1972
FRYER
Questioning the Past
Questioning the Past

A Selection of Papers in History and Government

edited by
D. P. Crook
for GORDON GREENWOOD

On his twenty-first year as McCaughey Professor of History at the University of Queensland
CONTENTS

Preface ix
Contributors xi
Acknowledgments xiii

1 In Retrospect: The Department of History and Economics to 1948
   A.A. Morrison 1

2 Political Economy Ancient and Modern: Aristotle, Locke, and Keynes
   R.W. Staveley 10

3 Mauryan Art and the “Episode” Theory: Another Misconception about Ancient India
   D. Devahuti 26

4 Revolution, Reaction, and the English Civil War
   Christopher Falkus 38

5 The Payment of Provincial and Local Taxes in North Carolina, 1748–1771
   Marvin L. Michael Kay 57

6 John Williams and His Ship: The Bourgeois Aspirations of a Missionary Family
   Niel Gunson 73

7 The Palmer Loans: British Indian Money and Netherlands Indies Administration under Van der Capellen
   Nicholas Tarling 96

8 A Rare Early Book Printed in Malaysia
   John Bastin 117

9 Colonial Education Policy and Social Change in Indonesia, 1860–1900
   Chris L.M. Penders 130

10 Tocqueville’s Democracy in America and the British Intelligentsia
    D.P. Crook 144

11 The Idea of the Ministerial Department: Bentham, Mill, and Bagehot
    Bernard Schaffer 173
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Cattle Industry in Queensland, 1870–1880</td>
<td>Noela Deutscher</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Case of Benjamin Kitt: Responsible Government and the Kanaka Trade in Queensland</td>
<td>I.D. McNaughtan</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Development of Gold-Mining Unionism in Queensland in the Late Nineteenth Century</td>
<td>June Stoodley</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Patronage and the New South Wales Public Service: The 1894 Royal Commission</td>
<td>Ken Knight</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Metropolitan and Central Government in Queensland, 1859–1925</td>
<td>John R. Laverty</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sir William MacGregor: A Colonial Governor</td>
<td>Roger B. Joyce</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Australian Nationalism and the Imperial Connection, 1900–1914</td>
<td>Charles Grimshaw</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The July Crisis 1914: Historiography and Weltanschauung</td>
<td>John A. Moses</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Australia and British Relations with Japan, 1914–1921</td>
<td>Don Dignan</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Shadows over a Continent: Ideology and Alignment in Latin America, 1938–1939</td>
<td>Glen Barclay</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Writing Asian History</td>
<td>Damodar P. Singhal</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Comparing the English-Speaking Democracies: Value Differences Absolute or Relative?</td>
<td>Tom Truman</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The “Federal Principle” Revisited</td>
<td>S.R. Davis</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix: Gordon Greenwood, Selected Publications 432
The past is insecure, to reverse a proposition of Daniel Webster’s. Disconcertingly for the layman, scholars have made it so, for the discovery and evaluation of new sources has only resulted in a process of incessant questioning of our received view of the past. Sir Robert Walpole knew something of history, for he made some of it, and something of documents, for he wrote a good many of them; it is thus instructive to notice that, when his son offered to read to him, Walpole answered: “Anything but history, for history must be false”. Voltaire thought it “no more than accepted fiction”. Practitioners of the trade, although commonly harbouring a fugitive faith in the ultimate effectiveness of skilled craftsmanship or social science techniques, need to be professional sceptics in this day and age, aware of the fallibility of men and the records they bequeath, and able to subject the past to microscopic cross-examination.

It is clear that man’s account of his past has been constantly tailored, sometimes outrageously so, to the values of the chronicler and the historian; clear that history has been suffused by the colours of the age and culture in which it has been written. This problem of subjectivity has been much discussed and may well be an ineradicable one (even a misconceived one, if we believe some philosophers). Nevertheless the effort of scholars has been, on the whole, to understand and meet it; meticulously to eliminate, as far as is in their power, sources of bias and error, including the particularly insidious ones of nationalism and race; to drive out poor analysis by good in the hope of promoting a more fruitful understanding of the dynamics which have moved, and still move, the world.

These papers are, I trust, in this genre. They are also commemorative, for in 1970 Gordon Greenwood completed twenty-one years as McCaughey Professor of History at the University of Queensland, and these papers are dedicated to him in appreciation of his work in fostering historical studies during that time.

Whilst a full assessment of the man as historian, and the recounting of his own particular Odyssey in the world of ideas and affairs, must await another occasion, the present moment seems opportune to provide a panoramic view of the kind of research and speculation which has occupied the historians and political scientists gathered together at St. Lucia. All of the papers collected
Here are written by members or sometime members of the department of
which Gordon Greenwood has been head since 1949, a department which until
recently combined the disciplines of history and political science; and in general
they reflect a prominent interest of the people concerned. In many cases they
represent very long-term research commitments. The table of contents gives
an indication both of the major weighting, and the range, of departmental
activities. Fifteen papers have been previously published, eleven are new. The
former have been reproduced without substantial changes; where their judg­
ments have been too sharply overtaken by events, or new knowledge – and
this, I believe, is rare – they are perhaps best viewed as documents in the his­
ioriography of their subject.

D.P.C.
CONTRIBUTORS

Glen St. John Barclay, Reader in History, University of Queensland
John Bastin, Reader in Modern History of South East Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London
David Paul Crook, Reader in History, University of Queensland
S. Rufus Davis, Professor of Politics, Monash University, Victoria
Noela Deutscher (Mrs. N. C. Corfield), Lecturer in History, Department of External Studies, University of Queensland
D. Devahuti, Reader in History, University of Queensland
Don Dignan, Senior Lecturer in History, University of Queensland
R. Eric Dowling, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, University of New South Wales, Sydney
Christopher Falkus, Director, Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., London
Charles Grimshaw, Reader in History, University of Queensland
Niel Gunson, Fellow in Pacific History, Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University, Canberra
Colin A. Hughes, Professor of Government, University of Queensland
Roger B. Joyce, Reader in History, University of Queensland
Marvin L. Michael Kay, Associate Professor in History, West Chester State College, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
Ken Knight, Professor of Public Administration, University of Queensland
John R. Laverty, Senior Lecturer in History, Department of External Studies, University of Queensland
I.D. (“Sandy”) McNaughtan, late Lecturer in History, University of Queensland
Allan A. Morrison, Reader in History, University of Queensland
John A. Moses, Senior Lecturer in History, University of Queensland
Chris L. M. Penders, Senior Lecturer in History, University of Queensland
Bernard Schaffer, Professorial Fellow in Development Administration, Institute of Development Studies, and Reader in Politics, University of Sussex
Damodar P. Singhal, Professor of History, University of Queensland
Richard W. Staveley, Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of Queensland
June Stoodley, Senior Lecturer in History, University of Queensland
P. Nicholas Tarling, Professor of History, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Tom Truman, Professor of Political Science, McMaster University, Ontario, Canada
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to the journals and publishers mentioned below for kindly permitting us to reprint listed material. Full citations are given at the beginning of relevant papers.

American Political Science Review: Paper 24
Australian Journal of Politics and History: Papers 4, 11, 15, 18, 22
Australian Outlook: Paper 20
Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde: Paper 7
Hemisphere: Paper 23
Historical Studies of Australia and New Zealand: Paper 17
Labour History: Paper 14
William and Mary Quarterly: Paper 5
Recent years have seen such a tremendous growth in Australian universities, both in number and size, that it is very easy to forget what they were like before the postwar changes began. Indeed, some members of university staffs at present could have little if any knowledge of earlier conditions, or of the work done by early administrators and teachers in giving a firm basis to these institutions. Particularly is this true in the case of Queensland, one of the relatively young group of Australian universities, which began its teaching in 1911. This publication seemed to me to offer an opportunity to cast some light on earlier developments and to rescue almost from oblivion the names of those who carried through successfully the heavy tasks of establishment and consolidation. It may be, too, that despite the extensive changes of the last twenty years we shall find that some of the character of modern institutions has been, in part at least, determined by our predecessors and that it is time that some effort should be made to assess their work. Unfortunately there has been little time to complete research into the details, so in all humility there is offered here an impressionistic survey of the establishment and growth of the Department of History in the University of Queensland, as formed by one who graduated through that department, taught in a secondary school for examinations set by it, and first became a member of it in the last years of the old regime.

It began its career in 1912, but its first decade was beset with staffing difficulties. E.O.G. Shann, the first lecturer in charge of history and economics, offered a two-year course in British history, constitutional history, and economics, though lecturing in the last subject was carried on by a member of the Philosophy Department. The courses were so popular that in 1913 it became necessary to appoint Mr. W. Gates as evening lecturer. The first break came at the end of 1912 when Shann was appointed to the Chair of History in Perth. Fortunately the University had become actively engaged with extension lectures, and on the spot was A.C.V. Melbourne who became temporary lecturer in history. In 1914 Henry Alcock (M.A., Oxon.) took up the post of lecturer in charge of history and economics, with Melbourne handling the evening classes. But staff troubles were far from over — with the outbreak of war Melbourne enlisted. B.H. Molesworth, who was the first to receive first class honours in the department and was soon to become its first M.A., became a temporary assistant
lecturer, and now the department took over the lecturing in economics. But Molesworth's position was only temporary — in 1916 he went abroad on a travelling scholarship.

Despite Molesworth's departure, the outlook brightened in 1916. Melbourne, invalided home from the war, became assistant lecturer in history and industrial history, and T.C. Witherby temporary lecturer in social economics. Both however had to give half their time to University tutorial classes and the Workers' Educational Association (W.E.A.). Still, the presence of Melbourne and Witherby allowed some expansion of the department's activities — economic history, previously treated only as a part of the economics course, now became a separate course, delivered by Melbourne. In 1917 a further extension took place with the introduction of political science, a course given by Alcock himself. At last the department seemed to be settling down, and despite its limited staff, it was already offering a considerable range of courses. But a further interruption came when Melbourne was recalled for military duties in 1918, his place being temporarily filled by E.J.D. Stanley, an honours graduate in history.

Following this, however, came a period when the difficulties appeared to have passed. In 1919 Melbourne returned, this time to a full-time appointment, with Witherby taking over the whole of the tutorial courses and W.E.A. duties which the department had assumed. In 1921 Molesworth took Witherby's place, with the understanding that he would also be a part-time lecturer at the University. At the same time Melbourne was made lecturer in economics and colonial history. In 1922 some money was allocated from the McCaughey bequest to establish the McCaughey Chair of History and Economics, to which post Alcock was appointed and which he was to hold until his death. Continuous pressure had been exerted for an increase in staff, to which, in 1922, the Senate agreed; in 1923 J.K. Gifford joined the staff as lecturer in history and economics. One suspects that John was never happy about having to lecture in history but he was appointed to the dual post, and he did carry out both tasks. In the same year came a further increase in the number of courses offered, with the addition of economic geography. Expansion occurred in another way soon afterwards with the department offering special short courses in agricultural economics and economics for engineers. In addition, in 1926 Alcock had succeeded in establishing a Faculty of Commerce, of which he became Dean.

At the end of 1928 Melbourne was awarded a Laura Spellman Rockefeller Fellowship, which took him abroad for two years, and enabled him to do the work which resulted in the publication of his book, *Early Constitutional Development in Australia*. Soon after Melbourne's return Gifford was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship which took him abroad also for two years from 1931 to 1933. During Melbourne's absence his lecturing was carried on by Marjorie Hopkins (afterwards wife of Walter Harrison, late Professor of Law), while Gifford's work was done by Molesworth, with the assistance of M.F. Hickey (late Professor of Anatomy, but originally with honours and then an M.A. in history). In 1932 T.P. Fry became reader in history (in those days the term
reader was used to describe the post we now call tutor). In 1934 Melbourne became an associate professor. In 1935 Molesworth took over economic history, and Gifford at last was relieved of lecturing in history, becoming lecturer in economics. Further change came in 1937 when Molesworth was appointed Federal Director of Talks for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, his place at the W.E.A. and the University being taken by Mr. N.M. Richmond. Towards the end of 1934 the old two-year course in British history had been replaced by two alternating two-year courses, one in mediaeval and early modern history and modern international relations, the other a two-year course in British and Imperial history. Thus throughout the nineteen-thirties the department settled down to steady development, and one that was not restricted to the study of British history.

Special attention however should be drawn to certain aspects of the development up to that time. Although little money was available efforts were made from the beginning to encourage an independent spirit of research, and an honours school was established which soon bore fruit, producing people such as Hugh Molesworth, Eddie Stanley, Marjorie Hopkins, Tom Fry and “Mac” Hickey to step in and do temporary lecturing in time of need. Topics of research varied, but encouragement was given to those who wished to work on the local story — in fact, Molesworth’s M.A. thesis was one of the first real efforts to work out something of the history of the Kanaka trade, while A.E. Palfery took his M.A. in 1922 with a thesis on the Australian tariff. Secondly, some opportunity was given for specialization, as can be seen from the varying titles accorded to Melbourne, but it was specialization of a very broad kind, and not limited to special periods. Moreover, at times that specialization had to give way to the needs of the department, and staff members had to step in to take other subjects, though where possible temporary assistance was brought in. The result was that from the professor downwards all staff members had very broad fields and very heavy lecture time-tables. Apart from lecturing work a firm interest was always taken in the University Library. In 1934 Melbourne became Librarian, replacing F.W.S. Cumbræ-Stewart, a historical fellow of Christ Church, Oxford, formerly Registrar of the University, and from 1926 onward James Cadell Garrick Professor of Law. Perhaps it will not come amiss to mention here — and certainly it will show how small the administration was in those days — that in 1918 Alcock married Miss Olga de Tuetey, who had been in 1911 the University typist and who had become in 1917 the Library assistant.

The department also played its part in reaching the general public, Melbourne maintaining his interest in adult education, through the tutorial classes and the W.E.A., and Alcock giving strong support, sometimes going on tour through the country districts. Melbourne was one of the founders in 1913 of the Historical Society of Queensland. Alcock was later to become a member of the Council and then President of that society. In 1924, after Brisbane had celebrated its centenary, Alcock strongly supported Cumbræ-Stewart and Dr. Sandford Jackson in the establishment of the Oxley Memorial
Library, and later he was to become chairman of the committee of that Library, a post he held for many years. Alcock also strongly supported Sir Matthew Nathan, Governor of Queensland, in establishing the Queensland Place Names Committee, an organization created to rescue from oblivion the origin and meanings of as many place names as possible in Queensland. In 1932 Tom Fry organized a Queensland Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, with, in those days, a mere shoestring for finance. By sheer hard work he was able to place the branch on a sound footing.

But interests were by no means purely local, and hopes were always entertained of adding Far Eastern history. Two special efforts were made to establish connections with Asia and Japan. In 1931 the Senate of the University decided to send A.C.V. Melbourne to visit those two countries to investigate the possibility of increasing trade between them and Queensland. He left on 14 December 1931 and returned on 19 April 1932 having visited Tokyo, Kobe, Osaka, Yokohama, and Nagoya in Japan, Canton and Shanghai in China, and Hong Kong. Nanking, Peiping, and Tientsin, although on his original programme, were not reached because of the Sino-Japanese War. A report of his visit was issued by the University. In 1935 the Senate decided that another visit was desirable, this time to the Universities of China and Japan, and again Melbourne was sent to the East, leaving Brisbane on 22 January and returning on 22 June 1936. Again the University published his report, which included a recommendation for the appointment of a Japanese lecturer in the University of Queensland. This was taken up by the Senate, which appointed Mr. Seita to conduct a course in Japanese civilization and courses in the Institute of Modern Languages. He was here for some three years, but with the outbreak of war he was first interned, and then repatriated to Japan, putting an end, for the time being at least, to the attempt to establish Eastern studies in this University. But a precedent had been set, a line of interest had been laid down.

During the nineteen-thirties hopes for further expansion were high. With history, economics, political science, some geography, and now Japanese civilization under his wing, Alcock felt that something in the nature of a school of integrated studies was developing. He sought full recognition of this, to some extent anticipating practices adopted in some of the new Australian universities established in the nineteen-sixties. He tried to break away to some extent at least from the older method of organization into faculties and departments, by the establishment of a school of social studies. However, the concept came too early — and the money was not there. His ideas were accepted in principle when the department was renamed the Department of Social Studies.

The war years soon put an end to these hopes, and indeed brought the department into the gravest difficulties it had yet experienced, especially in relation to staff. First, during the early nineteen-forties Alcock himself became so grievously ill that one weekend the doctors despaired of his life. He pulled round through sheer will-power and lived for another seven years, also
largely by sheer will-power; but he no longer had the same strength and incisiveness. In 1943 Melbourne died. The government and the W.E.A. were now at odds, with the result that the government subsidy was removed and the W.E.A. collapsed. Richmond had left the post of director and accepted a position in the Department of Political Science in the University of Melbourne, and the decline of the W.E.A. meant that no replacement came to act as a part-time University lecturer. Thus the department now consisted of Alcock, who was very ill, and Gifford. Part-time assistance proved much more difficult to obtain than in previous times of staff shortage with the result that an increasingly heavy load fell on Alcock’s shoulders. In 1944 the decision was taken to begin to restaff the department and two new assistant lecturers were appointed, R.G. Neale and A.A. Morrison, both taking up their duties in 1945. Every effort had been made to keep all subjects available to the students, though, before the coming of the new appointees, not always completely satisfactorily. This meant that the two newcomers had to plunge straight to work with very heavy lecturing timetables, sometimes in subjects which were completely new to them. No real specialization was possible for them — the department had to come first. Neale had to take European history, economic history, and economic geography, while Morrison had charge of British and British Commonwealth history and British dominion and foreign constitutional history.

Then in 1948 the last of the old guard of historians passed on, when Alcock could keep up the battle no longer, and collapsed and died at his home. Neale and Morrison battled on for a time — with Gifford of course still handling the economics — but the load became too great, so an urgent request was made for assistance, leading to the appointment, late in 1948, of Mr. T.C. Truman as assistant lecturer to handle political science. The Senate had decided that it would now prepare for the ultimate separation of history and economics, so the advertisement for a replacement to Alcock called for a Professor of History, not of History and Economics. The man appointed to the post was Gordon Greenwood.

Before a pen-portrait of the men involved in this story is attempted, it may be well to draw attention to yet more of the difficulties they had to face. Reference has already been made to the university typist in 1911: by 1945 the position had improved a little. In the typing pool in the main office one typist was on call to meet the needs of all individual staff members in the Arts Faculty. Little money was available: even as late as 1948, the entire allocation to the department for maintenance and library was £100. Admittedly costs were much lower then, but —! Moreover, history had to make its own way almost from scratch; it was not a subject specifically required for any matriculation, and it was one of the low marked subjects in the range capable of being used for the award of Open scholarships to the University.1 Hence many schools made

1 In some subjects the total marks were multiplied by 6, others by 5, and yet others by 4, the top 33 units being taken. History was a 4 pointer.
no provision for teaching history at all, while others gave it a very minor place. As a result, few came to the University anxious to study history and the staff of the department had to sell their subject, which they did with considerable success.

It is now necessary to offer some description of the men themselves, to try to bring them forward as real personalities. First of course must come Alcock. He came from the west of England, somewhere near Bath. Graduating from Oxford, he came to Queensland a young man full of energy and enquiry. He always refused to take anything on trust: for example, while at Oxford he was asked to explain the course of one battle of the English Civil War. Being puzzled by some aspects of it, and unable to find the answer in the printed texts he visited the field itself, and walked over it foot by foot till he solved his problem. A small man but sturdily built, he brought the same energy to all his problems. Once during a short visit to Townsville he slung his camera round his neck and climbed Castle Hill from the seaward side, no mean feat in street clothes.

He brought the same spirit of energy and enquiry to his lectures: one always received the impression that behind his bulging forehead his brain was ceaselessly working on some problem or another. Before his illness he was a most inspiring lecturer who led his classes to a considerable understanding of the picture he wanted to create, but who also planted in their minds a series of enquiries. After an Alcock lecture there was quite a procession to the Library of students seeking answers to some of these questions. Sometimes he would open proceedings by drawing from his breast pocket the most bulging wallet I have ever seen and, extracting from it a clipping from the morning’s newspaper, proceed to develop a lecture on a subject such as the Hobbesian theory of power, at first glance far removed from the topic in the clipping. To take lectures from him was to be stimulated. And he did have a full programme of lecturing — all the political science, much of the European history, and the special courses for students in other faculties. Towards the end of his life his lectures lost much of their verve and sparkle but this was not surprising in view of his bad health.

He made a tremendous contribution to the University on the administrative side. Early staff members had to take up a considerable burden of such work, and as Alcock was expressly good at it, he was dragged into much of it. A member of the Senate from 1929 to 1944, he was also chairman of the Library Committee from 1938 to 1944. President of the Professorial Board, Dean of the Faculties of Arts and Commerce at varying times — these were only some of his positions. He told me once that at that time he was a member of sixty-four committees and chairman of half of them.

This concern with administrative duties combined with his lecturing load had one important and unfortunate result: he never had the time to do any major writing for publication. All of us who passed through his hands hoped that some day the break would come and time would be made available. But this never happened: no study leave was available then, and he never sought any overseas
scholarship for himself. The result is that the only published material we have from him is a few short articles in the Queensland Educational Journal and a presidential address to Section E of ANZAAS in 1930.

Towards the end of his life it was agony to watch him struggle up the stairs to his room on the first floor of the old University in George Street. In an effort to help him the administration quietly prepared a room on the ground floor to save him at least the stairs. Hearing of this, he refused point blank to accept it, declaring that he would regard such a step as tantamount to a declaration by the University that he was no longer capable of doing his work, and the administration hurriedly dropped the project. He was looking forward to the move to St. Lucia but he died before it could come about. He lies buried on a hill in Toowong Cemetery and from his graveside a clear view can be obtained of the University at St. Lucia, to the foundation of which he had given so much.

A.C.V. Melbourne was much bigger in stature with a bluff hearty air, and something more of the man of the world than Alcock. He was also a brilliant lecturer, but of a very different kind — he plugged a particular line so well that one left his lectures feeling that one knew the subject thoroughly — there was no progression to the library after his lectures. This worked very well for the pass students, but it could be something of a trap for honours students, who were sometimes tempted not to follow up the questions by further reading. His work led him to take a considerable interest in matters relative to constitutional forms, and he was to give important and interesting evidence before the Royal Commission on the Australian Constitution in 1929, especially on the subject of the Senate. He was much interested in the position of the Legislative Council in Queensland abolished in 1922, and for it too he had a plan of reorganization. We have already noticed his two trips to the Far East, to report on possibilities of trade between Queensland and Japan and on universities in China and Japan.

Melbourne was responsible for more publication than all the others in the department. A paper to the Historical Society in 1913 on Methods of Research was followed, at varying times from 1925 to 1928, by a series of valuable articles on Queensland history in the Brisbane Daily Mail. Following his research abroad he transmuted his successful Ph.D. thesis into a volume on the Early Constitutional Development in Australia, published in 1934 and republished by the University of Queensland Press, with some addition of previously unpublished material on Queensland, in 1963. In 1932 he delivered the Macrossan Lecture, his topic being William Charles Wentworth. The lecture was published by the University in 1934, and has not yet been replaced by any more definitive study of Wentworth.

But he too became caught up in administrative affairs. As already noted he became Librarian in 1934. He was a member of the Senate from 1926 to 1929 and also from 1935 to 1943. During his second term in the Senate he was Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and thus played an important part in the planning of the new University buildings and grounds at St. Lucia.
Although he always looked well he suffered severely from asthma. As already related he had been invalided out of the army. He always kept in his office in the old University some substance which he burned to produce an inhalant to give him temporary relief. Once again, the load of administration and sickness took its toll, and he died suddenly in 1943, though no one had expected Alcock to outlive him.

The third member who needs some specific description is Molesworth. Again a man smallish in stature, and very softly spoken, he too had the gift to inspire and to start people thinking. I remember when we took two hours of evening lectures from him, by our request up in his office in the W.E.A. headquarters in the old Fire Station (since demolished) at the corner of Edward and Ann Streets. Discovering that we were finding the second hour rather hard going he changed his tactics; at the end of the first hour he would call a break and start a general light conversation. But after a short while we would discover we had returned to the main topic of the evening through animated discussion and argument, with the result we began to enjoy what had been something of a drudgery. These evenings too had another pleasant aspect; sometimes at the end Mrs. Molesworth turned up to go on with him to an evening’s entertainment and, before we broke up, some conversation with her helped to enliven the evening. A fine tennis player, and several times women’s champion of Australia, she did her best to help everybody. People playing in lower grade fixtures at the Milton courts found it not unusual, after muffing a shot, to hear Mrs. Molesworth’s voice saying, for instance, “Your feet were not properly in position. This is what you should have done”, or some other such comment. Never upset herself she hated poor sportsmanship. I remember the rebuke she administered to one young player who was losing his temper as a result of being beaten. It was a loss to Queensland when the Molesworths left for Sydney.

Such was the atmosphere in the old department. Other stories could be told of some of the others, Norm Richmond, Marjorie Harrison (who was unfortunately killed in a motor accident on the Toowoomba Range), Tom Fry, and of course John Gifford.

Mention might be made of some of the products of the old department. Here again space prevents any complete listing, but some at least deserve inclusion. Molesworth we have already mentioned sufficiently; E. J. D. (Eddie) Stanley became a Queensland Supreme Court Judge, and Walter Harrison, Rhodes scholar and later Garrick Professor of Law in the University of Queensland. Mac Hickey, after taking his M.A. in history and working for a time with the Department of Public Instruction (as it was then), decided he needed a change. He took up medicine, became specially interested in anatomy and was appointed Professor of Anatomy in this University. Tom Fry moved from history to law, and then transferred to the School of Pacific Administration, where he established a unit to investigate the laws of Papua and New Guinea. Although he took his honours in another department we also claim that we had at least a share in the development of Herbert Burton of the School of
General Studies in the A.N.U. Sam Rayner, now Registrar of this University, was another of our products. Bob Jay, after a long stay with the Commonwealth Public Service, is now on the staff of the Australian National University, while Joan Allsop is at Newcastle. Perhaps in view of the earlier connections between the department and the Library, we can finish this final summary by referring to Harrison Bryan, sometime James Forsyth Librarian here and now Fisher Librarian at Sydney University.

Such then in brief is the story of the old department, such was the inheritance that fell to Gordon Greenwood.
Few economists could deny that their profession regained its respectability in the aftermath of the Great Depression due primarily to the influence of Lord Keynes. The success of the economic policies of governments since 1936 is directly attributable to what were called in the post-World War II period the New Economics and the Keynesian Revolution. Keynes himself, in the *General Theory*, explicitly repudiated Classical Economics by demonstrating the invalidity of some of its basic assumptions. The disrepute of economics, it would seem, was due to the general acceptance for over a century of the fundamental teaching of Adam Smith and his successors. Keynes, himself, did not explicitly articulate his own presuppositions in the *General Theory* but it is reasonably apparent from Chapter 24 that he understands economic man as generically derivative from political man and that, in consequence, he appeals to that traditional view of man as a political animal which is associated with the teaching of Aristotle rather than with that of Adam Smith. Nevertheless, in the social science of economics, there is a methodological bias which inclines to the modern scientific view of man as not having a fixed nature, strictly speaking, so much as an evolutionary history; and which is probably responsible for the prevailing contemporary assessment that Keynes was not revolutionary after all but contributed an additional set of variables to make the classical model more functional. The usual classification of economics into “micro-” and “macro-” illustrates this trend; a quantitative not a qualitative difference distinguishes the classical and neo-classical view from the Keynesian approach.

Among some contemporary economists this methodological bias produces a
certain fuzziness of thought which parallels the revisionists' attempts to graft Keynesian economics onto the classical mechanism. It is a failure to distinguish common sense, which being pre-scientific is not value-neutral, from scientific facts, which are; and is characterized in writers such as Professor Paul A. Samuelson as a withdrawal to common sense explanation when economic analysis fails to afford a satisfactory resolution of a particular problem. While his *Economics* has undergone some tidying-up in its successive editions the paradox is still clearly in evidence in the sixth edition. To illustrate from his account of "The Theory of Demand and Utility" he heads a section, not, it will be noted, "deliberative choice" or simply "choice" as Aristotle may have but "the Process of Rational Choice". The individual's equilibrium situation is achieved when total utility is maximized by equating the marginal utilities relative to their prices of the various goods to be consumed. Price and amount purchased are quantities whereas utility still in common sense connotes a quality and this Samuelson alludes to by distinguishing the price and therefore the marginal utility of lamb chops from those of eggs:

For lamb chops cost much more a piece than do eggs. On reflection, it would seem much more reasonable that he should keep buying a good which costs twice as much per unit as another until it ends up in his equilibrium bringing him just twice as much in marginal utility.6

There are two steps in the "process": the reasonable reflection which is qualitative comparing the lamb chop with the egg for the intrinsic value; and the quantitative calculation, the amount purchased at the price. The latter being mathematical is basic to economic science, the former, being qualitative, constitutes a value-judgment which, while compatible with common sense, is anathema to value-neutral social science. To compound the difficulty Samuelson proceeds to dispose of a dilemma confronted by Adam Smith's empirical method which Smith nevertheless sought to resolve independent of reliance on common sense. In "The Paradox of Value" Samuelson alludes to Smith's distinction between "use-value" (which is analogous to Locke's "intrinsic value") and "market or exchange-value" which is, of course, price. Samuelson patronizingly dismisses Smith's problem of explaining the little use-value of diamonds which have a high exchange-value and the converse value relation of water as a problem to which "to-day each beginning student can give a correct answer" but which could not be resolved by Smith's analysis. What Smith's

---

5 Plato, *Ethics Nic.*, 1107a, 1111b ff.
6 Samuelson, op. cit., p. 430; emphasis added.
7 Cf. J. Locke, *Of Civil Government*, Bk II, paras. 38 and 43. The edition of Locke used in this essay is as published in the Everyman's Library, volume 751, viz.: John Locke, *Two Treatises of Civil Government* (London, 1924), with an Introduction by Professor W. S. Carpenter. Unless otherwise indicated paragraph references are to Book II, usually referred to as *The Second Treatise*.
8 Samuelson, op. cit., p. 433.
remarkable intellect had not contrived was the addition to the economist's kit of tools of demand and supply curves and the concept of marginal utility which "determines in a competitive market the price of the last least useful unit". The "last least unit of diamonds" still commands a very high price and the freshman student accomplishes what Smith was unable to do simply by ignoring value and considering price as being "determined" in "a competitive market" by the interaction of the aggregate demand and supply curves. In other words the price of diamonds is high because the price of diamonds is high and conversely for water. The abstraction from value is a consequence of the beginning student's catechism of positivism in whose dogmas he is systematically indoctrinated. Even if price was "determined" in a competitive market by the interaction of the aggregation of individual demand and supply curves in accordance with the catechism, the individual is nevertheless still obliged to consider whether he can afford to pay the price in light of his own particular circumstances and those prevailing in the market. He has to decide whether the commodity is worth the money. The transaction depends primarily on this value-judgment. Samuelson's freshman reverses the process and abstracts from the problem, and rather than resolve Smith's paradox chants the truism, price determines price. Under competitive conditions, if price is determined by market supply and demand, the individual must take his bearings from the market price prevailing. Rather than his marginal utility determining the price he pays, the market price, by measuring the marginal utility, determines the utility of the commodity to him. Price and marginal utility are simple identities under the assumptions of "equilibrium analysis" and amount simply therefore to the truistic dogma price equals price.

Other examples of this fuzziness in economic science abound. While Samuelson simply assumes as a man of common sense that diamonds under normal circumstances of human life have not the sustaining power of victuals and thinks thereby that his "demonstration" of marginal utility and price is an account of this implicit assumption, other economists more dedicated to value-free mathematical analysis seek to abstract from common sense entirely. While the older generation of economists implicitly — or to use Samuelson's adverbs "unconsciously" or "sub-consciously" — accepted the common sense circumstances of their analysis, there was a safeguard provided for policy recommendations. They acted as "on reflection a reasonable man" would. The new breed of economists who have shunned the common sense rationality for that of mathematics present a more sinister threat to government (as do their value-free or nihilist colleagues in the academies!) Asserting as they do the subjectivity of values, their analyses do not allow them even to distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable means, to say nothing of ends. Mathematical ranking is not the same as reasonable rankings of preferences (distinguishing lamb chops from eggs!) and, in consequence, mathematical rationality cannot

9 Ibid., p. 430; cf. also 3rd ed., pp. 424 and 430.
distinguish between reasonableness and stupidity, virtue and viciousness, prudence and mean expediency, knowledge and ignorance.\textsuperscript{10}

That the post-Keynesian economists have been most successful in advising on policy in the “macro-” area of their discipline is prima facie evidence that Keynes accomplished what he explicitly claimed, the repudiation of classical economics. The success of economic policy-makers did indicate that Keynes provided an adequate kit of tools, not, as his revisionists contend, for more universal, theoretical models, but for the economic statesman.\textsuperscript{11} If the economic statesman has been able since 1936 to take action commensurate with the public interest, then economic man is distinguishable from political man. Political considerations govern the economic and not conversely as was held by the political economists and their successors the classical and neo-classical economists. To choose the appropriate economic means for the particular political circumstances and problem imposes a responsibility on the statesman reminiscent of a way of looking at political things which was the tradition from which the political economists broke. If the statesman is able to choose between alternative means that most appropriate for the particular problem, no determinate solution, strictly speaking, is possible. Choice implies a criterion of choice and the absence of absolute knowledge. A determinate solution rejects choice and substitutes necessity which with its consequent rejection of an area of freedom also pre-supposes absolute knowledge, at least of the determining conditions. As elements of freedom and uncertainty are implicit in choice, the deliberate standard itself pre-supposes a value, by virtue of which deliberation is good. Reason itself is good for man who by reasonable means may thereby promote his own good. Practical life would wish that men act reasonably to promote their own well-being by promoting the public good. Practical life, thus considered, depends on prudence, which is the political virtue.\textsuperscript{12} The highest form of practical life which requires prudence to the highest degree is politics. To consider politics in this way is no longer fashionable\textsuperscript{13} within the universities and for reasons analogous to Keynesian revisionism; to wit, the alleged superiority of value-free social science over value-oriented common sense. Nevertheless, if politics utilizes prudence it is an art on the level of the practitioner, not an applied science. Similarly, when the economic statesman utilizes economic tools to pursue the public welfare, economics is


\textsuperscript{11} While Keynes called his a \textit{general} theory which may invite the parallel to the Marshallian formulation of economic laws as general tendencies under the limiting conditions (\textit{Principles}, I, iii, 4), it is reasonably clear that Keynes had not such determining conditions in mind. His general theory is more akin to the theoretical abstraction from the general rule or maxim guiding practical action, i.e. from prudence.


in this respect a practical art although subordinate to the political art. Economics as a theoretical pursuit is knowledge of the general principles which guide and ought to guide the practical man. This was the teaching of Aristotle.\textsuperscript{14}

Contemporary economics with its almost complete reliance on mathematics had its origins in political economy, in the teaching of Hobbes and Locke. The political economists knowingly and deliberately broke from the Aristotelian tradition. Specifically, the departure is seen in the concept of value being directly attributable to labour alone. The things useful for the support and comfort of life are created by man's labour. Man and nature are no longer viewed as standing in a harmonious relation but in a state of war. The ultimate instrument of man's mastery over nature is allegedly the empirical method of science; contemporary positivistic economics, which relies on the scientific method more exclusively than did its predecessors, purports to be the highest peak, if not the peak of economic understanding, in the same way and spirit as Samuelson asserts the superiority of his “beginning student” over Adam Smith. Paradoxically, despite Keynes's admonition that “classical theory is misleading and disastrous if applied to the facts of experience”,\textsuperscript{15} the methodological bias of contemporary economics is unheeding and blind to the fact that the practical success of economics since 1936 (if not indeed since the 17th century!) has in effect been due to the rejection of this method. If the practical success of Keynesian economics may serve as the criterion the conclusion is warranted that what the \textit{General Theory} in effect did, though this intention of Keynes is not explicit, was to restore economics to the Aristotelian tradition. It is not the classical model of Smith and Ricardo that Keynes made more functional but the classical teaching of Aristotle. This is the thesis of this essay, and it will be argued by contrasting Aristotle's teaching on production or natural acquisition with its most stunning critic, John Locke, whose doctrine of property rejects Aristotle's concept of natural acquisition and lays the foundation for modern economics. Keynes's compatibility with Aristotle turns on the relation of economics to politics. If Locke and the political economists are right the solution to the political problem is dependent on the solution of the economic problem; if Aristotle (and Keynes?) is right it is the converse, economics is subordinate to the political art. Locke utilizes the Aristotelian categories of acquisition but gives them entirely new meanings; and the consequence is to give nature and natural law a radically different meaning from the traditional view. It is prudent, accordingly, to begin with the traditional view as far as it is discernible in Aristotle's brief treatment of economics.

"The household or family is the first form of association naturally instituted for the satisfaction of the daily recurrent needs" (1252b5).\textsuperscript{16} Each "species of

\textsuperscript{14} Aristotle's economic teaching is primarily found in \textit{Politics}, Bk 1 and \textit{Ethics Nic.}, 1133a and 1133b.

\textsuperscript{15} Keynes, \textit{General Theory}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{16} The references are to Bekker's citation of columns and lines as contained in the Barker translation: E. Barker, \textit{The Politics of Aristotle} (London, 1952).
association is instituted for the purpose of some good" but the household is
the only primary association which survives in the polis (what we would today
call "the country");

and the polis exists not for economic reasons but for
the sake of living well (1252a1, 1253b1, 1252b8). Its work is distinguishable
from the primary economic activity of man. Every household, being part of the
whole, of the polis, its virtue, as that of every part must be considered with
reference to the virtue of the whole (1252a3, 1260b15). The character of the
polis is the character of the regime; that is, of the way of life of that polis.
The purpose or end of the household is influenced by, but not identical with,
the purpose or end of the political association (1283b12).

Aristotle knew and rejected the alternative view whereby the "'political'
comes to be understood eventually as derivative from the 'economic'".
According to that view, which seems to anticipate the modern view of political
society, the purpose of the city is to enable its members to exchange goods
and services without violence among themselves and from foreigners and without
being concerned at all with the moral character of its members. According to
the rejected view "society as distinct from the state first comes to sight as the
market in which competitors buy and sell and which requires the state as its
protector or rather servant".

Aristotle's rejection of the view is implicit in
his conception of the arts as necessarily regulated by and subordinate to law;
namely, that prudence or practical wisdom of the level practised in the arts is
of a lower order than in the highest form of practical wisdom or prudence which
is concerned with the common good of a political society; that is, the political
or legislative art. The artisan as artisan is concerned with producing the work
peculiar to his art (the cobbler with making shoes, the physician with restoring
health). As artisan he is not concerned with his own good but when he receives
pay in return for his work, in selling and buying, he practises an accompanying
art, the art of making money which could thus appear to be a universal art
(1257b).

This art of acquiring money Aristotle distinguished from natural
acquisition, the acquisition of property for the use of the household.

Property is part of the household and the art of acquisition — of acquiring
property — is part of household management, not identical with it (1253b28,
1256a). Acquisition relevant to the household is concerned with "the provision
of subsistence", "because it is impossible to live well, or indeed to live at all,
unless the necessary conditions are present". There are a number of different
modes of subsistence and therefore of acquiring property so it is necessary not
only to consider the kinds of property but modes of its acquisition to discover
if there is a peculiar kind and mode best suited to living well (1256a25-27).

The articles of property are the instruments of household management and

17 Strauss, The City and Man, p. 32.
18 Cf. also Ethics Nic., 1098a 8-11.
19 Strauss, The City and Man, p. 32.
20 Ibid.
21 Cf. also Plato, Republic, 341c4-7 and 346.
these instruments are used by command of the users. There are instruments of production and instruments of action. From the instruments of production something issues which exists apart from the instrument as the woven wool is the product of and exists apart from the instruments of its production. Production is different in kind from action; and as "life is action not production" the instruments of action, which are part of property, such as the slave, exist not for mere use but for the useful life (1253b32 - 1254a21). Before property, whether instruments of action or production, can be used it must be acquired; and the art of acquisition is part of, but not identical with, the art of household management, which deals with "the use of resources of the household" (1256a27). What is provided may be used wisely or unwisely and Aristotle implies that household management proper is the art of using well what is provided. There is a guiding principle to which household management, acquisition, and production are, or ought to be, subject. As there are different kinds of property and different modes of its acquisition, one kind and one mode, if superior, must be so by harmony with the guiding principle whereby one lives well. "If nature makes nothing incomplete or in vain" the guiding principle must itself be provided by nature, and if for the good of man, nature must itself be providential (1256b39). Hence, if acquisition provides what may be properly used for the good of the household one mode of acquisition is apparently intended by nature to satisfy best its daily recurrent needs. Of the different modes of acquisition and their accompanying ways of life, "most men derive their livelihood from the soil, and from cultivated plants"; but Aristotle recognizes that some men live 'comfortably' by a combination of the different modes of life; the nomadic, hunting, robbing, fishing, and agricultural lives (1256a27).

What is the natural form of acquisition by being naturally a part of the art of household management? It is a form "necessary for life and useful to the association of the polis or the household" (1256b39). It cannot, therefore, be the nomadic mode because man is by nature a political animal (1253a9). If, to repeat, nature makes nothing incomplete or in vain, nature must provide or equip man with what is sufficient to enable him to fulfil nature's purpose for him — to obey the law of nature (1255a25, 1253a9). The polis being natural must

22 Cf. Plato, Politics, 1254b32, where it is implied that what is useful is so by reference to the political life and therefore of living well in the good polis. Aristotle's contention that production is different in kind from action is an implicit rejection of the labour theory of value. Man's activity as a producer is of a different kind and lower in order from his activity as a man. The labour theory of value asserts the opposite: that labour being a commodity, its use-value is the use-value of its production, of its productive activity. There is, of necessity, an identity between the productive activity and the product, when man is viewed essentially as a producer. The activity of man whereby he is man, Aristotle maintains, is not in essence material production.


24 Cf. Politics 1288b40 - 1289a36. What is simply best may not be practically best. While one mode of acquisition may be simply best to fulfil nature's intentions practical circumstances may require a combination of modes. The best combination must be so by its approximation to the natural standard of the self-sufficiency of the good city.
be capable of "enabling its inhabitants to live a life of leisure which combines liberality with temperance" and must occupy a territory "which produces all kinds of crops" (1326b3). The self-sufficiency of the polis is intended by nature for the purpose of living well (1252b9). Self-sufficiency implies a natural limit. Natural acquisition cannot therefore be unlimited but must be regulated to what is sufficient for political society, specifically for the good political society.

Natural acquisition "ensures a supply of objects capable of being stored which may be regarded as constituting true wealth" (1256b39). The instruments needed by all the arts are limited by the requirements of the art they serve, as acquisition is part of household management the amount of wealth is not unlimited but only what is sufficient to enable the household or polis to do well its proper work. The art of acquisition requires, like all the arts, regulation by practical wisdom or prudence; by the knowledge of what is good for the subject of the art; but that this is not invariably, if at all followed, arises from the possibility of regarding wealth, and therefore acquisition, as not consisting in those objects useful for satisfying the daily recurrent needs of the household, but in money. The confusion while understandable is nonetheless inexcusable.

All articles of property are capable of their proper use and of being exchanged for other likewise useful things (1257a29). Money originally belonged to this category of useful things, with the additional advantage of being portable. But when the value of money currency was settled by convention or law, it lost its intrinsic value and came to belong to that category of things which are said to exist by law or convention rather than nature (1255a1). Money, being homogenous, is not limited in the way the instruments of natural acquisition are. Hence, it is easy to see how men might confuse money-making with natural acquisition and the art of money-making might be regarded as the universal art accompanying all arts, "as though to make money was the one aim of human life and everything else must contribute to that aim" (1258a20). This error arises because of "men's anxiety about livelihood, rather than about well-being" and since their desire for livelihood is unlimited "their desire for the things which produce it is equally unlimited" (1257b28-1258a). But as well-being, Aristotle contends, is higher than livelihood, the art of acquisition of money is unnatural and owes its respectability not to nature but to convention (1252b9). The convention ought to be subordinate to the natural art which is part of household management which is to use well what is provided. To know how to use wealth well presupposes practical wisdom or prudence and in the particular household how the moral virtue of its members may best be furthered (1259b20). Moral virtue is inextricably related to the capacities of members of the household for temperance, courage, and justice and involves such considerations as whether temperance is the same in a man as in the woman, the

25 Cf. note 24 above. Nature's providence is rarely, if anywhere, so manifest. A combination of modes may therefore be practically best and the self-sufficiency of the political life provide the natural standard.
slave, the child, who are members of the household, and in the artisan, who is not a member of the household (1260a19). Slavery is not only natural but conventional, whereas marriage is a convention sanctioned by nature; while the rule of the parent over the child appears natural and the rule of the husband over the wife may only be conventional (1254a21, 1254b32). The moral virtue of the household is not unrelated to the habits and customs, to the manners of the polis, for it is the legislator who declares what is right and just, and it is by the legislative art therefore that the art of household management is also governed (1260a19–b18). “Every household is part of a polis”. “The virtue of every part must be considered with reference to the virtue of the whole” (1260b18).

The guiding principle for the art of household management is discernible only by reference to the master art in the polis, namely to the political art and its virtue, prudence. For Aristotle, this means the political art in the good polis, and prudence itself, accordingly, stands in need of defence by a higher form of knowledge. If philosophy is the highest form of knowledge for man as man, economics was conceived by Aristotle as being a sub-category of political philosophy or science, and the economic art as being subordinate to and dependent upon the political or legislative art. While the knowledge possessed by the artisan, including the manager of the household, and the knowledge possessed by the writer on economics differ in kind in the manner in which the exercise of prudence in a particular situation differs from knowing that prudence is a practical virtue or the principle governing such practical activity, both forms of knowledge have in common a compatibility with error, with ignorance. The shoemaker may find a defect in his materials which hinders his workmanship; the theoretical man is limited because his knowledge can only be partial, a general understanding of the principle prevailing. There is a kinship between the two forms of knowledge; between economics as the understanding of the general principles and as the art of household management whereby “economic man” performs his work well dependent upon his practical wisdom or prudence. Decisions made from practical wisdom have an element of uncertainty, of the indeterminate, or of the unpredictable. Being dependent on experience practical wisdom is more like “rules of thumb”, “informed hunches” or “prudent guesses” than mathematically precise formulations and scientific predictions. Aristotle’s economic science was knowledge which, while an

---

27 Cf. Republic, 574a–e.
28 Ethics Nic., 1094a–b.
29 What is a just solution to the economic problem in the Soviet Union is not necessarily so in Australia or in U.S.A. A predominant theme of Book I of Politics is the tension between nature and convention and Aristotle implies that while economics throws some light on the manner of the resolution it cannot be effected alone on the level of economics, of household management. This is not the sense in which economics is primary.
30 Cf. e.g. Politics, 1324a19–23.
32 Politics 1255b25; cf. also Republic, 421e and 428d.
33 Samuelson, op. cit., p. 489.
abstraction from the actual knowledge of the practical man, was not inconsistent with it. It did not, as does contemporary social science, purport to know better than the artisan what it was that he was doing; nor was it the distinction, commonly made today, between “theoretical” and “applied” in economics and other social sciences. The antecedents of the contemporary view are to be found, among others, in the teaching of John Locke.34

The deliberate obscurity of Locke’s teaching makes a full and complete understanding difficult, if not impossible. It is reasonably conclusive, however, that he rejects the Aristotelian and traditional view of a natural harmony. Nature is not providential, certainly not in any positive way. The “penury of (man’s) condition” required him, and “his wants forced” him, to labour (32, 35). “Unassisted Nature” and “the earth furnished only the almost worthless materials as in themselves” (42, 43). “Of the products of the earth useful to the life of man, nine-tenths are the effects of labour;... as they come to our use... we shall find that in most of them ninety-nine hundredths are wholly to be put on the account of labour” (40). The uncultivated earth “which is given to men in common” is “neglected and waste land” whose “benefit amounts to little more than nothing” (34, 36, 42). “The conveniences of life” are provided not by nature but are the improvement of “the inventions and arts”35 whereas the “spontaneous products of Nature” “really useful to the life of man” by which he is nourished “are generally things of short duration” and “decay and perish of themselves” (26, 27, 37, 46). As the nourishment provided by victuals presupposes their consumption to sustain life appropriation is necessary (25). The title to appropriation, to property, is labour (27, 28). “The ‘labour’ of his body and the ‘work’ of his hands, are properly his” (27). “The same advantages of Nature” to which “all creatures of the same species and rank are promiscuously born” have their source in the “‘property’ every man has in his own ‘person’” (4). The advantages of nature are conditional upon appropriation which itself is necessitated by wants and requires labour; but labour is forced on man by the penurious condition of his existence. While labour entitles man to the “advantages” of nature, need both in the desire for self-preservation and this penurious condition seems to be the motivating agent; and labour appears to be the primary faculty, the “equal and independent use” of which all men are born to (4, 6). Nature’s providence to man is labour arising from need. In comparison, labour was the curse God put upon Adam but is consistent with God’s beneficence if it was intended for man’s good.36

34 E.g., L. Strauss, The Philosophy of Hobbes (Chicago, 1952), p. xx; and his Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe, Ill., 1958), Introduction. The break with antiquity which began with Machiavelli and then Hobbes became victorious in Locke who, with Hobbes, is the co-founder of political economy. References following in brackets in the text refer to Book II Of Civil Government.


36 Genesis 3: 14, 17, 23; and cf. Locke, I, 47 and I, 89 where the “course of Nature” may well be read as the “curse of God”.
be providential accordingly if need and labour are subordinate to Nature's good will towards man.

"The law of Nature" "wills the peace and preservation of all mankind" (7). "Everyone as he is bound to preserve himself . . . when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought as much as he can to preserve the rest of mankind" (6). "The law of Nature" governs "the state of Nature" (though not necessarily civil society) and "reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that . . . no one ought to harm another in his life, . . . liberty or possessions" (6). The partiality to one's own preservation, "to the passionate heats or boundless extravagance of his own will" compel the offended in the state of nature to seek reparation and punish the offender, because "the execution of the law of Nature is in that state put into every man's hands" (7, 8). Only if "calm reason and conscience" govern in the state of nature, if "self-love, ill-nature, passion and revenge" do not carry men "too far in punishing others" so as to invite retaliation would "the peace and safety of the species", the preservation of the species be provided for by the law of nature (8, 13). The state of nature cannot, accordingly, be a peaceful state but one of war when "civil government is the proper remedy for its inconveniences" (13, 16-20). If self-preservation to which all men are partial and the desire for appropriation are in jeopardy in the state of nature, the state of nature must have been penu­rious. The peace and preservation of all mankind, which is willed by the law of nature, demand the overcoming of scarcity and the provision of a plentiful state whereby "comfortable self-preservation" can be ensured. Nature could not be indifferent to man but providential if the necessary condition of peace through plenty is attainable by means furnished by nature. If nature requires men to consult reason for its law to be operative its providence is conditional upon the status of reason. Only if the rule of reason is a self-enforcing law equally accessible to all men and not capable of transgression could nature be providential and not indifferent.

That the law of nature may be transgressed in the state of nature is suggested by distinguishing the innocent from the criminals. Whereas the latter renounced reason, "the common rule and measure God has given to all mankind", the innocent in so far as "calm reason and conscience dictate" punish the offenders "with so much severity as will terrify others from doing the like" (8, 11). "Degenerate man so varies from the right rule of reason as to become a noxious creature" and "may be destroyed as a lion or tiger, one of those wild savage beasts with whom men can have no society nor security" (10, 11). In the state of nature, neither God nor the right rule of reason was effective against the criminal making society impossible. The preservation of all mankind is dependent neither on God nor nature but on civil society and "the promulgated will of the legislature" (9). If civil society overcomes the defects of the state of nature and if civil law makes good the defects in natural law for the benefit of mankind, there can still be a limited providence depending upon whether nature

37 Cf. Locke, I, 87.
in the fundamental respect both requires and provides the opportunity in affording the minimum equipment for its supplementation and completion — for the fulfilment of nature’s will. If man, unassisted, provides for his own and for the species’ preservation, then he is not indebted to nature. That nature’s will is not unambiguous is further seen in the apparent tension between the law’s will to preserve all mankind and its executive agent, the free individual who is partial to his own self-preservation (6). If nature intends the resolution of the tension and indicates the manner of its resolution it cannot be an indifferent providence, even if the law of nature can be transgressed; for in permitting its transgression nature may intend a solution reconciling necessity and freedom. That this is not the traditional resolution or that of Machiavelli and Hobbes is the claim Locke makes for his “strange doctrine” (9, 13).

Necessity is implied from need both in the wants arising from the desire for self-preservation and the penurious condition of existence (32, 35). Freedom implies the absence, if not of necessity as such, then of a realm of necessity. “To be free from such force” as would make a man slave to another is the condition of independence as “that freedom is the fence to one’s preservation” (17). Similarly to be forced by need and penury to be dependent on the produce of nature’s “spontaneous hand” (26) is to be enslaved by nature. The condition sufficient for overcoming this realm of necessity, the natural needs of subsistence, is comfortable self-preservation, which, if general for all mankind, eliminates also the qualification — “when his own preservation comes not in competition” with his fellows — and promotes that peace willed by the law of nature (6, 7). As the executive power of the law of nature presupposes individual freedom to pursue one’s own preservation, a novel solution reconciling the ambiguity of the law of nature would be possible if this freedom was compatible with “the peace and preservation of all mankind” (7). Furthermore, if the law of nature, in allowing its own transgression, provides sufficient guide-lines for the novel solution, the reconciliation, par excellence, of necessity and freedom, by peace and comfortable self-preservation, must be sanctioned by nature, as the reconciliation is not possible on the level of unassisted nature alone. If a certain kind of labour is favoured by nature to effect the solution the benevolence of providence is confirmed.

Whereas the offender “transgressing the law of Nature” “declares himself to live by another rule than that of reason and common equity”, the innocent being “damnified” may “appropriate to himself the goods or service of the offender by right of self-preservation” and “by the right he has of doing all reasonable things” (7,11: emphasis added). Can the innocent as such consult reason, when he cannot appeal to its efficacy in others and is himself liable to “extravagancy of will” (8)? It is plain that the law of nature prefers the innocent in the state of nature (which cannot be simply a state of innocence if there are criminal offenders against the law)38 and the “industrious and rational” are

---

38 Cf. Genesis 2: 17; “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. See L. Strauss, Jerusalem
preferred in society to the “quarrelsome and contentious”; indeed the latter
may be brought into the former’s “service by the right he has of preserving
all mankind” (34,11). That the preference stems from nature and not from
society is clear from such considerations as the individual’s entitlement to as
much land as he “tills, plants, improves, cultivates and can use the product of”
(32); and that the nourishment of appropriated apples and acorns is due him
from the moment he “picked them up” and not from the moment he “brought
them home, boiled them, ate them and digested them” (27). But in improving
the land and in boiling the acorns and apples the labour of man effects a trans­
formation which removes one of the two sanctions of the law of nature limiting
appropriation, namely, that “there be as much and as good left in common”
(27); and which, in the case of acorns, might make them palatable if not nourish­
ing! The rudimentary form of labour parallels the state of innocence and the
improvement that of society; but entitlement to the annexation due to improve­ment by labour is sanctioned by natural law and is not dependent on positive
law. Such annexation “excludes the common right of others” and “makes them
beholden to him, who by his industry on neglected and consequently waste
land, has increased the stock of corn which they wanted” (27, 36). If the industry
of the improvers is dependent on reason and nature thereby favours them as it
did the innocent in the state of nature there must have been an element of
reason present at the beginning. Reason “the only star and compass” (I, 58)
must, it seems, be the means of reconciliation of the duality of the natural law’s
necessity and freedom.39 How was the law known to the innocent and how
can the reconciliation according to right reason be known?

The law of nature requires consultation but is effective only when promul­
gated (6, 9); but in their state of innocence the law was “possibly plainer”
(though perhaps less intelligible) than “the positive laws of commonwealths to
a rational creature and studier of that law of nature” (12). However, just as
the exclusive dominion of Adam over all the world “can no way be proved”
“by looking back as far as records give us any account of peopling of the world
and the history of nations” because “history will direct us towards the original
of commonwealths” and not therefore to man’s pre-social origins or God’s
creation, the efficacy of the law of nature in man’s innocence cannot be proved
by historical records (39, 105, 106). Similarly, whether man was fitted with
“understanding and language to continue and enjoy society” as he was “put
under strong obligations of necessity, convenience and inclination, to drive
him into society” can not be proved (at least not by the traditional methods)

39 Cf. Locke, II, 59, where the son is regarded as no longer dependent for the satisfaction of
his needs on his father when at the age of discretion. “If such a state of reason, such an
age of discretion made (the father) free, the same shall make his son free, too.”

and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections, The City College Papers, Number 6 (New York,
1967), p. 10, “Man was not denied knowledge . . . (without which) he could not have under­
hstood the prohibition. Man was denied knowledge of good and evil, i.e. the knowledge
sufficient for guiding himself, his life. While not being a child he was to live in child-like
simplicity and obedience to God”.

Property of University of Queensland Press - do not copy or distribute
Aristotle, Locke, and Keynes

(77). If the law was possibly plainer, though perhaps less intelligible in the state of nature not reason but necessity appears to be the more reliable principle, for while God commanded, his wants and the penury of his condition forced him to labour. This necessity is not, however, the necessity governing the creatures of instinct, because it is evident that it is as an "intellectual creature that man is capable of dominion" (1, 30). While the innocent may not have intelligibly appealed to the law of nature, which is the rule of reason, they must have acted in a way as to distinguish them both from the criminals and the brutes. Just as there are "different degrees of industry" and the possessions of "the industrious and rational" differ in proportion to those of the "quarrelsome and contentious" (34, 48) there must have been varying degrees of awareness in the state of nature of man's need for labour and industry to improve upon his penurious estate for the comfortable preservation of his being.

This rudimentary understanding relating labour to need is a calculation favourable one's own self-preservation and recognising the folly of appropriating more than one can "use to any advantage of life before it spoils" (31). In consequence if a man bartered perishables for more durable nuts or "agreed that a little piece of yellow metal", with whose "colour he was pleased" because it glinted in the sun, was "worth a great piece of flesh or a whole heap of corn", he offended not against the law of nature but by extending his own possessions benefitted others by his industry as he benefitted from theirs (37, 46; emphasis added). Mankind by consenting to the use of money consented to take "in exchange the truly useful but perishable supports of life" (45, 47). It is plain that men, by consenting to the use of money, "have agreed to a disproportionate and unequal possession of the earth" (50); and that the impecunious "kings of the Indians, in America, which is still a pattern of the first ages in Asia and Europe whilst... want of people and money gave men no temptation to enlarge their possessions" (108) are less well-off than the day-labourers in the more virtuous "golden age" with its "most ardent love of possessing" (41, 111). With "hopes of commerce" and the convention of money the unlimited acquisition of money promoted "invention and arts" for improving and increasing the stock of the truly useful but perishable conveniences and comforts of life (44, 47). Unassisted nature furnishes only useless things and by analogy those poor men, and the Indian tribes who live a brutish existence, when unassisted, when not in the service and under the guidance of "the industrious and rational", are inclined to transgress "the common law of reason" (11, 16, 142). But while nature does not sanction slavery, it wishes men to "live together according to reason" and makes the "lazy and indigent" beholden to the industrious and rational for producing in exchange for their services the things they want to make them better fed, better housed, and better clad (19, 22-24, 41). The assistance nature needs is mastery (44). To assist nature, when it allows its law to be transgressed is in a

40 E.g. Locke, II, 93 and 181.
41 See Hamilton, et al., The Federalist, X, "The diversities in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate..." et seq.
sense to master nature and make it man’s servant (44). The flexibility intended by the violability of the natural law is providential when by mastering nature’s will through discovering it the peace and preservation is ensured of “all those creatures of the same species and rank born promiscuously to all the same advantages of nature” (4). The law of nature sanctions a master-servant relationship based on freedom of property, of the property one has in his labour. The law of nature wills capitalism as the effective rule of reason to ensure the peace and preservation of all mankind.

The reconciliation of necessity and freedom is effected by a particular kind of labour relationship, namely day-labour, and encompasses the rule of reason. Reason has a kinship to freedom if in obeying this law of nature, or by being compelled to obey it, peace and security are guaranteed and one is left as free as he was in the state of nature to be judge in his own case (13). The universal conditions to guarantee the rule of reason are to promulgate positive laws which give effect to the realm of necessity and freedom, by allowing the free disposal of one’s property, freely to contract for the use of one’s labour and industry. “The great and chief end of men putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property” (124).

As this is the universal solution all other solutions are necessarily wrong or deficient. All previous teachers have misread the natural law. If the traditional methods of proof relied on records post-dating society and whose validity by this fact cannot be verified, Locke’s own method must be independent of reliance on such records. If “the common law of reason” is the “common rule and measure given to mankind” or to those “who will but consult it” the traditional methods must have mistaken the nature of reason if they maintained its compatibility with, say, the biblical wisdom and revelation (6, 11, 16). Yet this law is possibly plainer, though less intelligible to a “rational creature” than the positive laws of commonwealths (12). There must be a kind of certainty or proof which is rational though not necessarily dependent on intellect; nor is it the same as instinct. The rationality must vary from the rudimentary awareness of the need to labour, to the self-interested calculation in bartering and exchange to the recognition of the benefits of industry and inventions to its peak in encompassing the law of nature as the rule of reason whereby all mankind are benefitted. Self-love is present at each level of rationality. The intellect whereby man has dominion must be a kind of calculation. The proof of the superiority of this rationality to the traditional concept of common sense rationality is by appeal not to the common law of reason but to the common desire for preservation, indeed, to comfortable self-preservation. If, furthermore, it must be made plain and intelligible to the studier (not the self-interested partisan?) of that law “there cannot be a clearer demonstration of anything than several nations of the Americans”, because not only is America “still a pattern of the first ages in Asia and Europe”, but “in the beginning, all the world was America and more so than that is now” (41, 49, 108). Not God’s revelation or the traditional understanding with its trust in “records”, in society, but the pattern of America that is now is the basis of the right rule of reason. Em-
Priricism and scientific rationality replace speculative reason and contemplation. This does not free Locke's "strange doctrine" from being essentially hypothetical, because the beginnings may not have been more so then than America is now, as the nations of the Americans are already men united into society and this leaves the state of nature and the law which governs it as hypothetical constructs. In this respect Locke is one of the progenitors of contemporary social science.

In another respect, namely the possibility of at least a limited providence, Locke adheres to the traditional view that the natural law is binding on man-kind if nature wills the good for man. The reconciliation between need and freedom to effect the good will of nature is not however the same as in the traditional view. Locke's solution is fundamentally economic, the political society exists to establish the proper economic order, the order sanctioned by nature. Man is understood primarily on the level of economics, of material desires and wants, which by being unlimited, as the desire for acquisition of money is unlimited, question whether man has a nature, strictly speaking, at all. The differences in faculties appear not so much differences from nature as from the variety and strength of desire — whether to be industrious and rational or lazy and poor. There are not real differences in intellect but differences of degree ranging from the innocent stage of awareness to enlightenment through the rule of reason and which parallels the difference between the son and the parent and each having a kinship with self-love, with calculation. In Locke's concept of the nature of man there are the anticipations of the contemporary view which is the completion of the break with the traditional view, that of Aristotle. Where rationality has its genesis in desire the rational society must be primarily concerned with material well-being. The political end is to serve the economic. With Aristotle — as also with Keynes — the economic while primary is subordinate to the moral and political well-being of man, to the humane and decent life in the just political society.
Mauryan art has been much written about. It has the quality which draws attention and admiration, and the quantity which provides sufficient material to work upon. Its connection, moreover, with western Asian art led to its early and extensive study by European historians. Among Indian historians the veteran scholar, Nihar Ranjan Ray, has written much on Mauryan art. In most of the recent general histories of India and specialist studies of collective authorship, the subject has been dealt with by him. His treatment of it clearly shows the width and depth of Professor Ray's knowledge of Asian art on the whole and of Indian art in particular. Neither are the Indian precursors of Mauryan art lost sight of, nor is the author unaware of the continuation of the movement which had been brought into full force by the Mauryas. The contemporary Achaemenian influences are, of course, fully dealt with along with the common western Asian heritage that inspired both the Hellenes and the Persians. In spite of this three dimensional approach Professor Ray invariably arrives at the conclusion quoted below from his chapter in the Age of Imperial Unity but which is also stated in similar words in his other writings:

... Mauryan court-art only constitutes an episode in the history of Indian art. It was indeed a hothouse plant... In course of time, the glass walls fell to pieces and the plant withered. Mauryan court-art failed to make any notable permanent contribution to the growth of Indian art except that it directly helped the fixation of the latter in permanent material. Like Asoka's Dhamma-vijaya, it lacked deeper roots in the collective social will, taste, and preference... Mauryan court-art... forms but a short and isolated chapter of the history of Indian art.¹

Indeed there are many others too among Professor Ray’s predecessors and contemporaries who belong to the “episode school” but who have not worded their opinion so frankly and boldly. Criticism, therefore, is not of a person but of a school whose views Professor Ray states in such clear and precise terms.

We beg to differ with this school.

Three factors should be borne in mind when viewing early Indian art: the part played by ethnic, geographical, and historical ties in the close connection between India and western Asia (the use of some common symbols); the fact of independent developments in certain spheres (the beginnings of rock architecture); and the element of continuity even when links appear to be missing (lack of evidence of survival of Harappan technology). In studying a country's history one should not, of course, lose sight of the intermittent external stimuli which act like a sheet of calm water that makes a man recognize himself through his reflection.

Looking at Mauryan art from the Indian angle (rather than say Egyptian, Cretan, or Scythian) and treating it as a stage in a process we shall first deal briefly with its antecedents.

As for the other aspects of culture, so for the art and architecture of the Vedic period our knowledge is derived mainly from literary sources. The bas-reliefs on the Buddhist monuments of Bhārhat (about a hundred miles southwest of Allahabad) and Sāñchi (near Bhopal) depicting life in earlier and contemporary days give us additional information on the ancient modes of building. The stūpa of Bhārhat was built in the second century B.C., while that of Sāñchi was founded by Aśoka in the third century B.C. Its decorative elements, however, are to be attributed to the Śuṅgas and more particularly to the Śata-vāhanas. The latter completed the great stūpa in the first century B.C.

The early Vedic period structures had little in common with the Harappan buildings not only in the matter of size and design but also with regard to materials. While the former were constructed almost wholly of wood, the latter had used this material but sparingly. Wall decorations with various pigments, however, might have been common to both. This form of adornment may still be seen in dwellings in the remoter parts of the country. The Vedic village huts were circular with domical roofs or oval with barrel roofs covered with thatching. There were also square and storeyed structures. The archway of the barrel roof was achieved by stretching a thong or withe producing the horseshoe shape which tenaciously persists in later architecture and is described as the chaitya or “sun-window”. The heavy eave of the thatch was also copied in stone. The railings and gateways of Buddhist architecture and the go-purams of the Hindu temples are undoubtedly survivals of the primitive, aesthetically beautiful Aryan village fence, made of bamboo, and the special entrances for the cattle.

The early Indo-Aryans interred their important dead in earthen mounds piled around a central wooden post, sthāna. Pillars were also set up at town gates, on public squares, and in front of sanctuaries. The latter might be a fenced area enclosing a grove sheltering a holy man or a tree associated with a yakshi (tree goddess, dryad). Posts with decorative pennons carrying shapes and symbols adorned such spots. Such were the simple beginnings of the stūpa, the chaitya, and the stambha. The stambhas were later used for both sacred and secular purposes, by all religious sects, and by ordinary people, guilds as well as emperors. The Buddhists inscribed the shafts with the message of dhamma, surmounted by a symbolic animal capital carrying the wheel of law; the Jainas
used them as *dīpa-dans*, or lamp-bearing pillars, and sometimes to support the quadruple figures of a *tīrthaṅkara*, the Vaishnavas placed aloft the *garuda* or *Hanumān*, and the Saivas, a trident, bull (Siva’s mount), or alternatively, lamps. Many of the more important Mahā-bhārata heroes had their own emblems on their banners. In fact posts and columns with totemic symbols were common among many ancient peoples including the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and the Greeks.

The mounds discovered at Lauṛiya-Nandangarh (Champaran district, northern Bihar), whether assignable to the pre-Mauryan or very early Mauryan period, represent the transitional stage between the Vedic and Mauryan structures of this nature. Complete with the central pillar, now mostly of brick, these mounds are enclosed by a brick platform and a retaining wall. Even a small repoussé gold plaque representing probably the earth goddess of the Aryan burial hymns has been found. The low round outline of the mounds resembles more closely the original Aśokan shape as preserved in the less altered *stūpas* built by him, four at Lalita-Pāṭtana, and one at Kirtipur in Nepal.

The effect, in terms of psychological satisfaction, of the use of rocks as monuments and their sheer utility from the viewpoint of all that building involves, had already been discovered by the western Asians. We have many examples of their rock cut tombs. In India too, rock cut *stūpas* in Kerala, of great antiquity (even if their Vedic age is questionable) have been brought to notice. The most notable type among them is the “hollow *stūpa* with central column”. Aśokan rock cut caves, therefore, are to be seen as part of a process in the Indian as well as the western Asian context. If the Lomas Rishi cave in parts reminds one of the tomb of Darius at Naksh-i-Rustam near Persepolis, the Sudāmā cave resembles in concept and shape the hollow *stūpa* with the central column missing.

That the ethos of man, initially a cave dweller, should spontaneously express itself through rock architecture, and sculpture, is understandable. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans all practised it with varying degrees of success. In India the art was not only pursued for longer than anywhere else, but also produced great and peerless monuments in this mode of architecture. Its final phase ended circa A.D. 900.

Another point of comparison between western Asian and Mauryan art is the lustrous polish on their stone monuments, although Aśokan masonry is still to be excelled in this respect. The walls of the Barābar cave cut in the difficult quartzose gneiss glisten like enamel. Some 700 years after the stone had received its finish in the palace of Aśoka, it was praised by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien as “shining bright like glass”. The English travellers Tom Coryate and Whittaker described an Aśokan pillar as made of brass, Chaplain Terry of marble, and Bishop Heber of cast metal. An episode related in the Mahā-bhārata readily comes to mind on this subject. In the palace of the Pāṇḍavas a pool of clear water was mistaken for a highly polished stone floor by their cousin Duryod-
hana. This led to a comic accident. The infuriated Duryodhana then sought to hire the services of a rival architect who was required to produce a superior creation.

The achievement of Aśoka's lapidaries in attaining such high standards in polishing should also be viewed as a high watermark in a progressive movement. It began with the spontaneous desire of the ancient man for this kind of effect. The twelfth dynasty Egyptians and Homeric Greeks aimed at a glassy surface and the Achaemenians attained a metallic finish on stone. In India the Bhir mound at Taxila has yielded, among other finds, beads, lathe-turned polished hard stones, and two polished sandstone discs of pre-Maurya or very early Maurya date. It can be stated with certainty from these and other relics that glassmaking had already attained a high level by the beginning of the Maurya period and that the Mauryas did not introduce but sustained and carried forward the existing art of cutting and polishing hard stone. The exquisite crystal reliquary of the Mauryan period obtained from the Piprāhwā stūpa in Nepal has been lustrously finished, perhaps with an agate burnisher, and is the work of a hereditary stone cutter, pāśhōna-kottaka. The Jātakas record the existence of many crafts, eighteen of the most important being organized in guilds including potters, carpenters, leather workers, ivory carvers, smiths, and painters. The higher craftsmen including the smiths were designated kammāra. In southern India at Guḍimallam, near Rēṇīguṇṭa, there is a highly polished stone Śiva-liṅgam of perhaps the first or the second century B.C. which is still worshipped.

The capitals on the Aśokan pillars are campaniform in shape, fluted elongated petals of an inverted lotus taking the form of a bell. Often designated “Persepolitan” this capital is not a copy of the Persian model, rather the two might be considered cognates from a common western Asian ancestor, the Aryan Weltanschauung finding expression in Persia as well as in India. Indeed the lotus ornament is also an Egyptian motif.

Both the lotus and the bell are conventional Indian symbols. To the wood craftsmen of pre-Mauryan times the lotus (bell) capital must have been a familiar motif along with many others, such as mythical creatures with heads and bodies belonging to different species, animals addorsed and affronted, palmette and honeysuckle, rosette, acanthus, reel and bead, the spiral, and the svastika. Lovingly transferring the old forms from wood to stone, the Indian craftsmen carried their conservatism not only into the field of architecture but also into that of sculpture.3

The stāṁbha architecture, starting in wood, passing through the brick phase, and culminating in stone under the Mauryas, was carried forward by kings and the populace (common people, merchants, guilds, etc. often contributed to the cost of the structures), in the new medium but with expected changes in form and motifs. As the wood tradition of the tree models receded and the stone medium became established, the pillars were supplied with bases, cylinders

became eight or sixteen sided or square shaped, and the smooth gradual pinecone-like tapering became punctuated with projections and depressions. The western Ghats Bedśā, Kārli, Nāsīk, Kanheīri (second century B.C. to second century A.D.) and Ajaṅṭā (cave XIX), and Elūrā (sixth to eighth century A.D.) all provide examples of these changes, while many pillars still retain Mauryan features. By the time of the Pallavas the lions supported the pillars rather than being supported on them (Kāṇṭhipuram, Māmalla-puram, Melapāljuvur; eighth century A.D.).

The motifs also show a continuity in development characterized by change. Bāhrut (second century B.C.), the repository of Indian folk tradition, has lotus capitals. At Bhājā (first century B.C.) the lotus capital of a pillar is surmounted by female figures with bovine bodies below the hips. Bedśā has capitals surmounted by elephants and horses. The pose and the arrangement of these animals remind one more of Persepolis than do even some of the Mauryan capitals. They do not have the power and strength of the Sārnāth capital; rather, the figures of a man and a woman scantily clad and heavily ornamented poised gracefully on the kneeling animals bestow upon the structure a homely charm and graciousness. At Kārli there are addorsed lions on two detached stāṃbhās.

Nāsīk has addorsed bulls on a pillar in one cave and addorsed lions in another. Pitālkhorā (northeast of Nāsīk) has sphinxes.

In the Orissan caves (second century B.C.) the capitals of the pilasters are made up of pairs of reclining animals reminiscent of western Asia. The Bāgh guṇipha (cave) has pilasters with winged creatures for capitals. In the Maṅchapuri guṇipha the struts on the pillars consist of figures riding hippogryphs and other stylized imaginary creatures. At Jaggayapeta (second to first century B.C.), near Amarāvati, a number of pilasters with lotus capitals and addorsed winged animals in Bāhrut style have been found.

We have earlier referred to the simple but aesthetically beautiful architecture of the earliest Aryans in India. After they had become settled in the Gangetic plains, their houses became larger with several rooms for different purposes. Still later the Gṛihya-Sūtras provide us with details about mansions containing an assembly hall, living rooms, stores, children’s quarters, and latrine with full instructions about their construction. The outdoor area included ponds, wells, and gardens. The Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahā-bhārata, and the Purāṇas also have descriptions of houses, cities, palaces, forts, and castles. Discounting the elements introduced through brilliant imagination and the fact that contemporary conditions have been projected into an earlier past there is still some basis for the assertions made in the epics. If none of these descriptions are borne out by archaeology, the blame goes to the impermanent nature of the building material — wood and sometimes brick and mud — and no doubt also to the lack of a fortunate combination of conditions which bring about such discoveries. The bas-reliefs on the earliest structures, however, are of invaluable help in the conjectural reconstruction of ancient houses, palaces, and cities.

Legendary architects emerge from the ancient works, Viśva-karmā, Maya, and others, apparently generic names arising from their vocation like those in
other spheres of Indian culture. Viśva-karma is of Rigvedic antiquity: "In the earliest ages of the gods, even as a smith, the lord of prayer, together forged this universe." The Brhat Samhitā says, "the science of house building has come down to us from the seers". Such statements may not be taken to indicate the imposition of a pantheistic theology on secular matters, rather they signify the important status accorded to architecture as an emotional experience of the highest degree, the realization of the Supreme, through yet another medium. The present day śilpis and sthāpatis, many of whom follow sculpture and architecture as hereditary vocations, often for a pittance, consecrate their tools once a year by dedicating them to God in his aspect as Viśva-karma, the architect, the maker of the science of mechanics and metallurgy, the carpenter, the goldsmith, "the executer of a thousand handicrafts". Carpenters still pay homage at a chaitya-hall at Eliura named after Viśva-karma. Some of the treatises on architecture and sculpture that have survived are Viśva-karmayam, Mayamatam, Kāśyapam, Brahmiyam, Sarasvatīyam, and Māna-sāram.

The Mahā-pari-nibbāna Sutta speaks of large cities in pre-Buddhist times. The Vinaya text records the names of the architect Mahā-govinda who planned Bimbisāra's capital and palace. In the Kathā-kosha there is mention of an architect, Sūra-deva, a resident of Sopārā (a west coast port, north of Bombay) who had designed a temple in the faraway Pāṭaliputra and whose model he produced in his house when someone called to make enquiries about it. The model was probably to scale, so that the stone could be dressed, carved, and chiselled in the quarry before being brought to the site, a practice very common though not universal, as proved by the eleventh century Rāja-rāṇī temple at Bhuvanesvar.

The Greek writers of Alexander's campaign repeatedly refer to large and many cities and strong forts which the Greek invader subdued, often with the greatest difficulty, not only owing to opposition but also because of the architecturally well-planned, strong defences.

The city of Massaga (Maśakā-vati) in modern Kafiristan, just north of the River Indus, had, according to Curtius, a citadel commanding great natural advantages with an artificial rampart and a moat on the unprotected side. The rampart was thirty-five stades (approximately four miles) in circumference, with a basis of stone work supporting a superstructure of unburnt sun-dried bricks which were bound together with stones. It is in connection with such forts that the Greek author states that Alexander had to "bring up military engines to batter down their walls". A little further to the southeast, Strabo singles out Taxila for its excellent town planning. According to him, there were 500 cities in the nine states between the rivers Beas and Jehlum. South of the Ravi, the Kathaians had a strongly fortified city called Sangala (Jandiala) with its walls made of brick. The Malloi, on the confluence of the Chenab and Jehlum, had many walled cities with citadels, according to Arrian. The walls had towers at intervals, and bars closed the gates of the wall between the towers. Megasthenes, the resident Greek ambassador at the court of Chandra-gupta Maurya, records:
Of their cities, it is said that the number is so great that it can not be stated with precision, but such cities as are situated on the banks of the rivers or on the sea coast are built of wood... Those cities, however, which stand on commanding situations and lofty eminences are built of brick and mud.

Finally, we have the description of the Mauryan capital and palace by Megasthenes which we shall discuss later in detail.

The Milinda-panha (text of dialogue between the Greco-Bactrian king, Menander, and the Buddhist philosopher, Nāga-sena, leading to the conversion of the king), originating in northwest India about the beginning of the Christian era, has the following description of a city:

Fine and regular, measured into quarters, with excavated moats and ramparts about it, with stout gatehouses and towers, with market-places, cross-roads, with regular lines of open shops, well provided with parks, gardens, lakes, lotus ponds and wells, adorned with many kinds of temples of the gods, free from every fault and standing in all its glory.

This description could well apply to a somewhat earlier period.

The story of archaeology compares poorly with this wealth of literary evidence. The earliest remains of the Aryan period are those of some cyclopic city walls found in plains as well as in mountains. Many of them may be very ancient but have not yet been properly investigated. The more systematic diggings have so far been done at Ahichchhatra, the capital of Pañchāla (Oudh), where walls of baked brick are still standing forty to fifty feet high. There were also principal streets which converged on a large temple in the centre of the city. Other diggings are at Vaisali in northern Bihar and in Magadha (southern Bihar). The latter is associated with King Jarā-sandha whose clash with Krishna and death at the hands of the second Pāṇḍava brother, Bhima, is recorded in the Mahā-bhārata epic. The earliest historical kings of Magadha are Bimbi-sāra (544–493 B.C.) and his son Ajāta-sātru (493–462 B.C.) who were contemporaries of the Mahā-vīra and the Buddha. If, however, the traditional Buddhist date 544 B.C. is accepted for Nirvāṇa, Bimbi-sāra’s accession would fall in 604 B.C. and that of his son in 552 B.C. Bimbi-sāra chose as his capital Giri-vraja (hill-girt valley), about sixty miles southeast of Patna and renamed it Rāja-grīha (the royal abode). Ajāta-sātru, for the most part, also treated it as his capital. The ruins of Rāja-grīha, modern Rajgir, cover an extensive valley and a considerable area outside the hills that surround it. In the centre of the valley are the remains of Bimbi-sāra’s capital enclosed by a wall of mud and rubble and moat with gates. In the plain just outside the valley is the fort founded by Ajāta-sātru, which at one time was surrounded by a mud wall (except the southwestern corner which had a masonry wall to protect the citadel covering an area of over eighty acres). Later in his reign when Ajāta-sātru was threatened by the king of Avanti (Malava) he strengthened his fortifications at Rāja-grīha. This outer defence along the crest of the hills consists of a cyclopean wall immensely strong. It is made up of huge undressed stones each three to five feet in length, expertly fitted together without the use of mortar. Fourteen to seventeen feet thick, this masonry wall rises at places to a height of twelve feet and has a
perimeter of almost thirty miles with gates at the narrow passes between the hills.

The various platforms found in the vicinity, some in the centre of the city and one in the direction of Ajāta-śatru's fort, appear to have served as foundations of multi-storeyed buildings. Located between the north gate of the outer defence wall and Ajāta-śatru's fort are two of the monasteries where the Buddha lived, while the famous Grīḍhra-kūṭa hill, studded by memorial shrines by Buddhists from all over the world, lies southeast of the old city. The Mahā-vīra also lived at Rāja-griha, and the ancient Jain memorial in the area is the Sonbhandār cave. Outside the valley the remains of stūpas built by Ajāta-śatru and Aśoka are still visible but the multi-storeyed monasteries built by Bimbisāra and Ajāta-śatru have vanished, not to speak of a hall especially constructed by the latter for the meeting of the first Buddhist council. According to the Mahāvaṃśa, it was

a . . . magnificent hall constructed by the side of the Vebhāra rock in which it was excavated by the entrance of the Sattapaṇṇi cave. It was like the Assembly-Hall of the gods themselves. When it was adorned in every way, he caused precious rugs to be spread according to the number of the Bhikkhus.

