among the greatest achievements of modern architecture in this country, and will stand comparison with some of the best American and French design.[13]

Sir Edwin Cooper

Edwin Cooper was born in Scarborough in 1874 and died in London in 1942.[14] His early training and work was largely in northern England, although he did spend some time working for Messrs. Goldie, the well-known Roman church architects in London. By the end of the 1890s he was established in practice with S. B. Russell in London's Gray's Inn, although he continued to enter competitions and receive commissions in the provinces, including a celebrated design for the Guildhall in Hull in 1905. Cooper's profile was further enhanced in 1911 by winning, with Russell, the competition for the new Marylebone Town Hall, a design described by Powers as '"advanced" for its time for its

Franco-American simplicity of outline and scholarliness of ornament.[15] In 1912, with increasing recognition and competition success, Cooper set up an architectural practice on his sole account. Following the Port of London headquarters, for which he was knighted, Cooper went on to design a considerable number of key buildings in the metropolis. In the City alone he was responsible for the Banque Belge in Bishopsgate, Spillers headquarters in St. Mary Axe, the new Lloyds of London, the headquarters of the Royal Mail in Leadenhall Street and the National Provincial Bank in Princes Street, opposite the Royal Exchange.[16]

Cooper eschewed 'modernist' architecture. Commenting on the 'new' materials of glass, steel and concrete, he remarked that "in their proper place these materials are useful ...[but] the mere use of these perhaps cheap and economical commodities does not constitute fine Architecture".[17] Further, he stated "I firmly believe that all fine buildings should develop upon traditional lines ... knowledge of the past, in my opinion, is the best equipment for the future".[18] Cooper was a dedicated exponent of Beaux-Arts planning in architecture, which suited his preference for the Grand Manner in his commissions for public buildings and corporate headquarters.[19] In this way he frequently sought to combine an interpretation of civic ideals and corporate responsibility with a monumentality that signalled the permanence of the institutions for which he designed.

Although an architect who worked entirely in England, Cooper can claim a place as one of Britain's leading imperial architects, conceiving the place and purpose of 'imperial architecture' as central to our understanding of 'home' as well as 'colonial' spaces. Indeed, in his work in the 'heart of empire' he stands comparison with the much more celebrated personalities of Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker. Indeed, all three shared an Edwardian optimism that saw Britain, and especially London, as the natural home of a worldwide empire that was a fundamental force for civility and natural justice.[20] Cooper was every bit as committed to putting architecture to the service of communicating this imperial ideal as Lutyens' or Baker's work in the City or their work in South Africa or India.[21]

The design

The new headquarters was officially opened by the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, on Tuesday 17 October 1922. There was an appropriate

symmetry to the occasion, Lloyd George having been the key minister, as President of the Board of Trade, behind the decision to form the Port of London Authority following the 1900 Royal Commission Report. The redevelopment, as noted, was extensive. The design for the new headquarters saw the creation of two new streets – Pepys Street and Muscovy Street – together with a series of newly created building sites, adjacent to the headquarters itself, in Trinity Square, Seething Lane, Crutched Friars and Savage Gardens. These plots were to be let out on building leases, creating a future income stream for the Authority. A total of 56,000 sq. ft. was available, though the nature of any building and its occupancy was to be strictly controlled. Sales particulars noted how:

> The creation of these Building Sites, clustered round the Head Office of a Body having under its control all the important interests of London as a Port, probably eclipses any other Building development that has ever been made in the City, and for Business Houses, or Companies connected with Shipping, East India and Colonial Produce, and the Rubber, Corn, Tea, Wine, Fruit and Provision Markets, the situation is unsurpassed.[22]

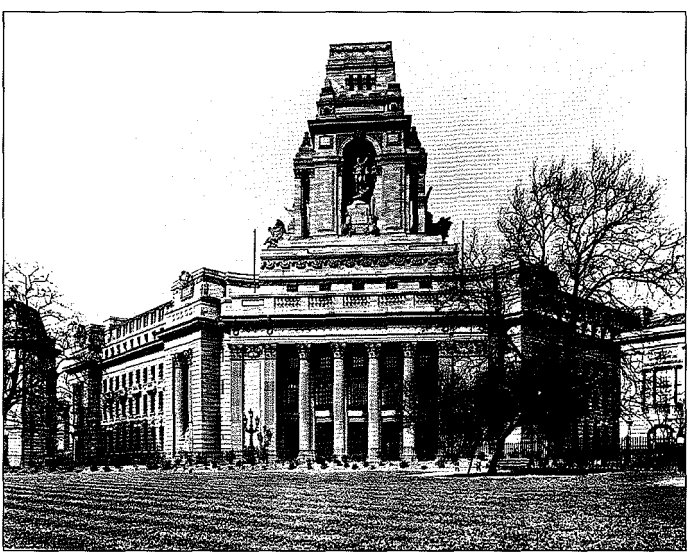

Figure 15.2 Principal entrance portico and tower, Port of London Authority Building, Trinity Square. View from Savage Gardens in the early 1930s. *Source*: Museum of London, PLA Collection.

All lessees were required to build fireproof buildings in Portland stone and each exterior required the approval of the Port Authority's architect.

Figure 15. 2 gives a view of the principal front of the new headquarters building from Savage Gardens. Cooper's treatment was based on a close interpretation of English Renaissance architecture, with Italian and French influences in the ornamentation.[23] Richness of detail was concentrated on the portico, tower and to a lesser degree the pavilions. The four flank walls between the pavilions had severely plain windows and relied upon the great cornice and shadows of the balconies of the second floor windows for articulation. The building was faced with grey granite up to the ground floor level, the remainder being of Portland stone. The principal entrance from Trinity Square dominated the composition, with the graceful pyramidal outline of the upper part, the lofty niche with its black shadows and the figure of Father Thames of heroic proportions standing within. The entrance ensemble carried a detailed iconographical scheme with a sculptural group on the west of the tower symbolising 'Exportation', with a galleon drawn by sea horses and steered by 'Prowess', a male winged figure. The eastern group symbolised 'Produce', with oxen drawing the chariot on which stood a winged female figure 'The Triumph of Agriculture', and 'Husbandry', equipped with agricultural implements, leading the oxen. Between the columns on the ground floor level of the west pavilion was a seated male figure 'Commerce', holding the scales of trade, the basket of merchandise, the books of account, and the lamp of truth. In the corresponding pavilion in Savage Gardens there was a female figure of 'Navigation' with one hand on a steering wheel the other grasping a chart, her foot resting on a globe, and around her are symbols of shipping. The sculpture was the work of Albert Hodge and Charles Doman. In the early stages Hodge had the principal role but sadly he died at the young age of 42 in 1917. His assistant, Doman, completed the commission, including the working up of the figure of Father Thames and the two groups Exportation and Produce from his master's sketch models.[24]

The architect and critic Charles Reilly was characteristically provocative in his assessment. Writing in *Country Life* he compared the new building with Wyatt's decorous neighbour Trinity House, built between 1793 and 1796, and seen immediately to the east of the new headquarters in Figure 15.3. Whereas Trinity House was "low, reticent, yet full of the reserve and dignity of the eighteenth century", by turning 45 degrees "you are facing this great twentieth century structure".[25] He continued:

There is, I am sure, no more dramatic contrast in London. The great square pile of the Port building stands shoulder high above its ladylike partner and then lifts into the air a big head covered with bright curling locks. This latter is the great tower, full to overflowing with colossal and exuberant sculpture, which crowns the big columnar entrance. It is an extraordinary and theatrical effect, and in its new white stone it is almost impossible to believe in its reality. Yet there it is for centuries to come, to show at least that we of this age have the courage of our convictions and can glory in our work. For absolute sheer swagger I know nothing like it. It explains to me how we managed to beat the Germans. Nothing could withstand the vitality of a race that could produce a tower like that.[26]

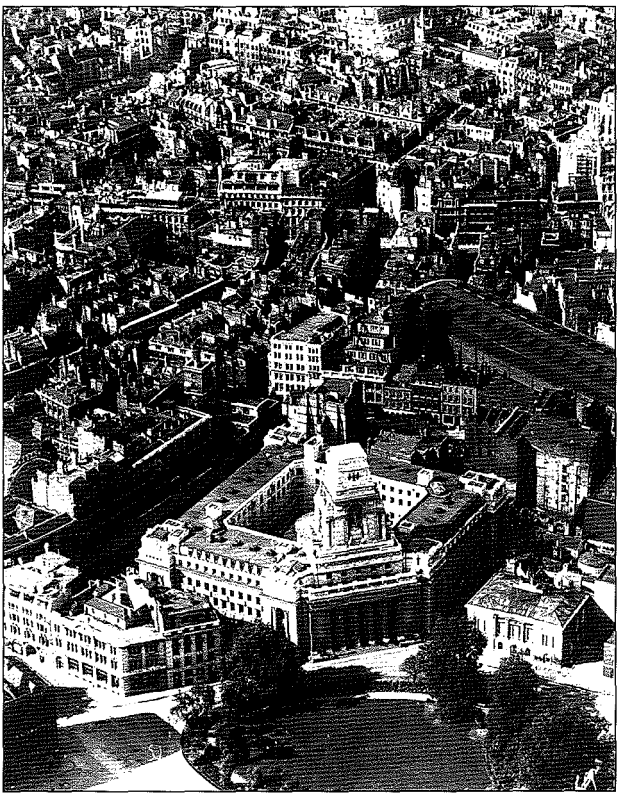

Figure 15.3 Aerial view of the Port of London Authority building, with Trinity House immediately to the east, in the late 1930s. *Source*: Museum of London, PLA Collection.

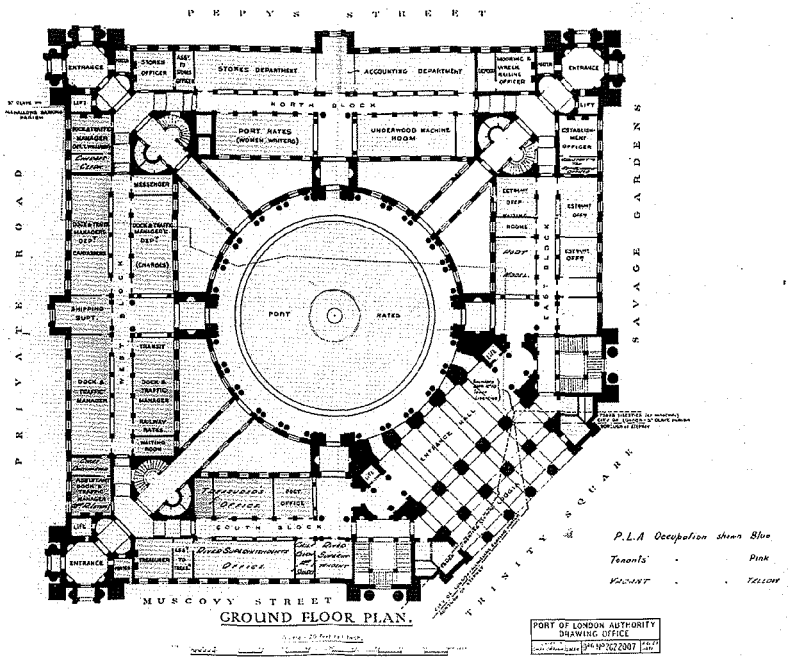

Figure 15.4 Ground floor of the Port of London Authority Building, 4th June 1929. *Source*: Museum of London, PLA Collection.

The general conception of the new building, in keeping with Cooper's Beaux-Arts vision, was that of a perfect square, with its sides facing the cardinal points, and the angle sliced off on the southeast towards Trinity Square, creating space for the imposing principal entrance block. This geometry is captured in Figure 15.4, which shows the ground plan of the new building in a survey of 1929. Entering through the Portico a flight of six steps led up to a vestibule of double height. Its walls and piers were lined with Subiaco marble, quarried near Rome, where Pliny spoke of it being like ivory. The floor was the same, in geometrical patterns, all unpolished. The ceiling was pure white plaster finely modelled and enriched with ornament. Broad flat pilasters of polished marble extended from floor to ceiling with symbolical emblems in low relief. From the vestibule five swing doors led into the entrance hall proper and thence to the Rotunda. The Rotunda was the key to the whole scheme. In his design notes Cooper remarked that "if the centre of this Hall is taken it will be seen that the whole plan radiates

upon its axial lines".[27] The blocks forming the sides of the square were five stories high, with entrance pavilions on the southwest, northwest and northeast corners. From these diagonal corridors led to the Rotunda, which served as the principal public space within the building. In dimension it was 68 ft. in height, with a diameter of 110 ft., and was decorated in the Corinthian order with Subiaco marble.[28] Writing on the day the new building was officially opened, a correspondent for *Lloyds List* remarked on the day-to-day use of the Rotunda, where around a monumental clock in the centre "are grouped four concentric circles of desks for the use of the staff dealing with the port dues which will be paid over the counter by the public".[29]

On the second or principal floor was the Board Room, 60 ft. long, 38 ft. wide and 30 ft. in height (Figure 15.5). The walls were treated with rich dark brown English and French walnut, and the deep cove and ceiling were in white plaster. The architectural treatment was in Cooper's favoured Corinthian style and

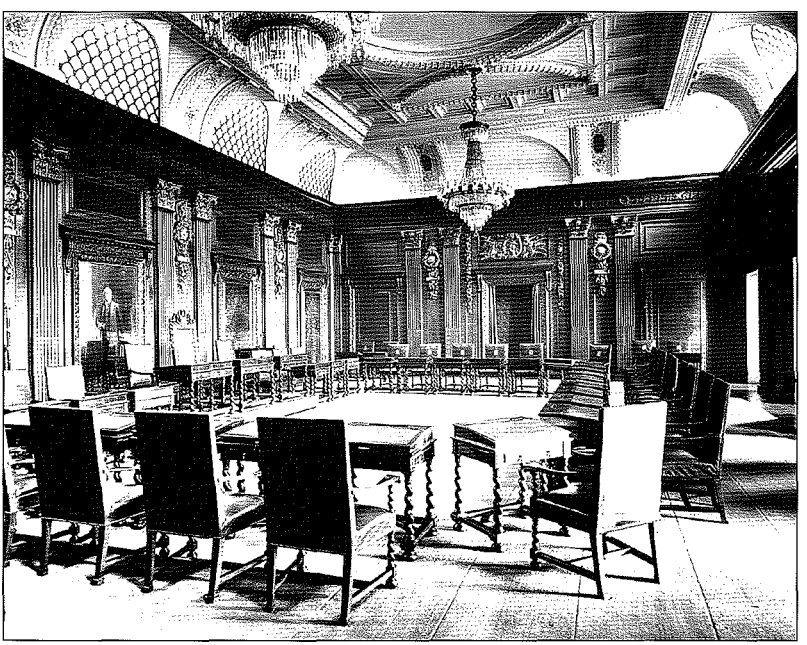

Figure 15.5 Board Room, Port of London Authority Building, shortly after completion in 1922. *Source*: Museum of London, PLA Collection.

indicated his predilection for such lush panelled interiors, captured by Betjeman in his *Variation on a Theme by Newbolt*: "The City will see him no more at important meetings In Renaissance board rooms by Edwin Cooper designed".[30]

Icon of Empire?

On completion, the Port of London Building attracted extensive coverage in the popular and specialist press. Many commentators drew attention to the symbolic qualities of its architecture. The *Sunday Times*, on 15 October 1922, pointed to the centrality of the port to Britain's worldwide role, symbolised in the building by "the magnificent tower ... with a huge sculptured figure of Father Thames, which may be said to act as a link between the Port of London Authority and the vast shipping which wends its way from the Thames to every port of the world".[31] The interiors too carried symbolic weight. In the Board Room (Figure 15.5), for example, the *Daily Telegraph*'s correspondent noted the use of intricate carved panels and trophies to capture a strong sense of imperial geography:

> On the centre line of each pair of pilasters, and at a little more than two-thirds the height, is super-imposed a carved trophy symbolical of the Port and its associations. On the ends of the room are "Navigation" and "Commerce", "Arctic" and the "Tropics". Between the windows "Australia", "Canada", "Africa", "India".[32]

The *Spectator*, on 21 October, drew attention to the hugely impressive scale of the new building suggesting, a little disingenuously, that

> a few decades back this grand architectural symbolism would have been impossible in the case of a utilitarian building devoted to trade. Business was business in those days, and an office was an office, and any nonsense about expressing the might, majesty and power of commerce by means of the Arts would have been very coldly received.[33]

In its scale, style and decoration, the Port Authority headquarters can be seen as a landmark building, in the shift from the Italianate commercial palazzos of the mid-Victorian years to a new monumentalism and *folie de grandeur*

signalling commercial and financial power in the late-imperial City. In both its external and internal treatment, it symbolised the Edwardian belief in Britain's maritime greatness as a trading nation. Bradley and Pevsner describe it as "too late for the label Edwardian Baroque, but still with the Edwardian optimism, like a super-palace for an international exhibition ... reflecting the Imperial monumentalism of the new century".[34] Cooper was widely appreciated by contemporaries as an architect sensitive to Britain's imperial role. In an appreciation on his award of the Royal Gold Medal of the R.I.B.A. in 1931, the critic A. E. Richardson remarked:

> no other living architect has had such opportunities to add to the dignity of the Metropolis ... Sir Edwin Cooper views the City as the centre of the Empire, and he indulges his taste for symbolism because he feels that the riches that are sea borne should find some conventional echo in the buildings he has designed.[35]

In his building for the Port of London Authority such desires reached perhaps their most intense and most enduring resolution.

Acknowledgements

I would like to record my thanks to Mr. Robert Aspinall, Librarian at the Museum in Docklands, for his kind attention during my research in the Port of London Archives. Figures 15.1-15.5 inclusive are reproduced by courtesy of the Museum of London.

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[8] ML/PLA: Board Minutes, 28 March 1912
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16

Commercial geography and inter-war French politics: Louis Marin and the *Société de Géographie Commerciale de Paris*

Michael Heffernan

The relationship between European geography and ultra-nationalist, right-wing politics during the inter-war period has been extensively researched in recent years. The experiences of Germany and Italy have been studied in considerable detail,[1] though rather less has been written on other countries where authoritarian, fascist or neo-fascist politics gained a foothold during the 1920s and 1930s. The standard histories of inter-war French geography, for example, emphasise the discipline's liberal, democratic values, even its radical, left-wing potential, and explicitly reject any influence by the French far right.[2] This is perfectly valid while the focus remains on France's leading academic geographers, but becomes less convincing if the discipline is viewed in more expansive terms as a public debate which involved politicians, diplomats, soldiers, businessmen and journalists as well as teachers and academics. Building on earlier research on French geography during World War One, this essay examines a hitherto unacknowledged far-right tendency in the *Société de Géographie Commerciale de Paris* (SGCP), France's most overtly political geographical society.[3]

The origins of French commercial geography

The foundation of the SGCP in June 1876 was one manifestation of the remarkable late nineteenth-century expansion of French geography, and the related emergence of a distinctively French colonial lobby.[4] The SGCP emerged from the much older *Société de Géographie de Paris* (SGP), which was established in 1821, and reflected the growing unease of a politically-motivated, business-oriented constituency within the SGP which was critical

of the older society's gentlemanly, apolitical stance.[5] After the national humiliation of 1870-1, the reformers within the SGP argued that the society should play a more active political role in re-building France's national pride. More particularly, they argued the SGP should be more aggressive in promoting French imperial expansion as the only way to compensate for territorial losses within Europe and re-establish the country's status as a great power.

At the same time, new alliances were being forged between the worlds of business and academia in other French cities, particularly those with strong commercial links to the colonies. By 1876, self-consciously commercial geographical societies had been established in Bordeaux, Lyons, Marseilles and Montpellier, backed by financial assistance from the *Chambres de Commerce* in those cities.[6] Inspired by these provincial developments, the reformers in the SGP established their own independent organisation, the final split from the SGP taking place more amicably than many had feared because the old and the new society recognised that the two organisations would have different, and complementary, objectives. Over forty per cent of the founding membership of the SGCP were employed in business or commerce (the comparable figures for the provincial commercial geographical societies were even higher at between 50 and 70 per cent), compared to just 14 per cent of the SGP's membership.[7] During the head-long rush for colonial expansion that commenced with the "scramble for Africa" in the 1880s, these differing constituencies – the scientists, explorers and soldiers in the SGP and the businessmen and politicians in the SGCP and the provincial commercial societies – justified their regular appeals for further colonial annexation in the name of both science and commerce.