Ajāta-śatru had already built a fort on the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Son as a base against the Līchchhavis of Vaiśāli. Thus was founded Pāṭali-putra. Ajāta-śatru's successor Udāyin built a new town, Kusuma-pura, near the site. Another king of the dynasty, Muṇḍa, lived at Pāṭali-putra although the later kings of the line returned to Rāja-griha. The powerful Nandas made Pāṭali-putra their capital as did the great Mauryas.

Thorough excavations at Pāṭali-putra are hindered, among other things, by the fact that a considerable number of ruins lie in the lowland with a high subsoil water level. Two sites, however, have been partially explored, one at Bulandi Bagh and the other at Kumrāhār. The former has yielded fragments of what was once a stupendous stockade. It was a long wooden structure made up of two rows, fourteen feet apart, of upright teak planks, twelve to thirteen feet high. They were spanned at the top and the bottom by similar planks tenoned into them at the ends. The upright planks were strengthened from the outside by horizontal planks nailed into them with wooden pegs. The inside was probably filled with earth.

The Bulandi Bagh wall constituted the fortifications around the royal city which was approximately 9 miles (80 stades) long and 1.66 miles (15 stades) wide. It was punctuated by 570 towers and 64 gates and had numerous loopholes for archers hidden from the enemy's eye. This wall was protected by a moat 60 feet deep and 200 yards wide, filled with waters from the Son and probably covered with lotuses and other foliage such as those depicted in the sculptures on the Sāñchi gateways. At one place the wall is cut into, at right angles, by a large wooden drain, 40 feet long, 20 feet on each side of the wall. It is constructed of huge posts and planks joined together by iron strips. Part of the upper portion of the stockade is kept in the storage section of the Indian Museum, Calcutta. About half a mile east of Bulandi Bagh, at Gosain-khaṇḍa, a similar structure
has been found but without the bottom sleepers. There is literary and sculptural evidence that the Celts and the Romans employed methods of timbering similar to those used in the construction of the Mauryan stockade.

The excavations at Kumrāhār have bared the remains of the Mauryan palace complex which was enclosed within a high brick wall. According to Greek writings the various buildings were located in a vast park wooded with native and exotic trees. There were also artificial lakes with pleasure boats. Enormous fish were to be seen sporting in the waters.

The central feature of the palace complex was the pillared hall the remains of which have been sighted at a depth of seventeen feet. It has an area of 250 feet and was built on a high stylobate. Three storeys high it was constructed mainly of wood except perhaps the atlantean figures which might have supported one of the ceilings, and the characteristic pillars which Aśoka erected in place of the earlier wooden columns. Various fragments of the stone pillars have survived; one almost complete example is a highly polished cylindrical shaft some twenty inches in diameter at the base and tapering like a pine trunk along its fourteen feet, three inches, although the entire length must have been around twenty feet. The passage of centuries would have played its part in destroying the palace, mostly of wood, but a disastrous flood leaving an eight-foot silt, followed by a more disastrous outbreak of fire completed the task long before time. The severity of fire expanded the metal bolts which fitted into the socket holes of the stone columns in the portion above the silt and cracked them vertically into innumerable splinters.

The hall had a wooden floor and a wooden superstructure. The pillars had wooden bases. Their plan becomes evident “from heaps of fragments of polished sandstone and ash pits in which they had sunk, being regularly at a distance of fifteen feet from centre to centre of the heaps and the underlying ash circles”. Although only eight rows with ten heaps in each were found, the area of the hall and the regularity of the plan suggest anything up to 225 pillars in the hall.

In the time of Chandra-gupta, the grandfather of Aśoka, the pillars were of wood and are described by Greek writers as “clasped around with vines embossed in gold and ornamented with designs of birds and foliage in gold and silver, thus excelling in magnificence the famous royal plaisances of Susa and Ecbatana”. Indeed such was the workmanship of Mauryan artists that the Chinese traveller Fa-hsien who visited Pāṭali-putra some seven centuries later described the palace as the work of “spirits who picked up the stones, reared the walls and gates, and executed the elegant carving and inlaid sculpture work in a way which no human hands of this world could accomplish”.

Less spectacular than the massive stockade and the palace complex, but pieces of matching workmanship, are the huge teak platforms made up of beams jointed together with extraordinary skill and precision. A number of them, each thirty feet in length, have been found buried deep in the silt at Kumrāhār. It is suggested that they served as foundation for the palace façade.

The parallels between the Mauryan hall and the Achaemenid hall of one hundred columns at Persepolis are more apparent than the differences. There is
the fact of the common concept of a hypostyle hall, the Achaemenid being the earlier in time. On the surviving Aśokan pillar appears a mason’s mark comparable to a symbol used in the rock carving at Behistun in Persia. In both cases the stone is highly polished. While the wooden columns in Chandra-gupta Maurya’s time are described as “clasped around with vines embossed in gold and ornamented with designs of bird and foliage...”, those in the courts of Ecbatana are stated to have been “all covered with silver plate”. Although the Mauryan hall, in all respects, appears to have been a more refined creation than its Achaemenid counterpart, that is not the point being made here.

The differences might be seen in the simplicity of the Mauryan palace pillar compared with the Achaemenid column of the Hall of Xerxes. The Mauryan pillar was plain, without a base or a capital and made of one piece in contrast to the fluted Achaemenian pillar made up of several blocks, with a base and an elaborate capital. The independent developments with regard to the lustrously polished stone have been discussed earlier. The idea of decorated wooden pillars of the type described by Megasthenes would not be hard to conceive with the Indian background of bamboo lattice and meshwork, and the developed arts of the gold- and silver-smith. Even today this type of decoration may be seen on the pillars of household or temple hindolās for the occasion of Krishna’s birth festival or on some articles of jewellery such as bangles.

The episode theory rests on two assumptions: the presence of foreign motifs and concepts and their execution, and the existence of two distinct streams of court art and folk art during the Mauryan period.

... Mauryan court-art, like Achaemenian court-art, was to impress and over-awe the populace with the power and majesty of its rulers. To this function can be traced the compactness of the solid animal figures, their exaggerated forms and their conventional appearances, also the most imposing stateliness of the columns... it lacked deeper roots in the collective social will...4

We maintain, however, that Mauryan art was a happy and effortless combination of the folk and court elements. It was the folk wooden shaft which was petrified. The new medium of stone, moreover, did not have forced but natural beginnings. It had an inherent dignity and stateliness of its own enhanced by the lustrous polish, an art with pre-Mauryan beginnings. The coincidence of Aśoka’s majesty and of the new form of architecture that evolved is, in fact, balanced by the Buddhist middle path virtues inscribed on the monoliths; and the impressive isolation of the free-standing pillar is softened firstly by its lack of base and gentle tapering, and secondly by placing it, along with a few others, in a complex of stūpas and monasteries. The latter having vanished in most cases or the pillars having been removed from the original sites (one was used by a member of the civil service as a roller for the station roads) their effect can not now be fully gauged.

4 Ray, op. cit., p. 510.
As the mount of the capital, the lion, as much an Indian motif and symbol (from Vedic times) as western Asian, (including Greek) yet shares his glory with the bull and the elephant and perhaps even with the horse who is now lost for ever. And when it crowns the capital in its tense and aloof royal dignity it does so in company with the graceful representation of the four traditional symbolic animals, or is laced by the folk decorative motif of the haṁsas (geese). The plastic qualities of the Rāmpurwā bull, and greater still the strength and poise of the Dhauli elephant further vindicate my point that Mauryan art was a happy mixture of the two trends. I have not dwelt upon these two sculptures because there is no controversy in this respect, especially with regard to the latter creation.

Apart from these examples of a harmonious, dignified, and graceful blending of the two streams, there exist the robust, massive, earthy, comparatively flat-surfaced Patna and Parkham yakṣas and similar statuary made of the characteristically Mauryan highly polished Chunar sandstone; but these are below the familiar Mauryan standards. In this respect one only has to remember the distinction made by the grammarian Pāṇini, long before the advent of the Mauryas, between grāma-śilpa, the folk artist, and rāja-śilpa, the court artist. It is even possible that figures similar to these rough and bulky atlantes were used in the Mauryan palace to support the ceilings. The contrast between them and the slender pillars would have served to heighten the effect. Patañjali’s remark that the last of the Mauryas replenished their treasury by the sale of images has suggested another use for these popular works of art. Whatever the truth, the existence of two art standards is widely known in space and time especially before the onset of mechanization, and is in evidence even today in many societies including the Indian.

The resemblances between the Indian designs and motifs of the Mauryan period and Achaemenian and Hellenic themes might give the impression that there was a large scale import of artists from Persia and the Hellenized areas. There may well have been western Asian artists in the Mauryan workshops; indeed, given the facts of history of the period and the Mauryan vision, it would be strange if foreign people and fresh ideas had not been welcome.

Certain qualities of Mauryan art and architecture and its stage of development in relation to other periods of Indian history incline one towards the “episode” theory. Partly this is owing to insufficient documentation for the earlier period; partly, and inexcusably, it is also because the few available data have not been examined in their proper perspective. Mauryan art and architecture are remarkable not because of foreign influences; richer with, they would still have been great and epoch-making without them. It was the culmination of a movement that had long been at work in India, throwing up, throughout this period, its own ideas. At the same time it was pollinating itself to a greater or lesser degree by reaching out as well as by receiving. Mauryan art achieved its climax in the third generation which is further indicative of a gradual process. The three factors which combined to produce it, in order of importance, are: a king as bold, imaginative, and sincere as Aśoka, the ready Indian ground with the
Mauryan art had to happen as surely as the centralized Mauryan empire. The awareness of the existence of a great Persian empire and the later destruction of many northwestern republics by Alexander’s armies, were but minor factors in the entire situation that had been building up during the period of the second epic, under the Bimbi-sāra dynasty and then under the Nandas.

Aśoka’s reign is distinctive in many respects; art is one of them. This neither makes the age exotic nor Aśoka an oddity. History is well familiar with the pattern of storms of brilliance and calms of mediocrity, both equally important. A development more “episodal” than Mauryan art and architecture is Aśoka’s political concept of dhamma -vijaya which remained fossilized for nearly twenty-two centuries, not only in the history of India but in the annals of mankind. It stirred into life again with the advent of Gandhi, but in this instance as the cry of the weak rather than as the blessing from the strong. Aesthetic and idealistic impulses might not appear in the same form again nor might they present a continuous story of development yet they lie latent in the subconscious of the people or of mankind, to become manifest in course of time in a recognizable sequence or in distantly related forms.
The civil war occupies a special place in English history and historiography alike. As the only civil war in England's post-medieval history it presents a unique challenge to historians, a challenge which has met with no shortage of responses. Unfortunately, however, it would seem that so much attention has obscured rather than clarified the fundamental issues. Whether the war should be explained in terms of a wider European "crisis"; whether it should be viewed as a struggle of "have-nots" to become "haves"; whether it was primarily a geographical struggle between a backward north and west and a progressive south and east — all these are interpretations put forward by modern historians, but about which there is certainly no consensus of opinion.

But divergent as these interpretations of the civil war are, they have this in common — they are attempts to discover "root-causes" governing the events they precipitate. Consciously or not they are attempts to provide a substructure of "what matters" to explain a superstructure of "what happens". Historical explanations of this type have undoubted advantages. They are at once simple and seemingly profound. What could be more convincing than to learn that "the centre of social gravity has shifted: political power is shifting with it"; to learn of men "withdrawing from the Court. . . also from the idea-


1 By "modern historians" I am referring here mainly to the ideas of Professor R. H. Tawney, Professor H. R. Trevor-Roper, and Mr. C. Hill in works which will be cited later. They represent, of course, only a fraction of those who have worked in this period over the last couple of decades: an up-to-date version of Professor J. H. Hexter's "gentry" bibliography printed as an appendix to his "Storm over the Gentry", Encounter, X, No. 5 (1958), reprinted in Hexter, Reappraisals in History (Evanston, Ill., 1962), would read very much more formidably today. However the three historians I have cited have been, I think, the most persistently concerned with explaining the civil war, and their ideas have achieved an overall influence which, despite the lively controversy surrounding them, dominates the field at present. The analysis by R. Walcott, The Tudor-Stuart Period of English History (1485-1714): A Review of Changing Interpretations (New York, 1964), pp. 5–14, seems to bear this out.

logy of the Court"; of events which transcend "mere local forms" and are to be explained in terms of the "general, structural weaknesses of the western monarchies" which can be reduced to the formula "support for Parliament came from the economically advanced south and east of England, the King's support from the economically backward areas of the north and west". Processes such as these can be described so persuasively that the events emanating (allegedly) from them appear perfunctory and even irrelevant.

Yet events are not irrelevant, and in the last resort the most brilliant of theories collapses if it is at odds with them. And it is precisely when the theories I have mentioned are tested against the events they supposedly explain that the whole fabric of the substructure appears disconcertingly independent of the superstructure.

II

The characteristic weakness of the substructure theories is that they ask us to see the various phases of a complex series of events as aspects of one particular situation. For Tawney the situation was the changing balance of property; for Trevor-Roper the alienation of "the country" from the "court"; for Hill the unequal stage of development of different geographical regions.

When Tawney wrote "Harrington's Interpretation of his Age" and his "Rise of the Gentry" he had no idea that he would provoke a generation of argument, or indeed that he was being controversial. It seemed to him axiomatic that the great political upheavals of the seventeenth century were based on shifts within the economic structure of society. To assemble evidence, then, of the increasing prosperity of the "bourgeois" elements at the expense of "feudal" ones seemed to him simply a method of underlining the true nature of the great rebellion — the transfer of power from the "old" to the "new" men. So convinced was Tawney of his hypothesis that this most conscientious of historians was beguiled into producing evidence which, on examination, has proved not so much unreliable as a "veritable dream world". I certainly do not wish to rehearse the now well-known defects in the Tawney statistics, and in any case

5 Ibid., p. 63.
7 See Walcott, op. cit., p. 13. In several works, e.g. Puritanism and Revolution (London, 1958) and Economic Problems of the Church (London, 1956), Hill argues that social and economic differences went far towards determining the sides on which men fought in the civil war. In A Century of Revolution (pp. 121–24) he extends this thesis to explain the geographical nature of the struggle.
8 Proceedings of the British Academy, XXVII (1941).
they are not necessarily fatal to the validity of his general thesis, but it must be emphasised that Tawney’s method — to collect evidence to illustrate a general situation which he presumes resulted in the war — is open to grave objection. It depends on the assumption that the rising gentry sought political power to correspond to their new found wealth, and used it to create a climate favourable to further economic growth and social mobility. Of course if we accept this as dogma then indeed every sign of economic expansion during the eclipse of royal power, together with descriptions of the restrictive practices of the Stuarts and the capitalistic interests of Pym and his associates becomes “evidence” of what caused the war. But there is no proof, or even likelihood that the opposition to the Stuarts thought in economic terms at all. This opposition was drawn from a wide range of classes which included not only rising gentry like Pym, but relatively poor men like Nicholas, Nutt, and Oliver St. John; and aristocrats like Manchester, Essex, Northumberland, Bristol, Rutland, and Howard of Eresick. All these wanted the overthrow of Strafford and Laud and the destruction of the regime which governed during the “tyranny”. To see them as representatives of nascent capitalism requires, at the least, a fervent act of faith.

Tawney, of course, is less concerned with the individuals involved than with his economic interpretation of their activities. He therefore directs our attention away from the actual men and events of the time in order to take a short cut to what is, according to his theory, the reality behind the appearance. This is a tendency common to all substructure-type theories. It reached a height of absurdity in Trevor-Roper’s now notorious work “The Gentry”. Here he ascribed the making of the civil war to the Independents of whom Oliver Cromwell is the outstanding example. These men, claimed Trevor-Roper, economically declining because they were excluded from the patronage of the court, had adopted creeds — religious and political — in opposition to the establishment. They were behind nearly all the plots preceding the civil war and finally succeeded in toppling the monarchy itself. Now there is, of course, a great deal of value in the picture of a court-country antithesis. However, Trevor-Roper asks it to explain more than it is capable of doing. The Independents — and Oliver Cromwell — were not particularly important, let alone in control of events, at the time the civil war was being “made”. Moreover, the Independents were opposed not only to the Royalists proper, but to the Presbyterians as well. To ascribe the civil war to a movement in conflict with Pym’s Presbyterians has certain limitations (!) in the period before 1647.

---

10 Some historians have reservations about the amount and nature of social and economic advance at the time of the revolution. Cf. L. Stone: “Society in 1660 looked much the same as it had in 1640, and the number of new families who had risen, or old families who had fallen, over the previous 20 years does not seem to have been at all exceptional. In terms of permanent social change (as opposed to a permanent legacy of ideas) the English revolution was the least successful of all the Great Revolutions in History”. “Social Mobility in England, 1540-1660”, Past and Present, No.37 (1966). See also Trevor-Roper, “The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century”, Past and Present, No. 16, p. 65–67 and 18, p. 40.

Another version of the war leaving much to be desired is Mr. Hill’s, which leads him to the remarkable assertion that “we should not think of the House of Commons as in any sense creating the Civil War.” Now the only possible inference from the words in any sense is that the activities of the commons in this period were quite irrelevant — that the war would have come anyway. (If not then at least in some sense the commons did create it!) This is a most bewildering approach for the student accustomed to regarding the meeting of the Long Parliament as a decisive episode in English history; to thinking that the commons-inspired attacks on Strafford and Laud were not without significance; to seeing the statutes of 1640-41 as a breach in the fabric of Stuart monarchy which the civil war of 1642 was to complete; to emphasising the significance of the Grand Remonstrance and the Nineteen Propositions which between them demanded commons’ control of finance, foreign policy, ministers of church and state, the judges, and the army. The Earl of Clarendon, elsewhere praised by Mr. Hill for his perceptiveness, certainly sees the civil war as the result of a breakdown of hope and trust between the King’s party and the more fanatical members of the commons. His glowing praise of the constructive work of a united parliament, when

these Acts of Parliament finished and enacted in the time we speak of... will be hereafter acknowledged by an incorrupted posterity to be everlasting monuments of a princely and fatherly affection to his people, and such an obligation of repose and trust from the King in the hearts of his subjects that no expressions of piety, duty, and confidence, from them, could have been more than a sufficient return on their parts

is followed by the ominous “which how they performed is to follow in the next place.” What follows “in the next place” is a detailed narrative in which “ways by which the disaffected party grew powerful in Parliament” occupies pride of place. In fact there can simply be no doubt that, in the sequence of events leading to war, affairs in the commons were of crucial importance, and that in denying it “in any sense” Mr. Hill is clearly not interested in such mundane things as events. Indeed, in his introduction to A Century of Revolution he specifically contrasts the roles of narrative history and historical explanation. His explanation of the war is an attempt “to penetrate below the familiar events to grasp 'what happened'”. It is a substructure to explain a superstructure, a substructure which asserts “that economic issues were fundamental to the Civil War and affected deeply the political attitudes of the various social and economic interests in English society.” In other words the positions men adopted were likely to have been reflections of their economic standing and the war can be

---

12 Hill, A Century of Revolution, p. 120.
13 Hill, Puritanism and Revolution, pp. 199 et seq.
16 Hill, A Century of Revolution, p. 5.
17 Ibid.
explained in terms of "interests" after all. In *A Century of Revolution* Mr. Hill uses this approach to explain the geographical nature of the struggle: "If we want to understand this Civil War a glance at the maps... is far more important than the most elaborate analysis of members of Parliament"; and "Support for Parliament came from the economically advanced south and east of England, the King's support from the economically backward areas of the north and west." This had implications which indeed make the commons' activities irrelevant: the war was "created" outside the range of the political leaders by an economic dichotomy which divided England's backward north from her progressive south.

There is, needless to say, a great deal of truth in the picture of economic diversity between England's north and south. There is also nothing obviously wrong in interpreting men's activities in the light of environmental factors. Nevertheless, Mr. Hill's account is unsatisfactory, for in stressing these environmental factors he diverts our attention away from the very men whose decisions actually led to war, and whose different decisions must have avoided it or led to a different war. The whole tendency of Mr. Hill's approach to explanation as independent of narrative is to concentrate on one at the expense of the other: to lead, for example, to an interpretation of the civil war as uncreated by the commons in any sense although it should be obvious that without the commons of 1640-42, or with a different one, led by different men, the civil war we read about would just never have materialized.

Apart from this general criticism, there are one or two other difficulties involved in accepting the economic factor as the most significant determinant for the sides on which men of the north and south ranged themselves in the war. For one thing it fails to explain why the most northerly and most backward region of all—Scotland—sided with the progressive southerners; and why the Scots fought with the Royalists only when most of the southern "capitalists" changed sides as well. The notion of north and west versus south and east should not be invested with that aura of inevitability which comes from treating it as the explanation of the war: rather it should be regarded as a characteristic of the war caused in part by accidental factors. Many participants decided their allegiance simply on the basis of whose armies occupied the areas of their own estates. Moreover, Trevelyan added a qualification to the geography of the struggle which has remained uncontradicted by recent research:

The North never felt that it was engaged in a death struggle with the South, nor were the West and East roused to battle by conscious intention to subdue one another. In every shire there were two parties, of which the weaker only waited opportuneely to join hands with an invading force from the other side of England. For in motive it was a war not of class or districts, but of ideas. Hence there was a noble speculative enthusiasm among the chiefs and their followers, but less readiness to fight among

---

the masses of the population, than in other contests that have torn great nations.\textsuperscript{20}

Lastly, it is important to remember that the picture, while true, was also true at other times with very different results. At the very beginning of the seventeenth century Thomas Wilson drew attention to the disparity between north and south. The gentleman "about London and the counties adjoining, where the lands are set to the highest... is not counted of any great reckoning unless he be betwixt 1,000 marks of £1,000, but northward and far off a gentleman of good reputation may be content with £300 and £400 yearly."\textsuperscript{21} The economic and social variation between the regions explains many features of the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 and the Northern Rising of 1569. What it does not explain is why in the earlier risings the backward elements were \textit{against} the government while in the civil war they found themselves under the banner of king and court. To regard the positions adopted by the king and his advisers on the one hand and his enemies on the other as mere peripherals, oscillating aimlessly outside the main area of conflict has, as explanation, the merit only of simplicity.

It is no part of this essay to offer a detailed critique of the substructure theories. J. H. Hexter has subjected both Tawney's "rise" and Trevor-Roper's "decline" to a brilliant analysis concluding that:

When we follow the guidance of Tawney and Trevor-Roper we may occasionally feel that they have called on us to give close attention to the sporadic vapourings of the First Lord and Second Lord or of Shallow and Slender, while the main plot is taking shape at the fringe of our vision or beyond our ken.\textsuperscript{22}

Trevor-Roper's \textit{General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century} has been examined, mainly critically, by several historians in \textit{Past and Present}, No. 18.\textsuperscript{23} Dr. G. R. Elton, writing off this article in the course of a review, pithily commented on the tendency of "substructures" to conflict with narrative: "Nor can it be said that a definition which places Eliot... and Pym... with the 'Court' is entirely helpful in understanding the origins of the war."\textsuperscript{24} Hill's methods have been penetratingly dissected by C. H. Wilson in a review article. He writes:

As attention shifts from the individual to the group, the problem of explanation becomes larger and more impalpable, the historian's method more artificial and remote, not more scientific but less. As the historian shifts his focus, it becomes concentrated not on the historic act or event but on the supposed gestation or motivation of the act. The problem why men of the same material background chose differently in 1642 remains


\textsuperscript{22}Hexter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{23}See also T. Aston, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{24}Elton, "Stuart Government", \textit{Past and Present}, No. 20 for a review of G. Aylmer's \textit{The Civil Service of Charles I}. 


Christopher Falkus

a problem. Neither maps nor graphs can resolve it. They merely substitute an illusion of concreteness for reality itself. . . . This seems to be the natural consequence of separating the action—"what happened"—from its alleged cause and relegating it to a minor role, a tale fit only for children.25

My own purpose in emphasising, then, what is already well known is two-fold. First I want to underline the methodological similarity of our current interpretations of the war, however different the conclusions built on the differing substructures may be. It is in this, I feel, that recent history has not so much gone off onto the wrong track as adopted the wrong means of transport. To explain the civil war we must surely bear in mind that, as Professor Butterfield has expressed it, "it is men who make history"26 and that "what men think they are fighting for is important".27 Secondly, it is worth drawing attention to the plight of the present-day teacher of seventeenth century history, particularly at the undergraduate level. Whatever the reason the fact remains that the efforts of many fine scholars working in a closely-studied field have so far failed to produce anything which can remotely be described as an "orthodox" interpretation. The failure has been apparent for some time, and has not surprisingly provoked a reaction. Robert Ashton has written that

more than one writer has expressed the view that, since the arguments [of the economic historians] appear to be unconvincing—not least in their attempts to uncover the social and economic roots of political behaviour—it would seem to be more profitable for historians to return to the discussion of traditional problems in a traditional manner.28

Yet if this is so it has made the situation more confusing than ever, for there is certainly no generally accepted "revision" which synthesizes older views with the contributions of more modern research. Instead, the journals, textbooks, and specialist studies are still largely dominated by those highly controversial and dubious views which have been so energetically canvassed over the last ten or fifteen years. There has been no corresponding amount of work published "on the other side" to redress the balance. And there is no certainty that the specialists feel the need for such redress. Professor Stone has recently written that "the shifts in wealth and prestige among the various status and occupational groups, and the 'contest mobility' created by the expansion of education during the previous 100 years played no small part in generating the tensions that led to the political breakdown in 1640, to Civil War in 1642 and to the emergence of radicalism in 1647."29 Compared with some statements of the "rising and declining" theses this is a modest enough assertion, but still echoes those assumptions I have criticized above.

25 Wilson, op. cit., p. 92.
26 Butterfield, History and Human Relations (1951), p. 60.
27 Butterfield, "George III and the Namier School", Encounter, VIII, No. 4 (1957), 74.
29 Stone, op. cit., p. 15.
In short there must be many historians who agree with Roger Lockyer that "no all-embracing explanation has, as yet, been found of the motives which governed the actions of men forced to choose between conflicting loyalties when civil war came". It is certainly not within the scope of this essay, nor within my capacity, to attempt one. What is intended here is to offer some reflections on one of the more problematical aspects of this controversial period—the transformation of a peaceful constitutional revolution in 1641 into a civil war in 1642. It will be suggested that the character of the "opposition" underwent such a radical change between these events that it is quite fruitless to seek a blanket cause to explain it. To know why the rebels took up arms in 1642 would tell us little about the general nature of the opposition to the Stuarts and what motivated the men who helped to revolutionize the constitution the previous year. This is so not only because by the outbreak of civil war many of the latter were on the Royalist side, but also because the historical problem is in each case quite different. To explain the civil war we need to know what divided a section of the body politic: to explain the opposition to the Stuarts which culminated in the revolution of 1641 we need to know what united it. Not surprisingly what illuminates one may not do the same for the other. If we were able to analyse all those who took up arms against the king, and discovered them to be Presbyterians or Independents, capitalists or bankrupts, office-holders or unemployed, heliocentrists or holocentrists, and then tried to explain the nature of the opposition to the early Stuarts in terms of their interests we should overlook the fundamental differences in certain phases of the conflict which it is the main purpose of this article to emphasize. Take for example Mr. Anderson's stimulating article "Origins of the present crisis". Concerning what he calls "the Civil War of 1640-49" he writes:

it is, however, certain that the most economically progressive regions of England were Parliamentarian and the most backward Royalist. At the same time the nature of the allies flanking each side magnified and clarified the divisions between them. Taking extremes—on the one hand the archaic clan society of northern Scotland, on the other mercantile capital, particularly in the City of London. . . .

Now whatever service this kind of analysis performs it does absolutely nothing to help us to understand "the Civil War of 1640-49". The only war going on in 1640 was the second Bishops war between the royal army and the Scots— including Argyll's highlanders— while London at this time was under the control of royalists and would continue so for the next two years. How curious if London's loyal aldermen had survived a little longer and the capital had become the headquarters of the royalist feudatories! Moreover, by 1649 the advent of republicanism and independency had so transformed the

32 Ibid., p. 29.
situation that we can be sure that if Pym himself had lived he would — despite his mercantile capital — have been purged from the Rump like his son Charles! It is worth commenting further on Mr. Anderson’s article, for he tells us that “the ideological legacy of the Revolution was almost nil”. This is indeed logical if we regard the revolution simply as an expression of a social creed — of republicanism. But were not the writings of Hobbes, the investigations of sovereignty, the very implications of Cromwell’s axe, and the certainty that the prerogative known to the Tudors was gone forever ideological legacies? This seems to me to be obvious beyond debate, and denying it would appear to be the result of overlooking the broader issues involved and of the political, constitutional, and legal attitudes which were fundamental to the various ideologies of the war.

It will be suggested here that the road leading to war can be usefully divided into two sections: that culminating in the destruction of “Thorough” and the traditional exercise of the prerogative; and that which saw a growing cleavage between many of the supporters of this revolution and those who went on to take up arms under Pym. I will argue that the unity of the first period was based on the general acceptance of certain principles of law, and particularly the role envisaged for parliament within the framework of law. A brief description of the parliamentary claims resulting from these ideas, and the political problems they raised will be given. Finally I will argue that these problems called forth certain solutions which were not generally acceptable and which destroyed the unity. The most important disagreement was, consciously or otherwise, over the question of sovereignty, and disunity within an assembly containing or representing the views of almost every man of any consequence in the kingdom on such a fundamental issue could not fail to produce the greatest possible danger of civil war.

III

The civil war was not the culmination of a long-maturing opposition movement directed by a consistent leadership against the crown. When war came those who sided against the king’s armies found themselves opposed by many who had been their colleagues in earlier stages of the conflict with the royal government. Thus many who were royalists when the issue was peace or war were certainly not “royalists” when the issues were, for example, the impeachment of Strafford and Laud. It was not that the characters of these men had changed: rather the character of the opposition itself had changed. Far from representing an extension of the aims of those who had engineered a constitutional revolution in 1641, the civil war was a reaction against that revolution’s implications. It was counter-revolutionary. We often think of “moderates” like Hyde and Falkland as “changing sides”, but it would be more helpful to think of the movement of which they were a part developing

along new and more radical lines, leaving them, in reaction, as counter-revolutionaries.

The events leading up to civil war are characterized by two well-defined phases. The first is a period in which most of what can be described as the politically articulate nation combined to force the king and his close advisers to accept a revision of the constitution; the second is the reaction which followed this revision during which many key supporters of the revision recoiled from the implications of what they had done. It was this which enabled a “king’s party” to form and which therefore made the civil war possible.

This simple, though I think fruitful, viewpoint is obscured if we think of the opposition facing the Stuarts as dominated by sectional interests. Whether we describe such interests as economic, religious, social, or anything else it at once leaves us no nearer explaining the identity of interests manifested in the early stages of the Long Parliament. On nearly all major issues prior to the Grand Remonstrance “High Anglicans” like Hyde voted alongside Presbyterians like Holles and Independents like Cromwell, whether they were voting for such things as the illegality of ship money, the Triennial Act, or the impeachment of Archbishop Laud. Wealthy commoners like Hampden voted alongside peers “of mean and narrow fortune” like Lord Say and Sele; upstart lords voted with those of ancient lineage; members of the “country” voted alongside officeholders like Solicitor-General St. John and Lord Chamberlain Essex. Dissenting in class, tradition, outlook, and religion, these men yet presented the united front which toppled Strafford and Laud and wrought major changes in the constitution. What was it, then, that united them?

One of the few things which most historians of this period can agree about is that the summoning of parliament after eleven years of personal rule was a decisive event in Charles’s reign. Parliament was, after all, the natural focus of those who did not wish to submit to arbitrary monarchy. Attempts of such men to participate in matters of policy, to exercise some control over the king’s ministers, to legislate when the government overstepped what were thought of as “fundamental laws” — all these depended on parliamentary processes. Men like Coke, Hyde, Pym, and Essex respected and defended the necessary functions of parliament. It was thought in some quarters that annual parliaments were legally necessary. Hyde, in retrospect, felt able to write: “I cannot but let myself loose to say, that no man can show me a source from whence these

35 Clarendon, op. cit. (Bk III, p. 375) illustrates the extent of the unity as late as June 1641 when he describes the summary nature of the abolition of Star Chamber: “So that important bill was never read aloud but once in the House of Commons, and was never committed; which, I believe, was never before heard of in Parliament.”
37 The foreign policy debates of 1624 and 1625 are obvious examples among many.
39 For example the Statute of Monopolies, 1624.
40 Clarendon, op. cit., Bk III, p. 452.
waters of bitterness we now taste have more probably flowed, than from this unseasonable, unskilfull, and precipitate dissolution of Parliaments.'*! So important did parliament's role appear that any disregard or infringement of it was itself enough to provide an immediate common bond between many hundreds of diverse but significant men. Parliament was, in fact, of crucial importance in both the theory and mechanics of revolution. When in 1640-41 revolution came it came through statute, Impeachment and Attainder; and when in 1642 the Nineteen Propositions heralded war they were issued as “the Humble Petition and Advice of both Houses of Parliament”.

It is parliament's vital role, then, which provides an obvious clue to our problem of what united the “political nation” and makes it a relevant question to inquire into the nature of parliament in the early seventeenth century. Now parliament was not a board of directors, though it contained plutocrats and company directors; it was not a bankruptcy court, though it contained gentlemen in decline; it was not a national synod, though it contained Presbyterians; it was not a labour exchange, though it contained those angling for court sinecures. Parliament was a court of law, with an undoubted, though not easily defined part to play in the constitution. As a law court it was, of course, only one of many. There were also the prerogative courts, like Star Chamber; the church courts like High Commission; the equity court of the lord chancellor and the various common law courts. In addition to these there was the king himself acting in his capacity as head of state and the fountain of justice — proclaiming, suspending, dispensing, and showing mercy by virtue of the prerogative.

This seemingly straightforward pattern of legal administration concealed two problems of a politically explosive character. Most obviously there was no general agreement as to which kind of law was supreme. Statute law was indeed a particularly solemn form of law, but it would be hard to show that it was “above” prerogative law. Secondly there was a great difference between law making and law enforcement: whatever theories there might be about declaring “good law” the executive branch of administration was firmly in the hands of the government. Hence the political troubles of the mid-seventeenth century, though overtly concerned to a large degree with discovering and declaring good law, could not help raising a still more fundamental problem — that of sovereign power in the state. In the last resort no law can exist invulnerable to the dictates of the sovereign executive authority if only because the contingency of national emergency might make the operation of a particular law dangerous or impossible. This situation is not peculiar to the seventeenth century. Between 1935 and 1945 there was no general election in Britain because the sovereign authority in the state, acting in an emergency, decided to override the Act of 1911. In this case the government was popular, the enemy feared, and the emergency obvious. But legally there is no great difference between this decision and that of Charles I when he declared successive states of emergency to collect ship money. While

41 Ibid., Bk I, p. 5.
the king held sovereign executive authority, controlled the judges, and dispensed prerogative justice it is hard to see how he could be realistically challenged, and by whom, on legal grounds at all. It was a lawyer not particularly notable for his devotion to the Royal cause who wrote: “we see that earthly Monarchs doe oft dispence and cast their honours, favours, and disfavours upon men, advancing this man, and displacing that; Upon no other grounds at all, but that it is their pleasure yet, who may say unto them, what doest thou?”

It is obvious that Parliament's role in the constitution was a difficult and, from a legal point of view, a vulnerable one. One difficulty was that until the Triennial Act it had no legal necessity at all. In theory it remained what it always had been, a convenient device for the king's purposes. Prerogative law was potentially capable of eclipsing representative institutions as happened elsewhere at the time. Parliament’s salvation lay not in the strength of its legal status but mainly in its indispensable role of raiing money. Parliament’s “power of the purse”, together with the bankruptcy of the government, possibly alone saved representative institutions in England while they faded in several countries on the continent.

Parliament's position by the 1640’s was naturally determined in part by the claims put forward in the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These implicitly, though not explicitly, threatened the prerogatives of the monarchy as understood not only by the king but also by his political opponents. For example, when parliament claimed the right to advise on foreign policy, it was an automatic step to go further and make grants conditional on such advice being accepted. In 1624 treasurers from the commons were appointed to supervise the expenditure of the subsidy just in case the agreed policy was changed. But this meant, in effect, that the king's untrammeled role in government was challenged by an institution which in theory need not have been summoned, let alone allowed such initiative in the ordinary exercise of governmental authority. The implications of this led eventually to a constitution in which the commons did indeed become an important part of government. But in the period before the civil war it is safe to say that not one of the major political figures either realized or would have welcomed these implications.

The claims put forward by the Elizabethan and early Stuart parliaments are well known. Led by the House of Commons they demanded acknowledgement of their privileges, of which freedom of speech and freedom from arrest were the most important. They jealously guarded their “power of the purse”, sometimes going so far as to deny the legality of unparliamentary taxation. They sought the opportunity to discuss any matter they wanted to — including such “mysteries of state” as religion, foreign policy, the queen’s marriage and succession, and the royal patents of monopoly. Extremists saw early the possibility of using the power of the purse for political objectives. In 1566 one member tried to force an answer to the succession petition by attaching it to that year’s

subsidy bill. In 1586-87 other members tried to make the subsidy conditional on Elizabeth’s acceptance of the sovereignty of the Netherlands. In 1606 a demand for war with Spain was pressed with the same device. Though none of these attempts to divert royal policy succeeded, it is clear that certain elements in the commons were increasingly thinking in terms of a wider parliamentary voice in policy: and from advising on matters of policy it is only a very short step to the demand that the advice be taken. All the possibilities of a clash between government and parliament over control of policy were latent in this new concept of parliamentary rights and privileges. The logical end of such a development had to be either the triumph of absolute government, or the transformation of parliament from an advisory, legislative, and taxing body into an integral part of the machinery of government. By the third decade of the seventeenth century the uneasy facade of a status quo had become impossible to maintain.

In one sense all the complex problems involved in these issues can be reduced to the very simple one of whether the crown should govern as a limited or an unlimited authority. Naturally enough the “Parliamentarians” and the common lawyers subscribed to the generally accepted belief that royal power was limited — by “good law”. Yet while the king remained the fountain of justice, the judges remained his creatures, and the government a matter for him and his servants, the practical consequences of such a view were extremely limited. When in 1610 parliament reversed the judges’ decision in Bates’s case it was not only assuming a legal supremacy it just did not have, but was also illustrating the futility of declaring the law without any possibility of its enforcement.

In fact to limit royal authority in both theory and practice required a totally different constitution from that generally understood as existing in the early seventeenth century. In the first place it required that some agency outside the royal prerogative should have the independence and authority to declare supreme law; and it required that the executive government should no longer be the exclusive domain of the king and his personal servants. This latter point is particularly important. Everyone, including the king, might agree that parliament shall meet every three years; but while the king governs and can do no wrong it is not hard for a Charles II or a James II to ignore the law without acting illegally. The power vested with sovereign authority cannot break the law — it is itself the final court of appeal. The solution to the basic problem of a limited or unlimited royal authority silently raised the greatest of all political questions — the rightful location of the sovereign power of the state.

It must not be thought that the issues were seen in this light by contemporaries. To most people the law, though the beginning and end of political theory, was not related to government at all. The task was to discover the law, after which administration of it became the concern of other agencies. There was, in the

---

44 Ibid., II, 169-83.
period prior to the civil war, virtually no discussion of how one makes a government “obey” the law. The opposition to the early Stuarts was dominated by the very medieval concept that the law existed outside the agencies for its enforcement. The more modern realization that the law is largely created by those agencies was not a sudden one. With it came the gradual evolution of parliament from primarily a court of law into primarily a seat of government, a process which spanned the dynasties from Tudor to Hanoverian.

IV

However revolutionary and novel parliamentary claims may have been the language of its supporters suggested a return to the past. This appeal to the past was necessary not only because the Stuart age distrusted novelty, but because parliament’s case, being essentially legal, had to be firmly grounded on precedent. The precedents, however, though seeming to their advocates to make an unanswerable case for parliamentary participation in politics, were based on two quite different and contradictory sources.

In the first place the commons clearly had a good case when they expected to be consulted before the levying of extraordinary taxation. Kings at least as far back as Edward I had found this expedient, and under Edward III it became almost systematic. Of course expectation was one thing, legal right another. To claim that parliament’s consent was legally necessary implied, as I have already suggested, a revision of the machinery as well as of traditional attitudes towards the constitution. Nevertheless, the precedents were there and the commons’ inference natural.

Very different was the other line of precedents publicised by the “Parliamentarians”. This was the long line of challenges given to royal authority by such bodies as the barons of Magna Carta, Simon de Montfort’s parliament, the Lords Ordainers and Appellant, the “Good Parliament”, etc., etc. There is no doubt that the seventeenth century House of Commons considered itself as standing in line with this tradition, and that Magna Carta was considered the precedent for such successors as the Petition of Right.46 However, we know that for all their erudition and sincerity the seventeenth century antiquarians were quite wrong about two things. First their heroes of Magna Carta and the Good Parliament were far from being champions of anything other than their own narrow interests. Secondly the basis for their activities was the very good one that in feudal law they were the “natural councillors” of the king and therefore entitled to a share in government.47 Those who distrusted Henry III’s relatives had indeed a legitimate grievance. But those members of the Stuart parliaments who saw themselves as heirs to the feudal concept of counsel were deluding themselves. Feudal law was, as Professor Pocock has pointed out,48

totally obsolete in seventeenth century England. Yet it was feudal law which provided the legality for those actions regarded by later “Parliamentarians” as precedents and which sought to extend politics beyond the personal and private concern of the king. Feudal law was rejected, but the feudal precedents were not. To mould the latter into a non-feudal framework of law was a difficult and, in the upshot, an explosive process. But it should be noted how persistent the “feudal tradition” was. Opinion in the lords (a much more legitimate successor to the barons of Runnymede, incidentally, than the commons) was far more susceptible to the argument that peers were natural councillors and advisers than to ideas of Presbyterianism and economic liberalism. The lords resented Buckingham in the tradition of the hatred of Poitevin uncles and Piers Gaveston. It is probable that the historians’ pre-occupation with the commons has diverted attention from the lords and from the important motivations of men like Essex, Manchester, Bedford, Hertford, John Manners, eighth Earl of Rutland and Algernon Percy, tenth Earl of Northumberland. Undoubtedly some moved in defence of their “natural” role as confidants of the king — not unlike their noble predecessors who had taken up arms in 1215, 1258 and 1399.

In short, then, there were diverse but powerful reasons why many influential men should consider it necessary to press for some kind of limit to the crown’s authority. This of course does not imply that they consciously sought limited monarchy in any modern sense, but rather that they failed to realize that their demands for privileges, controls and participation were incompatible with legitimately exercised kingship as even they understood it. While the dominant issues involved mere criticism of the regime the political nation could unite and force on the king the attainder of his servants and the partial destruction of the prerogative. But it was precisely because the implications of these events were not realized that the unity broke down. In order to safeguard what they had done some of the revolutionaries moved on to demand parliamentary control of the armed forces, and the right to appoint the officers of church and state. And so at a time when it was generally understood that the king should govern, “moderates”, like Hyde and Falkland, were shocked to see that the corollary of what they had done was that he would not. Now emerged that wide gulf between former colleagues: Hyde’s plea for the retention of “landmarks” and “foundations” was little different from Pym’s “the form of government in any state cannot be altered without apparent danger of ruin to that State”; but what room was there for landmarks and foundations in

Parliament is the absolute sovereign power within the realme, not subject to, or obliged by the letter, or intendment of any laws, being in truth the

50 “The opposition... attempted to prove... that the House of Lords had once possessed untold privileges and greater jurisdictions when it was the magnum concilium.” Ibid.
sole law-maker, and having an absolute sovereignty over the laws themselves (yea, over Magna Carta and all other objected acts) to repeal, alter, determine and suspend when there is cause, as is undeniable by its altering the very common law in many cases.53

The Grand Remonstrance and the nineteen Propositions, demanding parliamentary control of the army and the chief officers of state amounted to the replacement of royal by parliamentary government. This went far beyond the modest desire for the king to govern according to good law. No wonder those who venerated “landmarks” found themselves counter-revolutionaries. This is the basis of that all-important difference between the unity of 1641 and the disunity of 1642, a difference which made possible the civil war.

V

The problems involved in the changing relationships between the legislative, executive, and judicial aspects of government were far too sophisticated for the thinking of the pre-civil war generation of theorists.54 The medieval notion that the law awaited discovery rather than was made and enforced tended to persist. However this did not prevent thinkers of the Stuart age from adopting one quite un-medieval characteristic — that of insularity. It was believed that English law derived from one source alone, namely English tradition: Roman law, canon law, feudal law, were all rejected in favour of the English common law; and what has been called the “common law mind”55 remained dominant throughout this period. So much so that this “mind” was not even one side of an argument but both sides: supporters of the royal prerogative claimed the prerogative as part of, not as above, the common law; its critics denied it.56

The common law mind was at best a poor substitute for perceptive political thinking. Its dominance ensured the triumph of the tendency to equate political problems with legal ones and therefore to ignore the practical problems which politics raise.

The archetype of this kind of thinking was the great common lawyer and sometime chief justice, Sir Edward Coke. For Coke the English common law itself was sovereign, reigning supreme over parliament and princes alike: “And it appears in our books that in many cases the common law will controul acts of parliament and sometimes adjudge them to be utterly void; for when an act of Parliament is against common right and reason ... the common law will controul it”.57 The king cannot lawfully override the sanctity of precedents. He “cannot by Proclamation create an offence which was not an offence

54 The war itself, of course, produced a number of theorists — such as Digges, Herle, Hunton, and Parker — whose grasp of sovereignty was, no doubt because of the political climate, markedly more modern than that of their pre-war predecessors.
55 Pocock, op. cit., especially chaps. 2 and 3.
56 Ibid., pp. 54–55.
57 Coke 8 Rep. 114, 118; from Bonham’s Case, 1610.
before". Moreover "the King's proclamation forms no part of the law; and he hath no prerogative but that which the law of the land allows him".

Now however inspiring Coke's defence of the common law was, and however large his following in the commons may have been, the fact remains that his system was politically useless. His solution to the problem of government was to ignore it; and consequently he never came to grips with the truth that a sovereign law needs a sovereign power to enforce it. Prynne exposed the fallaciousness of Coke's legal reasoning with his pithy, "What weak assurances then, are Lawes alone, to binde Princes hands, or secure Subjects Liberties". His own solution, that parliament can alter "the very common law in many cases" would have been as repulsive to Coke as it was to Hyde.

Coke's basic assumption — that there is a law which binds the king — contained the dangerous implication that someone or some institution might enforce this law and therefore assume sovereign power. This was of course not Coke's intention, nor that of those "moderates" who sooner or later gravitated towards the royalist side. Even those who fought for parliament were not necessarily as radical as the circumstances of the war made them appear. There was something slightly more than legal fiction in the claims by both sides that they were fighting for the king. Essex, Manchester, Prynne, Pym himself, could not imagine an English state without royal government. How they reconciled this with the parliamentary demands for control of army, church, judges, and ministers is an interesting commentary on the naivety of political thinking at the time when the civil war was being "made". Prynne, for example, might seem from the passage quoted earlier to have at last realized the full issue of sovereignty; but in fact his position was far more equivocal than it appears. The whole tone of his Soveraigne Power of Parliaments suggests that he is concerned not with the permanent exercise of authority but with a temporary measure reluctantly adopted to restore "normal" government. In the words of Mr. Lamont, Prynne is dealing with "an extra-legal expedient to sustain a legal ideal". The legal ideal was that concept of lawful monarchy which had united the revolutionaries prior to the Grand Remonstrance; the extra-legal expedient was the issue which created the all-important counter-revolution.

The tragedy of the civil war was that it divided men whose fundamental notions of good government were not dissimilar. Hyde wished to preserve landmarks and foundations: Prynne defended parliamentary control of the militia partly on the grounds that parliament was "never desiring nor intending to devest [the King] of this his soveraigne power over them". Thus from the beginning the stage was set for that gradual narrowing of parliamentary support leading

58 Coke 12 Rep. 75.
59 Ibid.
61 Ibid., IV, 15.
62 See above, reference 53.
to the extraordinary spectacle of the restoration of monarchy, almost entirely on the pre-civil war basis, being welcomed by Fairfax and by Prynne! When the circumstances of the war and the interregnum had once more re-united the “political nation” the great issue of the location of sovereignty remained largely unperceived and certainly unsolved. At the restoration the king was still the government: he could still suspend the laws; dispense with them; ignore them; override acts of parliament by proclamation; control the army and the judiciary; choose his own ministers. It is one of the ironies of history that this situation was later changed without a civil war, giving rise to the myth that the issues solved under Charles II, James II, William, Mary and Anne were different from and less fundamental than those of the 1640’s. They were not. The limitation of the prerogative; the balancing of the various aspects of government; the relationship of government to the law; the issue of sovereignty itself — all these were basic problems which, though largely unrealized and not at all understood, underlay the origins of the English civil war.

VI

I have suggested that the war was, in the last resort, concerned with what men thought about the nature and location of authority rather than, for example, with their economic situation. To concentrate on economics seems an invitation to produce some such myth as Mr. Anderson’s “Civil War of 1640–49”. There was no civil war in 1640 or 1641, yet it was precisely those years which saw a revolution whose implications resulted in war. Those years are significant enough to merit close analysis, and not automatic inclusion within a framework which obscures rather than clarifies the events it encompasses.

But in arguing in favour of an older type of interpretation I would certainly not wish to deprecate the value of recent researches and particularly the explorations of the economic factor. Indeed, I do not think that the role of economics in the civil war period can be easily overrated, though I do think it can be misunderstood. There can be no doubt that it was the economic transformation of society during “Tawney’s century” which made the civil war a possibility — that is to say it was the sine qua non. Without the rise of sections of the gentry which, as Hexter has pointed out, is from one point of view “not a hypothesis to be verified but a fact which demands explanation”.67 the war of mid-century, with Pyms, Hampdens, and Cromwells as leaders of society, could not have taken place in anything like the form in which it did. But to find a sine qua non is not the same as finding an explanation of events short of a level of fatuousness such as: “the Counter Reformation occurred because of the Reformation”.

65 Charles II and James II ignored the Triennial Act between 1681 and 1688.
66 Charles II withdrew his Declaration of Indulgence which overrode the anti-Catholic and anti-Puritan legislation through expedience rather than its illegality which was never admitted.
67 Hexter, op. cit., p. 143.
The civil war may not have taken place without the economic and social mobility that preceded it, but that is not to say that the latter made the former inevitable or even more likely in 1642 than say, in the 1620's. Historical events are too complex and subtle to be explained by concentrating on a particular aspect of a situation, however brilliantly that aspect is analysed and however persuasively it is related to the whole. This is, I am sure, the reason why historians of the stature of Tawney, Trevor-Roper, and Hill have failed to produce any generally acceptable version of the genesis of England's civil war: their failure is not one of scholarship but of method. They have delved for a substructure but overlooked the superstructure: more emphasis on the "narrative of events" might well lead us back to explaining men's conduct at least in part in terms of what they thought they were concerned with. It is no accident that perhaps the most successful recent work on early modern English history, J. E. Neale's great *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559–1601*, is a work of narrative history. Professor Neale naturally alludes to the economic status of his Nortons, Wentworths, and Mildmays, and naturally also to the crown's increasing financial difficulties; but he draws no extravagant and unwarranted conclusions. Instead we read about the conflicts in the terms in which they were seen — as conflicts, for example, over religion, foreign policy, and the succession. Neale's narrative enables us to realize one very important point — that men thought and acted as they did in, say, 1571 partly because of their experiences since 1559; obvious enough indeed, but a point which non-narrative explanations find it hard to accommodate. The civil war era awaits its Neale; meanwhile let us hope that interpretations of the war will, if only by default, once more come to grips with the richer complexities of motivation. Professor Butterfield has made an eloquent plea for something of this sort: "All attempts to simplify explanation and turn history into schematic patterns are limited in their validity and are periodically liable to crack ... for the purpose of recovering authentic contact with the past we must return to the elasticity of ordinary narrative history". And again, concerning another school of history, yet in words which seem particularly appropriate to the substructure interpretations of the seventeenth century: "The ideal thing would be to have the whole story related 'in depth' — structure and narrative combined".

---

68 Butterfield, "Marxist History", p. 67.
69 Butterfield, "George III and the Namier School", p. 72.
5 The Payment of Provincial and Local Taxes in North Carolina, 1748-1771

Since taxation by Britain has long been recognized as important in understanding the American Revolution, it is perhaps surprising that a thorough study of the extent of taxation in each of the colonies has not attracted more attention from historians. The assumption, for example, that the tax burden in the colonies was negligible, has led to the conclusion by some that Britain was justified in increasing taxes after the French and Indian War. Since taxes allegedly were insignificant economically, others have contended that imperial taxes were onerous simply as a symbol of political oppression: they represented Britain's neglect of traditional imperial relationships and disregard of American liberties.

In North Carolina taxes nevertheless represented a real burden after 1755, especially for those in the lower economic groups. They included dues to the Crown and taxes levied by Parliament, but the most important taxes were those assessed by the North Carolina legislature, the county courts, and the parish vestries. A shortage of currency, moreover, further increased this burden.

Provincial taxes levied by the General Assembly were, as a rule, administered by provincial officials for colony-wide purposes. Sheriffs collected the poll taxes and receivers provided by each specific law collected the other levies.

First published in William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., XXVI, No. 2 (April 1969).

1 Since the administration of public taxes and the political struggles arising from attempts to insure an efficient and honest handling of public monies have been analyzed recently, that story will not be duplicated here. See Marvin L. Michael Kay, “Provincial Taxes in North Carolina During the Administrations of Dobbs and Tryon,” North Carolina Historical Review, XLII (1965), 440-53; Jack P. Greene, The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1686-1776 (Chapel Hill, 1963), pp. 72-80, 233-43; Jack P. Greene, “The North Carolina Lower House and the Power to Appoint Public Treasurers, 1711-75”, N.C. Hist. Rev., XL (1963), 37-53. Some of the more detailed documentation in the original publication of this article (William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., XXVI, No. 2 [April 1969], 218-40) has been abridged for this collection.

2 For laws listing the tax collecting duties of the sheriffs during the period under review, see Walter Clark (ed.), The State Records of North Carolina (Goldsboro, N. C., 1894-1914), XXIII (hereafter N. C. State Records). For laws stipulating the manner of appointment and the duties of receivers and collectors of provincial levies other than poll taxes, see ibid., XXII, and XXV.
The collectors generally accounted for and handed over the public funds, less their commissions, to the treasurers of their particular district, northern or southern. The monies received by the treasurers were then used for purposes specified either by law or, less frequently, by order of the lower house. Sometimes tax legislation provided intermediaries between the collectors and the treasurers, for example, port commissioners, or allowed the collectors or the intermediaries to spend their public monies directly, accounting to the lower house, or to deliver the public funds, less their commissions, to the lower house itself rather than to the treasurers. The lower house controlled the final auditing of provincial accounts.

Local poll taxes, also collected by sheriffs and their deputies, were the only type of local tax, except for fees paid to officials and direct work levies obligating taxables to build, repair, and maintain roads and waterways. The local poll taxes were authorized in various ways. The country courts and parish vestries had plenary tax powers, limited to certain amounts, granted by provincial law for meeting their ordinary expenses, or contingent charges of government. In addition, they might receive specific grants of power to levy poll taxes for particular purposes. Also, the General Assembly sometimes levied county and, rarely, parochial poll taxes directly upon the taxables of particular counties or parishes. Specific county poll taxes authorized or levied directly by the General Assembly, except for the tax to provide law books for the county courts, were mainly to finance the building of county and district courthouses, offices, jails, pillories, and stocks; to run county lines; and to a lesser degree to help finance the building, maintaining, and repairing of bridges, roads, waterways, and ferries. Thus, collections from all local levies were used in the political and administrative units in which they were collected, and the collectors, after deducting their commissions as established by provincial law, accounted for and distributed the monies under the direct supervision of the county courts and parish vestries.3

The most important tax in colonial North Carolina, provincial, county, or

---

3 I have used the following materials to derive statistics for local levies, an understanding of the expenditures covered by these levies, and the relationship between local tax powers and provincial laws. Of greatest importance are the County Court Minutes, to be found on microfilm in the State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C. The sampling I chose comprised the minutes of six county courts covering varying portions of the period 1748-1771. The years covered were determined by the available records, an attempt being made to survey the maximum number of years for each county. This sampling includes three Piedmont counties (two northern, Orange and Rowan, and one southern, Anson) and three counties from the Coastal Plain (Bertie, Carteret, and New Hanover from the Albemarle Sound, Pamlico Sound, and Cape Fear regions respectively). In Alonzo Thomas Dill, Jr., “Public Buildings in Craven County, 1722-1835,” N. C. Hist. Rev., XX (1943), 312-13, lists of county taxes for Craven County, also in the Pamlico Sound region, for the years 1753-1764, complement my own findings. Enabling acts and other related laws passed by the General Assembly both with respect to county and parochial taxes may be found in N. C. State Records, XXIII. Local records concerning parochial taxes are more difficult to come by. See St. Paul’s Church Vestry Minutes, 1701-1779, Chowan County, State Archives; William L. Saunders (ed.), The Colonial Records of North Carolina (Raleigh, N. C., 1886-1890), VII, 772-73; IX, 226 (hereafter N. C. Colonial Records); N. C. State Records, XXV, 344.
Taxes in North Carolina

parochial, was the poll tax, or head tax, on all white males, freemen or servants, sixteen years of age and over; on Negroes and “all Persons of Mixt Blood to the Fourth Generation”, slave or free, male or female, twelve years and over; and on all whites who married persons of color and their progeny, twelve and older. Even though masters paid taxes on their servants and slaves, the tax remained inequitable, bearing disproportionately upon the poorer inhabitants. As a group free persons of color were taxed most severely, for they bore not only the inequity of the poll tax but also the group injury of having all persons taxed from age twelve instead of only males from age sixteen.

On the other hand, the economic group benefitting most from the inequitable nature of the poll tax was that group whose wealth consisted mostly of property other than slaves or servants. Critics of the tax structure understood this well. For example, a petition of the Regulators of Orange and Rowan Counties in 1769 to the governor, council, and assembly stated: “And may it please you to consider of and pass an Act, to Tax everyone in proportion to his Estates; however equitable the Law as it now stands, may appear to the Inhabitants of the Maritime parts of the province, where estates consist chiefly in Slaves; yet to us in the frontier, where very few are possessed of Slaves, tho’ their Estates are in proportion (in many instances) as of one Thousand to one, for all to pay equal, is with Submission, very grievous and oppressive.” Many see this statement as a protest against a tax system that favored the east, but the Piedmonters were actually saying just the opposite. They admitted the possibility that the “Inhabitants of the Maritime parts of the province” paid their share of taxes because of the poll tax on a large portion of their wealth, their slaves and servants. But the petition protested that westerners, rich in property other than slaves, paid no more taxes than their poorer western neighbors. The petitioners, therefore, called for an equitable levy on all forms of wealth. As a matter of fact, in emphasizing the preferred tax position of wealthy westerners, the petitioners demonstrated an inadequate awareness of the importance of other forms of accumulated wealth in the “Maritime parts” and too readily assumed equitable tax payments by large eastern slaveholders.

The second major provincial tax in North Carolina between 1748 and 1771 was the duty on alcoholic beverages. The effect of this duty upon the equity of the North Carolina tax structure depends upon the degree to which merchants, storeowners, and innkeepers were able to pass on the tax to the consumer as well as upon the amount of liquor consumed. And neither of these questions can be answered conclusively from available data.

Rum, North Carolina’s most important alcoholic drink, was a major item of trade in the colony. A study of the accounts of a typical general store in the Piedmont, Johnston and Bennehan’s in Snow Hill, Orange County, indicates that annual family purchases of rum from Orange County country stores were probably between £1 15s. 8d. and £2 13s. 6d., or between 4.8 and 7.1 gallons.

4 See laws passed in 1749 and 1760, ibid., XXIII, 345, 526. For 1767 see N. C. Colonial Records, VII, 539. There was no time limit on the law passed in 1760.
5 Ibid., VIII, 83.
at 7s. 6d. per gallon. Rum and wine import figures for the province of North Carolina support these estimates. If they are roughly correct, they demonstrate that colonial North Carolinians consumed a considerable amount of rum.

The study also shows that storeowners had a high markup, indicating that they probably passed on this tax. Furthermore, statements by eastern merchants in North Carolina demonstrate that they assumed the provincial duties would be passed on to the middlemen and ultimately to the consumer. These merchants complained that the duty placed them at a disadvantage in relation to the exporters from Virginia and South Carolina who sent their goods overland. Although overland importers were supposed to pay the duty, it is most likely that the collection on these imports was negligible. The duty, therefore, in general contributed to the inequity of the tax structure in North Carolina except in the Piedmont where evasion of the tax was widespread.

There was not, however, widespread antagonism to the tax. Resistance to it seems to have been confined to the merchants of North Carolina who imported liquors from overseas and to their political allies. Both preferred the regressive and less bothersome poll tax. The farmers were unconcerned probably because the duty was hidden in the price of the rum they purchased. Furthermore, the rum duty was least important in the Piedmont, where most of the farmer protest originated. Thus, farmers aimed their criticisms of tax levies at the poll tax because of both the amount and the difficulties involved in paying this direct tax.

6 Johnston and Bennehan Account and Invoice Book, 1769-1775, Snow Hill, N.C., Cameron Papers, 1700-1921, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The above estimates were derived from the following figures: Johnston and Bennehan's liquor sales totaled from 8 March 1769 to 22 October 1771 about £1,264; there probably were from 10 to 15 stores in Orange County which sold between £4,815 and £7,220 worth of rum per annum; there were about 2,700 free families in Orange County. All figures quoted in this article, except when specifically stated otherwise, are in North Carolina currency which had a legal exchange rate with sterling of 133 1/3 per cent. The market exchange of the currency of North Carolina, however, very likely fluctuated between 180 per cent and 233 1/3 per cent during the years 1756-1771.

7 The figures for wine and rum imports into North Carolina ports for 1768 (totals of 58,706 gallons of rum and about 3,000 gallons of wine which probably helped quench the thirst of the 11,000 white families of much of the Coastal Plain region) were gleaned from a report in Greenwich Hospital, Medical Department, Secretary's Department, 1718-1786, English Records, State Archives.

8 Johnston and Bennehan Acct. and Invoice Bk., Cameron Papers. See also, C. Crittenden, Commerce of North Carolina (New Haven, 1936), 86, 88-89, 110-11; Adelaide L. Fries (ed.), Records of the Moravians in North Carolina (Raleigh, N. C., 1922-1954), II, 768. There was a limit to the above tendency, for if a merchant already charged all that the traffic would bear, the tax could not be passed on. There is no evidence that this was the case.

9 Legislative Papers, 1689-1759, State Archives; William Tryon, 1764-1771, Governors' Letter Books, 1764-1897, ibid.; N.C. Colonial Records, VI, 1023-24. Actually the duty was not an important factor in determining the trade practices of western store owners. Established trade routes, better and cheaper supplies in general, superior transportation and marketing facilities, and ties of ownership with Virginia and British firms assured close commercial ties between the North Carolina Piedmont and trade centres in Virginia and South Carolina.

10 I have analyzed the criticisms of North Carolina's tax policies by farmers in general and the Regulators in particular in Marvin L. Michael Kay, "An Analysis of a British Colony in
Nevertheless, the rum duty together with the poll tax, excluding fees, constituted probably more than 90 per cent of North Carolina's provincial revenue between 1748 and 1771. Out of sixty-five provincial taxes levied in this period, thirty-three were poll taxes, nine were duties on alcoholic beverages, and the rest were minor taxes. Contemporary commentators invariably stressed the overriding importance of the two major taxes. The minor taxes were only sporadically employed, placed upon insignificant items, or used to support unimportant public expenditures.

Three reports that John Burgwin submitted to the legislature by December 1770 provide a basis for analyzing the importance of the provincial poll tax. The first and third reports indicate the sheriffs' arrears in poll tax payments to the treasurers between 1754 and 1770 were £64,013, and the collections accounted for between 1748 and 1770 were £56,616. An extrapolation for 1748 to 1770 indicates about £126,197 in poll taxes should have been collected and accounted for.

Similarly a report made to Governor Tryon by three members of the council on 6 December 1768, makes possible an estimate of rum duties. The report calculated that during the years 1755 to 1767 £26,000 in rum import duties were collected and that £2,500 would be collected for the year 1768. By extrapolating for the period 1748 to 1770, the total rum duty collected for these years may be calculated at £34,000.

Provincial tax levels also increased markedly between 1755 and 1771, the French and Indian War undoubtedly providing the single most influential cause of the rise. Levies on imported alcoholic beverages (exclusive of duties collected in a specific region, the inclusion of which would increase the following calculations) averaged during the pre-war period, 1748 to 1754, 1 5/7d. a gallon per annum; during the war years, 1755 to 1763, 5 1/9d. per annum; and in the post-war period, 1764 to 1771, 4 1/2d. per annum. Poll taxes show similar trends: averaging 1s. 8d., 1748-1754; 8s. 1d., 1755 to 1763; and 6s. 3 1/2d., 1764 to 1771. The most dramatic rise occurred when war expenditures were highest, 1757 to 1759, the provincial poll tax averaging 10s. 9d. for these three years. Minor provincial taxes, however, did not follow this pattern. The war years quite
likely witnessed a slight lessening in their absolute importance. During the postwar period, minor taxes came to be of greatest absolute importance, although still below their relative prewar level. These generalizations concerning minor taxes, however, cannot be so exact as those dealing with poll taxes and rum duties because available information is less complete.

Out of the 72s. 8d. in provincial poll taxes levied for the nine-year period of war, 1755 to 1763, 40s. 10d. went toward defraying aids totaling £52,706 of which £48,206 were earmarked for military expenditures. A further 10s. went to sink £73,350 in bills of credit emitted by the laws of 1748, 1754, and 1760. Of the £52,000 emitted in bills of credit by the laws of 1754 and 1760 £26,000 assisted in financing the war, with the remainder paying for salaries, past indebtedness, and other contingent charges of government. In other words, 37s. 4d. in poll taxes, or 51.4 per cent of all poll taxes, were used to support war expenditures in the form of direct aids during the period 1755 to 1763. Of the remainder, 23s., or 31.6 per cent, went to pay for salaries, past indebtedness, and other contingent charges of government (the last two categories undoubtedly involved some war expenditures); 10s., or 13.8 per cent, was supposed to go into the sinking fund (50 per cent of the bills of credit issued in 1754 and 1760 helped finance the war); and 2s. 4d., or 3.2 per cent, paid for the colony’s printing expenses.

It is important to notice, however, that war expenditures are not the sole explanation for the burgeoning poll taxes of this period, for the levies that directly defrayed contingent charges of government, including past debts and salaries, and printing expenses averaged 8d. per annum for the period 1748 to 1754 and 2s. 5 7/9d. per annum for the years 1755 to 1763. Clearly, government in general was becoming a more expensive proposition.

Provincial taxes for 1764 to 1771, although not as high as in the preceding period, were considerably higher than those of the prewar years for a number of reasons. First, a substantial proportion of the poll taxes of these years, 20s., or 39.7 per cent of the total levied, were supposed to be used to sink the bills of credit totaling £93,350 issued in 1748, 1754, 1760, and 1761. The percentage was highest in the first four tax years after the war, 1764 to 1767, the sinking taxes then equalling 64.4 per cent of the total poll taxes. Since some £46,000 of the bills were used originally to finance the war effort, it may be argued that almost half of the sinking fund taxes of 1764 to 1771 were in payment of the war debt.

A second major factor in maintaining high poll tax levels during the postwar years were two extraordinary expenditures: the building of the governor’s palace and the suppression of the Regulator Movement. Poll taxes to meet these expenses were levied during the last five years of these survey years, except for 1767, when the sinking fund taxes had decreased in importance. Governor Tryon’s palace cost more than £15,000 and prompted the levying of taxes of 8d. for 1767 and 1768 and of 2s. 6d. for 1768 to 1770. The Regulator Movement resulted in two 2s. tax levies, both taking effect for the first time in 1771. The total for these four taxes was 12s. 10d., or 25.5 per cent of the poll
Taxes in North Carolina

Income tax levies for 1764 to 1771 and 39.5 per cent for the years they were in effect, 1767 to 1771.

The remaining poll taxes of 17s. 6d., or 34.8 per cent, were used to defray past debts, salaries, and other contingent charges of government and printing costs. This was 3.2 per cent more than in 1755 to 1763, but the average yearly poll tax to defray these charges in the postwar years, 2s. 2 1/4d., was less than the 2s. 5 7/9d. average levy that prevailed during the war years, although it was considerably higher than the prewar average of 8d. What is apparent, then, is that, aside from extraordinary expenditures, expenses of government had increased perceptibly from 1755 on. Indeed, the building of the governor's palace implies an enlarged concept of the role of the provincial government. Thus, if the palace levies of 8s. 10d. are added to contingent charges, they raise the total to 26s. 4d., or 52.3 per cent of the taxes levied for these years, with an average per annum levy of 3s. 3 1/2d. All of these levels were considerably higher than in either of the two earlier periods.

A budgetary account for the year 1767 illustrates in detail the specific services the province offered and the expenses it incurred that year. A 4s. poll tax and 4d. per gallon rum duty were collected to sink the outstanding paper currency. A 2s. poll tax went into the contingent fund to pay for what are listed as ordinary and extraordinary expenses. In the first category are the salaries of provincial officials. Extraordinary expenses covered by this tax were the garrison at Fort Johnston, £498 16s. 8d.; arrears to the printer, £190; postal service, £133 6s. 8d.; allowance to William Churton for his map of the province, £150; expenses incurred in running the dividing line between the Cherokees' lands and western North Carolina, £100; presents to the Cherokees, £175; and a gratuity to an invalid, £10. A 4d. poll tax for the Printer's Fund paid £250 for the services of James Davis, the province's printer. A £5,000 expense for the governor's palace was to be defrayed by a special 8d. poll tax and 2d., per gallon rum duty, both to run for two years. A 16s. 8d. per hundredweight bounty on hemp and a 13s. 4d. per hundredweight bounty on flax were to be paid from the returns of a 1d. per pound export duty on raw hides. If this duty was insufficient to pay the bounties, the remainder was to be obtained from the contingent fund. Expenditures such as these, aside from the sinking fund, were either increasing or being incurred for the first time. The French and Indian War and the Regulator Movement alone cannot account for the rising tax levels. There was also a developing awareness of the possibilities of governmental activities and consequently a greater willingness to expand the public sector of the economy.

II

The expenditures and levies of the county courts and parish vestries were also important during this period. Problems arise, however, in attempting to present accurate statistics about them. First, there is a dearth of parish records.

14 Plantation General Correspondence, Entry Books, Petitions, Misc., 1764-1778, English Records, State Archives.
Second, since it is impossible to evaluate statistically the importance of direct work levies, such as the requirement that taxables work on the roads and waterways, an underestimate of county tax levels is almost inevitable. The county court minutes are filled with directions to build, repair, and maintain the roads of the counties, and there is no doubt that the money equivalent of the labor performed to achieve these internal improvements was significant. Third, although of relatively minor importance, it is difficult to collate the statistics derived from two different sets of records dealing with county taxes, the county court minutes and the provincial statutes. The county court minutes include listings of the annual county levies to cover the contingent charges of government. At times these contingent charges are detailed, that is, all the claims against the county in this category are listed. It is not clear, however, which of the specific county taxes authorized or levied directly by provincial statute are recorded in the listings in the county court minutes. To confuse the issue further, it is quite possible that county courts did not always levy the taxes that the General Assembly authorized.

During the period 1748 to 1771, the General Assembly authorized or directly levied specific poll taxes of varying amounts for twenty-nine of the thirty-four counties existing by 1771. Of these taxes about 41.5 per cent of their total monetary value was levied against the polls in the Piedmont counties which in 1767 had about 34 per cent of the whites, 11 per cent of the blacks, and 30 per cent of the total population. Since the Piedmont was settled and organized into counties comparatively late, it required more taxes for public buildings, the running of county lines, and transportation facilities and services than in the coastal plain. It is even more important that a bit less than 8.5 per cent of the total monetary value of taxes was levied during the years 1748 to 1754 (averaging annually just under 1d. per poll), nearly 17.5 per cent within 1755 to 1763 (1 1/4d.), and slightly over 74 per cent during the postwar years (5d.). Of course, this tax load was not distributed evenly among the counties; in a given year, one county might have a levy of 3s. 8d. while other counties had no levies; overall, ten out of thirty-four counties levied 65 per cent of these taxes.

Here once again the assembly manifested its growing willingness to use public monies to aid in the development of the province. Too, these expenditures served best a colonial elite of merchants, large land-owners, and courthouse rings. Such men had the most to gain from the creation of counties which they could dominate politically — from the commissions and contracts granted to build the courthouses, offices, jails, stocks, pillories, bridges, etc.; from the courts of law that favored creditors; from the internal improvements themselves.

A study of the county court minutes of six counties, Rowan, Bertie, Orange,
Anson, New Hanover, and Carteret, for the period 1748 to 1771 reveals that the range of tax levies ordered by the county courts was from a 1s. 2d. average per annum in Bertie to about 1s. 8 1/4d. in Carteret. The average for all six counties was slightly more than 1s. 5d. The expenditures covered by these taxes included payment to Superior Court jurors (this consumed perhaps one-third of the contingent charges of government — invariably the jurors were members of the county court rings); payment for the destruction of "vermin" (wolves, wildcats, and panthers); payments made to the sheriffs and county clerks for "extra-services"; the building, repair, and maintenance of courthouses, jails, pillories, stocks, and bridges; the purchase of law books; and sundry other charges.

With respect to parochial tax levels, the problem of a lack of records from which to make a statistical analysis is further complicated by the impossibility of determining in the first place whether a parish at a given time had a functioning vestry capable of levying taxes. All that can be said is that some parishes at various times either did not elect vestries as directed by law, or if they did, members refused to qualify or function. Any generalization is therefore impossible. The vestry minutes of one parish, St. Paul's, Chowan County, are however, complete. They reveal that in Chowan County, at least, parochial taxes were undoubtedly higher than county taxes. The average parochial poll tax between 1748 and 1771 was 2s. 10 9/11d., or broken down into briefer periods, the averages were: 1748 to 1754, 2s. 4 6/7d.; 1755 to 1763, 2s. 8d.; 1764 to 1771, 3s. 6 1/2d. The few other extant parochial tax records reveal similar tax levels.

The vestry, in addition to its religious functions, served as the welfare agency of its day. Parochial levies paid for the building, maintenance, and repair of churches, chapels, and their grounds, bought Bibles and other religious works for the churches and chapels, and compensated the ministers (remuneration varied in St. Paul's Parish from £53 13s. 4d. to £153 6s. 8d. per annum during the years 1748 to 1766), readers of the chapels, clerks of the vestry, clerks of the chapels, churchwardens, and tax collectors. In addition, the vestries supported indigent parishioners. St. Paul's vestry minutes are crowded with entries of payments made to parents and relatives for caring for invalid sons, daughters, brothers, etc., and to individuals caring for persons not related to them: the poor who were infirm, sick, or dying. Burial expenses were likewise paid for the indigent. Poor orphans, or at times bastards, were farmed out until the vestry felt that the children could pay their way as servants or apprentices. Widows were sometimes aided in caring for their young children. Such services apparently required that vestries levy higher poll taxes than the county courts. Both fees and direct work levies, however, played far greater roles in financing county government than parochial and may therefore have made the total burden of county taxes higher than those of the parish.

18 For example, see N.C. State Records, XXIII, 657; XXV, 450-51, 459-60.
19 St. Paul's Church, Vestry Minutes, 1701-1779, Chowan County, State Archives.
Fees were the most important means of paying public officials. Limit statistics, however, make it difficult to determine the total collections in fees for provincial and local services between 1748 and 1771. Moreover, since it was impossible to sort out from the available data those fees derived from provincial and local functions and those derived from imperial functions, any estimate may result in an inflated view of their provincial and local significance.

Of all the imperial, provincial, and county officials, only the members of the two houses of the legislature, the colony’s printer and agent, and the port commissioners who disbursed the tonnage taxes received salaries and legislative grants as their total public income. If commissions are included with fees, only these officers plus the governor and perhaps the attorney general and associate justices of the superior courts received all or most of their income from either salaries or legislative grants.

The estimated average annual collections of the various officials provide another indication of the importance of fees. Although data is unfortunately available only for the governors, naval officers, secretaries, county court clerk, and chief justices of the superior courts, it is enough to suggest the extent to which payment of fees constituted a significant part of the tax burden in North Carolina.

The governors of North Carolina, from the beginning of Dobbs’s administration through those of Tryon and Martin, received regularly £1,000 sterling per annum directly from the Crown, paid out of the 4.5 per cent duty collected in the Leeward Islands. The rest of the governors’ pay came from fees.

20 In Plantation General Correspondence, Entry Bks., Petitions, Misc., 1764-1778, English Records, State Archives, is a document of 1767 which lists the salaries of officers in the province payable out of the quitrent collections.

21 The first two royal governors, George Burington and Gabriel Johnston, had been granted the Crown salaries of £7,000 and £1,000 sterling respectively to be paid from quitrent collections. Since the collection of quitrents in North Carolina was inadequate, the payment of their salaries was grossly in arrears. Their most important remuneration, therefore, came from fees. N.C. Colonial Records, IV, 164, 251; V, 15-16, 21-23, 77-78; Governor’s Letters, Entry Books, 1754-1777, English Records, State Archives; In-Letters, Declared Accounts, Lord Chamberlain’s Papers, English Records, ibid.; Leonard W. Labare, Royal Government in America (New Haven, 1930), pp. 332-33; Evangeline W. Andrews and Charles McLean Andrews (eds.), Journal of a Lady of Quality (New Haven, 1921), pp. 294-5, 308, 310-12. From the beginning of Dobbs’s administration onward, the governors receive a salary of £1,000 sterling per annum that was paid punctually and was obtained from the 42 per cent duty on exports collected in the Leeward Islands. The following citations full document this for governors Arthur Dobbs, William Tryon, and Josiah Martin down to 1780. N.C. Colonial Records, V, 1702-1783, English Records, State Archives; Additional Manuscripts,Arr. Lists, In-Letters, Miscellaneous, 1671-1788, English Records, ibid.; Original Correspondence Military, Treasury, Miscellaneous, 1702-1787, English Records, ibid.; William S. Powell, “Tryon’s Book on North Carolina”, N.C. Hist. Rev., XXXIV (1957), 414; Labrador, op. cit., pp. 271-72, 332-33; Desmond Clarke, Arthur Dobbs Esquire, 1689-1765 (Charlottesville, 1977), pp. 103, 206, 215n, and 221n.

22 Dartmouth Manuscripts, 1702-1783, State Archives; William Tryon, 1765-1771, Governo
In a letter to his uncle, Sewallis Shirley, on 26 July 1765, Governor Tryon wrote, citing an estimate made by the recently deceased Governor Dobbs, that yearly fees, except those connected with the granting of land, equalled "about 400 Stg". Collections from fees from land grants, which Tryon considered to be a donation of the Crown, amounted to between £300 and £400 sterling annually. It is impossible to project Tryon's yearly total estimate of from £700 to £800 sterling with any accuracy into years other than the middle 1760's, but there is no indication that there were dramatic fluctuations in fees to the governors during the years from 1748 to 1771. Very likely, with the growth in population there was a general rise in the governors' fee collections during this period.

The naval officer of the province and his deputies, according to an estimate made by Governor Dobbs in 1761 or 1762, received total annual fees of about £150 sterling. Dobbs also estimated the fees received each year by the secretary to be about £150 sterling. Governor Martin's later estimate in 1772 that the secretary received a total yearly remuneration of £250 sterling demonstrates that the secretary's income from fees remained fairly constant, since the £250 figure cited by Martin included the £70 salary granted by the Crown out of the provincial quitrent collections. Martin also estimated that yearly incomes varied among the county clerks from £50 to £500 sterling. This income came mostly from fees although by law the county courts were empowered to grant the clerks what the justices considered to be adequate pay for services not provided for by fees. Governor Tryon noted in 1767 that the average income of county court clerks was £100 sterling. Tryon also concluded in the same year that the chief justice received a total of £745 sterling per annum of which £550 came from fees. Another estimate at this time placed the total yearly remuneration of the chief justices at £660 to £960 sterling.

Conservatively the annual receipts from fees in the 1760's for these five officials were £4,500 sterling, an amount that exceeded by about £1,000 the listed provincial expenditures for 1767 excluding payments made to the sinking fund. And if the fees of the other officials, especially the well-paid sheriffs and registers,
were added to this figure, the comparative importance of fees would increase accordingly. The conclusion seems inescapable that any estimate of the tax burden of North Carolinians that ignores the role of fees would be far too low.

IV

Despite the difficulties involved, it is extremely important, also, to attempt to determine what media of exchange were acceptable in payment of taxes. If the levies had to be paid in money, specie or paper currency, the shortage of money would make taxes a still greater burden. Or, more precisely, they would become more burdensome for the poorer or least commercial farmers who had last call upon the limited money supply.

Until 1748 commodities undoubtedly were used for the payment of provincial, county, and parochial taxes. A law passed in 1740 rated certain commodities—tobacco, rice, “Indian dressed” deer skins, beeswax, tallow, and barrelled pork and beef—and made them receivable for all taxes and public and private debts in the province, although the actual method of payment varied. For example, during 1741 a poll tax of 3s. proclamation money to defray the expense of sending troops against the Spaniards in the West Indies was payable in rated commodities paid directly to the inspectors in public warehouses. Other taxes and public and private debts could be paid with promissory notes issued by the warehouse inspectors on rated commodities. Commodities not rated by law could be delivered to the county warehouses for storage and if the produce were acceptable, the warehouse inspector gave the owner a promissory note which was negotiable for private debts and acceptable for the payment of county and parochial taxes, but not for provincial taxes.