The SGCP's primary objective, as expressed in its statutes, was "to support the development of French commercial enterprises in all parts of the world". Hundreds of pamphlets, reports and articles were published by the society through the later years of the nineteenth century, many appearing in the pages of its house journal, the *Bulletin de la SGCP*. Regular fund-raising dinners were organised in an attempt to influence the politicians, businessmen, academics and journalists who attended.[8] By the eve of World War One, the SGCP membership exceeded 4,000, and included many senior officials in the French overseas diplomatic staff. Subsidiary branches had been created for, and by, the French communities in Tunis (1896), Hanoi (1902), Constantinople (1904), Algiers (1907), Copenhagen (1909) and Buenos Aires (1911).

For the SGCP, and the provincial commercial geographical societies, geography was a practical, economic pursuit as well as an educational, academic discipline. This was scarcely an unheralded argument, to be sure, but the establishment of specialised commercial geographical societies marked a new departure that has received little attention in conventional histories of geography.[9] The vision of geography these societies promoted was different not only from older learned societies such as the SGP, but also from the more academic verrsion of the discipline advanced in the universities. The SGCP offered a utilitarian and commercial prospectus that drew upon the business community for support and intellectual guidance but spoke to a larger educated public. Solidly imperialist in origins, this form of popular commercial geography embraced representatives of all political opinions, including many on the socialist left.[10]

Louis Marin and French conservative thought

Of the thousands of colonial enthusiasts who joined the SGCP in the late-nineteenth century, none had a more lasting impression on the society than Louis Marin (1871-1960), who became a member in 1895. The favoured son of a staunchly Catholic family from Lorraine, Marin grew up in shadow of the Franco-Prussian war. The German annexation of part of Marin's native province, as well as the neighbouring region of Alsace, after 1870 fuelled Marin's fear and suspicion of Germany, which he retained throughout his life.[11]

Marin's early years were spent in Nancy, where he mixed with like-minded anti-German nationalists such as François de Wendel, who later became a wealthy industrialist and president of the *Comité des Forges*, France's powerful organisation of iron and steel manufacturers.[12] In 1892, the young Marin moved to Paris where he studied at several private academies, including the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* and the *École d'Anthropologie*, all chosen in preference to the Sorbonne, which Marin's family dismissed as too liberal, too concerned with theory, and altogether too Germanic. When not studying, Marin took long trips abroad where he developed a passion for social anthropology and human geography. In 1895, he was offered two posts as lecturer in ethnology, one at the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, the other at the *Collège Libre des Sciences Sociales*. For the next fifteen years, he taught in both institutions and wrote on ethnographic method, social geography, national psychology and related

topics while travelling extensively, particularly in Asia.[13] Firmly committed to positivist, empirical forms of social scientific investigation based on hard statistical evidence, Marin would later develop a standard ethnographic methodology based on what he saw as the three essential characteristics that could be measured in all civilisations – *vie matérielle*, *vie mentale* and *vie sociale*.[14] Only through the deployment of such a standard research methodology, Marin insisted, could geographical variations between different civilisations be properly assessed. This concern to acknowledge and assess human geographical variation was to have a critical bearing on Marin's thinking in respect of France and its overseas empire.

Like many French conservatives, Marin's ideas were strongly influenced by Frédéric Le Play's corporatist vision of family-based, place-bound social harmony.[15] Alongside Le Play, Marin drew inspiration from the writings of Maurice Barrès, a fellow Lorrainer and the leading apostle of the French far right;[16] Charles Maurras, the Catholic royalist intellectual and guiding spirit behind *Action Française*;[17] Gustave Le Bon, the founder of crowd psychology whose famous luncheon meetings Marin regularly attended;[18] and the 'back-to-the-land' peasantist philosophy of Félix Jules Méline.[19]

These ideas shaped Marin's deeply conservative critique of modern French society, which he re-articulated in his numerous books and articles.[20] In Marin's view, France was in the grip of a profound spiritual crisis, the result of a century or more of unchecked urban-industrial development and associated immigration. These twin forces threatened to destroy forever the country's civilisation and social order which had traditionally rested, Marin insisted, on an appropriate and harmonious balance between modernity and tradition, industry and agriculture, the urban and the rural. This balance, previously maintained by institutions such as the Catholic Church, was now severely compromised, with the result that the country's urban population had become deracinated, violent, unhealthy and potentially pathological, while the rural population was deprived of its more energetic, vigorous elements. The results were cultural and moral decline, demographic collapse and economic sclerosis.

This was scarcely an original diagnosis, to be sure, but Marin sought to develop practical domestic policies based upon these ideas through his involvement with numerous academic-cum-political societies, including the *Fédération Régionaliste*, an anti-metropolitan, anti-urban organisation committed to preserving the cultural, linguistic and architectural diversity of provincial

France.[21] He also developed intriguing economic theories about the need to facilitate inter-sector capital flows, in order to limit population mobility rather than encourage it, a theme he would develop further in his imperial policies.[22]

Marin's ethnological and geographical work in the non-European world led him to very different conclusions about the kind of reforms that were necessary in the French empire. In the colonies, Marin argued, the balance between the rural and the urban was skewed in the opposite direction because rural, agricultural life was entirely untouched by modernity, while urban life was still dominated by ritual, ceremony and ancient privilege. Just as France needed to restore its own distinctive "natural" balance by moving in one direction, so the French colonies needed to develop a different and distinctive balance, consistent with their traditions and their potential role within an economically and culturally integrated empire, by moving in the opposite direction. In virtually all cases, this would require an injection of French cultural energy, economic capital and technical innovation.

There was an obvious virtuous circle here: domestic reforms would halt the cultural and economic decline of France and allow the country to divert more resources to its empire, while simultaneous imperial reforms would maximise the impact of these resources to the benefit of the colonies and France. The balance to be maintained in France would obviously be different from the balance required in the various parts of the empire, Marin argued, as the ultimate objective was an imperial symbiosis between the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery, each dependent on the other. There was nothing remotely original in this argument either but, once again, Marin energetically developed these ideas through his work with a variety of pro-empire organisations within the so-called *Parti Colonial*, particularly the *Comité de l'Afrique Française*, the *Comité de l'Asie Française* and the *Comité de l'Orient*.[23]

Marin was not alone in expressing the need for a reactionary conservatism in some arenas while simultaneously identifying the need for technologically-advanced, scientific modernity elsewhere. As numerous historians have shown, this was a feature of the radical right across Europe in the inter-war years, and became an abiding characteristic of both Italian and German fascism.[24] In Marin's case, however, there was a distinctive geographical rationale underpinning his thinking. The differences between his domestic and imperial ideas – the one tending towards an atavistic "back-to-the-land" corporatism, the other reflecting a modernist faith in the energising power of technology –

were not contradictions, he insisted, but necessarily flexible responses to the enormous *geographical* variations within *la plus grande France*. Marin's ideas perfectly exemplified what Paul Rabinow has called "techno-cosmopolitanism", the distinctively French attempt to regulate history, society, and culture by changing its cultural, social, and aesthetic values in such a way as to reflect, and expand, geographical differences.[25]

Louis Marin and the SGCP

Marin's willingness to combine elements from apparently divergent philosophical traditions, to opt for "both/and" rather than "either/or", became a feature of his career, as was his related ability to combine academic interests with an active participation in politics. The latter began in 1905 when Marin was elected to the *Chambre des Députés* as a representative for the second *arrondissement* of Nancy. In parliament, he gained a reputation as an uncompromising, anti-German ultra-nationalist preoccupied with two objectives which had previously been seen as somewhat contradictory: the return to France of the 'lost provinces' of Alsace and Lorraine, and the expansion and development of the French overseas empire.

In the early Third Republic, the most vocal advocates of a French Alsace-Lorraine tended to come from the conservative right, many of whom were openly hostile to overseas colonial expansion on the grounds that an empire was a costly distraction from France's European destiny. From this perspective, French prosperity and great power status would be shaped not by the far horizons of empire but by the "blue line of the Vosges".[26] The cause of overseas expansion, on the other hand, was popularly associated with liberal and even left-wing republicans, many of whom had come to accept France's diminished, post-1870 European borders as a permanent feature. From their perspective, extra-European expansion, particularly when carried out in the name of a liberal, inclusive French civilisation, was the only viable alternative to another, ultimately un-winnable war with an ever more powerful Germany.[27] The apparent mutual exclusivity of these two objectives was underscored early in World War One when a few commentators (including some senior officers in the French army) suggested that France should consider ceding some of its African territories to Germany in return for Alsace and Lorraine.[28]

Working behind the scenes, Marin and a handful of like-minded activists sought to counteract the belief that these two geopolitical objectives could be traded against one another in the search for a negotiated settlement with Germany. For Marin, a French Alsace-Lorraine and an expanded overseas empire were complementary aims and he saw the SGCP as an important forum from which to launch his political campaign to demonstrate the validity of this view.[29]

In December 1915, Marin persuaded the SGCP's central committee to initiate a series of detailed studies on the economics of the French war effort, most of which emphasised the urgent need to mobilise the full resources of the overseas empire and to recover the valuable coal, steel and potash resources of Alsace and Lorraine. If France failed to achieve both these objectives simultaneously, warned Marin and his co-workers, it would never be able to sustain its position as a great power.[30] Encouraged by the willingness of the SGCP to throw its resources behind him, Marin began to intervene more regularly in the society's affairs after 1916, the first steps on a path that would ultimately lead to the organisation becoming his private "think-tank".

That France emerged from the war with its suzerainty in Alsace and Lorraine restored and with an expanded overseas empire was in no small measure due to the dogged resilience of the campaign associated with Marin and his fellow lobbyists.[31] This successful outcome reinforced the message that the empire was not an alternative route to national rejuvenation for a cowed, territorially diminished France, but the logical culmination of a revived and strengthened European power. An ambitious, global and imperial strategy had never been fully realised before, Marin insisted, precisely because France's metropolitan European core had been fatally weakened by the absence of its eastern provinces.

Marin might have aspired to the highest political office after the Great War had his continuing hostility to all attempts at rapprochement with Germany not repeatedly hindered his advancement. His refusal to vote in favour of ratifying the Treaty of Versailles on the grounds that it was too conciliatory towards Germany annoyed war-weary *députés*, even on the conservative right, though his uncompromising stance certainly strengthened his credentials among more radical right-wing nationalists. Impressed by Marin's undoubted resolve and capacity for hard work, the conservative Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré, whose family also came from Lorraine, appointed him to the cabinet in 1920

as Minister for the Liberated Regions. This initial foray into government was short-lived and Marin returned to the backbenches after only three months following the fall of Poincaré's administration.

Over the subsequent years, Marin's political career flourished alongside his academic activities. On the political front, he gradually took control of the *Fédération Républicaine* (FR), France's largest right-wing political party. Under his guidance, the FR moved steadily to the right while simultaneously winning increasing popular and parliamentary support, especially in western and eastern regions, the Rhône valley and the Massif Central.[32] Marin served in later Poincaré cabinets through the 1920s, and was the principal right-wing representative alongside Maréchal Phillippe Pétain in Gaston Doumergue's government of national unity in 1934. At its peak, *Le parti Marin*, as the FR was popularly known, boasted around 100 *députés*, including a number who openly supported extreme and even crypto-fascist organisations such as the *Jeunesses Patriotes*, the *Action Française*, the *Croix de Feu*, the *Parti Social Français*, the *Parti National Populaire*, the *Parti Républicain National et Social* and the *Parti Populaire Français*. In 1937, faced with the radical proposals of Léon Blum's left-wing coalition *Front Populaire*, Marin's FR entered into a formal alliance with Jacques Doriot's fascist-style *Parti Populaire Français* to establish an alternative far-right alliance, the so-called *Front de la Liberté*. The FR's newspaper, founded by Marin and devoted almost exclusively to articles that reflected his political philosophy, was entitled simply *La Nation*.

Marin's rising political reputation brought opportunities to advance his career in the world of science. In 1920, he was elected president of the *Société d'Ethnologie* and in 1923 he became the director of the conservative *École d'Anthropologie* in Paris.[33] In 1925, he was invited to become president of the SGCP.[34] With characteristic self-confidence, Marin set about transforming the SGCP in his own image. His principal objective was use the SGCP to advance his personal campaign to convert the French right to the imperial cause. As we have seen, French conservatives were at best ambivalent about the benefits of an overseas empire and frequently dismissed the colonies as costly diversions which threatened to undermine France's security within Europe. Although the French army had always included powerful advocates of colonial expansion and development, the civilian right still associated the empire with liberal, and even socialist republicans whose colonial enthusiasms seemed as fleeting as they were unrealistic. Despite the renewed efforts of the *Ligue Maritime et Colonial*, as the re-organised *Parti Colonial* was called after 1921, Marin

reasoned that the absence of any cross-party consensus would always undermine attempts to develop an economically integrated French colonial empire.

Marin proposed a series of reforms within the SGCP through late 1920s, in the face of growing resistance from liberal members who felt the society was being pushed towards the right. Several prominent activists resigned, including some academic members.[35] Matters came to a head in January 1930, when Marin's opponents garnered sufficient support to force a vote of no confidence in his presidency. Marin survived this challenge after a bruising debate and successfully turned the tables on his critics, most of whom resigned.[36] Marin's position was by then virtually unassailable, and a root-and-branch review of the society followed that further reinforced his dominance. Marin persuaded Jacques Ancel, a wealthy historian and long-standing SGCP member, to become the society's full-time secretary and editor of the *Bulletin*, which was immediately re-launched as the *Revue Économique Française* (REF), with financial support from the Paris *Chambre de Commerce* and the motorcar manufacturer André Citr^en.[37] Under Ancel's editorship, the REF was re-positioned as a more popular periodical with short, accessible articles aimed at the general reader on the economic and strategic benefits of France's still undeveloped overseas empire. Ancel's inaugural editorial set the tone by lamenting the geographical ignorance of businessmen and politicians, and the political and commercial naivety of geographers and other academics, a characteristically French 'divorce', according to Ancel, which was far from replicated in Germany. "Our ambition", concluded Ancel, "is to offer these two worlds, the worlds of business and science, a forum to exchange their ideas".[38]

Ancel's editorship of the REF, though short-lived, was to have a lasting impression. At the time, his reputation rested on his historical research on pre-1914 diplomatic history, which had generated several scholarly tomes on the Balkans.[39] Having gained control of a campaigning new journal, Ancel's interests shifted from diplomatic history to political geography. While most French geographers were openly contemptuous of the lurid journalistic writings being produced in Karl Haushofer's *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* and Ernesto Massi's *Geopolitica*, Ancel adopted a muted version of the same format for the REF and engaged directly with German and Italian geopolitics in his own publications. Although he angrily disputed the territorial claims asserted by German and Italian geopolitical theorists, Ancel relied on many of the same arguments and techniques, and frequently mounted equally spurious French counter-claims.[40] Ancel's editorship of the REF was successful in financial

terms, as the journal began to return a healthy profit, but his abrasive personality did not enamour him to the society's council, with whom he repeatedly quarrelled.[41] Following a spectacular fall-out with Marin, Ancel resigned in early 1931 to be replaced by Georges-Henri Brissaud-Desmaillet, a retired 62-year old general who had been a prominent colonial activist in the centre-left *Parti Radical Socialiste* but had embarked on a familiar journey towards the opposite end of the political spectrum.[42] Ancel continued to write regularly for the REF through the 1930s and Brissaud-Desmaillet seemed content to retain the journal's style and format, while adding new publications to the SGCP's stable, including a colourful magazine entitled *Marchés du Monde* that appeared in 1932.[43]

The SGCP intensified its activities throughout the troubled 1930s as an increasingly polarised French society teetered more than once on the brink of civil war.[44] Marin's influence, sustained by the ever loyal Brissaud-Desmaillet, was always in evidence, particularly during the *Front Populaire*, when the REF published numerous articles by Marin, Brissaud-Desmaillet and others attacking the socialist government's wide-ranging but ultimately ineffective colonial reforms, a stance that precipitated further resignations from SGCP members disillusioned with the society's flagrant disregard for its original claims to objectivity and political inclusiveness.[45] As one critic observed in his resignation letter to Marin in July 1939: "I believe that the *Bulletin* (*sic*) has no longer any discernible geographical character, but has become instead a current affairs journal (*une revue à tendance*) ... in which some people seek to impose their views on political questions where unanimity is impossible.."[46]

Louis Marin, the SGCP and "le myth impérial"

The SGCP was not the only forum Marin used to advance his political campaigns, but it was not without significance in the gradual conversion of French conservatives to the imperial cause. Although many traditional conservatives remained unconvinced by the arguments in favour of colonial expansion and development, by the mid-1930s the French right wing could no longer be relied upon to dismiss the empire as geopolitically unrealistic and economically wasteful, the last redoubt of romantic military commanders and ineffectual dreamers who refused to face the brutal realities of France's European challenges.[47] The new breed of right-wing imperialists prided themselves on introducing a "realism" to French colonial policy, notably in the

field of economics, but the main distinguishing feature between the new right-wing imperialism of the 1930s and the liberal-left imperialism of earlier periods revolved around the question of race. As a number of recent studies have confirmed, the 1930s witnessed a steady decline in old-style assimilationist and quintessentially republican French colonialism which saw the empire as a means of imparting the cultural and political benefits of French civilisation to all peoples, regardless of race or religion, and a corresponding development of a hard-nosed economic imperialism, invariably coupled with an insistence on the need to maintain clearly defined and legally sanctioned racial distinctions between colonisers and colonised. Although the colonial reforms of the short-lived *Front Populaire* sought to re-affirm the earlier liberal colonialism, these were faint-hearted changes that were either aborted or reversed, and did little to halt the steady right-ward drift in France's imperial policy and practice through the 1930s.[48]

The fact that the colonial project was no longer associated with just one political position made for some invigorating, if frequently confused debate about the nature and purpose of the empire, both in parliament and in the pages of national newspapers which had previously given little space to colonial affairs. The political interest in the empire spawned a growing popular curiosity, encouraged by the vogue for lavishly illustrated "empire" magazines such as *Mer et Colonies*, a familiar sight on tables in hotel lobbies and doctors' waiting rooms throughout the 1930s. The enormously popular 1925 *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris had reflected a distinctly colonial intellectual appropriation of non-Western artistic styles and traditions and engendered a new Art Deco "empire aesthetic" which rapidly transformed the worlds of art, architecture, design, fashion and advertising.[49] The new-found enthusiasm for empire was further reinforced by the extraordinary success of the 1931 *Exposition Coloniale Internationale* in Vincennes, on the eastern edge of Paris, where a global empire was recreated in microcosm and then "performed" as an elaborate *mise-en-scene* both for, and by, the 33 million people who visited the site.[50] This was followed by the no less spectacular colonial section in the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, staged in the centre of Paris and designed to promote the idea of *la France des cinq continents*.[51]

By the mid-1930s, the statistics, digests and reports produced by the SGCP and myriad other pro-empire agencies began to indicate that after decades of neglect, French colonies were at last having a positive impact on the French

economy. The colonies had by then become the main source of raw material for French industry and a significant focus for French capital investment.[52] The empire still had its critics from the left as well as the right, but its growing importance to France's domestic economy reinforced the colonial argument during the rising international tension of the late 1930s. By the eve of World War Two, observers of all political shades had accepted what Charles-Robert Ageron has called "le mythe impérial" - the idea that France's extra-European resources guaranteed national security in an otherwise uncertain age.[53]

The SGCP, by now firmly associated with the right-wing politics of its president, was at the heart of these developments. Revealingly, it was the SGCP, rather than the more traditional SGP, which hosted the 1931 conference of the International Geographical Union, part of the programme of the *Exposition Coloniale*. The SGCP's new agenda was revealed in the IGU events and by the eclectic resolutions the society proposed to the conference. These included a call for a revamped French Colonial Ministry, the establishment of new courses on colonial studies in schools and universities, the mobilisation of national and international credit for colonial development, the completion of the long-discussed trans-Saharan railway to link west and north Africa, the establishment of a *Musée Colonial* devoted to the history of France's overseas empire in which the displays gathered together for the *Exposition* could be permanently preserved, and the foundation of an *Institut National Géodetique et Cartographique* to bring together the France's various map-making facilities and aerial photographic units into an single agency.[54]