Beginning in 1748, however, the legislature limited commodity payments for taxes. It is possible that the inspectors’ promissory notes were not valid for payment of the 3d. rum duty in effect during the first quarter of 1748 nor for the duty on rice which ended 1 May 1749. Of even greater importance was the act of 1748 which levied a 1s. poll tax to sink an emission of £21,350 in bills of credit. Continuing throughout the period under review, the tax was payable solely in gold, silver, bills of credit, or, from 1758 on, the colony’s note issues. The 1748 bills were placed at par with proclamation money, that is, they were valued at four to three with sterling, but the market exchange rate very likely reached 180 per cent in 1756 and possibly as high as 233 1/3 per cent in 1771. However, passage of the law of 1748 ended the grossly inflated currency of the previous years when the legal value was seven and a half to one and the market value even higher. Since the total provincial poll tax was 1s. 8d., 60 per cent...
of the taxes in 1748 had to be paid in either specie or bills of credit. The remaining two 4d. taxes, passed during the December 1746 session of the assembly, could be paid in inspectors’ notes.33

A study of the tax legislation passed between the currency emission act of 1748 and 1768, however, yields little information about what was acceptable tender in the payment of provincial taxes after 1748. A law of 1754 that emitted £40,000 in bills of credit asserted again that the 1s. sinking tax first levied in 1748 could be paid only in specie or bills of credit. The same rule very likely applied to the 4d. per gallon rum duty levied in the same act and collected through 1771. However, in 1757, £9,500 in interest-bearing notes were issued which could be used to pay two poll taxes totaling 6s. 6d. levied for 1758. Then, after the passage of a law in April 1758, all interest-bearing notes became acceptable in the payment of provincial taxes.34

From the end of 1755 indigo notes, unique among inspectors’ notes, could be used to pay all provincial, county, and parochial taxes with the possible exception of the sinking taxes. The law of 1755 also empowered all county courts to provide for warehouses for the storage of indigo when such public warehouses had not been “by Law Erected for the Reception and Inspection of Tobacco”.35 And the passage of other laws between 1756 and 1771 with identical provisions makes it certain that except for the period December 1762 to November 1764, all taxes, with the possible exception of the sinking fund taxes, were payable in indigo inspectors’ notes.36 Since indigo was an insignificant crop, these laws did little, however, to help North Carolinians meet their tax obligations.

Tobacco notes, with certainty from the end of 1755 and very likely both indigo and tobacco from 1748, could be used for the payment of county and parochial taxes.37 However, at least after 1752, tobacco notes were not acceptable in the payment of provincial taxes.38 A law in effect from 10 June 1755 until December 1759 stated specifically that all parochial and county taxes could be paid with inspectors’ tobacco notes, but nothing was said about provincial taxes.39 And in the case of all other laws concerning tobacco passed until 1768, the inspectors’ notes were never designated as being acceptable in the payment of provincial levies.

An important law of 5 December 1768, however, seemed to reverse the tendency to restrict payment of taxes in commodities or inspectors’ notes that had prevailed for the past two decades. This law made all provincial taxes, and hence local taxes as well, except the sinking fund taxes previously levied, payable

33 N. C. State Records, XXIII, 255-56.
34 Ibid., 395-98; XXV, 350-52, 363.
35 Ibid., 316.
36 Ibid., 383-84; XXIII, 645-46, 768-69, 797.
37 Ibid., 404, 407-408, 410-11, 733-34.
38 Ibid., 402-17; XXV, 313-19; XXIII, 477-78; XXV, 365-67, 378-87; XXIII, 488, 507-8, 512-14; XXV, 495-96; XXIII, 639-49; XXV, 499-500; XXIII, 728-41, 768-69, 790-801, 804.
39 Ibid., XXV, 316.
in inspectors’ notes as well as specie, bills of credit, or interest-bearing notes.

Several features of the 1768 law suggest that it did reverse previous policies. First, if it had been customary to accept commodity payments before 1768, it hardly seems likely that the assembly would have provided new ratings for commodities without reference to past ones. Yet, the new law rated tobacco at 15s. per hundredweight, rice at 12s. per hundredweight, indigo at 4s. per pound, beeswax at 1s. per pound, myrtle wax at 8d. per pound, and Indian dressed skins, weighing at least one pound, at 2s. 6d. per pound. Second, if this tax measure had merely continued previous policy, legislators would not have hailed it as a boon to the poor because it provided for commodity payments. Third, the law explicitly rejected inspectors’ notes for the payment of previously levied sinking fund taxes, a necessary provision if the legislator wished to maintain the pretense of sinking the outstanding bills, but also indicating that commodity payments were not normally allowed for other taxes prior to this time. Moreover, the frequent complaints made prior to this act about the difficulty in paying taxes because of the currency shortage would have little meaning if commodity payments were the rule before 1768.

Immediately after the passage of the law complaints about taxation began too, to take into account the possibility of paying taxes with rated commodities. The Anson County Regulators petitioned the assembly on 9 October 1769 listing among their grievances: “That no method is prescribed by Law for the payment of the Taxes of the Western Counties in produce (in lieu of Currency as in other Counties within this Province; to the Peoples great oppression.” They also recommended the building of warehouses accessible to the farmers of Anson, Rowan, Orange, Mecklenburg, and Tryon counties. An appeal made by officers and other affluent citizens of Orange County and adjacent areas, who were hardly Regulators or sympathizers, in which they called for the construction of a warehouse in Hillsborough to avoid the necessity of transporting commodities at least one hundred miles for inspection, also attests to the need for warehouses in the Piedmont.

The 1748 law stating that the sinking fund tax was payable only in specie or bills of credit, therefore, set the standard for the payment of all provincial taxes, and very likely local taxes as well, prior to the passage of the law of 1768. Exceptions were the acceptability of the note issues of the colony from 1751 on, indigo notes from the end of 1755 on, the powder shot or lead payments in the various ports, for a time rum in payment of a liquor duty, and tobacco notes to pay local taxes. This meant that the payment of taxes from 1748 to 1768 was especially burdensome for the poorer or least commercial farmers who had

---

40 Ibid., XXIII, 782.
41 Ibid.
42 For example, Gov. Tryon on 31 January 1767, in a letter to Lord Shelburne, noted that one of the reasons tax collections were behind schedule was because the people did not have adequate currency to make their payments (N.C. Colonial Records, VII, 433).
43 Ibid., VIII, 76, 78.
44 Ibid., 80b.
Taxes in North Carolina

last call upon the limited money supply. The situation was generally worst in the western counties; and although the law of 1768 made most taxes payable in enumerated commodities, the limited number of warehouses in the west reduced the advantages of this law.

It is now possible to make a final estimate of North Carolina’s actual tax burden. If we limit the analysis to the years 1755 to 1771, county taxes very likely equalled about 1s. 7d., while a conservative estimate of parochial taxes would raise the local tax to 4s. During the same period provincial poll taxes averaged 7s. 3d., and duties on alcoholic beverages, 2s. 5d. per taxable. Since estimated minor provincial taxes equalled about 1s. and fees some 13s. per taxable, the total yearly tax for each poll averaged 27s. 8d. during the period 1755 to 1771. A roughly calculated ratio of taxables to total population of about one to three places the per capita tax average at 9s. 2 2/3d. If, however, it is accepted that perhaps some 2s. 10d. of the listed annual provincial and local poll taxes were not collected, the per capita average collection is lowered to 8s. 3 1/3d. These figures, converted to sterling, put the per capita tax for North Carolina at a yearly average of 4s. 7d. taxes collected or about 5s. 1d. taxes levied during the period 1755 to 1771. If imperial dues and levies, including quitrents, and direct personal services, that is, the labor service required of taxables to work on roads and waterways plus militia service, could also be calculated, the tax level would rise considerably.

Professor Robert R. Palmer has concluded that Americans were very lightly taxed when compared with the residents of Great Britain, finding in the six provinces which he surveyed an average annual per capita tax burden in sterling for the period around 1765 of 9 1/3d. The highest assessed tax in any of these provinces was 1s., the lowest 5d. Since these figures were estimated tax levies, the proper North Carolina figure with which to compare them is 5s. 1d., or about six and one-half times Professor Palmer’s estimate for Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. It is unlikely that North Carolina’s tax level differed so dramatically from that of her sister provinces.

In North Carolina, taxes from 1755 on were far from negligible and the inequitable tax structure and the currency shortage increased the tax burden on most inhabitants. Thus, fiscal policies were actually, as well as potentially, of great political and economic consequence to the colonists. During the Regulator period, the insurgents protested, among other things, the high and inequitable tax burden and the method of paying taxes. Understandably, an assembly comprised of the leading county officials and the large landed and mercantile elements of the colony, bent upon serving their own interests,

rejected any real reform of the tax structure. The assembly, therefore, tried only to keep the total tax levies within certain bounds and to obtain relief from Britain's currency policies. At times, it sought both these ends jointly, as, for example, when the assembly tried gradually to end the various sinking taxes before all the emitted bills were collected and burned. It also resorted to additional devices to alleviate the shortage of currency: issuing notes and bills to meet extraordinary expenditures and afterward destroying only portions of these notes and bills, even when laws demanding their destruction were in effect. In the final analysis, despite these efforts the Assembly left essentially untouched the inequitable tax structure which depended almost entirely upon the poll tax, duties, and fees. Here the Whigs of the province successfully rejected reforms urged by the populace and opposed threats from abroad to its political power and its material interests.
John Williams and his Ship: 
*the Bourgeois Aspirations of a Missionary Family*

The Reverend John Williams (1796–1839), missionary in the South Seas, has long held a prominent place amongst the uncanonized saints of British nonconformity. His fame was sealed after meeting a violent death in the New Hebrides when he unwittingly antagonized the Eromangs by his landing. Greatness was almost immediately thrust upon him by an excited religious public. Besides this so-called martyrdom, Williams’ fame as a missionary rested upon his advocacy of a ship (a borrowed idea), and the well-timed publication of his *Missionary Enterprises*, in which his ingenuity was displayed. Some incidental fame as the “discoverer” of Rarotonga was hardly merited.

Williams’ posthumous greatness was, however, out of all proportion to his personal success as a missionary. The tragedy of such greatness is that the image which it projects usually belongs to a cause or class rather than to an individual, and careful historical analysis will more usually reveal human frailty and inadequacy than substantiate the illusion. Williams, under careful scrutiny, will often seem a lesser man than those with whom he worked. If any part of the greatness of his legend belonged to him alone it depended for survival on the work of others, though his own ingenuity, determination, and enthusiasm were sufficient to enshrine that legend in himself. Williams, when compared with his colleagues, was a failure as a missionary and, though he possibly had an unconscious wish for martyrdom, a process of secularization was already competing with the missionary’s religious motives in the years of his fame. This process of secularization was a feature of many of the missionary families who found that their station in island life enabled them to develop their bourgeois aspirations.

That Williams in some way belied his reputation in his own lifetime was seen by those who knew him. The Reverend Dr. John Campbell, Protestant editor and minister of the Tabernacle, made a point of emphasizing Williams’ ordinariness in his “philosophy of missions”, *The Martyr of Erromanga* (1841), no doubt intending thereby to give the greater glory to God for the achievements wrought in Williams’ name:

His greatness was altogether moral; in point of intellectual powers, as we have seen, he was a very ordinary man, respectable, but nothing more. It is probable that many who have not had sufficient means of judging,
or who have not turned their attention to the point, may think I have under-estimated our friend. They will consider the elements here set forth as insufficient to form the basis of so much excellence; they will be at a loss to reconcile a fame so vast with powers so unpretending; at a loss to understand how a name representing so little brilliancy should have acquired so much glory. ... It is not only granted, but even contended, that the mental powers of Mr. Williams were of a common order; and on this ground I chiefly rest his claims to high praise and universal admiration.  

Despite Campbell's emphasis on the ordinariness of Williams, and the simplicity of his character, he was a pious biographer and his adulation of the missionary hero further secured his place in Protestant hagiology. Indeed, Campbell's position 'can be partly explained by the fact that, although he preached from a pulpit of Calvinistic Methodist foundation, he was acutely aware of the tradition of Puritan intellectualism which he also represented, and would feel that Williams' obvious uncouthness required some explanation. The qualities which he delineated in Williams greatly added to the martyr's moral stature: magnanimity, philanthropy, scriptural piety, liberality of spirit, mechanical ingenuity, a spirit of adventure, and diligent perseverance in his work. On this assessment of Williams, Protestant hagiographers could safely build.

Any modern historical re-evaluation must necessarily tarnish this pious image, though, at the same time, Williams' contribution to the story of the Pacific peoples is better expressed in other than moral terms. No one can deny that the apparent virtues and sacrificial life of Williams impressed the devout of his own nation, and had their effect on English church life, but in the Pacific his contribution must be seen in relation to the values and idioms of the island societies in which he lived.

Williams possibly set little store by ancestry, although his family at one time claimed relationship with gentry of the same surname descended from Sir David Williams, a notable judge and the first of his family to adopt an English surname and settle out of Wales in the sixteenth century. The connexion of the missionary's immediate forbears in Oxfordshire with retail may have been related to the fact that they were practising Baptists. It is perhaps relevant that the landed Williamses referred to "Black Williams", their ancestor during the Civil Wars, as one of Prince Rupert's men, whilst the family of

---


2 Benjamin Williams, *A Sketch of the History of the Family of Williams of Cowley Grove, in the parish of Hillingdon Middx., and of Cote, near Bampton, Oxon.* (Hillingdon, 1852). For a revised version of the family history see Benjamin Williams, *Memorials of the Family of Williams, of Cote or Coate, in the parish of Bampton, Oxon.* Reprinted 1904 (Abridged), by W.A.B. Williams.
John Williams stated that their Black Williams was one of Cromwell’s Ironsides.3 The Williamses of Oxfordshire were firmly committed to the Puritan tradition.

The chief formative influence in the life of the young John Williams was his mother, Hannah(?) Maidment, whose father was senior partner in the firm of Maidment and Neale, china and glass merchants, of St. Paul’s Churchyard, London.4 Mrs. Williams came from a background both affluent and pious. After her marriage she worshipped at the Baptist Chapel in Oxford, the church of her husband’s family. However, when they later moved to Tottenham in the London area, she joined the Independent Chapel at Edmonton. John Williams was born at Tottenham on 27 June 1796. His mother gave her family strict moral and devotional training, and the boy was sent three miles to a school at Lower Edmonton where he was taught writing and arithmetic.

In March 1810 Williams was apprenticed for seven years to Enoch Tonkin, a furnishing ironmonger at 12 City Road.5 Williams’ practical genius was such that by the time he was eighteen he had not only become manager of the shop but had mastered the mechanical skill of the workshops as well. Separated from his home environment, and left to the influence of his workmates, he soon developed a preference for Highbury Tea Gardens instead of the local chapel. Mrs. Tonkin, however, conscious of the absence of her husband’s apprentices from the family pew in Whitefield’s Tabernacle, found that she could handle a bad conscience. Inside the Tabernacle Williams was exposed to a fundamental Calvinist sermon by a visiting Anglican divine, the Reverend Timothy East, and the experience was traumatic. On 30 January 1814, Williams believed that he had been born again, and Timothy East was his father-in-God. The words with their awful message were never to leave him. “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

He became serious, and believing himself elected to salvation by Grace through faith he was admitted into church membership at the Tabernacle in September 1814. He saw his hitherto carefree life as an indication of latent depravity and wrote that he had not been “outwardly immoral, tho. very wicked”.

I was regardless of the holy sabbath day; a lover of pleasure more than of God. I often scoffed at the name of Christ and his holy Religion and totally rejected those things which can alone afford solid comfort and consolation in the hour of extremity.6

3 The Baptist version is given in J. J. Ellis, John Williams, The Martyr Missionary of Polynesia (Kilmarnock, 1889), pp. 16–17.
4 The Maidments were sufficiently influential in Evangelical circles to have the friendship of the Reverend William Romaine, the distinguished Calvinistic Methodist churchman who had the ear of such men as Wilberforce and Porteus, Bishop of London. Romaine conducted a weekly service in the Maidment establishment.
5 His indentures show that he was “not to undertake the laborious part of the business” but was to acquire “only so much of the retail department as would enable him to manage a business of his own.” See Ellis, op. cit., p. 19.
Anxious to redeem other souls from similar peril he applied to the president of the Tabernacle Sunday School for the position of teacher. Under its successive ministers the Tabernacle was the virtual Geneva of Calvinistic Methodism and a whole network of Evangelical classes existed in its precincts. Williams was placed in Barritt's Monday evening Youths' Class for "mutual improvement" and was soon teaching, sick visiting, and distributing religious tracts.

Williams' desire to go to the South Seas was first kindled by listening to his minister, the Reverend Matthew Wilks, speaking of the millions of heathen "destitute of and daily perishing for lack of knowledge", at the Quarterly Meeting of the Tabernacle Auxiliary Missionary Society, in the autumn of 1815. Wilks, a preacher noted for eccentricity and Evangelical zeal, was a founder of the London Missionary Society, and was in receipt of letters written by former members of his church then missionaries at Tahiti. Williams' imagination was stirred, and he entered into a prayer compact with the Almighty. Under this arrangement God would

if not consistent with his holy mind and will, totally eradicate and banish the desire, if it was consistent, he would increase my knowledge with the desire which I found he answered.\(^7\)

Wilks, himself, conducted classes at his own residence to prepare young men for the ministry. About March 1816 Williams joined this class where he was given instruction in English grammar and scriptural exegesis. In July he applied to the London Missionary Society and was accepted. Tonkin released him from his apprenticeship and he was left in Wilks's care to complete his training. Obviously the directors were satisfied with his proficiency in Biblical knowledge and general education as they did not require his attendance at the mission seminary at Gosport, and approved his ordination at Surrey Chapel on 3 September 1816. On 29 October following he was married to Mary Chauner, a member of the Tabernacle church and daughter of a country family similarly circumstanced to his own. The young couple sailed with a group of other missionaries to the South Seas on the "Harriet" in November.

Williams' comparative youth was matched by a comparable enthusiasm. Some shades of his character were undoubtedly associated with his youth. Dr. Waugh's practical advice that Robert Moffat (of later African fame) and Williams were "ower young ta gang t'gether" was probably based on evidence of rather headstrong idealism.\(^9\) It was Williams who preached the first Evangelical sermon in an open field in Hobart during the brief stay of the mission party in Van Diemen's Land. At Hobart, the missionaries were informed by young Thomas Hassall, an ex-missionary's son, that the whole of the Society Islands had embraced Christianity.

\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ellis, op. cit., p. 21.
The first missionaries to the Society Islands, most of whom had sailed either in the "Duff" (1797) or the "Royal Admiral" (1801), belonged in their thought and religious disposition to the eighteenth century: their social values and manners were pre-Napoleonic. They were Evangelicals before they were Dissenters and stressed ecumenical feeling rather than denominational difference. They were ostensibly a "faith mission" waiting as empty vessels for the outpouring of the Spirit, and as men with reaping hooks to bring in the Lord's harvest. All depended on God's will. They were not conscious of any mission to civilize unless it meant to humanize in an eighteenth century sense. Their ideal was the simple life which could be lived out in an English cottage or a grass hut on a tropical island.

The missionaries who went out after 1813, and before the thirties, were, in a sense, the products of a further social revolution. Whereas the older missionaries were only too anxious to escape their depressed trade backgrounds and relegate their artisan crafts to a subsidiary position, the new brethren had a much more class-conscious approach to their trades just as they were much more conscious of their Dissent. A new individualism akin to the spirit of political liberalism, soon to emerge, contrasted with the somewhat socialistic community life of the pioneers. Williams and his colleagues had a passion to civilize as well as to evangelize. A masonic veneration for tools permeated their whole sense of evangelistic mission. In doctrine they were possibly less concerned with eschatological matters than with material results. Death was no longer an escape to a blessed state of relief from "this vale of woe" but a rite in the scale of life's advancement, something comparable in the natural order to an animal's fight-to-the-death to save its young.

Of the new-type missionaries, Ellis and Orsmond had already reached Tahiti. In a short space of time Ellis had antagonized John Davies by his desire to introduce new skills and supervise the educational programme. Orsmond, the only missionary who had received full ministerial training and was alone entitled to wear a gown when preaching, quickly antagonized Henry Nott by his desire to take over the translation work of the mission. The arrival of the "Active" at Moorea on 17 November 1817, bearing the missionaries Barff (who resumed his journey at Sydney), Bourne, Darling, Platt, Threlkeld (who resumed his journey at Rio), Williams, and their wives, was undoubtedly welcomed with mixed feelings.

Williams entered into his missionary duties on the crest of great expectations, at an impressionable age, and with new ideas. His missionary ardour had been further kindled by talks in Sydney with the senior colonial chaplain, Samuel Marsden, and the Wesleyan missionary, Samuel Leigh. Marsden's own convictions regarding the importance of civilization — he was inclined to the view that civilization (or European skills) should be introduced before Christian teaching — were not all that dissimilar to Williams' beliefs, though Williams...
always maintained that the desire for civilization was the natural result, rather than the precursor, of Christianity.

There can be no doubt that the state of Tahiti was very different from that envisaged by the missionaries. Their knowledge was somewhat restricted to the narratives of Cook and Bligh, the account of the "Duff"’s voyage edited by Haweis and Greatheed and the periodical *Missionary Transactions*, greatly coloured by notions of providential intervention and romantic piety. What, then, did they find? Instead of civilized living standards they found missionaries living in buildings they described as bird cages, wearing ragged clothes, mostly shoeless, children running naked with the Tahitian children. They learnt that the older missionaries had distilled rum and salted pork in order to obtain what little provisions they regarded as absolutely necessary. Faith had been put to a sore trial. The island government was virtually a despotism; the new religion, adopted in name by the king, being completely under his control. Not only did the people live in obvious fear of the victorious Te Porionu’u party and allied chiefs but Pomare’s conduct was hardly a good advertisement for a Christian king: he still terrorized his subjects, practised sodomy, and drank spirits to excess.

If the actual state of the islands was a shock to Williams his immediate reaction was to apply some of his own remedies to island problems. It is significant that he first turned his energies to practical matters, to completing the ironwork on the "Haweis", the little ship which the missionaries had been building since their return from Sydney in 1811-12. This practical achievement earned him the respect of Tahitians and missionaries alike.

The early career of John Williams in the Society Islands is obscured by the activities and outraged utterances of his colleagues. Apart from his assistance with the “Haweis” his name is rarely mentioned in the public journals. This

11 Although Captain James Wilson is more generally listed as editor, *A Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean, performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798, in the Ship Duff, commanded by Capt. James Wilson compiled from Journals of the Officers and the Missionaries, ... with a Preliminary Discourse* (London, 1799) was edited by the Reverend Dr. Thomas Haweis while the Preliminary Discourse was written by the Reverend Samuel Greatheed.

12 This description appears most frequently in the writings of J.M. Orsmond.

13 The new missionaries soon found themselves in the same position. Platt noted on 7 November 1820 that his everyday trousers "were so patched that it would have been difficult for a stranger to tell which was the master patch or which the original piece". London Missionary Society, South Seas Letters (hereafter S.S.L.)

14 Henry Bicknell was without shoes for at least eight years. Joseph Fox, *An Appeal to the members of the L.M.S. . . .* (London, 1810), p. 74.

15 Threlkeld wrote of the children "running about the sea shore without hats, shoes, or stockings, sometimes naked, boys and girls 6 or 7 years old who mixing together with the naked native children learn all those practices which stop the peace of a parent's breast", 29 September 1818, S.S.L.

16 There is no reason to believe that Pomare’s threats and commands recorded by Orsmond were an exaggeration. For instance, Pomare “said in Tarahoi if any man speak a contemptuous word against my God Jehovah, I will draw out his rectum, & dry it in the sun”. “Reception of the Gospel”, Orsmond Papers, Mitchell Library, Sydney. Other missionaries hint at such sentiments.
contrasts with the accounts given by the writers of pious biography who in-
variably suggest that Williams had already shown himself a leader and that his
own initiative finally took him to the new field of Raiatea. Williams, it is true,
was enthusiastic, but it was he who was led.

From the time that Lancelot Edward Threlkeld boarded the "Harriet" at
Rio de Janeiro until he was permanently stationed at Raiatea in September
1818, Threlkeld became the central figure in all discussions of policy, the
principal critic of the society and the mission, and the most vociferous exponent
of the new ethos. His principal supporters were Robert Bourne and David
Darling. There is nothing to indicate that Williams did not share their views,
or that he wished to keep out of controversy. It was simply that others were
more articulate than he. Threlkeld, previously an actor with the Royal Circus
and the Royalty Theatre, knew how to declaim to a gallery, and his load of
grievances, in his own estimate, was considerable. He made his position only
too plain to the old brethren and opposed giving any political advice to King
Pomare. He led the resistance to the practice of taking majority decisions for
the mission and condemned the plan to decide personnel for the new stations
in the Leeward Islands by lot. His handling of the old missionaries, especially
Davies and Nott, at a public meeting held in January 1818, was an exercise in
political hustling which completely undermined any constitutional structure
which the Tahitian mission had possessed. Brother Davies wrote into the public
journal:

br. Threlkeld declared he was a freeman, and would never consent to
put the yoke of bondage on his neck, he would have no rules or regulations,
nor would he ever submit to a majority nor could he think of ever joining
himself to men that held such principles.17

Bourne and Darling supported Threlkeld, saying that "submitting to a
majority was tyrannical" — "they would have no rules, the Bible was their rule,
and they would act notwithstanding rules and majorities' every one as he
thought proper".18 To the protestations of the old missionaries their explanation
was — "we are Independents". Threlkeld, in particular, challenged the leader-
ship of Davies, pursuing the vendetta into the realm of morals, until a kind
of missionary commission revealed that the balding Welshman (then widowed)
solaced himself by fondling the breasts of Tahitian women. Clearly all was notight with the moral state of the mission and the new brethren called for a
deputation.

When the missionaries moved to Huahine in the Leewards in July 1818 —
some time before the exposure of Davies — they were an ill assorted party.
Nott and Davies represented the older men whilst their most bitter opponents,
Threlkeld, Orsmond, and Ellis, were of the new. Williams was also with them.

17 J. Davies, 15 January 1818, London Missionary Society, South Sea Journals (hereafter
S.S.J.), No. 50.
18 Ibid. Most of the material concerning Davies is to be found in S.S.L.
By this time Williams appears to have attached himself to Threlkeld. Ellis, who knew them both well and liked them, had this to say in retrospect:

Mr. Threlkeld, the senior of the two, was an intelligent observer of men and things, and possessed a considerable amount of general information; he was also decided and determined in purpose, as well as prompt and vigorous in action. On the judgment of his colleague, Mr. Williams placed implicit reliance, and paid the utmost deference to his opinion.19

Ellis also added that, although very different in temperament, “their confidence in each other was entire, their co-operation uniformly harmonious, and their intercourse most affectionate and cordial”, and that this relationship was the final formative influence in Williams’ character.

Whereas the pious biographers set the stage dramatically with Tamatoa, the king of Raiatea, crying out “Come over and help us,” and Williams taking the initiative, the real picture appears to have been quite different. Few of the missionaries could make up their minds whether they should stay in the Leeward or not. Davies spoke of them as being “very fickle and unsteady in their proceedings” and says that no sooner had Threlkeld got the islanders building a house for his family when he “resolved to go to Raiatea as he does not like this island”.20 On 11 September he and Williams sailed to Raiatea with their families on the “Active”, a step, wrote Davies, “that we could neither approve of nor consistently prevent”. Even when they reached Raiatea the missionaries do not appear to have had any real conviction of calling, simply the desire to get away from the older brethren and community rulings.

But despite their expressed misgivings Threlkeld and Williams were only too anxious to implement their own missionary programme, not to build, as Threlkeld had earlier expressed it, on “Man’s foundations”.21 The general policy of the Raiatea mission was to shape the church or mission on more congregational lines than was possible in Tahiti, remove the authority of the high chiefs in church matters, and at the same time to thwart, if possible, the political and ecclesiastical influence of Pomare in the group. Simultaneously they sought to implement a full scale policy of civilization. Orsmond joined them following the death of his wife, in 1818-20. “We agree very well indeed,” wrote Williams, “and are as happy as we can possibly expect to be.”22 Though they had been critical of missionary political influence in Tahiti Williams added:

The Natives generally are fond of us — & are agreeable to anything we propose. We are little Kings amongst them — they ask our advice both Cheifs [sic] and people upon every subject.

---

20 Davies, *op. cit.* 5 September 1818.
21 L.E. Threlkeld, 8 January 1817, S.S.L. See also Threlkeld, “Reminiscences”, 1853–55, Sydney (typescript from newspaper articles).
22 Williams to his parents, 4 September 1819, L.M.S., South Seas Personal (hereafter *S.S.P.*), Box 2.
The same missionary policy was implemented at Borabora by Orsmond, at Huahine by Barff, and at Tahaa by Bourne. By the mid twenties the character of the Leeward Islands mission was to contrast forcibly with the haphazard shambles of Tahiti. The “home of taste”, the sofa, chair, table, tea-set, and liquor decanters gave a veneer of lower middle class English urban life to the tiny island port-capitals. Neatness, perspective, and mechanical precision in coral lime and island timber characterized the settlement at Raiatea, grandiloquently styled the City of David. Even today one is told proudly by the citizens of Uturoa that the streets were laid out by John Williams. Mechanical ingenuity produced an elaborate lighting system in coconut oil so that evening services could be held.

If the estimate of Threlkeld by Ellis is correct, most of the policy decisions in Raiatea would have been taken by him rather than by Williams. Other assessments of Threlkeld’s character certainly confirm this view. George Bennet, member of the London Missionary Society deputation to visit the islands in 1820–24, wrote privately of him that he was “one of the most obstinate and self-sufficient men among Missionaries — if not allowed to be dictator he will be nothing”. Others wrote that he would brook no control, and it would be fair to state that the goodnatured Williams was the only one who could really get on with him. Yet in this very situation may have lain the tensions and urges in Williams that were to find their outlet in sailing from island to island and in his attempt to impress his own personality on the world. The older man certainly took an authoritarian role in the mission, and after his departure in 1824 Williams was not able to cope with the general reaction to missionary influence. We know that Williams wanted Threlkeld back and we also know that the social revolution or reaction on Raiatea was much more pronounced than in Tahiti in the same period.

John Williams spent his entire missionary career tossed between the buoyant idealism of his youth and the eddy of his disillusionment. His initial shock on seeing Tahitian society as it was did not dampen his enthusiasm, but probably quickened his missionary zeal. His disillusionment probably commenced when he began to doubt the competence and understanding of the directorate of the London Missionary Society. On the voyage to the islands he would have heard many harsh things about the directors from Threlkeld, their most vociferous critic. Orsmond, who met Threlkeld briefly in Rio in September 1816, wrote that “Bitterness against the Directors still flows from his lips and the convictions of my conscience are that he is more suitable to enervate a missionary’s arms than to hold up his hands”. Marsden further criticized London

21 Marginal gloss (partly scored) in Threlkeld, A statement chiefly relating to The Formation and Abandonment of a Mission to the Aborigines... (Sydney, 1828), p. 15.
24 J.M. Orsmond, 16 September 1816, S.S.L.
policy in Sydney; so did an auxiliary missionary committee which he had formed to make on-the-spot decisions and recommendations. The older missionaries greeted the new with tales of neglect and indifference by the society at home. The state of the mission itself suggested that the home authorities had no understanding of the local situation. The greatest blow came in June 1819 when letters arrived from the directors censuring the new missionaries for their expenditure in New South Wales and refusing to allow the small salary recommended by the Sydney committee. Orders also came from the directors to sell the “Haweis” on which so much labour had been spent and in which Pomare himself had shares. The Sydney committee was also dissolved.

All the missionaries were indignant, but none were as savage in their criticisms as Threlkeld and Williams. Whereas Threlkeld put his strongest invective into his official letters, Williams relieved his spleen in a lengthy letter to his parents. He ridiculed the view that missionaries could live “of their own” from the abundant tropical fruits, saying almost gloatingly that one meal of fern root “would kill a Director”. He accused the directors of treating the missionaries “as they please” because of the distance between them, and said that to live decently they would have to take part in “the disgraceful trade” of pork salting. They had come “thousands of miles from civilized society” and were “left to die on a Dunghill”.

The Directors have not a poor cowed down company to deal with now and they will find so very soon unless they materially alter their conduct towards us — The Great Mr Platt — known in the South Sea Mission by Alexander the Coppersmith (from whence it arose I don’t know) — has written to Mr Barff — saying he supposed we are so accustomed to the Native food — that we could live on it now — provided it were possible to live on native food — where are we to get it.

Whereas the older missionaries extolled the virtues of a fish and breadfruit diet Williams never relished native food, insisting that English standards and comforts should be maintained. A missionary’s journal entry provides a glimpse of him in 1839 sitting down with his family to pancakes made from flour while the then new missionaries sat down nearby to cold tāro.

Nor did Williams ever have confidence in the directors. Much of his own writing and more in that of observers suggests that, in some humours, he despised them. At best they were well-meaning but hopelessly out of touch with real conditions. His long struggle with them to provide a ship for the mission convinced him of their limited outlook and confirmed his own contrary streak. Once he had established his reputation he ignored their advice. His counsel to one of the young missionaries, determined to stand by instructions, in 1838, reflects this admirably.

---

25 See particularly Threlkeld, 1 June 1820, S.S.L.
26 Williams to his parents, 4 September 1819, S.S.P., Box 2.
27 Ibid.
You know, my young friend that the Directors are not acquainted with the state of things and we are, and we must adapt our proceedings to circumstances. The Directors write excellent instructions, which look very well upon paper but they become a mere bagatelle when we get here.29

For their part, the directors had to act warily for fear of losing someone who, by 1837, had kindled the public imagination on the subject of missions. The Wesleyan missionary, Peter Turner, succeeded in provoking Williams into a defiant mood:

When I asked him whether the society would sanction all he did and whether they would be willing to send European teachers to all those islands on which he might place native teachers? “Oh yes” — he said, “besides, I could go home now and I could form a society of many noblemen with the Queen at the Head, who would soon send out 100 missionaries.” He said to my saying th[e]n you can do what no one else can, he said “I never yet undertook a thing which I could not accomplish.”30

Disillusionment with the mission was a more gradual process than with the directors. At first Williams and his colleagues had tackled the Raiatean situation with unbounded confidence. To them the unsatisfactory state of affairs at Tahiti was the result of backsliding in the mission and compromise with the chiefs. Also, just when they were about to quit and return to England, the miraculous-seeming conversion of the people of Rurutu in the Austral group and the popularity of the civilization programme introduced by the younger missionaries boosted their energies and convinced them that they had received an apostolic commission.31

But the novelty of the new religion and its attendant “civilization” did not last. The European-type cottages with separate rooms, boarded floors, and plastered walls were soon regarded with disfavour and only kept up by the chiefs as symbols of prestige: none slept in them. This reaction commenced soon after Threlkeld left Raiatea in 1824. For a time Williams maintained the strict control which they had established. Joseph Smith, who visited Raiatea in 1826, wrote afterwards of “the humble, and obliging, but deep imagining Williams, [who] was then at his meridian — a King in benevolent power; and walking in as much success, as his limited sphere could furnish”.32 Williams’ regime was probably the nearest Protestant equivalent to a theocracy to evolve in the Pacific in that the rule of Tamatoa IV was virtually the rule of church members, but it did not last. In the ensuing years the adultery laws were continually flaunted and intemperance was rife. The year 1826 was particularly unsettled throughout the Society Islands and the new doctrine of the Mamaita

29 J. Johnston, 15 December 1843, S.S.L.
30 Turner, op. cit.
31 See the opening chapters of Threlkeld’s “Reminiscences”, op. cit.
prophets spread rapidly.33 Hue, a prophet in Tahiti, was sent home to Raiatea only to raise a following among the discontented there. During 1827 a Raiatean deacon was left in charge of the mission. Hugh Cuming, the naturalist, who visited Raiatea in April 1828, wrote that the town that Williams had planned was not finished because Williams had been absent for nearly a year. Cuming explained that the people had been on trial to see whether they could do without Williams: “Since his return he has conven’d them all together and plainly told them, if they did not alter their Conduct he would leave them never to return.”34

However the principal reaction set in following the death of Tamatoa in 1831. In the Society Islands the nature and character of government were intimately connected with the concept of personal rule. In other words, leadership was the sole criterion in determining government. The death of a ruling chief did not mean that the principles of his administration lived after him but that the new leader set the character of the new government. Thus, in Raiatea, the enthronement of the self-indulgent Tamatoa V was tantamount to a social revolution. The king, in a real sense, was a living god whose every mood had to be placated.

Raiatean politics were further complicated by another dynastic change. Some months before the death of Tamatoa IV, the succession of Queen Pomare’s husband, the high chief Tapoa, to the highest title of the Te Faanue clan, in the Leeward Islands, provoked considerable unrest. Tapoa’s ascendency was according to traditional practice, his predecessor having exercised “passive kingship” during the ascendancy of Tamatoa IV. Tapoa’s bid for leadership in the group was not rebellion but the assertion of a customary right. He does not appear to have wanted conflict, but merely the restoration of traditional government in his hereditary territories. Williams viewed Tapoa’s procedures as “unconstitutional”, contrary to good government, and harmful to the new society that had been established. Before Tamatoa’s death, Williams bluntly preached resistance to Tapoa. Violence occurred when Williams went to Tahiti to persuade two of the Leeward Islands chiefs who had settled there, Utami and Ari’ipaea Vahine, to return as mediators.35 They arrived just in time to prevent a full-scale battle. According to Orsmond’s Tahitian informants, who had been employed in the pacification of the Leewards, Williams’ personal involvement was largely responsible for creating war. There would have been no evil, they said, “had he taken the side of Tahaa as well as of Raiatea”36 and if he had not banished Tapoa. There were stories that Williams had made powder and that he had given the people sheet lead from the bottom of the sugar mill to cast into bullets. The chief Utami told Orsmond:

---

34 Hugh Cuming, “Journal of a Voyage from Valparaiso to the Society and the Adjacent Islands performed in the Schooner Discoverer Samuel Grimwood Master in the years 1827 and 1828”, Mitchell Library, MS A1336, p. 102.
35 See G. Platt to W. Ellis, 18 July 1832, S.S.L.
36 Orsmond, 13 December 1832, S.S.J., No. 100.
Mr Williams is not a Missionary, he is the tamu root of the war, a breeder of war & had he staid at his post all would have been right.\(^{37}\)

"Of course", added Orsmond, "I do not regard all that is said. God knows all." However, shortly afterwards Williams left on one of his voyages and a war ensued which disrupted the erstwhile model mission. The Mamaia prophets supported Tapoa and the war took on a religious nature.

On his return to Raiatea, Williams found that the Raiatean party had been victorious but that all was chaos. He wrote:

But there were other causes of lamentation beside the war. In consequence of this, of the death of good old Tamatoa, of the bad conduct of his son who succeeds him, and of my long absence, the people had begun to distil and drink native spirits, so that on my arrival, the laws were suspended, the means of grace thinly attended, and the whole fabric of society shaken to its foundations. By great and persevering exertion, I succeeded in rectifying many of these evils. The stills were destroyed, the laws re-established, the church reformed, and all things placed on a footing which bids fair to restore prosperity.\(^{38}\)

He added significantly, "Had I been able to stay another month, I could have done much more, but I must be thankful for what was effected". However, in his routine missionary labour, it looked as if John Williams had failed.

Besides disillusionment with the directors and the mission there was a further negative factor in Williams’ career, perhaps a disillusionment with himself, at least a spiritual uneasiness. Grounds for self-incrimination become obvious when those features of his life which suggest the disintegration of his missionary character are examined. Also, in common with most Evangelicals, especially convinced Calvinists, Williams’ sense of urgency in converting the heathen would have been sharpened by the psychological effect of his own conversion, particularly the desire to atone or make reparation for his earlier sinful behaviour. A sense of spiritual inadequacy often haunted missionaries and drove them to greater exertions. Where the flesh was weak, and where sin was unsuspected, the desire for reparation became an important element in the missionary dynamic. Although the doctrine of justification by faith should have transformed the missionary’s motives into something more positive, there is much to indicate that feelings of spiritual inadequacy assumed greater proportions in missionary thinking than their religion actually allowed. Few experienced, to any profound degree, a peace of mind which would rid them of guilt feelings and anxiety. The temptations of this world were too strong and the risks were too great. So it haunted Williams. "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" All the joy of the doctrine of Christian redemption could not remove the indelible signs of an absence of grace. He knew how to be saved; he cried in desolation, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Perhaps too, with the guilt and the anxiety, was an incipient death wish.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) Williams to his sister, quoted Prout, *op. cit.*, pp. 352-53.
The central motif in the pattern of John Williams’ life must always be the Ship. In the Ship was hope. In all the disillusionment and personal difficulties it represented the solution. It was to be the ark of his apotheosis after Eromanga; its image was before him like a fata morgana when he first arrived in the South Seas and completed the “Haweis” within eight days whereas the older missionaries were prepared to take years.

The need for a ship had been seen at the start of the South Seas mission, primarily as a means of ensuring subsistence: Captain Turnbull believed a mission ship would cover its expenses by trading between Sydney, Tahiti, and Hawaii in pork and salt.39 The missionary William Shelley actually built a small vessel, the “Halcyon”, which he used to send pork to Sydney. He recommended a ship to the directors in 1810, suggesting that it should be armed to protect the missionaries. When master of the “Queen Charlotte” he also left an English artisan on Tonga to prepare the ground for a missionary.40 Marsden had acquiesced in Shelley’s schemes and may have planted the idea in the mind of the Reverend Dr. Claudius Buchanan whose sermon at the tenth anniversary of the Church Missionary Society advocated a missionary ship for that society.41 Between 1810 and 1814 Marsden continually urged the directors of both the London Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society to combine in providing a ship to visit the Pacific Missions, but had little success, despite the interested support of Wilberforce. It was Marsden who urged the building of the “Haweis” that Williams completed. He also purchased the “Active” to serve both missions.

The directors showed little interest in ships. They had insisted on the “Haweis” being sold, and they believed the “Active” was sufficient for their needs. Although interested in promoting civilization they had little sympathy for the trading schemes of Williams and Marsden. They grew impatient with Williams’ unsettled behaviour. The missionary’s restlessness must in part be explained by his situation with Threlkeld and the force of his missionary dynamic. He evidently conveyed a sense of restless motion in his person. Joseph Smith, who found Williams “a very obliging man, of a generous and amiable spirit”, qualified his assessment by observing that “he always appeared to me of an unsettled look; as if he was only on the way to his destination — but I suppose he was at that time deeply meditating his after course of action”.42 Williams’ letters to the directors convey a similar atmosphere. Williams’ own explanation is

---

41 The Missionary Register. . . 1815, pp. 236-38.
42 J. Smith, op. cit.
sometimes not interpreted in context. In June 1820, he informed the directors that, whereas he had expected to find 28,000 persons in the Leeward Islands he could find “not more, or very few more” than 4,000; and argued that there were too many missionaries in the Society Islands for such a small number of inhabitants. At the same time, native teachers were being sent on trading ships to some of the other islands. In January 1822 he purchased a ship, the “Endeavour”, in Sydney, obviously with Marsden’s connivance, but with the same argument he had used in 1820, that it was wrong to “confine the labours of so many missionaries to so few people”. This argument was more forcibly repeated in his famous letter of 30 September 1823 when he exclaimed:

for my own part, I cannot content myself within the narrow limits of a single reef, and if means are not afforded, a continent to me would be infinitely preferable, for there if you cannot ride you can walk, but to these isolated islands a ship must carry you.

The argument of so many missionaries in a comparatively insignificant mission field had been the theme of Threlkeld’s grievances since he was first told that his destination had been changed from Bethelsdorp, in Africa, to Tahiti. Williams had heard it often, and in supporting his desire for a ship, made it his own.

The “Endeavour”, renamed “Te Matamua”, was bought specifically for the chiefs of Raiatea, Tahaa, Borabora, and Maupiti, and it was Williams’ own plan to further his civilization programme by creating a trade in sugar-cane and tobacco with Sydney. The desire to make a profit and reinvest it in commercial undertakings was now subsidiary to the desire to make converts. With his shop-keeping class background Williams had a natural bent for commercial speculation. But there was also a compatibility between religious zeal and trade which lay at the heart of Calvinist Christianity, resting mainly on the doctrines of stewardship and personal calling. His very conversion analogies had a mercantile ring suggesting that he connected evangelism and merchant enterprise in his own mind. Thus he wrote in June 1820:

I know that one soul is infinitely more value than my body or a thousand bodies, but how does the merchant act who goes in search of goodly pearls? Supposing he knows where there is one pearl which would pay him for his trouble, and he knows where there are thousands of equal value, to which place would he direct his course?

His view of unevangelized fields was similar to an entrepreneur’s search for a field of investment. In another analogy he compared the thirst for knowledge by heathen to a desire for money.

But the new enthusiasm of Williams’ missionary capitalism was shortlived.

44 Ibid., p. 254.
46 Ibid., p. 249.
The New South Wales government placed a prohibitive duty on the importation of tobacco and all schemes for island commercial enterprise were thwarted. Both Williams, in regard to the “Endeavour”, and Marsden, who had purchased the “Queen Charlotte” and chartered the “Westmoreland” for the London Missionary Society, were temporarily embarrassed. The “Endeavour” was sold in 1823.

Williams continued to urge the necessity of a ship. Finally, when stranded at Rarotonga in 1827, he built the “Olive Branch”, more generally known as the “Messenger of Peace”, a schooner of from seventy to eighty tons. This notable feat was the turning point in his missionary career, it exhibited his ingenuity, and it gave him remarkable independence. It was to gain him the sympathy of the British public. In 1833 the “Messenger of Peace” was sold in Tahiti shortly before Williams went on furlough. He returned to the islands in 1838 with the first official missionary vessel, the “Camden”, a brig of 200 tons. It was his triumph.

Besides its obvious utility, the Ship was also, for Williams, both a symbol of material success and of escape. In the Ship Williams’ rather doubtful record as a missionary was patently redeemed. In the Ship he found escape from frustration and disappointment in the pure joys of exploratory adventure. The story of his search for Rarotonga, then not marked on the maps, and often acclaimed wrongly as a first discovery, has all the romance of true exploration: provisions were low, the captain demanded that the search be given up, Williams put a time limit on the search.

This was an hour of great anxiety; hope and fear agitated my mind. I had sent a native to the top of the mast four times, and he was now ascending for the fifth; and when we were within half an hour of relinquishing our object, the clouds which enveloped its towering heights, having been chased away by the heat of the ascending sun, he relieved us from our anxiety, by shouting “Teie, teie, taua, fenua nei!” Here, here is the land we have been seeking! The transition of feeling was so instantaneous and so great, that, although a number of years have intervened, I have not forgotten the sensations which that announcement occasioned.47

Williams’ Samoan journals exhibit the sheer delight of acquaintance with comparatively unknown peoples. Early in 1839 he was off again. Orsmond wrote irately, “The explorist has been away 3 months exploring in quest of the Elizabeth”, then thought to be lost, and he lamented that the “Camden” was “under the control of the Great Explorist”.

You will find I fear that all the discoveries will be loss, & irremediable expense. The Islands have been visited & Missionaries on them & after all a[n] Explorative voyage is required. Absurd, absurd. Waste, waste. Let the Missionaries explore by effectual & silent efforts.48

47 Williams, A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands; with remarks upon the natural history of the islands, origin, languages, traditions, and usages of the inhabitants (London, 1837), pp. 98-99.
48 Orsmond, 7 July 1839, S.S.J., No. 118.
If Williams had commenced his career as a rather headstrong idealist there was a marked disintegration in his missionary character. If through the Ship, and the book about the Ship, he had set his own name amongst the missionary heroes, the image which he presented in the islands showed features little known in England. For instance, in the islands, all interests were submerged before the interest of the Ship. Williams, the benevolent dictator of Raiatea, was adroit in handling chiefs. Most chiefs were well-disposed towards him and willingly placed their men at his service. But the people at large were quick to question whether Williams' concern for trade and the Ship was not at their own expense. Early in 1823, when Williams was required to sell "Te Matamua", the people of Raiatea expressed their resentment at making sacrifices which had come to nothing. Orsmond, who had a knack for drawing forth gossip regarding his colleagues, reported that the Raiateans called him a liar and deceiver and said that because of him children instead of being brought forth at home were brought forth on the mountains while the parents were in search of arrow root for the Ship. Not one of all the Islanders that I could find took his part or spoke in his favour. How dangerous to meddle with mercantile affairs to the utter neglect of ones more sacred duties.49

In fairness to Orsmond it should be stated that he was one of the few missionaries to abstain from trading himself and that he was genuinely popular with the people. Though tactless he was truthful, but not always free from personal animus.

Again, the interest of the Ship prevailed when Williams set about building the "Olive Branch". There is some reason to believe that Williams' decision to build was partly predetermined, and not simply the result of being stranded on Rarotonga. Certainly the Reverend Charles Pitman viewed Williams' proceedings with distaste. The missionaries had landed in May 1827, and in July the Williams family removed to Avarua. Pitman disagreed with Williams' general policy, for instance his support of the dictatorial native teachers and particularly the building of the ship: letters passed between them. Pitman confided to his diary that Williams was "naturally of an obstinate disposition and does not like to be thwarted".

As the Missionary of the Island I did think it right to be consulted on what is done — But Mr. Williams does not consider that necessary — He has begun a very large Vessel at Avarua, which is very great labour for the people. . . As the people have had so much work ever since the reception of the Gospel (The Teachers did not spare the people) I advised him not to give the people any more work, but he would not listen to my proposal.50

Pitman's concern for the people increased and he feared that Williams' callous-seeming attitude would make them disgusted with Christianity.

If other interests were sacrificed to the Ships in the earlier years, Williams'
possessive attitude towards the “Camden” approached megalomania. When the missionaries on board in 1838–39 wished to have some direction in the ship’s itinerary Williams flew into a characteristic liver-storm:

He says the vessel is my own — to take where I please — or to burn if I please. No one has any control over me, or my vessel. Mr. Hardie said Mr. W.[illiams] is the vessel yours, or does it belong to the Society. He answered, “It is my vessel”...

Peter Turner, though he had cause to be prejudiced, added that in January 1839 Williams told him that

no Society or directors should hinder him from going where he pleased with the Camden, that the vessel is his own and that he would do as he pleased with it. He said many things very ill becoming any Christian Missionary.

This gives some support to Orsmond’s independent account:

Mr. Williams the Explorist has twice visited Tahiti in the “Camden” but no supplies for contemptible missionaries in Her. She is his own, he says. He can sell her, or sink her or burn her or do as he pleases with her.

The Ship was now the symbol of success, of material prosperity. The thwarted capitalist individualism of the 1820’s could be indulged without fear of censure by the directors who had already accepted Williams’ apostolic stature. The missionaries who came out in 1838 stated that one-third of the “Camden” was occupied by goods belonging to John Williams, Junior, who was going out to establish himself as a merchant at Apia. Both Royle and Charter were unable to bring out all their luggage and supplies, and no supplies were brought out to the missionaries in the islands. According to Charter, the ship was “filled with his own things and the things of his son John”.

It was even suggested that Williams planned it so “that the missionaries should be under the necessity of purchasing things from his son John”.

Relative to the breakdown in missionary character is the suggestion that one of the reasons for Williams’ unsettled behaviour, his desire to itinerate, was to escape involvement with the island women. But the evidence rather suggests that his interest in Polynesian women was a fascinating interlude rather than something which tortured his conscience. His description of a tea party with

---

51 Reported by Turner, op. cit., 17 January 1839.
52 Orsmond, 7 July 1839, S.S.J., No. 118.
53 Reported by Turner, op. cit. See also Orsmond, 7 July 1839, S.S.J., No. 118. Johnston referred (16 September 1839, S.S.L.) to Williams being involved in “very extensive commercial pursuits”. According to Orsmond (20 August 1839, S.S.J.): “The pestiferous Camden has come bringing me nothing save seven pieces of blue calico while for one she brings 20 tons.” Even Williams’ close friend Charles Barff could write (3 September 1839, S.S.L.), “Do you consider Mr. & Mrs. Williams real friends to the cause, or to their own interest only? I fear England has spoiled them—they are now going to heaven with Dukes, Lords &c. The mutual recriminations of all who came in the Camden grieve us from day to day...” However the grievances should be balanced by Williams’ defence, 26 March 1839, S.S.L.
the five naked wives of Malietoa, bowdlerized from the published account of the voyage to Samoa in 1832, is a panegyric upon pagan feminine charm. Two of the five wives were aged about 17 or 18:

They drew nearer and formed a circle dropping their little roundabouts off their loins on the ground they curled the small tail end of it into the lap just barely concealing the only part that they make even a pretension to conceal.54

He commented that they ate heartily and cheerfully and wrote that it was the first time he had "had the honor of eating with 5 naked queens".

On the other hand, Charter's statement in his private journal suggests at least that Williams allowed his interest in Polynesian women to affect his itinerary. When the "Camden" was delayed at Rarotonga, Charter wrote privately:

From this detention of the vessel we learn how important it is for persons to act in a business and conscientious manner. Had Mr. Williams gone on board as he arranged all the brethren would have gone speedily to their station on Tahiti. All this arose from his paying too much attention to a native female. Poor man!! Lord what is man. We must fall if thou keep us not every moment of our existence.55

Williams' particular interest in Polynesian women may not have had as significant a psychological effect on his work as his apparent failure and disillusionment at the local level. His amorous interests are important only in so far as they contributed to his guilt feelings, and in this respect, his leniency and readiness to reinstate native teachers guilty of sexual lapses may even have been a cover-up for double standards.

Lastly, and most important to our theme, we should note Williams' growing preoccupation with material prosperity, particularly with the desire for family betterment, a preoccupation which, in the islands, would take his family further away from its missionary connexions — a triumph for secular principles in marked contrast to the apotheosis of its founder in religious circles.

On first coming to the islands Williams' notions of civilization, shared with his colleagues, included the view that social betterment was the reward of Christian industry. It arose out of direct social experience. It was by close adherence to the Christian virtues of prudence, moderation (or temperance), and stewardship (or responsibility) that artisans and tradespeople were able, on the one hand, to prevent themselves from being completely depressed, and on the other, to move up into the more comfortable rungs of society. The seeds of lower middle class capitalism were often nurtured by Evangelical Christianity.

In the islands Williams was conscious of the outward signs of industrious respectability:

54 Williams, 23 October 1832, S.S.J., No. 101.
It was my determination when I left England, to have as respectable a dwelling-house as I could erect; for the missionary does not go to barbarize himself, but to elevate the heathen; not to sink himself to their standard, but to raise them to his.  

He disavowed the frugal living of the older missionaries and maintained the best standard of living which his situation could afford. European food was eaten and there was always a bottle on the table. He despised the policy advocated by the popular preacher, Edward Irving, that missionaries should go out "without scrip or purse".

But Williams was not only interested in maintaining standards of civilized comfort. He believed, under God's providential guidance, he was entitled to the fruits of his own industry. A business sense permeated all his relationships. There is even the suggestion that, at times, his concern for profit actually clashed with the expansion of the church. For instance, at the Quarterly Meeting of the Tahitian Mission in August 1832 Williams refused to visit the outstations in his vessel for anything under £500 while Captain Hunter, described as an ungodly captain, was prepared to visit every station for £250, the sum offered by the directors. The meeting resolved to employ Hunter's vessel annually. Pritchard, who was prepared to "sell all his shirts" to see that the outstations were visited, preferably by Williams, had been invited to go to Hawaii as ship's chandler on Williams' ship, sell it there, and act as a deputation to the Hawaiian mission. This was interpreted as an unnecessary cover-up for Williams' business arrangements.

In 1834 Williams went to England on furlough. He had set his mind on obtaining a ship for the mission to replace the vessel he had built himself. The story of his enterprise excited sympathy and he quickly became the most popular missionary speaker in the United Kingdom. His lectures, illustrated by large and impressive coloured drawings, were extremely popular. Not only did Williams become a nabob in missionary and religious circles but also he was recognized by the Establishment. The publication in 1837 of his book, Missionary Enterprises, based largely on the narratives of his voyages to the Cook Islands and Samoa, became overnight a missionary classic, and the most popular book on the South Seas since Cook's Voyages. Bishops and dukes extended to him their patronage, and the missionary seized on their good will to advance both the mission and himself. However, that Williams was patronized rather than feted by his noblemen is nicely portrayed in a letter which he received from his friend Joseph Paxton, the Duke of Devonshire's gardener, who wrote in October 1837 that "the Duke sometimes asks if I have heard from the 'nice boy'".

Largely in tribute to Williams, the sum of £4,000 was raised by public sub-

---

56 Quoted Prout, op. cit., p. 70.
58 The meeting was reported by Orsmond, 15 August 1832, S.S.J., No. 100.
59 The drawings are held in the Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia, Canberra.
60 J. Paxton to Williams, Chatsworth, 23 October 1837, S.S.P., Box 2.
scription and the “Camden” was purchased and fitted out as a mission ship. It was talk among the missionaries that “some of the Committee were quite aware of the character of Mr. Williams & strenuously opposed him having a vessel. They were of opinion that he would do too much in the way of trading among these islands”.61 Williams was now at the peak of his career. Peter Turner, who found him “selfish, ostentatious, vain”, believed that the people of England had “ruined him with foul-smelling flattery”, and maintained that Missionary Enterprises did not always “adhere to truth”. With the ship at his disposal Williams was determined that his family should reap the rewards of his own ingenuity, or rather, his own investment. Orsmond’s verdict regarding the “Camden” was perhaps extreme: “a more wild, ill-conducted, fruitlessly expensive, and unsatisfactory outfit... never left Graves-End”.62

The missionaries who travelled in the “Camden” were highly critical of the missionary leader. Most of them belonged to a new generation of Evangelical nonconformists whose social ideal was the Christian gentleman. Indeed, their nickname in Tahiti was to be “gentlemen missionaries”. The bulk of them became pioneers in Samoa. Most of them were afterwards to complain that Williams let them down in his rosy picture of the islands.63 Most of them denounced the trading preoccupations of the earlier missionaries, and all were highly critical of Williams’ authoritarian attitudes and apparent self-importance. Williams in turn called them “a stubborn & un-ruly set”.64 At least his old colleagues Bourne and Platt wrote in his defence.

Within a year Williams was dead and his critics acquiesced in silence to the trump from England announcing his apotheosis. His death, by clubbing in the shallows at Dillon’s Bay, Eromanga, on 20 November 1839 with the younger man, Harris, was dramatized in pulpit and press and in the many prints made from George Baxter’s original paintings. It was a moving death, and even the critics were impressed. Had Williams calculated it could not have been better timed. He wrote on 18 November his last journal entry:

This is a memorable day, a day which will be transmitted to posterity, and the record of the events which have this day transpired will exist after those who have taken an active part in them have retired into the shades of oblivion, and the results of this day will be — 65

But he was anticipating by two days.

His son, John Chauner Williams, was perhaps more attractively pious than his father though he was criticized for breaking off his engagement to a Tahitian

61 Turner, op. cit.
62 Orsmond, 7 July 1839, S.S.J., No. 118.
63 George Platt, who remained loyal to Williams, was sarcastic regarding the young missionaries saying that they came out thinking they were going to heaven “But when they arrive, instead of heaven, they find black men and fiends, and barbarised Missionaries and even the devil himself not cast out. . . Alas poor Williams! It appears he was the arch-deceiver. . . O that we could soon behold his like in the work; And as fully devoted.” (12 April 1840, S.S.L.)
64 Charter, op. cit., 3 July 1838.
65 Williams, 18 November 1839, S.S.J., No. 123.
missionary's daughter in order to marry someone of better social standing. In him the desire for material betterment and successful investment was uncomplicated by missionary obligations, and he appears to have had the genuine affection of the island peoples.

The social changes which took place within the family are well documented in the letter-journals of his second wife, Amelia, née Crook, who went to live in Samoa some time after 1856. Of the children of the first family, Samuel Foster appears to have managed his father's cotton plantation and generally assisted him at Apia. During his father's absence in New South Wales he became acting British consul (1873-77). It was said that he could not carry out his consular responsibilities effectively because of his involvement with such unscrupulous traders as Bully Hayes. In 1873 Amelia lamented that, without her knowledge or approval, her stepson had sanctioned the alteration of the Sabbath law, thus permitting public houses to remain open on Sunday during the evening and from twelve to three in the afternoon.

Amelia found the older members of her husband's family too socially minded. She informed the consul, when he was in Sydney in 1873, that his children at Matautu were living "too fast". Instead of calling on Samuel and his sick wife they visited Mrs. Hayes nearly every night. Amelia was reluctant to stay with them as she felt they would not do as they liked in her presence. She felt uncomfortable at a party given at Matautu for Commodore Goodenough and his officers by Mary Williams (Mrs. Charles McFarland) who was "always so dreadfully pushed for cash" and she disapproved when the family did not ask one of the settlers into the parlour "because he does not play cards or dance".

It was her youngest stepchild, Thomas William, who gave greatest offence. Besides letting the side down by lax chapel attendance he went about "very untidy... in such dirty clothes, & seldom a coat, only a jumper".

---

66 Johnston, 16 September 1829, S.S.L.
67 J.C. Williams "made his fortune" out of coconut oil, but lost it when he bought the Ebenezer coal-mine (established by L.E. Threlkeld at Lake Macquarie) with Threlkeld's son-in-law, G.A. Lloyd. Subsequently, in 1855, he became auctioneer and agent for Captain James Malcolm of Sydney at Apia. When he was replaced as American consul by J.M. Coe in 1864 his income was further reduced by £200 a year. See T. Trood, Island Reminiscences. A graphic, detailed Romance of a Life spent in the South Sea Islands (Sydney, 1912), pp.32-33, 35, 59; W. Collin, Life and Adventures (of an Essexman) Captain William Collin (Brisbane, 1914), pp. 107ff.
68 These journals, formerly in private hands, have been microfilmed for the National Libraries of Australia and New Zealand, the Mitchell Library, and the Library of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau of the Australian National University.
69 Both Trood and J.L. Young, who were guests of Mrs. McFarland, wrote of her in the highest terms. The American adventurer, A.B. Steinberger, who owed his acceptance in Samoa largely to the Williams family, was sufficiently ungentlemanly to declare that "he was willing to pay Mrs. McFarland for any services she had rendered him" and "that she thought too much of herself": J.L. Young, 20 November 1875, Journal (copied by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau).
The Missionaries remarked it to Mr. Pratt the other day, "There is Willie Williams the Consul's Son, he looks no better than a beach comer." Mr. Pratt told me this & I felt so sorry.

Amelia had previously tattled to her husband that Willie had taken to smoking "& one afternoon he called at Sam's & I was almost sure he had taken too much to drink, he acted so strangely, and now I hear he is ulavale with women". When told of his stepmother's concern William called on her — "he did not deny anything except about drinking, & the other things, he just laughed at, & said he flattered himself he knew how to behave as a Gentleman". The new standard of respectability had become gentility rather than piety. What was socially acceptable to visiting naval officers and the more prosperous merchants was preferred to the less liberal standards of the missionaries. Gradually the family which claimed a missionary martyr became wholly involved in secular affairs and totally indifferent to missionary claims. It was a pattern noticeable in many parts of the Pacific, but in this case at least it was anticipated in the missionary himself.

* 

In the islands the trading image presented by Williams was viewed somewhat cynically by the Society Islanders though, in the newer groups, he was venerated as the bringer of new material goods. But the total image which Williams presented was that of Viriamu the chief. He was a chiefly figure, large and impressive, with obvious talent. He could rule men. Those who had least cause to love him bore his authority as a necessary yoke in the scheme of things. The privileges of chiefs were rarely questioned. Also, Williams was not only a chief in his own right but he had excellent relations with such powerful chiefs as Tamatoa IV, Makea of Rarotonga, and Malietoa of Samoa. The image of benevolent authority helped to give Williams greatness in the context of the islands.

Then too, despite all his negative characteristics in missionary policy, Williams grew to have a greater tolerance of native custom. By the time that he came to pioneer the Samoan field his views had broadened. He realized that coral lime houses were not an asset in missionary endeavour and favoured the traditional style houses. There were other signs that he was becoming more liberal in his approach to island culture. But just when he showed promise of redeeming, in the new field of Samoa, the mistakes he and Threlkeld had made in Raiatea, his obsession with the Ship, his exploratory vision, and his sense of destiny had set in motion the wheel of fortune revolving to his death. The Ship, the image of escape and success, had been metamorphosed into the mission itself.

---

70 T.W. Williams acted as interpreter and Secretary in the Steinberger government until he resigned in November 1875. The drinking bouts of Colonel Steinberger and his aide, Major Latrobe, were notorious, but T.W. did not identify himself with their public excesses.
The Palmer Loans: British Indian Money and Netherlands Indies Administration under Van der Capellen

The great Calcutta financial house of John Palmer and Co. played a part in the history of Indonesia in the 1820's. Besides being agents in British India for the restored Netherlands Indies Government, they arranged for it in a number of loans which undoubtedly assisted the re-establishment of Dutch authority and the maintenance of the "liberal" administrative principles of Governor-General Van der Capellen. But the 1824 loan — the loan that failed, the most notorious in Dutch colonial history — was the most important. The measure was heartily condemned in the Netherlands and precipitated a crisis between the home and colonial Governments, a crisis between Van der Capellen and his closest associates Van de Graaff and Wappers Melis on the one hand, and on the other the Colonial Minister Elout and the King, Willem I, who was short of money, anxious to maintain exclusive royal authority over the Indies, fearful of foreign intervention, and keen on setting up the Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (N.H.M.). And the crisis, with the reform of the monetary system that was proposed along with the loan, led to the King's appointing Du Bus as Commissioner-General and thus to the end of the "liberal" system.

The Indies administration was chronically short of money. For this various causes have been assigned by various writers. The Commissioners-General who took over in 1816 after the British interregnum had little cash in hand, and Van der Capellen's subsequent government met much opposition in its attempts to re-establish Dutch authority. Hence, for instance, the costly expeditions to Palembang in 1819 and 1821, and to Bangka and Riau. There were also clashes with the Padris in Sumatra (1821) and with the Chinese on the west coast of Borneo (1822, 1823), troubles in Ceram and the Celebes, uprisings in Kedoe and Banten (1820 and 1822), and finally the Java war itself. Some critics believed that the administrative machine was unduly elaborate, others blamed the Governor-General's extravagance. And here there was an extenuating circumstance: no proper budgets could be drawn up because the book-keeping was so


2 Ibid., p. 12.
much in arrears. Thus there was room for argument over the real situation, room for "illusions", as Wappers said. But financial pressure made itself felt more and more as time went by, especially with the decline in coffee prices after 1823. The Government sought loans locally, in British India, and in the Netherlands, and issued promissory notes and paper money which caused inflation and, operating with the currency system established by the publication of 14 January 1817, drove precious metals out of circulation.

In seeking loans and precious metals, the Indies Government turned on several occasions to Palmers, their agents in India, who for instance paid pensions there, purchased rice for the Dutch settlements at Malacca and Riau, obtained piece-goods, and marketed Japan copper and Indonesian tin, spices, and coffee. The letters of John Palmer, though mostly of a private character, do throw some light on the loan proceedings. It is clear, for instance, that Palmer himself was interested most of all in the agency business and that he, and even more his partners and colleagues, were doubtful about raising substantial loans in British India, obligations he nevertheless undertook not merely for their intrinsic advantages, but rather in order to encourage the Government to develop that agency business. This hardly suggests corruption among the Netherlands Indies officials. Possibly, indeed, the motives of Van der Capellen and Wappers Melis become clearer. There is little evidence, though perhaps some, that Wappers Melis was corrupt, but much more that he was ambitious, and that Palmer attached the fortunes of his firm to the star of this newly-arrived official. Certainly there is no evidence of corruption in Van der Capellen's case. Otherwise one would hesitate to draw any conclusions about Van der Capellen's character from Palmer's correspondence, since he varied his attitudes with the address of his letters. There are signs, perhaps, of the Governor-General's hesitancy, and perhaps of his inclination after hesitating to do what his last interlocutor suggested. But clearly the early loans enabled him to continue his "liberal" policy, and his determination upon the great loan of

---

3 P. H. van der Kemp, "Over de boekhouding en de begrooting van Nederlandsch-Indie onder de regering van den gouv. gen. Van der Capellen", De Indische Gids, 30th Year, ii (1908), 1021-41.
5 Wappers Melis, a Belgian adventurer, had been sent out by A. R. Falck, the Colonial Minister, who was interested in his ideas on expanding the market for Netherlands textiles in the Indies. H. R. C. Wright, Free Trade and Protection in the Netherlands, 1816-1830 (London, 1955), pp. 196-97. Wappers reached Batavia in February 1821, and in September became "lid van den raad van Financien en directeur der inkomende en uitgaande rechten", P. H. van der Kemp, "F. Wappers Melis...", De Indische Gids, 30th Year, ii (1908), 1609-1610.
7 See also P. H. Van der Kemp, "Brieven van en aan Mr. H. J. van de Graaff 1816-1826...", Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, i, ii (1901), 167.
1824 illustrated, as Palmer believed, not merely extravagance, but a determination to maintain an independence of the home Government that seemed likely to be eroded by the monopolising principles behind the foundation of the N.H.M.

In 1820 the Batavia Government had recourse to private loans of 600,000 Indies guilders, and in 1821 to the issuing of paper money and promissory notes bearing interest at 9 per cent. That year John Palmer visited the Indies in connexion with the debts of his Batavian subsidiary, Deans Scott and Company, which became Deans and Co., with John Deans and Robert Morris as partners. Palmer proposed raising in Bengal on behalf of the Indies Government a loan of 2-2½ million sicca rupees at 7 per cent or 8 per cent. The majority of the Board of Finances declined the suggestion, Wappers Melis and the Hoofddirecteur, Goldman, favoured it. The Governor-General and Council subsequently agreed with the majority, especially because they doubted if the King would approve a foreign loan. But as the matter had already been discussed with Palmer, who moreover had meanwhile left for Bengal and perhaps, it was thought, had begun negotiating for the money, it was resolved to approve a loan of up to 1,200,000 sicca rupees. In January 1822 Palmer wrote to say that the house had in fact not contracted for more than 50,000 sicca rupees and that it would now cease to negotiate. This, declares Van der Kemp, suggests Palmer’s honesty of approach. It also suggests his caution.

Late in 1821 Palmer had written to Van der Capellen himself, alluding to the house’s execution of the agency agreements he had made with Goldman, alluding also to the proposed loan with some doubt,

as the Silence of your Government leads me to imagine it may be relinquished; but I must candidly acknowledge to Your Excellency that I discover a less encouraging Spirit here than I expected to experience among the Monied Men, and a want of that entire Confidence, which my knowledge of Java has inspired me with. If however Your Excellency may still find it expedient to resume that Project I will not despair of affording some satisfaction in my negotiations: for I have greatly at Heart to effect any and every duty which you condescend to refer to my agency...

By January 1822 Palmer appears to have heard definitely that the project had been abandoned, and it seems that he had not pushed ahead in Bengal, not only because of difficulties in the money market there, but also because of doubts about the situation in Batavia. He wrote to Wappers Melis:

After my recent communications you will judge that I am not sorry at the failure of the Loan Scheme; and especially as it may be infer’d that I

---

8 Louw, op. cit., ii, 15-16.
10 Louw, op. cit., ii, 599-600n.
11 Van der Kemp, Ind. Gids, 30th Year, ii, 1038.
owe it partly to unworthy motives, and partly to an Ineptitude of which I might have been the victim had I not anticipated the outturn of the negotiation.

It would have afforded me pleasure to possess the power of furnishing you with provisional authority for relieving your Government from impending embarrassment, if I had no cause for fearing that the little passions which defeat the first projected measure might not, as assuredly, paralyze any wherein you and our House should be engaged. I confess the character of the opposing Proceedings leaves me without appetite for extended connections, or the continuance of the agency: for if present Information does not teach me to expect all practicable exception to our provisions of Goods, &c., I fear in the voice of Mr. Overbeek I have authority for apprehending it, and I may confidently whisper to you that He does in effect impeach the Justice of your administrators.

I shall scrupulously observe the caution you justly expect of me, and consider your unofficial communications — whether direct, or through Mr. Deans, or Mr. Morris — as perfectly confidential. Your whole Proceeding has been so open, simple and liberal that I at once was satisfied of my Security in all my Transactions with you: but I have no such confidence in other Hands, even if Mr. Van de Graaff, and the good Govr.-Genl. himself were your immediate auxiliaries. What faith can I repose in your colleagues, after their recent machinations and senseless Improvidence? Mr. G[oldman] is probably a just and good Man, but if his Habits are unsuitably punctilious and procrastinating it is easy to see that he would become an Instrument in the hands of Men who might affect his banner in order to subvert the ascendancy of greater Talent in other Men. The Govr.-Genls. fear of responsibility will ever deter him from the adoption of measures not supported by the majority of any of the public Boards; and Mr. V. d. G. cannot be very covetous of the trouble of a constant opposition from the members of a Department over which he presides. You see the Illustration is already afforded us of the Influence of certain Persons over the Minds of the Govr.-General and his colleagues, in defeating a Measure agreed upon in September; and then only awaiting the formality of official signature. Even Goldman himself too, pledged to that very measure. . . .

Another letter shows that Deans believed rivals responsible for the abandonment of the loan project, presumably because they too sought the agency business:

Having raised no Money for the Dutch Govt. and wanting encouragement to beat about for Supplies amongst the monied People, I regret that I cannot pursue the course suggested to me for enabling Friend Melis to interpose for the Relief of his Govt. when his coadjutors fail in their resources. If however I had Funds of my own, I should be very reluctant to commit them to the control of certain Persons who might always have Talent and power enough to hamper Melis's Engagements, and might be as careless of the reputation of their Govt., as of my Security and Reimbursement. . . . I shall as little envy the better success of the other Houses, as I do the little arts by which they supplant me: but I doubt if either of

13 Palmer to Wappers Melis, 20 January 1822. Eng. lett. c. 92, p. 134. The "Overbeek" mentioned was presumably D. A. Overbeek, the Dutch Resident at Chinsurah.
them can effect preliminary Measure by foreign Resources; and conclude
they possess none of their own adequate to such operations.

I trust it will occur to Melis to shew that any Proposition from others,
however specious, grows solely out of ours, and never perhaps had been
entertained by anybody but from Example — and possibly an illaudable
motive.

The Batavian Government had no love for the founder of Singapore and,
as Palmer told Wappers, “it may be a triumph to some to know that Sir Stamford
Raffles is the only man of my acquaintance who, except myself, can suffer
Disappointment from the failure of the Loan”. Palmer explained to Raffles the
difficulties in Bengal rather than those in Batavia.

I have... relinquished the Loan, though I view it as one of the best
means of employing Money which could be presented to the public in
these Times; for I discovered a feverish sensation about the Security of the
Dutch, altho their power and Resources were never less equivocal.

The “feverish sensation” seems to have been caused by fears of war in Europe.
Palmer wrote later to Melis:

I lament that the loan operation came to nothing, for I am persuaded
that it might have been equally advantageous and secure for, altho I con-
sider nothing more precarious than the tranquillity of Europe I know that
even a state of war could only have involved the regularity of payments.
I trust and believe that you will easily surmount the pecuniary difficulties
of your Government for with such resources as you enjoy order and
economy alone must secure you a surplus Revenue your cumbrous
Establishment requires the Knife and you may prune off 10 Millions p.
annum more easily than even your great resources will enable you to save
them. I have suggested to Deans that we might become useful in the further-
ance of any financial project of yours.

Your Interposition has been manifestly salutary in our agency arrange-
ments, and the distrust involuntarily harbored here is giving way to the
explanations and information you afford me.

During 1822 the financial situation in the Indies continued to deteriorate
and Palmer noted that some agency payments were overdue. This fact,
combined with a thousand others, must sooner or later, impose a Change
and bring W. M. into play. The Govr.-Genl. is paralysed by one or two
respectable Persons as to W. M. but his Talent, Information and Persever-
ance will surmount unwarranted Objection.

Presumably this accurately foretold the future, for in November 1822 Van der
Capellen resolved to borrow one million sicca rupees (1,050,000 Indies florins)
in silver money from Palmers, the only way, it was thought, to acquire it
sufficiently quickly. Goldman and Wappers handled the correspondence.

Palmer wrote to a connexion in London:

---

16 Palmer to Wappers Melis, 6 May 1822. Eng. lett. c. 93, p. 248.
18 Louw, op. cit., ii, 609–610.
Our external relations since you left us have been marked by increasing satisfaction and advantage in our Dealings with the Dutch; to whom we are advancing 10 Lacs for a couple of years at 9 p Cent (or rather half for one year) and to be repaid in Bullion, Produce or Bills on London. I expect larger consignments of Tin from them, and an augmentation of their Indian Investments, and we are perfectly satisfied with the efforts they have made to put us in Funds. General de Kock — as worthy a man as Capellen — has been appointed Lt.-Govr. and will probably succeed the Baron: our Friend W. Melis is well with both and is daily establishing the advantage of his habits for Business and his Talent, in all their Financial and commercial concerns. . . .

“Our Friend W. Melis”: but, Palmer told Morris, “despise the malice which imputes clandestine connections between you . . .”

As Palmer knew, Wappers Melis was a man with ambition, and thus with ambitious plans for the Batavian Government. But he did not wish Wappers to overplay his hand. Thus on receiving a letter of Wappers of March 1823 he lamented to observe you have less confidence in the application of your powerful financial resources than formerly: for your doubts imply a fear of constancy and consistency, which no Talent, Zeal or Industry can remedy. It is more than wise therefore to pause upon such important Measures as funded Debts and Bank Establishments, until you are emphatically assured that the best use will be made of your resources and an undeviating attention shewn to their improvement and development. It is indispensible to your honor, as well as to your success, if such measures are undertaken, that by no possibility, within human control, any diversion of Means whatever should be allowed to defeat your arrangements and Plans. You comprehend your Position too well to compromise either your reputation, or the Interests occasionally confided to you, by hazarding much of either for the mere chances of support. . . . It is painful to reflect that for unequivocal Services, unabating Labor and ardor and zeal, a generous recompense is yet to be looked for from your Government; and especially whilst so good and so discerning a man presides over it. That Justice should be denied you is grievous in the extreme but nothing short of Infatuation can long withhold from any able and upright Public Functionary the meed of his services. Happy is it for you, my dear Sir, and for all men conscious of their purpose, that nothing can rob you of your own approbation. . . .

I should infinitely regret any cause which might induce your retreat from the service: for believing firmly that you have already achieved very substantial good in Java, I must persuade [myself] that your merits and claims cannot be long overlooked; and they must be daily more conspicuous and better acknowledged. . . .

It would seem that Palmer’s tribute to Wappers was paid in flattery rather than in florins and that he attempted rather to salve his frustrated ambition than fill his empty purse.

19 Palmer to Brownrigg, 28 February 1823. Eng. lett. c. 95, p. 128.
Palmer continued also to correspond with Van der Capellen, "the only great man I ever knew", he told Deans, "that I would go one hundred miles to visit, after having got acquainted with him or indeed before". In August he replied to a letter of the Governor-General's, also written in March:

I very cordially hope that the negociations upon us in completion of the Loan will yield an unlooked for advantage to your Government, and I as firmly rely upon a proportionate benefit from the Products we receive from you to liquidate our Advances.

If, as it seems reasonable to calculate, our respective nations keep out of the war which menaces the [Iberian] Peninsula and strengthen the relations now subsisting between them, I shall be prepared for an extension of the Intercourse between Java and India. Your Excellency's naming eighteen Months longer to mature and cement them, will be singularly pleasing to me; and particularly as I can with certainty say that I shall be eye witness of your measures.

He intended to visit Java again, and was clearly looking out for an increase in agency operations.

In a letter to Deans in October, Palmer again alluded to the possibility of war in Europe, though he did not suppose the Netherlands will espouse the infamous cause of France. . .

I cannot harbor a doubt of the Fidelity of the Govt. in the transactions with me whilst such characters as the Baron, General De Kock, and Mr. Van de Graaff occupy seats in the council, altho a temporary suspension of Intercourse and payment may ensue. I fear you may give offence by a suggestion of security in Land or any other real Property.

Deans no doubt believed that such was desirable lest the political situation changed. But Palmer was not prepared to allow this problem to interrupt the development of harmonious relations — and agency business — with the Batavian Government. Much further he was not prepared to go at this time: he wanted no big deals. Deans planned a discount house, dealing in the precious metals that tended to disappear from circulation. But Palmer was not very encouraging.

The Government's shortage of cash and the disappearance of the precious metals led in 1823 to a new arrangement for Palmers' supplying "Bullion Dollars or Rupees to the extent of Fifteen Lacs", in return for consignments of products to Europe, thus providing some money fairly quickly; also, said Palmer, "the apparent competition . . . must have the inevitable effect of enhancing the value and price of that Portion of your Produce which is sold bona fide to Speculators . . ."
Bigger schemes than this Palmer still did not seem to favour:

I do not think our capitalists are so speculative as to trust their Funds under a Foreign and distant Flag: so that I fear I shall carry no subscriptions for your Bank even [should] a real security constitute the Basis of such an Institution and of course the same may be said of Loans... I abstain here from noticing the Austin Friars plan of Loan. ... Such schemes of Loans and Banks are too vast for our resources and above all for our Nerves...28

This presumably was a reference to a scheme originating with Robert Morris for procuring through Cockerell Trail and Company of Austin Friars, the house connected with Palmers in London, a loan of six million Indies florins, to be used partly for immediate expenses, partly for paying off debts, partly for calling in paper money, and to be secured on the residency of Kedoe. The matter was referred home. Van der Capellen declared that he would have preferred a loan raised in the Netherlands. However, Morris, who was going to Europe, would discuss the matter with the Colonial Minister, and a further report from Batavia would assist in a decision on the matter.29 Elout, the new Colonial Minister, replied privately to Van der Capellen in April that the decision would be affected by the setting-up of the trading company (i.e. the future Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij), and that a large loan, secured on a whole residency, was unlikely to be approved unless a strong case could be made for it and rigid economies first attempted. In another letter of May Elout wrote that the proposal would not go through but that he would do all he could to support the Batavian finances. And finally he was to recommend a loan of eight millions from the N.H.M. secured on the coffee of the Preanger regencies.30

Meanwhile Palmer had at last arrived in Java. The sanguine Deans was talking there, it seems, of trying to raise the six millions in India, and for that real security would clearly be required. Palmer apparently was now ready to contemplate this, perhaps believing it was the best way of consolidating the firm's position and the position of Wappers in an administration clearly much divided over the issue. But Palmer's colleagues back in Bengal were not encouraging. H. W. Hobhouse wrote:

Your report upon the fluctuating and capricious Councils at Java confirms me in the opinion I always entertained of the expediency of receiving real Security for any specific Loan... I have no hesitation in saying that they would not at this moment raise six millions here on any terms, and it would be idle in them to indulge in any such speculation. I think 20 Lacs the outside of their Credit — finding the Burman [war] bid[s] fair to use all the spare cash in the Country...31

28 Palmer to Deans, 18 January 1824. Eng. lett. c. 100, p. 120.
E. A. Newton wrote:

I am somewhat disturbed by your awakened suspicions of the good faith of some of the Persons constituting the Govt. where you are. Nevertheless my confidence yet remains unbroken, and so long as we are really treating with the proper authority, and observe the strictest order and regularity on our part, and require the same on theirs, my repose will continue undisturbed. Evidently we are of the greatest convenience to them, and I think, all matters considered, are serving them faithfully, and for as moderate recompense, as circumstances will admit, and with a degree of good faith, that is not to be excelled — all we gain is apparent, there is nothing hid. . . . Landed security, such as you hope to obtain, is most desirable, and will enable us to extend our relations — but I somewhat doubt if we are ever able to lend, or procure them, so large a sum as Deans has named, to wit 60 Lacs Rs, for the aspect of things here is somewhat cloudy, and this Burmese War may be a most expensive and bloody one. . . .