Marin's world-view was encapsulated in the SGCP resolution recommending that talented young people from the colonies should *not* be educated in France, but trained instead in practical subjects within the colonies themselves. This resolution may well have reflected the growing French hostility to immigration, proportionately as high in the 1920s and early 1930s as in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the widespread conviction that incoming non-Europeans threatened France's cultural identity and social stability. But this most revealing of SGCP statements was justified in precisely the opposite terms. According to the resolution's preamble, immigrants from the colonies, particularly those who settled in Paris, were being intoxicated by the "unhealthy propaganda" of socialists and Marxists and were then spreading these dangerous ideologies in otherwise peaceful colonial societies. Rather than encourage this disastrous policy, France should seek to create an indigenous, Francophone technocratic elite within each colonial arena, cultivated under the supervision of responsible

colonial regimes. More than any other statement, the 1931 SGCP resolution on immigration and education demonstrates Marin's rejection of traditional liberal assimilationism and his conviction that France and its empire could only sustain one another by respecting their inherent, racially defined differences. For Marin, France's problems were primarily domestic. France was a decadent and declining power, he felt, one that was capable, in an act of wilful self-destruction, of corrupting its own colonies with the very ideas that were hastening its own collapse. The colonial empire might yet save France from its own excesses, Marin implied, but only if these highly combustible regions were carefully managed and protected from the undesirable aspects of France's declining metropolitan culture.[55]

Conclusion

The SGCP occupied a liminal space in the political culture of early twentieth century France. It provided a forum where academies, businessmen and politicians could intermingle in pursuit of common objectives. Under Louis Marin's guidance, the SGCP became a mouthpiece for his powerful conservative critique of modern French society and culture between the wars, and was especially important in his campaign to develop a conservative and nationalist case for an expansive overseas empire. Although Marin scornfully dismissed the collaborationist Vichy governments that came to power after the fall of France in 1940 (he eventually escaped to London to join De Gaulle's Free French), many of the ideas he and his supporters within SGCP developed during the 1920s and 1930s were widely accepted during the Vichy era.

That said, the direct influence of the SGCP on French government policies from the 1920s to the 1940s should not be overstated. The story of the SGCP has more significance for the history of French geography between the wars than the political history of the country in this period. For those interested in the former topic, it is important re-examine the SGCP, and the individuals associated with it, because this hitherto unexamined constituency throws a new and very different light on the standard account of twentieth-century French geography, as practised by its leading representatives in the major centres of higher education. As Paul Claval demonstrates in his outstanding recent study, the French school of geography that developed in the country's universities between the wars was arguably the most distinguished in the world. Geography was by then a cohesive, socially relevant discipline, firmly wedded to the

moderate, liberal and above all republican nationalism of Paul Vidal de la Blache, but with more than a hint of the radical, left-wing idealism of Élisée Reclus.[56]

The SGCP represented a very different geographical tradition from that which developed in French universities. It is a tradition that scarcely features in the standard histories of the discipline. This is partly because the SGCP, despite its name and explicitly geographical perspective and language, can readily be seen as a commercial, financial and political organisation, rather than an intellectual, academic or educational society. It can thus be dismissed as marginal to the main intellectual currents within French academic geography. Yet the SGCP was at heart of a wider geographical community that reached across a number of domains – academic, political and commercial - and was arguably more significant as a result. The absence of any sustained investigation into the kind of geography represented by the SGCP should not be seen in an unduly conspiratorial light, but this silence in an otherwise extensive historiography has created the impression that French geography was always associated with the moderate, ideologically acceptable liberal-left during the fractious ideological and political disputes of the middle decades of the twentieth century. The foregoing analysis seeks to demonstrate that French geography was connected to a much wider spectrum of French political culture than has have hitherto been acknowledged.

Notes

[1] D. Atkinson, Geopolitics, cartography and geographical knowledge: envisioning Africa from Fascist Italy, in M. Bell, R. Butlin and M. Heffernan (Eds), *Geography and Imperialism, 1820-1940* (Manchester 1995) 265-97; M. Bassin, Race contra space: the conflict between German *Geopolitik* and national socialism *Progress in Human Geography* **11** (1987) 473-95; I. Diekmann, P. Krüger and J. H. Schoeps (Eds), *Geopolitik: Grenzgänge im Zeitgeist* (Vol. 1 – *1890 bis 1945*) (Berlin 2000); M. Fahlbusch, M. Rössler and D. Siegrist, Conservatism, ideology and geography in Germany 1920-1950 *Political Geography Quarterly* **8** (1989) 353-67; G. Herb, *Under the Map of Germany: Nationalism and Propaganda, 1918-1945* (London 1997); H. Heske, German geographic research in the Nazi period *Political Geography Quarterly* **5** (1986) 267-82; Idem., Karl Haushofer: his role in German geopolitics and Nazi politics *Political Geography Quarterly* **6** (1987) 135-44; B. Hippler, *Hitlers Lehrmeister:Karl Haushofer als Vaters des NS-Ideologie* (St. Ottilien 1996); M. Korinman, *Quand l'Allemagne pensait le monde: grandeur et décadence d'une géopolitique* (Paris 1990); K. Kost, *Die Einflüsse der Geopolitik auf Forschung und Theorie der Politischen Geographie von ihren Anfängen bis 1945* (Bonn 1988); *Idem.*, The conception of politics in political geography and

geopolitics in Germany until 1945 *Political Geography Quarterly* **8** (1989) 369-85; D. Murphy, *The Heroic Earth: Geopolitical Thought in Weimar Germany 1918-1933* (Kent, OH 1997); M. Rössler, Applied geography and area research in Nazi society: central place theory and planning, 1933 to 1945 *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **74** (1989) 419-31; W. D. Smith, *The Ideological Roots of Nazi Imperialism* (Oxford 1986)

[2] P. Claval, *La géographie au temps de la chute des murs* (Paris 1993), 71-91; *Idem.*, *Histoire de la géographie française de 1870 à nos jours* (Paris 1998) 153-213, and for an exception, J.-L. Tissier, Rendez-vous à Uriage (1940-1942): la fonction du terrain au temps de la Révolution Nationale, in M.-C. Robic et al., *Géographes en pratiques (1870-1945)* (Rennes 2001) 343-51

[3] M. Heffernan, The spoils of war: the *Société de Géographie de Paris* and the French empire, 1914-1919, in M. Bell, R. Butlin and M. Heffernan (Eds), *Geography and Imperialism, 1820-1940* (Manchester 1995) 221-64; *Idem.*, History, geography and the French national space: the question of Alsace-Lorraine, 1914-1918 *Space and Polity* **5** (2001) 27-48

[4] M. Heffernan, The science of empire: the French geographical movement and the forms of French imperialism, c. 1870-c. 1920, in A. Godlewska and N. Smith (Eds), *Geography and Empire* (Oxford 1994) 92-114; D. Lejeune, *Les sociétés de géographie en France et l'expansion coloniale au XIXe. siècle* (Paris 1993); and, more generally, T. Chafer and A. Sackur (Eds), *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Basingstoke 2001)

[5] See, however, M. F. Taylor, Nascent expansionism in the Geographical Society of Paris, 1821-1848 *Proceedings, Western Society for French History* **7** (1979) 229-38; and M. Staum, The Paris Geographical Society constructs the Other, 1821-1850 *Journal of Historical Geography* **26** (2000) 222-38, on the politics of the early SGP

[6] J. F. Laffey, Roots of French imperialism in the nineteenth century: the case of Lyons *French Historical Studies* **6** (1969) 78-92; *Idem.*, Municipal imperialism in nineteenth-century France, *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* **1** (1974) 81-114; *Idem.*, The Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Indochina during the Third Republic *Canadian Journal of History* **10** (1975) 325-48

[7] W. Schneider, Geographical reform and municipal imperialism in France, 1870-80, in J. M. MacKenzie (Ed.), *Imperialism and the Natural World* (Manchester 1990) 90-117

[8] The original statutes of the SGCP, the documentation relating to the society's recognition by the government as an association having 'utilité publique' in 1884, as well the details about its social events, can all be consulted in the *Archives Nationales* [hereafter AN] F^{17} 130

[9] For related studies, see T. J. Barnes, Inventing Anglo-American economic geography, in E. Shepherd and T. J. Barnes (Eds), *A Companion to Economic Geography* (Oxford 2000) 11-26; *Idem.*, 'In the beginning was economic geography': a science studies approach to disciplinary history *Progress in Human Geography* **25** (2001) 521-44; *Idem.*, Performing economic geography: two men, two books, and a cast of thousands *Environment and Planning A* **34** (2002) 487-512, esp. 496-500

[10] For studies of socialist commercial geography in Britain, see L. Hepple, Socialist geography in England: J. F. Horrobin and a workers' economic and political geography *Antipode* **31** (1999) 80-109; D. Linehan, Regional survey and the economic geographies of Britain 1930-1939 *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* **NS 28** (2003) 96-122

[11] W. D. Irvine, *French Conservatism in Crisis: The Republican Federation of France in the 1930s* (Baton Rouge 1979) 1-26; H. Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity 1900-1950* (Ithaca 1992) 12-50; K. Passmore, Catholicism and nationalism: the Fédération Républicaine, 1927-1939, in K. Chadwick (Ed.), *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France* (Liverpool 2000) 47-72. The only existing biography of Marin was penned by his wife. See F. Marin, *Louis Marin 1871-1960: homme d'état et savant* (Paris 1973)

[12] De Wendel remained a life-long friend and political ally of Marin, and a bottomless source of finance for right-wing political programmes. See Heffernan, *History, geography and the French national space*, 32-3; J. Jeanneney, *François de Wendel en République: l'argent et le*

pouvoir, 1914-1940 (Paris 1976); and more generally W. Serman, The nationalists of Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1888-1912, in R. Tombs (Ed.) *Nationhood and Nationalism in France from Boulangism to the Great War, 1889-1918* (London 1991)