Clearly there were doubts — and in relation to the nature not of the international situation, but rather of the Batavian Government — about the security of loans, if not of extended advances on agency account. Even with such security, Palmer’s colleagues queried if they could raise as much as Deans suggested, especially in view of the war in Burma that had begun in February.

Palmer meanwhile was having discussions with officials in Batavia. One of the results was a second loan of one million sicca rupees, later secured, with the first, on the opium farm. Further arrangements appear to have been discussed, for in a letter replying to Palmer’s of early May, Hobhouse intimated that he thought the agency business must be restricted: “if we are correct in assuming that only 10 Lacs can be repaid here annually, then, as it would be inconvenient to us to take payment of more than 20 Lacs by shipment from Java to London, our commercial agency, including Bullion shipments necessarily limits itself to 30 Lacs of Rupees . . .” As for the loans, they were now in advance thirteen lacs (with interest nearly fifteen) i.e. ten lacs on the first loan and three on the second. When the first was paid off, they would lend seven more, the total at any one time being ten lacs for two years reimbursable in Calcutta. Palmers, too, should have “Collateral Security (Territorial) to the whole extent of our Credit”, i.e. about forty lacs:

We are of opinion, that if the Dutch were now to come into our money market simply on their own credit, they could not do so with much effect, and generally speaking that 50 Lacs altogether must be assumed as the maximum of their available Credit in Calcutta. By altogether, we mean from ourselves on all accounts, and for all purposes, and from others in simple loans. We have none of the cumbrous balances you speak of; on the contrary we are prepared and preparing to withdraw our capital from other employ to meet the wants of Java Government.

. . . The substance of all this is, that we wish no limit to exist to our

---

33 Louw, op. cit., ii, 620. Palmer to Hobhouse, 7 October 1824, Eng. lett. c. 126, p. 16.
commercial and Bullion agency, but their means of repayment here in the
course of the year after 10 Lacs paid here and allowing them to pay 20
Lacs in England annually by shipment from Java. The Loan of 10 Lacs
is a kind of bonus that we are willing to pay...34

In Batavia letters of February 1824 from Falck, Elout's predecessor, had
arrived, asking for remittances to cover the colonial debt in the Netherlands.
A new public loan was recommended, then deferred till the Governor-General
returned from his visit to the Moluccas.35 Palmer thought of taking part in
a remittance loan and committing his London friends to a share in it. The letter
in which he explained this to Trail may be a further clue to his policy thus far
in relation to the Batavian loan transactions:

The past present and future state of things has accumulated and is still
accumulating such a superfluity of Capital in Europe North America
and Asia, it is a matter of astonishment to me that this Govt, has not
with its great resources turned the circumstance to its own account and
made those provisions for its financial relief, which early improvidence
and false Policy have imposed upon it. In a state of universal peace, and
when its continuance was universally necessary, a large military and naval
Establishment, a cumbrous staff, and all its extravagant concomitants have
been pompously and ruinously maintained here and a revenue fairly and
easily augmented to 28 Millions, still leaves an annual deficit of 3 or 4
Millions of Rs, and the evil must augment until a greater difficulty of raising
supplies imposes a change of system, and introduces regulations better
suited to the condition of the Country. Casting about for temporary
succour, I am not confident of preserving the advantages we have acquired
in the extensive agencies of this Govt., for we neither escape notice, nor
envy, and it wants but little to raise up powerful competitors in India and
England, perhaps in Europe or America, which with a change of Rulers
might shake the relations at present happily established between us. In
this view of things I have travel'd something out of our way already, and
am disposed to deviate a little farther; — and having rec'd. a formal
pledge of security from the temporary Govt., and a recent confirmation of
it under the hand of the absent Govr.-General, there needs no further
restraint than is prescribed by our own conscience. I know that it is the
Policy of this Govt., and I believe it to be a salutary policy, to keep its
principal arrangements free from the interference of the Parent Govt.,
which would absorb or waste in its measureless patronage, a vast deal
more than the difference of Interest, with which Indian Loans and advances
must be fettered. — I have no hesitation in asserting that this Govt. would
prefer local transactions at 9 p.Ct — to loans originating at home, and
controlled by the Parent Govt. at 5 or 4 pr. Ct. On this feeling I consider
it fair to act, and actually enjoying a safe and lucrative agency and [I] may
add a pleasant and creditable one, it has occurred to me that I may safely
engage your House in a transaction of some moment and of the most
unequivocal security. Deans has already broached the Subject matter to
Larpent and perhaps secured you its European Agency but I have reason
to believe that I can direct this benefit to you, and fix it prospectively, by

34 Hobhouse to Palmer, 19 August 1824, and enclosure. Eng. lett. c. 101, pp. 42, 50.
35 Louw, op. cit., ii, 30-33, 621-23.
taking a prominent place in their remittance loan, by accomplishing in large part, and facilitating in toto, the success of that arrangement.

It is probable that the loan may fill without alien assistance, tho' I believe with some rare exceptions (the G.G. and a high functionary or two) there is an absolute deficiency of means in their Service. . . . I know it would be peculiarly acceptable that I came forward in this exigency, and by a decisive measure not only filled their loan, but enabled the Govt. at once to fulfill the special object of it, namely acquitting the Colonial debt to the Mother Country. . . .

I have special reasons for not engaging in this Loan on account of the Calcutta House; for besides the chance of the Burma War affecting their dormant balances, at the moment when they had reduced the rate of interest, I must still press equally upon your resources if I did not forego the important object of effecting an immediate impression upon the Colonial debt — the only motive to, and perhaps the only value of my critical interposition. I am sure I shall not need stipulate for your perpetual Agency, for I have observed from the outset that wherever our connection was established or our confidence reposed, there became concentrated, all the operations of this Government. But I shall take care to have a clear understanding with the Govt. and his successor, that all their European Agency be referred to your House.

. . . Various Efforts have been made to participate in their Indian Agency, and if persisted in by sturdier Rivals, it would require great moral influence to secure the advantages we possess. I think we hold this at present for the Govt. feels strongly that our aid was liberal as well as timely. . . .

The loan was not, however, at once carried through, the Batavian officials awaiting the return of Van der Capellen; and Palmer doubted if, when he did come back, he would "sanction the measure until necessity forces it upon him". Palmer had heard indeed

that the Terms on which this Government was treating for money were condemned at Home, and as the new Company may choose so to employ a portion of its funds, I shall not be surprised that they interrupt such a Loan. Still I believe that reluctance to European engagements and to their concomitant Patronage, influence and control will prevail over the advantage of lesser Interest and induce a dependence upon their Indian credit and facilities even if the Dutch Company [the N.H.M.] should be timely in the field. — But the habitual slowness of all great bodies cannot keep pace with the pressing wants of this Government; and I shall expect the gratification of putting a safe and good transaction in your way. . . .

These letters seem to suggest the motives of Van der Capellen and Palmer in entering upon the great loan negotiations of late 1824, a desire for independence on the one side and, on the other, not merely a profitable commission but also the prospective development of general agency business. Early in October the Governor-General at last returned from the Moluccas:

36 Palmer to Trail, 7 August 1824. Eng. lett. d. 105, p. 130. G. G. de Hochepped Larpent was another partner in the Cockerell house.
37 Palmer to Trail, 10 September 1824. Eng. lett. d. 105, p. 135.
Money is wanted and I shall probably be authorised to borrow beyond your estimate of Dutch credit: but with ample securities in hand and higher interest than our Govt. will give, I should not despair of raising a considerable sum. I am sure that it would well consort with our interest to promote the Loan; for commission would necessarily result from the operation.

Great retrenchments and reforms are imposed upon this Govt. but the whole debt does not exceed half a year’s revenue nor much exceed their saleable property in Marine and other stores and ships.38

The first result of the discussions with Van der Capellen was a scheme of remittance to Europe, to replace the remittance loan proposals. Palmers were to provide £60,000 in sterling bills and deliveries of coffee were to be made in repayment.39 The larger question was referred to a committee consisting of De Kock, Van de Graaff, Goldman, Melis, G. F. Meylan, the director of direct taxation, and W. de Vogel, the director of auditing and bookkeeping, to whom instructions were issued on 23 October.40 These had been preceded by reports from Goldman and Melis. The former had argued that by 1825 the deficit would be f. 14,709,140 and Wappers had more or less agreed. If six millions were obtained in the Netherlands, ten millions would still be necessary, and he recommended a loan of thirteen million sicca rupees from Palmers.41 Indeed these reports had been themselves preceded by discussions. At least an undated letter from Palmer to Goldman referring to a conference the previous day seems to belong here:

I lament that I cannot give assurance of raising the further sum required for the exigencies of your Govt. by loan, or other means, because its magnitude may exceed the latitude of credit — under any security — which foreign markets would concede. But I would not despair of our entire success with the general security of these valuable territories, and I shall therefore be prepared to undertake such commission as his excellency may be pleased to confide to my house — and eventually to myself alone, for raising a sum not exceeding ten millions of Java Rs.

The moment is not propitious to such an operation, for my Govt. is involved in an expensive contest, which may give full employment to a vast amount of the floating capital of India; and prodigious as its resources are, if the contest be long protracted, a great temporary increase in the rate of interest will probably ensue.42

In a letter to Hobhouse of 19 October, Palmer discussed the earlier loans, secured on the opium farms:

This Govt. has required a loan from the King of the Netherlands of six millions of Java Rs. and will have its answer by the end of the year. If it

38 Palmer to Hobhouse, 7 October 1824. Eng. lett. c 126, p. 16.
39 Elout, op. cit., p. 74. Louw, op. cit., ii, 42. The arrangement was virtually concluded in early October, though some modifications were made in November. Elout, op. cit., pp. 75–76. Palmer to Cockerell, Trail and Company, 16 October 1824. Eng. lett. c 126, p. 20; d. 105, p. 146.
41 Elout, op. cit., pp. 131, 129.
be affirmative, the loans will be discharged and the security redeemed, if not we may possibly be reduced to its realization if you see no reason for deferring the execution. But the Govt. is probably more anxious still to be independent of the home Govt. in its pecuniary engagements; and it may be that other considerations cause a partiality to Indian Loans. Our Interests might be eminently promoted by a successful agency in such a transaction; as the Loan would certainly be liquidated progressively, in produce, in Calcutta or London. But there is an embarrassment touching the requisition from Home and the G.G. is further apprehensive that the new Company [the N.H.M.], by cupidity or instigation, conclude some comprehensive bargain with the King, for supplying every want of the colonial Govt.

Supposing however a loan referred to us, the ways and means proposed for its redemption and provision for Interest, will be 50 Lacs of Java Rs. If the whole sum contemplated 13 Millions of Java Rupees be raised — all the debts and obligations of the Govt. would be discharged...

Some paper money would be withdrawn and new currency issued, coined in Calcutta and “restoring the intrinsic value of the Sa Rs in relation to guilders, which the specious quackery of 1816/17 robbed the public of...” 43

Palmer also wrote to Trail on the matter:

The lavish expenditure of the Public Money in establishments exceeding infinitely the Public wants, and the imposition from Holland of superfluous stores, coupled with expensive and unproductive wars, have brought this Government into a heavy State of pecuniary embarrassment; and its mischief has been aggravated by the presumptuous complacency of the Government itself. But no longer under any illusion, it is become necessary to adopt some efficacious Plan of general reform providing for the liquidation of all existing engagements, and for the certain extinction of the fresh debt, it must contract for the accomplishment of that important purpose.

Including a debt in Holland (partially liquidated by my bills on you) and providing for all ordinary contingencies of current expenditure, it is understood that a sum of thirteen millions of Java rupees, are requisite for the attainment of all the objects and engagements of this Government and it is probable that our House in Calcutta will be empowered to raise that amount by loan redeemable in 15 years, which including yearly or half yearly Interest, will be paid off at our office. This loan will be secured upon the Revenues and Territory of Java and its dependencies and its rate of Interest must necessarily be governed by the state of things in India.

The provision for the punctual discharge of the loan will be made by annual allotments of some Millions of the public revenue, and which in produce will find its way progressively to you and us. The same to be funded for the extinction of this loan. I should have been in some doubt of being able to raise so large a sum of money in India, if I did not rely on the temptation of the Burman War, causing considerable remittances to India, and preventing any pressure on our money Market: but as it is, I think it probable that at the three Presidencies, and subordinate Places, we may be able to raise the money within the next year...

It would seem that the Revenues of the Island, and its dependencies are

43 Palmer to Hobhouse, 19 October 1824. Eng. lett. c. 126, p. 12.
susceptible of an increase of one Million at least, and its expences may be even now safely retrenched three to four more, and when peace is reestablished on Celebes, the Military reduction will not be less than one and half Million. . .44

The committee of 23 October meanwhile recommended first of all the coining of new silver money in Calcutta by arrangement with Palmer.45 Its second report, dated 19 November, reckoned the debt at the end of 1824 at sixteen million guilders and by August 1825 at twenty millions. It advocated a loan of nine millions and probably — since the Dutch Colonial Minister seemed unlikely to send the six millions — ultimately of fifteen millions, secured on Java. Interest at 8 per cent and a yearly reduction of one thirtieth of the capital would have to be provided for by economy.46 Van der Capellen raised various objections: he questioned procuring a loan among foreigners and using Java as security; no absolute refusal had been received from the Netherlands, and possibly capital would be left over after shares in the N.H.M. had been allotted. He suggested a temporary loan, and doubted if he had the power to make alterations in the monetary system which the committee thought should go along with the loan. The committee argued against all this: 8 per cent was not high, support from the Netherlands was unlikely, Java — or better the whole Indies — gave adequate security.47 And the ultimate decision was for a loan of fifteen millions and a change in the monetary system, without which much of the effect of the loan would be lost, Wappers argued.48

Hence the instructions to Palmer.49 These said nothing about his commission, understood to be 2½ per cent, as Elout was later told by Wappers,50 who went home to explain the negotiation.51 He had indeed been anxious to go on leave.52 His reception was most unfavourable. Elout opposed both loan and currency change, and was especially doubtful about a loan among foreigners on such a security, about the looseness of the terms set down and the encouragement to British trade involved.53 The loan was disapproved and a special commissioner was appointed.54 Van de Graaff had forecast Elout's opposition,55 and Van der Capellen said he had never expected his approval.56

In fact, as Elout saw,57 Palmer had had his doubts about raising the loan

45 Louw, op. cit., ii, 35–36.
48 Ibid., pp. 43–45, and Bijlage 13.
49 Elout, op. cit., pp. 138–39; and, more fully and in English, Van der Kemp, B.K.I., lxii, 142–48.
50 Elout, op. cit., p. 140.
52 Van der Kemp, Verhandelingen, iii, Pt. 1, ii, 217–18.
53 Van der Kemp, B.K.I., lxii, 159–66.
54 Louw, op. cit., ii, 78–79.
55 Van der Kemp, Verhandelingen, iii, Pt. 1, ii, 247.
56 Van der Kemp, B.K.I., lxii, 159.
57 Ibid., p. 161.
and, as Palmers later reported, Elout would be happy to know that they had in fact raised nothing. 58 On his return to Calcutta, Palmer had tried to secure subscriptions. He wrote to his friend R. Grant in Cawnpore: “if you could put me in the way to get any subscriptions at Cawnpore, it would be rendering me a great Favour and great service too...” He offered 7 per cent interest. 59 On 20 March 1825 he wrote to Deans that he had not yet been able “to raise a Stuiver”, but he did not yet despair. He observed that by their charter the N.H.M. was “not to meddle with the Public Funds, consequently they cant lend their Money to your Government...” 60 Palmer wrote to a friend at Benares asking for his help:

My friend Rammuram has wrote about this Loan to his father at Benares, Collysunker Roy, who I introduced to you two or three years ago; and who he thinks has great Influence with the monied People there. Perhaps you could talk with Collysunker on the subject. The Object is of vast importance to our House, and personally I take the deepest Interest in its success from my sense of obligation to the Govr.-General Van der Capellen and the Lieutt. Governor-General De Kock... 61

Palmer also wrote to Treves at Lucknow: “get my Friend Ricketts to back your exertions amongst the Bankers. Balmokund Davy Doss might help us...” 62

In April a further difficulty arose, as Palmer told Deans:

Government has refused us the use of the Mint, and in as few words as I use here. They certainly only desire to parry Competition, but have not the courage to say so; and prefer equivocation to a lie. But they have not inhibited the Loan; and as far as Lord Amherst’s personal assent may be relied upon, I am at liberty to proceed. I am in correspondence all round India but having achieved nothing in Calcutta, I dispair of success elsewhere. The Houses are at their Tether for some months to come. ... I can pick up trifling subscriptions but will not avail of them until I can secure a considerable Sum. I abstain from publishing to avoid the Humiliation of Failure.

I am deliberating whether to inform the Baron that I must give up the attempt and propose the sending of one of the Members of the House Home to raise the Loan in England, or still to try what may be done in India...” 63

Palmer wrote to Madras the following day, 64 but shortly after received dis-

---

58 Ibid., p. 182n.
59 Palmer to Grant, 16 March 1825, Eng. lett. c. 101, p. 147.
61 Palmer to W. A. Brooke, 22 March 1825, Eng. lett. c. 101, p. 169.
63 Palmer to Deans, 2 April 1825, Eng. lett. c. 102, p. 2. Amherst was the Governor-General. There had been some doubt of the Bengal Government’s assent to the loan. Van der Kemp, Verhandelingen, lii, Pt. 1, i, 167.
64 Palmer to Sir E. Stanley, 3 April 1825, Eng. lett. c. 102, p. 4.
appointing news from Lucknow.65 "My Dutch loan does not get on prosperously", he told Grant at Cawnpore, "though from the eagerness displayed about subscriptions to this new 5 per Cent loan, one would think the Dutch should get into vogue".66 But they did not, thanks above all, as Palmer’s colleagues had anticipated, to the Burma war and the consequent Government loans. "Nothing has been done, nor may be done whilst the Burman War lasts; and I conclude recourse must be had to Europe if any innovation upon their System is resolved upon..."67

Palmer made this suggestion in a long letter of explanation to Van der Capellen on 25 June,68 written in despair of being able to effect the object even partially.

A lamentable deficiency of Specie and of Bullion had been already been experienced here, before my arrival, while the wants of Government excited the acquisition of Silver in any form, the moment of its Importation from without, or from within; whilst the well-grounded Belief of large hoarded Funds amongst the Native Population, encouraged a Hope that a fresh Loan at 5 pr. Cent Interest, might tempt the opulent amongst them, to bring out their Treasure.

The Loan of the previous year, at 4 pr. Cent, had extracted a subscription, from all our possessions, of about 1,40,00,000 (probably the floating capital of our Territories) and that Loan was made the Fulcrum of the fresh one: for the conditions were, an equal Subscription of the 4 pr. Cent obligations, and of cash, for obligations in the 5 pr. Cent Loan. It is probable therefore that the Capital above quoted will be once more attracted to the Treasury; but that I verily believe is the utmost Latitude of the success of the present measure, admitted even that secreted Treasure be drawn forth by the Demand for the Subscriptions are very slow; and the 4 pr. Cent Notes are actually at a Discount of 1/12 pr. Cent. [sic in origine]. It is in this depreciation alone that I would repose a Belief of the secreted Treasure being disturbed; and that but partially for between the Loans such a rate of interest would be obtained as might tempt some of our Native Bankers to enlarge their dealings.

The Effect of this new Loan upon Men in our Situation, would, at all times, be embarrassing enough, but being announced before all our Annual Engagements were formed and concluded, it has been very severely felt by the whole Mercantile Community, and we suffer vast Inconvenience from it, to meet the sudden exigency of investing Balances, we expected to hold throughout the year of account... Your Excellency will perceive, from this state of things, that pecuniary Succour from here, is hopeless, though I will not abandon the effort of raising a Sufficient Fund to redeem your two existing Loans of 10,00,000 each, without, if possible, varying the Terms already proffered to the Public. Indeed, I have never imagined, under the peculiar Circumstances

65 Palmer to Treves, 14 April 1825. Eng. lett. c. 102, p. 31.
66 Palmer to Grant, 26 May 1825. Eng. lett. c. 102, p. 138.
68 Palmer to Van der Capellen, 25 June 1825. Eng. lett. c. 102, p. 188. See also A. Tripathi, Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1793-1833 (Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, 1956), p. 199.
of the Times and case, that higher Interest, or better Terms would have
induced extended Subscriptions to your Excellency’s Loan, or otherwise I
should have offered them at once. But, in the Dearth of Silver, and the
wants of the Government, and its little equivocal proceedings towards us,
success would scarcely depend upon the Superior Benefit of your Loan... 

Perhaps London might be tried, though it might again be necessary to offer
the interest he had been offering in India, namely 7 per cent. It is notable —
and understandable — that Palmer did not try offering 8 per cent in India.

Early in July he wrote of his

continued Disappointment. ... At this time Loans covered by realizable
and adequate security, are with difficulty obtained at 10 per Cent, and
whilst the enormous public Expenditure is continued, the Evil must aug­
ment. I do therefore as painfully as reluctantly abandon the attempt to
raise your Loan, altho’ I shall still feel it my duty to avail of any change in
circumstances which may enable me to provide for your Loan falling due
in December next for one million of Rupees. ... I am highly gratified that
your Excellency gives me credit for zealous and unsparing exertions to
raise your Loan; and have as generally as intelligently appreciated the
unexampled difficulty of the Times. This has been constantly increasing, for
never was there known so inconsiderable an Importation of Silver; or so
utterly disproportioned even to the ordinary Demand of the Country....

unless some speedy succour comes in, I really can foresee no mean of sup­
porting the public Expenditure but by legalizing a temporary Paper cur­
rent. I shall be happy to learn that your new Company brings large
supplies to your relief; but its regulations seem to preclude Loans or
Dealings in any Funded Property. I trust however that the Company
will aim at large Dealings in your Products...  

Though the situation in Batavia was desperate — especially with the opening
of the Dipo Negoro revolt — the Council was opposed to trying to raise money
in London. Presumably aid was expected from the N.H.M., or at least dis­
approval from Elout. Ultimately a loan of twenty million Netherlands guilders
was in fact approved by the States-General.

The desire of Van der Capellen to continue a “liberal” policy had put his
Government into debt, and the desire to retain some independence of the
Government in Europe and the N.H.M. made him turn to British India for
succour. The great loan, upon which he embarked perhaps in desperation and
certainly with doubt of success, precipitated the appointment of Du Bus as
Commissioner-General and the changes of policy that ensued. Whether, as
Palmer implied, economy would have saved Van der Capellen and his policy
seems doubtful. Ultimately pressures at home would have compelled a change,
if not the Java war, itself a result of “liberal” policy. Palmer tried to serve the
Indies administration in the first place in order to improve his general relations
with it and the general business prospects; and even the last loan, though itself
advantageous, was perhaps entered into with this view, since it was in face of

69 Palmer to Van der Capellen, 8 July 1825. Eng. lett. c. 102, p. 214.
the opposition his colleagues in India had raised (as he had himself earlier) against extensive loans. In all this there seems little room for the corruption of which Du Bus suspected Wappers.\(^{71}\) It seems much more likely that Palmer’s connection was not with his cupidity but with his ambition. The fact that Wappers believed that the 1824 project would help his career and that he wished to go home to present the case for it suggests a strange misjudgement of the situation but not a consciousness of corruption. Certainly he found himself in difficulty on his return and he asked Palmer to vouch for his character and principles. The merchant replied: “If not to coax and flatter your superiors, but fearlessly and honestly to express your Sentiments, if not to overreach your Equals in Transactions of moment as well as in common affairs, and if not to trample on your Subordinates and Inferiors were public virtues, then I know not the Man in Java more entitled to confidence, respect, and Esteem.”\(^{72}\)

Van der Capellen was also criticized on his return. While he was going home, Palmer wrote him a most flattering letter:

> Of Javan affairs I will not venture to speak, because I could only speak in sorrow and Despair: but Your Excellency need not deprecate a comparison of their condition under your parental Administration, with their subsequent State. Whatever might have been their exigency, your credit was never extinct, nor your Engagements violated...\(^{73}\)

But Palmer could write to another:

> The System of Economy imposed upon the Com. Genl. is what alone can rescue the Colony from Ruin. ... One half of the Civil, Military and Judicial Establishments was superfluous; and at least two thirds of the Naval; whilst at the same time, the degrading system of Checks and pomp of ridiculous Forms, multiplied the Labors of every Department, and every subordinate office, almost beyond the physical power of every Functionary. ...\(^{74}\)

And to Deans:

> I hear nothing of his [Van der Capellen’s] being in favour; and I scarcely...

---

\(^{71}\) Van der Kemp, *Ind. Gids*, 30th Year, ii, 1612–1613. Van der Kemp mentions one of the matters over which Wappers was criticized, the Government purchase of a warehouse from Deans and Co. at a price allegedly inflated by his intervention. It seems strange that Wappers should have risked what he had so far achieved by a favour to a merchant who was in any case interested in his success. Yet we find Palmer writing to him in September 1823: “I am infinitely obliged to you for your promised consideration and good offices towards little Deans, who is an active intelligent and worthy man, rallying under misfortunes which would have subdued the Energy of half the men in the world. Your attachment to him is a real consolation to me; and the motives for it equally acceptable and flattering. I know our obligations to you about their Stores, whilst you must be satisfied that you combined your public Duty, with an act of private kindness...” Palmer to Wappers Melis, 30 September 1823. *Eng. lett. c. 98*, p. 276. But this in any case is hardly evidence of Palmer’s or Deans’ corrupting Wappers.

\(^{72}\) Palmer to Deans, 29 September, 16 November 1826; to Wappers, 4 November 1826. *Eng. lett. c. 104*, pp. 88, 173, 200.

\(^{73}\) Palmer to Van der Capellen, 18 April 1827. *Eng. lett. c. 105*, p. 308.

expect it after his unfortunate administration; for so it must be considered in every Instance except the Palembang. He could not avoid the Expenses of his Government, but by a decided opposition to the cause of them, and for that and every other opposition he wanted Energy.  

Some in Java described Palmer, according to Wappers, as “the proud and haughty English Merchant pervading the Country en Prince, corrupting the public Functions, and laying the Govt. under arbitrary contribution. . .”. Palmer was rather at odds with Du Bus. Later in 1826 Palmer had written: “if he [Du Bus] is an honest Man, I am satisfied his Prejudices will subside, when he sees the Services I have rendered to his Government: if, as I believe, he is a Rogue, I shall covet his worst opinion. . .” In fact “we are said to owe him the loss of the Dutch Company’s Agency”. Subsequently some business was done, however, with the N.H.M. in substitution for the Government agency; and no doubt it was the more necessary to the Dutch because of “the dissolution of the Dutch Establishments in India” under the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824. Palmer was soon talking of “extended Dealings”. He told Deans:

I wholly agree with you as to the Importance and advantage of their Agency; and am as confident of their security, independent of my conviction of their Prosperity so long as they absorb all the Commerce of the Dutch Colonies. They have no cumbrous Establishments to support; and know better how to profit of the corruption which surrounds them, than strangers and aliens; and have the vigor and sinew wanting to the Colonists: I do not believe that any People on Earth Surpass the European Dutch in Commercial Pursuits — their extraordinary Economy, habitual Phlegm, infinite regularity and precision, facility in languages and great self control, almost leave them without Rival; and to our Enterprising alone do we owe a successful competition. . .

He might visit Java again and would be “glad know the Gentlemen who are come out” to form the N.H.M. Factorij. This letter also suggests that Du Bus was contemplating some new bil arrangement with Deans, and on this Palmer was not keen: “I hope his Excellency will. . . confine his Financial Contrivances to his loving Countrymen and dearly beloved Capitalists of Batavia. . .” Shortly after, however, Du Bus was investigating the £60,000 remittance arrangement of 1824.

75 Palmer to Deans, 5 May 1827. Eng. lett. c. 106, p. 17.
79 Palmer to Deans, 25 February 1826. Eng. lett. c. 103, p. 64. For the Anglo-Dutch treaty, see Nicholas Tarling, Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Malay World, 1780–1824 (Brisbane and Cambridge, 1962), chapters 4 and 5.
81 Palmer to Deans, 5 May 1827. Eng. lett. c. 106, p. 17.
82 Elout, op. cit., p. 78.
If the Cy. Gl. does not know, his colleagues will not forget that his Govt. could not have ensured the arrears of Payment of their Pensions which the Colonial Minister was bellowing for unless I had given them Bills to discharge the Debt and the common obligations of Justice and Humanity. . . . I took a fair rate of Exchange; as if I had been purchasing or selling a Bill for 1,000 £. I explained to the worthy Baron that I was trespassing upon my personal Influence with Cockerell, Trail and Co. and consequently that I was morally bound to secure their Interests by a liberal Commission and the right of charging Interest from the acceptance of the Bills, and that you must be remunerated for your agency in the Transaction. . . .

Late in 1827 Palmer visited Java again and was received by Du Bus civilly on Christmas day . . . He seemed to avail designedly of an allusion to little Deans to mention his contentions with our zealous and spirited friend in order to tell me that I had drove hard bargains with his predecessors . . . The imputation was not perhaps aimed at us at all, but it was obviously intended to inculpate the Baron Van der Capellen, and to enhance the merits of his own administration . . .

Palmer did not, however, "expect to escape some coarse invectives from His Excellency; as he has a rooted opinion of my having turned to the utmost possible advantage, all my transactions with the Baron Van der Capellen . . ." On 31 January Palmer had a long conference with Du Bus, an account of which is given in an abstract of a letter to Deans:

his discovered wish to inculpate the B. v. d. C. and criminate W[appers] M[elis] and J[ohn] D[eans] in extravagant and corrupt Transactions with my House — how repelled; readiness to justify my Engagements. His Ex. free Opinions of all Classes of Persons. Boasts of reforms in the whole Administration: liquidation of Debts — overflowing Treasury: and redemption of the Kings Pledge to make the Colony pay the public Debt of Holland; in order to place that part of his Dominions on a level with Belgium. His perfect acquaintance with all Branches of Business . . .

Palmer was still, however, trying to create good feeling (trying also, as for some years, to get rid of his Tjikandi estates), and he took shares in the new Javasche Bank — hardly "corruption", or at least not bribery, and perhaps rather comparable to his proceedings in the Van der Capellen period. Palmer also tried on his return to India to carry out a commission of the Commissioner General's. De Kock, the Commander-in-Chief, wanted sepoys for use in the Java war. Palmer saw the new Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, about procuring two thousand recruits. Bentinck was doubtful of his power to sanction such a measure, but Palmer mentioned that a predecessor, Lord Hastings, had permitted him "to collect a small body of Sepoys for the Raja elect

84 Palmer to Prinsep, 28 December 1827. Eng. lett. c. 127, p. 4.
of Acheh and publicly to obtain arms and military stores from the Arsenal for their Equipment". Bentinck suggested that the request be made official, but Palmer was doubtful, since this, and a subsequent refusal, might compromise Du Bus's dignity. The notion was finally abandoned. The war was indeed going better. In March 1829 Palmer congratulated his friend Nahuys, Resident at Surakarta and Jogjakarta, on the capture of the rebel leader Modjo, adding with an unusual note of sincerity:

I wish with all my soul that the cause had been a more righteous one: for... who can resist the conclusion that the Princes were driven into revolt; and took arms for the chance of preserving their Dominions from the meditated usurpations of your Govt. A man's Heart bleeds to find the mildest people in the world a prey to the Cupidity and Tyranny of their Superiors and Allies; and to know that disciplined Force and experienced Policy shall smother up the Rights, and Prayers and Tears, of such a People...
John Bastin

8  A Rare Early Book Printed in Malaysia

In Malaysia most of the early books were printed at the Malacca Mission Press which was established by the Reverend William Milne who brought the equipment (and the Chinese compositors) from Canton in 1815. The press formed part of a complex of presses directed by the London Missionary Society whose early leading light in Eastern Asia was the Reverend Robert Morrison, compiler of the first English dictionary of the Chinese language, and translator, with Milne, of the Protestant Bible into Chinese. So far as I know there is no detailed account of the Malacca Mission Press, though some information, including a list of its early issues, is to be found in Walter Henry Medhurst’s China: Its State and Prospects (London, 1838). While this list is incomplete, and fails to distinguish adequately between the titles printed in Malacca and Canton, it furnishes the astonishing information that 450,469 books, pamphlets, and tracts were printed by the Canton and Malacca presses between 1810 and 1836. This figure seems high, but I can only state, from my own count of titles not specifically included in the list, that it would appear to err merely in being conservative. Milne himself calculated that as early as 1817 not less than 36,000 pamphlets and tracts, exclusive of Holy Scriptures, had been printed in Malacca and Canton.4

This article is a revised and rewritten version of the Introduction to the facsimile reprint of John Anderson’s Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to The Malayan Peninsula (Prince of Wales Island, 1824) which was published in the Journal of the Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society (hereafter JMBRAS), XXXV, No. 4 (1965).


3 Appendix No. II, pp. 576-78. See also the Malacca titles listed in W. Milne, A Retrospect of the First Ten Years of the Protestant Mission to China (Malacca, 1820) and A. Wylie, Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese (Shanghai, 1867), passim.

POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL
CONSIDERATIONS
RELATIVE TO
The Malayan Peninsula,
AND THE
BRITISH SETTLEMENTS
IN THE
Straits of Malacca.

BY JOHN ANDERSON,
Of the Honorable East India Company's Civil Service, Pinang.

Prince of Wales Island,
Printed under the Authority of Government,
By WILLIAM COX.

1824.
Compared with the Malacca Mission Press the achievements of Malaysia's premier press, the Prince of Wales Island Government Press in Georgetown, were far less spectacular. Apart from the weekly *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, which commenced publication in 1806, the work of the Government Press was confined to printing official notices and broadsheets, though it did issue in 1807 what is undoubtedly the first book printed in Malaysia: J.S. [Shaw] *A Rough Sketch of Part of an Intended Essay Towards Ascertaining, Deducing, Elucidating, and Correctly Establishing the Rudiments of the Juh, Wee or Jahwee Language; Vulgarly called the Malay Language; Designed Principally for the Use of The Civil Servants of the East India Company, on the Establishment of the Prince of Wales Island.* Printed by A.B. Bone, at the Government Gazette Press, At the Expence of the Author, pp. [i-viii, 1] 2–92.

Seventeen years elapsed before another book (and two pamphlets) appeared under the Press's imprint, all written by John Anderson, Malay Translator to the Prince of Wales Island Government. The pamphlets I shall simply note, and pass on to the book which may be regarded as the first locally printed work on Malaysian history.

---

5 The *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* ceased publication in 1827, but was revived briefly during the 1830's. For some account of the early newspapers of Malacca, Penang and Singapore, see C.A. Gibson-Hill, "The Singapore Chronicle (1824–37)", *JMBRAS*, XXVI, No. 1 (1953), 175–99.
6 John Anderson was born in 1795, apparently in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, and was nominated a Writer on the establishment of the Prince of Wales Island Government in 1813. He was appointed Assistant to the Accountant and Auditor in 1816; Assistant to the Secretary to Government in 1817; Assistant to the Warehousekeeper in 1818; Sub-Treasurer and Assistant to the Warehousekeeper in 1819; Deputy Warehousekeeper and Malay Translator in 1820; Deputy Accountant, Deputy Auditor, Accountant to the Recorder's Court and Commissioner of the Court of Requests, with the rank of Factor, in 1822; Junior Merchant in 1824; Paymaster and Malay Translator in 1825; Accountant and Auditor, and Acting Secretary to Government in 1826; and Secretary to Government and Malay Translator with the rank of Senior Merchant in 1827. He went on home leave in 1829, and shortly afterwards retired from the East India Company's service to engage in mercantile activities in the United Kingdom. He died in London on 2 December 1845. *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. L. Stephen (London, 1885), I, 385–86; *The Gentleman's Magazine* (London, 1846), XXV n.s., p. 104; *The East-India Register and Directory for the years 1814–31*.

7 The two pamphlets were *Observations on the Restoration of Banca and Malacca to the Dutch, as affecting the Tin Trade and General Commerce of Pinang. The Result of a Political and Commercial Mission to the States of Perak, Selingore and Colong, in the Year 1818; and the Negotiations of Governor Bannerman, for obtaining a Free Navigation of the Rivers Mirbow and Muda, and Opening a Commercial Intercourse with the Patani Country (Prince of Wales Island, 1824), pp. i–iv, 1–52; and An Exposition of the Political and Commercial Relations of the Government of Prince of Wales Island, with the States on the East Coast of Sumatra from Diamond Point to Siack, containing a Brief Account of the Several Missions to these States, the Nature of the Trade Carried on Between Them and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca; the Produce of these Countries and the Duties and Port Charges Levied at the Several Places (Prince of Wales Island, 1824), pp. 1–52.* The latter pamphlet was subsequently incorporated as Chapter XIV in Anderson's book, *Acheen, and the Ports on the North and East Coasts of Sumatra; with Incidental Notices of the Trade in the Eastern Seas, and the Aggressions of the Dutch* (London, 1840), pp. i–xvi, 1–240. Anderson's other book is entitled *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra, in M.DCCC.XXIII*, under the
The book is entitled Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to The Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, and, as with the early issues of the Malacca Mission Press, is now extremely rare. However unlike the relatively long runs of many of the Malacca titles, only one hundred copies of Anderson’s book were printed, and of these nearly one-third were distributed through official East India Company channels in London and Calcutta. There they mostly disappeared, as did the remaining copies in the Penang secretariat, giving rise to a rumour that they had been destroyed on the orders of Government. This, at any rate, was what James Richardson Logan asserted in an editorial note when he reprinted the first part of the book in the Journal of the Indian Archipelago in 1854:

A work under the above title was compiled in the year 1824, by the late Mr. John Anderson, of the Penang Civil Service, then Secretary to [Government], at the instance and under the supervision of Mr. [Robert] Fullerton, Governor of the Straits Settlements. Only one hundred copies were printed, and of these a very limited number had been circulated, when for some reason or other they were recalled, and so strictly was the suppression of the work enforced, that Mr. Anderson was required to give his word of honor that he had not retained a single copy. One copy, however, seemed to have escaped notice and fell into the hands of the late Mr. [James Fairlie] Carnegy, who very justly deeming it a work of great interest in connection with the history of the Malayan Peninsula, in 1835 reprinted it in the Singapore Chronicle, which he then conducted. After Mr. Carnegy’s death this copy was sold at auction for 30 dollars and, we believe, sent to England.

Logan’s account of the suppression and destruction of Anderson’s book has been accepted by all later historians of Malaysia; I shall attempt to show that it has no foundation whatever.

Anderson finished writing his book some time towards the end of 1823 but for some unexplained reason he did not submit the manuscript to the Penang Government until September of the following year. In a covering letter to the Governor-in-Council he explained that his purpose in writing the book had been to remove some misconceptions which had arisen regarding the tributary...
dependence of the Malay state of Kedah upon Thailand, as implied in the despatch of the *bunga mas* (flowering tree of gold leaves), so that in any future British negotiations with Thailand the independence of Kedah could be asserted. He hoped that the book would also show the advantages to British interests of interfering in the affairs of Kedah.\(^{11}\)

The book is divided into two parts, the titles of which give sufficient indication of its contents:

Part First. Considerations on the Conquest of Quedah and Perak, by the Siamese; A brief Account of the early Malayan Establishments on the Peninsula of Malacca, and the Modern Relations with Siam; together with An Exposition of the Relative Connexion of the Quedah State with Prince of Wales Island; and Suggestions for the Security of British Interests and the Improvement of the Commerce of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca., pp. 1–112.

Part Second. Descriptive Sketch of the Tin Countries on the Western Coast of the Peninsula of Malacca, from The Island of Junk Ceylon to the River Lingi near Malacca, and the Rivers on that Coast; Intended to exhibit the Boundaries of the Several States, their Natural Productions, as Objects of Commerce, &c., pp. 113–204.

It was the opinion of Henry Burney, who negotiated the Anglo-Thai Treaty of 1826,\(^{12}\) that Anderson’s book was responsible for allying the Governor of Penang, Robert Fullerton, with the anti-Siamese party in the colony.\(^{13}\) The evidence certainly suggests that this was so. Fullerton arrived in Penang during August 1824 after a long period of service in Madras. As his administrative experience was confined to India,\(^{14}\) he could not have come to the Straits with any precise knowledge of affairs in the Malay Peninsula and he must therefore have been dependent on local sources of information. Anderson’s manuscript was among the first things that he read, and its influence on him is evident in the long despatch which he addressed to the Supreme Government on 19 October 1824 urging the adoption of a strong anti-Thai policy in the peninsula and the restoration of the ex-Sultan of Kedah. Fullerton’s despatch, in the words of Lennox A. Mills, “read almost like an abstract of Anderson’s pamphlet”.\(^{15}\)

It would appear that Fullerton authorized the publication of *Considerations* on his own authority as he did not inform his colleagues on the Penang Council.

---


12 See *The Burney Papers* (Bangkok, 1910–14), 5 vols.

13 Burney to Secretary Court of Directors, 31 July 1841, Burney MSS. Box D, IX (Royal Commonwealth Society, London); Board’s Collections, 82466, fols. 281–516 (India Office Records, London).

14 Fullerton was appointed Writer on 27 July 1789, and held various posts on the Madras establishment, including those of Second Member of Council and President of the Board of Trade. *Alphabetical List of the Honourable East India Company’s Madras Civil Servants, from the year 1780, to the year 1839* (London, 1839), pp. 108–9.

of his action until December 1824, by which time the book was in print. In a Minute of 10 December he wrote:  

Mr. J. Anderson the Malay Translator under this Government, submitted to me some time ago a Manuscript Paper, drawn up by him on a variety of subjects, affecting the Commercial Interests of this Island, as well as our Political relations with Siam and the Malayan States, compiled partly from the Records of Government, and partly from those sources of private information to which his official pursuits had afforded him access. Considering that this Paper contained a concentration of Information highly useful to all Public Authorities employed in the Administration of the affairs of this Presidency, and which could only be otherwise come at by a long and careful examination of a voluminous mass of Records, I authorized that Gentleman to superintend the printing of the same on the part of Government:— it being distinctly understood that the number of copies was not to exceed that required for the above purpose, and all such were to be the property of Government, and not circulated or otherwise published without the consent of the Honorable Court of Directors. Mr. Anderson having now delivered 100 Copies, I propose that they be distributed as . . . [follows]:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the Honble Court of Directors</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Supreme Government</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Appendixes to the Proceedings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Gov. &amp; Members of Council</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remainder to be kept in the Secretary's Office</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the Political views and opinions of the Writer, it is quite unnecessary for us to enter into any discussion, nor would such be proper on the present occasion, because the general sentiments entertained by us as to the future course of Policy to be observed, whether in respect to the King of Queda or the other Malay States in the Peninsula, must, as circumstances require become the subjects of reference for the consideration of the Right Honorable the Governor General, whose directions will form the rule of actions to be followed by us. But as it has ever been the liberal policy of the Honorable Court of Directors to encourage amongst their Servants a spirit of research, and the pursuit after useful information by rewarding those who have devoted their leisure hours to that purpose: I propose that the transmission of the Copies intended for the Honble Court be accompanied by a favourable recommendation of this Government, and that they be solicited to bestow on that Gentleman such remuneration as they may in their judgement see fit, with reference to the time and labor occupied in the Compilation.

Actually only twenty-five copies of the book were sent to the Court of Directors in London and five to the Supreme Government in Calcutta.  

16 Straits Settlements Records, Vol. 96, Consultations 16 December 1824.
17 Straits Settlements Records, Vol. 96, Consultations 16 December 1824. The Prince of Wales Island Council recorded its approbation “at the zeal for the public interests evinced by Mr. Anderson” in writing the book, and agreed to the despatch of the copies to London and Calcutta “accompanied by an expression of the sentiments of the Board as . . . recorded in [Fullerton’s Minute], and a recommendation to the Honble Court conformably to the latter part of the . . . Minute”.

latter copies was acknowledged in a despatch of 14 January 1825 wherein the book was described as “this very useful Work which is considered by His Lordship in Council to be extremely creditable to Mr Anderson’s intelligence, zeal and industry in the Public Service.”¹⁸ This was also the view of the Directors who thought that Anderson’s various pamphlets contained “much interesting information and display[ed] great industry and research”. The Court however opposed the suggestion that Anderson should be granted some pecuniary remuneration for his labours as this would constitute “a bad precedent”.¹⁹

These appear to be the only references to the book in the East India Company records; certainly no further mention is made of it in the “Secret” or “Public” despatches of the Court of Directors to Prince of Wales Island down to the middle of 1829 when Anderson was given local leave to settle his affairs preparatory to returning to Europe.²⁰ The book obviously had considerable relevance to the treaties concluded by Henry Burney and James Low with Thailand and Perak in 1826,²¹ and it was in direct conflict with official British policy towards Kedah and Thailand during these years; but there is no evidence to show that any action was taken by the Directors or the Supreme Government to suppress it. What, then, is the source of Logan’s story that the book was withdrawn from circulation and the remaining copies of it destroyed?

The genesis of the story appears in the Singapore Chronicle of 11 April 1835 when its editor, James Fairlie Carnegy, announced his intention to reprint the whole of Anderson’s book. In an editorial note Carnegy wrote:

We have great pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to an extract from the first division of a work on the Malayan Peninsula under the head of “Considerations on the Siamese Conquest of Quedah and Perak”, and it is our intention to continue such extracts in short and convenient portions until the whole work has been gone through.²² It is not improbable a very large proportion of the European part of the Straits Community may not have had an opportunity of before perusing the work which although printed so long ago as 1824 under the auspices of the late Mr. Fullerton the Governor of the Straits Settlements, still the impressions struck off were strictly limited to a very few copies, distributed we believe to the heads of the Government in India and to the personal friends of

---

¹⁹ Court to Prince of Wales Island, 19 April 1826, [Secret] Letters to Prince of Wales Island from 7 Jan. 1824 to 12 May 1830, fols. 367-69 (India Office Records, London).
²¹ Mills, JMBRAS, XXXIII, No. 3 (1960), 161 ff.
²² I have had access only to a defective file of the Singapore Chronicle, but Part 1 of Anderson’s book appears to have been reprinted in the following issues: Vol. 5, No. 15 n.s. (11 April 1835) [= Anderson, pp. 1-13]; No. 17 n.s. (25 April 1835) [= Anderson, pp. 13-42]; No. 20 n.s. (16 May 1835) [= Anderson, pp. 42-55]; No. 22 n.s. (30 May 1835) [= Anderson, pp. 55-69]; No. 24 n.s. (13 June 1835) [= Anderson, pp. 69-82]; no. 26 n.s. (27 June 1835) [= Anderson, pp. 82-93]; No. 27 n.s. (13 July 1835) [= Anderson, pp. 93-112.] In an editorial note in Vol. 5, No. 41 n.s. (24 October 1835) Carnegy announced his intention to reprint Part 2 of the book, and the first extract appeared in No. 42 n.s. (31 October 1835).
Mr. Fullerton in the Direction at home. We understand, that even a copy of the author's own labour was denied to him, which if correct, it is not probable any out of the Service would be highly favored. The Copy which we have, and of which we intend to take ample advantage, came into our possession by an accidental purchase at a public auction, so that the interest of a work so long and so closely kept from the public will lose none of its zest, nor our readers any of their pleasure in the perusal of it from any apprehension of what we are purveying has been obtained through surreptitious means. The public are indebted for the work to John Anderson Esqre. formerly of the Honorable Company's Civil Establishment at Pinang who progressed through the different grades of the service until he attained the rank of a provisional Member of Council, and finally retired from the service some years ago with many honorable testimonials from Government. From the talents, activity, and industry of that gentleman better known to the Pinang than the Singapore Community, it is to be supposed that no opportunities would be omitted to avail himself of the many favourable circumstances and occasions afforded him while acting as Commercial Agent to the Government and conducting the correspondence between the late Governor (Mr. [W.E.] Phillips) and the authorities at Ligore and Quedah, in the acquisition of the fullest and most authentic information on the interesting subject of the Malayan States from official records and other documents.

Here, then, are all the elements of the story which gained such wide currency after it appeared in Logan's *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* nineteen years later. In the light of what is now known, it is surprising that the source of the story was Carnegy, for he was Anderson's brother-in-law and could therefore easily have checked the facts if he had wanted to. Of course, the story of the suppression of the book rested on the assumption that it was a source of embarrassment to the Government as it exposed the vacillation and bad faith of official British policy towards Kedah; but the interesting thing is that when rumours about the book's suppression were given a new lease of life in 1840 and 1841 it was being asserted by the anti-Anderson faction that the book had been withdrawn from circulation not by the Government but by its author because of its many factual inaccuracies. The details of this particular controversy are complicated but require explanation; they relate to the affairs of Tengku Mohamed Saad, a nephew of the ex-Sultan of Kedah, who had been active in fomenting Malay opposition to Thai rule in that state.

* *

Between 26 October and 2 November 1840 Tengku Mohamed Saad, two other Malay rajas, and ten of their followers, were arraigned before the Court of Judicature in Penang, in its Admiralty jurisdiction, on a charge of piracy. They were represented by two Law Agents, William Balhetchet and

---

23 Anderson married Mary Alison, second daughter of the Penang merchant, James Carnegy, on 30 May 1818 (Prince of Wales Island Gazette, 6 June 1818). For certain details about James Fairlie Carnegy and his connection with the *Singapore Chronicle*, see Gibson-Hill, *JMBRAS*, XXVI, No. 1 (1953), 175-99.
James Richardson Logan, who developed a spirited defence on the grounds that Kedah was an independent state whose integrity had been earlier recognized by the East India Company. In support of this argument Anderson's book was admitted in evidence and freely cited during the trial by the defence counsel, both of whom made reference to the fact that the Penang Government had destroyed all copies of the book at an earlier, unspecified, date. Logan mentioned the matter only in passing ("... as the only copy of Mr. Anderson's work to be found in Pinang, and not recalled apparently by an oversight of government... "); Balhetchet, on the other hand spelled out the details: "I have already mentioned... that the government recalled all copies of this book that could be discovered; that Mr. Anderson was obliged to give his word of honour that he did not retain a copy, and that this copy now produced [in evidence] and proved is from the library of Mr. James Fairlie Carnegy of this Island a brother in law of Mr. Anderson." As these statements went unchallenged by anyone in authority, such as the Resident Councillor, James William Salmond, who was present at the trial and actually required to give evidence on the authenticity of Anderson's book, there is naturally a strong presumption that they are true. Certainly Balhetchet's statement contains all the ingredients of the later editorial note in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*.

Tengku Mohamed Saad was ultimately acquitted of the charge of piracy but instead of being freed he was sent as a state prisoner to Calcutta where an attempt to secure his release by writ of *habeas corpus* failed through the efforts of Government in having him smuggled to Murshidabad. This action produced a storm of criticism in the Calcutta press, especially in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, which reprinted a transcript of the Penang trial. The Supreme Government undoubtedly experienced some embarrassment from the publicity given to the affair, but Lord Auckland managed to quieten matters by having compiled a complete set of records relating to the British connection with Kedah and making them available to the press. The *Calcutta Courier* and *Friend of India* immediately modified their earlier critical line, as a result of which they became engaged with the anti-Government *Bengal Hurkaru* in a controversy.

---


25 The *Friend of India*, 1 July 1841, denied that the records had been received directly from the Supreme Government, but the circumstances strongly suggest that Government arranged for them to fall into the hands of the press.
which, in part, related to the accuracy or otherwise of Anderson's book:

The enemies of the Quedah cause, have endeavoured to decrease the value of Mr. Anderson's work, because it makes against them, and they have designated it a garbled compilation, fabricated for a particular purpose. (Bengal Hurkaru, 29 March 1841.)

Mr. Anderson's account of the taking of Quedah is stated to be a perfect romance and greatly contradicted by the report of the Penang Government. Mr. Anderson's book was never suppressed by order of the Supreme Government. It is more likely that he and Mr. Fullarton [sic] became ashamed of it, and stopped its circulation. (Friend of India, 1 April 1841.)

The Hurkaru says, that Mr. Anderson was engaged by the British Government to compile his work, but this is an error, and not the less so because commonly entertained. Mr. Anderson and the Governor of Penang (Fullerton) published it with the intention of aiding the desire they entertained of having Quedah annexed to Penang, . . . The opinion that Mr. Anderson's book was prepared by desire of the Home Government probably arose from the latter taking one hundred copies, but that was their practice when a work was published by any of their public servants; and as to its being subsequently withdrawn from circulation, we can only say that if any attempt was made to suppress it, we conceive that it was without the knowledge of Government, and by Mr. Anderson's own directions for reasons best known to himself. (Calcutta Courier, 30 March 1841.)

This controversy in the Calcutta press soon engaged the attention of the London newspapers as well as Burney and Anderson, both of whom addressed long memoranda to the Court of Directors expounding their views on Kedah's relations with Great Britain and Thailand. The details of this controversy need not concern us, except that we must note, what has hitherto escaped attention, Anderson's categorical denial that his book was ever suppressed or copies of it destroyed by the Penang Government. This denial is incorporated in a paragraph in the Asiatic Journal of 1841:

It has been said that, subsequently to the treaty with Siam [in 1826], this work was suppressed, one copy only having escaped destruction; but Mr. Anderson, who is now in England, has expressly declared that the work was undertaken, compiled from official records, and published, at the suggestion and with the approval of Governor Fullarton [sic], who strongly recommended the author; "the governor" he [Anderson] says, "also distributed several copies, and the work was read by nearly all the officers of Government, civil and military, and freely commented on. No copies were called in, nor pledge required, while I was at Penang, during nearly six years after its appearance".

---
26 Anderson to Court, 11 August 1841, and Burney to Court, 31 July 1841, Board's Collections, 82466, fols. 263–80, 281–516. A copy of Burney's letter is also to be found in Burney MSS. Box D, IX (Royal Commonwealth Society, London). See also J. Anderson, "Siam and Quedah," Asiatic Journal, XXXV n.s. (1841), 144–59.
27 "Quedah, and Tuanku Mahomed Saad," Asiatic Journal, XXXV n.s. (1841), 111–12.
28 It is exceedingly curious that James Low, who was in Penang at the time, did not know of the book. In the introductory paragraph of his "A Retrospect of British Policy in the Straits
This statement by Anderson effectively demolishes the story of the book’s suppression and destruction, but it does not explain how the story gained ground after it first appeared in the *Singapore Chronicle* in 1835, or why it went unchallenged during the trial of Tengku Mohamed Saad five years later. The most likely explanation is that rumours began to circulate because spare copies of the book, which were supposed to have been kept in the Penang Government secretariat, were dispersed through private circulation soon after it was printed; and Logan and Balhetchet’s charges went unchallenged in 1840 because by then there was no one in government service who had any intimate knowledge of Fullerton’s administration of the 1820’s.

*The conclusion that the book was not suppressed by Government accords not only with Anderson’s categorical statement on the matter, but also with the fact that more copies of it survived than was supposed by Carnegy and Logan. During the trial of Tengku Mohamed Saad it was asserted that only one copy of the book was to be found in Penang — that belonging to Carnegy — and fourteen years later Logan stated that this sole surviving copy had found its way to the United Kingdom. But in 1841 there were at least three copies in Calcutta, presumably part of the consignment of five which had been despatched there from Penang in 1824, and no attempt had been made by Government to destroy them. A century later Professor Lennox A. Mills, who accepted the story of the suppression of the book, referred to five extant copies; I have found another six, making eleven in all. I have no doubt that there are others, particularly in libraries in India. Oriental booksellers in London inform me that a survival rate of ten per cent of a book published so obscurely as *Considerations* is entirely reasonable, and this opinion adds further support to the conclusion that no copies of the book were wilfully destroyed. I have marked with an asterisk those copies of the book which I have been able to examine personally:

2. *India Office Library, London*: two copies:
   (i) a copy* bearing the ink inscription on the title-page “R[ceived] from

   of Malacca...”, *Burney Papers*, Vol. V, Part i, p. 1, he declared: “The following account was written by me several years ago and before I was aware of the nature of a pamphlet which had been published by Mr. Anderson and which, from having been distributed at the time and privately to a few individuals only, did not become public until its republication in the *Singapore Chronicle* in 1835.” From these remarks we may infer that Low’s later assertion (*Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, IV [1850], 26) that the book had been suppressed by Government was based on what he had learned from the *Singapore Chronicle* of 1835 and from what had passed at the trial of Tengku Mohamed Saad in 1840.

29. *Trial of Tuanku Mahomed Saad* (Penang, n.d.). The editor of this transcript added the following note to Balhetchet’s statement cited in the text above: “We know positively that this is the only copy of the book on this Island.”
32. *JMBRAS*, III, No. 2 (1925), 34, n. 71; XXXIII, No. 3 (1960), 42-43, n. 16.
Mr. Dart 28 July 1825", and bound up with Anderson's two other pamphlets, *Observations on the Restoration of Banca and Malacca to the Dutch...* (Prince of Wales Island, 1824), and *An Exposition of the Political and Commercial Relations of the Government of Prince of Wales Island, with the States on the East Coast of Sumatra...* (Prince of Wales Island, 1824).

(ii) a second copy,* with a slip of paper bound-in bearing the ink inscription, "Received from Secretary Sept: 8. 1837".

4 *The British Museum, London*: one copy.*


6 *Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*: one copy* which was formerly in the possession of C.O. Blagden, one-time Reader in Malay at the School. It bears an ink inscription on one of the fly-leaves: "E libris Charles Otto Blagden Malacca 1893."

7 *Library of the Royal Commonwealth Society, London*: one copy* which was purchased by the Society (then the Royal Colonial Institute) in 1893.

8–9 *Library of the Perak State Museum, Taiping*: two copies:

(i) a copy* which is bound up with Anderson's pamphlet, *Observations on the Restoration of Banca and Malacca to the Dutch...* (Prince of Wales Island, 1824).

(ii) a copy to which Leonard Wray made reference in a letter to the *Singapore Free Press*, 17 April 1905, in answer to an appeal from the Curator and Librarian of the Raffles Museum, Singapore, for information about Anderson's *Considerations*. Wray's letter reads:

'Sir,—In answer to your literary query respecting John Anderson's work on "Political and Commercial Considerations relative to the Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca" I may inform you that there are two copies of the book in the Library of the Perak State Museum. One copy was bought from the late Mr. Noel Denison, Superintendent of Lower Perak and the second was presented by Sir Hugh Low G.C.M.G. formerly British Resident, Perak. The first was bought from some Bookseller in London for £2. and is stated to be "very rare".'


11 A copy sold as lot 157 at Sotheby & Company's London sale on 17 November 1969. Bound in straight-grained red morocco, it bears the contemporary ink inscription on the first flyleaf: "The Right Honorable (Lord Amherst) Governor General." Amherst was Governor-General between 1823 and 1828, so the book would appear to be a presentation copy, given by the author or, more likely, by Robert Fullerton, Governor of Prince of Wales Island.
What makes this copy unique is the fine water-colour drawing on an inside leaf entitled "King of Quedah", and signed by the artist, A.T. Fransiz. The portrait is obviously that of Sultan Ahmad Taju’d-din Halimshah, the figutive ruler of Kedah, and was most probably executed soon after the book’s publication. It therefore represents, to the best of my knowledge, the earliest known portrait of a Malay ruler of one of the peninsular states. The book was purchased at Sotheby’s sale by Maggs Bros. Ltd., 50 Berkeley Square, London, and was subsequently listed as item No. 748 in their sale catalogue *Voyages and Travels*, Vol. 6, Part V, No. 924 (May 1970) for £500.
Colonial Education Policy and Social Change in Indonesia, 1860-1900

Until the mid-nineteenth century Dutch colonial policy had for most of the time been based on the principle of non-interference in indigenous affairs. During the period of the Dutch East India Company the profit motive ruled supreme and education facilities were only extended to servants of the Company and Indonesian Christians. The number of pupils in Company schools in 1799 has been estimated at 6,680 of whom about 5,000 were Indonesian Christians.¹

A change in colonial policy occurred in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The various Liberal-inspired governments which succeeded the Dutch East India Company after its dissolution in 1799 were prepared to admit — at least in principle — a greater degree of responsibility for the economic and social advancement of the indigenous population. Very promising was the Fundamental Law of the Netherlands Indies (1818) which contained the first definite statement that it was the duty of the government to provide educational facilities to European as well as indigenous children. It was also promulgated that Indonesian children were to be allowed entry into European primary schools.²

However, this “Liberal experiment” in Dutch colonial administration failed and the promising education plans were not allowed to materialize because of a lack of finance. During the 1820’s the colonial treasury faced a serious impasse and loans had to be granted by the Home government to prevent the Indies from falling into bankruptcy.

More drastic measures were needed to make the Indies profitable to the mother country — the sole raison d'être of colonies at the time — and in 1830 the Liberal direction in colonial policy was abandoned and the Cultuurstelsel ( Forced Cultivation and Consignment System) was introduced. Under this system Javanese peasants were forced to grow export produce on part of their land in return for low prices. The monopoly of buying, transporting, and selling these crops was granted to the Nederlandsche Handelsmaatschappij (Netherlands Trading Company). At the same time the colonial government was ordered to cut down drastically on expenditure. In terms of native policy this meant a return to the

¹ I. J. Brugmans, Geschiedenis van het Onderwijs in Ned. Indie (Groningen/Batavia, 1938), p. 54.
policies of the Dutch East India Company and, in line with normal business procedures, the overheads of colonial administration were kept as low as possible. Hence any suggestions to improve the social and intellectual situation of the indigenous population were bound to be dismissed on the grounds that such expenditure would be unproductive and would lower profits. As a result only very few Indonesians were able to receive a Western-type education. Only Christian Mission schools received some measure of financial support from the colonial government. In the period 1846–49 about 15,000 children of Indonesian Christians are reported as attending mission schools, while in 1847 only 47 non-Christian Indonesian children were attending European primary schools. Brugmans' argument that the small number of non-Christian Indonesians in European primary schools was entirely due to parental apathy needs qualification, because a number of Javanese Regents are known to have provided Western-style schooling to their children on their own account. A more important reason perhaps was the attitude of the colonial government which initially discouraged and finally, in 1849, forbade Indonesians to attend European primary schools.

The ascendancy of laissez-faire Liberalism in politics in Holland in the period 1848–1870 also gradually caused a change in Dutch thinking on colonial affairs; recognition was made of the need to provide Western education facilities to the indigenous population. The Liberal colonial education policy has so far received scant treatment from historians perhaps because the actual number of Indonesians involved was pitifully small. For example, in 1900 only 78,719 children or 1.1 per cent of a total of 6,739,101 children in the age group 6–13 years were attending public and private primary schools. Yet in spite of this quantitative insignificance Liberal education policy caused important changes in the social field, particularly in the lower and medium reaches of the prijaji class, a point which so far has escaped serious investigation by historians. The main purpose of this article, which is based on published Dutch materials, is to draw attention to the need for a more detailed investigation of archival sources in The Hague and Djakarta.

In 1848 a new constitution was adopted in the Netherlands which ensured a more important role in government to the Liberal bourgeoisie — “the thinking part of the nation”. The power of the King was curtailed by the principle of ministerial responsibility, and the citizen was guaranteed the

---

4 H.I.O.C., No. 9, le stuk: Historisch overzicht..., p. 16.
6 H.I.O.C., No. 9, le stuk: Historisch Overzicht..., pp. 15–19.
7 Ibid., No. 7a: De nog wachtende taak op onderwijsgebied (Batavia, 1931), p. 11.
8 Javanese princes (pangeran) and regents (bupati) and their descendants are known by the Javanese as prijaji. The term is often used in a wider sense including all government officials.
fundamental human rights of freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, and freedom of association.

For the colonies the new constitution stipulated that the minister was to submit to parliament a yearly report about the state of affairs in the colonies and that the principles of colonial policy were to be regulated by the legislature. The Liberal colonial programme was largely concerned with opening up the Indies for private enterprise, although humanitarian considerations also played a part.

Criticism about abuses in colonial administration had reached Holland only sporadically during the heyday of the Cultuurstelsel. It was only from the mid-1840's onwards that there seems to have been "an awakening of the national conscience". Pamphlets appeared decrying the miserable lot of the Javanese and newspapers featured stories about the situation in the Indies. In particular reports about famines in Grobongan and Demak in 1847 seem to have caused much upheaval in the Netherlands. The struggle for the "arme Javaan" (poor Javanese) was carried on in parliament by a small but vociferous group of humanitarians foremost of whom was van Hoevell, who stressed that, instead of exploitation, the first duty of the colonial government was to raise the economic and intellectual standards of the indigenous population. Criticism about the suppression and maltreatment of the Javanese increased during the 1850's and reached its culmination in 1860 with the publication of the Max Havelaar by Multatuli who in particular directed the attention of the Dutch public to the malpractices of Javanese officials.

10 In order to stimulate production the colonial government in 1832 awarded officials 50 cents for every picul (61.7 kilograms) of sugar produced. Similar arrangements came into existence for other export crops such as tobacco, tea, and spices. Many Dutch and Indonesian officials in an excessive zeal for profits tried to drive up production in their particular areas to the utmost limit. In some areas the pressure put on the population was so great that neither time nor sufficient land was left for essential food production. In some areas of Java famine occurred in 1846 and 1847. For example in Demak starvation and emigration caused a fall in population from 336,000 to 120,000 between 1848 and 1850. Reinsma, op. cit., p. 27, and H.T. Colenbrander, Koloniale Geschiedenis (The Hague, 1926) III, p. 42.
11 Wolter Robert baron van Hoevell departed for the Indies in 1836 as a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. He was an ardent Liberal with a genuine interest in improving the lot of the indigenous population. He propounded his ideas in his Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indje. He became involved in a movement in 1848 which petitioned the King for freedom of the press, secondary schools, and representation in Dutch parliament. He resigned his post largely because of government pressure and returned to the Netherlands where he was elected to the Tweede Kamer (Lower House). He retained his seat until 1862. Colenbrander, op. cit., pp. 43-44, and Vandenbosch Amry, The Dutch East Indies, Its Government, Problems, and Politics (Michigan, 1933) p. 48, note 14.
12 Multatuli, pseudonym for Eduard Douwes Dekker, 1820-87. Arrived in the Indies in 1838 where, after having served in many parts of the archipelago, he was appointed assistant-resident of Lebak (West Java) in 1856. He soon became involved in a dispute with the resident whom he accused of weakness in dealing with local Javanese officials who were pillaging and suppressing their own people. Dekker was transferred to another post but refused to mend his ways and was discharged from the colonial service. On his return to Europe he published Max Havelaar and numerous other writings in which he vividly described the inhumanity of Dutch rule. Multatuli, Max Havelaar of de koffieveilingen der Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (Rotterdam, 1962), pp. 5-14.
The main point of contention between the Liberals and the Conservatives was the question of how the colony could be exploited most efficiently. Most Liberals believed just as strongly as their opponents that the colonies existed for the benefit of the mother country.

The impact, however, of Liberal thinking on colonial policy was only gradual:

... It is wrong to think that as a natural result of the direct elections in 1848 there immediately occurred a more realistic appreciation of colonial conditions. The exhortations of van Hoevell in the Lower House... were exciting and new both in form and content. One did not know what to admire most: his considerable knowledge of the Indies... the boldness of the demands which he put or implied, or the glowing and eloquent manner in which his demands were formulated. But however much one liked to listen to Baron van Hoevell when it came to voting — at least about important questions — one turned away and listened to Baud [Conservative expert on colonial affairs].

Hence the Fundamental Law of the Netherlands Indies of 1854 was a compromise in that it foreshadowed the gradual abolition of forced cultivation and tried to protect the indigenous population from the abuses and excesses of the Cultuurstelsel. The influence of Liberal thought is more directly visible in the clauses abolishing slavery and granting citizens the fundamental right of freedom of conscience. Freedom of the press and freedom of association were still severely restricted. Significantly, a number of clauses established the principle that the colonial government was bound to provide education to the indigenous population.

It was not until the 1860's that Liberalism was triumphant in Dutch politics and the death blow was delivered to the Cultuurstelsel. At the same time the Liberal-inspired educational programme began to gain momentum, and the period 1860-1900 saw a distinct break with the past. In contrast to the previous centuries of Dutch rule it now became official policy to encourage at least upper-class Indonesians to learn the Dutch language. Liberals argued that, in view of the underdeveloped state of the various indigenous languages, a knowledge of Dutch would speed up intellectual development and would be a great civilizing force. In a submission to the colonial government the Inspector of Native Education, van der Chijs, argued that in Indonesia the Dutch language should be allowed to act a role similar to the one played by Latin in medieval Europe.

Another important reason for the spreading of the Dutch language among Indonesians was the growing demand of the rapidly expanding economy for lower grade Dutch-speaking personnel.

In line with the Liberal principle of ensuring equal opportunities to all citizens the Minister of Colonies, Fransen van de Putte, in 1864 took the

14 H.I.O.C., No. 9, le stuk: Historisch overzicht... p. 42.
momentous decision — which again broke completely with past policy — to open civil service positions to all population groups in the colony. Candidates were to be accepted into the civil service on the basis of competitive examination. Two types of examinations were instituted: the *Kleinambtenaarsexamen* (Lower Clerical Entrance Examination) which demanded an educational standard equal to that of the European primary school, and the *Grootambtenaarsexamen* (Higher Clerical Entrance Examination) which required secondary school qualifications.\(^{15}\)

Closely connected was the decision to open European primary schools to Indonesians and the introduction of secondary education in the colony. The first secondary school, the *Gymnasium Willem III*,\(^ {16}\) had already been opened in Batavia in 1860. From 1867 onwards this school, which soon after changed its name to *Hogere Burgerschool* (*H.B.S.*),\(^ {17}\) provided a special course preparing pupils for the *Grootambtenaarsexamen*. Other secondary schools of the *H.B.S.* type were established in Surabaja in 1875 and Semarang in 1877.\(^ {18}\)

In addition to the European primary school and the *H.B.S.*, which in principle were opened to all races in the colony, the colonial government also set up special schools of more advanced training for Indonesians. First in this category were the various teachers' training schools in which Dutch was used as the medium of instruction. Then in 1878 four-year schools especially designed for sons of *prijaji*, the *Hoofdenscholen*, were founded at Bandung (West Java), Magelang (Central Java), Probolinggo (East Java), and Tondano (Celebes). In these schools Dutch was also the medium of instruction. More important, in terms of Indonesian social and political development, was the *Dokter-Djawa school* established in 1851 in Batavia for the purpose of training Indonesian vaccinators. In 1864 the original two years training course was expanded to three years and now, in addition to vaccination, students were given instruction in minor surgery and the diagnosis and treatment of common diseases. In 1875 there was a further important reorganization. The course was extended to seven years and the first two years were devoted to raising students to the required level of general education and to training them in the Dutch language. Dutch was adopted as the language of instruction during the actual five-year training course, which included, in addition to a large number of medical subjects, physics, chemistry, botany, and biology. Again in 1900-1902 another reorganization took place. The course was lengthened and the name of the school was changed to *School Tot Opleiding Van Indische Arissen* (*S.T.O.V.I.A.* — School for the training of Indies doctors). By now this institute had reached university level, and its graduates were eligible to qualify for a Dutch medical

---

\(^ {16}\) The *Gymnasium* evolved from the old Humanist Latin schools and therefore a great deal of emphasis was placed in the curriculum on the Latin and Greek classics. Until 1917 the Gymnasium was the only type of high school granting matriculation status.
\(^ {17}\) *Hogere Burgerschool* means literally High School for Burghers. These schools were similar in curriculum to the Gymnasium with the exception that the classics were not taught.
\(^ {18}\) *Brugmans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 149 and 152.
degree after one year of further study at a university in the Netherlands. An attempt was also made to provide schools for the general indigenous population. As a first step in this direction an Inspector of Native Education was appointed in 1864. This was followed in 1867 by the establishment of a Department of Education and finally in 1871–72 the provision of elementary education to Indonesians was regulated by law. Three-year elementary schools were to be established catering for the whole of the indigenous population irrespective of class and providing at least instruction in the three R’s. To cope with the need for qualified teachers six new teachers’ training schools were opened between 1873 and 1879. The duration of the latter course was to be four years and the Dutch language was given an important place in the curriculum.

It was soon apparent that the primary school system which was established under the Education Regulations of 1871 was not only inefficient but also too expensive. Critics of the system pointed to the high rate of absenteeism and the practice of leaving school before completion of the course. For example, in the period 1878–82 Indonesian children on the average stayed away from school one day out of every five, while in the same period 69.7 per cent of pupils left school during the first, 19.4 per cent during the second year, and 7.5 per cent in the third year, leaving only 3.4 per cent of first year entrants to receive a school certificate (tamat belajar). Moreover the standard of education left a great deal to be desired because of a lack of qualified teachers. Teacher training schools showed a high failure rate, because trainees on the whole were not able to cope with the large range of subjects which were taught in Dutch, a foreign language, by European teachers who usually had no knowledge of the local vernacular. Hence many unqualified teachers were appointed. To make matters worse, many of the qualified teachers were often ineffective because they attempted to instruct their pupils in the whole range of subjects, including Dutch, which they had been taught at the teacher training school.

A controversy occurred in the colony on the fundamental causes of the inefficiency of the education system. The Liberal director of education, Stortenbeker, was of the opinion that the idea of one basic school type with a flexible curriculum serving the whole of the indigenous population had apparently misfired, because the educational needs of neither upper-class children nor lower-class children were satisfied. In Stortenbeker’s view educational needs were determined by the social status and function of the parents and hence he suggested that entry into the existing elementary schools should be restricted to upper-class children and that simpler schools — teaching the three R’s — should be set up for the remainder of indigenous children.

22 Ibid., p. 1.
23 Ibid., pp. 3–4.
An entirely different view was taken by Verkerk-Pistorius who argued that the core of the problem lay in the secular character of the government schools. According to this education expert, Christian Mission schools were not only cheaper — always an important consideration in Dutch policy discussions — but they had proved to be far more attractive to the indigenous population:

... Secular mass education... cannot lift a half-civilised people to a higher cultural level. In order to reach the objective religion has at all times and in all countries been an indispensable tool.  

Verkerk-Pistorius proposed that the running of the education system should be left to the Christian missions with the financial support of the government.24

The proposals of Verkerk-Pistorius caused strong opposition from Liberal colonial officials and parliamentarians. In fact his criticism struck at the anti-clericalism of many Dutch Liberals who insisted on a complete separation of Church and State in Holland as well as in the colonies. In the Dutch parliament at this time the Christian parties were attempting to stop Liberal moves to secularize education. This struggle was now transplanted to the Indies. The Colonial Fundamental Law of 1854 had laid down that the colonial government was to adhere strictly to a position of neutrality in religious affairs. Consequently, the Education Regulations of 1871 banned religious instruction in government schools and an ordinance of 1874 stipulated that private schools were only eligible for government subsidy after religion had been removed from the syllabus.25 As a result of these new subsidy regulations a number of mission schools in Eastern Indonesia had to be closed down and some of the teachers' training schools and primary schools run by the Netherlands Missionary Society were transferred to the colonial government.26 Liberal legislation, however, held one advantage for the Christian Missions in that the principle of religious neutrality meant a reversal of the long accepted rule forbidding missionary activity in predominantly Muslim areas. Hence, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century Christian missionaries were allowed to work in larger numbers in areas such as Java and Sumatra, causing the expansion of educational facilities in these areas. The number of Indonesian pupils in Christian mission schools in Java increased from 1,001 in 1877 to 2,350 in 1892, while in the Outer Islands the figures for the same period were 11,158 and 15,755 respectively.27

However, financial considerations forced the government to act before it had been able to reach a final verdict on these fundamental education issues. A drop in the world market prices of colonial produce, diseases in coffee and sugar, and a deterioration in colonial finances from the late 1870's onwards demanded the introduction of economy measures. The Minister of Colonies

24 Ibid., p. 8.
25 Ibid.
26 Hartgerink, op. cit., pp. 45-49.
27 Brugmans, op. cit., p. 168.
28 Hartgerink, op. cit., p. 39.
decided in 1885 that, as a temporary measure, the syllabuses of both the teacher training schools and the primary schools were to be greatly simplified. Not only were Dutch and a number of other subjects taken from the curriculum, but some of the existing teacher training schools were to be closed and the expansion of primary schools was to be slowed down.\(^\text{29}\) Apparently ideals such as the "mission civilisatrice" or the "white man's burden" were held at this time only by a few radical Liberals, who strongly objected to this curtailment of education expenditure. The fervor of the majority of Dutch Liberals, who since 1848 had been clamouring for more education for Indonesians, slackened considerably as soon as the colonial government ran out of money and it seemed that the Dutch treasury might be asked to contribute.

A final decision on the principles of education policy was not made until 1893 when the earlier proposals of Stortenbeker were adopted. Two types of elementary school were to be established: the *Eerste Klasse School* (First-Class School) destined for upper-class Indonesian children and providing a five-year course in the three R’s, geography, history, nature study, drawing and surveying; and a *Tweede Klasse School* (Second-Class School) which was much simpler in its set-up and would provide a three year course in reading, writing, and arithmetic to lower-class children. It should be noted that in both types of school the medium of instruction was to be the local vernacular or Malay and that the Dutch language was not taught.\(^\text{30}\)

The question of private versus public schools was finally settled in 1895 when a new subsidy ordinance was passed granting government assistance to any private school, including Muslim schools, providing these schools had a curriculum and standards equal to government schools.

The tables below illustrate educational progress during the Liberal period.

**Production of Teachers' Colleges\(^\text{31}\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1873-1877</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-1882</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-1887</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-1892</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-1897</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898-1899</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Production of *Dokter-Djawa School*\(^\text{32}\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875-1884</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-1894</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1904</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\text{29}\) H.I.O.C., No. 9, 2e stuk: Historisch overzicht..., p. 5.
\(^\text{31}\) Hartgerink, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
\(^\text{32}\) *Jaarlijks verslag der School Tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Arissen... over... 1904-1905* (Batavia, 1906), p. 62.
EXPANSION OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>boys girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>12,186 4,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>37,868 5,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>45,121 7,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>48,156 8,238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously indigenous educational advancement was far less spectacular than radical Liberal reformers such as van Hoevell had hoped for.34

However, Liberal education policy was far more important from a socio-political point of view than the above statistics would indicate. From the 1860's onwards there occurred a slight but nevertheless significant increase in the social mobility of a number of Indonesians, particularly sons of lower prijaji, who were able to take advantage of the improved educational facilities and employment opportunities in the civil service.

Before 1864 posts available to Indonesians in the colonial civil service had been monopolized by the higher nobility. Although, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, Javanese noblemen had lost a great deal of their local independence and had been gradually transformed into a corps of colonial civil servants, the Native Local Government Service (Inlands Bestuur), this had not meant an increase in social mobility within the prijaji class or Javanese society as a whole. Important positions in the Native Local Government Service remained the privilege of the higher nobility and the principle of hereditary succession which hitherto had been used de facto was laid down by law as late as 1854. Under these circumstances sons of prijaji could only hope to succeed their fathers, while to rise in the hierarchical scale was practically impossible. In fact the situation deteriorated during the first half of the nineteenth century when, in line with the rise in the general population, the prijaji class increased in size while the number of government positions remained relatively stable. The result was growing unemployment among the sons of prijaji, while many others had to content themselves with positions below the rank held by their fathers.35

Some improvement occurred during the Liberal period when sons of lower prijaji and even some commoners were able to by-pass the aristocratic Native Local Government Service and find employment in other government departments in positions such as native doctors (Dokter-Djawa), teachers, or clerks. By the end of the century the number of Western-trained indigenous intellectuals and semi-intellectuals had increased to the extent that they formed the nucleus of a new Indonesian elite of civil servants whose position no longer depended entirely on the accident of high birth but rather on their academic

33 Hartgerink, op. cit., pp. 39 and 82.
34 H.I.O.C., No. 7a: De nog wachtende taak op onderwijsgebied (Batavia, 1931), p. 11.
achievements. The appearance of this new elite, however, caused friction within indigenous society as well as within colonial society as a whole. Indonesian doctors and teachers resented the fact that their position carried very little weight in Javanese eyes and that, although having been much better educated than most higher prijaji they were socially unacceptable in upper-class Javanese circles. This eventually caused some of the new elite to turn to nationalism as a solution to their problems.

For a long time the higher nobility showed very little interest in the medical or teaching professions because they considered these positions as far below their social status. During the 1870’s the colonial government attempted to make the position of Dokter-Djawa and teacher more acceptable in the Javanese world by granting them the status and rank equal to a middle-ranking position in the Native Local Government Service, and also by increasing allowances and salaries.36 But higher prijaji continued for some time to be uninterested, with the result that most of the students in the teacher training schools and the Dokter-Djawa school originated from the lower nobility and commoners. This is illustrated in the table on page 140.