13 See, for example, L. Marin, *Voyage en 1901 en Russie, Sibérie, Mongolie, Mandchourie, Chine et Corée* (Paris 1911)

14 L. Marin, *Questionnaire d'ethnographie: table d'analyse en ethnographie* (Paris 1925)

15 V. Berdoulay and J.-Y. Puyo, La pensée géographique de Le Play *Études Sociales* **16** (1997) 19-36; M. Z. Brooke, *Le Play, Engineer and Social Scientist: The Life and Works of Frédéric Le Play* (London 1970), and for examples of Le Play's writings, C. B. Silver, *Frédéric Le Play on Family, Work, and Social Change* (Chicago 1982)

16 R. Soucy, *Fascism in France: The Case of Maurice Barrès* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1972); Z. Sternhall, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme française* (Paris 1972); E. Weber, *My France: Politics, Culture, Myth* (Cambridge, Mass. 1991) 226-43

17 M. Sutton, *Nationalism, Patriotism and Catholicism: The Politics of Charles Maurras and French Catholics, 1890-1914* (Cambridge 1982)

18 R. A. Nye, *The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic* (London 1975)

19 M. Cleary, Retour à la terre: peasantist discourse in rural France, c. 1930-1950, in I. Black and R. Butlin (Eds), *Place, Culture and Identity: Essays in Historical Geography in Honour of Alan R. H. Baker* (Quebec City 2001) 235-53

20 For example, L. Marin, *Le triomphe de vice: étude réaliste et sociale* (Paris 1905)

21 T. Flory, *Le mouvement régionaliste français: sources et développements* (Paris 1966); J. Wright, *Regionalism in France, 1900-1920* (Oxford 2003). The remainder of this essay draws on Marin's personal papers, organised thematically by correspondent and year, in AN 317 *Archives Privés* [hereafter AP]. Marin become the president of the *Fédération Régionaliste* in the late 1940s. See AN 317 AP 153, Dossier 4

22 Marin, *Le triomphe de vice*, 23-5

23 Information on the full list of societies, colonial or otherwise, in which Marin played a prominent role can be found in AN 317 AP 157

24 J. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar Germany and the Third Reich* (Cambridge 1984)

25 P. Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms in the Social Environment* (Cambridge, Mass. 1989)

26 C.-R. Ageron, *L'Anticolonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914* (Paris 1973); Idem., *France coloniale ou parti coloniale?* (Paris 1978); M. Heffernan, The French right and the overseas empire, 1870-1920, in N. Atkin and F. Tallet (Eds), *The Right in France 1789-1997* (London 1997) 89-113; J.-P. Biondi and G. Morin, *Les anticolonialistes (1881-1962)* (Paris 1992)

27 A. L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930* (Stanford 1997); J. Marseille, La gauche, la droite et le fait colonial en France des années 1880 aux années 1960s *Vingtième Siècle* **24** (1989) 17-28; M. Michel, La puissance par l'empire: note sur la perception du facteur impérial dans l'élaboration de la défense nationale (1936-1938) *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* **69** (1982) 35-46

28 Heffernan, *History, geography and the French national space*

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30 A special *Commission d'Études Économiques* was established within the SGCP to prepare these reports, under the presidency of Raoul Peret, a former Minister of Commerce. This commission divided itself into seven sub-committees, each with around six members, charged with reporting on specific kinds of economic reform necessary for the war-effort, ranging from transport to credit and banking. Marin chaired the sub-committees on colonial trade and general financial questions. See AN 317 AP 151, Dossier 4, and Heffernan, *The spoils of war*, 259-60

[31] C. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *France Overseas: The Great War and the Climax of French Imperial Expansion* (London 1981)
[32] Irvine, *op. cit.*, 42-3; Passmore, *op. cit.*
[33] Lebovics, *op. cit.*, 12-50
[34] AN 317 AP 151, Dossier 1
[35] Other liberal academics persevered, including Albert Demangeon who sat on the SGCP's Council and on the editorial board of the *Bulletin* throughout the inter-war period
[36] AN 317 AP 151, Dossiers 11 and 12
[37] AN 317 AP 151, Dossier 10
[38] J. Ancel, Avant propos *Revue Économique Française* **52** (1930) 1-2, quotation on p. 2
[39] J. Ancel, *Peuples et nations des Balkans* (Paris 1926) was probably his most widely book prior to his involvement with the SGCP
[40] Ancel's books include *Géopolitique* (Paris 1936); *Affaires étrangères: aide mémoire de la politique française (1789-1936)* (Paris 1936); *Manuel géographique de politique européenne: Vol. 1 – L'Europe centrale, Vol. 2 – L'Europe germanique* (Paris 1936 and 1945); and *Géographie des frontières* (Paris 1938). For brief reviews of Ancel's life and works, see M. Sivignon, Géographie et politique: deux moments de la pensée de Jacques Ancel, in J.-R. Pitte and A.-L. Sanguin (Eds), *Géographie et liberté: mélanges en hommages à Paul Claval* (Paris 1999) 109-16; R. Specklin, Jacques Ancel 1882-1943, in T. W. Freeman, M. Oughton and P. Pinchemel (Eds), *Geographers: Bio-Bibliographical Studies* (Vol. 3, London 1979) 1-6, though both are silent on his involvement with the SGCP. See AN 317 AP 151, Dossiers 10, 11 and 12
[41] AN 317 AP 151, Dossiers 10 and 11
[42] Brissaud-Desmaillet continued to refer to himself in his correspondence with Marin and others as a '*vieux radical*' throughout the 1930s. See AN 317 AP 152, Dossier 1
[43] AN 317 AP 151, Dossiers 9, 12 and 13; AN 317 AP 152, Dossier 1.
[44] The society's sixtieth anniversary celebrations were especially lavish, and culminated with a major conference in 1934, held in Vichy with the President of the Republic, Albert Lebrun, as guest of honour. The conference theme was *La jeunesse et l'empire*, and the major speeches were subsequently published in a special, 270-page edition of the *Revue Économique Française* **57** (1935). The conference details are in AN 317 AP 151, Dossiers 7 and 18
[45] L. Marin, L'échec de la politique coloniale du Front Populaire, *Revue Économique Française* **60** (1938) 271-84
[46] Letter to Marin from Auguste Chevalier, senior botanist at the *Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle* and a member of the SGCP Council, 25 July 1939, in AN 317 AP 151, Dossier 20
[47] On this shift, see Marseille, *op. cit.* and, more generally, R. Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale de la France de 1871 à 1962* (Paris 1962)
[48] Conklin, *op. cit.*, especially chaps 5 and 6, and O. White, *Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa* (Oxford 1999). On the colonial policies of the *Front Populaire*, see the essays in T. Chafer and A. Sackur (Eds), *The French Colonial Empire and the Popular Front: Hope and Disillusionment* (London 1999) alongside W. B. Cohen, The colonial policy of the Popular Front, *French Historical Studies* **7** (1972) 368-93; M. Laguna, L'échec de la commission d'enquête coloniale du Front Populaire, *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* **16** (1989) 79-97; B. Stora, La gauche socialiste révolutionnaire et la question du Maghreb au moment du Front Populaire (1935-1938) *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* **70** (1983) 68-73
[49] C. Benton, T. Benton and G. Wood (Eds), *Art Deco 1910-1939* (London 2003) 38-137; T. Gronberg, *Designs on Modernity: Exhibiting the City in 1920s Paris* (Manchester 1998).
[50] C.-R. Ageron, L'Exposition Coloniale de 1931: mythe républicaine ou mythe impérial, in P. Nora (Ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire* (Vol. 1 - *La Nation*) (Paris 1984) 561-91; C. Hodeir and M. Pierre, *L'Exposition Coloniale* (Paris 1991); Lebovics, *op. cit.*, 51-97; P. A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge, Mass. 2000)

[51] S. Peer, *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World's Fair* (New York 1998)
[52] J. Marseille, L'investissement français dans l'empire colonial: l'enquête du gouvernement de Vichy (1943) *Revue Historique* **122** (1974) 409-32 and, more generally, *Idem.*, *Empire colonial et capitalisme français: histoire d'un divorce* (Paris 1984)
[53] C.-R. Ageron, La perception de la puissance française en 1938-1939: le mythe impérial *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* **69** (1982) 7-22; *Idem.*, Les colonies devant l'opinion publique française, 1919-1939 *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* **77** (1990) 31-73; Marseille, *op. cit.*; Michel, *op. cit.*
[54] AN 317 AP 151. Dossier 16. The idea of a *Musée Colonial* was based explicitly on the *Musée Social*, established in 1895 by Jules Siegfried, one of the original SGP instigators of the SGCP and the father of the prominent economic and political geographer André Siegfried. Jules Siegfried was a reform-minded mayor of Le Havre who created the *Musée Social* as a focus for moralising research aimed at improving the lot of urban-industrial workers while preserving the economic and social order under which they laboured
[55] AN 317 AP 151, Dossier 16
[56] Claval, *Histoire de la géographie française*, 153-213

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Well-being at a distance: the return of TB to an East Midlands city, 2001

Morag Bell

This essay is about an outbreak of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) in Leicester in 2001. In analysing the outbreak the essay draws together insights from two literatures, those which approach questions of health, disease and identity from postcolonial perspectives, and geographies of science studies focusing on the interactions between expertise and the public. The paper is divided into three sections. First the argument is framed around two biological metaphors. One is associated with separation and exclusion, the membrane model, and the other with interaction and connection, the genetic model. These metaphors are then linked to two health-related events which were widely reported in the UK and beyond in 2001. Second, the progress of the TB outbreak in Leicester is examined through the communications established between medical expertise, the media and various public groups. Finally, the paper offers some comments and conclusions.