As is apparent from the table, it was not until the closing years of the nineteenth century that a significant decrease is noticeable in the proportion of lower-class medical students. This seems to have been mainly the result of a regulation of 1890 restricting entry into the medical school to students with a certificate from the European primary school. Hitherto, most of the students had been drawn from the vernacular elementary schools and as Dutch was the medium of instruction in the Dokter-Djawa school the first two years of the course was taken up with familiarizing students with this language and improving their general education. The standard of Dutch achieved was generally unsatisfactory and it was for this reason that the regulation of 1890 was introduced. The European primary school, however, only admitted upper-class Indonesian children and as only few prospective medical students could be expected from this group the government decided to establish forty free places in European primary schools for Indonesian boys irrespective of class who intended to study for Dokter-Djawa. This meant a time lag of at least five years, the duration of the European primary school course, before the first scholarship holders were ready to take up their medical studies. And as one Dokter-Djawa points out in his memoirs, it was because of this that for some time after 1890 the majority of new medical students originated from upper-class families.37

Another possible explanation for a relative increase in the number of upper-class medical students could be that the medical profession had by this time gained greater social recognition in the Javanese world. Van Niel argues that by the end of the nineteenth century doctors and teachers were considered as

37 Jaartijks verslag der School Tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Arisen...over...1904-1905, op. cit., Bijlage No. 10.
## Dokter-Djawa School: Students and Graduates
### According to Social Status of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Grad.</th>
<th>Students Grad.</th>
<th>Students Grad.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875-1884</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Sons of high Native officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radja</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pangeran</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patih</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-Djaksa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-Collector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedono</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-Panghulu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Army Officer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1885-1894 | | | |
| (b) Sons of middle-ranking Native officials | | | |
| Djaksa | 1 | - | 3 |
| Assistant-Wedana | 4 | 1 | 16 |
| Dokter-Djawa | 3 | - | 19 |
| Teacher | 3 | 1 | 27 |
| Mantri | 10 | 4 | 29 |
| Vaccinator | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Native veterinary surgeon | - | - | 1 |
| Total | 22 | 7 | 97 |

| 1895-1904 | | | |
| (c) Sons of lower Native officials and private persons | | | |
| Clerk | 6 | 4 | 9 |
| Prison Warder | - | - | 1 |
| Telegraph operator | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Type-setter | 2 | - | - |
| Draughtsman | - | - | - |
| Supervisor | - | - | - |
| Soldier | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Village head | 7 | 6 | 17 |
| Trader | 3 | - | 2 |
| Farmer | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| Tradesman | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| Pilot | - | - | 1 |
| Watchman | 3 | 1 | - |
| Tram conductor | - | - | - |
| Cart driver | - | - | - |
| Village police | - | - | - |
| Coolie | - | - | - |
| Total | 2 | 5 | 10 |

---

38 Raden Goentoeng Taroennadibata, "Land vervlogen dagen," *De ontwikkeling van het geneeskundig onderwijs...op. cit.,* p. 284.
Servants (House) 4 2 4 – 2
Official on half pay – – 2 – –
Private and without profession 13 3 39 9 15 1
Profession unknown 57 4 19 5 34 2
Total 115 26 112 21 83 6
General total 147 41 255 74 327 37

Source: School Tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Arisieren...Jaarlijks Verslag, 1904-1905 (Batavia, 1906) Bijlage No. 10.

*prijaji* of some standing by the common people.39 And Burger points out that from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards some of the higher *prijaji* began to put a higher premium on academic qualifications, particularly university degrees.40

Does this mean that all holders of academic qualifications were granted greater social recognition in upper-class Javanese circles? With the exception of the often quoted example of Dr. Radjiman’s appointment as private physician to the Sultan of Solo, the available evidence seems to point the other way. Kartini, who was a very acute observer of her own society, wrote in 1900 that:

...The aristocracy sees with sad eyes how sons of the people are educated, and often even elevated to their ranks by the government because of knowledge, ability, and industry. Sons of the people go to European schools and compare favourably in every respect with the high and honorable sons of the noble. The nobles wish to have rights for themselves alone; they alone wish to have authority and to make Western civilisation and enlightenment their own...41

In 1904 the Director of the STOVIA observed that:

...The position of Native Doctor is after all not highly regarded in Javanese society, from which most of the students originate; a Native Doctor does not belong to the *prijaji*.42

Often the *Dokter-Djawa*’s sense of dignity and his desire for social equality received a rude shock when confronted with the realities of colonial life. For example, in his memoirs, one *Dokter-Djawa* complains about the inferior status accorded to his profession on official occasions:

...How painful the position was may be illustrated by the fact that on official occasions European clerks43 of the Assistant-Resident, people who have usually great airs, Chinese officials, urban district officers44 in fact

---

42 Taroenndibata, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
43 European should read Eurasian.
44 Translation of the Dutch term “wijkmeester”.


all of those people with whom the Native doctors had daily dealings in the course of their work... sat on chairs looking down on the Native doctor, who was not considered worthy of a chair...45

Another interesting incident is related in the memoirs of Achmad Djajadiningrat, a high Javanese official, who was rebuked by a Dokter-Djawa, because he

... treated him somewhat haughtily. In any case I did not treat him with any more consideration than I would have accorded to a mantri or assistant-Wedana...46

The majority of the new Indonesian elite were probably solely concerned to improve their socio-economic position within the existing social structure. Some young intellectuals, however, were more radically inclined and wanted drastic changes in the existing colonial status system. It was from this minority group that the early leadership of Budi Utomo, the first Javanese national body organized along Western lines, was drawn. In particular Sutomo and the brothers Gunawan and Tjipto Mangunkusumo, all of lower prijaji origin, played a prominent role in founding this association. The distrust in which the prijaji class was held by the early leaders of Budi Utomo is clearly illustrated in an article by Suwarno, secretary of the organization, published in the Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad of 23 July 1908. According to Suwarno the students at the medical school had for a long time been considering how to improve the lot of the Javanese people. They were well aware of the difficulties involved and they were particularly worried about the reaction of Javanese officials who because of their uninterested attitude had wrecked efforts in the past to advance the Javanese people to a higher intellectual level:

... One of the prescribed duties of the prijaji is supposed to be to help the common man, to raise him from the darkness of stupidity so that he will be better equipped for the struggle of life and will be able to compete more successfully with foreigners. But it is well known that lower prijaji in particular are unable to free themselves from the pressing yoke of servility. They always succumb to pressure from above because they feel that opposition would be an act of great irreverence and would damage the prestige of their superiors. So when the higher prijaji cannot be won over to our side our cause is surely to be rejected by at least half of the lower officials... Therefore we considered it wise for the time being not to propagate our ideas among the older generation. Instead we decided to approach the young people who live under the same pressures as we do... We could expect these people to be sympathetic...47

Summarizing, it should be clear that Liberal education policy although perhaps insignificant in quantitative terms did have some important social and political repercussions. In fact it can be argued that Liberal education policy prepared

45 Taroennadibata, op. cit., p. 284.
46 Both mantri and assistant-Wedana are lower grade positions in the Native Local Government Service. See Achmad Djajadiningrat, Herinneringen van... (1936), p. 237.
the way for the Indonesian awakening at the beginning of the twentieth century. This point has so far not been stressed sufficiently with the result that in most publications Budi Utomo appears to bolt out of the blue in 1908.
Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America has suffered the fate of becoming a classic. It is known, if not read, by students of politics both as a commentary upon the Jacksonian political scene and as a piece of political philosophy. But it is important for the historian — and for that rare specimen, the political scientist who recognizes time as one of the variables of his discipline — to remember that this book was regarded as a classic almost from its publication. It became a force in its own right in the history of its time. It influenced Frenchmen. It influenced Americans. More to my present concern, it profoundly influenced British opinion about America, and about democracy, at a time when liberals and conservatives were bitterly wrangling about both subjects.

Before 1835, when Democracy in America first appeared in translation, the most striking accounts of America had been written by Radicals or Tories with axes to grind. As John Stuart Mill complained: "... for many years every book of travels in America had been a party pamphlet, or had at least fallen among partisans, and been pressed into the service of one party or the other. ..." Tocqueville created an essentially new image of America, and American democracy. He raised the debate to a more serious level by presenting new evidence in an objective spirit, by asking new questions, and by clarifying the issues. For many informed Englishmen, America became America as seen by Tocqueville. This is not to deny that resistance was generated to Tocqueville's ideas in various quarters, but the resistance was itself shaped in relation to his own orthodoxy.

Henry Reeve's translation of Part I of De la Démocratie en Amérique burst upon the English literary world in 1835 and met with instant success, being widely reviewed and soon running through a number of editions. Contemporaries obviously felt that here was a new revelation about America, presented with the clarity of an astute political philosopher. John Stuart Mill, then at the

Based on Chapter 5 of author's American Democracy in English Politics, 1815–1850 (Clarendon, 1965).

height of his power as a spokesman of the Philosophical Radicals but sensitive to new insights, was deeply impressed and wrote in his *London Review*:

The book has at once taken its rank among the most remarkable productions of our time; and it is a book with which, both for its facts and its speculations, all who would understand, or who are called upon to exercise influence over their age, are bound to be familiar. It will contribute to give to the political speculations of our time a new character. . . . The book is such as Montesquieu might have written, if to his genius he had superinduced good sense, and the light which mankind have since gained from the experiences of a period in which they may be said to have lived centuries in fifty years.  

Mill's endorsement, together with the near-universal praise of the major periodicals, urged with their then almost magisterial authority, set the seal on the book’s success in England. (It was of course immediately successful in America and Europe as well, and won a prize in 1836 from the Académie française.) The eagerly awaited Part II appeared in 1840 and was given a critical attention reserved for important works of speculation. Although the deeper philosophy of this volume did not satisfy all tastes, Tocqueville’s argument was carefully expounded in most of the journals, which invariably gave long extracts from the original, for Tocqueville was eminently quotable, although he did not always endorse the ends to which his words were put. Even the Tory *Blackwood’s* extended tolerant approval to a work which was by no means obviously anti-democratic:

> The clearness with which he analysed and exposed to view the working and tendencies of the democratic state of society exhibited in the United States carried all his readers with him. Whether they liked or disliked the inferences to which his remarks seemed to point, they acknowledged, either promptly or reluctantly, that his statements, and his comments upon them, were fair, luminous, and most eminently instructive.

The first sense of the enduring worth of the *Democracy in America* remained undissipated by time, or so it seemed to Henry Reeve, writing on the eve of the civil war. He felt that the work, over twenty-five years, “has gained in interest from the inexhaustible depth, the unflinching truth, and the extraordinary foresight which are its characteristics. It is, and will remain, by far the greatest work of political philosophy of this age, for it embraces futurity itself, and that with no uncertain range.”

In the compact world of the British intelligentsia in the 1830’s and 1840’s there was ample opportunity for the spread of Tocqueville’s ideas. Personal

---

2 *London Review*, XXVI (October 1835), 94.


4 *Blackwood’s*, XLVIII (October 1840), 463. For similar praises, see *Blackwood’s*, XXXVII (May 1835), 758, 766.

5 *ER*, CXIII (April 1861), 431. *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* was the most unfavourable about Part II.
contact added to the effect of the written word. Tocqueville visited England in 1833 and 1835, and made the acquaintance of a number of important thinkers and leading politicians to whom he conveyed some of his impressions about the new world. On his first visit Tocqueville made himself known to Nassau Senior, with whom he maintained a lifelong friendship; he met Edward Bulwer Lytton, the Radical M.P. and author of a now-forgotten classic, *England and the English*; and he discussed government with Lord Radnor, a Whig, and Sir John Bowring, editor of the *Westminster Review*. The precocious and cosmopolitan Henry Reeve he met in Paris in March 1835. On his return to Britain in May 1835 Tocqueville was a celebrated writer, and was feted in London society. He became the centre of attraction in the polished Whig society of Lansdowne and Holland Houses. According to Reeve, an eye-witness:

...his manners and his powers of conversation ensured him a cordial reception; he found there not only the easy citizenship of good breeding, but the same deep interest in the progress of mankind, and the same ardent attachment to every great and free object which had become the ruling passion of his life. His own ideal of social excellence and political greatness lay precisely in the combination of aristocratic tastes with popular interests, and in that independence of position and character which is never more complete than when it is united to a high sense of the duties... of property and station. That is what he found in the Whig society of this country.6

Tocqueville may have obtained different impressions when he was received among the Benthamites who were wont to gather at Senior's house in Kensington. In London he came to know John Mill; the Grote and J. A. Roebuck; Henry Hallam, the learned Whig historian of England; Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the classical scholar and enigmatic administrator-politician; and the "enthusiastic but paradoxical" Monckton Milnes, M.P., poet, and social butterfly *par excellence*.

He also met John Austin, the Benthamite student of jurisprudence, and Sir James Stephen (permanent head of the Colonial Office from 1836 to 1847, and as such ridiculed by Charles Buller as "Mr. Mother-Country" for his *de facto* control over colonial policy). The letters and autobiographies of the time show abundantly the considerable impression made by this young Frenchman of aristocratic lineage but with startling ideas about democracy. Symptomatic of the high regard in which he was held was the fact that he was invited to give evidence before the 1835 Select Committee on Bribery at Elections, probably at the instigation of George Grote.7 Peel used his testimony freely in a debate upon bribery five months later in the Commons. Tocqueville maintained many of the contacts he made in England. He corresponded regularly with Senior and Reeve, frequently with Mill, and occasionally

6 ER, CXIII (April 1861), 442.
with the Grotes and Lewis. The Seniors, the Grotes and Monckton Milnes often visited the Tocqueville estate in Cherbourg. In this way his new ideas on democracy and politics were kept before his British friends, who passed them around in correspondence, reviewed them in the journals, and, undoubtedly, discussed them socially.

It seems likely that the gregarious Henry Reeve was a leading disseminator of Tocqueville's ideas in England. As the translator of the *Democracy*, Reeve became closely acquainted with Tocqueville's thought, besides becoming a close friend and admirer of the author. Widely travelled, urbane, and something of a prodigy in his youth, Reeve was exceedingly well-connected and mixed freely in English and French society. In 1837, through Lord Lansdowne's patronage, he obtained the important post of Clerkship of Appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. From 1840 he became a critic and leader-writer for *The Times*; he was Registrar of the Privy Council from 1847 and editor of the *Edinburgh Review* from 1855 until 1895. Here was a man, imbued with Tocqueville's ideas upon America, who lived, according to his biographer, “with his fingers on the keys of public opinion, directing it, leading it, guiding it with a power which was none the less real because few recognized it or knew of it”. His ideas are considered at greater length below. Among others who owed intellectual stimulus to Tocqueville were, as we have seen, the younger Mill, who was certainly influential in propagating the new ideas within the important Benthamite salon. It is at least relevant to note here the extraordinary effectiveness of this circle as a political and intellectual pressure group in Victorian England. Influence was wielded by means of what Professor Samuel Finer has called a process of irradiation — by working through personal contacts, family connections, and social intercourse in informal as well as specialist bodies, by methods of conversion, recruitment, and proselytizing manipulated by and from a missionary clique. Many of Tocqueville's English friends were either members of this clique or else exposed to it, and it seems not unreasonable to conclude that his influence upon these people was considerable and infectious. Nassau Senior was a fringe member of the group, and his reaction, showing sympathy with Tocqueville's liberalism but alarm at some of his conclusions, was perhaps not untypical. Senior described Part I to its author as "one of the most remarkable books of the age"; but, from his correspondence with Tocqueville, it seems not unreasonable to conclude that his influence upon these people was considerable and infectious.

---

8 He was related to the influential Austin family, and became a protégé of Lord Lansdowne. He knew most of the Benthamites and Whigs, and among Frenchmen, knew D'Eichthal, Cousin, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Balzac, and Montalambert. His work for the Privy Council brought him into contact with Greville, Brougham, and Lyndhurst, among others.

9 Laughton, *op. cit.*, I, v. Reeve's counsels, we are assured, "had a large but unreported share in the decisions of Cabinets". *Ibid.*, p. vi.

10 See a letter from Senior to Tocqueville, 17 February 1835, in M.C.M. Simpson (ed.), *Correspondence and Conversations of Alexis de Tocqueville with Nassau William Senior 1834–1859* (London, 1872), I, 2.
States he frequently referred to Tocqueville as an authority; but his assessment of American politics was emphatically not in Tocqueville’s tradition. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Senior took a Tocquevillian standpoint in the 1850’s when interest in reform was revived. Although sympathetic to Aristocracy in its present clash with Democracy, he was above all “for the winning horse”: “... if Democracy is to prevail I shall join its ranks, in the hope of making its victory less mischievous”.

The New Revelation

It was part of Tocqueville’s significance that he forcibly brought America into the great debates upon liberalism which rent Europe in the nineteenth century. He suggested that western society was in transition from a corporate condition to that of an industrial egalitarian democracy. This, he said, was a Providential fact, the result of irreversible historical forces. Feudalism had exemplified a society based upon a coherent theory of inequality, but ever since the rise to power of the commercial and business orders there had been a growing tendency towards “the equalization of social condition”. Clashes between kings and nobles had first accelerated this tendency; then the rise of technology and bureaucracy, the spread of knowledge, and the success of Protestant individualism had enabled a democratic revolution to occur throughout Christendom. In Tocqueville’s view the gradual development of social equality in the modern mass society had the character of a law of nature: “... it is universal, it is durable, it constantly eludes all human interference, and all events as well as all men contribute to its progress”. He therefore regarded as obsolete the debate being waged between the adherents of democracy and aristocracy: “Necessity and Providence have decided that for us”, as Mill put it. Choice was possible only between a well and an ill-regulated democracy, “and on that depends the future well-being of the human race”.

With this historical interpretation constantly in mind, Tocqueville proceeded to examine the United States as a specific form of what would ultimately be the universal condition of mankind. “I confess”, he wrote, “that in America I saw more than America. I sought the image of democracy itself.” By studying empirically the structure and dynamics of American society, he hoped to gain insight into the potentialities of democracy for good or ill; he thereby hoped to give man a chance to exert some control over his future, within the framework of historical laws. He believed that generalizations could be legitimately made from the American condition, although he was nevertheless aware of America’s peculiar historical and geographical situation. Indeed he saw in the very novelty of American experience some valuable lessons to be learned by Europe.

Tocqueville viewed the democratic process as a levelling and broadening

---

11 Senior to Tocqueville, 19 February 1852.
12 Mill in London Review, XXVI (October 1835), 91–93. This review article is hereafter referred to as Mill, London Review, 1835.
influence in terms of power, knowledge, and prosperity. Extremes of condition disappeared, to be replaced by standardization and homogeneity. As Reeve explained: "... multitude is substituted by the democratic change for magnitude; whatever existed with greater intensity for the few, is diluted for the many; and the standard dimension is changed from that of depth to that of extent". Tocqueville, an aristocrat by birth and sympathy, was uneasy about the disappearance of the aristocratic cultural dimension, but justified it as the historical price to be paid for the realization of a more widespread social justice. Democracy at its best, he was convinced, could substitute for the noble virtues the civil virtues of human welfare and peace, practical morality and social sympathy. Like Bentham and the Mills, he saw as the advantage of a well-regulated democracy, such as the United States, that its systematic and perpetual end was the good of the immense majority, or at least its interest. By means of reason, rather than blind tradition, popular obedience and attachment to the law was obtained. The majority, said Tocqueville, respected authority because, through universal suffrage and elections, authority was clearly seen to emanate from the people, from themselves. He agreed with the criticism that republics were less expert than aristocracies in administration. He thought that America lacked a statesman class, that it had no traditions of continuity and expertise in administration, that it often followed hasty and shortsighted policies. But a democracy of this type had one overriding virtue, that it escaped the exclusiveness and class spirit of aristocratic government.

The opponents of democracy preferred to seize upon Tocqueville's criticisms of majority rule — and his doctrine of the "tyranny of the majority" was widely publicized in upper-class circles. Many commentators suggested that this tyranny was a threat to property and person, but Tocqueville emphasized that it was primarily a threat to the independence of thought: democratic societies, he argued, tended to atomization. At first, this resulted in anarchic individualism of opinion, for the older authorities, such as tradition, had been discredited. But soon a democratic tradition was built up. Society succumbed to the logic of numbers, and a new authority — that of the majority — replaced the old. In the United States the majority combined all the powers of society, and virtually constituted public opinion. The existence of social equality only served to emphasize the essential insignificance of the individual and to underline his final dependence upon the majority. The deviant must conform or submit to the sanctions of social ostracism, or worse. The result was to promote a permanent "courtier spirit" in society, to encourage the majority in perpetual adoration of itself. Average standards were embraced; genius, distinction, and

13 Tocqueville was not semantically clear in his use of the term "démocratie", and his readers were often confused as to its exact meaning. The senses in which he used the word varied from the concept of a limited system of political democracy to a wider concept of the egalitarian society at large. By it he often meant the entire structure of bourgeois, capitalist society. The Tories had a sound criticism when they objected that Jacksonian democracy had inegalitarian characteristics which Tocqueville underestimated.

14 British and Foreign Review, X, No. 20, 548.
difference were resented and discouraged. This, for Tocqueville, amounted to a stultification of the human personality. Thus he explained the mediocrity of American culture (although he allowed some credit to its provincial condition). Literature, art, and philosophy suffered through a constant reference to the market criteria of the many. Widespread education, wealth, and leisure created a demand for the products of the intellect; but the values to which creation must conform were, by virtue of popular tastes, vitiative of real achievement. Quality was sacrificed for quantity, permanence for topicality, deep meditation for immediate entertainment.

Tocqueville was a Frenchman, well aware of France's revolutionary history, and he was therefore deeply concerned at the tendency of democracy to degenerate into despotism. In the circumstances of the nineteenth century he feared that "democratic despotism" would be more pervasive than any known hitherto. In the new democracies, where the older corporate hindrances to autocracy had been swept away, society became dangerously atomized. The individual was weak, and dedication to equality kept him so. Unless alternative safeguards were devised, there would be no resistance to the despotic tendencies of the modern age. Tocqueville was wary of the bureaucratic centralism which was being adopted by most countries to meet expanding social needs. He perceived that the demands of technology and the requirements of the new industrial age encouraged the creation of an all-powerful state, omniparticipant in the lives of its citizens. He foresaw that egalitarian dogmas could breed despotism, for the values of freedom and equality were by no means necessarily compatible. He thought that it was equality rather than liberty which distinguished democracies. The citizens might cherish freedom (and it was Tocqueville's contention that they must do so if the potentialities of the new age were to be realized); but their passion for equality was "ardent, insatiable, incessant, invincible". Thus they would endure poverty, barbarism, and even servitude under a despot, rather than lay down their right to "equality of social condition".

Tocqueville hated despotism of any kind: "... for myself, when I feel the hand of power lie heavy on my brow, I care but little to know who oppresses me: and I am not the more disposed to pass beneath the yoke because it is held out to me by the arms of a million men". He regarded himself as a liberal of a new species — one who combined a humanist concern for the individual with a deep sense of social justice for the masses. Personal and social fulfilment he believed possible only in the presence of liberty, but liberty in the present age, he also believed, must be co-existent with, and an element of, the new egalitarian society. It must be achieved within the historical framework of the levelling, democratic process, for he regarded that process as prerequisite to the decent existence of the people. He had faith that the amalgamation of the two sets of values would ensure a continuous vitalization in the new society.

Influence of Tocqueville

Tocqueville suggested a number of safeguards for the preservation of a desirable form of democracy with a liberal character. Here the crucial experience was American, although Tocqueville always insisted that national varieties of democracy must derive from their own history and needs. In his view American democracy exemplified a way of life in a spirit of freedom; it seemed to demonstrate the possibilities of free institutions which embodied the mores of the nation, whereas France indicated the dangers of a divorce between forms and values. He saw that American liberalism sprang out of a complex of historical, social, religious, and geographic considerations: out of the frontier, the traditions of local self-government, religious dissent, and the heritage of English common law. He advised strife-torn Europe to look at some of the controls which prevented extremism in the new world. He advocated administrative decentralization after witnessing the merits of municipal self-government in the townships of New England. Believing the strength of a free people to reside in the commune, Tocqueville looked upon democracy in the locality as the school and safety-valve of democracy in the state. As in the United States, the people became accustomed to administering the business of society without outside assistance; and this was an important lesson in public responsibility as well as a means of personal fulfilment. The individual, through his experience in local affairs, was made aware of his place in the public cosmos; his sphere of reference and his knowledge were enlarged, and his selfish materialist interests tended to be balanced by public-spirited ones. The active faculties of groups and associations in the community were fostered in the same way. In short, demagoguery was avoided by a training in communal obligation. Thus, as Mill said, democratic institutions were Tocqueville's remedy for the worst mischiefs to which democracies were exposed. In countries where everything was done for the people, and nothing by the people, he was certain that the superficial love of freedom would never survive the practical habit of slavery.

Tocqueville had also a Whiggish appreciation of American checks and balances. He warmly approved the federal system, which countered the menace of legislative supremacy at the centre; and he concurred in the separation of powers. He commended a constitution which caused legislation to be referred to a fundamental law, interpreted judicially. Tocqueville saw little likelihood of the judiciary usurping power — the legal profession was, he thought, a very

17 As Monckton Milnes wrote of Tocqueville in 1861: "... he considered the art of government to consist in enabling society to understand itself, to submit to its own obligations, to regulate its own affairs and to work out its own destiny... he was ambitious to assist, eager to co-operate, and ready at any personal sacrifice to encourage others to produce the greatest possible good to themselves." Quarterly Review (hereafter QR), CX (October 1861), 524.

18 Give the citizen a public duty, "whether as vestryman, a juryman, or an elector; and in that degree, his ideas, and feelings are taken out of their narrow circle... he is made to feel that besides the interests which separate him from his fellow-citizens, he has interests which connect him with them; that not only the common weal is his weal, but that it partly depends upon his exertions". This is Mill paraphrasing Tocqueville in the ER, October 1840, reprinted in Dissertations and Discussions, p. 15. (This article is hereafter referred to as Mill, ER, 1840; and the page numbers will refer to Dissertations and Discussions.)
conservative social group — and a bulwark was thus ingeniously set up against both mob-rule and Caesarism.

Tocqueville believed that Christian morality, in a broad rather than a sectarian sense, was indispensable to genuine democracy; and he suggested that the viability of American democracy owed much to the expression of this morality in institutions and social life. Here in the Union, largely because of Puritanism and the Pilgrim tradition, there was no European divorce between liberalism and religion. He advised European liberals to espouse a less secular creed, to recruit support from popular religion.

Interpretations

Tocqueville was quite clear upon his standpoint in the great political debate of his age. As he declared to Stoffels (who had imagined the tendency of his theories to be radical, almost revolutionary):

I have sought to show what a democratic people is in our days, and by this delineation, executed with rigorous accuracy, my design has been to produce a two-fold effect upon my contemporaries. To those who make to themselves an ideal democracy, a brilliant vision which they think it easy to realise, I undertake to show that they have arrayed their picture in false colours: that the democratic government they advocate, if it be of real advantage to those who can support it, has not the lofty features they ascribe to it; and, moreover that this government can only be maintained on certain conditions of intelligence, private morality, and religious faith, which we do not possess; and that its political results are not to be obtained without labour. To those for whom the word “democracy” is synonymous with disturbance, anarchy, spoliation and murder, I have attempted to show that the government of democracy may be reconciled with respect for property, with deference for rights, with safety to freedom, with reverence to religion; that if democratic government is less favourable than another to some of the finer parts of human nature, it has also great and noble elements; and that perhaps after all it is the will of God to shed a lesser grade of happiness on the totality of mankind, not to combine a greater share of it on a smaller number, or to raise the few to the verge of perfection.19

Yet, as Tocqueville regretted, there were few who understood this position, and many who greeted his work favourably because they found in it arguments suitable to their “passion of the moment”. Writing to Henry Reeve in 1837 of the various complexions thrust upon the Democracy, he quipped:

It makes a collection of portraits which I like having. Up to now, however, I have received none which resembles my real self. They insist on making me a party man, and I am not. They give me passions, when I have only opinions, or rather the only passions I have are love of liberty and human dignity... They endow me alternatively with aristocratic and democratic prejudices.20

Reeve in 1861 testified to the contradictory receptions accorded the Democracy in opposing political camps:

It was hailed with equal satisfaction by the ardent friends of democracy and by those who dread the exclusive predominance of democratic power. The former were gratified by M. de Tocqueville's admission of the predominance of this great element in modern societies, and by his prediction of its future dominion over the world. The latter were no less struck by the acuteness with which he pointed out its tendency to favour absolute government, and to degrade the noblest faculties of man. His doctrine of the universal extension of social equality was applauded by Mr. Mill and Mr. Grote; his doctrine of the tyranny of democratic majorities was quoted with extraordinary effect by Sir Robert Peel, when he was laying the foundations of the great party of conservative resistance, after the popular movement of 1832.21

For some therefore Tocqueville's very impartiality lent itself to selection for party ends. They often praised his magisterial disinterest; for example the Quarterly Review noted in 1861 that "the effect of this permanent study, discreetly used and sanely regulated, stood out in strange contrast to the diffuse fancies and distracted notions of the political sciolists of our age";22 but the profundity of Tocqueville's vision only served to render more subtle its assimilation to political ends.

*John Stuart Mill and America as a Middle-Class Democracy*

John Stuart Mill came to be regarded in the decades following the Great Reform as one of England's great seminal minds. He was at the same time the foremost interpreter of Tocqueville in Britain, and his authority gave a great impetus to Tocqueville's reputation. Mill clarified the ideas of the *Democracy* for the benefit of English minds and stated their implications for English politics. What scholars have perhaps underestimated is that Mill subtly amended Tocqueville's analysis, and the effect was to render his work more acceptable to the English middle class.

Mill read the *Democracy* during a critical stage in the evolution of his own political thought, and the book hastened him on the way to the ideas set out in his *Representative Government*.23 Between 1829 and 1835 Mill had begun to question orthodox Benthamite Radicalism. In 1832 he attacked the Radical theory that representatives ought to be pledged to their constituents. He began to explore the means by which the ablest few should govern for the many in a democracy, and to move away from his father's preoccupation with the need for checks upon the power of any set of rulers. Mill agreed with Burke that the will of the people must, in the end, be supreme; but he thought that the test of what is right in politics should be the good of the people, not the will of the people.24 Like Tocqueville, Mill was concerned with a central problem of

---

22 *QR*, CX (October 1861), 519, by Monckton Milnes.
24 See *Examiner*, 1 July 1832, pp. 417-18; and 15 July 1832, pp. 449-50.
democracy, how to impose restraints upon popular rule in the general interest, a problem which Bentham and his disciples avoided. Mill was also aware of another problem that Tocqueville was to examine closely, that of the flattery of majorities by “every factious minority, every separate class, every adventurer” with an interest to fulfill. Only intelligent leaders, Mill felt, could combat “the formidable array of human weaknesses and passions which would be at work to make a Representative Democracy (what it has so often been asserted to be its own essence) a mere mob-government”.25

In 1835, when Mill first read Tocqueville, he had just launched the London Review as a vehicle for his New Radicalism. As has frequently been pointed out, this was for him a time of intellectual eclecticism. He had read and been influenced by the St. Simonians, by Robert Owen and the early English Socialists, and by Coleridge. He found immediate stimulation in Tocqueville’s analysis of transatlantic democracy, sympathizing with the Frenchman’s liberalism and responding to his sociology:

M. de Tocqueville’s is, in our eyes, the true view of the position in which mankind now stands: and on the timely recognition of it as such, by the influential classes of our own and other countries, we believe the most important interests of our race to be greatly dependent.26

Mill came to regard himself as something of a disciple of Tocqueville: “... if there was any one of the leading intellects of this age to which I could flatter myself that my own had a kind of analogy it was probably yours”, he wrote to him in 1840.27 Mill read Part II in 1840, and informed its author that

You have changed the face of political philosophy; you have carried on the discussions respecting the tendencies of modern society, the causes of those tendencies, and the influences of particular forms of polity and social order, into a region both of height and of depth, which no one before you had entered, and all previous argumentation and speculation in such matters appears but child’s play now. I do not think that anything more important than the publication of your book has happened even in this age of great events.

Mill accepted most of Tocqueville’s theses. He agreed that history was leading inevitably towards greater democracy and gave evidence to show that England was involved in the process. He thought that Tocqueville’s attempt to guide democracy to desirable goals was a valid one, and he was impressed by such American safeguards as administrative decentralization and a tradition of communal self-government. Although Mill was not, in the thirties, as pessimistic as Tocqueville concerning the frailties of democracy, he extended a guarded

25 Ibid., 15 July 1832, p. 450.
Influence of Tocqueville

approval to such propositions as "tyranny of the majority", the want of merit in public men, and democratic tendencies to cultural mediocrity. On these subjects, however, Mill constantly found himself wallowing in Tocqueville's intellectual wake. Part II, which disappointed some people, made a profound impression upon Mill; and he lamented to the author that "although my own thoughts have been accustomed (especially since I read your First Part) to run very much in the same direction, you have so far outrun me that I am lost in the distance..." 28 At least until the publication of his Logic, Mill retained this sense of Tocqueville's elder status in the field of their mutual concern.

Despite this respect, Mill was never the acquiescent disciple. He freely interpreted Tocqueville's ideas to fit the English situation, and in doing so he drew a picture of the United States as an essentially bourgeois republic. Mill and Tocqueville had taken a radical step in asserting the triumph of the democratic over the aristocratic principle; but Mill at least made the idea less dangerous by making it attractive to the English middle class.

He did so in a number of ways. He proposed that the process of democracy in America was equivalent to the English process of commercialization. Mill alleged that Tocqueville had bound up in one abstract idea — Democracy — the whole of the tendencies of modern commercial society. The tendency to equality of social condition was in this view simply a tendency of the commercial civilization:

When a nation is advancing in prosperity — when its industry is expanding and its capital rapidly augmenting — the number also of those who possess capital increases in at least as great a proportion; and though the distance between the two extremes of society may not be much diminished, there is a rapid multiplication of those who occupy the intermediate positions. There may be princes at one end of the scale and paupers at the other; but between them there will be a respectable and well-paid class of artisans and a middle class who combine property and industry. This may be called, and is, a tendency to equalisation. 29

Democratic societies were therefore societies in which the preponderant social condition approximated to that of the middle class. In this view, the United States was a typical democracy, wherein all were equal because all were middle-class. Thus Mill could conclude that...

... to most purposes in the constitution of modern society, the government of a numerous middle class is democracy. Nay, it not merely is democracy, but the only democracy of which there is yet any example; what is called universal suffrage in America arising from the fact that America is all

---

28 Mill to Tocqueville, 11 May 1840, Mayer (ed.), Oeuvres (the letters are listed chronologically). Tocqueville, in his turn, was gratified by the care and penetration of Mill's review of Part II in the Edinburgh Review; he even spoke to Mill of binding the article with his own copy of the Démocratie. See Tocqueville to Mill, 18 December 1840, ibid. (The preceding extract is from Mill to Tocqueville, 11 May 1840.)
middle class; the whole people being in a condition, both as to education and pecuniary means, corresponding to the middle class here.\textsuperscript{30}

Mill suggested perceptively that many of the so-called egalitarian traits which Tocqueville discovered in America were in fact universal commercial characteristics; they were to be found in England as well as in the United States. As an example he cited the brooding spirit of restlessness abroad in both nations, a spirit of aspiration and acquisitiveness, "that treading upon the heels of one another, that habitual dissatisfaction of each with the position he occupies and eager desire to push himself into the next above it".\textsuperscript{31} Mill cited other changes stemming from the same cause: a greater mobility of individual relations, the corruption of the permanent ties of an older type of society, and a resultant shackling of the individual to the mass. But the mass in England, as in America, was pre-eminently the middle class, only now through technological change attaining emancipation from the aristocracy. Its wants were now of crucial economic importance. Its opinions were dominant and constituted a new "despotism of the majority" — "not the less irksome because most of the tyrants may not be manual labourers".\textsuperscript{32} Its taste determined the nature and value of art and literature; hence, said Mill, there was now a greater amount of mediocre work, and fewer devotees of thought for its own sake. Finally, the supremacy of the middle class had been secured politically at the time of the Reform Bill. Mill thus discerned more than capricious identities between English and American experience. He appealed to all competent observers:

\ldots whether in nearly all the moral and intellectual features of American society, as represented by M. de Tocqueville, this country does not stand next to America? whether with the single difference of our remaining respect for aristocracy, the American people, both in their good qualities and in their defects, resemble anything so much as an exaggeration of our own middle class? whether the spirit which is gaining more and more the ascendency with us, is not in a very great degree American? and whether all the moral elements of an American state of society are not most rapidly growing up?\textsuperscript{33}

Mill clearly was not altogether happy about such a situation. He regarded the rule of the middle class in England much as Tocqueville regarded the rule of the many in America — with respect for its salutary influences and suspicion for its frailties. Mill, like Guizot, believed that the dominance of any single element in society was ultimately detrimental to the growth of that society. The advance of commerce and industry — and thus of democracy according to

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 65. Mill thought that the existence of a nobility encouraged such ambitions by the rewards which it offered to wealth: "\ldots it perhaps required the example of America to prove that the 'Sabbathless pursuit of wealth' could be as intensely prevalent, where there were no aristocratic distinctions to tempt to it" (p. 56).
\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 76. Even the aristocracy, Mill claimed, was succumbing to the yoke of bourgeois opinion: "No rank in society is now exempt from the fear of being peculiar, the unwillingness to be, or to be thought, in any respect original" (p. 67).
\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 65.
Tocqueville’s concept — was coming to be accepted as a “law of progress”, but Mill was sceptical that such an association of ideas would continue to seem plausible. He admitted that the growth of commerce in Europe had been “one of the greatest instruments not only of civilization in the narrowest, but of improvement and culture in the widest sense”. But he predicted that it would remain so only so long as the environment in which it flourished was diverse and many-sided:

\[
\ldots \text{so long as other co-ordinate elements of improvement existed beside it, doing what it left undone, and keeping its exclusive tendencies in equipoise by an opposite order of sentiments, principles of action, and modes of thought} \ldots \text{But example and theory alike justify the expectation, that with its complete predominance would commence an era either of stationarity or of decline.}
\]

Such homogeneity and stagnation, particularly in the spheres of philosophy, morality, and culture, seemed to Mill the real defect of American democracy. As he wrote in his article “The State of Society in America”, the faults of the Americans were the faults of the middle class everywhere:

\[
\ldots \text{a general indifference to those kinds of knowledge and mental culture which cannot be immediately converted into pounds, shillings, and pence; very little perception or enjoyment of the beautiful, either in nature or in the productions of genius, along with great occasional affectation of it; the predominant passion that of money — the passion of those who have no other; indifference to refinements and elegancies for their own sake, but a vehement desire to possess what are accounted such by others.}
\]

Mill’s solution to the problem was not unlike that suggested by Tories such as Robinson. Mill declared that deviant ideological forces should be encouraged as a counterbalance to the sole sway of the commercial spirit: “... in order to the formation of the best public opinion, there should exist somewhere a great social support for opinions and sentiments different from those of the mass”. He thought that, in England, such support might come from an agricultural, a leisured, and a learned class. England’s possession of such classes, he believed, was the greatest natural advantage she enjoyed over America, “and we believe that the interests of the time are greatly dependent upon preserving them”. Indeed Mill contended against the “propitious circumstances”

\[\text{34 London Review, II (January 1836), 375. Both Mill and Tocqueville were agreed on what was then an unusual point, “that the real danger in democracy...is not anarchy or love of change, but Chinese stagnation and immobility”. See Mill to Tocqueville, 11 May 1840, Mayer (ed.), Oeuvres.} \]

\[\text{35 Mill said that the agricultural class accepted authority and kept local attachments, unlike the manufacturing classes. But he did not regard the American agriculturalists as a counterpoise to the business class, because they shifted constantly and were “to all intents and purposes a commercial class”. (This, true up to a point, surely neglects some aspects of the sectional clash between the rural Mid-West and the commercial oligarchy of the East.)} \]

\[\text{36 ER (1840), p. 76.}\]
doctrine on these grounds. America, he said, was "in many important points, nearly the most unfavourable field in which democracy could have been tried". Her frontier conditions obstructed the advance of civilization; her provincial circumstances encouraged mediocrity in intellectual life; while "everything in the position of America tends to foster the spirit of trade, the passion of money-getting, and that almost alone". Democracy would have a fairer trial there, he predicted, when education and prosperity should create a leisured class and a more diverse culture, in the English tradition.

The English middle class was much less likely to concern itself with these misgivings, which in some sense were as old as Christianity, than to reassure itself that democracy could be interpreted as the natural rule of the propertyed classes. The United States was already admired for its open society and its economic structure. American politics — which had hitherto been suspect in the eyes of those who did not accept Radicalism — acquired a new gloss of respectability from Mill's analysis. His doubts and qualifications served to channel speculation into what was becoming a familiar, and therefore manageable, debate — the merits or otherwise of the steam age. The Radicals were disconcerted to find that Republican democracy had been filched from their political armoury, and to find the formidable authority of Mill and Tocqueville ranged behind the backs of their bourgeois opponents. Instead of Tocqueville's radical-sounding "equality of condition", there was now Mill's "homogeneity of rule by the middle class". Working-men had imagined the Republic to be peopled by Radicals. Mill informed them that "America is a republic peopled with a provincial middle class". Nor did the preoccupation of both Mill

37 *London Review*, II (January 1836), 380. The article contains a very interesting discussion of democratic causation. For example: "America has been discussed, as if she were nothing but a democracy: a society, differing from other human societies in no essential point, except the popular character of her institutions. The friends or enemies of parliamentary reform have been more or less in the habit of ascribing to democracy whatever of good or evil they have found or dreamed of in the U.S. . . . But the Government is only one of a dozen causes which have made America what she is. The Americans are a democratic people: granted; but they are also a people without poor; without rich; with a 'far west' behind them; so situated as to be in no danger of aggressions from without; sprung mostly from the Puritans . . . with boundless facilities to all classes for 'raising themselves in the world'" (p. 371). He ascribes their prosperity to rapid accumulation of capital beyond the increase of population; and their education to an English middle-class tradition. But high wages and universal reading are preconditions for democracy: "... where they co-exist all government, except the government of public opinion, is impossible". Mill concludes that much of what is good and bad in America is the result of non-democratic causes; its system must be studied with much more discrimination to separate essentials from non-essentials. Mill wrote this article after reading Part I of Tocqueville, but he is noticeably more optimistic about the benevolent influence of democracy than the Frenchman; he is still affected by the Benthamite tradition.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 374. "Subtract from the British empire London and Edinburgh . . . leave . . . the merchants of Liverpool, the manufacturers of Manchester, the bar of London spread over the whole of England, and the physicians, attorneys and dissenting clergy; then raise the working classes to the enjoyment of ample wages — give them universally the habit of reading, and an active interest in public affairs; and you will have a society constituted almost identically with that of the United States . . ."
Influence of Tocqueville

and Tocqueville with the need to restrain pure democracy meet with Radical favour. Both stressed the importance of popular participation in public affairs, but until the 1840’s Mill was satisfied with the £10 householder franchise for England. He saw little likelihood of universal suffrage being a success, for the majority would be degraded *proletaires*, labouring in abject poverty and swilling away their earnings in gin. Such people, until they were made wiser and better, might safely be excluded from sovereignty, although society might not escape their Swing outrages and Wat Tyler insurrections. The franchise, he thought, could be given to skilled artisans and the upper ranks of the working class — such people, in Mill’s view, were aspiring to middle-class status. Only as the working class did so aspire to better conditions, and higher education, should its opinions “tell, according to its numbers, upon the affairs of the country”. Mill’s overriding idea about government in England was that it was progressing from the rule of the few to the rule, not of *the* many, but of many — “from an aristocracy with a popular infusion, to the regime of the middle class”.

Mill’s theory of representation logically followed. Tocqueville actively encouraged Mill to explore further the dangers of delegation, which he had begun to appreciate in the early thirties. Tocqueville wrote to Mill in 1835, commending the distinction which the latter had drawn between “delegation” and “representation”:

> Rest assured, my dear Mill, that on this occasion you have mooted a most important question. ... it is much less essential for the partisans of democracy to find means of governing the nation, than to teach the nation to choose the men most capable of governing; and to exercise sufficient influence over the general nature of their government without interfering with their individual acts, or means of execution. This is the problem. I am quite convinced that the fate of the modern world depends on its solution.

Mill was already arguing that the people should not themselves govern, but should ensure security for good government by retaining ultimate control and sanctions. The best government, he said, was self-evidently government by the wisest, and therefore by the few. The people’s interest lay in choosing the ablest rulers, and allowing them to exercise their ability for the good of the people, with the minimum restraint. This was the solution to the “tyranny of the majority”. Mill saw that, as a solution, it depended upon the good sense of the people; but he was still Benthamite enough to hope that the people would

---

39 See Mill’s article on “Civilization”, *London and Westminster Review* (April 1836), reprinted in “Dissertations and Discussions”, *in Mill, Works*, IV (New Universal Library, London, undated), pp. 139–40. Mill argued that, if the people were prepared for power, aid ought to be given to the democratic movement; if they were unprepared, their ultimate supremacy must be recognized, and the utmost done to prepare them.

40 *ER* (1840), p. 21.

41 Tocqueville to Mill, 5 December 1835, Mayer (ed.), *Oeuvres*.

42 Both men believed that a governing class not accountable to the people must serve separate interests. The people must thus retain final sanctions; “but this is the only purpose for which it is good to entrust power to the people”. Mill, *London Review* (1835), p. 110.
reject any alternative arrangement as a mistake of interest. Mill's theory of "enlightened" democracy, of an almost Platonic rule by the best men, was reassuring to the middle class; for they did not doubt that such an élite would be provided from their own ranks.

In his writings upon the United States, Mill emphasized the bourgeois respect with which property was there held. Following Tocqueville, he specifically denied that "tyranny of the majority" meant economic tyranny. Where "equality" implied practical equality of economic opportunity, the many were unlikely to oppress the few economically:

That the security of person and property are the first social interests not only of the rich but of the poor, is obvious to common sense. And the degree of education which a well-constituted democracy ensures to all its citizens renders common sense the general characteristic. Truths which are obvious, it may always be expected that the American democracy will see.

Only where the poor were so poor as to have no reasonable expectation of improvement, claimed Mill, were property rights endangered. Democracy might be dangerous, then, in the crowded and poor countries of Europe, but never in a prosperous middle-class community. Mill's tone might be more like that of George Grote than of Mackintosh upon this subject, but his conclusions were more Whig than Radical.

Both Mill and Tocqueville employed empirical and utilitarian standards in their appraisal of the new world, and this appealed to the middle class. So did much, although not all, of Tocqueville's political philosophy. His view of America was constructive and non-partisan. His idea of a "well-regulated" democracy was not revolutionary or visionary except in teleological terms: it was essentially an idea of cosmos, of integration in society; he was sensitive about the need for order, interdependence, and obligation, as well as about the need for change and variety. On the whole, these qualities in Tocqueville were satisfying and comforting to the English middle class; even though his ideas were closer in various ways to the thought and feeling of Burke than to the atomistic individualism of some liberals.

I do not want to suggest that Mill's influence was unequivocally calming and conservative. There were tensions and ambivalences in his thought about

---

43 Tocqueville was more pessimistic. He was not sure that the people would see that their interest lay in representation rather than pledges. His sociologist's analysis of America made him more aware of the situational factors which encouraged "tyranny of the majority". Mill's analysis was basically ideological; he was still affected by the Radical's incurable optimism about mankind.

44 London Review (1835), p. 118. See also on this topic, Mill, ER (1840), pp. 36-37. These ideas preceded his much later conclusion that Socialism was equality "logically carried out".

45 However Mill thought that, even where the poor had power and were led by their grievances to make laws of economic redress, the danger was not so much of spoliation of property as of "undue interference" with contracts, and of laws founded on mistakes of political economy (for example, a minimum wage or a tax on machinery). ER (1840), p. 37.
democracy at this stage in his life which he did not always recognize, and which were susceptible of various interpretations. For instance, he styled himself as far more the left-wing democrat than Tocqueville, yet his concept of democracy was essentially a middle-of-the-way, middle-class one. His extremism, as compared with Tocqueville and the English upper class, consisted in a more vehement rejection of aristocracy. Mill dissented from Tocqueville’s adulation of the aristocratic virtues of government, and acidly questioned the nobility’s supposed qualities of prudence and skill:

The only steadiness which aristocracy never fails to manifest, is tenacity in clinging to its own privileges. . . . In all other matters, the opinions of a ruling class is as fluctuating, as liable to be wholly given up to immediate impulses, as the opinions of the people. Witness the whole course of English history. All our laws have been made upon temporary impulses. In what country has the course of legislation been less directed to any steady and consistent purpose? — except, indeed, that of perpetually adding to the power and privileges of the rich . . . . And as for the talents and virtues of those whom aristocracy chooses for its leaders, read Horace Walpole or Bubb Doddington, that you may know what to think of them.

Anti-aristocratic sentiment was of course by no means anathema to the middle class, but Mill frequently said things which gave little comfort to the interests of industry and business. Democracy, he said, would inevitably become middle-class. But he also asserted that the middle class of the day had a positive responsibility to ameliorate the condition of the working class — to create, in short, a society like the American, where all enjoyed middle-class status and all were therefore prepared for power. He insisted that such altruism was justified, if only in terms of self-interest, but this did not gild the pill. There were alarming intimations in Mill’s thought that democratic evolution might attain a separate dynamic out of the numerous, but less enlightened, working class. Tocqueville had said, and Mill agreed, that even a dominant middle class could not impede the ultimate triumph of numbers: “. . . is it credible that the democracy which has annihilated the feudal system, and vanquished kings, will respect the bourgeoisie and the capitalist? Will it stop now that it has grown so strong and its adversaries so weak?” Mill stressed that Britain had only gone part of the way along the American road to homogeneity of social condition. He praised England’s plural society, but he recognized that it could breed class conflict. In 1840 — the time of Chartism, of embryonic Socialism, of Owenism, and the co-operative movement — it seemed to Mill that the masses were intruding into older spheres of economic and political activity. The common people had multiplied in number. It was generally acknowledged that knowledge and intelligence were spreading to the lower

46 See Mill’s second letter to Tocqueville in 1835, Mayer (ed.), Oeuvres, p. 299.

47 London Review (1835), p. 116. The converse of this position was that Mill was more inclined than Tocqueville to regard the vices of democracy as temporary and not congenital. For example, he suggested that the mediocrity of American politicians was due to such factors as the attractions of business, and the lesser need for administration.

48 Quoted by Mill, ER (1840), p. 12.
ranks. Working-class propaganda was gaining in influence through the popular press; labourers and artisans were forming trade unions for industrial purposes; and their political power was "increasing and likely to increase". Mill liked to look upon such developments as part of a general progression to a state of bourgeois welfare and enlightenment; but it was not clear to the commercial classes of 1840 that a violent challenge to the existing order was not also part of its potential. It was not the intention or the general tenor of Mill's political thought to suggest such dismal prognostications; and the American parallel seemed to indicate the possibility of class collaboration. But the spectre of class war remained a permanent qualification to optimism and a stimulus to the institutional safeguarding of democracy.

Henry Reeve: A Whig View

Henry Reeve, at the time a precocious young man of letters, met Tocqueville in Paris in March 1835. He read the &Democratie& hot from the Paris press, and was at first alarmed by its arguments. But he soon came to a more favourable opinion, describing the book to his mother as "perhaps the most important treatise on the Science of States... since Montesquieu". He laboured over his translation during the summer of 1835, and by so doing underwent a valuable discipline in Tocqueville's methods and opinions. As he later wrote: "My own opinions were no doubt affected by the influence of that pure and subtle intellect; and the highest merit I would venture to claim for them is their conformity with his principles." As we have seen, Reeve, as an intimate of both the Benthamite and Whig salons, and as an important figure behind the political scene in the 1840's and 1850's, had ample opportunity to propagate Tocqueville's ideas in England. He favourably reviewed Parts I and II of the &Democracy& for the &British and Foreign Review& in 1836 and 1840. He maintained a regular correspondence with Tocqueville, keeping abreast of his rapidly evolving thought. Although a busy man, Reeve found time to translate &L'Ancien Régime& when it was written. During the fifties he prepared critiques of Tocqueville's collected works, and he wrote the memorial articles of 1861 and 1865 for the &Edinburgh Review&.

Nevertheless, Reeve's acquiescence in Tocqueville's thought was only partial, and his response was typical of the traditional school of Whiggism. Henry Reeve was an aristocrat by sympathy, if not by descent. He was a cosmopolitan liberal who favoured the cause of liberty in Continental Europe; but he was not a democrat, and he was completely unsympathetic towards plebeian...
aspirations in Britain itself. Reeve responded warmly to Tocqueville's very personal brand of liberalism, to his regard for the individual human personality; and he was vastly impressed by the brilliant and dispassionate analysis of transatlantic democracy offered in the *Democracy*. But, as Reeve once said, Tocqueville was writing the book of the People for France and the world, just as Machiavelli wrote the book of the Prince for Caesar Borgia. Reeve never overcame a distaste for the fact that such a book needed to be written, for he distrusted the People and their "darker sophistries and more pressing tyranny". Like the Tories, he was reluctant to grant that the day of the aristocracy — with its noble culture for the few, its intense cultivation of the highest faculties of man — was over, to be replaced by the era of the mob and the industrial middle class. Reeve agreed that Tocqueville's doctrine of the inevitability of democracy was difficult to deny in America, France, and most of Europe; but he was hopeful that in England democracy would be modified in interaction with the peculiar national heritage.

These divergent ideas even became part of the translation of the *Democracy*, although scholars have rarely noticed the fact. Tocqueville was aware that he was more of a friend and counsellor of democracy than his youthful translator, and he had cause to admonish Reeve on the point in 1839:

> I think that, influenced by your opinions, you have, in your translation, unwittingly coloured too highly all I say against democracy. I pray you, resist this temptation and preserve the impartiality of my book in its theoretical judgment of the two societies, the old and the new, and moreover my sincere desire to see the new establish itself.

This indeed was the core of the matter. Reeve was not willing to pay the historical price to be paid for achieving a well-regulated democracy: the necessity of countering its vices, and the inevitable sacrifice of the aristocratic virtues. Reeve knew only French democracy at first hand, and he recoiled from its "fierce revolution" and "spirit of strife". He was aware of Tocqueville's central argument that French democracy exemplified the weaknesses, American democracy the strengths, of popular government. He admitted that France lacked "the wholesome restraint of earnest religion, the machinery of local institutions and combined enterprise, the protection of extensive public education or the tradition of self-government" enjoyed by America. Tocqueville


53 Tocqueville to Reeve, undated, 1839, in A. H. Johnson, "Correspondence of Tocqueville and Henry Reeve", *ER*, CCXXVIII (October 1923), 288-89. For Francis Bowen's criticisms of Reeve as a translator, made in Bowen's American translation of the *Democracy* in 1862, see E. Phillips Bradley (ed.), 'Democracy in America' by Tocqueville (New York, 1945), Appendix II.

54 He believed that Englishmen would read in the example of France "the fate of those who would launch the vessel of state, without due pilotage, on more tumultuous seas: they may trace the gradual infiltration of democracy into the minds of men and into the frame of society, till the former lose their noblest powers and impulses, the latter its security from oppression". *British and Foreign Review*, X (1840), 544-45. Reeve never visited the U.S.A. but he was acquainted with literature about the new world, translating, besides Tocqueville, Guizot's *Washington*. 
preached the necessity of larding the egalitarian society with these liberal elements. But Reeve was both less confident of the validity of American panaceas and more sanguine of guiding aristocracy to meet the new situation in Britain.

Reeve pointed out that Tocqueville's generalizations about America had been deduced from undeniable conditions of social equality. England, he objected, was, unlike France and America, still an inegalitarian society. The habits and manners of the English people were still monarchical rather than republican. Moreover, England had not America's vast territory in which to try the dangerous experiment of democracy. Thus Reeve was sceptical about the relevance of Tocqueville's analysis to English conditions (an objection which Tocqueville upheld, to a point). Reeve admitted that English society was in flux — one had only to look at the intelligence, energy, industry, and accumulating wealth of the nation, he said, to reject any theory of an immutable, fixed constitution, to repudiate the doctrine of final measures in politics. But Reeve saw no overwhelming evidence that aristocratic principles were permanently irrelevant to the new conditions. The future could lie in an adaptation of these principles to new needs:

For if we be destined to prolong the existence of British institutions, based, certainly, on aristocratic principles, it must not be by a reaction arising from timorous prejudice against democratic innovation, but by a high and enlightened determination to vindicate the true application of those principles, to cast out their abuses, to repress their evil tendencies, and to confer upon them the power, without which all their dignity is adventitious — the power derived from the just fulfillment of the law of duty, directing all things to the public good.55

Reeve described himself as a "constitutional" reformer, determined to distinguish the value of institutions from the delinquencies of individuals who worked them. This he regarded as a far more profitable endeavour than the immediate and uncritical acceptance of American-type democracy; for as he wrote:

If the institution itself be destroyed, it may never be replaced, and upon its ruins must necessarily arise that purely democratic form of government, which — unsuited as it may prove to the present habits and manners of the people, and not adapted, perhaps, under any circumstances, to a redundant population within a confined space — may bring with it anarchy and terrorism, instead of that partial success, which the confirmed manners, and the local advantages of the Americans, have shown to be not inconsistent, for a time, with equality and democracy.56

55 British and Foreign Review, X (1840), 545. In a letter to Tocqueville, 7 December 1852, Reeve wrote: "... it has been given to the English Aristocracy to march with the times, and even to take the lead". Mayer (ed.), Œuvres.

56 British and Foreign Review, II (1836), 327. He agreed with Tocqueville that democracy had to be studied, but to be met "before the unhallowed rites of destruction have begun ... before the vertigo of conquest has seized the lower orders, or the palsy of dejection fallen upon the aristocracy". (Preface to the Democracy.) Reeve went to the other extreme from Mill in defending the aristocracy against Tocqueville's criticisms (e.g., that the nobility lacked sympathy with those outside the pale of their caste — this was an exaggeration, said Reeve).
On a higher plane aristocracy was justifiable for its spiritual values — values whose loss, for Reeve, transcended the egalitarian compensations set out by Tocqueville. Reeve, like Carlyle and the Tories, despaired of finding high spirituality in the industrial middle class. He was, for a Whig, surprisingly acrimonious and outspoken in his dislike of this group:

That bastard aristocracy which M. de Tocqueville predicts may arise from the manufacturing powers of our age, has all the harshness of contrast, with none of its humane corrections — all the hideous consequences of the property of man in man, without even the interested sympathy of the slave-owner in the negro. Such an aristocracy would indeed be the worst of all changes, even from the worst democracy...57

There was a tension in Reeve’s thought whenever he tried to weigh the merits of aristocracy versus democracy in Tocqueville’s terms. He felt bound to admit the force of the humanitarian and liberal arguments which Tocqueville used to defend the existence of greater social equality in society:

Yet we pause before we adopt so sweeping and disastrous a conclusion, confident that on however broad a scale this system may be applied to the moral, intellectual and political conditions of life, there will ever remain above the law of society minds and qualities which are a law unto themselves — the indomitable energy of virtue, the aspiring flight of genius, or if even these fail, the desperate activity of passion: in these things men are not equal.58

The attempt to clamp society in an egalitarian straightjacket led directly to the culture of materialism and mediocrity, and such a culture was ultimately degrading of mankind’s highest aspirations, even in America:

The paltry indulgences of animal life, the mere pursuit of self-interest...cannot satisfy minds which are not devoid of cravings for the highest intellectual enjoyment... Man can only improve by humility, by the love of superiority, and by respect for what is higher than himself: but these qualities are the reverse of the democratic virtues of reliance on self, emulation pushed to jealousy, and disdain of authority.59

Reeve therefore believed that “the great principles of science and abstruse truth” would languish in America. He was pessimistic about the efficacy of Tocqueville’s counterweights to democratic vices.60 His inclination was to

57 British and Foreign Review, X (1840), 571.
58 Ibid., p. 550.
59 Ibid., p. 571.
60 For instance, Reeve questioned whether the growth of “associations” in America was a protection for a free society. Associations, he said, lacked individual responsibility; they were led by interest rather than by principle or regard for the general good; and they were uncontrolled in a democratic system. In 1856 Reeve wrote to Tocqueville thus: “Twenty years ago, when you were writing your apology for American Democracy I was not always of your opinion; I had less faith than you in those institutions; and today I have still less...” Reeve to Tocqueville, 1 May 1856, Mayer (ed.), Œuvres.
reject the Frenchman’s quasi-determinism and to reassert an older patriarchal solution of “the difficulty of God’s various allotments to men”.

_Tory Impressions_

Tocqueville’s book was reviewed widely, and in most cases favourably, in the Tory periodicals. Outside speculative circles it was pressed quite openly into the service of the Tory party. Peel, as John Mill remarked, “praised it, and made the Tories fancy it was a Tory book” (“but I believe”, he added in 1840, “that they have found out their error”). In 1835 Peel quoted extensively from Tocqueville’s _Democracy_ during the Commons debate upon bribery at elections. Two years later, in his inaugural address as Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, Peel presented his audience with heavily biased selections from the _Democracy_ in order to give a panegyric upon the political _status quo_ in Britain. At Cambridge University, where Professor William Smyth delivered lectures upon America, Tocqueville’s study was projected in such a conservative fashion that protests arrived from the United States. The American historian Jared Sparks, a friend and correspondent of Tocqueville and a later President of Harvard College, remonstrated with Smyth: “I think too much confidence is placed in M. de Tocqueville’s ideas of the ‘tyranny of the majority’ ... in practice we perceive no such consequences as he supposes.”

Tocqueville, despite Peel and Cambridge University, presented a challenge to the conservative style of thought. There was in his thinking much that was congenial to the Tory mind — his sympathy with the advantages of a patriarchal

---

61 Tocqueville often wrote upon the dangers of historical doctrines of necessity, and Reeve used the master’s warnings to criticize the so-called inevitability of democracy. Reeve was more confident that the individual could master his destiny; he hated the idea that the only space left to the free will of man was to make the best of a democratic lot. As the years passed Tocqueville’s determinism, although providential, became stricter and gloomier. He wrote in the 1850’s: “What I called ‘the bottom I cannot touch’ is the wherefore of the world; the plan of creation of which we know nothing, not even in our bodies, still less in our minds — the reason of the destiny of this singular being whom we call Man, with just intelligence enough to perceive the miseries of his condition, but not enough to change it...” Quoted by Reeve from the _Oeuvres Complètes_, etc. (Paris, 1864), in _ER_, CXXII (October 1865), 458, 476.

62 Mill to Tocqueville, 11 May 1840, Mayer (ed.), _Oeuvres_, p. 328. _Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine_, a liberal journal, wrote in similar vein: “Sir Robert, finding some of the harsher lineaments of democracy portrayed in lines equally harsh by M. de Tocqueville, speaks patronisingly of that author: but Sir Robert, no more than Pilate, cares for an exposition of ‘what is truth’; we shall hear no more eulogies of M. de Tocqueville from such a suspicious quarter, now that he has professed himself a democrat, anxious to turn democracy to the best account”. Vol. III (1840), 507.

63 See Beaumont (ed.), _Tocqueville’s Oeuvres Complètes_, etc. (Paris, 1864), I, 36.

64 See _A Correct Account of Sir Robert Peel’s Speeches at Glasgow January 1837_ (London, 1837).

65 Sparks to Smyth, 13 October 1841; published in H. B. Adams, “Jared Sparks and Alexis de Tocqueville”, _Johns Hopkins University Studies_, XVI, No. 12, 44. For eight letters from Tocqueville to Sparks and Charles Sumner, see R. L. Hawkins, “Unpublished Letters of Tocqueville”, _Romantic Review_, XIX (1929), 193ff. In 1833 Sparks welcomed the _Démocratie_, and compared it favourably with the English press “teeming with... misrepresentation and spleen on America”.

Property of University of Queensland Press - do not copy or distribute
corporate society; his feeling for law, tradition, and order; the sense of reverence in his liberalism; his distaste for democratic vices and his distrust of utopianism.66 Nevertheless, the central tenet of his theory was a rejection of the present utility and relevance of aristocracy. Tocqueville was aware of his standpoint between “the plaintive murmurs of the dying past and the indistinguishable tumult of the advancing time”; but his utilitarian concern was with the future, and was thus in the final analysis profoundly repugnant to the aristocrats.

The Tory reaction to his influence was thus understandably ambivalent and ranged from harmless reiteration by people like Basil Hall to outright rejection of basic premises by Blackwood’s. Hall’s readable account of Part I, which appeared in the Quarterly Review in 1836, was unexceptionable in its fidelity to the original.67 He acquiesced in Tocqueville’s praise of the inbuilt checks of the American system, and came to believe only less vehemently than Mill that Tocqueville’s was the true account of American society:

He has not only shown us the country, but explained to us the reasons why it exists in the present state, which we are aware of, not only the true situa­tion of that extraordinary people, but the true causes of their social and political situation, are clearly developed.68 Hall was less certain than Tocqueville of the irresistibility of democracy in Europe, but he had no qualms about having the Frenchman’s ideas on the subject broadcast in Britain. He recommended the production of a cheaper edition, “in order that the interesting information and practical wisdom which it abounds within the reach of those classes where prejudice and error take the firmest stand”. Hall, like Peel, was satisfied with the non-revolutionary character of Tocqueville’s work; he did not perceive the Democracy was politically significant. O’Donnel, who was a regular contributor but about whom little is known. O’Donnel opened with an ingenious attack on Tocqueville’s method. He denied the validity of the conclusions he had reached upon the commonest fallacy into which spectators of the American scene fell, said O’Donnel, was to assume that American society constituted a tangible product of theory; that it exemplified a general principle of

66 “Whatever might be his views on that unpractical speculation, the ultimate destiny of the human race, he regarded with open contempt all ‘phalansterism’ and similar projects for the immediate or rapid perfectibility of mankind.” QR, CX (October 1861), 525 (by Richard Monckton Milnes).
67 It is somewhat surprising that Hall, an aristocrat, whose book of American travels (1829) should have been so temperate. He acknowledged, however, that the Democracy had weeded out many of his long-cherished fallacies, that it was right which we had believed to be wrong and vice versa”. QR, LVII (September 1836), 133.
68 Ibid., p. 133.
rather than a uniqueness of condition: "Reasoners, considering state organizations as wholes, and finding theories in them, by a common mistake regard them as resulting therefrom." Yet there was no necessary reference from existing structure to predetermining plan, and in fact governments should be analysed "not in their finished states, and as a result of plans, but in their beginnings and growing details, and as the result of peculiarities". In such an analysis, "the gross deceptions which sprang from invidious comparisons between state and state would fall to the ground, and each would see that in its peculiar self resided its peculiar sources of amelioration and well-being". Comparison was legitimate only when there was complete parity between the countries being compared. This condition was never fulfilled; hence "a just comparison between nation and nation, with a view to proposing one, in any singular particular, as a model for the other may be pronounced impossible". Nations could be understood only by the historical view; the scientific study of states to create a Science of Society was chimerical.

O'Donnel went on logically to deplore any reform that was not an entirely indigenous reform: "... the habit which nations have of looking out of themselves for reforms, has occasioned more disorder and misgovernment... than all other causes put together". This was an attempt to lessen by one the species of "weapon in the Radical arsenal; although the Tories themselves refused to abide by the logic of their argument when they enthusiastically drew anti-democratic lessons from the American experience.

The Tories had no objections to many of Tocqueville's conclusions respecting America. Blackwood's warmly approved his respect for the "scriptural piety" of the Americans, past and present, and agreed that it was a key to republican stability, though for Tocqueville's Christian Deism O'Donnel preferred to substitute the Protestant religion, alone in history "the mother of civil liberty". The party of the landed gentry applauded Tocqueville's recommendation of decentralization and the virtues of local government. But they were careful to point out that the spirit of civic responsibility which Tocqueville found in New England had grown slowly throughout American history; it sprang from ancient Anglo-Saxon tradition, and had not been created by legislative enactment. This was a thrust at the Municipal Reform Act of 1835; but it readily became an argument for precluding any directive reconstruction of society in favour of natural and organic social evolution.

69 Blackwood's, XXXVII (May 1835), 758ff, for this and following quotations.
70 Ibid., p. 759. The subject of reform, he added, should be separated "from all the foreign associations, prejudices and perversions with which it is oftentimes mixed". It is interesting to note how the debate which now revolves around such subjects as "Comparative Politics" was anticipated in some ways in the political speculation of the 1830's.
71 It was typical of the Tory view that local institutions were pictured as virtually the only centres of order in the Union: "... beyond the township all is agitation, confusion, violence, and constant change; society seems to be brought to the brink of dissolution; but in the very height of each crisis every man falls back upon his city, town or hamlet, and there recognizes an authority of which he individually forms a constituent part as if by magic." Ibid., p. 760.
Influence of Tocqueville

Freedom [wrote O'Donnel] naturally grows out of the infancy of states; not from speculative wisdom, but from the simple wants of man; and... history will teach us to add, that when the natural action of these wants have been frustrated, or that men rebel in wantonness, so that speculative wisdom or theories come to usurp their place, the result aimed at is never attained. There is then a disproportion between men and their aims.72

Legislation could only formalize changes which had slowly evolved through time — "it is vain to attempt to force them".

O'Donnel had his own theory of "propitious circumstances". Universal suffrage, he argued, was neither inappropriate nor hurtful in the virtual universality of condition that prevailed in the United States. The whole population was "one industrial class", that of manual labour: "Hands have been alone wanted, and therefore hands alone counted." Numbers were the great desideratum in such a situation, and numbers alone deserved to be represented. Under conditions of minimal government, suited to a pioneering society, tensions were avoided — "men in large spaces jostle not against each other, especially when their work is a common one, their interest a common one..." O'Donnel, however, foresaw insurmountable difficulties for democracy once emancipation took place from frontier conditions:

When the great work of hands shall be completed, hands will lose their predominating value; when the all-absorbing necessity of manual industry shall be abated, and it continues no longer to resolve all classes of society into one, many distinctions, as yet hardly known and all connected with or arising from intellectual superiority, will emerge. The question then will be, shall all these yield the political arena completely to a numerical majority...?73

Whereas Mill could envisage increasing (bourgeois) homogeneity in America's future, unless there were safeguards, O'Donnel predicted that transatlantic society would become more complex and more heterogeneous. The one saw democracy as the natural government for the future, the other thought such a government would become increasingly inadequate. O'Donnel pointed out the pernicious effect of majority rule even in the favourable environment of the West. Had Tocqueville not shown that intelligence was sacrificed to ignorance in the nation's assemblies? Did he not demonstrate the oppression of an egalitarian society over will and opinion? Was not in America "the minority struck with a fiat of moral annihilation?", and did it not lay down "as an axiom, which lies at the heart of all pure democracy, that there can be no superiority, either intellectual or moral, that is not given or expressed by a major number...?" It was unthinkable that such stultifying values would be tolerated in the complex and variegated, higher-order civilization of the future. If America was to transcend her mechanistic materialism, democracy could not last:

72 Ibid., pp. 760-61.
73 Ibid., p. 765.
If her mind is to rise from the earth and have its wants, its labours, its delights, and to bring all the results of its researches to adorn, dignify and liberalise the otherwise grubby pursuit of society; if she is to consider man not a mere work-day labourer, but an inquisitive intelligence, and this world, not so much a material as a spiritual laboratory; then she must find some other interpreter than bare numbers to express her will.74

O'Donnel was indefinite in suggesting an alternative to representative government as a solution to the problem, but he was unimpressed by Tocqueville's premise about the inevitability of democracy, or by the relevance of that system to an evolving society. Like Reeve, he was refusing to abandon the values of aristocracy for those of equality. Tocqueville was, in Laski's phrase, an aristocrat admitting defeat; but England had many aristocrats who refused to do the same.

Part II of the Democracy, which appeared in 1840, was much more abstract and philosophical than Part I, and the Tories became more openly critical. Some became more friendly towards America, which they now began to see, in many aspects, as a conservative society. Tocqueville's catastrophic vision of an America driven by an egalitarian dialectic was said to be overdrawn, to be much too theoretical in the French fashion. Conservatives alleged that Tocqueville was confusing the American kind of democracy with that of France: "One cannot read a single chapter of his work", commented Blackwood's, "without being struck by the conviction that all his observations, touching all people, are made from the meridian of Paris."75 French democracy was admitted by all to be doctrinaire, visionary, abstruse: it sprang from the French Revolution, which "aimed at the universal; its most potent spellword was the regeneration of man".76 According to O'Donnel, who wrote a second article on Tocqueville for Blackwood's in 1840, French democrats tested institutions by ideal standards; and the French ideal was a doctrine of equality both uncompromising and unpractical. Inevitably, he argued, any attempt to translate the ideal into reality became an attempt to reverse the natural human order. Thus he explained the French passion for transforming society. American democracy was said, on the other hand, to have a profoundly different spirit. The Tory argument was similar to the Whig insistence upon the common cultural qualities of Americans and Englishmen. American politics were more like British than French politics. American democracy was piecemeal and

74 Ibid., p. 766.
75 Blackwood's, XLVIII (October 1840), 470. "In France he seems to fancy he has discovered the Catholeic passion of all nations, and this notion... falsifies radically all the dubious and frightened deductions he has drawn from it." Basil Hall, on the contrary, regarded Tocqueville's nationality as a distinct advantage. Like Shaw, he suggested that the British and Americans were separated by a common language: "There is undoubtedly much in the current language of American society which conveys to an Englishman's mind a very different class of impressions from what the self-same words do to the understanding of a native... The Englishman never suspects that he is taking up a wrong idea; the Frenchman distrusts himself and inquires." Q.R, LVII (September 1836), 135.
76 Blackwood's, XLVIII (October 1840), 467.
practical, earthy and concrete in the English tradition, not abstract and visionary in the French style:

The words democracy and equality have a noticeable diversity of signification in the apprehension of the Frenchman and of the American. The former sees in them... an ideal; he maintains and defends them continually by abstract reasonings. The latter is quite insensible to these subtle perceptions. ... He understands them only as practical things, and values them solely on account of their practical effects. Indeed, equality in the United States should more properly be called rude and exuberant freedom; for it wants the chief mark — passionate blindness — by which M. de Tocqueville has discriminated equality from liberty. It has in America arisen out of, and is associated with, no eccentric agitations of the spiritual man, but comes entirely from the terra firma man....

In the view of men like O'Donnel, Tocqueville had failed to consider sufficiently the Anglo-Saxon character of the Americans, which was a more important fact than the superficial identities between French and American democracy: “We maintain especially that the description he has given of democracy and equality only describes the French conception... and that in England, and more positively in America, this French idea is sternly reprobated and repudiated.”

The empiricist frame of mind seemed an obviously conservative influence to O'Donnel. All was safe and right in societies where men devoted their energies to the pursuit of everyday interests. Dangerous social convulsions always occurred “out of the irresistible predominance of some new spiritual principles and never out of the common energies and activities of men, however high-wrought, enterprising and ambitious these may be”. (He would surely have regarded the Civil War as a product of absolute moralism prevailing over the counsels of pragmatism.) O'Donnel felt that Tocqueville might have been less pessimistic about the future if he had realized “that the Real in the two freest countries on the face of the globe, is much more than an over-match for the Ideal in France, and is able to counter-balance and counteract its effects very sufficiently”.

Like the argument of the Whigs, that of O'Donnel in effect praised the cast of mind of non-Radicals in England, and opposed potentially Socialist theories of egalitarianism. The non-revolutionary and inegalitarian characteristics of

77 Ibid., p. 468 (O'Donnel).
78 Ibid., p. 468. Cf. Tocqueville: “America is perhaps... the country of the whole world which contains the fewest germs of revolution.” O'Donnel, in making his theme striking, was less than fair to Tocqueville, who of course made a point of distinguishing French and American experience.
79 Ibid., p. 469. This argument jostled a little uneasily with that other strand of conservative thought which insisted that the nobility provided a “spiritual” counter-balance to “the pursuit of everyday interests”.
80 To illustrate his argument, O'Donnel pointed out the essential incompatibility between French and English genius. France could produce no demagogue with the qualities of Cobbett; Cartwright could not be compared with Lafayette. It was because Godwin's cast of mind was French, and Mme de Stael's essentially English, that they were not appreciated in their home countries.
the Americans were highlighted to this end, although five years earlier O'Donnel had accepted Tocqueville's view about the existence of equality in the United States. Such conclusions were partly arrived at by undeniable distortion or rejection of some of Tocqueville's theses, by ignoring some of his important qualifications. His thesis that egalitarian societies must predominate in Western Europe and America was repudiated. Faced with working-class movements in Britain and the Continent, the Tories had to concede Tocqueville's point about the aggrandizement of popular power in the civilized nations. They agreed that the masses would have to be conciliated, politically and socially. But to reason from this to an entire and inescapable remoulding of mankind was, they thought, "preposterous, false and pernicious". The English, and the Americans, were empirically-minded people, who rejected absolutes in favour of concrete solutions to situations as they arose. They would certainly come to profoundly less radical conclusions. Again, as in the case of Mill and the Whigs, ideas about America were assimilated to the dominant gradualist ethos of the age.

---

81 Associated with this theme was the argument that freedom was more cherished in countries with an empiricist tradition. Freedom, it was contended, was an essentially pragmatic attitude; unlike equality, it referred to no abstract ideal but existed only in practice and experience; it was by its nature an exercise in compromise.

82 Tocqueville, for example, was much more aware of the fact that divergent national conditions shaped democracy than Blackwood's allowed. He realized the importance of gradualism in English development and wrote for instance of British customary law that "it has given that nation what one might call its taste for precedents, that is to say, a certain turn of mind which leads men to try and find out not what is reasonable in itself, but what is done, not what is just, but ancient, not general theories but particular facts... habits bred from customary law... have proved strong allies of aristocratic institutions". This he wrote in his journal during his American tour; see J. P. Mayer (ed.), Tocqueville's 'Journey to America' (London, 1959), p. 16.
The Idea of the Ministerial Department: Bentham, Mill, and Bagehot

There were three major inventions in British governmental machinery in the nineteenth century. One was the classified civil service recruited by open, academic, competitive examination. The second was the elected, multi-purpose local authority. The third was the ministerial department. None of these was a sudden or independent invention, but their importance cannot be questioned. They have received unequal study. The history of the ministerial department has received least attention of all. The outlines are therefore unfamiliar and its peculiarity unappreciated. The purpose of this article is to summarize one aspect of the history of the ministerial department: the debate about notions of responsibility and organization from Bentham to Bagehot which went along with actual developments in central government practice.

The ministerial department came to have certain specific features. It was to be headed by a single political person, at once exclusively responsible, the most powerful and yet the most temporary element in the organization. Underneath the Minister would be certain senior officers reporting directly to the Permanent Head and appointed, like him, in consultation with the Prime Minister and the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. The Minister would be responsible for these appointments. The Permanent Head would be at once the chief adviser to the Minister and the general manager of the department. As the general manager he would also be the accounting officer. Thence downwards there would be a continuing hierarchy. The patterning of departmental top organization on the grading of the civil service administrative class would create a type of organization characterized by filtering and therefore by strain. What would appear at the top was what Sir John Henry Woods called a super-bottleneck. This sort of organization was quite different in its shape and methods from what can be called the norm of executive organization. A comparison of the organization of the Treasury with that of the Board of Inland Revenue would show the distinction clearly. At the head of the pyramid would be a single person, the Minister. The Parliamentary Secretary would be an assistant not in any sense a deputy or jointly responsible person. The organization of this “normal” department would reflect civil service classification and a distinction between

administrative and other work and its dominance over such other work. The top of the pyramid would tend to consist only of the top grades of the administrative class.\(^1\)

This was an organization of a peculiar type, dependent on parliamentary scrutiny and financial control, a reformed civil service and a restriction of departmental functions. If the organization was peculiar, it was still more peculiar that it should be held to be the best, and even the only, form of organization for central government. The nineteenth century invention was precisely the belief that ministerial responsibility demanded departmental organization of this and only of this type, and that ministerial responsibility and departmental organization should be applied throughout central government.\(^2\) One side of this was the actual development of the preconditions, for example the reform of public finance beginning with Graham's work at the Admiralty in the 1830's. This was gradual not sudden. So until the 1850's, that is for a generation after the Reform Bill, central government still freely used organizations other than ministerial departments and new non-ministerial organizations were set up. Thereafter this ceased to be true. Irresponsible and variegated eighteenth century and earlier forms were abolished or absorbed by ministerial departments. Nineteenth century experiments in non-ministerial organization were replaced. No new non-ministerial organizations were created. New and major ministerial departments — for agriculture and for education, for example — appeared. This was a striking tendency. It continued until in this century a further transition occurred.

These developments have recently been discussed elsewhere.\(^3\) Some aspects (like the failure of the first Poor Law Board) are familiar; others (debates about the Office of Woods and Works, for example) are less so. But the ideological side has scarcely been discussed at all. When it has, the assumption has been that Bentham was the first to enunciate the idea of a responsible ministerial department; that at the height of its acceptance, the doctrine was reiterated by Mill; and that there you have the main outlines. This is misleading about Bentham and Mill and indeed represents an inadequate statement of the whole development. Today, when there are anxious questions about the future of the ministerial department and about the whole problem of providing for responsibility in government organization, it may be worthwhile to re-examine the matter.

II

What had Bentham to say about responsibility? For Bentham responsibility was a matter of being open to punishment. It was a liability rather for things done than for a failure to do anything. Public offices were places where

---


\(^2\) Cf. J. Morley, *Life of Gladstone* (London, 1908) II, 51-54, for the Ayrton case when ministerial responsibility received a precise exposition and a supreme tribute.

such misdeeds were especially likely to occur. Some types of office made this the more likely. Bentham’s contribution therefore began as an attack on one particular existing system. He was attacking the remnants of eighteenth century administration in what he saw: the non-ministerial organization of the system before 1832. The ministerial offices of the years before 1832 were themselves specifically free from some of the later conditions of the ministerial norm: Lord Palmerston, for example, regarded a permanent civil service as a danger to, not a condition of, ministerial responsibility. The fifty years of economical reform before 1832 did not blunt Bentham’s attack. He was concerned with the actual corruption and influence that seemed to him to be consciously hidden by abstract nonsense about independence.

The country justices are all gentlemen; their mess, like the member of parliament’s, is all sweet without bitter, all power without obligation. What they vouchsafe to do, the country is to think itself obliged to them for: they do just as much as they like, and as they like it, and when they like it.5

What was wanted, Bentham thought, was officials in precisely the opposite position to that of the country justices: officials who would do as much as the country liked as and when the country liked it, and do it as their obligation. This was the object of concern, not abstract qualities like independence.6

The second thing about Bentham, however, was that the solution he recommended was not the responsible Minister of nineteenth century Parliaments and Cabinets at all, but something much more like the American version. He was all in favour of “single-seated functionaries” and dependence on the “public opinion tribunal” as a way of securing “appropriate moral aptitude”. The Minister was the person in a position of highly concentrated and public accountability. His reputation was the result of his own actions. This included an undertaking of responsibility for his subordinates lest they do evil on his behalf.7 But Bentham did not want Ministers elected to or voting in the Parliament, though they would have certain rights of speaking and initiative there: thus would their influence be honest not dishonest. He acknowledged the similarity to American government.8 The beliefs that led him against boards led him against parliamentary Ministers.

Certainly Bentham’s views of the society around him did lead to an attack on boards, commissions and trusts, to some sort of design for pyramidal departments and to a number of interestingly specific prescriptions. The

6 Ibid., p. 316.
8 Works of Bentham, III, Plan of Parliamentary Reform, Catechism, S. IV; and Vol. IX, Constitutional Code, Bk. II, chap. 8, Arts. 3–6 and 10 and at p. 206.
gravamen of his case was that answerability for results was weakened by the aggregation of positions constituting a board. A board was a screen behind which power could be abused and punishment miscarry. A multiplicity of members meant greater influence, greater protection and greater indifference to shame. The fellowship of the board would provide applause for a member or compensation elsewhere for disgrace. Closed methods failed to apportion public disgrace according to desert or public approval according to merit. Emulation or exertion were submerged under lassitude and neglect.

The evil went beyond the members of a board. The more deeply you penetrated subordinate levels the worse the abuses and the less the performance:

A Board, my Lord, is a screen. The lustre of good desert is obscured by it — ill desert, shrinking behind, eludes the eye of censure — wrong is covered by it with a presumption of right, stronger and stronger in proportion to the number of folds: and each member having his own circle of friends, wrong, in proportion again to the number, multiplies its protectors.9

This was so, as he said elsewhere in a less familiar passage,

not so much on the part of the members of the board itself, which by the prominence of its situation engages in some measure the public eye, as on the part of the subordinate functionaries; whose functions while they have little to attract the eye of the public have much to repel it, and who are the less looked after by the public in proportion as they are supposed to be well looked after by their superiors at the board.10

Here Bentham is indeed concentrating on the effects of the board on subordinates and is almost prepared to weaken his attack on board members to do this.

From his limited views of the motivation of conduct and of the functions of government Bentham devised a picture of the sort of organization he wanted. It would be one in which the “exclusion of delay, vexation and expense” would be achieved with the appropriate “aptitudes” at various levels. The necessary conditions were responsibility, the “responsible location principle” and the fear of consequences. These conditions, which should replace independence, differed. Responsibility, indeed, depended partly on fear. It would be created by “subordinateness” and “accountableness”. Subordinateness was a result of certain powers — of direction, “suspension”, “dislocation”, “suppletion” and punishment. So, if there was to be responsibility, the subordinate must be frightened of his “superordinate” because of these suspensive and other powers. He must also be subject to directions. The directive power itself was insufficient. Further, it was only efficacious when the subordinate was accountable. By accountability was meant the necessity to report on the performance of operations undertaken “in consequence of, and compliance with”, the superordinate’s directions. All these conditions of responsibility were to be distinguished.

9 Ibid., V, Letters on Scotch Reform, Letter II.
10 Ibid., VI, 558.
Subordinateness and accountability were the main conditions, though not the same thing: other departments were accountable but not subordinate to the Finance Department.\textsuperscript{11}

Responsibility meant subordination and accounting for results. Fear was the ultimate sanction. This took Bentham to certain conclusions about pay, tenure and promotion. "The military functionary is paid for being shot at. The civil functionary is paid for being spoken and written at." Thus he argued that confusion about responsibility, reward, and punishment had maximized official expense in English government. Officials ought to be rewarded for taking on their obligations; but they would carry them out for fear of punishment. This precept, accepted generally, was not applied in the English administration, in which functionaries professed responsibility in proportion to their rewards, present or expected. "Note that only by the expectation of eventual evil (punishment included) can responsibility be established: neither by expectation of eventual good or by possession of good (reward included) can it be established."\textsuperscript{12} Bentham's most significant conclusion was about organizational structure: the need for a pyramidal hierarchy with one individual at the top. Here he recommended a departmental form and anticipated something of the Northcote-Trevelyan principles for civil service classification; the association of the two things was important. He wrote that a division between levels of control on the one hand and lower levels of information on the other hand would provide a better distribution of work than would many-membered boards. He discussed the allocation of functions at the top and bottom of "the official climax". He distinguished between situations as they demanded talent, simple trust or trust and talent.\textsuperscript{13}

His general recommendations contained specific criticisms and further recommendations. For example, he said that people were confused about arbitrariness.

That which in the exercise of official functions constitutes arbitrary power is — not the unity of the functionary but his exemption from control, including the obligation, contemporary or eventual, of assigning reasons for his acts.

A second example was his argument that the practice of staggering appointments and limiting conditions of eligibility tended to make boards self-perpetuating: retiring members would be reappointed and would later do the same for their beneficent colleagues; the board would degenerate into "imbecility, corruption or ineptitude". He instanced the Bank of England and the East India Company. The solution was "the here-proposed all-comprehensive temporary non-relocability system". Of all those enjoying independence, trustees were the worst,

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., IX, Constitutional Code, Bk II, chap. 9, S. III, Art. 6; S. XXI, Art. 6; chap. 2, Art. 17; chap. 9, S. V.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., chap. 9, Ss. XVIII and XIX; chap. 5, S. VI, Art. 3; chap. 2, Art. 16, Rule II, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., chap. 9, S. III, Arts. 15 and 30; S. XVI, Arts. 11–14.
and of all trustees, unpaid ones were the worst. "The more confidence a man is likely to meet with the less he is likely to deserve. Jealousy is the life and soul of government." Individual and if possible contractual management was the answer: this was how Panopticon was to be managed. He observed that the branches of service most essential to the comfort and luxury of the monarch were not put into the hands of boards. Here a necessary exception was made to the normal use of boards in a corrupt government,

for were it in the hands of a board, each member in reality, as well as in name and pretence, becoming a part in the business, what is sufficiently understood is — that there never would be a house fit for service.

What was required for the monarch's house was also required for Bentham's ideal penal house, Panopticon. Boards would be as unsuitable for that as they were — Russian experience, he said, had shown this throughout the eighteenth century — for effecting great schemes of codification or improvement. Bentham did approach the general design and some of the details of the normal, ministerial, civil service department. But he was attracted to the American model. He ignored the reforms that had already taken place. Furthermore, despite his general attitude to boards and to departments, his inventive genius and his honest and ample parentheses provided a good deal of possible assistance to those who favoured non-ministerial organization itself. To take one instance: he suggested the use of annual and other reports as a link between the legislature and organizations otherwise limited in responsibility. His doctrine about annual reports was reflected in some of Chadwick's opposition to ministerial control and, in particular, in the Kennedy case in the 1850's. Kennedy, who at the time was one of the official Commissioners of Woods, objected to the Treasury's exerting any control over him and specifically over his annual report: this was to be a full and independent preparation linking his administration directly to Parliament and, if possible, to a special parliamentary committee. Bentham saw the ways in which a board's decision could be fortified against outside opinion. There were suggestions about the use of powers of direction, "dislocation" and inspection as controls over less responsible organizations. His distinctions between subordinateness, accountability and responsibility elucidate the variety of relations that may exist between one official and another. If one applies his argument to relations between one organization and another (as Bentham did with his example of the Finance Department) one can see that they may be linked by certain degrees of responsibility and subordination without being united. Here is an approach to an

15 Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, 1854, X, Select Committee on Crown Forests, Question 882, etc.
understanding and a classification of relations between a ministerial department and a non-ministerial organization.  

In the main stream of his argument, Bentham himself assumed "a form of government of which corruption is the main instrument" swarming with boards that were merely screens for abuse, multipliers of office and defences against punishment. But his footnotes did allow for boards in certain cases. At one point he said so quite clearly and gave a list which suggested that they could be used for very routine or very open work. He also implied that board members could be useful watches on each other. This tallied, not with what he himself had said elsewhere, but with an argument sometimes used later in the nineteenth century. "It would be an error if... a conclusion were formed that there exists not any case in which government by bodies corporate or boards can be conducive to the legitimate ends of government." His possible examples included, "where neither extraordinary talent nor extraordinary exertion is necessary, ... giving out money by others' direction, ... where misapplication would be manifest or easily detected, ... and insofar as division of power is necessary to good government". In his Principles of Penal Law he said that plurality in administrative councils might be some form of precaution against abuse of authority, though unity was *prima facie* desirable for responsibility. He thought that the advantages of plurality and unity might be combined if there were a single head and a subordinate council of associates and voting were avoided. This bore an interesting resemblance to the top organization of the East India Company of which Bentham was thinking, as well as to later arrangements for Indian government and other later institutions like Sir Horace Plunkett's Irish Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.

Altogether Bentham's list is an interesting contrast and sometimes a parallel with later non-ministerial forms. One would say that he was nearer to ideas of "hiving off executive work" — as in the old German departments — than to such of our own contemporary uses as are the opposite of that. Indeed, some of his statements now provide a starting point for that understanding of the difference between administrative and executive posts that is of importance to any appreciation of the significance of non-ministerial organization. He said that precedent was of limited use as a basis for action. He provided a careful analysis of "executive power". His words about high and low level posts are enlightening:

... At the top and at the bottom of the official climax the greatest scope for the union of functions exists: at the top because there the functions are chiefly of the directive kind: and to the directive function, exercise

---

16 *Works of Bentham*, IX, Constitutional Code, Bk II, chap. 6, S. XXVII, Art. 56; chap. 9, S. XX, Art. 10; Bk I, chap. 8; etc.,
may, in minute proportions of time, be given to the operations of functionaries, in indefinite number; at the bottom, because for the performance of the functions, though of the executive kind, the demand for performance will generally be so infrequent.21

Bentham did at times admit that the normal conditions of responsibility would not always be sufficient for enforcing “appropriate aptitude” in officials and organizations. The public opinion tribunal could secure moral aptitude by its enforcement of responsibility through the single-seated functionary as Minister. But certain situations required more than moral aptitude. The normal conditions would not necessarily be sufficient where intellectual and active abilities were required. Here additional powers — administrative ones, for example — would be needed. And there would be a problem of finding evidence in case of official transgression.22

He saw that there were problems and indeed limitations in ministerial responsibility and organization. He was prepared to admit that the Minister’s responsibility was limited by the possible extent of his vigilance, and that his responsibility depended on directive and dislocative powers which could not usefully apply to subordinates so distant that an “exercise” was effected before it could be “excluded”. These may have appeared marginal admissions to Bentham; however illegitimate it may be, it is impossible for us now to read him without feeling that these admissions go almost too far.23

III

Bentham contributed a very great deal to the theory of the normal ministerial department of the later nineteenth century. He did not have that precisely in his mind, and he did not only say that. If one adds later experience to what he said one could sometimes almost get an explanation of the amount of deviation from the normal department to be found in the present machinery of government. Chadwick was his disciple. Nor was the discussion of responsibility and organization in central government after Bentham simply a matter of a swelling chorus of philosophical radical praise for the ministerial department. If Bentham had mainly been concerned to criticize the boards and trusts of eighteenth century administration and its aftermath, there were those who were prepared to criticize Bentham. Thus in The Statesman, 1836, Sir Henry Taylor’s statement that boards and commissions were in fact useful and no longer irresponsible was put in words which so clearly echo Bentham’s that they read as a conscious refutation:

Formerly it might be objected to boards that the sense of responsibility was weakened by division. But in these days responsibility is brought to

22 Works of Bentham, IX, Constitutional Code, Bk II, chap. 9, S. XXV, Arts. 20, 22, 24; Bk I, chap. 8.
23 Ibid., Bk II, chap. IX, S. XXV, Arts. 26, 27, 32, 35.
bear with an excessive and intimidating force, and in many cases the plural is the preferable responsibility.

Taylor approved of commissions as a means by which the statesman could get his work done out of doors. He certainly preferred commissions to parliamentary committees for their greater degree of permanence and suggested that they should decide and draft necessary bills and instructions: they should see the business through. He also gave some characteristic advice on their organization.24

His corrective is sharper than his defence of boards and commissions. It is instructive to read his account of a Minister’s office. The office was not yet a department and responsibility in such an office was not at all the problem with which we are faced. Even within those terms, Taylor thought that there were inevitable limits on political responsibility and control. “The far greater proportion of duties which are performed in the office of a Minister are and must be performed under no effective responsibility.” That was, where no question of politics, party or individual injustice was involved. There was an echo here of Palmerston’s view in the 1830’s that responsibility existed as long as you did not have, or allow too much to, permanent officials. Taylor added that the statesman had no time for the “inventive and suggestive” portions of his functions. It was the job of the executive agents to work towards legislation on the topics whose execution was provided for by legislature: the chain of functionaries should be suggestive as well as executive. Parliamentary inter­position in administrative business should be restricted to certain types of case and certain conditions.25 Taylor developed this later. In a letter to Earl Grey in 1855 and in another letter of 185226 he suggested the type of speaking but non-voting Minister which Bentham had suggested and O’Higgins was later to suggest in Ireland as a compromise with the full ministerial type. Perhaps the most suggestive of Taylor’s points were the emphasis on the ability to work through others, the dangers of popularity and accessibility and the need “in high and important spheres of action” for a frequent setting aside of general administrative rules.27

Taylor wrote when the flow of reform which had in fact begun in Bentham’s day was fuller and more obvious. His concern was practical not constitutional. Hence his specific marginalia in the thesis of ministerial government picked out, for example, the uses of commissions and the translation of them into something more than bodies of enquiry only.

Then there is the position of Chadwick to be taken into account. Chadwick was a major Benthamite of the second generation. He was also a major propagator of boards and commissions. It is possible to explain away his

support for non-ministerial organization. He soon enough ceased to be happy with his boards and commissions at the phase of enquiry. He had grasped the case against administration by commissions of technical experts: expert officials were another matter. He was much happier in the General Board of Health under Lord Morpeth than he had been in the first Poor Law Board.28 Sympathetic Ministers and civil service status might have provided a better screen for the independence he was searching for than did the relatively public position of a board. But the fact is that Chadwick never understood that. A faithful disciple of Bentham, he was, like his master, never able to appreciate the advantages that would flow from an amateur, responsible, parliamentary Minister in charge of an official permanent machine. Nor could he distinguish clearly between the two. The contemporary ministerial office described by Taylor or by Palmerston did not encourage any assumption that it was with such vehicles that the Benthamite objectives would be reached.

In any case opposition to boards and non-ministerial organizations was not at all confined to philosophical radicals. It included angry Tories like Praed and perturbed Whigs like Sydney Smith.29 The line of thought that has been called Gothic constitutionalism — the application of the spirit of early Victorian Gothic revivalism, of neo-romanticism in the field of government — was, like Taylor’s, very different from the Benthamite. But it was sometimes, as in local government, indirectly sympathetic to some part of the Benthamite programme. The major figure in this line was Toulmin Smith.

It was, not surprisingly, Taylor’s commissions which especially angered Toulmin Smith. He was indeed a spokesman of a widespread reaction in the 1830’s and 1840’s against radical commissions of enquiry, as in his Government by Commission Illegal and Pernicious, published in 1849. His case was that administration by Crown-appointed commissions, as well as the use of commissions of enquiry, was part of a contemporary centralization. He saw in this a threat to the natural rights expressed in the constitution according to Coke, in its principles of taxation and in its principles of local self-government. His first thesis was that particular legislation and, still more, administrative action or extra-parliamentary legislation were, irrespective of their content, things which lessened confidence in the existence of fundamental law. His second thesis was that the use of commissions was something which made encroachment particularly easy. Here he was attacking radical — generally Benthamite — experiments “of which the beginning is always a Commission of Inquiry and the end a General Board of paid Commissioners”. In theory the use of commissioners was inevitably bad. In practice government nomination led to a packed commission of enquiry whose interest it would be to recommend the creation of a permanent body.30 He referred back for support to Sydney Smith who,

though a radical of a sort, had in the 1830's indulged his gift of irony at the expense of the commissioners of that decade. Toulmin Smith was right to see that some of the legislation of his time would make new demands on administrative organization. The ultimate outcome was often to be a ministerial department; but the immediate outcome then was often a non-ministerial board.

Furthermore, it was precisely the Benthamite first Poor Law Board itself that was particularly influential in the formulation of the nineteenth century case against non-ministerial organization. It was nicely put in 1847 by Sir George Grey, as Home Secretary, in moving a bill to amend the Act of 1834.\textsuperscript{31} He (unlike Toulmin Smith) was not against central supervision or even against delegated legislation. He was pleading against imperfect and indirect responsibility, against the lack of a cheek and the lack of opportunity for self-defence, against the position in which the House, the Minister and the commissioners were all placed. Grey perceived two features of responsibility. As with Bentham, there was a desire for culpability, or at least for a cheek. This would be secured by the competence, the power in the Minister: the one feature depended on the other. Grey also assumed that ministerial competence demanded departmental organization. Such departments would need Ministers who would in the end take the blame because they did possess the power to set things aright. In the growth of this sort of attitude a role was played by the debates in the 1850's on the reform of Indian government and especially on the arrangements for transferring responsibility from the Company and the Board of Control to Ministers. Evidence of the influence of those debates on this matter is found in Mill, Bagehot and Helps. Indeed, Bagehot said that the new India Office was the only case in which “the real constitution of a permanent office to be ruled by a permanent chief” — the form of the normal, homogeneous, ministerial department — was discussed. He implied that James Wilson, his predecessor at the \textit{Economist} and a former Financial Secretary, was the only protagonist who then had understood the matter.\textsuperscript{32}

By the 1860's there was not merely an opposition to the use of boards; there was a separate emphasis on the use of responsible Ministers at the head of homogeneous departments. Such Ministers were to be answerable, accountable, or culpable, and in positions of what Bentham would have called competent superordination. But this could be expressed for reasons completely independent of Bentham's. One can think by then of such textbook writers as Alpheus Todd or Earl Grey.\textsuperscript{33} Todd gave in 1866 a remarkably explicit formulation of the relationship of direct and universal ministerial responsibility to the established

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Great Britain Parliamentary Debates}, Third Series, XVII, 340, 4 May 1847. See contributions by Hume, Banks, and Henley as well as those of Grey and Russell; n.b. the signs of opposition to the use of the word “board” itself.


constitutional doctrines of the Cabinet and collective responsibility. He had, apparently, started his book before Erskine May's work was first available in 1854.\textsuperscript{34} Secondly, Todd quoted Earl Grey on this matter of direct and universal responsibility:

It is no arbitrary rule which requires that all holders of permanent offices must be subordinate to some Minister responsible to Parliament, since it is obvious that without it, the first principles of our system of government — the control of all branches of the administration by Parliament — would be abandoned.

The one meaning of responsibility (he thought of it as parliamentary control of Ministers) demanded the other. He assumed departmental organization.

Todd's treatment of some details is interesting: for example his discussion of such a tool of responsibility as parliamentary questions, whose origin he dated to Pitt but whose formal recognition to May's work of 1854.\textsuperscript{35} Commissions — "Royal, statutory and departmental" — he restricted to enquiry. They were permissible only because of ministerial responsibility and only so long as they were not issued with a view to evade the responsibility of Ministers in any matter; or to do the work of existing departments of state, which possess all needful facilities for obtaining information upon questions of detail, and which are directly responsible to Parliament.\textsuperscript{36}

Parliament, Ministers, and departments made irresponsible bodies intolerable. They made them unnecessary, too: this was not quite what Bentham had been saying. For Todd and Grey the abolition of sinecures had led to the clear division between supreme and political offices on the one hand and subordinate non-political offices on the other hand.\textsuperscript{37} For them responsibility existed not merely to provide punishment but as a part of the architecture of the constitution and therefore as an accepted end in itself. It was expressed in a combination of parliamentary Ministers, departments and permanent civil service with the royal prerogative. Bentham had not exactly foreseen this and might not have particularly liked it. The completion of financial and service reforms in 1866 and 1870 was to strengthen this arrangement of responsibility.

IV

By the 1860's there was a wide acceptance of responsibility and the ministerial department. This was not at all an exclusively Benthamite creation. The results had not been what Bentham had had in mind. One usually thinks of

\textsuperscript{34} Todd, \textit{op. cit.} (1892 ed.), preface by Spencer Walpole, p. iv.
\textsuperscript{35} It was the Irish M.P.'s who were to make parliamentary questions take several steps forward in importance. It is surprising how far departmental organization went irrespective of the parliamentary question.
\textsuperscript{37} Todd, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 165-66.
Mill and Bagehot as the main exponents in the 1860's of responsible organization for central government. But were they, was Mill even, merely reiterating in 1861 just what Bentham had said? Did Mill, more or less than Bentham, fully state a conception of the ministerial department itself? Was not Bagehot a better exponent than either of those two? When one comes to Bagehot one doubts whether he at any rate thought that ministerial responsibility and the ministerial department were generally accepted.

Mill had, long before the 1860's, edited, augmented and completed Bentham's *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*. Some of the strongest of Bentham's argument lay there. It was necessarily of more importance for the development of contemporary opinion than was, say, the *Constitutional Code*. However, like Bentham, Mill was prepared to accept boards in certain practical instances. He had supported Chadwick and the early administration of the Poor Law Board. He later supported the idea of using a government commission to supervise London's water supply. Here was a specific instance where the development of local government would make the use of non-ministerial organization less necessary, for Mill thought that such a commission should exist only until London had its own single Council. Similarly one finds him like others of his time forced to contemplate some deviation from the normal ministerial situation in Irish and Indian government. In the 1860's he mooted for Ireland a body something like the Land Commission which was later to be created.

The Indian situation was the more important. Bentham had seen certain possibilities in a translation of the East India Company into some sort of advisory council. Mill went further. Indeed, he devoted much more space in the relevant section of his *Considerations on Representative Government* to the case for using such conciliar forms in departmental organization than he did to the attack on boards. Naturally, he had defended the East India Company, his employers, but this was much more than a matter of defence. He thought he saw something generally useful in such a form. If there were to be political Ministers, should they not have boards of advisers like the Court of Directors associated with them and appointed by the government? This was relevant not merely to India but also to naval and military affairs and indeed wherever "it is not sufficient that the Minister should consult some one competent person". As with many of Bentham's admissions, this was an admission into which one can read a great deal. It certainly suggested that Mill did not think that pyramidal departments always necessarily provided ministerial competence. Elsewhere he explained how the necessity for special experience for handling

---


39 See various articles by Mill, e.g. in the *Examiner*, 27 October 1833, pp. 675–76; the *Sun*, 12 May 1834, p. 2; the *Morning Chronicle*, 2 August 1834, p. 2; the *Globe*, 8 September 1835, p. 4; the *Morning Chronicle*, 31 October 1846, p. 4 (for a later opinion on the Poor Law Board); *Public Agency v. Trading Companies* (London, 1851), pp. 19–23; *England and Ireland* (London, 1868).

affairs intelligently demanded a council to check the Minister, to whom the
Minister should present all important measures and by whose suggestions he
would have to be affected. The council that had been provided in the 1858 Act
did not, he thought, go far enough at all. Such councils should be strong. They
would be alternatives to the purely pyramidal department.

The utility of such special and, in a sense, responsible councils — able,
experienced, professional, and consultative (but by no means merely ciphers) —
was something in which Mill obviously and deeply believed as one of the good
results and lessons of Company rule. It was not at all something which he merely
expressed as an official. Nor was it an idea which he would have restricted to
Indian government. It was something he thought that ministerial government
would require. This is an outstanding example of the influence of the Indian
debates of the 1850's on the formation of opinion on responsibility and depart­
mental organization.

Mill’s main thesis was concerned with a rational democracy, the paradox of
representative and responsible government. This required a distinction between
the legislature and the Minister and between the Minister and the official. A
chain of responsibility would run from the official to the legislature through the
Minister. Boards would prevent this. His opposition to bureaucracy was
unambiguous. He did not equivocate about the need for responsibility. Much
of this he had expressed as early as 1835. It was more fully put in 1861 in his
Considerations on Representative Government. However much of Bentham Mill
may by then have discarded, it is true that in this matter he came at times near
to repeating what Bentham had already said. Bentham is duly quoted. With an
individual head — with a council if necessary — there was complete respon­
sibility; with a concurrence of more than one functionary in a decision respon­
sibility did exist but penalties were diminished by being shared; with a board and
secret decisions by majorities there was no responsibility. Mill’s opening
paragraph on this topic in Representative Government states a belief very similar
to what was to be stated in the Haldane Report nearly eighty years later: that
responsibility is best provided and the work best done if all functions of similar
subject be allocated to single departments.

It is, however, just as true that here (as elsewhere) Mill saw a vital defect in
the Benthamite inheritance: how, for example, to provide for competence as well
as liability: as so often he saw both sides but could not make them meet. Further,

---

41 See references in Representative Government; and various articles and reports, e.g. on the
India Bill of 1853 in the Morning Chronicle, 5 and 7 July, p. 5 on each occasion; Contention
for Continuation of the East India Company: Report of the Debates at the East India House
Relative to the Proposed Change in the Government of India (London, 1858), pp. 6–8; Review
of Improvements Under the East India Company (London, 1857–58), pp. 1–38; various pam­
phlets on the India Bills and Resolutions of 1858: A Constitutional View of the India Question,
Practical Observations on the First Two of the Proposed Resolutions on the Government of
India, A President in Council the Best Government for India, The Moral of the India Debate.
This last pamphlet is especially interesting.

42 London Review, July and October 1835, reprinted as Appendix in J. S. Mill, Dissertations
as one can read significance into Bentham's exceptions, so one can into Mill's. He wrote that "boards . . . are only admissible in [executive government] when, for other reasons, to give full discretionary power to a single Minister would be worse". No examples are given to elucidate this tautology. Some exception to Bentham was presumably intended there, as when Mill added that if a spirit existed which made the individual member identify himself with the board, the suffering and so the responsibility of the board would be his also. Mill did not admit that this very non-Benthamite situation ever occurred; but the admission was there. We may find extra meaning in his discussion of conciliar forms. In his distinction between legislative, ministerial, and official phases and in his attitudes to decentralization, to knowledge and power in public administration, to public administration as a skilled business, to the limitations which are therefore necessary to parliamentary interference in detail — in all these things we may detect starting points. From them would much later emerge such a belief in the division between phases of the governmental process as would in fact justify non-ministerial organization itself. This was to occur when the responsibility of a Minister for officials in a vast department became a problem and when other forms of responsibility seemed necessary.\textsuperscript{43}

One does not always see the same things in Mill as in Bentham. Mill drew different conclusions than Bentham from the two sides of responsibility. His distinction between politics and administration was different from Bentham's distinction between high-level and lower or executive official functions. Mill was not merely concerned to abolish boards as apt devices for corruption: he was concerned to design a lofty structure for government and society. Too much had happened and been changed and discussed between Bentham's day and 1861 for Mill merely to repeat Bentham. Mill was much more interested in the differences between Ministers and officials and much more concerned with the problem of supplying Ministers with expert assistance. Bentham, it has been stressed, did not envisage departments like those that were the later Victorian norm however much he contributed to some points of the theory on which the departments were based. Though Mill's concern did enable him to stress some things with which Bentham had not been so concerned — notably the difference between Ministers and officials — he did not always get nearer than Bentham did to the actual type of responsible ministerial pyramidal department. And in some ways Bentham is nearer to us. At least Bentham and we ourselves look out on an untidy machinery of government. Mill's contemporary machinery was much nearer his ideal and it was effectively no nearer to ours than was Bentham's in the vital matter of scale.

If Mill was the first, Bagehot was the second of the two main exponents. There are two things to be noted about his position in this matter: he was a more definite proponent of the ministerial department than Mill (or Bentham); and he wrote as though on the defensive. In 1867 — six years after Mill's

\textsuperscript{43} Representative Government, pp. 344-46; n.b. the significance of his words about "the fluctuations of a modern official career". 
Considerations and a year after Todd's *Parliamentary Government* — Bagehot published *The English Constitution*. He began with a quotation from Mill. Though he was analyzing rather than prescribing, what he had to say about non-ministerial organization was broadly what had been said by Mill and the others before. Certain differences were important. For example, Bentham and Mill had been attracted to conciliar forms in departmental organization but Bagehot was specifically opposed to them. Mill thought that the Indian Government Acts had not gone far enough in providing them for the India Office. Bagehot specifically said they had gone all too far.44

Bagehot emphasized two main points which had not been so emphasized before. The first and more familiar was the need for any department in its own interest to be represented by a party political Cabinet Minister in the House. The point had begun to emerge from, for example, the first Poor Law Board and had been implied by Sir George Grey. It was Bagehot who elucidated the party aspect. The second — and this was new and very important if at first difficult to see — was the peculiar advantages such an essentially temporary Minister brought to the internal office organization of the department. It was, for instance, only the amateur Minister — the “extrinsic” chief — who could bring “the rubbish of office to the burning glass of common sense”.45 The first point dominated his superb chapter “On Changes of Ministry”. Having stated all the disadvantages of a situation in which all the heads of government are likely to be swept away together, he went on to justify it. He specifically dealt with the weakness of the alternative to which Bentham had been attracted — a defender who was the more expert in the affairs of the department because he was not a member of the House though he could attend and speak. He too drew on the experience with the old Poor Law Board in this matter of political defence.46

Bagehot’s parliamentary argument was quite unequivocal. In some ways his second point was the more important because it was the more original. From them both he drew a picture that was much more than Bentham’s or Mill’s the normal, ministerial, civil service, pyramidal department. This picture included a place for the permanent, official head. Further, Bagehot would have allowed no exception at all. Not merely did he not want boards and so forth, he did explicitly want all departments to have this and precisely this one form. This emphasis was a new and a very important part of the theory of the ministerial department. Here Bagehot had gone beyond analysis to prescription and here his statement was more rigid and more complete than that of Mill, Bentham or anyone else. One might add that Bagehot’s view would seem to have been based on an assumption of relatively small offices and relatively similar functions in each of them.47

The second thing to be said about Bagehot is that if here he went beyond

46 Ibid., pp. 162, 164, 167–68.
analysis it was because he did not see anything like a general acceptance of the complete norm in the contemporary machinery of government. His words are evidence of the discussion of this norm in the 1860's. But they suggest both that it was not yet necessarily established and that to Bagehot at least agreement about it did not look at all inevitable. He wrote, in this matter, as one on the defensive. Thirty years before Bagehot wrote, Palmerston had thought of a civil service based on political patronage as a defence against bureaucracy. Todd and others had explained that on the contrary, it was the existence of a permanent civil service and the division between it and politics that was an essential part of the responsible system. Now Bagehot saw a threat to that system and in particular to the sort of departmental organization which should complete it, coming from a contemporary "seizure of partiality" towards bureaucracy. 48

Was there any evidence in the contemporary machinery of government or in the development of opinion in and after 1867 to suggest that Bagehot was right to be on the defensive? Insofar as the influence of German thought and the administration of the Prussian state was then becoming fashionable he did have cause for concern. Among other things one may recall that it was German administration that specifically developed non-ministerial organization and hived off executive work as an alternative to the use of comprehensive ministerial departments. The contemporary writing of, for example, Arthur Helps, Fitzjames Stephen and others showed such a partiality in highly relevant matters as, two decades later, did the early Fabians. 49 In practice, however tidy the central machinery of government of that time may look to us, it did still contain a good deal of deviation in non-ministerial organization and within departmental organization. In particular we should note that Bagehot's idea of the departmental virtues of the amateur Minister were not all widely understood then or for some time. An outstanding example of this can be found in the contemporary discussions about the creation of a ministry of education. The Select Committee on Education of 1883–84 was bogged down in a discussion of the wholly irrelevant and hypothetical question of whether the sort of person appointed to a Lord Presidency or a Vice-Presidency, a separate ministry or a parliamentary commissionership and so forth would have the more knowledge of education, museums, etc. 50 Early and mid-Victorian government was rich with experiment in political posts that were not simply for departmental Ministers.

48 ibid., p. 170.
50 *Gt. Brit. P. P.* (1883), XIII and (1884), XIII.
But Helps and the others were not prepared to go very far with their criticisms. This is the more striking when one considers who these critics were. Helps, for example, was a distinguished civil servant very much after the model of Sir Henry Taylor in his literary ambitions and writings, in his attitude to his subject and in other ways. His general approach came from a belief in paternalism and governmental patronage. He thought this more not less necessary as civilization advanced. A serene confidence breathes through the work: the British people were easy to govern under a constitutional monarchy; there were no grounds for fearing a bureaucracy since officials were too lazy to be ambitious for power. Indeed he thought that the limits of interference, which included ridicule as one of the most potent, meant that the danger was too little not too much government. Now this was a very forward-looking attitude in some ways and doubtless different from Bagehot’s, but it did not take him to a defence of non-ministerial organization. There his approach was not unlike that of Mill. The legislative and administrative functions were distinct and done by different bodies. The legislature should interfere as little as possible in administration. “Trust your agents” should be the note in public as well as in private business. But, at the same time, “fear of responsibility was the great fear of modern times”. He had an idea for having “councillors” attached to a department, who would be neither permanent civil servants, nor permanent commissioners, nor the same as members of advisory bodies or legislative committees, but he had not approved of the conciliar idea that had been discussed in the 1850’s for the India Department, or of the Board of Health of that time.51 Nor would Fitzjames Stephen — a Utilitarian still more concerned with doubts about democratic implications than J. S. Mill and a vigorous controversialist if ever there was one — state a stronger attack than did Helps.52 Such was the state of opinion in the 1870’s.

The fact was that by the mid-Victorian period one would not have found any important general statement, as against particular exceptions,53 opposed to ministerial responsibility and the emerging department. There was the long history of a demand for a ministry of health. In 1852 Kay-Shuttleworth was prepared to propose the administration of charities with education under the same Ministers.54 Early in the Crimean campaign The Times was calling for the unification of all army departments under a Secretary of State for War no longer responsible for the Colonies.55 That did not mean that there was a clear understanding of the ministerial department in the 1850’s — Kay-Shuttleworth and The Times were, apparently, speaking of ministerial boards. But it did mean a movement to responsibility and single political heads. By the 1880’s even such a work as the Duke of Somerset’s Monarchy and Democracy was concerned to

51 Thoughts Upon Government, chaps. 2-4 and App., especially pp. 6, 23, 27, 28, 38, 233 ff. 
56 The Times, 8 April 1854.
deprecate the effects of party solidarity and the Cabinet on ministerial responsibility and not to belittle the latter. What a writer like Helps wanted (and the same would be true for Chadwick) was not non-ministerial organization at all. It was a recognition of public administration, of the role of the permanent, efficient and in that sense independent officials. And by the 1870s most realized that all this depended on having, not on avoiding, a ministerial system: these were not (as Bentham might have thought of boards and responsibility) alternatives; they were conditions of each other. This was a great step forward in theoretical understanding. One may, perhaps, now believe that non-ministerial organization itself can depend on and assist the ministerial system: but that was another step still and at that time had not been taken and was not, generally, needed in the processes and scale of work then being done.

There may still have been some preference for the ministerial board. There was still much confusion about what the Minister himself would do. The word Minister was itself avoided except by radicals: but reformers tended to think always in terms of ministerial departments. Would it be an over-simplification to say that while radicals of, say, the 1930s and 1940s were excited by the idea of public corporations, radicals of the 1870s were equally excited by the idea of ministries — for health, education, agriculture and so on? Critics like Stephen, Maine or Lecky were not prepared to say what would be said elsewhere and later by Faguet or Mosca. There was no reflection of the reaction that in Canada or Australia, for example, was already leading to a demand for official independence from Ministers.56

In general nothing came to disturb the acceptance of the ministerial department until after the turn of the century. Popular descriptions and accepted textbooks almost entirely neglected non-ministerial organizations. For Traill the central executive so completely meant responsible ministerial departments that he could hardly think of the first Poor Law Board as a branch of the central executive at all. Nor did he find any non-ministerial organizations of his own time worth mentioning. Similarly all the departments that Porritt dealt with were “represented by a Minister in Parliament”. Courtney did devote a short chapter to commissions like that for statute law revision. He even devoted a somewhat larger chapter to what he called “Parliamentary Commissions”; but these, with one or two exceptions, were also either investigating or judicial bodies and he stressed Parliament's jealousy of such forms. The fate of the Poor Law Board he thought to have been inevitable. But his exceptions — Ecclesiastical and Charity Commissions, and the Light Railway Commission — were not, we can see now, without significance.58 Anson mentioned “departments which

may be described as non-political” and said that these were “the outlying departments of the Treasury, the Ecclesiastical Commission and the Charity Commission”. This was not, in fact, a full and certainly not a helpful indication of what existed or of the characteristics of non-ministerial organization. What it did do was to indicate the way in which the Treasury was thought of as a convenient cloak for such inconvenient creatures. Dicey did not recognize the field at all. His discussion of the Minister was limited to a reiterating of the contrast between his position of legal responsibility and droit administratif.59

If the general attitude was one of acceptance, it had been Bagehot who had supplied the fullest statement. The distinction between Minister and official, the uses of the political Minister in the House and the amateur Minister in the department, the need for homogeneity in the machinery of government and the exclusion of all exceptions — in all these ways Bagehot thoroughly expounded the ministerial department and thoroughly opposed non-ministerial organization. Bagehot’s understanding of the Minister was echoed in, for example, Trollope’s contemporary Palliser novels. There was a popularization of the idea of a Minister. There was now to be no exception. Bentham’s preference for a presidential system could be forgotten. Critics were not prepared to engage in a direct attack. The paradox of the ministerial department — the accountable, potent but temporary Minister and the permanent but obedient official — was to be universally applied in central government. Where it was apparent non-ministerial organization would be opposed. Broadly speaking it was either not to be recognized or not to be understood if it made an appearance. This was after all a thoroughly good mid-Victorian attitude to the exotic, the inconvenient or the deviant. Smiles were permissible. “You are a Lord now — and you will be a President soon and then perhaps a Secretary. The order of promotion seems odd but I am told that it is very pleasant.”60 You could afford a decorative cloak of odd titles as long as the basis was a solid homogeneous conformity. You could assume that the machinery of government was what it ought to be: a group of essentially similar responsible departments, no more and no less; the rest was mere delightful trappings. Like other contemporary compromises this hid large exceptions and tremendous strains. These have since triumphed. We can only look back from the present chaos with envy and admiration at the splendour of the Victorian attempt to establish such an exclusive invention for central government organization.


It was in the 1870's that Queensland displaced New South Wales as the leading cattle producing colony in Australia. Between 1870 and 1880 the number of cattle in Queensland increased by almost 300 per cent to reach a total of three million head. The impetus given by the gold rushes, the market for preserved meat created by the Franco-Prussian war, the demand for cattle to stock new runs in the Northern Territory and distant parts of Queensland, and the change from sheep to cattle in the coastal belt of Queensland help to explain the cattle boom of the seventies.

An outstanding feature of the history of this period was the substitution of cattle for sheep in the coastal regions of Queensland. Due to the difficulty of finding a profitable means of disposing of surplus stock, cattle raising was less lucrative than sheep rearing. Consequently, the early settlers in Queensland had tried to rear sheep in unsuitable areas such as the coastal belt, with its high rainfall and widespread incidence of spear grass. For a long time squatters had refused to concede that large areas of Queensland were suited only to raising

---

1 In 1870, New South Wales still carried twice as many cattle as Queensland but, in the decade 1870-80, the number of cattle in New South Wales increased by only 384,944 head to reach a total of 2,580,404, while the increase in Queensland herds in the same period was 2,338,583 head, making a total of 3,415,213 head. See the Queensland parliamentary papers, Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly (1881), II, 970. (Hereafter cited as V. & P.) See also the Australian Encyclopaedia (Sydney, circa 1958), II, 295, for a convenient table of the number of cattle in the leading cattle producing states of Australia in the period 1860-90 (although the figures given for the number of cattle in Queensland in the 1880's do not tally with official Queensland Government returns).

2 Spear grass had always existed in the coastal pastures to some extent but, as the sheep ate out the less hardy native grasses, spear grass spread rapidly. The seeds of the grass became embedded in the wool, lessening its value, and also entered the flesh of the sheep, eventually causing death. One of the pioneer squatters, Edward Vance Palmer, wrote that, “The seeds of the spear grass ... were a terrible scourge — they are finely barbed and intensely sharp and hard; once entered they pass right through the skin of the sheep, even into the flesh, causing great annoyance and leading to poverty and death ... After seeding, the heads bunch together, in tangled masses, and shower the seeds on to sheep passing through”. Cattle, however, thrived on the grass so that “its presence in any quantity at once determines whether the pasturage is favourable to sheep or not”. E.V. Palmer, Early Days in North Queensland (Sydney, 1903), p. 129.
cattle, although the more realistic of them had come to terms with this fact in the 1860's and had turned from sheep to cattle. This movement gained momentum in the seventies when low prices for wool, added to heavy losses from spear grass and footrot, at last convinced most squatters that it was futile to continue the struggle to raise sheep in the coastal districts. The wool grown in this area was poor and thin in quality and the yield was small. Many owners persevered with these small yields while they were receiving 2s. 2d. per lb as they were in the early sixties, but when the price of wool fell to 7d. per lb or less, as it did in the late sixties, they decided that sheep rearing did not pay on these pastures. Cattle eventually replaced sheep in the Gulf Country of northwest Queensland and in the entire coastal belt from Cooktown to Brisbane. In addition, cattle replaced sheep in good sheep country in the areas near the Warrego, Maranoa, Barcoo, Thomson, and Flinders Rivers. This substitution was not permanent, however, for when the construction of railways had reduced the cost of carriage on wool, pastoralists in these areas reverted to sheep rearing.

There had been a widespread financial crisis in Queensland in 1866, accompanied by a series of unfavourable seasons, causing many owners to forfeit

---

3 For example, H.C. Corfield, a pioneer squatter in the Burnett River district, removed his sheep to an inland run in the early sixties in order to restock his coastal run with cattle. See W.H. Corfield, Reminiscences of Queensland, 1862-1899 (Brisbane, 1921), pp. 9-18. Also, as early as the 1850's, David McConnel of Cressbrook in the Brisbane Valley realized that the country was not suited to sheep and changed to stocking cattle. See M.M. Banks, Memories of Pioneer Days in Queensland (London, 1931), pp. 17-19.

4 See, for example, the Archer papers, quoted in V. Voss, "Early Pastoral Development in Central Queensland" (unpublished thesis, University of Sydney). Due to an old friendship between Voss's family and the Archers, he had access to their private papers. Throughout the papers there are many references in the sixties and seventies to the spread of spear grass and the depreciation of the wool clip. In 1871 James Archer wrote that, "The sheep are showing signs of battle and are looking very miserable . . . ." (Quoted in Voss, op. cit., p. 55). Eventually, between 1872 and 1874, the Archers transferred their sheep to an inland run (ibid., p. 17). Another squatter complained that his wool clip was so spoiled by seed that he obtained only 3d. per lb for it. (See the report of the chief inspector of stock, V. & P. [1870], p. 313).

5 In the early sixties sheep on Gracemere, a coastal station owned by the Archers, were yielding only a little over 2lbs 6ozs of wool per head. See Voss, op. cit., p. 17.

6 Ibid.


8 See the report of the chief inspector of stock, V. & P. (1871, 1st series), p. 1015 and the figures given in V. & P. (1881), II, 969-70, showing the number of sheep and cattle in each of the pastoral districts of Queensland in the decade 1870-80. In the Burnett River district, for example, the number of cattle increased from 101,087 head in 1871 to 247,932 head in 1880, while, in the same period, the number of sheep in the area decreased from 557,606 head to 161,621 head. Similarly, in the Moreton Bay area the number of cattle increased from 178,312 head to 251,019 head, while the number of sheep declined from 203,298 head to 21,230 head. For the experiences of some individual squatters who were forced to change from sheep to cattle to stock their runs in the coastal area, see R. Gray, Reminiscences of India and North Queensland (London, 1913), pp. 58 and 137, and O. de Saige, Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter (London, 1901), p. 166; Bennett, op. cit., p. 115; Banks, op. cit.; and H.S. Bloxsome, "The Early Settlement of the Burnett River District of Queensland" (typed MS, Oxley Memorial Library).

9 In his reports for 1869-70, the chief inspector of stock for the Queensland government, P.R. Gordon, commented upon this trend. See V. & P. (1870), p. 313, (1871), p. 1015.
their runs. The ensuing loss of revenue caused the government much concern and resulted in the passing of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 in an effort to encourage squatters to take up runs in the less settled areas outside the Darling Downs and the southern coastal belt. The secure tenure afforded by this Act was a great stimulus to the cattle industry, especially as a meat preserving boom occurred after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870. The Act gave squatters a twenty-five year lease at low rental and also granted them the right of pre-emptive purchase, without competition, of any 2,560 acres of a run at the low price of 10s. per acre. As 25 square miles could be held to constitute a run, squatters could select and purchase 2,560 acres for every 25 square miles held. This was a most valuable right since it gave squatters a security on which they could borrow in bad seasons and many were also able to use it to buy strategic portions of their runs, such as waterholes, thus enabling them to block closer settlement.\(^{10}\)

The passing of this act was not immediately followed by expansion into new areas but when pastoral prospects improved there was a rush to take advantage of the terms offered. After the beginning of the 1870 meat-preserving boom, cattlemen were more disposed to take up new country in the inland, especially since there were some good seasons in the early seventies. The movement to take up new runs continued until the price of cattle fell in the late seventies.\(^{11}\)

Squatters pushed westward even beyond Cooper’s Creek and past the Georgina River to the border with the Northern Territory. Most of the stations established in these regions were stocked with cattle because of the distance from port and the low rainfall.\(^{12}\)

The great problem of all cattle owners in this period and, indeed, until the development of the frozen meat trade, was how to dispose profitably of their surplus stock. The tremendous increase in the number of cattle in the colony in this decade meant that the problem had become crucial. In this connection, the discovery of gold in a number of places in Queensland was of some importance, since the goldfields provided a direct market for beef and also led to the establishment of new towns to handle the trade with the fields. These, in turn, provided cattlemen with further markets. The gold discoveries thus accelerated the development of more distant parts of the colony which otherwise might have remained undeveloped for years — for example, the Palmer River area in far north Queensland.

Unlike the Victorian fields, which were mainly alluvial, Queensland goldfields were predominantly reef mining fields. As reefing was a more permanent form

---


\(^{11}\) Report of the Under-Secretary for Lands, V. & P. (1876), III, 187; (1877), III, 91; (1880), II, 547.

of mining, there was usually a settled community of miners and their families on such fields, providing a constant market for beef. On the whole, cattle owners made a reasonable profit from selling to butchers on the fields, receiving, in north Queensland, about £4 10s. to £5 per head for fat cattle. This was considered a fair price in the north, especially since selling to a nearby market saved the worry and expense of overlanding to the southern colonies.

Important as was the market opened up by the discovery of gold, it could absorb only a portion of the surplus stock of the colony, so overlanding to markets in the southern colonies assumed considerable proportions in this period. Cattle were sent from Queensland to many centres in the south, but the main market was Melbourne. The Adelaide market was also important to stations in southwest Queensland which were in a good position to take advantage of the high prices ruling there. Even stations in the remote northwest of Queensland overlanded cattle to the southern colonies and the stock columns of the countryman's paper, the Queensland, abound with references to mobs, often two thousand head strong, moving south.

However, both overlanding and direct sale of cattle to butchers on the goldfields only scratched the surface of the problem. To solve it, some means had to be found to transport beef to the immense market waiting in Great Britain — but the difficulty was how to do it. In the early 1840's Moreton Bay cattle owners tried the experiment of curing beef for export, but the trade never assumed large proportions because, although there was a limited market for it in the armed services, salt beef was not popular with the English people.

About 1863, the German chemist, Liebig, had developed a process for making a meat extract and had established a company to manufacture it in South

---

13 The following table shows the number of European miners working on goldfields in Queensland. There were large numbers of Chinese miners on these fields too, but they have not been counted because they did not provide a market for beef. The figures were compiled from the statistical registers in the Registrar General's reports for 1869, 1874, 1876 and 1880, in V. & P. 1870, 1875, 1877, and 1881.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reefing field</th>
<th>1869</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1876</th>
<th>1880</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gympie*</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>4,375</td>
<td>3,560</td>
<td>5,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravenswood*</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charters Towers*</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>3,310</td>
<td>4,590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodgkinson*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td></td>
<td>954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer river*</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,330</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(*) reefing field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(*) alluvial field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


15 There were no official stock routes in Australia at this time, but one of the most popular routes for moving stock from Queensland to the southern colonies was down the Paroo, Balonne, or Moonie Rivers in southwest Queensland and thence down the western river system of New South Wales. The town of Deniliquin in western New South Wales was an important centre on this route and the stock reports in the local newspaper, the Deniliquin Pastoral Times, give an excellent account of stock movements from Queensland. The reports from the Deniliquin Pastoral Times were reprinted in the Queensland.

America. His lead was quickly followed in Australia and in 1866 a Queensland pioneer, Robert Tooth, established similar works, sending his first consignment of extract of meat to London in July of that year. The manufacture of it continued to be a useful export outlet, but it did not solve the problem.

Australian graziers also pioneered the canned meat trade and works were operating in Queensland in the early sixties. Australian canned meat began to be used in some quantity in Britain in the late sixties and the process was hailed as the solution to the problem of transporting beef from Australia to the overseas market. The increased demand for tinned meat created by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 strengthened this belief. The existing meat preserving works in Queensland were operating at full capacity at this time and new ones were being established. However, the heavy demand from preserving firms during the boom period forced up the price of cattle, eventually making preserving uneconomic and causing the closure of several establishments. The prices being paid for cattle at Laurel Bank, one of the central Queensland works, were typical of those being paid by other companies in the area. In 1875, owners were receiving 16s. per hundred lbs, which would have been average return of approximately £6 8s. per head for bullocks and £5 4s. per head for cows, while prices in southern Queensland were even higher. When cattle prices fell, as they did in Queensland about 1878, at which time the operators of the Laurel Banks works were paying 9s. 6d. per hundred lbs, many preserving works resumed operations. By this time, however, a large overseas market for Australian preserved meat no longer existed. That market had been captured by the United States which, in 1874, commenced sending large quantities of chilled beef to Great Britain. This was a crippling blow to Australian cattle owners as they could not enter this trade, the chilling process used being possible only on voyages of short duration in cool climates. Then, too, in the market for tinned meat still remaining — largely among institutions — the American product was preferred because it was more attractively presented. Meat preserving thus failed to fulfil the hopes of cattle owners and

18 Queenslander, 15 June 1867, p. 4. It was reported that charities had found that 1 lb of the extract was equivalent to 30 lbs of meat and was sufficient to make broth for 128 men.
19 Canning meat for export was begun commercially in Australia in 1847 by the Dangar brothers who were pioneer settlers in northern New South Wales. Their product found a ready market with the Admiralty in England. Critchell and Raymond, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
20 Queenslander, 3 November 1866, p. 4.
21 For example, Whiteheads, an English firm operating the Laurel Bank meatworks near Rockhampton in central Queensland, had a contract to supply 2 million lbs of preserved meat to the French government. W. Angliss & Co., “An Early History of Meatworks in Queensland” (typescript, Oxley Memorial Library), pp. 4-5.
23 Ibid.
the closing years of this period saw them searching for some new outlet for their beef. A trial shipment of live cattle to Great Britain was made but proved a failure. A small number of fat cattle were shipped live from Queensland ports to New Caledonia and New Zealand but the trade was not sufficiently great to offer any solution.

Another unsuccessful experiment was the attempt to preserve the whole carcass by forcing brine through the ventricles of the heart, a process which had been used successfully in embalming. The Society of Arts in England interested itself in the problem and, in an attempt to bring various forms of dried beef into favour, it conducted tests to prove that, weight for weight, dried beef was four times more nutritious than fresh beef. The British public, however, remained unimpressed. At one time, Queensland squatters also looked hopefully towards Asia, but eventually realized that this was not a market for beef. The most promising prospect was the attempt to find a means of refrigerating meat and the hopes of cattle owners were fixed on these experiments, but they did not achieve commercial success until the nineties. In the meantime, cattle owners had once more to resort to boiling down fat stock to obtain tallow.

The development of boiling down had been of tremendous significance to cattle owners because it added a valuable new item to the list of exportable cattle products. The first boiling down works in Queensland were established in Brisbane in 1843 and, as settlement spread throughout the colony, so did the

---


26 The *Moreton Bay Courier*, 10 May 1856; 23 September, 7 October, and 4 November, 1865; the *Queenslander*, 3 November 1866, p. 4; N. Hartley, *Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences* (Brisbane, n.d.), p. 206. The small value of this trade is illustrated by the export tables in *V. & P.* (1866), p. 1214; (1867), I, 1379; (1869), II, 463.

27 Jack cutting book, No. 10 (Oxley Memorial Library). See the article on the meat export trade by G.E. Bunning.

28 Critchell and Raymond, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

29 It was hoped by some squatters that Leichhardt’s journey of exploration to Port Essington might result in the opening of the interior and trade with the East. See for example, H.S. Russell, *The Genesis of Queensland* (Sydney, 1888), pp. 359-60. The Leslie brothers who pioneered pastoral settlement in Queensland also enquired of their brother, who worked for a large firm of English merchants engaged in the China trade, whether the Chinese would buy beef. See the letter of George Leslie to William Leslie, junr., quoted in K.G.T. Waller, “The Letters of the Leslie Brothers in Australia” (unpublished thesis, University of Queensland), p. 107. The original letters are held by the Oxley Memorial Library.

30 The procedure at boiling down works was that the carcass was cut into rough pieces and thrown into large steam vats, remaining there for about ten hours. The tallow was run off into refining pans and boiled again to remove any watery particles. It was next turned off into iron tanks and the sediment allowed to settle. The refined tallow was then dipped off into casks and was ready for export. The hides were cleansed and put in pickle for a few days. After being salted and laid in the sun for a short time, they were rolled and exported (Courier, 5 July 1846). Most of the early boiling down establishments worked on the consignment system, cattle being boiled down at a charge of about 8s. 6d. per head (Courier, 8 January 1853). In later years, the works usually sent out buyers to purchase cattle and then boiled down for their own profit (see Pattison, op. cit., p. 62). Many squatters also erected pots and boiled down on their own properties. The tallow was not as refined as that produced at boiling down works, but neither did they have to pay costs. See J.E. Murphy and E.W. Easton, *Wilderness to Wealth, 1850-1950* (Brisbane, 1950), pp. 119 and 176.

31 Campbell, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
boiling down works. There was a large market for tallow in Great Britain and
the price was seldom less than £30 per ton. Fat cattle usually turned out between
200 lbs to 300 lbs of tallow, which would give a minimum return of £2 10s.
to £3 15s. per head, and usually more.32 There was also a market for hides,
horns, bones, and hoofs in Great Britain. Boiling down was a wasteful process
because no use was made of the meat and the returns from it were not high;
but it paid on a well managed run. When cattle prices were low, the expedient
of boiling down enabled many owners to hold on while they waited for better
times.

However, high prices for cattle and cattle stations ruled throughout the
greater part of this decade. The demand from meat preserving works from
1870-72 raised prices, and they remained high even after this demand ceased,
because so many cattle had been slaughtered that a shortage was created.
A prolonged drought in 1877 maintained prices at a high level, so it was not
until about 1878-79 that they fell steeply and the effect of the collapse of the
preserved meat trade was felt fully. In 1873 in Brisbane, Ipswich, and other
southern Queensland centres, good fat bullocks were being sold for £8 per head
or more, and cows for £5 to £6 per head.33 In 1874 fat cattle overlanded to
Melbourne from far southwest Queensland brought the high average of £12
18s. per head,34 while “fats” from the same area fetched £16 to £18 per head in
the Adelaide market in 1875.35 Prices for store cattle were high too and in 1875
southern buyers were paying as much as £5 10s. per head for store bullocks,
while breeding cows also brought good prices.36 By 1878, however, cattle prices
had declined considerably. In Melbourne, fat bullocks were selling for only £5
per head and, in Brisbane, for £3 to £4 per head. Even at these prices, the
market was so glutted that prime fat cattle were frequently withdrawn from
auction without a bid having been made.37 The government returns showing the
number and value, of stock overlanded to the southern markets reflect this
depression.38 The market for store cattle, although far from buoyant, was a
little less depressed because Queensland was supplying considerable numbers
of store cattle for the stocking of runs in the Northern Territory.39

In the boom years of this decade there was a great demand for cattle stations.
In the early years of settlement in Queensland sheep had been regarded as the
more profitable investment. In the fifties, a prospective buyer, advertising for a

32 Patrick Leslie to his parents, 27 November 1844, quoted in Waller, op. cit., p. 115 and Satgé,
op. cit., p. 70.
33 Queenslander, 4 October 1873, p. 2.
34 Ibid., 31 October 1874, p. 5.
35 Ibid., 13 November 1875, p. 28.
36 Ibid., 7 June 1875, p. 2.
37 Ibid., 7 December 1878, p. 304; 11 January 1879, p. 64; 6 July 1879, p. 128.
38 In 1874 a total of 28,677 head of cattle valued at £165,849 crossed the border while, in 1880,
the number was 48,109 head valued at only £168,382. See the returns in V. & P. (1876), II,
254 and (1881), I, 912.
40-57.
station, typified popular feeling when he stated that he would consider purchasing a cattle station but would prefer a sheep station. By 1876, however, southern buyers were inquiring for stations in Queensland — sheep considered, but cattle preferred. From about 1870 to 1877, the reports of stock and station agents all emphasised this preference for cattle stations. Comparatively unimproved stations were realizing high prices — a station near the Warrego River in the far inland sold in 1874 for £45,000, the cattle bringing £7 per head, and sales of stations with cattle at £5 per head were legion. However, the boom collapsed when the bottom fell out of the cattle market.

This period saw the beginning of many developments which were to effect considerable changes in methods of managing cattle stations. By 1870, settlement had spread throughout Queensland, reaching the Gulf Country of the northwest, the tip of the continent at Cape York, and inland towards the borders of South Australia and the Northern Territory. Now the gaps were being filled and settlement consolidated. Much pioneering work remained to be done but in the more settled areas squatters were beginning to turn their thoughts to improving their stations and stock. In the wealthier and older settlements, such as those on the Darling Downs, the Brisbane Valley, and the Burnett River, settlers had begun to build elaborate homesteads. In these areas there was also a trend towards smaller, more compact runs and towards improvement of runs to increase the stocking capacity. The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868 reinforced these new trends in the settled districts. This act defined as “settled” the Darling Downs and those parts of the coastal regions which were suitable for closer settlement. Half the area of each run in the settled districts was resumed, a ten-year lease being granted for the remainder. The resumed land was classified for sale into agricultural, first class pastoral and second class pastoral land, and thrown open to free selection. Due to faulty classification and general maladministration, large areas of good agricultural land were sold as pastoral country, squatters being able to purchase the freehold at very reasonable rates. The act failed in its object of settling large numbers of small farmers on the land but, by halving the runs, it did force squatters to make better use of the portion they retained. The secure tenure given to squatters in the unsettled districts by the 1869 act, mentioned previously, also encouraged many of them to begin improving their runs and stock. Considerable capital was invested in improvements by cattle owners because the prospects of the industry seemed so bright in the early seventies.

One major expenditure was on wire fencing. Fencing had been used first in Victoria in the fifties when the rush of labour to the goldfields made it impossible to continue to manage sheep stations under the shepherding system. In the early stages of settlement in Queensland squatters could not afford the very considerable outlay for fencing; but as areas became more settled the wealthier squatters did fence small paddocks to keep stud or young female stock separated from the herds. These fences were the crude post and rail type, easily destroyed by fire or floods. By the sixties wire fencing was being urged on Queensland owners. It was first adopted on sheep stations because, as it ended the shepherding system, the benefit was more immediately apparent to sheep owners; but it was not long before cattle owners were converted to the idea that fencing could be of advantage to them. It eliminated straying of stock, prevented the formation of mobs of "scrubbers" or wild cattle, and curtailed cattle stealing. In addition, it allowed breeding to be carried on in a systematic manner. Under the "open range" system bulls ran in the herd all year round, which meant that calves were dropped throughout the year. Fenced paddocks enabled bulls to be kept separate from the rest of the herd, resulting in controlled calving at a time of the year when grass and water should be plentiful. Then, too, with fenced paddocks, graziers could rotate the parts of a run used, preventing the eating out of any particular area. Fencing thus gave greater control over the management of a station and it was only a matter of time before these advantages became generally recognized.46

Water conservation was a development which, practised by a few squatters in the sixties, was adopted by many more in the seventies and eighties. The construction of dams and tanks reduced dependence on natural water, thus increasing the carrying capacity of runs. The severe drought of 1877 caused owners to become increasingly aware of the need for conservation, especially now that the country was being more closely settled and more heavily stocked.47 The solution to the problem of obtaining an adequate water supply in all seasons was provided by artesian bores which were developed in the eighties.48

During the boom years of this decade, when the returns from cattle raising were so satisfactory, there was a general trend towards the improvement of stock; it had been proved that well-bred animals fattened more quickly, with the result that more beasts could be depastured on the same area. Large numbers of well-bred cattle were bought from southern studs, the prices being paid frequently equalling those paid at leading British sales.49 New studs were also

46 See the propaganda pamphlet written by the chief inspector of stock and circulated throughout the colony, P.R. Gordon, Fencing as a Means of Improving Our Pasture Lands, and Its Advantages to the Stock-owners and the Colony (Sydney, 1867). See also the memo on fencing contributed by Jesse Gregson to the Nisbett MSS (Mitchell Library). There were some who opposed fencing, of course, such as the ex-station manager writing in the Queenslander who maintained that it was expensive and useless (18 January 1879, p. 83), but such men were soon in a minority.
48 W.G. Cox, Artesian Wells (Brisbane, 1895), pp. 38 and 52-53.
49 Queenslander, 15 July 1876 and Ellis, op. cit., p. 116. In 1876, a world record was set when
Noela Deutscher founded in Queensland and existing ones prospered - for example, Glengallan on the Darling Downs which, by 1876, had developed into the largest Shorthorn stud in Australia and one of the largest in the world.50

Another important development was the introduction of a number of Hereford cattle into the colony and the founding of Hereford studs. There had been a small number of Herefords in Queensland from the earliest days of the settlement, but it was some time before it was realized that Herefords were better suited to certain parts of the colony than were Shorthorns. Eventually, Herefords became the dominant breed on the tablelands and in the coastal areas. They also matured early and fattened quickly, which made them a popular breed when the frozen meat, and later the chilled meat, trade developed. Several Queensland squatters, including David McConnel,51 established Hereford studs. McConnel's daughter wrote later that in the days of the Shorthorn vogue, "We thought it heresy to speak of Hereford cattle; 'vulgar animals' we called them, with their white faces and briskets and their longer horns. We looked upon our cousin, whose father bred Herefords, as really inferior on that account. But this breed of stock took the place on many properties of the more aristocratic Short Horn, for it had qualities necessary for meat-freezing processes when exportation began."52

Local shows contributed to the raising of stock standards throughout the colony by increasing competition and by gathering good stock together, thus rendering it easier for squatters to inspect and purchase. The Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland was formed in Toowoomba in 1860, the first show being held there in 1862. The first Brisbane Exhibition was staged in 1876 and many show societies were later formed in country centres throughout the colony.53

2,200 guineas was paid for a 26-month-old heifer bred in Victoria. See Ellis, op. cit., p. 117. Some idea of the large number of well-bred cattle being imported into Queensland can be gained from the Government returns, printed in V. & P., although these are not complete for the period — the number and value of stock imported by sea being available, but the number and value of stud stock imported across the border is not always given. The following table was compiled from the statistics given in V. & P. (1872), p. 1505; (1875), II, 1323; (1876), III, 1001; (1877), III, 1001.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>By Sea Value (in £)</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Across Border Value (in £)</th>
<th>Total Value (in £)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>12,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>15,020</td>
<td>5,476</td>
<td>47,906</td>
<td>62,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>12,954</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>26,915</td>
<td>39,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>27,233</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>16,191</td>
<td>43,424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 Ellis, op. cit., p. 172.
51 McConnel was one of the first free settlers in the Brisbane Valley area and one of the first to realize that sheep would not prosper in the wet coastal climate. He then stocked Shorthorn cattle but, as early as 1850, he pioneered the change to Herefords in the coastal areas, eventually establishing a Hereford stud on one of his properties. See A.J. McConnel, "The Hereford in Queensland" (typewritten MS, dated 1914, held by the Queensland branch of the Australian Hereford Society).
53 Queenslander, 5 and 26 August 1876, pp. 5 and 29.
However, buying stud stock and improving stations required money. Improvements were financed by pooling resources to form joint partnerships, or by loans from banks and merchant houses. As the novelist Anthony Trollope remarked after a visit to Queensland, “For a squatter... not to owe money to his merchant or his banker is an unusual circumstance... The normal, and I may almost say the proper, condition of a squatter is indebtedness to some amount.” All borrowed money was subject to crushing interest rates, city financiers often being the only people to profit from squatting enterprises. Merchants usually lent on less security than banks but their charges were higher. The rate of interest charged by both banks and merchants ranged from ten to twelve per cent but, in addition, merchant houses insisted that persons in debt to them should buy provisions from them at exorbitant prices and that all produce should be sent through their hands, so that they received brokerage and commission as well. The local newspaper, the Moreton Bay Courier, alleged that such firms often extorted as much as twenty per cent over and above interest charges from their clients. To avoid these crippling rates and to prevent money flowing from Queensland to Sydney and Melbourne, the Courier urged squatters to form a joint stock company to float loans on the London market as did banks and other organizations. In this way they would obtain money at five per cent instead of the twenty or thirty per cent charged by agents in the colonies. However, nothing came of this scheme, possibly because squatters were seldom able financiers.

From the sixties onwards, capital flowed to Queensland from Victoria where, following the gold discoveries, there was a surplus of capital for investment. In addition, the selection legislation passed in Victoria and New South Wales to split up large stations and to throw the land open to small settlers caused considerable numbers of squatters to migrate to Queensland in search of more secure tenure. An article which appeared in the Melbourne newspaper the Argus noted that capitalists coming from England to invest in the pastoral industry were disturbed by the selection legislation in the southern colonies and turned their attention to Queensland. The article also noted that the wealth which refugees from Victoria and New South Wales carried with them in money, stock, and labour greatly assisted the development of Queensland. The passing of the Brands Act in 1872 caused changes which were of benefit to the cattle industry. The Act was designed to check cattle stealing by ending the confusion and duplication of brands which had existed since the beginning of settlement in Queensland. Cattle duffing had always been a serious problem but was now arousing greater public criticism. The legislation also sought to end irregularities connected with the droving of cattle. Under the provisions of the Act, any person droving a mob of cattle must have a waybill or delivery note,

55 Courier, 31 December 1861.
56 Courier, 7 September 1859 and 11 December 1860.
57 Reprinted in Courier, 14 January 1863.
showing the number and description of the stock, together with their place of origin and destination. Any magistrate, constable, or inspector of brands could inspect a mob of travelling cattle to compare them with the description on the waybill. Heavy penalties were imposed for infringements and the same penalties could be incurred by any person purchasing from a proprietor or drover, any stock not described, or incorrectly described, in the waybill. Another provision, designed to check cattle stealing and the collection of "strays" along the route, was that no person was to purchase stock from a drover unless the latter had written authority from the owner to make such sales. Owners were quick to take advantage of the Act and, in two months, approximately five thousand brands were registered. On the whole, the Act worked extremely well and was used in ways never envisaged by its framers. One police magistrate said, "I have seen drays, yokes, implements and tools going about branded with the owner's registered brand and harness stamped with it."

Numerous changes were also taking place in methods of buying and selling cattle. In the early days of settlement butchers visited stations to buy their own supplies but, by the seventies, an organized system of saleyards was developing. An Ipswich firm of stock and station agents established their own saleyards in 1862, and between 1870 and 1880 yards were built in Brisbane and the major country centres. In the early seventies butchers, although using the saleyards to some extent, were still visiting outlying runs, sometimes as far distant as seven hundred miles from the coast. However, by the second half of the seventies, regular sales were being held in Brisbane by numerous agents and by the eighties butchers were using the saleyards extensively. The Queenslander reported in 1880 that, "For some time the chief butchers did not like the saleyards, and some still buy up country, but as a rule, stock holders cannot now depend upon their coming to do so, consequently cattle have to be sent to the saleyards".

Pleuro-pneumonia continued to be one of the major problems of the cattle industry at this time and there was a particularly serious outbreak of the disease in the Australian colonies in the early seventies. The chief inspector of stock

---

60 Ibid., in V. & P. (1881), II, 966.
61 Courier, 14 June 1862.
62 See the advertisements in the files of the Queenslander.
63 Queenslander, 24 October 1874, p. 12.
64 Ibid., 11 January 1879, p. 64.
65 Ibid., 7 February 1880, p. 185.
66 See the report of the chief inspector of stock in Queensland, V. & P. (1874), II, 925. In a paper presented at the conference of chief inspectors of stock in 1874, the chief inspector for New South Wales, Alexander Bruce, estimated that from 1860 to 1873, 40 per cent of the total number of cattle in the Australian colonies had died as a result of pleuro-pneumonia. The conference favoured legislation to make innoculation compulsory but stock owners were so divided on the issue that no legislation was brought down in the colonial legislatures. For the report of the conference see V. & P. (1875), II, 1329-55.
for Queensland, P.R. Gordon, argued constantly that while cattle continued to mix on unfenced runs, as well as travelling freely throughout Australia because there were no official stock routes, outbreaks of the disease must continue to occur. Gordon was an ardent advocate of fencing, regulated stock routes, and inoculation. Unfortunately, some of the early inoculation against pleuropneumonia in Australia had been carried out by unskilled operators using improperly prepared virus, with the result that inoculation was often ineffective and many cattle owners became prejudiced against it, although the method was widely used in Europe with excellent results. Support for inoculation grew slowly in Queensland as an increasing number of owners realized that if it were properly performed with good virus it was an effective method of prevention. The refusal of many buyers to deal in cattle which were not inoculated was also a powerful stimulus, so that throughout the seventies, control of pleuropneumonia by inoculation was becoming more widespread.

In distant areas squatters still experienced difficulties with warlike groups of aborigines, but in the more settled districts their power had been broken, largely by the action of the “Black Police”, a force of aboriginal troopers officered by Europeans. In the seventies, the employment of aborigines on cattle stations became more usual. Native labour was more important to the cattle industry than to sheep owners because aboriginals soon became expert horsemen and preferred the greater excitement of working cattle to the more monotonous work on sheep stations. Their employment as stockmen and drovers relieved cattle owners of the worry of labour shortages, especially during the goldmining era.

---

67 V. & P. (1874), II, 925.
68 The chief inspector of stock in New South Wales alleged that many inoculators were untrained men “who knew little or nothing as to how the operation ought to be performed, and who did not care what sort of stuff they used, so long as they made, as they often did, from £5 to £10 a day . . . .” Alexander Bruce, quoted in H.R. Seddon, Diseases of Domestic Animals in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Health, Division of Veterinary Hygiene, Service Publication, No. 10, 1953), p.401.
69 The Dutch government was so convinced of its value that in the mid-seventies inoculation was made compulsory there and the government defrayed the costs. V. & P. (1877), III, 1037.
70 The board appointed by the Queensland government to inquire into diseases affecting livestock and plants reported that Victorian cattle dealers preferred purchasing inoculated cattle, “so that for this market inoculation becomes almost a necessity”. (V. & P. [1877], III, 1037). The same point was made by the chief inspector of stock in his reports. (V. & P. [1877], III, 1001.)
71 The Native Mounted Police of Queensland, usually termed the “Black Police”, was formed in 1857 to protect squatters in the outlying areas. It was disbanded in 1900 when the closer settlement of the state and the declining numbers of the aborigines removed the need for it. It was often alleged that the native police behaved with great brutality, but the squatters argued that a small, scattered European population could not have continued to occupy the country without some such protection. A.L. Haydon, The Trooper Police of Australia (London, 1911), pp. 365-85. For the squatter viewpoint, see Gray, op. cit., p. 79.
72 It was the view of one squatter that the success of many Queensland pioneers was due to the faithful service of their aboriginal helpers. See A.C. Grant, Bush Life in Queensland (Edinburgh, 1881), II, 155. This was certainly true, too, of Robert Christison, a pioneer in north Queensland. The story is told in Bennett, op. cit., pp. 56-69 and 106-111.
The spread of telegraphic communication was a feature of this period and a considerable network of lines had been established by 1875.\textsuperscript{73} This was helpful to pastoralists because it provided them with a rapid and reliable means of communication with agents in Brisbane or the southern colonies.

This was a decade of important change. Cattle now dominated the coastal belt, the northwest, and the far west of Queensland. The nature of squatting was gradually changing — runs were being developed intensively, involving heavy capital expenditure. As a result of fencing and other improvements in the wealthier, more settled areas, new methods of cattle management were being adopted, although the “open range” system of the pioneering days still applied in the more distant parts of the state.\textsuperscript{74} Generally speaking, this had been a period of prosperity for cattle owners, but it closed on a sombre note. Due to the great increase in the number of cattle in the colony, the immense surplus of stock and the failure of canning as a means of disposing of a large part of it, prices fell sharply towards the end of the decade, causing despondency among owners. The most urgent problem confronting the cattle owners in the years which followed was the need to find a profitable means of disposing of their ever-increasing herds of cattle.

\textsuperscript{73} For a map showing the extent of these lines, see \textit{Post Office Historical Society Paper}, May 1953 (Oxley Library).

\textsuperscript{74} See, for example, Costello, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 196, where he refers to the “open range” system still being practised on Lake Nash and other huge, unimproved, stations in the Georgina River area in far northwest Queensland in the eighties and nineties.
I. D. McNaughtan

13 The Case of Benjamin Kitt: Responsible Government and the Kanaka Trade in Queensland

The Kitt Case has been remembered outside Queensland only because of the constitutional questions which arose out of it. Most studies have lifted it almost completely from its political background so that the whole thing has been misunderstood or used to make quite false deductions. This paper attempts to replace the affair in its context. To do this it is as well to begin with a summary of the main features of the political crisis, before going on to a reinterpretation.

The dispute about a certain Benjamin Kitt arose immediately after the Queensland general election of May 1888. By this election, Sir Samuel Griffith's Liberal Party, which had held power since November 1883, was turned out and the National Party under Sir Thomas McIlwraith took office on 13 June. The defeated Liberal Party drew most of its votes from the towns. Very approximately, it represented the majority of professional men, artisans, tradesmen, and small farmers. The National Party can best be described as "the rest". On the squatter-planter-merchant base was a superstructure contrived of Irish interests, protectionists, publicans, and even one or two republicans. It is difficult to say in what their nationalism consisted, except perhaps in the case of the Irish. For most it does not seem to have gone much deeper than haphazard opposition to certain arrangements made by Griffith with Downing Street during the Colonial Conference at London in 1887. The party was national only in the rather strained sense that it collected almost every interest opposed, for various reasons, to Griffith's policy.

Meanwhile, on 28 March, Kitt had been convicted at Townsville of stealing two pairs of boots valued at 40s. For that he was sentenced to three years' penal servitude. About a month after the McIlwraith ministry took office, that is, on 11 July, the Colonial Secretary recommended, through cabinet, that the Governor, Sir Anthony Musgrave, remit this sentence. The Governor, at the Executive Council meeting, declined to do so. The recommendation was resubmitted on 18 July, and the Governor again refused, stating that he saw no reason to do otherwise.

Read at the Monthly General Meeting of the Historical Society of Queensland, 28 June 1951, this paper is based on the files of Queensland Governors' correspondence which His Excellency, the Governor, has very kindly made available to the Department of History of the University of Queensland. References for Governors' correspondence throughout are to titles of volumes in this series. First published, Journal of the Historical Society of Queensland, IV, No. 4 (December 1951), 535-58.
reason to doubt that the judge and jury were right, while for him to interfere would shake the confidence of the public in the administration of justice. He felt bound to exercise the Royal Prerogative of Mercy, which was legally confided to him, according to his own conviction, but if cabinet wished he would refer the question home for the Colonial Secretary's decision.

McIlwraith summed up cabinet's case in a long letter to the Governor dated 9 August 1888. He claimed that the Governor's refusal to accept the advice of his ministers in exercising the royal prerogative was "a grave departure from the principles of responsible government". For many years past this advice had always been followed, except in capital cases where the Governor was clearly told in his instructions to act on his own judgment. McIlwraith quoted precedents in Canada and New South Wales and the opinions of such oracles in constitutional matters as Todd and Higinbotham, in an endeavour to show that the Governor must always take the advice of his ministers. In view of these precedents cabinet would decline to accept the decision of the Secretary of State for Colonies.

In his reply of 14 August, Musgrave denied that he was bound, either in law or by custom, to follow his ministers' advice and stated that he intended to place the whole question before the Secretary of State. A further exchange added little, and on 3 September the Premier waited on the Governor and said that his ministry had determined to resign unless the Governor accepted their advice on the matter by the following morning. Sir Anthony remained unmoved and on the 4th McIlwraith sent in their resignation. That afternoon he laid the correspondence on the table of the Legislative Assembly, telling the House that the decision of the Secretary of State was quite immaterial and would not influence the cabinet one way or another. Meanwhile, that morning, the Governor had sent for Griffith and asked him to form a government. Griffith, after consideration, declined on the next day, stating that he thought the Governor should take the advice of his ministers in cases such as this, but at the same time could see no reason for their resignation while the matter was before the Secretary of State. On the same day McIlwraith notified the Governor, who had refused to accept the resignation, that he and his colleagues would not proceed with parliamentary business until their successors were appointed.1

The newspapers had been running the case for some time. Figaro, the Nationalist newspaper, got hold of it as early as 28 July and other papers were reporting it from 11 August. By 4 September the excitement throughout the colony was such that the Governor wrote that the state of affairs was "practically revolutionary".2 It is clear now that the most vocal opinion supported McIlwraith. On the night of 7 September a crowd estimated at seven to eight thousand marched in a torchlight procession to a point near the Houses of Parliament where a public meeting was held and the action of the Governor

---

2 Telegram to Secretary of State for Colonies. See his desp. No. 78, 4 September 1888: Governor's Despatches to the Secretary of State, VII.
condemned “unanimously”. Throughout Queensland there were similar meetings, and telegrams and letters poured into Brisbane, mostly supporting the ministry. The deadlock was ended by a cable from the Secretary of State on 8 September ordering the release of Kitt. The cabinet thereupon withdrew its resignation.

It will be evident from this summary why studies which are based on the debates and correspondence printed in Hansard should treat the case purely at the constitutional (or personal) level. C. A. Bernays, for example, says: “Anyone familiar with the political career of Sir Thomas Mcllwraith will readily understand how his impatience of criticism and his dictatorial inclinations would lead him to precipitate a crisis over a comparatively trifling matter.” The issue, according to Bernays, was whether the Governor alone or the Governor-in-Council should exercise the prerogative “and it was just over that one fine point that two obstinate men came in conflict.” But such an explanation only raises the wider question why such collisions with the Home Government or its agents should have occurred over functions which were previously accepted without dispute. If the question is pressed the usual answer will be that the growth of Australian national sentiment made these clashes inevitable.

But it is doubtful whether this dawning sentiment of “adulthood” producing, as it undoubtedly did, a fitful desire for complete self-government or an irritation with Imperial supervision, was ever more than a favourable medium in which interested groups in the colonies struggled for, and usually gained, immediate and ulterior objectives. The sentiment of adulthood may explain widespread support for the colonial government concerned, but scarcely the motives of the government itself. It may always be a necessary condition but is rarely, if ever, a cause. The milestones on the road to self-government have too often been sentimentalized into monuments to Australian patriots, commemorating the victories of their long struggle with British Imperial domination. They might be described just as realistically as the tombstones under which are buried a number of enlightened but lost causes. In fact neither figure helps us much. The point is that, in almost all cases, these crises occurred only when a legitimate and accepted function of the Colonial Office or its representative became entangled in a local party political conflict.

So it is in the Kitt case. Indeed this affair is typical of many others. Thus, in the previous decade of the seventies, historians are confronted with the curious spectacle of the Gardiner case in New South Wales. On this occasion Henry Parkes, one of the fathers of the nation, is discovered “preferring” that the reluctant Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, should exercise the prerogative of mercy without consulting his ministers at all. “A larger share by the minister

---

3 See Evening Observer, 7 September 1888.
4 See QPD, LV, 206ff.
in the exercise of the prerogative of pardon, would not," he said, "in my judgment, be more satisfactory to the public." His reason seems to have been that he wished to sidestep what he called "an unscrupulous party movement." It was Sir Hercules who insisted that the Governor must have Ministerial advice on applications for pardon. The instructions to Governors were altered accordingly.

Or taking an illustration nearer home, Griffith is found, in 1886, insisting that the Governor must grant leave of absence to Legislative Councillors only on the advice of his ministers. His opponent, who struggled to uphold the Crown's prerogative, was a Queenslander and a henchman of Mcllwraith — the temporary administrator of the Government, Sir Arthur Palmer. Palmer had been Colonial Secretary in the first Mcllwraith administration and was Lady Mcllwraith's brother-in-law. Again, Mcllwraith's party in 1887–88 had opposed and defeated the Liberal Government's Naval Defence Bill in the name of independence and nationhood. The Bill provided for an Australian squadron of the Royal Navy partly maintained by colonial tax-payers in accordance with the agreement made by Griffith and other colonial representatives with the British Government at the Colonial Conference in London. Griffith was called an Imperialist and his bill the Naval Tribute Bill when the National party had an election to win. When it became expedient for them to form a coalition government with Griffith most of them swallowed his bill, entire and unadulterated, without visible difficulty.