Biological metaphors and questions of identity

Biological metaphors have been widely used to represent individual, national and imperial identities.[1] Writing on cell theory, the idea that all living things are made of individual cells, Laura Otis [2] states that the concept of identity that emerges, what she calls the membrane model, is based on exclusion: "It relies on the ability to perceive borders." Otis points out that "to see a structure under the microscope means to visualize a membrane that distinguishes it from its surroundings."[3] She points out that germ theory, the idea that infectious diseases are caused by living micro-organisms and an elaboration of cell theory, encourages one to think even more in terms of "inside" and "outside". Both cell theory and germ theory emerged in nineteenth century science. They

were inspired, at least in part, by technical refinements in the microscope.[4] But other influences shaped the scientific vision from which these theories emerged. For many postcolonial critics[5] the optical lens of imperialism visualised hidden threats to the integrity of imperial identities. As Europeans expanded their borders, the cultures, peoples and diseases they embraced, "began diffusing through their permeable membranes back towards their imperial cell bodies."[6] In the words of Donna Haraway, "the colonised (the invaded) were perceived as the invader."[7]

If the membrane model captured the sense of exclusivity, and with it the vulnerability, implicit in imperial approaches to boundaries and identity, the genetic model and in particular the metaphor of DNA represents rather better postcolonial approaches. A scientific breakthrough of the post-colonial world, the identification in 1953 of the inter-weaving strands of DNA molecules in an intricate double helix structure,[8] is suggestive of the dynamic and fluid qualities of identity. Furthermore, the challenge which recent gene sequencing has presented to genetic determinism, in particular the recognition that human variability arises from interactions between genes and the environment, finds common ground with contemporary characterisations of identity as unpredictable and contingent.

Notwithstanding differences between the membrane and genetic models and their association with an imperial past and postcolonial present respectively, the distinctions are not clear-cut. This can be illustrated by reference to two events reported in February 2001. First, the detailed mapping of the human genome was finally completed. The sequencing of all genes in the human body marked a *triumph* for western biological science and the outcome of cooperation over some twenty years between scientific laboratories around the world. This achievement was recorded as an important public event and was widely reported in the international press. The previous June when a draft human genome sequence had been completed there had been speeches by PM Tony Blair in London and President Bill Clinton in Washington.[9] Also in February 2001 an outbreak of TB was noted in a middle school in the city of Leicester, Crown Hills Community College. As a public event it too became part of a web of media reporting. It was first recorded in the local press in March 2001 and subsequently in a range of UK national broadsheet newspapers and in the tabloids. It was discussed on BBC and CNN networks, and public statements were made by the Leicestershire Health Authority and the Public Health Laboratory in London.

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Both events were framed in a global context. Moreover, they highlighted the intimacy of the global, in particular, that global connections were increasingly affecting the individual down to the level of the gene and germ. These connections were interpreted differently in each case. In the first, international scientific cooperation was hailed as a triumph. In order to counter any notion of exclusivity, Tony Blair and Bill Clinton made a joint statement emphasising that the genome sequence should be available to all researchers.[10] In the second case, there was an emphasis on global anxiety and risk in an age of uncertainty as dread diseases appeared to diffuse once again through the permeable membranes that are *our* national borders. Interestingly no explicit link was made between the two events. Despite the timing, they appeared to occupy separate public domains and different hemispheres of science and medicine. One was linked to an optimistic discourse and a confidence that this scientific breakthrough marked the dawn of a new therapeutic age. The mapping of the human genome appeared to bestow a new power on medical science in the prospect it offered of personalised medicine and, by implication, new opportunities for improved health. The second event was associated with a sense of return; the return of a disease of the past. The TB outbreak pointed to the continued inability of medical expertise to control those micro-organisms that cause infection and reinforced the mystery and fear attached to them.

These two health-related events can be interpreted in a number of ways. They symbolise the disenchantments of scientific and technological progress including its ambiguous, uncertain and selective benefits. They reinforce the elusive or *distant* qualities of well being in the West. They also highlight the fragmented influence of medical science in projections of western cultural power. However, public representations of specific events are closely related to material practices and to the devices through which ideas are produced and circulated over time. The negativity surrounding infectious diseases, especially when juxtaposed with genetic breakthroughs, disguises the importance of contingency. Outbreaks of disease are associated with, and have profound effects upon, people and places. Personal anxiety and public unease may, at times, stimulate medical advance.Outbreaks of disease also illustrate the complex and, at times, contradictory ways in which scientists and the public interact in particular contexts.

The idea that expertise is spatially grounded[11] has a particular resonance in cases of infectious diseases. The progress of an outbreak represents a process of "unique historical change"[12] in which there is uncertainty over the outcome

as public participation is crucial to the effectiveness of official control measures. Moreover, much remains hidden during the course of an outbreak. Official responses are required to public anxieties at the same time as scientists engage in internal debate over the precise control measures. Thus the extent to which "spaces enable and constrain discourse"[13] has a distinctive meaning in this context. There are indeed many spaces from medical laboratory to press conference in which views are expressed, discussion takes place, official and media reports are made. A focus on the TB outbreak in one East Midlands city provides the opportunity to examine the connections across these supposedly separate spaces. By interpreting the TB outbreak as a process rather than a single event, it is possible to examine the devices or mechanisms through which ideas are produced and circulated over time. The unfolding relationship between professional expertise and many different public groups can be identified, together with the significance of distance in the discourses that emerge.

The TB outbreak and its progress

Over the period February to May 2001 Leicester became a laboratory for medical detective work which combined "seeing and recording".[14] For the Leicestershire Health Authority responsible for handling the outbreak it took the form of identification, screening and treatment. These well-tried medical procedures and the progress of the infection were regularly reported within the locality. Indeed the outbreak provided an important test of effective communication between scientists and city residents. There was an appealing clarity and logic about the factual accounts provided on the Health Authority website. Over the period of the outbreak one case was identified as infectious, 69 secondary cases of active TB and 254 cases of latent were diagnosed,[15] over one thousand young people and adults were screened and some 140,000 letters about the infection were sent to those most at risk. The provision of statistical information was accompanied by regular press conferences. Significantly those communicating with the public were specialists in communicable diseases, an expertise which gave credibility to their medical reports.[16] These official communications were, however, quickly drawn into a web of broader reporting which opened up the outbreak to wide scrutiny and critical media attention. In effect, its impact spread far beyond the confines of the city. Reference is made to three prominent themes which emerged from this dialogue with the public. Each theme had its own spatialities. First within the locality the outbreak was

a major public health concern and Leicester an anxious city. Second, for those remote from the outbreak Leicester was a borderless city and TB a global epidemic. Cutting across these discourses was a third, Leicester as a postcolonial city with imperial connections in which national reporting was grounded in the city's distinctive qualities.

The TB outbreak as a public health concern

Whilst there was a desire on the part of the medical authorities to avoid a sense of panic locally, concern over the outbreak was not disguised. Between February and 4 April 2001 as the number of confirmed cases increased from three to twenty-four, public health officials acknowledged that this was a "major outbreak" of a "very virulent form" of tuberculosis.[17] By 3 May, when sixty-two cases had been confirmed it was described as "the biggest school outbreak on record in Britain and the USA."[18] In defining its significance, however, the precise location of the cases was as important as the total number and rate of increase in infection. The clustering of cases among people linked to the College implied that they were connected and it was this concentration that caused concern. The speed with which routine medical procedures were put into place was therefore important in minimising a sense of panic within the city and indeed, following diagnosis of the third case in February, a mass screening programme involving some 700 young people most at risk had been quickly launched. Nevertheless, by April uncertainty over the geographical spread of the outbreak into the wider community prompted experts to state that they faced a "race against time" if the disease was to be brought under control.[19] The Health Authority admitted, "We are dealing with a clinical situation which is difficult to assess."[20]

Notwithstanding this medical anxiety, on 6 April 2001 the local newspaper the *Leicester Mercury* carried the following headline on its front page, "TB: There is no need to panic. This is not a plague city".[21] On 7 April Dr Philip Monk, Consultant in Communicable Diseases at the Health Authority, was reported as saying, "There is no need for people to be concerned about visiting the city. We do believe we are on top of this. We've got the outbreak under control.'"[22] Whilst there was support locally for the efficiency with which the Health Authority responded to the outbreak, there was also public criticism of the NHS and the Department of Health. The chair of governors at the College told the BBC,[23] "If there is an issue, it's the decision to discontinue the BCG vaccinations two years ago. Maybe, and it is a maybe, if the vaccination scheme

had continued, we wouldn't be seeing what we have today." Indeed, two years prior to the outbreak the BMA's general practitioners committee had requested immediate action on the part of the Secretary of State to end what was described as a scandalous nationwide shortage of vaccine against several diseases including meningitis, TB and diphtheria.[24]

This broadening of the public debate about the outbreak was reflected also in the medical sphere. With a view to building local confidence the Health Authority mobilised a network of medical communities from beyond the city. The Department of Health which had launched its own investigation, resumed a TB vaccination programme. "Experts" from the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre and the Public Health Laboratory Service were called upon to work with "local physicians, microbiologists and health service managers."[25] At the same time, medical experts emphasised that there was an important and active role for the public in the reporting process. Information on the symptoms was supplied to city residents through the local press, the distribution of leaflets and NHS Direct. This was then translated into practical initiatives in order that through dialogue with the Health Authority, systematic 'seeing and recording' could be developed within the locality but beyond those with professional expertise.

Leicester and the global: a borderless city

A second discourse centred around global processes and world travel as risky behaviour. These broader issues were discussed beyond the city in particular. In the case of medical reporting they were linked to an emphasis on TB as being "nothing new". A consultant epidemiologist with the Public Health Laboratory Service told the BBC, "We have always had tuberculosis in this country, if you look back 50 years ago we had ten times more TB than we have now."[26] He continued, TB has been "entirely treatable" for 50 years. He did admit, however, that "we have seen a rise in TB in this country in recent years, and certainly an increasing proportion of that is occurring in people who have lived in parts of the world where tuberculosis is much more common."[27]

The framing of the outbreak in a broader spatial and temporal context heightened its significance as a disease that had returned. However, the timing of the return had a particular resonance. The outbreak occurred at the end of a decade during which TB had become defined as a global epidemic. In 1993 TB was declared a global emergency by the World Health Organisation. It is one of only three

diseases for which there is a global fund and yet the medical profession appeared ill-equipped to deal with this increase. As Hugh Pennington has pointed out, in the UK most "public health professionals" have come to "regard communicable diseases with disdain."[28] They are easily treatable with antibiotics. Other diseases have become the focus of attention. This apparent disdain for 'diseases of the past' had, however, become *risky*.[29]

The Leicester outbreak occurred four years after the coming to power of the Labour Government. Following the election victory in May 1997 the Government had argued that in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world, the separation of domestic and foreign policy was no longer realistic. This was reflected also in its approach to health. The White Paper, *Saving Lives*[30] indicated that against a background "of overall improvement and optimism" in relation to health, formidable challenges remained. It stated, "We may have won many battles against deadly infectious diseases of the past, but some, like TB, are rising again." In response to this concern, a follow-up document entitled *Getting ahead of the Curve,* drew attention to infectious diseases (notably TB, HIV/Aids and malaria) as a "major global threat" and a "global disease burden".[31]