Usually it is abundantly clear that the precipitating factor is an internal colonial issue. It will be argued here that although the Kitt incident became important as one of the test cases defining the relations between the Crown and Colonial administrations, the question of self-government or "responsible government" is only a part of the story. It is a consequence rather than a cause. The Kitt case can best be explained as one more skirmish in the desultory war over Kanaka labour. To make good this interpretation it will be necessary to look at the available evidence on the motives of both sides: i.e., of the Governor and of the Mcllwraith ministry.

It is relatively easy to judge why Sir Anthony Musgrave acted as he did. The Governor was an intelligent and spirited man, near the end of a long public life and in the habit of speaking his mind. The key to his motives is to be found in a code telegram and a confidential despatch, both to the Secretary of State, dated 4 September. In the former Musgrave states: "It [the recommendation for Kitt's release] is intended to clear the way for pardon of prisoners referred to in my confidential despath of 29th December 1884." (These prisoners were

---

7 *ibid.*, p. 286.
8 *ibid.*, p. 290.
9 See e.g. Palmer to Chief Secretary, 22 September 1886, *Governor's Official Letters to Various Persons*, II.
10 See *QPD*, LXIV, 7 July 1891.
11 *Governor's Despatches to Secretary of State*, VII.
12 In *Governor's Confidential Despatches to the Secretary of State*, I.
six of the crew of the labour vessel "Hopeful" convicted in 1884 of the murder and kidnapping of New Guinea natives.) The confidential despatch of 4 September reads, in part:

It is right to state what is tolerably well understood here that the case of Benjamin Kitt is put forward merely as a convenient test case for the purpose of establishing the principle that no matter how groundless the recommendation may be, any recommendation for pardon or mitigation of sentence made by the ministry is to have effect given to it without question by the Governor. The intention is to nullify all pretence at "the retention of the personal decision of the Governor". The real object in view is to pardon the convicts in the notorious "Hopeful" case in respect of which agitation has recently been stirred up by the parties who were useful supporters of the present Government during the late general election.

Finally he wrote after the release of the prisoners:

... I should never have regarded the case of Benjamin Kitt as of great importance, and might have given way to their recommendations after my first remonstrance, if I had not been convinced that the pertinacity with which it was pressed was intended to establish the principle that the Governor... is to be a mere hand to register the decrees of his "advisers".13

Taken together these statements can only mean that the Governor refused to release Kitt, because he thought that cabinet intended later to recommend the release of the "Hopeful" prisoners and that cabinet wished first to establish the principle that these recommendations for release of prisoners must always be accepted. Musgrave would clearly have been more accurate if he had said that he thought cabinet wished to prevent him establishing the contrary principle: that such recommendations may always be rejected. It was after all usual to accept the advice of cabinet: to do so in this case could hardly constitute an important precedent. To reject it in this case most certainly would, so that strictly the initiative at first lay with the Governor. With that modification the quotations probably state accurately one, if not all, of the Governor’s motives.

If this is so, two questions at once arise: Why should Musgrave be prepared to go to such lengths to establish his right to refuse to release the “Hopeful” prisoners? Secondly, why should he not wait for the real issue to arise — the actual recommendation for the release of the “Hopeful” prisoners — before making a stand?

The first question is not hard to answer. The “Hopeful” case had been in Sir Anthony's own words "a very bad one".14 The Chief Justice, who tried the six men late in 1884, stated that "the evil deeds of the prisoners had involved unauthorised warfare, murder and all the characteristics of piracy and slave-hunting".15 Griffith’s government, which was of course hostile to the Kanaka

---

13 To Secretary of State, No. 83, 11 September 1888, Governor’s Despatches to Secretary of State, VII.
14 To Erskine, 6 October 1884, Governor’s Official Letters to Various Persons, II.
15 Quoted Musgrave to Secretary of State, Conf., 4 September 1888, Governor’s Confidential Despatches to Secretary of State, I.
trade, immediately appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the "Hopeful" and five other ships which had been recruiting in New Guinea waters. In its report of April 1885 no ship was given a clean bill. The mildest finding was that the natives on one did not understand their contract (to "work in sugar" in Queensland for three years). In all other cases the Commission found that the sevitan had been kidnapped or fraudulently recruited. "The history of the cruise of the 'Hopeful'," the Commission reported, "is one long record of deceit, cruel treachery, deliberate kidnapping and cold-blooded murder."

Mainly on the strength of the "Hopeful" trial and this report, the Liberal Government brought down an act in September prohibiting the introduction of Kanakas after 31 December 1890. Afterwards it became pretty clear that the Crown case at the trial rested mainly on the testimony of a brace of rogues. As to the Royal Commission, evidence soon began to build up suggesting that some of the natives had not been deceived by the recruiters, but had themselves deceived the commissioners. Every piece of evidence which threw doubt on the justice of the convictions, or on the commissioners' findings, was, in the rough logic of politics, an argument against Griffith's Kanaka prohibition act, based largely on that trial and those findings. By the time that McLlwraith was in, the trial, the Commission, and the act were hopelessly identified. A retrial of the case in the Executive Council, resulting in pardon by the Governor, would be a retrospective vindication of the labour trade and a lever to overthrow the Kanaka prohibition act.

Now Musgrave was not merely convinced that these men were justly convicted, but was an inveterate enemy of the whole labour trade. One despatch gives a fair sample of his opinion. In March 1886 he described Queensland to the Secretary of State as

a comparatively uneducated community which has shown itself notably regardless of the commonest rights of humanity in respect of the black native tribes within its own territory — to say nothing of what has been disclosed of the Kanaka labour trade. Nothing in the history of the slave trade or slavery in the West Indies is more shocking than occurrences which have taken place in Queensland within the last ten or fifteen years. The display of popular feeling and sympathy with the criminals which I witnessed last year in the case of men most justly condemned to death for barbarous murders in what was nothing less than a slave hunting expedition on the coast of New Guinea is a thing not easily to be forgotten and it is far from creditable to the colony.

Clearly then the Governor was determined to resist the release of the "Hopeful" prisoners not only on the merits of the case, but also because he

---

16 Printed in *V & P of LA* (1885), II, 797 ff.
18 See, e.g. speech by Philp, *QPD*, LIX (18 October 1889), 2295-96.
19 E.g., *Evening Observer*, 31 July 1888. Leader said: "... the gentlemen who are getting up this [Hopeful] agitation are doing their best to revive" the black labour question.
20 11 March 1886. Conf., Governor's Confidential Despatches to Secretary of State, I.
feared that it would clear the way for the reopening of what he had always believed was “little better than a slave trade.”

The second question is more complicated. It is not easy at first to see why the Governor should not wait for the “Hopeful” case to arise before establishing his right to refuse his ministers’ advice. Possibly he thought that if he chose his ground on an issue in which no local political question was obviously involved he would be upheld by the Secretary of State, since he clearly had the legal right to refuse assent. If so, a clear precedent would be established and the reprieve of these men would be impossible while he remained Governor.

Musgrave obviously bargained without the noisy public support for McLwraith which was aroused when the Kitt case came out into the open. On 4 September he told the Secretary of State: “I should have no doubt at all that the judgment of the Governor in these cases would be approved by the community at large if only his authority to decide is upheld by H.M. Government.” But in fact the Griffith party was caught in a cleft stick and maintained a painful silence in the House during the debates of the next few days, while the Liberal newspapers were obviously embarrassed: opposed to the National party on one ground but reluctant to give open support to the Governor on the other under circumstances which would only provide fresh evidence of their “Imperialism.” Because of the lack of local support the Secretary of State had no option by 8 September but to instruct the Governor to withdraw.

Perhaps Musgrave, then, simply miscalculated his chances of success; but this seems doubtful in view of his long and wide experience. Another explanation is arguable. It is probable that the Governor had not only the “Hopeful” case in mind but also the wider issue of the government of British New Guinea. When the Kitt case arose the annexation was imminent and final arrangements were being made for its administration. By June 1888 the general framework of the territory’s government had been drafted. The Administrator of British New Guinea was to act under the instructions of the Governor of Queensland, who was to consult his Council in all matters connected with it. This was the very arrangement that Musgrave had campaigned against for years. In the despatch of March 1886, already quoted, he claimed that any such arrangement would “practically place the Administrator . . . directly in subjection to the Council” of a colony where the moral tone of the mass of the people was so low that its politicians would wink at almost any abuse. The recruiters could use New Guinea to supply black labour and the British Government would be helpless to intervene. “This,” he said, “is what the sugar planters of Queensland and their capitalist supporters in Victoria have been struggling for all along, from the time of Sir Thomas McLwraith’s first action in the matter.”

In October 1887 he again protested against what he called the “evident intention” of the British Government to hand over substantial control to the Queensland Government, and asked for a careful definition of his authority

---

21 Musgrave to Erskine, 9 February 1884, Governor’s Official Letters to Various Persons, II.
22 Governor’s Confidential Despatches to Secretary of State, I.
vis-à-vis the Council, since he anticipated the return to power shortly of the Mcllwraith party. This party included, he said, those anxious to use New Guinea as “a preserve to furnish black labour for the Queensland sugar plantations” and “those who persistently closed their eyes to the revolting cruelties of the Queensland labour traffic”. In confidential despatches of 10 September 1887 and 30 March and 22 June 1888 he stated that he had not been reassured on these matters and would refuse to take up his duties unless his status and authority were clearly defined. The last of these despatches, it should be noted, is dated just a little less than three weeks before the Kitt case began.

As if to confirm his fears the black labour question was reopened just at the time of the first recommendation for the release of Kitt. On 9 July, two days before the recommendation was made, the Telegraph gave prominence in a leader to a rumour that the Mcllwraith Government was going to repeal the Kanaka prohibition act. The fact that Hume Black, the representative of the northern planters and an avowed champion of black labour, was in his cabinet was a fair indication, the Telegraph thought, that the rumour would become fact. The next day the Observer, which supported Mcllwraith, reviewed the history of the New Guinea Protectorate and came to the conclusion that it had been a “miserable fiasco”. Burns, Philp & Co. had lost heavily there and so had many another planter and trader. Queensland ought to make sure that she got a profit out of the territory in return for the £15,000 bill for the cost of administration. Again on 13 July, two days after the first recommendation for the release of Kitt, Mr. Swallow, head of the firm of Swallow and Ariell, Melbourne biscuit manufacturers, and one of the firm of Swallow and Derham, sugar planters of Cairns, published a scheme in the Courier for recruiting in New Guinea. This, Mr. Swallow said, was becoming imperative since the Chinese were to be excluded soon and Griffith’s act prohibiting the recruiting of Islanders would come into force at the end of 1890. New Guinea recruiting could be supervised by the administrator and the Queensland Government and therefore would be free of abuse.

Now, whatever the precise legal position, and it was an extraordinarily tangled one, there can be no question that the Queenslanders assumed that their elected representatives were to control New Guinea through their Executive Council. The Governor, who had been kept in almost complete ignorance of the negotiations, had drawn the attention of the Colonial Office to this assumption many times in the past year, but as far as he was aware the position had not been clarified by late June 1888. He was afraid, whatever the Colonial Office protested to the contrary, that the draft Letters Patent, Commission, and Royal Instructions erecting the actual machinery of administration and

33 To Secretary of State, 20 October 1887, Conf. Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 See e.g. Courier, 9 September 1887, Leader. Hume Black, QPD, LIII (1887), 1114–15.
26 Particularly in his despatch to Secretary of State, 10 September 1887, Conf., Governor’s Confidential Despatches to Secretary of State, 1.
soon to come into force, would in fact confirm that assumption — that New Guinea was to be largely in the hands of the Governor-in-Council. If this meant that the Queensland cabinet could override the Governor, the situation in Musgrave's view would not only be deplorable politically, but, for technical reasons which do not concern us here, would be actually illegal.

He could not fail then to see the dispute about Kitt, which arose early in the following month, in the light of the New Guinea situation. There was little perceptible difference between his status in exercising the Prerogative of Pardon and his status in exercising control over the Administrator of New Guinea. In both cases his instructions directed him to consult with the Executive Council. If he bowed to the doctrine that "consult" must always mean "accept the advice of" then he would in fact give the cabinet of Queensland predominant power over New Guinea. The Governor would be the Imperial rubber stamp approving the acts of the Queensland ministry.

This seems to be the force of his confidential despatch of 18 August 1888, in which he again attacks these "proceedings which undoubtedly have the effect of placing the possession under the control of the Government of Queensland". A postscript to that despatch reads:

The present temper of local government upon the subject of the Royal Prerogative of Pardon — in respect of which they dispute the right of the Queen's representative to any independent judgment and virtually declare the severance of the Colony from all control of any kind on the part of the Crown or Government of Great Britain, renders it the more necessary that the Governor of Queensland, who is directed to consult the ministry of Queensland in all things with regard to New Guinea should understand distinctly what is his legal authority and status with regard to that possession.

When later, in a despatch already quoted, he says that he might have given way on the Kitt case, after a first remonstrance, had he not been convinced that the case was pressed to establish the principle "that the Governor is not supposed to be entitled to an opinion in the administration of the Government over which he presides . . . ", it is more than feasible that he had in mind not only the Government of Queensland but also the Government of New Guinea. Whether or not the "Hopeful" case could wait, the New Guinea "instruments" would shortly go into force and the matter was urgent. His position then was this. If he won the Kitt case he would loosen the hold of the Queensland ministry over the territory, and would probably be in a position to frustrate any attempts to recruit labour there. If he lost, at least he would have demonstrated, with a force that his most heated arguments could never carry, the utter powerlessness of the Governor to curb the local ministry in its dealings with New Guinea under the proposed arrangement.

---

27 Ibid.
28 To Secretary of State, 11 September 1888, No. 83, Governor's Despatches to Secretary of State, VII.
29 See also Musgrave to Secretary of State, 15 October 1888, Secret, Governor's Confidential Despatches to Secretary of State, I, in which he attempted to drive home the lesson.
It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that the Governor refused to release Kitt because he wished to prevent the release of the "Hopeful" convicts, with all that the release would imply. Further, it is likely that he refused to release Kitt also because he feared that New Guinea would pass under the direct control of the Queensland cabinet and hoped to prevent this.

If the Governor acted for the reasons suggested, it is still possible, of course, that McIlwraith and his colleagues were mainly concerned with the "constitutional" issue: that is, they may have wanted to prevent an autocratic Governor from overstepping what they thought were accepted canons of "responsible" government. In turning to estimate the motives of McIlwraith's cabinet, however, we are faced with an obvious difficulty in the lack of direct evidence. If members of the cabinet left any confidential records or correspondence on the subject these have not been found. The most that can be done is to assemble the "circumstantial" evidence which might answer the two obvious questions: Was McIlwraith's government at the time of the Kitt case committed to release the "Hopeful" prisoners? If so, was this their main reason for insisting on the release of Kitt?

To explain the National party's policy towards the "Hopeful" prisoners it is necessary to go back to the party's tactics in the election of 1888. After the redistribution of seats under the Electoral Districts Act of 1887, it is useful to divide Queensland into two groups of electorates on a line running roughly from Maryborough to Goondiwindi. In the huge area North and West of the line there were now thirty-eight seats (counting Burrum). Grazing and sugar, with their satellite interests, would win most of these for the McIlwraith party, but certainly not all. In the event, the Liberals held only five seats — Burke, which took in the Croydon and Woolgar goldfields (two seats), the mining electorate of Charters Towers (two seats), and Cairns (one seat). This was better than McIlwraith could reasonably have expected. In the corner southeast of the line there were thirty-four seats (counting Maryborough), twelve of them in Brisbane. Most of this area had been solidly Liberal in 1883 and McIlwraith would need some seats here to give him a clear win. He himself stood for North Brisbane opposite Griffith. To gain any substantial vote in the area his party was compelled to somersault and promise categorically not to reintroduce black labour and to exclude the Chinese, whatever his planter or squatter supporters thought of the matter. As it turned out he collected a fine bag; twelve seats in the area, five of them in metropolitan electorates, and one of them in the Liberal stronghold of Fortitude Valley. Griffith later said that McIlwraith had engineered this landslide by the simple device of taking over the Liberal policy, particularly on coloured labour.

As one might expect, then, the attitude of the Nationalist candidates towards

---

30 The question whether McIlwraith also had an eye on the New Guinea administration is left aside. What little evidence there is suggests that both political parties simply assumed that the Queensland Government (i.e., cabinet) would control the territory.
the "Hopeful" case during the election campaign was fairly cautious, at any
rate at first. Mcllwraith began by stating in his published manifesto to the
electors of North Brisbane that the New Guinea scandal in which the "Hopeful"
had been prominent was the fault of the Griffith government which had licensed
the vessels to recruit there. His own government had never allowed labour ships
to go to New Guinea. In his first address to his constituents on 16 March he
said: "The atrocities brought to light when these vessels came in shocked the
whole civilized world." He went on to say with more force than elegance that
"... the account given by the Royal Commission was something horrifying". 
Again the argument was that the Liberal government had been responsible. But by 12 April he admitted in answer to a question that he "... would favour
further inquiry into the 'Hopeful' case, if more evidence were forthcoming". On 26 April his attitude is clearer:

With regard to liberating the "Hopeful" prisoners the matter should be
carefully deliberated, and all the information that could be got should be
obtained. There was a great deal worthy of investigation and it would have
his instant attention as soon as he got into office.

The Telegraph, no doubt assuming that it would be unpopular, emphasized this
answer in a column called Election Points: "Do you know? — That Sir Thomas
will attend to the 'Hopeful' case 'as soon as I get into office'." Evidently Mc­
llwraith was uncertain of the city's temper on the subject and was feeling his
way.

The supporters of Sir Thomas were less guarded. Mr. T. Logan addressed the
electors of Toowong on 7 May. "He considered the present punishment very
inhuman, unnatural and un-Christianlike. He thought that the 'Hopeful'
prisoners had suffered long enough and it was time mercy was extended to them.
He supposed the Premier read his Bible, yet he stiffened his neck and hardened
his heart and allowed those people to waste their life in prison, almost in irons ..."). (Mr. Logan was not returned.) Mr. Cooper, speaking the following
day at Red Hill, said:

With reference to the "Hopeful" prisoners he considered that it was no
tragedy at all for which they were condemned, seeing that the kanakas
were in the habit of trying to murder the white crews. In this case the white
men were convicted and the white man had no means of redress at all ...

Mr. Cooper expressed himself similarly on other occasions. Mr. Burton at
Fortitude Valley and Mr. Swanwick at Woolloongabba also advocated release.

31 Courier, 14 March 1888.
32 Ibid., 13 April 1888.
33 Ibid.
34 Telegraph, 27 April 1888. The Courier reported him less fully and with a different emphasis
on this point.
35 Telegraph, 8 May 1888.
36 Ibid., 9 May 1888.
37 Ibid., 10 May 1888.
38 Ibid., 12 May 1888.
None of these outspoken gentlemen were returned, but it was clear that they were expressing the opinion at least of an influential section of the National party, if not of the Brisbane electors. The impression seems to have been widespread that the party as a whole stood for release. The editor of Figaro, an ardent supporter of McLlwraith, wrote on 21 July:

I have every confidence that Premier McLlwraith and his government will satisfy to the full the promises they made respecting these shameful convictions and they are as fully pledged to do that which is right and just for the "Hopeful" martyrs as is Figaro.39

In the following year, a Mr. Hunter got up in the House and said: "... the present Government party when they came before the country two years ago pledged themselves if they were returned to release the 'Hopeful' prisoners."40 The statement was not denied. Whatever the members of the party had or had not specifically said, they undoubtedly gave the impression that they favoured release.

Further they must have intended to give that impression. On polling day in North Brisbane, McLlwraith allowed the balcony of his committee room to be adorned with a large placard depicting the prisoners fettered and behind bars, appealing in vain to Griffith for release. Again, during the election campaign a pamphlet on the case called "Facts to Know" was circulated in Brisbane. Some of the accusations against Griffith read:

That the trial of McNeil [sic] and Williams was conducted in a manner utterly at variance with fair play, justice and humanity. That the evidence of cannibals, tutored for the purpose of criminating the prisoners, was utterly worthless, and should never have been admitted in a question involving the life of a white man ... That these facts were so well understood by the people of Brisbane that they determined to hold a monster meeting to protest against the vindictive and harsh measures adopted by the Premier with regard to the "Hopeful" prisoners.*

If these "facts" were correct there could, of course, be no question about the necessity for immediate release. Now the significant thing is this. Griffith quoted the tract in full in the House on 15 August, and in reply McLlwraith said:

I am not responsible for it. I read it now in print for the first time, but I am prepared to justify the "facts" — every one of them that the hon. gentleman has called abominable falsehoods. ... I take up the position of justifying everything the hon. gentleman has referred to.42

Indeed McLlwraith would have found it hard to adopt any other attitude. About eighteen of his party in the House, including three out of eight ministers, can be said to have represented the planter interest. One of these was Robert Philp (of Burns Philp), who had been part owner of the "Hopeful" in 1883.

39 Sub-leader.
40 QPD, LXI (1889), 2299.
41 Ibid., LV (1888), 20.
42 Ibid., p. 25.
Another, A. S. Cowley, had been manager of Hamleigh plantation near Ingham, employing natives from the “Lizzie”, one of the six ships investigated by the Royal Commission of 1885. The report of the Commission had made it appear that Cowley had “coached” and intimidated the boys to give false evidence before the Commissioners at Hamleigh. But even apart from the sugar interests, many of the squatters and merchants in his party obviously favoured release.

In view of all this, it seems clear that at the time of the Kitt case the National party administration was tacitly committed to the release of the “Hopeful” men.

To give a definite answer to the second question on the cabinet’s motives, i.e., to decide whether cabinet insisted on the release of Kitt mainly to ensure the release of the “Hopeful” men, is not possible. The difficult word is “mainly”.

Obviously it could be argued that the first recommendation for Kitt’s release was made on the merits of the case. There had been protests against the severity of the sentence at the time, and the question had come before the Colonial Secretary in Griffith’s government, just before it went out of office. He had made enquiries about the man’s previous character, and had been informed that nothing was known against Kitt by the local police before his conviction. The new administration considered this testimony important. Although the judge gave the opinion that Kitt had been guilty of numerous thefts on other occasions, McIlwraith claimed that no evidence supporting this conclusion appeared in the judge’s notes. In view of this there was undoubtedly a strong case for recommending release on the ground that the sentence was too severe. Certainly the Governor had not scrupled in the past to release prisoners either against the opinion of the judge or, more often, without getting the judge’s opinion at all.

Cabinet could argue, then, that the judge had been too severe, if not prejudiced. This could reasonably explain their insistence up to a point, but hardly their resignation without hearing the Secretary of State’s decision. They would scarcely be prepared to bring the government of the colony to a standstill simply to free Kitt, when the Secretary of State might order his release in a few days. McIlwraith himself argued throughout that the question of the release of Kitt was not in itself important. “Hon. members,” he told the House, “must not be under the delusion that this is a mere quarrel about the remission of a sentence or the pardoning of a prisoner.”

It is still plausible, however, that cabinet, having opened the case on its merits, would carry insistence to the limit simply on constitutional grounds. This in effect was McIlwraith’s explanation. Moreover, the platform of the Australian National Party, which was adopted just after McIlwraith took office,

---

43 The manager of the C.S.R.’s Victoria plantation (also near Ingham), where most of the recruits from the “Hopeful” were employed, was E. Cowley. I have not been able to discover whether he was a relation.
44 See QPD, LV (1888), 188.
45 McIlwraith stated that during Musgrave’s administration the Governor had remitted 196 sentences. Of these 111 were tried in the Supreme or District Courts. Of these the judge’s report was obtained in only 56 cases. Of these 35 were remitted or pardoned against the opinion of the judge. Ibid., p. 189.
46 Ibid., p. 194.
appears to support this argument. The motto of the party was to be "Alliance, not Dependence". The first objects of the party were

1. The cultivation of an Australian national spirit.
2. The Federation of the Australian colonies into a United Dominion with provision for a system of Australian national defence.
3. The energetic vindication and protection of the civil and political liberties, rights and obligations of the people, and the adoption of the principle that laws passed by the Australian Legislature shall not require Imperial sanction to render them operative.47

On the surface the conduct of McLlwraith's ministry would seem to flow naturally from this source. Their action on the Kitt case could be considered an obvious extension of object number three.

But a closer scrutiny brings out certain angular features which do not fit happily into this picture of a Nationalist Party vindicating or protecting colonial legislative autonomy. On 10 August, when the Kitt case was already fairly well advanced, McLlwraith stated the opinion of his ministry on certain proposed amendments to the Letters Patent and Royal Instructions to the Governors of self-governing colonies. These amended regulations had been circulated in draft form for the criticism of the governments concerned before being issued. The amended instruments still left the Governor the clear legal right to reject his ministers' advice in cases such as Kitt's. The ministers, McLlwraith wrote,

are not prepared to suggest any alterations of the drafts provided that it be understood that the provisions of these Instruments shall not be so construed as to interfere with the conditions of responsible government which I take to be that the Governor shall consult with the Executive Council in all matters appertaining to the government of the Colony, and shall in all things follow their advice, except when it may appear to him in any case that Imperial interests or the interests of any other of Her Majesty's colonies would be materially prejudiced thereby.48

The puzzle is that they declined, in the middle of the Kitt case, to ask for an amendment which would lay down in black and white the principle they claimed to be defending. McLlwraith had told Musgrave the day before that the Governor's refusal to accept his Council's advice was "a grave departure from the principles of responsible government". Why did he not take this opportunity to request a legal barrier preventing such departures in the future? It can hardly be urged that this is simply an example of the traditional British reluctance to have political powers and functions too closely defined. The definition which McLlwraith pressed for in the memorandum was close and rigid enough in all conscience: it would mean the total prevention of any independent action by the Governor in internal colonial matters. And if the Governor should be rigidly bound by an understanding, why not by specific instructions? The answer seems

48 To Musgrave, 10 August 1888, Local Official Letters to the Governor, LV1A. (Author's italics.)
to be that cabinet had no wish to prohibit such departures in the future, but only while the National party held power.

McIlwraith made his attitude plainer in the House. For example, on 11 September he explained to the (no doubt slightly confused) members:

I have never quarrelled with the position the Governor takes up — that he has full power to do what he likes in the way of rejecting any advice. I never quarrelled about that. In fact I wrote a letter about a month ago to His Excellency, saying that I thought he ought to have that power, because we do not know when an extravagant Minister might give some extravagant advice that it would be the Governor's duty to reject. But if he rejects advice he must take the consequences. He ought to have the power, and I have never disputed that; but what I do quarrel with is that His Excellency should exercise that power himself and still retain his Ministry. He has no right to the advice of Ministers whose advice he rejects.49

It is no doubt true that a pedantic logical consistency, which Emerson is said to have deplored, is rarely a weakness of politicians. Yet it is hard to find the wider harmony in these statements. Indeed, when the smoke of contradiction clears, it is seen that the purely “constitutional” explanation for cabinet’s course of action is in shreds. The case was not fought after all, it seems, to establish that the Governor must always accept the advice of his ministers. On the contrary, McIlwraith specifically said, at last, that he did not want that principle adopted. In any case he had rejected in advance the decision of the Colonial Office, the only authority which could alter the Governor’s instructions. Again, he and his colleagues could hardly have been asserting that the cabinet must resign if the Governor did not accept his ministers’ advice. Obviously cabinet was always free to resign and would do so if it thought the matter sufficiently important, and in any case, McIlwraith could hardly have intended to dictate the tactics of future cabinets. Finally, to establish the rule that the Governor, if he did not wish to take his ministers’ advice, must dismiss them and get others whose advice he was prepared to take, would be pointless. The ministers themselves could, if they wished, produce precisely the same result by resigning.

It is thus hard to see that the McIlwraith cabinet wished to lay down, protect or vindicate any constitutional principle, in the sense of either a conventional or written rule limiting or defining future practice. Their action boils down to a simple assertion of the National party’s power and intention to compel the Governor to follow their cabinet’s advice on questions of pardon; or, in plainer terms, to force Musgrave to release whatever prisoners they wished. With fifty-four seats in a House of seventy-two they could do this easily without establishing a general rule which might prove inconvenient if the party were, at some future time, in opposition when the ministers of the day chose to give the Governor “extravagant” advice.

We are thus forced back, for want of any other feasible explanation, to consider the Governor’s version of cabinet’s motives. Here there is more

49 QPD, LV, 209.
evidence. It is not clear when cabinet began to consider the release of the “Hopeful” prisoners, but probably it was, as McIlwraith had promised, as soon as he got into office. Governor Norman, in February 1890, said that the “Hopeful” case had been under consideration by the government “for the last twenty months”, i.e. from June 1888. Whether this was so or not, it is certain that the agitation for their release was reopened just about the time when the Kitt case began.

Figaro raised the matter on 7 July 1888. The following issue on 21 July stated that numerous letters were reaching the editor “pleading the sad cause of the ‘Hopeful’ prisoners”. A week later someone had given the editor full information on the dispute over Kitt, which was reproduced in a leader condemning Musgrave. The sub-leader was in support of a petition to the Governor praying for the release of the “Hopeful” men. On 27 July a Committee was formed to direct the campaign in support of this petition. The committee, consisting entirely of National party supporters, held a series of meetings beginning on 4 August and running up to the time of Kitt’s release.

At the first meeting, a Mr. H. Loader said:

He thought that the Governor could not do otherwise than extend his clemency to the prisoners... So far, however, Sir Anthony Musgrave had not shown much clemency of spirit, more particularly in regard to the man who, in the North, was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment for stealing two pairs of boots; and if he were afraid to extend his clemency in the case of the “Hopeful” prisoners, then the people of Queensland must look out for someone else who would.

The two issues, the Kitt case and the “Hopeful” petition, developed together, and were reported and discussed side by side in the newspapers. The Telegraph, as well as Mr. Loader and others, stated the obvious conclusion. “Speaking plainly,” it said, “the way was to be prepared [by the Kitt case] for dealing with the ‘Hopeful’ prisoners.” The connection seemed to be confirmed by a torchlight demonstration for Kitt’s release on the night of 7 September.

The chairman at the public meeting following the procession that night was Alderman Galloway (merchant), member of the Council of the National party, and honorary treasurer of the Committee for the release of the “Hopeful” prisoners. Among the eight speakers were: Mr. Cribb (merchant), National party candidate for Ipswich and chairman of the public meeting of 4 August to petition for release of the “Hopeful” prisoners; H. Burton, honorary secretary

50 To Secretary of State, 22 February 1890, Conf., Governor’s Confidential Despatches to Secretary of State, I.
51 Courier, 6 August 1888.
52 5 September 1888, Leader. See also 7 September 1888, 10 September 1888. Musgrave wrote: “The article which I enclose extracted from a Maryborough paper is only one amongst others but which alludes a little more distinctly than some to the obvious connection between the case of Benjamin Kitt and that of the ‘Hopeful’ prisoners.” There is no copy of the enclosure and no marginal reference. Probably the cutting was from the Wide Bay Burnett News, Files for this period are not available in the Brisbane Libraries or in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.
53 For account see Evening Observer, 7 September 1888.
of the "Hopeful" committee; W. Widdop (merchant), and Joshua Bailey (merchant), prominent members of that Committee. "It were wilful stupidity," the Telegraph said the next day "to affect not to see what much of the Kitt agitation means".

Griffith had evidently come to a similar conclusion. He could not support the Governor on the question of the release of Kitt, but said in the House that he could see no reason whatever for the resignation of the Government. At the same time he advised Musgrave in a memorandum that ministers' recommendations for release or remission of sentence should always be taken unless

1. Imperial interests or policy are involved; or
2. The offence is one against the laws of the Empire, which may chance to have been tried in a local court; or
3. He is of opinion that the proposed action is an abuse of the prerogative which he ought not to allow.\footnote{Printed QPD, LV, 207.}

The second proviso introduces a principle so bizarre and ingenious that it seems to have been deliberately framed as a loophole with a specific case in mind. The future Chief Justice of Australia was not unacquainted with constitutional law and one must suspect that he discovered this "principle" with an eye on the "Hopeful" prisoners who were, in fact, tried under "Imperial" law in local courts.\footnote{Cf. Norman to Secretary of State, 22 February 1890, Conf., Governor's Confidential Despatches to Secretary of State, I. Norman was duly puzzled by this exotic doctrine.}

Evidently many people saw a direct connection between the two cases. Certainly, an influential wing of the National party was chiefly interested in Kitt's release as a necessary means to the release of the others. It appears, however, that cabinet later preferred to postpone the recommendation for release of the "Hopeful" prisoners. Despite the fact that a petition bearing nearly thirty thousand signatures was presented on 15 October, cabinet, for another fifteen months, resisted the pressure of its own party in the House to release the men or table the papers. Possibly the ministry wished to let the Kitt case subside before making the recommendation. Whatever the reason, there can be little doubt that cabinet was anxious to release the men, and the recommendation was finally made, and accepted by Musgrave's successor, in February 1890. The reopening of the Kanaka trade two years later is, of course, another, though not perhaps a disconnected, story.

The evidence on the question of cabinet's motives is far from complete and, while it suggests that Musgrave's explanation was right, does not prove it. Certain conclusions, however, appear to be established: Cabinet did not force the release of Kitt mainly because they thought Kitt's sentence was unjust, nor did they wish to alter the existing constitution. The most prominent supporters of McIlwraith's ministry in the Kitt case were influential in the National party and were leaders of the campaign to release the "Hopeful" men. The Liberal newspapers, and possibly Griffith, as well as the Governor, suspected
that the ministers were using the Kitt case to clear the way for release of the "Hopeful" men. Finally, cabinet's action is fully consistent with this view, but quite inconsistent with their own professed motives.

Looking over the whole affair it is clear that the Kitt case was not an attempt on the part of a united colony or of a nationalist party inspired by the spirit of independence, mounting self-confidence or patriotism, to throw off one more Imperial control. The evidence suggests that it can only be explained as a struggle between Sir Anthony Musgrave and certain colonial interests over the Kanaka labour trade and its relation to New Guinea.
June Stoodley

The Development of Gold-Mining Unionism in Queensland in the Late Nineteenth Century

In the late nineteenth century, Queensland goldfields acquired among earnest Labour men in that colony a high reputation as centres of Labour strength and advanced thinking. A more recent writer has suggested, in contrast, that gold-miners had more than the usual share of working-class conservatism.¹ It will be argued here that neither generalization gives quite the whole picture, but that the pattern of developing unionism among the Queensland gold-miners does support, to a large extent, the earlier view of them.

The early self-employed alluvial “digger” had been marked more by his rugged individualism than by any urge to combine, though the spirit of “mateship” was present to a degree. Sporadic combined action did occur in Queensland on the Chinese issue, and the diggers did occasionally form Miners’ Protection Associations. These, however, were not the ancestors of later mining unions, in actuality or in function; although certainly endeavouring to protect the mining industry in various ways, they were much more catholic in their activities than their title would imply, and indeed included many of the aspects of general Progress Associations. They had provincial as well as group interests, and were by no means restricted to the class interests of the later miners’ unions.

Mining unions did not grow out of digger organizations at all, but had an entirely independent origin, usually following the development of co-operative insurance societies.² Their protective origin is indicated by the fact that the first stage of combination was the formation of Accident Insurance Societies, with employer and public assistance, and that the establishment of unions followed only after the lapse of several months. But on the Charters Towers field, from the first regarded as the most “advanced” centre, the stage of co-operation with employers was soon over. There, soon after the formation of the union in 1886, its strength was tested by a strike, the comparative success of which brought an influx of about 250 new members, though even then the membership comprised

First published in Labour History, No. 11 (November 1966), 14-27.

² Northern Miner, 1 December 1886; Gympie Times, 28 October 1886, 18 November 1886.
only 850 to 900 of the 2,000 miners on the field.3 This accession was to be a normal result of such strikes: it was often claimed by critics that men joined the unions only when their interests were obviously threatened, but at other times grudged the payment of fees and levies. This claim that while conditions were prosperous and wages good, the miners did not care about unionism, but “came crying to the unions” when they were in trouble, is substantiated to some extent by the fluctuating figures of union membership,4 and this, with the existence of large numbers of non-unionists, does support the case for conservatism among gold-miners.

Nevertheless, the next stage of association, co-operation with other mining unions, even those outside the colony, was reached quite quickly on most Queensland goldfields, organizationally at least. The impetus, however, came from the south, from Spence’s Victorian branch of the Amalgamated Miners’ Association, and not from any spontaneous development within the Queensland unions. But they were given little chance to come to it in their own way: hardly a month after the formation of the Charters Towers union, for example, the Victorian body was proselytizing it on the benefits of co-operation, with immediate success, and the same process had just won Gympie over, too.5 It could perhaps be argued that this rapid step was simply the result of legalization of unions at a moment when unionism elsewhere had reached this more “advanced” stage, but that it was not automatic can be gauged from the dissatisfaction later expressed by the more conservative wing in the unions.

The A.M.A. does not seem to have been, at least in Queensland, a really effective organization in terms of Labour unity. Membership certainly did not bring common strike action by several unions, but only combined deputations to Ministers or to employers, and these without any notable effect. Its chief advantage was probably the greater security offered by a much larger strike fund than any individual union could muster, even with sympathy contributions from outside. But even this was offset by the unpopularity of the more frequent levies, whether for the assistance of other strikers or, more particularly, for delegates to attend expensive conferences. As has been shown, such levies sometimes led to a decline in union membership, and even to temporary disbanding of unions to avoid payment, though this more drastic move does not seem to have been made by any gold-mining union.6 Expense was also to form a strong argument against contracting further obligations to an even wider organization.

Resentment was also aroused among the more individualistic men by the loss of some independence of action, for example over the right to strike, though

---

3 Northern Miner, 2 December 1886, 7 December 1886, 13 December 1886.
4 Ibid., 7 December 1886; Charters Towers Times, 27 July 1889, 12 January 1891; Gympie Miner, 18 August 1890.
5 Northern Miner, 7 December 1886, 16 June 1889; Gympie Times, 18 November 1886.
6 All but two of the Charters Towers unions (one of the two being the miners’ organization) disbanded rather than pay the Maritime Strike Levy (Charters Towers Times, 12 January 1891).
the A.M.A. organizer preaching in 1886 had given warning of this. Spence was later to explain that the payment of strike pay out of special levies, instead of the general fund, was to act as a check on over-readiness to strike by individual unions, but the resentment seems to have been against the curtailment of freedom rather than against the policy of avoiding strikes as far as possible. The mining unions were, theoretically at least, in favour of working in harmony with the employers and settling disputes by arbitration. The Queensland evidence supports June Philipp’s argument that (at least before 1891) the great majority of Labour men believed that “labour and capital could and must work harmoniously together for their common good,” and Clark’s description of the main current of labour and craft-union thought between 1860 and 1890 as one whose emphasis was on collaboration rather than antagonism.

The apparent solidarity suggested by the general affiliation of Queensland mining unions with the A.M.A. may have been somewhat superficial, for effective common action was infrequent. A case in point is the decision of the 1890 Queensland A.M.A. conference to press for a uniform working week of 44 hours; little if anything seems to have been done, and Gympie was still struggling for it in 1898, without active support from other centres which already had this benefit. However, it is unrealistic to think of solidarity in terms of sympathy strikes, at least in the eighties — an era before they came into fashion in Australia. Mining journals religiously reported labour disputes in other centres, and the more pro-Labour of them warned miners away from those areas. Levies were the most that was expected of affiliated unions at this date, and although they were not very popular they were usually paid. Even before the A.M.A. was fully established in Queensland, Glassey had thought it worthwhile to tour the chief gold and coal centres seeking support over a coal lock-out, and there is a suggestion that he had some monetary success. The report of the 1891 Royal Commission on Strikes also makes the point that in the eighties strike sympathy was limited to subscriptions. But it had now temporarily taken the form of the sympathy strike, and even if after 1891 strikes were out of favour as a bad risk, one might have expected the example of quasi-general strikes in 1890 and 1891 to be adopted by the Queensland mining unions in support of the Etheridge mining strike of 1891. But it was not even suggested, even though employers were bringing in outside labour to break the strike.

---

8 Gympie Miner, 25 November 1889, 18 August 1890; Gympie Times, 15 November 1890; Northern Miner, 6 December 1886.
10 Clark, op. cit., p. 758.
11 Gympie Times, 13 November 1890; Charters Towers Times, 15 November 1890, 17 November 1890.
12 Gympie Times, 29 November 1886.
13 Ibid., 4 December 1886.
Admittedly, pockets were already depleted by strike levies for the shearers, but it is one more example of the ineffectiveness of this stage of organization. A further weakness in the expanding web of Labour unity — parochialism — came to a head over Victoria’s attempt to regulate the Queensland allowance for fatal accidents, and it was heatedly argued that Queensland should have the management of its own affairs. A separate colonial district was therefore agreed upon at the 1889 A.M.A. conference, the membership of Charters Towers, Gympie, Georgetown (Etheridge field), Cloncurry, Croydon, Eidsvold, and Ravenswood — all gold centres — providing more than the six branches required for such a district. The decision certainly manifested, on the one hand, the growing strength and confidence of the Queensland unions, but also a rather significant localism and disposition to quibble over money — perhaps not unnatural in this time of strike expenses and growing economic depression — which were to be two weaknesses of the organization. Even more indicative of a lack of real unity was the rejection of a motion for a declaration of principles: the “general feeling” of the meeting found it unwise to risk the harmony of the association by binding members too closely. This suggests a certain backwardness in Queensland mining unionism when contrasted with the Victorian branch’s rule (already stated if not yet insisted upon in practice) of refusing to work with non-unionists.

The very mixed membership of the early gold-mining unions in Queensland may have been partly responsible for the hesitation over stating principles — in Gympie, for example, the A.M.A. of 1888 still listed many employers and businessmen (one of them a Cabinet Minister) as honorary members, this fact being used to refute the contention that the association was opposed to the employers. Gympie, however, was admittedly conservative in comparison with most of the newer centres, and especially Charters Towers. Certainly, any lag behind the southern colonies was quickly made up by some of the Queensland mining unionists: for example, in August of the following year, McDonald of Charters Towers was urging the boycotting of non-unionists. More important was the fact that many Queensland unions, including several mining bodies, federated in 1890, a year before the southern colonies were prepared to accept this degree of centralized control. The contrast between the decision to federate and the previous demand for independence from Victorian control reflects the change in attitude brought about by unsuccessful strikes and by the hardening of the employers’ stand during this period. The change, too, saw the seizure of power in the mining unions by the radical wing, with all its arguments for tighter organization and stricter discipline.

Affiliation with the Australian Labour Federation and the adoption of New

---

15 Gympie Miner, 25 November 1889.
17 Gympie Miner, 20 January 1888, 18 April 1888. There were 51 of these honorary members in January 1889 and 91 in July (Gympie Times, 9 July 1889), “giving admirable assistance in goods and money” (Gympie Miner, 28 April 1890).
18 Gympie Miner, 11 August 1890.
Unionism marks a further stage in mining Labour development — the extension of co-operation to other trades — though not without a clash with the conservative wing, standing by the A.M.A. with its more limited trade aims. The initiative came from Brisbane, but Charters Towers was again quick to follow the lead. In March 1890 the Worker, reporting on the way the mining fields were organizing against under-cutting of wages, had urged that “federation is the word and they must be in it.” The Worker itself was both a demonstration and an instrument of growing Labour unity, and through this paper the idea of federation spread rapidly through the colony. The scheme had first been drawn up by the Brisbane Trades and Labour Council, and put before the Inter-colonial Trades Union Congress of 1888, but rejected there as providing too much centralization of power and too little local autonomy. By the time federation was accepted by the other colonies at the Congress of 1891 it had already been put into practice in six Queensland districts. The Charters Towers miners’ union had joined in June 1890 and Gympie in August; Queensland gold-mining unions were no longer behind the southern colonies in readiness to accept centralized control, even if the vote was by no means unanimous.

Although not the initiator of the scheme, Charters Towers was an important centre of propaganda for it. Charles McDonald, associated with the mining union there in spite of his occupation as a watchmaker, was one enthusiast who was to do much work in organizing the north and west. And, as he pointed out, Charters Towers did produce the first A.L.F. Council with a woman member, representing the first domestic servants’ union in Australia. Unionism was spreading rapidly in Charters Towers at this time, though this was due in great measure to the A.L.F. Organizer from Brisbane, Gilbert Casey. Lane in the Worker gave him credit for the Towers butchers’ and cabmen’s unions, and reported an impressively swift succession of other organizations during his visit in June 1890 — shop assistants, general servants, cooks, and carters, while the miners joined the A.L.F. at the beginning of June also. But the ground had already been prepared. Lane had mentioned in April, before Casey’s visit, that a vigorous attempt was already being made to organize Charters Towers labourers and machine hands; that a Trades and Labour Council was being talked of there; that by June a General Labour Union and a Q.T.A. branch were already in existence, while “the A.M.A. men alone are numbered by the thousand”, so that the new A.L.F. district would be a strong body. Casey was quoted as considering the Towers “the most important

19 Worker, 1 March 1890, p. 5.
21 Worker, 1 September 1890, p. 10.
22 Charters Towers Times, 24 June 1890; Gympie Times, 18 August 1890; Worker, 7 July 1890, p. 3.
23 Charters Towers Times, 24 June 1890; Worker, 7 July 1890, pp. 3 and 15.
24 Worker, June 1890, p. 7; 7 July 1890, p. 3.
25 Ibid., April 1890, p. 4; June 1890, p. 7.
Queensland labour centre outside of Brisbane... ripe for federation", while A.M.A. secretary Richards, Charles McDonald “and other tried leaders” were mentioned as among the staunch advocates of the new movement.26 When Casey addressed the miners’ union on the merits of federation he brought down the house, the points he made were “cheered to the echo”, and the miners voted to join the A.L.F. without a division27 — clearly he spoke to an already convinced audience. Even if one allows for the obvious propaganda intent of Lane’s enthusiastic reports of Charters Towers activity, and for the snowball effect of excitement, it must still be admitted that the ground had been well prepared before the visit of the southerner. In Casey’s phenomenal success in the North and Centre, Charters Towers was cited as “bidding for top place” with its union membership of 1,700, its 3,500 signatures to the Factories and Workshops petition, its determination to have a Labour representative at the next election, the placing by a few enthusiasts of almost all its miners on the electoral roll, and its formation of the first domestic servants’ union in Australia.28 When in August McDonald, now to be paid Organizer for the A.L.F. district, was quoted as predicting that the Towers would “soon be as near perfect as possible”. Lane pointed out that “a great deal of its recent livening is due to McDonald’s unpaid persistence and devotion”.29

Thus, while again some of the impetus had come from the south, from the preaching of the Worker at long range and that of the peripatetic Organizer at close quarters, they worked in a sympathetic climate of opinion already fostered by local Labour leaders. That these leaders were not always miners30 need not detract too much from the importance of the miners’ union. They were in independent occupations which did not require a union, and they fixed unerringly on the miners’ union as the body to work with and through, and this was not only because it had by far the biggest membership. On the surface, the Charters Towers branch of the A.L.F. was not even led by the miners’ representatives, but this was an artificial and misleading situation. Although the mining union was the largest on the Towers and entitled to six delegates to the local A.L.F., whereas none of the other unions had more than one representative at the first meeting,31 the miners’ secretary had thought it would look better if the president were chosen from another union. Probably as a result, the presidency and vice-presidency went to the shop assistants’ and the bakers’ unions, relatively weak bodies on the field. However, McDonald, then a mining representative, was elected delegate to the General Council (the

27 Ibid., 7 July 1890, p. 14.
28 Ibid., pp. 7, 11, 15.
29 Ibid., 1 August 1890, p. 10.
30 McDonald was a watchmaker, Dunsford a newsagent, Vosper a journalist. Dawsons and Givens, however, were gold-miners.
31 Charters Towers Times. 24 June 1890. There were also Ravenswood miners, Hughenden carriers, Charters Towers domestic servants, tailors, cordial makers, cooks, bakers, shop assistants and cabmen, and railwaymen were expected soon. Carters, butchers, carpenters, joiners, and Croydon miners were in by December, the total nearly 2,000.
real centre of power), Richards (the miners’ secretary) became secretary of the local District Council, and two other miners were made trustees. Prestige was shared, but the effective voting power, locally, remained with the miners.

The movement at Gympie was rather more conservative and hesitant, for this old field, in spite of its size, was regarded among the mining fraternity as shamefully backward in Labour matters. Yet even there a General Labourers’ Union was formed in September 1890, and had 500 members by November. McDonald from Charters Towers had addressed a special meeting in August, to urge Gympie men to join the A.L.F., and a week later a small meeting of 50 or 60 miners decided on this course. A few individuals were strongly and persuasively in favour of federation, but out of the small number of voters there were at least eleven strongly against joining, at least without longer consideration. Within the Gympie union, then, there were both opponents of federation and also cautious neutrals, while the meeting can hardly be taken as representative of the miners as a whole, since it comprised only a sixth of the number on the electoral roll. Many undoubtedly shared the views of A. G. Stephens, then editor of the *Gympie Miner*, who warned that with the seamen’s strike in the offing, all bodies affiliated with the Federation might well be expected to assist in a strike which had little to do with them and whose causes were seemingly trivial. Nevertheless, the decision was to join the A.L.F.

At the same time, and not only in “conservative” Gympie, the question of affiliation with the A.L.F. did bring to a head the conflict between the right and left wings of the gold-mining unions, and marked the take-over of power in them by the more radical element, in early 1891.

Preliminary rumblings in mid-1890 had revealed the dissatisfaction of the right wing with the drift towards the new unionism. On the Gympie field, a condemnation of the A.M.A. committee for its growing radicalism had expressed the typical rightist standpoint. The critic, Morrison, first argued that the union should be careful lest it estrange “the sympathies and assistance” of its honorary members. He recalled the time when the founders of the union had sought and gained the help of prominent citizens in establishing an Accident Fund: “We did not say that we were forming a body that would oppose any scheme they endeavoured to bring out for the good of the place.” Such co-operation with Capital had previously been common to many unions, and although it was a point of view that was rapidly losing ground, it is significant that it was still being expressed as late as April 1890. Morrison also used the argument of extravagance. He even criticized the formation of the separate Queensland district of the A.M.A. for its cost to the local branches, so that the funds of the Gympie union, for one, had materially decreased in spite of an increase in membership. This may seem merely petty fault-finding of a type

---

32 *Worker*, 15 November 1890, p. 5.
33 *Gympie Times*, 19 August 1890.
34 *Gympie Miner*, 18 August 1890. The *Worker* set the figure at a fifth (April 1890, p. 4).
35 *Gympie Miner*, 15 August 1890.
common enough in any association — the sums involved were not large — but it probably indicates the hand-to-mouth existence of the unions at this time, and it is a typical criticism of wider organization.

A third and perhaps more significant grievance was authoritarian control over the union by the executive, dominated, said another writer to the press, by “a secret society with its own Inquisition”, an unscrupulous organization which had “polluted the good name of the Miners’ Association”.

These three arguments — the support not only of co-operation with employers but of their actual membership of the unions, the wariness towards any activity or affiliation that might cost money, and denunciations of the dictatorial and unscrupulous methods of the radical wings now taking over the unions — were typical of the right-wing attitude. The general decline of this faction, which had once been predominant, may be seen from this example in the most conservative mining centre: a special meeting of censure withdrew all confidence from Morrison, and removed him from the committee. Nevertheless, the Gympie leadership was certainly not in the forefront of radicalism: the “extremists” whom Morrison had criticized were soon to be scorned by the Charters Towers delegates as “stuck in the old groove of fossilized unionism”, and “too conservative to successfully carry on an institution formed for the liberal purposes and broad-minded aims of the modern school of unionism”.

However, while the end-result might not be radicalism of the Charters Towers variety, the same type of change was undoubtedly taking place in both centres.

Charters Towers had its early signs of dissension in mid-1890, also, with criticisms of the committee and of election methods, but the real clash there came in January 1891, with one motion by the right wing to secede from the A.L.F., and a counter-move by the left for secession from the A.M.A. The success of the latter faction was a clear indication of the swing towards radicalism. But again the question of economics, as well as of general principles, complicated the issue. Hard times made many unionists, as well as employers, wary of the unions and their demands. In January 1891 depression was approaching, many unionists had been unemployed for months, even the Charters Towers union was nearly bankrupt. There had already been a levy to assist the rather unpopular Maritime Strikers; now it was proposed to raise the subscription to defray the cost of membership of the A.L.F. The proposal was bound to be unpopular. Still, it was claimed by at least one miner that money was not the main issue. He maintained that miners as a rule were good unionists, not to be frightened away by a few shillings’ levy, and that the real reason for the dwindling membership of the Charters Towers union at that time was

37 Ibid., 30 April 1890.
38 Ibid., 28 April 1890.
39 Gympie Times, 24 December 1890, citing Charters Towers Times. However, the Worker, in rejoicing at Morrison’s overthrow, had remarked that while the Gympie union was not strong it had some splendid men on it (June 1890, p. 7), which meant, in Worker terms, men of some radicalism, at least.
40 Charters Towers Times, 9 July 1890, 30 August 1890.
disgust at the high-handed actions of delegates during the Maritime Strike. Dictatorship and radicalism were also part of the question, then, but it is reasonable to assume that finance played at least some part in the struggle at this time; if it did nothing else it brought the struggle for power within the unions to a head. In Charters Towers the success of the proposal to secede from the A.M.A. was accompanied by the election to the committee of so many radicals (members of the Republican Association) that it was labelled a republican body, and the union also adopted the other association’s newspaper, the *Australian Republican*, as its quasi-official organ. The former president and two other conservatives thereupon resigned from the committee, making the victory of the left wing still more complete.

Affiliation with the A.L.F., then, was the catalyst for the change in leadership of the biggest gold-mining unions in 1891. The conservatives, believers in the old craft type of union, objected to “new-fangled” ideas such as the bringing in of other trades, to the dictatorial methods of the new leadership, to the drift from industrial to political action, and above all, to the infiltration of socialism. The radicals were impatient of the old “fossilized” unionism, and of an aristocracy among labour. They found the A.M.A. useful enough while there was no broader system of federation but, when the latter had become a reality, were inclined to condemn supporters of the A.M.A. for standing in the way of “the onward march of progress”.

While leadership in the unions had moved to this point of view, conservatism on the fields cannot be denied. Unionists were still only a small percentage of the total body of miners, and even their numbers were depleted by this controversy: the most “advanced” union, that of Charters Towers, lost twenty-two members after its break with the A.M.A. Even among those who remained there were still men ready to resist the next step, the general union, as an “experiment on unworkable notions”. This lingering attitude was strengthened rather than weakened by the Labour difficulties of the nineties, and there was a tendency to ignore the changing circumstances when criticizing the new organizations. When comparing the merits of the A.M.A. and the A.L.F., for example, it was pointed out that since its formation the A.M.A. had won twenty-one out of twenty-eight strikes, the other seven being of minor importance, while the workers had suffered overwhelming defeat in the two strikes directed by the A.L.F. This disparity was attributed to leadership of the A.M.A. branches by “men of practical common sense, who will not initiate strikes unless

---

41 *Northern Mining Register*, 4 April 1891.
42 Ibid., letter by “True Unionist”.
43 *Charters Towers Times*, 12 January 1891, 19 January 1891, 3 April 1891 to 11 April 1891.
44 Croydon also seceded from the A.M.A. (*Northern Mining Register*, 1 August 1891).
45 *Charters Towers Times*, 6 April 1891.
46 Ibid., 4 April 1891.
47 Ibid., 18 July 1891.
48 *Northern Mining Register*, 22 August 1891.
there is a strong probability of a successful issue 

a somewhat ingenuous explanation when the two A.L.F. strikes in question were the Maritime and Shearers' Strikes of 1890-91. Nevertheless, there were some more or less successful moves to retain affiliation with the A.M.A. as well as the A.L.F., as in Ravenswood, or by the refoudning of local branches where the radical wing had succeeded in breaking official ties with it, as in Charters Towers and Croydon. These were not always very long-lived; the revived Charters Towers district branch survived for only one year, so that the Croydon association, which outlived it for a time, had to revert to the Victorian branch for leadership. But the fact that they survived at all indicates the perpetuation of the older type of union attitudes alongside the expanding New Unionism.

In spite of conservative opposition to federation of unions, Charters Towers went even further. In 1891 an Associated Workers' Union was initiated there, after one or two abortive attempts, combining several unions and taking in those workers not strong enough to form a separate organization. It was described as "simply the old miners' union, but opened to all workers alike". As always, the argument of economy in combining executives made a strong appeal, but the more important point was also urged that still closer union was needed before any substantial reform in the labour world could be effected. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the miners as a whole were really enthusiastic about the scheme, for attendances at meetings to consider the scheme were limited. But such as it was, the vote was almost unanimous, and the radical committee which had initiated the scheme had been voted into power by a majority of the Charters Towers mining unionists.

The formation of this combined union is probably the strongest argument for Charters Towers' advanced position in the Labour movement, for it was the first of its kind in Australia. And although it was the local District Council of the A.L.F. that put the scheme before the public, the suggestion had been initiated in the miners' union, at first unsuccessfully under the old conservative committee, but later with the unanimous approval of the new, more radical executive. And it was round the miners' union and its accident association

49 Ibid., 18 July 1891. The paper was supposedly reporting general arguments but in reality putting its own conservative case.
50 Ibid., 1 August 1891.
51 Ibid., 18 July 1891, 1 August 1891.
52 Brisbane Courier, 16 August 1892. The Croydon branch was still in existence in 1897 (Worker, 5 June 1897, p. 5.)
53 Charters Towers Times, 12 January 1891, 22 June 1891 to 27 July 1891.
54 Ibid., 30 June 1891.
55 Northern Mining Register, 8 August 1891, 26 September 1891.
56 Worker, 28 May 1892, p. 2. The Queensland Shearers' Union and Queensland Labourers' Union did not amalgamate into the Amalgamated Workers' Union until May 1892 (ibid., 14 May 1892); in the same month the Croydon A.M.A. and the Gulf Federated Workers' Union conferred on a similar move, but it did not materialise (ibid., 7 May 1892, 28 May 1892). Charters Towers men helped to spread the idea elsewhere in the north, however, and Thomas Givens formed a branch in Cairns with an early membership of 25 (Brisbane Courier, 6 December 1892).
57 Charters Towers Times, 12 January 1891, 22 June 1891, 30 June 1891.
that the amalgamation was organized. The leaders of the gold-miners, then, were responsible for the first introduction of this innovation in the Australian Labour movement.

The next stage in Labour development was the swing towards political action, and the creation of a political party seeking direct parliamentary representation for Labour. The trend, which had appeared before the Great Strikes which traditionally precipitated it, was resisted by many who still believed that a union should not dabble in politics. But by 1891 these were now at last the minority in the gold-mining unions. The Charters Towers body had changed considerably in one year, since February 1890 when it could still be described as an organization "composed of Griffithites, McIlwraithians, modern socialists and those who did not believe in either of the two political parties in the Assembly".58 At that date it had not wished "to identify itself with politics" by sponsoring a public speech by Thomas Glassey, a working man's representative in the Queensland Parliament, though nominally still a Liberal. As late as August 1890 this union still felt that as "a non-political body" it could not officially support a request for funds by a London Labour League hoping to return a workers' representative to parliament.59 But this was the last time such a statement could have been made at Charters Towers, for at that very moment the campaign for direct representation was under way on the field.

Nor was it a new or unpopular idea to mining labour as a whole. Intercolonial Trades Union Congresses had been recommending it from 1884 onwards, and as an A.M.A. nominal objective it had received some Charters Towers approval from at least 1886.60 But although there were spasmodic references to its desirability, it was not until after 1889, when payment of members of Parliament first made it practicable,61 and the formation of the A.L.F. in 1890 with this among its aims, that a really determined effort was made on the goldfields.62 There were still the die-hards who regarded unions as non-political bodies,63 but their voices were temporarily drowned by the clamour of approval that greeted the A.L.F. plank of political action — and in a socialistic platform at that. Even Gympie responded to the news with cheers.64 and on Charters Towers enthusiasm was active as well as vocal. The new Charters Towers A.L.F. District Council unanimously supported the establishment of a political party,65 and the Worker had already reported that

58 Ibid., 15 February 1890.
59 Ibid., 5 August 1890.
60 Northern Miner, 7 December 1886, 8 December 1886.
61 £300 per annum. Glassey and Hoolan had independently found their way to the Legislature, but at some personal sacrifice.
62 At the 1888 election for example, the Gympie A.M.A., in debating which candidate to support, had not even mentioned the desirability, let alone the possibility, of a Labour representative.
63 Gympie Times, 28 August 1890, 6 September 1890, 11 September 1890; Charters Towers Times, 3 April 1891.
64 Charters Towers Times, 5 August 1890.
65 Ibid., 16 July 1890.
a few enthusiasts had got most of the Charters Towers miners on the electoral roll.66

Charles McDonald’s report from the north to the Worker, after two months, claimed that the A.L.F.’s political platform was just what men wanted, and that everyone he had met was in favour of it.67 That this was sheer propaganda is shown by the hostility to the A.L.F. revealed in 1891, and already discussed; the right wing was certainly not in favour of it. But as a picture of a growing trend the statement might have had more validity. In the Charters Towers electorate, the Worker was immediately able to report, nearly three thousand unionists had a vigorous parliamentary committee registering voters, keeping the movement alive, and determined to contest both seats at the next election. Even on the tiny Eidsvold goldfield, subscriptions had already been promised to help a parliamentary committee to run a candidate.68 Even on conservative Gympie the seed took immediate root. The new, more radical president of the local A.M.A. opened the campaign there with a criticism of Liberal representation of Labour that as yet contained none of the post-1891 bitterness, saying mildly enough that Liberals, nearly all capitalists, could not fairly represent Labour, and in fact had not done so. He concluded on a note of idealism that rings rather sadly now, with the hope that working men, through more direct representation, would “seek to break the barriers down that have existed so long between capital and labour”.69

The A.M.A., though no longer the most advanced stage of miners’ organization, also joined the new trend: the Queensland conference of November 1890 resolved that only Labour candidates be supported at all elections.70 And all over the goldfields a rash of Workers’ Political Organizations or Parliamentary Associations sprang up.71 Public meetings called by these organizations, as well as urging men to register as voters, and demanding direct representation of Labour, also discussed the planks of the political platform laid down by the A.L.F. Regular weekly or fortnightly debates were held on such issues as universal adult suffrage, plural voting, the franchise for the floating population (always a sore point with the nomadic miner), annual parliaments, a single election day, and equal electorates on an adult population basis.

Once again the impetus for the next step had come from the south, partly

66 *Worker*, 7 July 1890, p. 11.
67 Ibid., 1 October 1890, p. 14. This was the practical working platform not the more idealistic (and socialist) manifesto put out also at this time.
68 *Worker*, 7 August 1890, p. 10. Committees were also reported from Blackall, Emerald, and the Bourke electorate.
69 *Gympie Times*, 12 August 1890.
70 *Worker*, 29 November 1890, p. 2; *Gympie Times*, 13 November 1890; *Charters Towers Times*, 17 November 1890.
71 Croydon A.M.A., for example, was “making a big try” for Labour representatives (*Worker*, 7 March 1891, p. 7). See *Gympie Times*: 30 August 1890, 31 October 1891, 19 September 1895, 10 October 1895, and *Gympie Truth*: 20 May 1898, 27 May 1898, 17 April 1901 for accounts of the Gympie activities; and for the early Charters Towers meetings see *Charters Towers Times*: 28 March 1891, 9 April 1891, 7 May 1891 to 21 July 1891. Even Mount Morgan had such a body by the 1893 election (*Worker*, 18 February 1893, p. 3).
through intercolonial congresses, partly through the A.M.A. and A.L.F., but again there is no doubt that on the goldfields as a whole there was a receptive climate for the idea. Once it had become a practical possibility, with payment of members of Parliament, the movement was rapidly under way. But the impact of 1891 was still needed to accelerate its rate of expansion.

While the activity of these goldfields organizations may have been spasmodic, it is interesting that their initial impetus, part of the general militancy developing in 1890, came at a time of confidence and determination and not of despair. The idea of political representation goes back at least as far as 1886 on the goldfields, and the decision to form political organizing committees was being taken by the Queensland miners in August 1890, when the Maritime Strike was only just beginning. Certainly they were well established before the failure of the Shearers' Strike of 1891, which once was thought to have initiated political action.

On the Charters Towers field, a political committee existed in August 1890, but the first formal meeting of a parliamentary association did not take place until March 1891. This was certainly at the beginning of the Shearers' Strike, but did not come as a result of that strike: the miners' union committee had elected delegates to such an association, and discussed the A.L.F. political platform, before the strike. Even in March, one speaker (Radford) was optimistically predicting that a workers' majority in Parliament would put an end to all strikes and disputes, as well as benefiting incalculably the community as a whole. Here is an example of the "panacea" type of thinking about political representation, as a complete substitute for industrial action. Radford indeed called it a new religion. And as the Shearers' Strike declined towards ignominy this view gathered strength. Even on Gympie a bitter month saw the change, from May—when, although radicals were urging the return of Labour men at the next election, the more conservative could still put their faith in joining unions, "which when properly organized would get the whip hand"—to the end of June when the radicals were able to point out bitterly that "the ballot box is the only place where labour can meet capital without injuring itself, and have any show of success". In Charters Towers, too, a sympathetic editor was also expressing the opinion that "there seems nothing for it but the ballot box".

Labour leaders had always professed a distaste for strikes; it was an old argument to condemn them as the cause of untold misery, the ruin of industry.

---

72 The Gympie body had "a long recess" somewhere between late 1895 (Gympie Times, 10 October 1895) and a revival in May 1898 (Gympie Truth, 20 May 1898).
73 Queensland shearers' agents were visiting stations to rally voting support by 1889. See J.E. O'Connor, "1890 — A Turning Point in Labour History", Historical Studies, IV, No. 16 (May 1951), 364.
74 Worker, 7 August 1890, p. 10; Charters Towers Times, 28 March 1891.
75 Charters Towers Times, 14 February 1891.
76 Ibid., 28 March 1891.
77 Gympie Times, 12 May 1891, 23 June 1891.
78 Charters Towers Times, 13 June 1891.
and the paralysis of trade and commerce—a loss to both employer and employed. But it was new to see them as an outmoded tactic, a weapon that had served a useful purpose in its day but could aid labour no further, now that organization was met by organization and workers could no longer rely on governments to be impartial, as was now argued. It was as utopian to put such complete faith in political organization as it had been to trust in the power of reason, of conciliation and arbitration, as was to be demonstrated in the nineties, with the slow progress of Labour in politics. The strike was not yet an obsolete weapon, as the Worker was to admit in 1893.

Nevertheless, there is still a case for seeing the strikes of 1891 as a turning point in Labour history. Evidence from the gold industry in Queensland certainly supports Mrs. Philipp's thesis of a desire for political action well before 1891, but she admits that the strike defeat "did undoubtedly create within the Labour Movement a more acute sense of the urgent need for political action". As Jean O'Connor has pointed out, the incidents of 1890 spurred union leaders to more energetic organizing of the electorates, so that instead of merely desiring parliamentary representation, Labour succeeded in establishing a mass political party. While diminishing the significance formerly attached to 1891, this still gives the date considerable interest as a watershed. And whatever may be said of the movement in Queensland before 1891, disillusionment with the Liberal Government that assisted the squatters in the strike remains a factor of some importance. It was the final catalyst that led to class politics, in Queensland at least.

Further, the intensity of feeling that 1891 distilled added no little drive to the Labour movement. Radford had already spoken of a new religion; this aspect was now accentuated. The Charters Towers Times foresaw that

defeat of the Unionists by the Government, not by the squatters, will only render future struggles more bitter. ... In future, what the patriot has felt for his country, the fanatic for his religion, the Unionist will feel for Unionism.

But this, while true of the already ardent unionist and of others brought in by the strikes or by the new, paid organizers, was not to be true at all: many wavered in the face of defeat and depression, so that in the early nineties unionism was in a somewhat parlous condition even though its stalwarts had increased in militancy. And although the struggle continued in the industrial field, much of the energy of those stalwarts was now diverted into political

---

79 Gympie Times, 25 June 1891, letter by "Argus".
80 Worker, 14 January 1893, criticizing Greta (N.S.W.) Miners' Association for concluding that strikes were useless and that Labour reform could be achieved only by legislation.
81 Philipp, op. cit., p. 153.
82 O'Connor, op. cit., p. 363.
83 Charters Towers Times, 13 June 1891.
84 On the Charters Towers field union membership, which had reached 1500, fell to 543 by March 1891 (Northern Mining Register, 18 March 1891), but began to rise again through the efforts of the organizers (Charters Towers Times, 31 March 1891, 25 April 1891, 7 May 1891). The Worker claimed near-doubling by January 1893 (21 January 1893, p. 4).
effort; indeed, for a time it seemed there might be some danger that the new political organizations might kill the unions,85 but as the depression slowly lifted so mining unionism gradually recovered also.

Nevertheless, the major effort had now been transferred to the political arena, and in the phenomenally rapid rise of Labour-in-Parliament the mining centres, and particularly the goldfields, played no small part in the Queensland scene. Not only did they elect a significant proportion of the total Labour members — nine out of the seventeen elected in 1893, for example — but their vote was consistently Labour, with one or two exceptions.86 Moreover, the mining fields sent organizers to other centres, while the more nomadic of the gold-miners spread the doctrine unofficially in their migrations, especially to Western Australia.87 Charters Towers was particularly notable for this, and in 1893 no less than six of the successful candidates (Dawson, Dunsford, Rawlings, Jackson, McDonald and Hoolan) had at some time been active in the Charters Towers Labour movement. In 1899 two more (Givens and Lesina) were added to the number, and these defeated former Labour men who had quarrelled with the central executive, so it could be said that the radicalism of Charters Towers was spreading abroad to defeat not only conservatives and liberals, but even right-wing Labourites. Certainly the centre was always prominent in political Labour during the formative years, and it had early been regarded as hardly worthwhile for a non-Labour man to stand there. With some qualifications, this is more or less the general picture of the Queensland mining areas by the end of the decade: although Labour supported a few Liberal candidates in electorates where it was thought useless to put up a Labour man, it was only in the exceptional case of Mount Morgan that it occurred on the goldfields.88

Once elected, gold-mining men took a prominent part in the parliamentary Labour Party. In any case, they formed a large proportion of the early Labour members in Queensland, but they also supplied some of the early leaders. The first independent Labour representatives, Thomas Glassey and John P. Hoolan, had come from coal- and gold-mining areas respectively; when they, with other gold-mining men Cross and Jackson, fell foul of the party line over the issue of discipline,89 it was Dawson of Charters Towers who succeeded Glassey in the leadership, and formed the first (short-lived) Labour ministry, in 1899. Charles McDonald, formerly of Charters Towers and more identified with that centre than with his electorate of Flinders, was later to become

85 Gilbert Casey reported that this had almost happened in Rockhampton, where the Workers' Political Association itself was dying, and that only his formation of an A.W.U. there saved the local Labour movement (Worker, 21 January 1893, p. 4).
86 Gympie, which vacillated until 1899, and Mount Morgan, where intimidation was claimed to be the cause.
87 F. C. B. Vosper is probably the best-known example.
88 Mount Morgan Truth, 25 February 1899. The electorate of Fitzroy was often described as a "pocket borough" of the Mount Morgan Company.
89 They refused to take the "solidarity pledge" to vote as the majority of Caucus should decide.
Speaker, and always had a leading role; Andrew Fisher of Gympie was to be Prime Minister; Thomas Givens of Charters Towers and Cairns became President of the Senate. Mining men are to be found both among the leaders of the party line and among the break-away group of individualists. And other less prominent goldfields representatives took a not unimportant part in Labour politics.

Yet it becomes impossible to single out individuals as shapers of policy. Especially after the question of discipline had been settled and the more individualistic had broken away from the main body, one sees the Labour men less as separate personalities or even as goldfields representatives than as members of a party. Their first loyalties were clearly to Labour; only where it did not dictate a line, as over Separation and Federation, or questions of local needs, does one see them acting as representatives of an industry, a region or a single field. In general Labour issues they did, of course, speak for the particular interests of Labour in their own industry or area. As a generalization it can be said that with the advent of Labour in politics the role of the goldfields politician becomes identified with and submerged in the role of Labour as a whole; he is not necessarily the most militant or the most influential in shaping that role, but he is certainly one of its most solid supporters.

It is certainly possible to argue, with Blainey, that many miners were made conservative in their attitudes to unionism, or even lukewarm towards any Labour organization at all, by their investments in the industry, or by other less tangible influences. The fluctuating union membership; the extent of dubiousness about proposed federation, first of mining unions and then of all unions; hostility towards the centralization of authority in the federations, once established, and towards the discipline that authority imposed; the criticisms of socialism; the diehard allegiance of many to industrial, as opposed to political, action — all these factors do contribute to the case for conservatism. But while admitting the existence of a large conservative element, the case seems even stronger for the view of the goldfields as strong centres of Labour organization and “advanced” thinking. This was certainly the contemporary opinion, which in itself is surely significant. One weekly newspaper commented in 1896: “if the Labour party loses its hold on the mining constituencies, then it will be indeed forlorn”, and the statement was an accurate one. Certainly, two important fields — Mount Morgan under company control, and Gympie, the oldest large field — were described, respectively, as too intimidated or too “fossilized” to support really advanced unionism. But at the other extreme stood Charters Towers, at one stage leading Australia in the establishment of a combined workers’ union, and throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century an unquestioned Labour stronghold. Between the two extremes the

---

90 He had been, for example, the first president of the A.L.F.
91 For further elaboration of this point, see J. Stoodley, “The Queensland Gold-miner in the Late Nineteenth Century” (unpublished M.A. thesis, Qld.).
92 Rockhampton Capricornian, 4 April 1896, p. 17.
lesser fields approached much closer to the Charters Towers position, though they might not rival either its strength or its radicalism.

A survey of Queensland gold-mining unionism indicates that the fields as a whole followed a reasonably rapid path to New Unionism and even towards a form of socialism; supports their contemporary reputation as major props of the Queensland Labour movement; and suggests that they not only kept pace with that movement but occasionally shouldered it ahead of its southern counterparts. It is hardly a picture of conservatism.
Patronage and the
New South Wales Public Service:
the 1894 Royal Commission

On 23 December 1895, “one of the most momentous measures that could be placed on the statute-book”¹ was assented to and became an act designed to co-ordinate administration in New South Wales under one agency, the Public Service Board, and to abolish patronage of ministers and of higher officials. Admissions to the service were to be strictly regulated, promotion was to be by merit, and the service was to be economically and efficiently managed.

Because of its importance the Public Service Act of 1895 has tended to become the starting point for many studies of administration in New South Wales, and the findings of the royal commission of 1894, from which the act stemmed, have been taken largely at face value. This has given rise to some false impressions about administration in New South Wales before 1895, for the issues raised by the commissioners were not clear-cut. It may be, too, that defects were over-emphasized so as to make it more likely that suggested reforms would be adopted.

By now it is hard to say with certainty whether defects were exaggerated. Contemporary newspaper reaction suggests that the commission’s report did assess conditions accurately. Is this sufficient, however? No Australian newspaper is, or has been, politically impartial. Editorial policies distort attempts to appraise public attitudes. Moreover, the public service has always been subjected to newspaper attacks and it is unlikely that the conclusions of the royal commissioners would have been analyzed critically.

This article will suggest that the commissioners held preconceived ideas, and overstated the evils of prevailing recruiting methods. Patronage produced many able public servants and the administration of the day was by no means uniformly bad, as might be inferred from the commissioners’ strictures. Defects that did exist are substantially explainable in terms other than the system of recruitment.

On the face of it, the investigation of the service was thorough. The commission met 73 times over a period of 4½ months. All permanent heads of departments were examined, together with a number of other officers and some private

¹ W. M. Hughes, *New South Wales Parliamentary Debates* (1895), LXXX, 1887.
individuals. Witnesses were questioned at length, and the commissioners personally inspected several offices. In addition, much supplementary information on administrative practices in Australia and overseas was collected.

Convinced of "the urgent need for reform", the commissioners asserted that the popular belief that the service was overmanned and overpaid was "not without foundation"; many officials were incompetent; procedures were antiquated; business was not handled economically or rapidly; and favouritism made the service a haven for relatives and friends of political adherents. Moreover, promotion by seniority had placed many officers in positions for which they were unsuited. Coupled with the lack of an adequate classification system, this had created serious anomalies in the salaries applying in the various departments and even within the same office. Duplication of work was common, while an elaborate system of recording documents — often useless — was maintained.

Some of these conclusions were valid. Others, however, seem to have been unsoundly based, sometimes contradictory, and to reveal misconceptions about the nature of public administration.

Background to the Commission's Appointment

Prevailing social conditions had an important bearing on the decision to launch an inquiry into the state of the New South Wales public service and, indeed, on the findings of the commissioners.

Briefly, the background to the commission's activities is provided by the financial depression of the time. Preceding this depression had been a period of free public spending, with the colonies competing for developmental funds. From 1875, with an easing of conditions under which loans could be negotiated, few limits were set on borrowing. Revenue was also buoyant and a "vigorous policy of public works" became the order of the day. Coghlan asserts that all caution was abandoned and many authorized projects were indefensible in terms of either existing requirements or future utility:

There was, in fact, a scramble amongst the parliamentary representatives of country constituencies for as much local expenditure as they could procure for their individual districts. In New South Wales, railways of an expensive character were constructed entirely without regard to any consideration other than satisfying the clamour of the parliamentary representatives of the districts served; while smaller works like roads, wharves, bridges and buildings were also constructed with no more legitimate object.\(^2\)

Contemporary comment supports this assessment. As early as 1876, for instance, it was claimed that "public money is voted, not so much because it is grievously needed, but because it is earnestly desired".\(^3\) The extent of political


\(^3\) *The Athenaeum*, 1 January 1876, p. 2.
influence in determining the programme of public works was also emphasized by various witnesses at the royal commission of 1894.\(^4\)

Although expenditure continued at a high rate until about 1890, signs of economic difficulties appeared well before this. Demand for labour began to decline early in 1885 and unemployment soon presented a serious problem. During 1886 several demonstrations occurred and the Colonial Secretary twice met deputations from the growing number of unemployed. Temporary relief works were established and the government undertook to commence more public works; but these measures did not check the drift, and over the next few years the situation continued to deteriorate. Falling wage rates aggravated the position, until eventually the trend led to the severe industrial disputes of the early 1890's.

The story of these industrial upheavals, and the "bank smashes" of 1893, needs no recapitulation. An idea of the magnitude of the crisis is given by an extract from a contemporary periodical:\(^5\)

A line of great banks, all earning enormous profits, rich in deposits, ... have gone down one after another. ... Here is the diary of disaster for a little over five weeks, omitting minor casualties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank</th>
<th>Suspended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Bank</td>
<td>5 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English, Scottish &amp; Australian Chartered Bank</td>
<td>10 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Joint Stock Bank</td>
<td>21 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Chartered Bank</td>
<td>1 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Bank (Melbourne)</td>
<td>6 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of Victoria</td>
<td>10 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland National Bank</td>
<td>15 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of North Queensland Ltd.</td>
<td>15 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Banking Company (Sydney)</td>
<td>15 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Melbourne Bank</td>
<td>18 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Bank of Queensland</td>
<td>18 May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All states were seriously affected. The stoppage of the Queensland National Bank caused severe repercussions as that bank was intimately bound up with the political life of the colony. In Sydney the disaster to the Commercial Banking Company was very serious, as its capital was wholly Australian, and more than £10 million of its deposits of £11 ½ million were Australasian.

For our purposes the important thing to note is that the depression's severity was greater than had been experienced previously and by 1894 workers throughout New South Wales were facing substantial wage reductions, irregular employment, or actual unemployment. Moreover, there seemed little prospect of improvement as private employers were reducing expenditure in the face

\(^4\) See, for instance, evidence of the Under Secretary for Public Works and a field officer of that department, that many unnecessary public works were put in hand because of "political pressure". *Minutes of Evidence of the Report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into the Civil Service, New South Wales Votes and Proceedings, 1894-95, II, Qs 6069-73 and 8135-39 (hereafter Minutes of Evidence).*

of pressure from financial institutions for repayment of advances made before the crisis.

Stringent living conditions inevitably drew attention to the comparatively sheltered position of public servants and there developed a general demand for economy in public expenditure as a remedy for the ills of the depression. Public service salaries were reduced by 10 per cent and considerable retrenchment was effected. These moves appear to have been supported by public opinion. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it, "... there has been a general approval of retrenchment in the Public Service, and the steps that have been taken ... have been regarded not with satisfaction, but as a painful necessity".6

The need for economy and reform of the service was continually stressed in the newspapers of the day and in parliament — so much so that the Premier could remark without denial, "we are all retrenchers now".7

In October 1894, Mr. Rose, M.L.A., proposed in a resolution that no further taxation be tolerated until an effort had been made to deal with the "extravagant expenditure existing through all branches of the Civil Service". He also suggested that the administrative functions of ministers should be handed over to an independent Civil Service Board with power to reconstruct the service.8 This resolution was withdrawn only after the Premier had given an assurance that there would be no further recruitment until an exhaustive inquiry had been conducted. Subsequently it was announced that a royal commission would be appointed and that no minister would be a member of such commission. This decision seems to have been inspired by the unsatisfactory nature of an earlier inquiry in 1887, referred to by the Premier as a "lamentable failure", and by the desire to ensure that the commission would "command general confidence".9

The investigation, then, was instituted in an atmosphere hostile to the service, and, as Parker has indicated, "chiefly in response to demand for public economy".10 Indeed, public service reform may be regarded as merely one of a series of measures of the Reid government to secure, along the lines of current economic thinking, economy in public spending and a balanced budget.

**Attitude of the Commissioners**

The royal commissioners were Messrs. T. Littlejohn (president), J. Robertson, J. H. Storey, R. Teece and the Honourable F. T. Humphery, M.L.C. Of these, Littlejohn, Storey and Humphery were prominent businessmen and company directors;11 Robertson was a leading Sydney accountant; while Teece,

---

6 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 February 1894, p. 4 (hereafter *SMH*).
7 Sir George Dibbs, *Financial Statement* (1893), p. 16. Many other illustrations of this attitude can be found in the parliamentary debates of the time.
8 *SMH*, 18 October 1894, p. 4.
11 Littlejohn had served as commercial representative on the Civil Service Board from 1886 to 1890 and acted as chairman in 1890.
general manager of the AMP Society, fellow of the Senate of the University of Sydney, the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, and the Statistical Society was internationally known as an actuary. He had previously investigated the Civil Service Superannuation Fund and had severely criticized its management.