Granted, the Leicester outbreak took place prior to the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States and heightened fears in the West of biological terrorism. Nevertheless, some alarmist reporting emerged. Shadow health secretary Dr Liam Fox told the BBC that the outbreak of TB in Leicester mirrored the increase seen over recent years in London, which he called "the TB capital of Europe".[32] Comments from others extended beyond statements intended to shock. The cases in Leicester prompted a medical specialist at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London to echo the view that health problems in the UK could no longer be framed in a national context. But he also asserted that in order to solve TB in the UK it was necessary to take responsibility for it globally.[33]

Imperial return: Leicester as a post-colonial city

A vision of global connections as threatening was refined in some press reporting to threats from an imperial Other. In its first report of the outbreak *The Times* used the headline, "Rise of disease has links to the Empire". It was noted that, "With Britain still the hub of the old imperial territories, it is not surprising that, as the incidence of TB increases in the developing world, so

should there be more in Britain."[34] It was pointed out that "40% of TB notifications in London are of people who had connections with the Indian subcontinent and 29% are in other non-white ethnic groups. The increase in the latter group is mainly in those from Africa." In effect, echoes of an imperial tropical neurosis could be detected as certain overseas territories were deemed once again to be an unhealthy threat.[35] This 'post-imperial threat' was closely linked with refugees, asylum seekers, the homeless, HIV/Aids and poverty. *The Daily Mail* reported, "it is in those parts of the modern world which most resemble Victorian Britain that drug-resistant TB is making the strongest advances."[36] Among the strategies it supported were compulsory screening of immigrants and their detention until satisfactory health results had been secured.

In national reporting the imperial connection went further. It made specific links with the distinctive qualities of Leicester. *The Daily Mail* suggested:

> it is impossible not to question where this outbreak came from and where it might lead. One of the most likely theories is that TB might have broken out at Crown Hills school because 93% of its pupils are Asian. The disease is rife in India and it is a strong possibility that it may have been picked up during a visit to relatives.[37]

The Times and *The Guardian* also referred to the ethnic composition of the College and expressed similar views as to the source of the infection. *The Times* noted:

> 93% of students in the College are of Asian origin and doctors fear that the disease may have been spread by pupils picking up the disease while travelling to areas in the Indian sub-continent where TB is rife.[38]

The Guardian reporter wrote,

> The outbreak began when one child in year nine developed TB last August. Ninety-three per cent of the children at the school are of Asian origin and it is possible the child became infected on a visit to India, where TB is endemic.[39]

Leicester is indeed one of "the most ethnically diverse cities" in the UK. Some 28.5% of its population comprises ethnic minorities.[40] However, this explicit reference to the ethnic mix of the school in national reporting was absent from the local press and indeed the assumption was strongly challenged that the origins of the disease lay overseas. Dr Monk stated that it was "wild speculation" to suggest that it had been brought into the country by people travelling to India. He continued, "It would be unreasonable to leap to these conclusions."[41] Granted, the local press acknowledged the prevalence of TB in Leicester and that the city had "a higher incidence ... than in other parts of the country."[42] But this was not linked directly to the composition of the city's population. Moreover, as if to minimise the significance of this contemporary evidence, in its 5 April report the newspaper noted that in 1845 Leicester had the fourth highest death rate in the country, due largely to the spread of infectious diseases, particularly TB and scarlet fever, in the city's Victorian slums.[43] The article included a photograph of the isolation wards at Leicester's Isolation Hospital and Sanatorium, later Groby Road hospital and now Glenfield, which is part of the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, and has become a leading specialist centre in the UK.

Conclusions

On a celebratory occasion of this kind, a presentation on disease might seem to be inappropriate; for this I apologise. I hope, however, that the geographical focus will remind Robin of one part of his East Midlands home and that the analysis will recall for him the work on empire and postcolonialism which occupied an important place in the research at Loughborough well over ten years ago.

In a short essay it is not possible to discuss the range of source materials available and the subtleties of the debate. There are just three broad points that I wish to highlight in conclusion. The first concerns the content of discourses and questions of identity. The essay began with brief reference to two biological models as metaphors of risk. Although one tends to be associated with an imperial past and the other with a postcolonial present, analysis of the outbreak demonstrates that they can be closely linked. Medical science and media reporting drew on various notions of space and time in the recording process. They mobilised time as past and present, as speed and performance, and as movements across borders, to create multiple and competing visions of

the city. Thus, at various moments during the outbreak Leicester was represented as an anxious city but one in which experts were in control. It was a city caught in a web of global movements which create endless unidentifiable possibilities for disease transmission. But it was also a city in which the imperial outside posed a continuing and distinctive threat to the health of its residents. Cutting across these representations was a common theme, namely, the search for origins. For the Health Authority it was the search for the "index case". For the media it was the social/spatial source in which echoes of an imperial Other could be discerned with moral undertones of victim and blame.

In explaining these diverse representations my second point focuses on interactions between experts, media and the public. Whilst numerous studies examine the complex ways in which expertise can be defined in different contexts, more attention could be given to the significance of distance in shaping these interactions. As Leicester became a focus of forensic examination by the local health authorities, shared knowledge through dialogue with city residents was crucial to the progress of the infection and to controlling its spread. Within the local media there was evidence of a sensitivity to public anxiety, an attempt to minimise an atmosphere of panic, and to avoid statements that might arouse local sensibilities. At a distance, taking risks was more significant than minimising them. Indeed, the comment and commentary in national reporting was consistently more risky and provocative both in the themes developed and in the features of the city on which commentators chose to focus.

My third point involves refocusing the optical lens beyond the boundaries not only of space (local/national/global) but also of time (past/present). In the opening part of the essay reference was made to a tendency to see genetics and infectious diseases as separate spheres of science and medicine, one associated with germs of the past, the other with an optimistic future. This dualism is, of course, artificial when one explores the practices that remain largely concealed from the public gaze in the reporting process. There are, for example, "hidden" spaces of scientific experiment, disputation and research that are rarely mentioned. During the outbreak only passing public reference was made to the use of DNA testing to trace the source of the outbreak. Then on 5 April 2003, two years later, *The Lancet* recorded that a new test had been produced for the early diagnosis of TB. The test had been trialled in Leicester during the 2001 outbreak and it was noted that a network of laboratories within and beyond the city had participated in the research process. In contrast to the familiar

tuberculin (skin) test, *The Lancet*[44] also noted that the new test was not sensitive to the influence of vaccination and, by implication, to country of origin of the patient. It was now known officially, beyond those spaces that are often hidden and silent during the course of a public *event*, that the city had been a laboratory for medical experiment, the outcome of which offered the prospect of significantly cheaper and quicker preventive treatment for people both in the UK and overseas.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Dr Lucy Faire for her assistance in collecting materials for this essay.

Notes

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[21] TB: There is no need to panic *Leicester Mercury* 6 April (2001) 1
[22] Hundreds of pupils to get TB test early *Leicester Mercury* 6 April (2001) 2
[23] Race against time, 5 April (2001) BBC website
[24] P. Baldwin, Vaccine famine puts lives at risk, say GPs *The Guardian* 18 September (1999)
[25] TB pupils treated in hospital, 5 April (2001) BBC website
[26] School awaits TB test results, 4 April (2001) BBC website
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[29] The outcome of a survey in August 2000 by the Public Health Laboratory Service placed TB fifth on the list of health priorities in the UK. See Phipps, *The Guardian* (2000)
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[31] Department of Health, *Getting ahead of the Curve – A Strategy for Combating Infectious Diseases* (London 2002) 9
[32] Vaccination programme, 5 April (2001) BBC website
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PART V

ROBIN A. BUTLIN: LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

18

The Historical Geography of England

1961 Some terms used in agrarian history *Agricultural History Review* **9** 98-104

1962 The Brue Valley of Central Somerset *Northern Universities Geographical Journal* **3** 37-48

1962 Plot's Natural History of Staffordshire *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies* **2** 88-95

1964 Northumberland Field systems *Agricultural History Review* **12** 99-120

1965 Enclosure and improvement in Northumberland in the sixteenth century *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4th series **45** 149-60

1967 The run-rig system *Area* **3** 44-7

1969 Recent progress in studies of terminology of agrarian landscape *Agricultural History Review* **22** 141-3

1973 (with A.R.H. Baker, Eds), *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge)

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1973 (with A.R.H. Baker) Conclusion: problems and possibilities, in A.R.H. Baker & R.A. Butlin (Eds) *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge) 619-56

1975 Rural change in Northumberland, 1600-1880, in A.D.M. Phillips & B.J. Turton (Eds) *Environment, Man and Economic Change* (London) 218-37

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1978 The Late Middle Ages, *c.*1350-1500, in R.A. Dodgshon and R.A. Butlin (Eds) *An Historical Geography of England and Wales* 1st edn (London) 119-45

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1982 The Historical Geography of Britain [text and thematic maps], in *The Ordnance Survey Atlas of Great Britain* (London) 144-57

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1990 Drainage and land-use in the Fenlands and Fen-edge of Northeast Cambridgeshire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in D. Cosgrove & G. Petts (Eds) *Water, Engineering and Landscape* (London) 174-87

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1979 D.J.Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West*

1980 H.D.Clout, *Agriculture in France on the Eve of the Railway Age*

1980 D.R. Mills (Ed.), *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Britain*

1980 M.L.Parry and T.R. Slater (Eds), *The Making of the Scottish Countryside*

1981 T. Rowley (Ed.), *The Origins of Open-Field Agriculture*

1982 H.A.Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates*

1982 L.M.Cantor, *The Medieval English Landscape*

1983 A. Charlesworth (Ed.), *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548-1900*

1983 A.Gibb, *Glasgow: the Making of a City*

1984 A.J.Christopher, *Colonial Africa*

1984 D.E.Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*

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Edited Series: Methuen E.E.C. Series (London)

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1984 H.D.Clout, *A Rural Policy for the EEC?*

1986 T. Weyman-Jones, *Energy in Europe: Issues and Policies*

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