All the commissioners thus had commercial interests—a factor which considerably affected their approach to the investigation of the service. Throughout the proceedings they attempted to relate public service practices, conditions, and salaries to those in commercial establishments. This, of course, is not surprising when we remember that by 1894 public authorities in New South Wales (including the transport undertakings, police, and armed services) employed over 39,000 at an annual cost in salaries and wages alone of more than £4,345,000. Naturally businessmen were keenly interested in how the service was conducted, for the numbers employed, their conditions, and rates of pay, had considerable effect on the private sector of the economy.

Even a cursory reading of the Minutes of Evidence shows how strongly the commissioners had been influenced by prevailing conditions and attitudes towards the public service. This is reflected throughout their examination of witnesses.

... seeing that the cost of living, house-rent, clothing and other things is so very much reduced, that the income of the Colony has suffered most severely with the bad times, and that every section of the community engaged in business is getting very little in spite of all the exertions it can employ, I think it is only reasonable that the officers in the service of the Government should share, along with their fellows, the infliction of some diminution of their income...

One feels, too, that many of the issues had been prejudged by the commissioners. The nature of questions to witnesses and the terms in which they were couched suggests that most of the public criticism of the service had been accepted by the commissioners before they began to hear evidence.

This impression is, of course, difficult to substantiate fully, and must remain largely a personal opinion. Nevertheless, there is some ground for believing that the commissioners held preconceived ideas. Consider the way "leading" questions were asked of witnesses:

Q.4581: With regard to appointments, instead of the present system do you think a Board of Commissioners, specially set apart and all experienced men, with at least one of their number practically acquainted with the Government Service, should be appointed to make all recommendations for appointments, dispensing altogether with Ministerial and political influence?

The only appointment we have had under our present Minister has been that of one probationer. Mr. Copeland only made, I think, two or three temporary officers permanent and the other appointments were only temporary ones.

12 Minutes of Evidence, Qs 1054, 1551, 1840-41, 3762-68, and 4092 to list only a few examples.
13 Ibid., Q 4575. Other similar comments by the commissioners could be quoted.
Q.4582: I was wanting your opinion.
I think it would be a good thing to take the matter out of the hands of Ministers generally.
Q.4583: And get rid of political influence?
Yes.

Other similar examples in the Minutes of Evidence reveal a definite tendency for the commissioners to lead evidence in the particular direction desired by them.¹⁴

One can see why the commissioners favoured substantial public service retrenchment and abolition of ministerial patronage. As stated, financial conditions were stringent and economy in public expenditure was being stressed. Quite apart from this, however, it appears that by 1894 ministers had become disillusioned about the desirability of possessing power over appointments to the public service.

That the exercise of patronage could bring in its train serious problems became evident fairly soon after responsible government. The way influence could be exerted in a parliament where members had no strong party allegiances was indicated by evidence of the Honourable John Robertson before a select committee of the Legislative Assembly which inquired into the civil service in 1872–73. Robertson recalled how an earlier government was pressed by four or five members of parliament to give an appointment to the father of one of their number. When the request was refused the members voted against the government in a close division and it lost office. Subsequently the requested appointment was made.¹⁵ Despite this evidence, however, Robertson, an influential figure, favoured recruitment by patronage. This attitude is understandable in a period of expanding governmental activity when it was comparatively easy to find positions for those who asked. Ten years later, however, the situation was changing and the Premier frankly stated that he would be glad to be relieved of the perpetual “dunning for billets” from unqualified persons who regarded the civil service as “a sort of benevolent institution”.¹⁶

By 1894 ministers were so harassed by office-seekers that they welcomed the criticisms of the royal commission, which gave them a chance to divest themselves of responsibility for appointments. My suggestion is, then, that the commissioners’ attitude towards patronage was partly conditioned by their knowledge of the feelings of ministers and of many members of parliament.

This is not to imply that the exercise of patronage held no attractions. Several members of parliament and some senior public servants supported recruitment by patronage,¹⁷ and it has been suggested that the Dibbs government, which preceded Reid’s, maintained itself in office largely by using public

¹⁴ See, for example, Qs 4638, 5098–5101, and 7827.
¹⁵ Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee of Inquiry into the Civil Service, New South Wales Votes and Proceedings, 1872–73, Qs 29–32.
service patronage and public works to conciliate local interests. On the other hand, there had been over the years strong criticism of the way patronage had been exercised and during the debate on the 1895 bill a number of members of parliament indicated their desire to be rid of the constant applications made to them for appointment to the service. In the words of one, a member had become “little better than a perambulating labour bureau”. On balance my impression is that by the 1890’s the majority of ministers and members felt that any likely political gain from patronage would be outweighed by criticism and other problems which inevitably arose.

**Recruitment by Patronage**

As McMartin has indicated, at least three broad categories are common in a system of recruitment by patronage. An applicant may make his own approach for employment, perhaps with support from connections possessing some influence; the recommendation may be made by a powerful political patron; or, if a man possesses special qualifications or ability he may be invited to accept an official appointment. The 1894 royal commissioners made no attempt to distinguish between these very different aspects of the working of the system, but merely condemned generally, and without definition, “patronage”.

The patronage of the governors and home authorities before responsible government was not exercised capriciously. Instructions issued from time to time by the Colonial Office show that the need to appoint only the most efficient to public office was appreciated. In 1847, for instance, Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, instructed colonial governors in the following terms:

In the distribution of patronage... great weight must always be attached to local services and experience. Each Governor will therefore make once in each year a confidential report of the claims of candidates, whether already employed in the Public Service or not... in order that when a vacancy or an opportunity for promotion occurs, the Secretary of State may have before him the means of judging how far the particular candidate recommended by the Governor is on the whole the best qualified, and whether a candidate of proper qualifications is to be found in the Colony or in any adjacent Colony.

A substantial part of the Colonial Office's contribution to the overall develop-

---

18 T. A. Coghlan, *op. cit.*, IV, 1947. As he was appointed by Reid to the first Public Service Board Coghlan's views may be biased.
19 The *Bulletin* was a particularly outspoken critic. See 15 April 1882, p. 2; 7 October 1882, p. 2; 3 December 1887, p. 5; and 27 February 1892, p. 7 for some examples.
ment of New South Wales was its wise choice of administrators — many of whom would compare more than favourably with most later public servants entering under the competitive system.

Before 1856 applicants for admission to the public service were examined in such subjects as writing, arithmetic, and spelling, but this was discontinued after responsible government and a test examination was not reintroduced until 1871.

This latter examination covered reading, writing from dictation, rudiments of grammar, elementary arithmetic, geography, and the outlines of English history since the conquest. On the face of it this imposed some restriction on the exercise of patronage, at least so far as permanent appointment was concerned. However, the secretary of the Council of Education stated in 1872 that the test was of an “exceedingly low” standard and “practically of very little value”. Moreover, the examination does not seem to have applied in all departments; the Auditor-General, for instance, gave evidence that in his office appointments rested unconditionally with the Colonial Secretary, with no restrictions as to age, health, or character of applicants, and with no examinations.

Witnesses at the 1872 inquiry differed considerably about the need for an entrance examination and about whether any such examination should be competitive. The committee itself favoured a regulating act to correct defects in the management of the service, and a majority of committee members supported a qualifying examination for admission to the service. A strong minority favoured a competitive entrance examination. However, for a number of reasons which cannot be discussed here, no action was taken to implement the suggestions for administrative reform.

Throughout the service at this time large numbers of temporary officers or officials surplus to establishment were employed, and men were apparently prepared to work for long periods without remuneration in the hope of being appointed to a permanent post. There was, however, no procedural uniformity in the way permanent appointment was obtained. Some departments held either test or competitive examinations. Others relied on “seniority” alone. Some even conducted a poll amongst officers in charge of subordinate divisions, the temporary official receiving the most votes being regarded as the most worthy of permanent appointment.

---

22 P. Loveday, “Patronage and Politics in New South Wales, 1856-1870”, Public Administration, XVIII (December 1959), No. 4, 342. Loveday’s information comes from the uncatalogued Windeyer MSS. in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

23 Ibid., Qs 10-16.

24 Minutes and Evidence of the Select Committee of Inquiry into the Civil Service, 1872-73, Q 136.

25 Anthony Trollope appeared and was one who strongly opposed competitive examinations (see Q 604).

26 See for instance, the evidence of the Auditor-General before the 1872 inquiry that two appointees as junior clerks had previously worked for “one, two or more years without pay, in the hope of getting on the staff” (Q 14).

Provision for a qualifying entrance examination was made in the Civil Service Act of 1884, one of the duties of the newly created Civil Service Board being to arrange for the examination of candidates for probationary entrance to the service, and to maintain records so that ministers could select qualified applicants when required.

With the assistance of the University of Sydney, qualifying examinations were conducted regularly and successful candidates were registered for employment as probationers. Registration did not mean, however, that probationary appointment would follow automatically — or that selection would be in order of merit. A minister could choose any qualified applicant for appointment as a probationer, and unless a successful examinee could command some influence it was quite possible that he would never be selected. In 1886, for example, of 63 successful candidates only 33 gained entrance to the service, and by 1894 there were some 200 registered applicants from whom ministers could choose. It appears, moreover, that a good deal of influence was needed by the temporary officer seeking permanent appointment. This was stated time and time again during the debate on the 1895 bill, and was not once denied.

The 1884 act did make possession of the junior university certificate or its equivalent a necessary qualification for permanent appointment, but this could be evaded since Section 28 permitted that, where “deemed expedient” by a minister, persons not already in the service might be appointed without either examination or probation. The use made of this “loophole” was perhaps not as great as suggested by some of the evidence given before the 1894 royal commission. Examination of returns made by departments in terms of the act reveals that between 1889 and 1893 only 54 appointments were made under Section 28. In any event, however, stipulation of an educational standard for permanency left untouched the problems arising from employment of large numbers of temporary officials.

Under Section 31 ministers could make temporary appointments without reference to the Civil Service Board. It is true that the act provided that temporary employment should cease after two years, but this stipulation proved to be a dead letter from beginning to end.

Evidence taken by the 1894 royal commission points to the significance of Section 31 as an avenue for the continued exercise of ministerial patronage. A. C. Fraser, Under Secretary of Justice and chairman of the Civil Service Board admitted that the 1884 act had failed to achieve its purpose of “excluding Ministerial and Political influence with regard to appointments and promotions”, pointing out that ministers had unlimited power to recruit temporary officers and could overrule the board’s recommendations regarding appointments and promotions. With appointment of probationers in the hands of ministers, said

---

30 Minutes of Evidence, Q 2944.
31 In addition, s. 7 exempted the Commissioner for Railways from all the provisions of the act relating to examinations, promotions, classification, and salaries. Departmental returns indicate that between 1887 and 1893 the commissioner made 1,878 appointments.
Fraser, “virtually the majority of officers are in the first instance not appointed to the Service by the Board or by the Governor or Executive Council, but independently of the Board and are selected and appointed by the Ministers themselves”.32

Similar evidence was given by Joseph Barling, Under Secretary for Public Works, and subsequently a member of the 1895 Public Service Board, who asserted that ministers could evade the spirit of the act when recruiting probationers by claiming that such officers were on the temporary staff, “and the Civil Service Board knows nothing about it beyond what it learns from the returns sent in every year according to the Act”.33

By an order of the Legislative Assembly of 17 June 1886, departments were required to furnish returns showing the number of temporary appointments made over which the Civil Service Board had no control. These returns indicate that in less than 18 months some 237 temporary appointments were made at salaries ranging up to £550 per annum. From 1887 to 1893 no less than 1,544 temporary officers were appointed under Section 31, and on several occasions the Civil Service Board emphasized that this allowed the objects and spirit of the 1884 act to be circumvented. In 1890, for instance, the board reported that its powers were too limited to allow proper regulation of appointments and stated that Sections 28 and 31 had been utilized by ministers “to the disadvantage and discouragement of competent officers within the Service”. It was further emphasized that appointment of temporary clerks was not subject to sufficient check, as the services of those engaged to undertake work of an urgent nature were seldom terminated when the emergency had passed.35

The effect of the employment of temporary officers is evident from the following figures extracted from appendix E of the 1894 royal commission report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive &amp; Legislative</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Royal Mint</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Secretary</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>1777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>1188</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>1602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lands</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>3811</td>
<td>4901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>1487</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4831</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines &amp; Agriculture</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMG...</td>
<td>3175</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>4982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                         | 14291      | 7072      | 21363  |

32 Minutes of Evidence, Q 2941.
33 Ibid., Q 6020.
In the next year, 1891, in discussing the appointment under Section 31 of
376 persons, the board pointed out that it was unable to ascertain whether those
appointed possessed any special aptitude or training. While probationers
might be required to give evidence that they had reached a particular educational
standard, and to comply with age and salary limitations, the temporary clerk
had “to furnish no proof of educational attainments, may be appointed at any
age, and his salary may be any amount the Minister may approve”.36

Haphazard recruitment of large numbers of temporary officials had one
serious result — it necessitated periodical retrenchment and salary reductions
if administrative costs were not to become completely prohibitive. As early as
1880 there were complaints about the arbitrary nature of this process,37 but
it was not until 1887, with the compulsory retirement of 38 officers, that what
the Bulletin called the “retrenchment disease” really got under way. In the
following year only 8 were retired, but in 1889 there were 80, while over the
next four years about 150 were given pensions. In addition, approximately 200
were dismissed and paid gratuities totalling some £40,000.38 Reference to the
need for retrenchment during this period occurs in various Premiers’ budget
speeches, but no general review appears to have been made. Reductions were
effected on a piecemeal basis rather than as part of an overall plan.

The absence of co-ordinated recruitment procedures made it hard to check
whether an overall reduction was, in fact, being effected, and lends an element
of truth to the Bulletin’s definition of retrenchment as “the art and mystery of
discharging a large, sensational batch of able-bodied officials . . . and then
appointing quietly, one by one, a crowd of personal friends and supporters in
their stead”.39

The effect on the superannuation fund also caused concern to public servants
of the day. As the 1894 royal commission report pointed out (p. 42) no steps
had been taken to improve the state of the fund, though investigations in 1887,
1890, and 1893 had revealed substantial and steadily rising deficiencies.
Indeed, by 1893 the liability for existing pensions was about £137,000 in excess
of the total fund, without allowing for pensions due later. By that time, too,
over half the pensions payable were being received by those prematurely retired
for retrenchment purposes. This was clearly unfair to contributors since it was
likely that relief would be sought in reduction of future pension rates.

Officials’ anxiety about the superannuation fund is apparent from the dis­
cussion centring on the 1895 Public Service Bill. To enable public servants to
comment on its provisions the Premier delayed the third reading and a meeting
was called to discuss the matter. This meeting, chaired by the Under Secretary
for Finance and Trade, and attended by between 600 and 700 public servants,
displayed surprisingly little opposition to the general proposals for reorganizing

36 Ibid. (1891), p. 2.
39 Ibid.
the service. The meeting’s main concern was that probable retrenchment following the creation of a Public Service Board would further deplete the superannuation fund. Resolutions passed aimed mainly at easing the situation for individuals likely to be affected. Editorial comment commended the officers’ views and referred to the temperate and reasonable way the matter had been considered. In fact, the resolutions were largely irrelevant, since the bill did not deal with the question of the superannuation fund.

Official Patronage

It should not be assumed that the expansion of the New South Wales public service following responsible government was due entirely to ministerial appointment of temporary officers. The patronage exercised by senior officials was almost as substantial as that of ministers — a factor which does not appear to have been given due recognition.

Taking 1894 as a sample year we find that, excluding teachers, members of the military forces, transport, and post office employees, the strength of the service was 11,583, and these had been appointed in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointed by</th>
<th>No. of officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor and Executive Council</td>
<td>3106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President, Legislative Council and Speaker,</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lords Commissioners of H.M. Treasury</td>
<td>48 (Branch Royal Mint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Public Servants</td>
<td>5350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers of the Crown</td>
<td>3034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures speak for themselves. Of these civil servants no less than 46 per cent owed their appointments to senior officials.

Moreover, even where final authority for appointment rested with the minister, or the executive council on his advice, the permanent head of the department often controlled or strongly influenced the actual selection. Several witnesses testified to this effect before the royal commission of 1894, indicating that they were always consulted and that an appointment which they opposed was unlikely to be made.

---

40 SMH, 28 October 1895, p. 5.
41 Ibid., p. 4.
42 These figures were obtained by dissection of the Civil Service List for 1894.
43 Minutes of Evidence, Qs 26–27, 281, 790–91, 1805–6, and 1175. The extent of a permanent head’s influence, however, may well have depended on his relations with the minister, and several other witnesses did testify that appointments had been made in the face of their objections. Perhaps the Under Secretary, Department of Mines, adequately summed up the situation when he said (Q 4894): "... my experience has been that, with a very few exceptions, the Minister takes the recommendations of the head of the department if he has confidence in him".
As Loveday has pointed out, the relationship between ministers and their permanent departmental heads represented one check on the indiscriminate use of patronage and we may agree that before making an appointment for political gain a minister would have to consider seriously the views of the permanent head who was, after all, responsible for the efficient running of the department.

**Patronage and Promotion**

It is difficult to assess how far influence entered into the question of promotion. Witnesses at various inquiries held after responsible government tended to refer to both appointments and promotions when discussing the effects of patronage. Newspaper comments from time to time also inferred that patronage was an important, if not the dominant, element in promotion. On the other hand, examination of parliamentary debates and evidence given before the 1894 commission gives the impression that seniority was by far the most important factor in determining promotions.

In their report the commissioners claimed that over-reliance on seniority had often resulted in officers gaining positions for which they were quite unsuited. Coupled with the lack of a satisfactory system of classification it had also given rise to serious anomalies in the salaries payable throughout the service and within individual departments.

There is evidence to support this contention. Seniority did play a large part in determining an officer’s salary and position, for it was common for salary to be raised as service increased, irrespective of work value. Some officers earned more than their superiors, either because of longer service, or because a man was “sometimes allowed to carry his salary with him to another Branch who was not found equal to the position he previously occupied”.

In discussing the 1895 bill the Premier described the promotion system as being based on the “fetish of seniority”, claiming that promotions were determined “mechanically, without the slightest effort to discriminate individual cases”. Other members commented similarly and pointed to the adverse effects of reliance on seniority and of the practice of filling vacancies from within the particular department.

This does not mean that the minister played no part in the promotion process. His was the final say:

44 Loveday, op. cit., p. 246.
45 E.g., Bulletin of 3 December 1887, p. 5, which referred to the number of “well-connected loafers of every degree” who had received unmerited appointment to the civil service and who were monopolizing the promotion in every department.
46 Minutes of Evidence, Q 3827. See also Q 5767.
47 New South Wales Parliamentary Debates, LXXX, 1575.
48 See for instance, the second reading speech of the Hon. J. H. Want, New South Wales Parliamentary Debates, LXXX, 2548.
... supposing promotion is recommended by the head of the department, if the Board disagrees with his recommendation it can only report in favour of some other officer whom it may think more entitled to the position. The papers then go back to the Minister who can select whom ever he chooses, so that virtually in the case of a Minister disagreeing with the opinion of the Board he has the power of making the appointment independently of the Board altogether.49

In general, the Civil Service Board was powerless against a determined minister. Moreover, it was relatively easy, and common, for departments to withhold essential information so that it was impossible in many cases for the board to make considered recommendations.50 There are indications of frustration in almost every annual report of the board. In 1886, for instance, in examining the appointments, promotions and transfers notified by departments, the board found it necessary in two cases "to give emphatic dissent from the recommendations submitted to us, and finally to invite the attention of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, as the administrator of the Act, to what we considered the improper preference shown to ineligible officers".51 In both instances, however, the minister overruled the board’s submissions.

Examination of contemporary sources, then, gives two conflicting impressions. On the one hand is pictured a service in which patronage is the decisive factor in both appointments and promotions. On the other is the insistence by numerous politicians and witnesses at various inquiries that promotions were determined solely by seniority.

The actual position probably lay between these two extremes. As Loveday has indicated, a minister would always have to balance possible political advantage against the claims of officers of his department and the fall in morale and efficiency inevitably following promotions or appointments made for political purposes.52 We may perhaps conclude that for the bulk of the service seniority was the ruling factor in promotions, but that there were sufficient politically inspired promotions to cause considerable dissatisfaction.

Lack of Unity

Despite contemporary emphasis on the effects of ministerial patronage it seems that the main defects of the service stemmed from its lack of unity of purpose. Co-ordination of activities was what was most needed to strengthen administration.

Limited space prevents detailed examination of why the Civil Service Board set up in 1884 failed as a controlling and co-ordinating agency. The board was handicapped by defects in the 1884 act, while by an amendment of 1886

49 A. C. Fraser, Under Secretary of Justice and Chairman of the Civil Service Board, *Minutes of Evidence*, Q 2941.
power to classify the service was taken from it. With restricted jurisdiction, no real independence and functioning only on a part-time basis, the Civil Service Board could not develop an integrated system of administration, and the service continued to function virtually as a collection of independent organizations. In the Premier's words, the departments had been "practically run as if they were separate civil services".53

Overlapping of services was common. The Department of Education, for instance, possessed a separate Architecture Branch, although the government architect could have performed the work at far less cost. Surveying and other work was duplicated by the Lands and Mines Departments; while even within a department the head office and the local branches would carry out many identical functions, nullifying much of the advantage of decentralized administration. Conditional purchase records, an important aspect of land administration, were not only maintained locally, but also, in identical form, by the head office, the Treasury, and the Auditor-General.

For individual public servants an unsatisfactory feature was the lack of uniformity in employment conditions. Difficulties arising from the considerable differences existing between departments in commencing rates and qualifications can be readily visualized. As indicated earlier, entrance qualifications varied widely. Some departments regarded the School Board's fifth class examination as sufficient. Others required a pass in the civil service examination. For professional positions the departmental head decided whether or not an examination would be held, and the standards of such examinations as were conducted appear to have been adjusted according to the supply of candidates. Moreover, as one public servant pointed out, there was "scarcely a department . . . wherein there is a single printed rule by which persons entering the Service may be guided".54

This point is emphasized by evidence given before a commission appointed in 1879 to inquire into the Lands and Survey Departments. Although hours of duty were ostensibly from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., officers could report at any time up to 10 A.M. without reprimand. Even regular lateness over an extended period evoked little comment and absence from duty during working hours was common.55 No uniformity existed in even such a minor matter as recreation leave. Normally this consisted of three weeks a year, but some officers were granted four weeks, apparently at the discretion of the head of the section or branch. Nor was any record kept of absences from duty for short periods, or of sick leave taken.56

The situation made it difficult to attract the best ability in the community. The uncertainties of official life were too great — uncertainty as to the subjects and standards of entrance examinations; uncertainty as to the salary to be

54 W. Currie, Survey Department, in a letter to the editor of the Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 27 March 1880, p. 6.
55 1879 Inquiry, Minutes of Evidence, Qs 37–53.
56 Ibid., Qs 202–12.
received in the event of appointment; uncertainty as to prospects of advancement. The need for a suitable regulating act and a powerful controlling authority was clear — and had been clear for many years prior to the inquiry of 1894.57

Forty years earlier Trevelyan and Northcote had argued that the "fragmentary character" of the British Civil Service had operated "to cramp the energy of the whole body, to encourage the growth of narrow views and departmental prejudices, to limit the acquisition of experience, and to repress and almost extinguish the spirit of emulation and competition..."58 This was precisely the situation in New South Wales and was the main barrier to any substantial improvement in administration.

Under capable senior officials most departments functioned reasonably efficiently, as individual units. Here we have the key to the main administrative difficulties which had arisen — and which may, paradoxically, have been increased by the high calibre of many top administrators. Not only was coordination lacking, but inter-departmental rivalry militated against moves for a concerted attack on the problems facing administration. A loosely knit public service had been satisfactory when public business was small in volume and uncomplicated. With population growth and entry of government into more spheres of activity such a service could not handle adequately its tasks.

Some Early Administrators

One cannot but be impressed by the number of senior officials associated with the development of cultural, educational and scientific bodies in the community. This, while not proof of administrative ability, is at least indicative of the type of men then appointed to responsible positions in the civil service.

Much could be written about some of the "pioneers" of New South Wales administration; of men such as Alexander Macleay who, despite the calls of his official position, greatly encouraged scientific activities throughout the colony and was himself prominent as a fellow of the Royal and Linnaean Societies; of his successor as Colonial Secretary, Edward Deas-Thomson, and Francis Merewether, the Auditor-General, both of whom were closely associated with the early development of the University of Sydney;59 or of William Wilkins who first as headmaster of the Fort Street School for trainee teachers and later as Secretary of the Council for Education and Under Secretary of

59 Merewether became Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1854 and Chancellor two years later, while Deas-Thomson was a member of the University Senate from its inception in 1852 and served as Vice-Chancellor from 1862 and Chancellor 1865–78.
the Department of Education sponsored many educational innovations and did much to raise the educational standards of the colony and the status of teachers. These are, however, examples of officials occupying senior posts before responsible government. We must confine ourselves to some instances of public servants who rose to prominence after 1856.

One such was William Houston who became a cadet surveyor in 1863. Showing early promise, Houston rose rapidly in the Lands Department. In 1878 he remodelled the numerous branches of the department in a way that provided the basis for later decentralization of administration following the Crown Lands Act of 1884. As inspector of Local Land Boards and Crown Land Offices in 1885 Houston implemented the new act’s provisions insofar as they related to pastoral runs. His thoroughness marked him as one of the state’s most capable administrators, the important project being carried out with remarkable smoothness. Promoted to chief inspector in 1886 Houston was a member of a commission of inquiry into land administration, which effected savings estimated at over £73,000. A further annual saving of some £30,000 followed his reorganization of the country offices in 1887. Three years later Houston became Under Secretary for Lands, a position which he held for ten years, during which time he also served for two terms as a member of the Civil Service Board. An official of Houston’s calibre would compare favourably with most present-day administrators.

Another well-known official was Frederick Bridges, one of the first seven inspectors of schools appointed under the Public Instruction Act of 1880. Previously Bridges had been headmaster of the Fort Street Model School, where he had effectively continued the work commenced by Wilkins. Bridges is perhaps best remembered for his development of technical education. This had had its inception in New South Wales in 1865, but its growth had been slow, despite the formation of a Board of Technical Education in 1883. This board was dissolved in 1889 and technical education was brought directly under ministerial control, with Bridges as first superintendent of the new Technical Education Branch.

Under his leadership technical education flourished, the Sydney Technical College and the Technological Museum being quickly completed and brought into use. Bridges’ flair for organization was marked, and technical training was soon an integral part of the system of education of the day. Many of Bridges’ ideas and methods were also reflected in the later organization of the Department of Education, of which he was permanent head from 1895 until his death in 1904.

An interesting example of patronage is the case of the Honourable Geoffrey Eagar, Under Secretary for Finance and Trade from 1872 to 1891. Eagar, born in Sydney in 1818, did not enter public life until 1859, when he was appointed to the Legislative Council. Subsequently elected to the Legislative Assembly he held at various periods the portfolios of Colonial Treasurer and Minister for Public Works, before resigning from parliament in 1868. Later, in February 1872, Eagar was appointed as Under Secretary for Finance and Trade where
his ability soon became evident. Indeed, he quickly established himself as the leading official of the day, his influence extending throughout the public service, by virtue of both his Treasury position and his appointment as first chairman of the Civil Service Board. At his death in 1891 Eagar was occupying this latter office for a second time.

The careers of the two public servants appointed in 1895 to the new Public Service Board are also of interest. Joseph Barling, ISO, AMICE, was fifty-six years of age, thirty-six of which had been spent in government employment. He had served in the Audit Office; had been chief clerk and then accountant of the Harbours and Rivers Branch; accountant of the Department of Railways; chief clerk and, from 1888, under secretary of the Department of Public Works. Contemporary sources emphasize his “clear-headedness” and “enthusiastic love of work”, and his bearing before the royal commission of 1894 suggests that he possessed considerable character and personality.

The youngest appointee, Timothy Coghlan, was the most interesting figure on the board. Born in 1855, Coghlan entered the service in 1870, serving first in the Education Department and later in the Harbours and Rivers Branch. Like Barling he qualified as a civil engineer, but in 1886 became the first government statistician. The establishment of a Statistical Bureau and Coghlan’s appointment by Dibbs caused a stir, since Coghlan was so young and had “no political pull or influence except his own ability, force of character, and special self-acquired knowledge”. Coghlan displayed great energy in seeking records and collecting statistics, and within a short space of time had prepared a statistical register of the trade, commerce, resources, etc., of New South Wales; had written a concise and useful history of Australia, and had published an excellent manual of the affairs of the “Seven Colonies of Australasia”. In addition, his Wealth and Progress of N.S.W., designed to comment on and illuminate the tables in the Statistical Register, set the pattern for later Commonwealth and State Year Books.

---

60 For a tribute by a contemporary to Eagar’s capacity as an under secretary see the Minutes of Evidence, Q 4318.
61 Quite a few New South Wales public servants have subsequently entered parliament and risen to cabinet rank, but as far as I am aware only two other men, apart from Eagar, have been officers of a department of which they have also been the political head. In both cases the Treasury was the department concerned. One example, Sir Bertram Stevens, is obvious. The other was Sir George Reid who was a member of the public service from 1864 and correspondence clerk and acting accountant of the Treasury from 1869 to 1878. Eagar’s is the only instance I know of in New South Wales where a ministerial career has preceded appointment as a permanent head.
62 The third member, Mr. G. H. Wilson, was from outside the service. At the time of this appointment he was Sydney manager of the Bank of New Zealand. This is an instance of the third type of patronage referred to in the article by McMartin which was mentioned earlier. Wilson was invited to accept appointment to the Public Service Board, and agreed only after several personal approaches had been made by the Premier. His acceptance involved a considerable drop in salary.
63 Lone Hand, 1 April 1911, p. 460.
64 In 1905 Coghlan left New South Wales to reorganize the Agent-General’s office in London.
Both Barling and Coghlan owed their advancement in the service to the exercise of patronage — in Barling’s case the turning point was his promotion by the Minister for Public Works to the position of chief clerk over the heads of senior men and against the recommendation of the Civil Service Board; in Coghlan’s case the Premier’s recognition of his ability was the vital factor.

There are only a few examples of the type of official who could come to the fore under the system of recruitment and promotion applying before 1895. Many others could be quoted. We might, for instance, enlarge on the work of Alexander Oliver, M.A., the parliamentary draftsman, who was one of the original seven students of the University of Sydney; or of Percy Williams, comptroller of the Government Savings Bank, founder of the New South Wales Ethnological Society, fellow of the Royal and Linnaean Societies, and author of numerous articles on natural science and literature; or of D.C. McLachlan, the first Commonwealth Public Service Commissioner, who was permanent head of the Department of Mines and Agriculture at the age of 42; but sufficient has been said to illustrate the ability of many of our early administrators.

As far as I can ascertain most departmental heads of this period were capable administrators who had made their way in the service after responsible government and under the system of patronage then prevailing.

This is not, of course, a conclusive argument for recruitment and promotion through patronage. While patronage may be appropriate for filling top posts or selecting potential senior administrators, it may also open the way for an influx of mediocre talent in the lower and middle ranges of the service.

Perhaps this is what did, in fact, happen in New South Wales. With increasing governmental responsibilities large scale recruitment was necessary and it became difficult to maintain the standard of the early appointees. Patronage could, and did, produce notable leaders; but changing circumstances required not only able senior officials, but also a large body of competent clerks.

One wonders whether open competitive entry may produce the opposite situation. That is to say, a recruitment system based on open competition may generate attitudes and conditions leading to the development of a service containing plenty of officials of fair average quality, but few with strong leadership powers. Speculation along these lines, however, would take us beyond the scope of this article and into fields touched on in papers presented at the second annual conference of the Australian regional groups of the Royal Institute of Public Administration.66

In any event, today’s personnel problems in New South Wales seem almost as
acute as in 1894. Most clerical officers enter at the school intermediate certificate level; and only relatively few acquire additional qualifications, other than the internal "grade examinations", which at best are only a negative indication of administrative potential. Open competition for entry has not substantially increased the supply of potential leaders. There is still only a comparative handful of clerical division officers who could be regarded as having the breadth of vision needed by senior administrators.

All of this is not to say that the system of recruitment and promotion was fully effective before 1894. What can be asserted, however, is that patronage was by no means as important a cause of administrative defects as the commissioners maintained.

The commissioners chose to direct their main attack on the system of recruitment and promotion, because this was the line of least resistance. The great achievement of the inquiry however, was not so much the abolition of patronage, as the creation of a central body able to co-ordinate administrative activities and build a public service out of a number of virtually independent departmental organizations. This could have been done, perhaps with beneficial results, without sweeping away patronage in its entirety.
In this paper it will be argued that local government has been part of an integrated system of administration of which the central government had the ultimate direction, and that the Queensland Government was therefore not acting improperly when it regulated and supervised the activities of metropolitan local authorities. While it will be demonstrated that the Government sometimes meddled in the affairs of the Brisbane Municipal Council between 1859 and 1879, and was disposed to weaken local self-government by re-allocating local functions to ad hoc authorities or state departments whenever the municipal bodies failed to exercise them acceptably, on the whole it was not guilty of undue interference with metropolitan government. However, it will be suggested that the ad hoc authorities were clear examples of what F. W. Eggleston has called "State Socialism", and that there seems to be no logical reason for excluding the ordinary municipal authorities from such a system, especially as it can be demonstrated that local authorities responded to the same indefinite notions of the crucial role of government in the achievement of national development that inspired the policies of the central government.

In common with all Queensland local authorities those of the metropolis were subordinate bodies exercising powers and functions delegated by the central government. They were, in fact, the conscious creation of the central authority, which in many cases had to force the establishment of local institutions. The structure of local government was largely determined by central decision: the size of areas, the nature of the electorates, the number of councillors, as well as their term of office, the character of internal organization, the duties, powers, functions, the revenue and expenditure, were for the most part laid down by statutes, and generally by public statutes. Herman Finer's definition of the distinguishing feature of British local government would apply equally well to the Queensland system:

... The British alternative is to permit the local authorities only to do what they are expressly given the power or duty to do. This is the method of the specific grant; what is specified may be done; beyond the specific grant local authorities are powerless ... ¹

The courts often determined the exact nature of the powers and duties (including their limitations) laid upon local authorities by statute. Not only did they decide, in specific cases brought before them, whether by-laws were valid or valuations just, but also whether some of the more ordinary activities of local bodies were within the powers granted by Parliament. Through these judgments the courts, as part of the central administration, exercised a restraining control over local authorities. Once again this was in consonance with general practice in British communities and not in any way peculiar to Queensland or to Australia.

The dependence upon specific grants of power lay at the root of the relationship between the central authority and the local governments of the city of Brisbane. Once again the nature of this relationship has been aptly defined by Finer:

... The interpretation is that local authorities and central government are part and parcel of one governmental system, and that their relationship is one of a partnership and collaboration in a single organism possessing one common ultimate purpose and an integrated system of institutions for that purpose...

The relationship between the two tiers of government in Queensland was seldom conceived as clearly as this by those participating at either level, and on occasion its true nature was scarcely recognized at all. There were reasons for the misunderstandings which arose. The local authorities were bound to approach all questions from the local viewpoint, whereas the Government had to fit them into a mosaic of national interests. Again, very human and personal problems arose when men accustomed to the exercise of authority in different spheres were brought into close contact. At a time when nineteenth century liberalism still exerted a strong influence, an emphasis upon local independence and local patriotism was only to be expected; it proved to be a discordant element in the local-central relationship, but it was by no means a purely negative factor. Finally, whilst councillors tended to resent central interference, Government members and officials too often exhibited a disposition to treat the local authorities as little more than instrumentalities of the state — as a huge unpaid Government department.

Conscious of their recent origin, the Government and Council tended to

2 For example, the Supreme Court ruled that the action of the Toowong Shire Council in decreasing the width of River Road was beyond its powers (Qld. Law Journal Reports, 1881–84, I, 170–73) and that since Parliament had not authorized the closure of the swing of Victoria Bridge, the Brisbane Council was bound to open the swing to shipping as required (Qld. Law Journal Reports, 1884–87, II, 73–80); during 1887 the same court compelled the Brisbane Council to close its manure depot at Kelvin Grove because it created a public nuisance (Mayoral Report to the Brisbane Municipal Council for 1887–88, p. 11); in 1906 it found that the Balmoral Shire Council had acted illegally by selling land to recover rates in arrears when the Shire Clerk had not issued rate notices as required by law (Qld. State Reports, 1906, Qld. Weekly Notes, No. 14). These examples could be multiplied to illustrate the point.

3 Finer, op. cit., p. 9.
regard each other with mutual suspicion and jealousy during the 1860's, when both sides lacked the confidence and maturity which come with age and experience. Aldermen believed that because Brisbane was the largest town and also the capital of the colony its municipal needs should receive special attention. The Government, however, was responsible to the colonists at large and was at times dominated by representatives of the pastoral interests and, on occasion, by those of Brisbane's rival, Ipswich. Consequently, it refused to countenance special treatment for Brisbane. This difference of approach was sufficient, when combined with personal animosities, to create a good deal of ill-feeling. There occurred unpleasant and petty incidents, such as the Government refusal to give the Council a proper part in proceedings connected with the arrival of a governor or the visit of Prince Alfred. But bad feeling was based on disputes involving more fundamental issues.

In many cases the Government seems to have consciously slighted or provoked the Council. On one occasion, the Government supported an Act empowering the Council to construct a bridge across the river and then tried surreptitiously to take the project out of Council hands. Similarly, the Council was allowed to carry its plans for a city water supply scheme to the point of execution before responsibility for its construction was transferred to a Government-appointed board. Land similar to that refused to the Council as a site for gas works on health grounds was later granted to the Gas Company for this purpose. Shortly afterwards a reserve held by the Council for public baths was granted to the Gas Company against Council wishes. In much the same way a portion of the end of Margaret Street was alienated to the Queensland Steam Navigation Company despite Council protests. Naturally the faults were not all on one side. The arrogance and ineptitude of the Council sometimes provoked the Government into making rash or ill-considered statements or adopting policies which smacked of discrimination and even of vindictiveness. It is not surprising, therefore, that relations between the two authorities should have been compared to border warfare.

Such asperity had died away before 1880; nevertheless, the feeling remained among local authority members, conscious of their inferior status, that local government should be fully recognized as a sphere of government in its own right. They held firmly to the belief that they should be allowed to function within the statutory framework laid down by Parliament with a minimum of Government interference. Encroachments on the local preserve were therefore resisted.7

4 There were numerous instances of disagreement over the status which the Council should enjoy at public functions, for example, the lack of official recognition given to the Council at the funeral of Governor Blackall, and the lengthy dispute over the arrangements to welcome the new Governor, the Marquis of Normanby.
5 For example, the Minister for Lands (Macalister) once referred to Brisbane aldermen as "cormorants, place-hunters, contractors looking out for contracts, loafers, etc." Brisbane Courier, 4 July 1871.
6 Letter to the editor signed "Spring Hill", ibid., 17 June 1864.
7 Minutes of Brisbane City Council (Brisbane), 1913-14, pp. 56-57, for the Council's vehement objections to Ministerial cancellation of an entertainment licence it granted during 1913.
Eventually a local authorities conference, convened on the initiative of the South Brisbane City Council in 1921, sought to regain many of the local functions which had been withdrawn by non-municipal legislation and regulations and to persuade the Government to rationalize all relationships between central and local authorities. Meanwhile, Mr. Tolmie had stressed one of the main sources of friction in Parliament during debate on the Health Acts Amendment Bill of 1917. In his view the resentment caused by the usurpation of the functions of local authorities was likely to be compounded by the delegation of the same functions to both central and local authorities.

Friction should not, however, be over-stressed. Partnership and collaboration were the more normal characteristics of the relationship, as is shown by the Government's readiness to consult local authorities whenever important municipal legislation was being prepared. Perhaps the most outstanding example of this kind is the Local Government Commission of 1896, but the Home Secretary's remarks to the Local Authorities Conference in 1923 also provide clear evidence of the extent to which the Government was prepared to accept the legislative suggestions of local authorities:

During the present session the Government propose to pass an amending Local Authorities Bill and an amending Health Bill. The Local Authorities Bill practically is comprised of amendments to the existing law asked for by this Association. It also will include an installment of town planning provisions, which also have been asked for by resolution of this Association...

Even though the Government refused to entertain suggestions of a separate charter for Brisbane until well after the turn of the century, it did secure a good deal of special legislation for the city.

At the administrative level Government departments sought and, for the most part, secured the cordial co-operation of the local authorities in matters of mutual concern, while the local authorities often appealed for advice and assistance from Government departments and usually obtained it. The Government was prepared, for instance, to plan and supervise and also to finance the first comprehensive drainage system for the city; it permitted the Government expert to advise the Council when the latter was planning to install an electricity scheme in 1897; again, on more than one occasion the Government made temporary loans to the South Brisbane Council to tide it over financial difficulties.

Co-operation was widely practised in many contexts, but it was in the field of public health that close collaboration was most evident.

---

8 Minutes of South Brisbane City Council, 1921–22, pp. 187 and 297.
10 For a comment on the sources of friction in England see Finer, op. cit., p. 8.
11 Local Government, 1922–23, p. 181. (Local Government is a journal devoted to news and comment about local government in Queensland.)
12 Ranging from the enabling Acts, under which the Victoria Bridge, waterworks, and Town Hall were built, to the Tramways Act (1882), Electric Lighting & Power Act (1896), City of Brisbane Enlargement Act (1902), Brisbane & S. Brisbane Loan Acts (1893, 1897 resp.), Brisbane & S. Brisbane City Improvement Acts (1916, 1924 resp.)
13 Minutes of South Brisbane City Council, IV, 429; 1905, p. 210; 1907, p. 29; 1910, pp. 54, 56.
Although the complexity of this relationship was increased to some extent by the spread of local government throughout the city and colony, it was largely determined by the extent of the powers granted to and exercised by the local bodies. During the years 1859 to 1879 metropolitan government, in so far as it may be said to have existed, was provided by the Brisbane Municipal Council. At first urban development was confined within the boundaries of the municipality, but the rapid growth of the city soon produced the familiar urban spread into adjacent rural areas. Nevertheless suburban local government did not develop until imposed by the central government in 1880. Naturally the multiplication of local authorities within the metropolitan area increased the number of central-local government contacts but as long as the functions and duties of the local authorities were relatively few and simple, the area of contact between local and central authorities was comparatively restricted and the relationship uncomplicated. However, technological change produced a new political attitude emphasizing conscious and consistent economic and social planning which, in turn, necessitated the widening of local powers to provide the economic and social environment demanded by the new generation. In consequence, relationships between the central and local authorities became more comprehensive and more complex.

The renaissance of local government, which began in the late seventies, not only brought a greater public participation in local affairs, especially through the widened franchise, but also necessitated closer control of local bodies by the central government — firstly to ensure that they performed their manifold functions, and secondly to augment their financial resources to enable them to do so. It was widely believed that the neglect and apathy, so patently clear at the local government level, were due to the limited powers enjoyed by local authorities. The functions and powers of local authorities had, in fact, been extended and widened as their experience and efficiency grew. Each piece of important local government legislation invariably granted new and extended powers to local authorities. However, the critics argued that, if these powers were radically expanded, public interest in local affairs would be stimulated and a more capable type of candidate would offer his services at local government elections. Working from other premises, Parliament widened and extended the powers of local authorities in almost every direction, especially after 1880, but the results were not altogether those which had been predicted. Although the Royal Commission of 1896 reported “that Local Authorities have hitherto faithfully exercised the measure of powers entrusted to them”, and concluded “that in many important directions further powers could be assigned to them with manifest advantage to the good government of the colony”, Mr. C.E. Chuter, Chief Clerk of the Home Secretary’s Department, found in 1919 that “The question — Has the Local Authority used its powers reasonably to its full capacity, and with what result? — must be answered in the negative”.14

15 C.E. Chuter, Local Government Administration (Brisbane, 1919), p. 11.
The Labour Party believed the failure to use all the powers available was due to the restricted franchise and, consequently, introduced the adult franchise at the earliest opportunity, in 1920.

The primary cause, however, lies much deeper in the structure of government than this. It reaches down, as Finer has argued, to the roots of a major weakness of local government; that is, to the conservative and unprogressive mind of the local community. The municipal record in Queensland, as in England, has shown that the central government has generally recognized the social ideals and needs of the whole community sooner than the local authorities and pursued them more consistently. Consequently, it has frequently had to persuade or cajole municipal bodies to perform quite important local functions.

It might, however, be objected that Government intervention progressed beyond the legitimate need to institute local government, to regulate it, and to ensure that local authorities carried out their functions properly. If it can be shown that Government interference with the functions and activities of local authorities within the metropolitan area went beyond the bounds of propriety; i.e., if it was not in consonance with the exercise of healthy and effective local government in its broadest sense, it seems to me that a measure of what has been called Statism in metropolitan government has been demonstrated.

There can be little doubt that Government action was a crucial factor in the establishment of municipal government in the metropolitan area on two occasions — when the inner city was incorporated in 1859 and, later in 1880, when suburban authorities were created. In the first instance local initiative was stimulated, if not anticipated, by Government intervention; in the second, the wishes of the local community were largely ignored. The incorporation of Brisbane as a municipality in 1859 was certainly the culmination, so far as Brisbane was concerned, of a determined effort by the New South Wales Government to set up a local government system in the colony. Prompted by the reform of English local government in 1835, the colonial Government set up municipal corporations in Sydney and Melbourne and introduced the ill-fated District Councils system for the colony at large during the 1840’s. After the District Councils had failed to take root and colonial self government had been granted, a more liberal and realistic municipal code was enacted in 1858. However, the citizens of Brisbane were not disposed to opt voluntarily for local self government and municipal rating while their civic needs were provided from the largess of paternalistic central government. It was therefore only

---

17 The Municipalities Act of 1858, 22 Vic., No. 13.
18 A municipality could only be instituted if incorporation was requested by 50 or more prospective ratepayers, provided a petition opposing incorporation signed by a greater number of prospective ratepayers was not presented within three months. Ibid., Sec. 2.
after the Government withheld all financial succour from the town\textsuperscript{19} that a
group of influential residents moved, in the face of acrimonious opposition, to
take advantage of the new legislation during 1859.\textsuperscript{20} There can be little doubt
that the government ultimatum stimulated a growing local initiative towards
incorporation.

Government initiative in the establishment of suburban local authorities was
much more forceful. Although urban development had spread beyond municipal
boundaries, residents in the suburban areas showed no inclination either to
seek incorporation as separate municipalities or to agitate for inclusion within
the municipality of Brisbane. Government concern was expressed by Griffith
when moving the second reading of the Local Government Act of 1878.\textsuperscript{21} The
solution he advanced was the compulsory constitution of these and other locali­
ties where local government was feasible. The Act empowered the Government
either to annex these suburban areas to existing municipalities or to constitute
them as separate municipalities. Under the Griffith scheme of 1878 the Govern­
ment was authorized to constitute urban areas as municipalities and rural
districts as shires. The initiative was, in effect, transferred to the Government,
though the local community still retained the right to petition for incorporation.

This coercive power was more prominent in the Divisional Boards Act of
1879 which was designed specifically to operate in the rural areas of the colony.
The Government's attitude was made quite clear by the Colonial Secretary,
A.H. Palmer, during a debate on the second reading of the Bill:

\ldots The Government had been asked why they had not put the Local
Government Act into force — why, in short, they did not use the power
reserved in the Bill to put it in force when the people themselves would not
move in the matter? His reply was that they did not think it fair to put the
Act in force in particular parts of the country when they could not make
it applicable to the whole. They had also been asked whether they were
prepared to put the Bill in action, if it became law? They were prepared to
put it in force over the whole of the colony, so far as they could.\textsuperscript{22}

The Government were as good as their word. During 1880 the whole of the
colony, apart from a few almost uninhabited areas, was split into divisions.
The metropolitan area outside of the Municipality of Brisbane was erected into
eight divisions. Griffith's Act was ignored, possibly for the sake of convenience,
even though it would have been more suitable in many of the suburban areas.
Henceforth the multiplication of local authorities within the metropolitan area
occurred on the initiative of the ratepayers, generally acting under the permissive
provisions of the Local Government Act.

\textsuperscript{19} Moreton Bay Courier, 5 January 1859; \textit{ibid.}, 13 April 1859.
\textsuperscript{20} An endowment equal to the amount of revenue raised during the preceding year was to be
paid by the central government during the first five years after incorporation, one-half the
preceding year's revenue during the second five years and one-quarter the preceding
year's revenue during the third five-year period. Thereafter it was to cease altogether.
\textit{ibid.}, Municipalities Act of 1858, 22 Vict., Sec. 91.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Queensland Parliamentary Debates}, XXV (1878), 202-5.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, XXIX (1879), 566.
It is rather a nice question to decide whether the Government, by creating a local governing system by executive action, had interfered unduly with the self-governing rights of local communities. Looked at from one point of view, Government action in this regard can be shown to be, not an attempt to increase control from the centre, but rather an effort to delegate the control of local affairs to the local community — the reverse of what is generally meant by Statism. This was Griffith's view of the question:

...The question, however, that they had to consider in dealing with all new legislation was, what were the evils which existed, and what was the best mode of remedying them? From the evil that the expenditure for local public works, and the control of it, was too much centralized in the Works' office, and not sufficiently in the hands of the districts, a consequent evil sprang. The practice had a tendency — he would not say that it had already done so — to make the people lose those habits of self-reliance, which were the distinguishing characteristics of colonists. He had no doubt that, if the present practice went on very much longer, and the different parts of the colony were taught for a few years longer to rely upon the Government, the tendency would be to make it more difficult to establish a system of Local Self-Government...

The existing system whereby local affairs became the province of the central government not only encouraged the political abuse which the Americans picturesquely called "log-rolling," but also clogged the machinery of central government. It was these considerations combined with the genuine desire to stimulate the growth of local independence and to kindle the habits of local self-government which prompted the Government to impose local government by executive action once it became clear that the colonists outside the main urban centres were reluctant to use the permissive powers granted by the existing municipal legislation.

The State, indeed, could hardly evade entanglements at the local level, if its constitutional responsibilities were to be fulfilled. All executive decisions dealing with the constitution of local authorities, such as the size of areas, the number of subdivisions, and the number of councillors, had to be taken by the Government. Local boundaries had to be altered in the metropolis each time a new local authority was constituted, but the Government also found it necessary to amend boundaries sometimes in the interests of efficiency.

Perhaps the most notable example of Government arbitration was the financial settlement effected by the Auditor-General when South

23 Ibid., XXV (1878), 202.
24 For example, between South Brisbane and Coorparoo, Queensland Government Gazette, L (1890), 156, and between Brisbane and Ithaca, ibid., CIII (1914), 2267.
25 Ibid., XCIII (1909), 1562, for a dispute between Stephens and Yeerongpilly shires over the maintenance of boundary roads. Under the Local Authorities (Joint Action) Act of 1886 (50 Vic., No. 16), Sec. 35, and the Local Authorities Act of 1902 (2 Edw. VII, No. 19), Sec. 363, the Minister, either at the request of one of the local authorities concerned or on his own volition, could order adjoining local authorities to make an agreement with respect to the formation and maintenance of boundary roads and bridges or other functions and works of mutual benefit.
Brisbane was separated from Brisbane in 1888. Similar settlements were arranged by the Government each time a new local authority was created from those already in existence. Moreover, the Government had a crucial part to play in the constitution of joint authorities; this was especially true of the constitution of joint health authorities for combating epidemic and infectious diseases.

The guidance and regulation of local bodies by the central authority may be seen in the making of by-laws. Before a by-law could be legally binding it had to be approved by the Governor-in-Council. The Government thus had a power of veto over the legislation of local authorities, and by-laws were examined, not only to see whether they were ultra vires but also to ensure that they were in the public and national interest. By-laws were often vetoed because of objections on these grounds, but, even when approved, they could still be tested in the Courts. To give the local authorities some guidance through the legal maze of by-law making, the Government's experts drafted model by-laws on subjects of general concern. The Government intervened at a different level to ensure that local government officers were properly qualified and certified, while the remuneration and working conditions of officers and other employees were brought under the regulation of the Industrial Court.

In addition, the activities of the local authorities were under the general surveillance of the various Government departments, which exercised a judicious mixture of guidance and control. The Works Department, for instance, supplied the professional services of its bridge engineer for the construction of the Bowen, Breakfast Creek, Burnett Swamp, and Normanby bridges; its engineers scrutinized the plans and specifications of all loans works before loans were approved, and its officers often supervised the works themselves. Similarly, the Auditor-General outlined the method by which local authorities were to keep their books; he also arranged for the formation of boards to determine the qualifications of

---

27 In practice the Government forwarded draft by-laws submitted to it by the local authorities to the Justice Department for scrutiny. This Department revised them if necessary and the amended draft was sent back to the local authority for approval before being confirmed. See Minutes of South Brisbane City Council (1904).
29 John L. Woolcock and Marcus Hertzberg (eds.) list five of these model by-laws dealing with Animals and Nuisances, Deposit of Offensive Matters on Streets, etc., Offensive Trades, Lodging-Houses, and House let in Lodgings, in their Local Government (Brisbane, 1913), pp. 847-68.
30 The officers formed their own associations to press for recognition of status and proficiency, on one hand, and adequate remuneration and satisfactory working conditions on the other. The former were largely secured by Government Regulations in 1921 and 1924 (Queensland Government Gazette, CXVII [1921], 477-78, 685, and CXXII [1924], 91), while salaries and working conditions were laid down by an agreement made with the Local Authorities Association in 1920 and registered with the Industrial Court (Local Government, 1920-21, pp. 51-52, 1921-22, pp. 167-68). The wages and conditions of other employees were either covered by general awards of the Industrial Court or by a special award made in 1916.
local government auditors and, after 1902, was virtually responsible for their appointment. It was the Home Secretary's Department, however, which was most closely associated with the local authorities since it was charged with the administration of both Local Government and Health Acts. Nearly all the activities of the metropolitan local authorities were the immediate concern of the department, and nearly all contacts between the Government and the local authorities were made through the Home Secretary. Under the circumstances it is the abnormal rather than the normal features of this relationship between the department and Brisbane local authorities which deserve attention, and these are to be found in the veto and coercive powers possessed by the Governor-in-Council, the Minister, and the Central Board of Health or the Commissioner of Public Health.

Before 1902 the power of the central authority to compel local bodies to carry out their functions was fairly limited except in matters affecting public health. The Local Authorities Act of that year gave the Auditor-General a definite authority of direction with respect to the methods of accounting used by local authorities; it also enabled the Government to interfere with decisions made by all local bodies. In exercising discretion in this particular the Governor-in-Council was to be guided by whether the resolution or order of the local authority imposed "undue burdens" upon the ratepayers.

Subsequent amendments to the Act of 1902 greatly augmented the supervisory powers of the central government. The amending Act of 1910 empowered the Governor-in-Council to dissolve a council and to require the election of a new one, should he be of the opinion that a requisite request of one-fifth of the ratepayers to do so was justified by circumstances. It also authorized the Minister to compel local authorities to submit returns and statistical information required by the Government. Section 21 amended the principal Act so that the Governor-in-Council could peremptorily place parks and other reserves under their control. Under the amending Act of 1912 the Minister could compel local

31 Before 1896 it was known as the Colonial Secretary's Department.
32 However, it is clear from the decision of the Supreme Court in the case, Regina v. Municipal Corporation of Brisbane, that the Government could compel local authorities by writ mandamus to assume the care, maintenance, control, and management of public highways, streets, roads, bridges, culverts, ferries, wharves, and jetties. In this particular case the Court ruled that the Brisbane Council must not only assume control of Victoria Bridge, but must also repair it. Victoria Bridge was transferred to the Government under the Victoria Bridge Act of 1876, but after the tolls were abolished by the Victoria Bridge Acts of 1876 and 1877, the Government endeavoured to place it under the control of the Brisbane Council by proclamation (Queensland Government Gazette, XXVII [1880], 1121; XXXII [1883], 655, and XXXIV [1884], 1456) under Secs. 236 and 245 of the Local Government Act of 1878. The Corporation, however, refused to take control of the bridge, since it would then become responsible for repairing it, unless an endowment were granted in consideration of the extra expense involved. Eventually, it was decided to submit the matter to the Supreme Court as a test case to ascertain whether the Governor-in-Council could compel the Brisbane Council by proclamation to take upon itself the charge of Victoria Bridge. The Court found that the Governor-in-Council did, in fact, have this power by virtue of Secs. 236, 237, 240 and 245 of the Local Government Act of 1878, Queensland Law Journal Reports, 1884-87, II, 16-20.
authorities to take a poll of ratepayers on specified and unspecified questions concerned with local government. Section 7 empowered the Governor-in-Council under certain circumstances to remove the Chairman from office and to ensure that a successor was elected. Control of local authorities by the central authority was still more obvious in the amending Act of 1923, which empowered the Governor-in-Council to prevent a local authority from taking any action contrary to the wishes of the electors as expressed in a poll at which not less than 35 per cent of the electors had voted.

The provisions enumerated leave no doubt that Parliament intended that the local authorities should be closely supervised by the Government. The Health Acts placed even more stringent powers of control in the hands of the central authority. The Health Act of 1872 abolished all local government by-laws dealing with public health and sanitation and placed these matters in the hands of local boards of health, operating under regulations laid down by a Central Board of Health and primarily responsible to the Central Board which was appointed by the Government. An attempt was made to leave municipalities some control over local health by requiring them to appoint the local boards of health in their areas, but in practice this system of dual responsibility proved unworkable and generally derogatory to the authority of the municipal council. The effect of the legislation in Brisbane was particularly harmful. The Brisbane Municipal Council considered its own by-laws to be more effective than those promulgated by the Central Board and, when eventually forced to act, took the unfortunate step of appointing a local board which it was subsequently unable to control. The Board proved so active that the aldermen soon felt that it was usurping many of the legitimate functions of the Council. The difficulty was partly overcome by appointing a new board consisting entirely of council members, but even so the local board remained as much an instrumentality of the Central Board as it was a servant of the Council.

Three trends are discernible in subsequent health legislation. First, the execution of the law, subject to the supervision of the central health authority, generally became the responsibility of the local authority. Secondly, health legislation became progressively more complex and comprehensive. Thirdly, the supervisory powers of the central health authority became increasingly stringent. Not only could the central health authority — be it the Central Board of Health under the Health Act of 1884, or the Commissioner for Public Health under the Health Act of 1900 — use the legal processes of the courts to enforce its will upon the local authorities, but it could even perform their work at their expense. The discovery that disease was spread by bacteria transformed the care of public health from a local to a national problem, with the stress being placed on prevention rather than cure; the grant of default powers to the central authority was an expression of this change of attitude.

It seems clear from the statutes and from the use made of such default powers

---

33 The local board consisted of eight ex-mayors and the General Inspector.
34 Finer, op. cit., p. 12.
by the Government that they were reserve powers to be used only as a last resort. Finer has aptly expressed both their weakness and value:

The procedure is too direct an interference with local authorities; it wears the aspect of an unconstitutional breach of the conventions of local self-government, and, as a matter of fact, the central authority uses it rather as a threat to a refractory local authority than as an instrument for getting its will performed ... 35

In Queensland, these powers were invoked on occasion to enforce the will of the central authority, especially within the metropolitan area,36 but they were used sparingly because of the weaknesses outlined by Finer. A reasonably balanced assessment of the local-central authority relationship has been made by C.E. Chuter, who was intimately connected with the administration of local government in Queensland:

Speaking generally, the exercise by the Local Authority of its powers, duties, obligations, and authorities rests within its discretion. There is no authority which can compel it to exercise its powers or carry out its duty, except the force of public opinion, or the Courts of Law. Every act of the Local Authority is, however, subject to the veto of the State, i.e., the Governor-in-Council. Every By-law is subject to his approval, and every resolution may be rescinded. The power of veto is in the nature of what is generally known as “constitutional checks”. It is, however, destructive and not constructive, in that if the Governor-in-Council refuses approval to a By-law, or rescinds a resolution, he cannot substitute another. (Under the financial provisions the Home Secretary may, on petition, amend or vary a resolution.)

The generality of this statement must, however, be qualified by a reference to the over-riding powers of the Commissioner of Public Health. He can make Regulations, and require the Local Authority to execute them and in case of emergency or default, or omission, exercise and undertake any or all of the powers of the Local Authorities at its expense.37

Writing in 1957, after his retirement from the Office of Under Secretary of

35 Ibid., p. 319. His viewpoint is borne out by the reaction of the South Brisbane Council to an emergency order of the Commissioner of Public Health during 1904 which authorized him to cleanse a portion of the city at the Council’s expense. The Council unanimously resolved:

“That this Council objects to and protests against the action of the Health Commissioner in declaring that under Section 20 of the Health Act of 1900 an ‘Emergency’ has arisen, and that a Committee be appointed to prepare and forward to the Governor-in-Council, a memorial stating the grounds of the Council’s complaint.”

Indeed the Council was so incensed that it also decided:

“That the Health Commissioner be informed that this Council withdraws from the arrangement made with him for the payment of twenty of the fifty men employed as special cleaning gangs.” Minutes of the South Brisbane City Council, 1904, p. 131.

36 See, for example, Queensland Government Gazette, CV (1915), 554, and CXI (1918), 2149; Mayoral Report to the Brisbane City Council, 1902-3, p.52; Minutes of South Brisbane City Council, 1904, pp. 124, 130, 131, 133, 134.

37 Local Government Law and Finance (Brisbane, 1921), pp. 18-19. Mr. Chuter was Chief Clerk in the Home Secretary’s Department.
the Department of Health and Home Affairs, R.H. Robinson stated that the power of the Commissioner of Public Health to dismiss health officers of local authorities had been exercised only once, and even then the dismissal had to be withdrawn later. He also pointed out that the central authority’s powers of rescission, repeal, and veto had rarely been exercised and that those of rescission and repeal were of small use:

The Commissioner of Public Health is the only authority who can act in default of or supersede the Local Authority. The Commissioner has seldom exercised this power, and every exercise of the power had led to dispute and contention.38

Queensland experience therefore confirms Finer’s judgment that the coercive powers of the central authority tended to be used as a threat rather than as a direct instrument of compulsion. On the whole, they appear to have been judiciously exercised.

Even the state meddling of the 1860’s and 1870’s is understandable, and was partially justified by the great difficulty the Council had in constructing Victoria Bridge. Only after the Council had gone through a long period of acute financial stringency, bordering on insolvency, and had managed by laborious negotiation to reach an agreement with its creditors, was it able to arrange for the completion of the bridge. The incident showed clearly enough that while the Council could plan a major undertaking, it lacked, at this stage, both the financial and technical resources to supervise and execute large constructional projects. This was ostensibly the Government’s justification for its policy of making the bridge and water supply projects national undertakings. There can be little doubt, however, that personal animosities and regional jealousies also prompted Government intervention to some extent.39

39 It is difficult to justify government action under the Brisbane Drainage Act of 1875. The Act was designed to make restitution to the city for the land sales endowment diverted to the Public Buildings Act of 1864. A land sales endowment of half the proceeds of land sales in Brisbane was granted by the Municipalities Act Amendment Act of 1861, but the Public Buildings Act of 1864 robbed the municipality of much of this endowment by exempting large areas of Crown land within the town from the operation of the Act and devoting the revenue derived from its sale to the construction of public buildings in Brisbane. The Brisbane Waterways Construction Act of 1870 had already done this to some extent, providing a special land endowment to finance drainage works at Eagle St. In other respects procedures were normal. The plans were approved by the Government, but the Corporation was the constructing authority. But under the Act of 1875 an almost completely different procedure was followed. A special land endowment was again provided to finance drainage works within the city, but now the government was itself the constructing authority. Government engineers drew up the plans and supervised their execution. While, admittedly, the plans had first to be approved by the council, and implemented to its satisfaction, the government had clearly usurped a legitimate function of the council. This trespass is hardly justified by the fact that the government had provided the land endowment, as this was freely acknowledged as a substitute for the land endowment denied the council by the operation of the Public Buildings Act. Nor can it be argued that it was essential because of the council’s lack of technical resources. The government could have given technical aid without taking over the actual direction of the work, while the council had no difficulty in executing drainage works financed by government loans once the endowment had been exhausted.
The Government's practice of creating *ad hoc* bodies to perform important municipal functions not only irritated Brisbane's local authorities, but also lessened the effectiveness of metropolitan government. This expedient was first adopted soon after local government was introduced to Queensland and was periodically resorted to until the trend was reversed by the Greater Brisbane Scheme in 1925. The *ad hoc* authorities were of several kinds. The board of trustees was widely used during the early years. It was, in fact, favoured above the municipal corporation for the control of cemeteries and parks, both in the central municipality and in the suburbs. Public companies established under special statutes were usually chosen to operate the city-wide "trading" utilities, such as gas and electricity supply and tramways, even though the Brisbane Municipal Council had tried to secure either direct or indirect control over them. However, provision was made for the electricity and tramway undertakings to be transferred to municipal or public authorities when the franchises expired. The tramways were eventually placed under the control of the Brisbane Tramways Trust in 1923 and subsequently transferred to the Greater Brisbane Council, but the City Electric Light Company was not converted into the Southern Electricity Authority until 1953. By that time the Greater City Council had developed an extensive electricity supply system for the suburbs.

The constitution of a nominee board in 1863 to construct a water supply scheme for Brisbane was the first and certainly the most contentious of the Government's *ad hoc* expedients. Indeed, its handling of the appointments was inept and provocative, laying the Executive open to charges of an arrogant disregard of the rights and dignity of the Brisbane Municipal Council and necessitating the retention of the board as the administrating authority of the water works. Since the metropolitan local authorities were intimidated by the size of the debt, water supply continued to be the responsibility of this appointee Board until an elective body responsible directly to the ratepayers was set up in 1909 to provide both water and sewerage services for the metropolitan area. Thus, instead of being a joint local authority controlled by the component local authorities the water supply and sewerage authority became a separate body operating within its own statutory framework. The Government retained its direct influence by making the President a permanent Government appointment. In a sense the board was an anomaly within the body of metropolitan government, partly under government influence through the President, responsible directly to the ratepayers for the administration of the undertaking, yet divorced from the traditional structure of local government.

---

40 The control of parks was not entrusted to metropolitan local authorities until the late 1880's and cemeteries continued to be administered by trusts until after the inauguration of Greater Brisbane. However, by 1901 the Government was pressing metropolitan councils to provide more parkland.

41 The Government made the transfer of the water works to the local authorities dependent upon their willingness to assume responsibility for the debt.
A mixed board, representative of the Government, local authorities and insurance companies was evolved to operate Brisbane's fire brigades. The Brisbane Municipal Council initially resisted this usurpation of one of its functions, but similar boards were later established in the suburbs and in 1920 these were all fused into the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board which operated on the same principles. A similar authority was created in 1923 to take over responsibility for the administration and financing of Brisbane's public hospitals. By contrast, responsibility for the control of traffic passed progressively from the hands of the individual metropolitan local authorities to a joint local authority, a mixed traffic commission, consisting of representatives of the Government, local authorities, and vehicle licensees and finally, in 1905, to the central Police Department. Fish marketing was another local function which was eventually taken over by a government department after a joint local authority did not live up to expectations. On the other hand, the obvious failure of local authorities, or any other government body for that matter, to plan and execute the integrated, state-wide network of major roads needed for national development and motor transport prompted the Government to set up a central Main Roads Board in 1920. This presaged the diversion of increasing amounts of public finance for main roads construction, but it deprived local authorities of yet another of their functions. The attraction of uniform centralized policy and administration was sufficient to induce the Government to disregard the legitimate rights of local authorities and to sacrifice the principle of local self-government to a desire for more efficient centralized control.

The evolution of a miscellany of ad hoc authorities to administer costly and extensive services in Brisbane, such as water supply and sewerage, lighting and power, transport, traffic regulation, fire protection, hospitalization, and main roads was by no means unique in the Australian context. Nearly all the capital cities faced similar problems due to the multiplicity of local authorities, which lacked the administrative experience and the human and financial resources needed for the provision of large public utilities and services. The responses of the various Governments were remarkably alike. Nor is the trend peculiar to Australia, for the use of the public company and the ad hoc authority for special functions and utilities was not uncommon in England itself. It is probably true, however, as Eggleston argues in his work, that the trend was carried further in Australia.

On the whole the undertakings administered by Brisbane's ad hoc bodies and by Government departments were well managed. Despite limited financial resources, an appointee board constructed and administered the waterworks along sound and efficient lines. There was a lowering in the standards of administration when the scope of the undertaking was extended to include sewerage and the board was made an elective one. With the growing complexity of the board's work, superintendence of construction was not so close and administration generally grew more lax. The light and power undertakings, being in the

---

hands of public companies, were naturally administered in the interests of the shareholders: there can be little doubt that efficiency was an aim of the directors and managers, but profit was the dominant motive. Under the circumstances the public interest tended only to be considered when demanded by the law or when it coincided with the financial benefit of the shareholders. This was also true of the tramways while under the control of the Brisbane Tramway Company. They were run with ruthless efficiency, but the desire for profit sometimes led to serious overcrowding and to hard bargains with suburban local authorities which desired tramway extensions in their areas. Furthermore, the desire to secure attractive financial returns for shareholders resulted in limiting maintenance to a minimum as the termination of the company’s franchise drew near. Thus when the tramways were taken over by the Trust in 1923 the plant, track, and rolling stock were in a run-down condition due to a reluctance on the part of the company to make replacements. The Trust, as soon as it assumed control of the undertaking, began a policy of expansion and its administration was notable for energy and efficiency.

The control of metropolitan traffic did not prove effective even after the work was taken over by the mixed commission in 1895–96, and this partial failure of the *ad hoc* authority finally ended in traffic control being vested in the Commissioner of Police in 1905–6. The Transit Commission’s failure was due partly to a reluctance to employ adequate staff and thus incur heavy expenditure, partly to the inability to secure willing co-operation from public and police, and partly to the division of authority as between police and commissioners. On the other hand, the fire brigades were placed on a sound basis by the composite boards constituted under the Acts of 1876 and 1881 and an integrated fire service for the whole city was provided by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board after 1920.

The success of most of these *ad hoc* authorities was due to a large extent to their freedom from what Eggleston called “capricious political control”. As a result appointments by personal or party patronage, and corruption in the letting of contracts and in the use of supplies, were largely eliminated and the management of the undertakings was generally left in the hands of paid administrators or experts who were relatively free to implement those policies in which they believed. Apart from the case of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, a preference was shown for “good government over complete self-government” in the constitution of such bodies and in the allocation of local functions to Government departments. The representatives of the different parts of the city on the Fire Brigade Boards, the Transit Commission, the Brisbane Tramways Trust, and the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board were indirectly elected by councils and groups of councils which tended, on the whole, to elect their senior and most capable members. In this way good government was secured at the expense of popular government. This system was nevertheless open to objection for the very reason that it limited democratic

---

control over those aspects of municipal activity for which the ad hoc bodies were responsible. In cases where local functions were usurped by Government departments local democratic control was almost completely lost, except in so far as local public opinion was able to influence departmental policy.

In the last analysis, resort to ad hoc authorities was detrimental to metropolitan local government as a whole. Their establishment aggravated the friction and discord arising from the existence of a multitude of local governing bodies with conflicting jurisdictions and functions, because it increased the number of authorities and so the area of possible conflict between them. Furthermore, it stimulated bureaucracy and increased the overhead cost of metropolitan local government as well as the complexity of municipal finance. The existence of these ad hoc bodies and the responsibility of Government departments for local functions made it increasingly difficult for citizens to locate responsibility for local affairs; public indifference was increased because the control of the electors over local administration became at once more restricted and more complicated. Finally, the delegation of local government functions to ad hoc authorities and Government departments deprived the traditional local authorities of the power and prestige so essential to a stimulation of public interest and so vital to the attraction of men of sufficient calibre to make local government imaginative and progressive. Despite these objections to the ad hoc authorities, they were indispensable while the local government of the city was in the hands of some twenty more or less petty local authorities. Nevertheless, Bland's comment upon the appointment of similar bodies in Sydney is relevant to the Brisbane situation:

... Had there been an understanding of the importance of local participation as a training for democratic citizenship, more patience might have been shown for the sometimes clumsy efforts to supply local services. More care, too, might have been taken to link local government directly with the ad hoc authorities that sprang up. Allocation has followed the most advocacy and the most aggressive demands, and in such an atmosphere, local government is cast in Cinderella's role.

If it is granted that the assumption of certain local functions by central Government departments and the creation of ad hoc authorities to deal with others were detrimental to local government generally, the significant question of whether this can be regarded as an example of Statism remains to be discussed. F.W. Eggleston has defined "State Socialism" generally as the "operation of common services by the State", but it is clear that he means much more than the control and administration of these services by Government departments and what are commonly regarded as State instrumentalities for he has included four authorities not unlike Brisbane's ad hoc bodies in his study of State Socialism in Victoria. In a sense, he sees these metropolitan authorities as a special

---

46 Eggleston, op. cit. The four metropolitan statutory corporations discussed are the Melbourne Harbour Trust, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Melbourne and
kind of State instrumentality operating utilities or providing services on behalf of the State and functioning within a legislative framework laid down by the State. They were, in short, one form of "state socialism" or, if you prefer the terms, of "state capitalism" or "étatism". Indeed, Eggleston asserts that "these metropolitan organizations are the best products of the Victorian system of State Socialism; their success depends on their separation from politics, and the charter of their freedom is their independence in finance".47

State Socialism in Victoria had been the result of a demand that the State shall be definitely used to secure social and economic objectives... the responsibility for the equipment and development of the country was placed on the State: one by one most of the activities upon which development depended, and most of the great common services, came to be administered either by Government departments or by corporate agencies working under political authority.48

It is clear from this and his elaboration of the point that Eggleston regarded the statutory corporation as the most important and successful form of state socialism in Victoria. In his view the development of these bodies was a clear example of statism. He argues further that a definite trend set in towards this type of statism in Victoria during the late part of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century:

... The opinion therefore gradually formed that if a business service be undertaken by the State, it must be isolated from the State system; definite functions must be allotted to it and responsible managers should be left to carry them out as they should think proper; policy should be determined on general lines by the State, and embodied in legislation, but its detailed interpretation and execution should be left to managers.

The instrument installed for this purpose is the statutory corporation, a body with a defined charter and a financial endowment, which can act independently of the departmental system of the State.49

Our somewhat superficial examination of metropolitan government in Brisbane has shown that State Socialism of the Eggleston variety also developed in Brisbane and that some of the ad hoc authorities discussed are very much like the Melbourne bodies he has used to illustrate his thesis. Furthermore, it is clear that they were evolved to solve much the same kind of problems and to serve similar ends. State socialism was an Australia-wide phenomenon. The Brisbane Waterworks Board preceded by thirteen years the Melbourne Harbour Trust, which is the earliest example of a typical Victorian metropolitan socialist project cited by Eggleston. Similarly, Brisbane’s fire brigade boards anticipated the metropolitan fire brigade boards of the other capital cities.

Metropolitan Tramways Board and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board. The Harbour Trust was originally an elected body, but was reconstituted as a Government appointed Board in 1911. The Board of Works was indirectly elected by the metropolitan local authorities. The Fire Brigade Board was a mixed board similar to the Brisbane boards. Finally, the Tramways Trust was appointed by the Government.

48 Ibid., p. 24.
49 Ibid., pp. 45–46.
In principle there seems to be little reason for confining the term "State Socialism", as Eggleston defines it, to the kind of metropolitan authority he has described in detail. Certainly the transfer of metropolitan services to Government departments must, as Eggleston himself agrees, be included. The use of public companies, under Government regulation, to perform municipal functions, seems also to fit into the general meaning he gives to the term. There even appears to be a case for including the ordinary local authorities in this scheme of "state socialism". They must, as I hope I have shown, be regarded as an important part of the total governmental system of which the central sovereign Government had the ultimate direction. They were corporate bodies exercising delegated functions in accordance with a legislative framework.

Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the central Government, i.e., the State, used them as agents to carry out its policies, especially those concerned with national development and well-being. The progressive extension of the powers and functions of local authorities and the growing intensity of Government supervision of local activities support this view. N.G. Butlin has shown that between 5 and 10 per cent of all capital investment in Australia in the years 1861–1900 went into local government works, especially roads and waterworks. It seems probable that the percentage rose after the turn of the century, especially in the postwar years (certainly loan expenditure by Brisbane metropolitan authorities rose rapidly between 1900 and 1925).50 That this kind of development was in accordance with overall State policy there can be little doubt, especially as most of the work was financed by loans over which the Government had a veto-control. It seems unlikely that the Government would have condoned loan works which were persistently at variance with its programme of national development, especially as funds to finance developmental works were seldom over-plentiful.

If this line of argument is valid, it follows that, although State intervention in metropolitan affairs — with the possible exception of isolated instances in the early years and the persistent habit of transferring special functions to ad hoc authorities and Government departments — can be justified either by the nature of the central-local government relationship or on grounds of national interest, the metropolitan authorities — municipal and ad hoc — were in a wider sense agents of the Government, implementing a general policy of state socialism. This thesis does seem, on the face of it, to discount local initiative heavily and to give the central Government a much closer direction of local affairs than it in fact appears from the evidence to have had. I feel, however, that this objection can be satisfactorily disposed of by drawing attention to the possibility that both central and metropolitan authorities responded to a general community belief that national development and well-being could best be achieved by governmental action; the level at which this occurred being determined by the nature

of the individual function or service to be provided. In short, the metropolitan authorities tended to pursue ends which accorded with general State policy because, like the central Government, they served a community which held an indefinite belief that public authorities were the best instruments for the achievement of some desirable social, economic, and administrative goals.
An important part of the rule of any colony, especially before the colony attains responsible government, concerns the ideas and policies of its governor. This point is generally true for British colonies of the last century although its significance to the history of any particular colony requires an appreciation of the extent to which British governors were able to apply their own policies within the framework both of British Colonial Office directives, and of pressures from the colonial people.

For these reasons I think that a consideration of how far one particular governor, William MacGregor, was able to apply his ideas and policies can be of value as a case-study, especially as there were few individuals who became colonial governors. Furthermore, MacGregor is a relevant choice insofar as, like others of the few, he served during his colonial career from 1872 to 1914 in so many parts of the British colonial world: in the Seychelles and Mauritius, in the Pacific (Fiji and British New Guinea), in Africa (Lagos), in America (Newfoundland), and finally in Australia (Queensland).

As well I would claim that in many ways the ideas of past British governors are still relevant to the multifarious problems facing those who now and in the future will govern these territories. This point applies particularly to William MacGregor if I can establish that he was primarily concerned in the good government and administration of the colonial people — in preference to British gain, or exploitation, or his own glorification.

In this paper I would like to try to find answers to certain questions which will show why I feel a case-study of MacGregor has such value. The first question is: Why did MacGregor become a colonial administrator? Does he illustrate the contention that the colonies were the refuge of the younger sons of the rising middle-class, or the claim by more hostile critics that they were escape hatches for upper-class failures? Clear denials of these two allegations can be made.

This paper was read to Section E of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, August 1962. First published in *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand*, XI, No. 41 (November 1963), 18-31.

about MacGregor, even if it is much more difficult to show whether or not he was typical of his fellow administrators.

William MacGregor was decidedly of working class origin. His father, John, was a crofter who, as Aberdeen County records show, accepted poor relief. John certainly had no money to spare for the education of his eight children, indeed his relatives have alleged that he took any money saved by his children. Census records show that at least by the age of fourteen William, like his brothers and sisters, had left his parents' croft and was working as a cattleman. It was the combined encouragement of pastor, dominie, and doctor which took William MacGregor from the farm to the university as well as the fact of his birth in Scotland with its less rigid class divisions and its respect for education. The pastor was Reverend John Watt, a Master of Arts from King's College, Aberdeen, and an old boy of Aberdeen Grammar, who befriended and took a deep interest in him. Watt was the chairman of the Parochial Board of the Parish of Strathdon which granted poor relief to John MacGregor. The dominie was James Kennedy of Tillyduke school, who was the Inspector and Collector for the same Board. William was later to assist him in this tiny school. The doctor was Dr. Robb, in the district in the 1850's, and later medical officer to the Board.

William's small savings from his farm work were probably supplemented by loans from both Watt and Robb to enable him to enter Aberdeen Grammar School in his twentieth year — far older than most of his fellow scholars. He still had to work on a farm part-time, for each year he missed five months' schooling. He himself wrote later that he "had paid for his education entirely out of his earnings as a farm servant", although this was special pleading for an advance from the Colonial Office. His success in his school examinations allowed him to continue his education.

But colonial life was still far from the crofter's son who had become a successful scholar: the church, or its alternative or training ground, schoolteaching, seemed his probable future. Now 21, with the aid of the bursary he had won of £20 a year, he entered King's College, Aberdeen, as an Arts student reading Greek, Latin (called Humanity), and English. His poor results helped to diminish his chances for a future in church or school. Furthermore, the fact that Mary Thomson, the daughter of the farmer who engaged him, became

2 Began 7 May 1867 at the rate of 5s. a week, reduced to 4s. a week on 3 November 1868.
3 Scottish Census Records of 1841, 1851, 1861, and 1871 in General Registry Office, Edinburgh.
4 The school rolls show that in 1867, 1: 6.5 of the population were attending, compared with Prussia, 1: 6.2, where education was compulsory. It has been argued that Scotland was "reckoned to be a generation ahead of England in its educational ideals and practice". Stewart Mechie, The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780-1870 (London, 1960), p. 152.
5 From school records at Aberdeen Grammar School, and information from the headmaster, Reverend John Skinner.
6 MacGregor to Colonial Office, 16 December 1872, CO 167/549, on 12461.
pregnant could have affected his future. In any event on 4 October 1868, he
married Mary (a son was born three months later) and on 28 October he entered
Anderson’s University, Glasgow, as a medical student.

The evidence shows MacGregor at the age of 26 as a successful and conscien-
tious student and one likely to do well as a doctor. When he graduated in 1872,
any idea of a career in the colonies was still remote; the only stimuli would have
been the numbers of overseas students reading medicine in the Scottish univer-
sities he attended, and the number of doctors like David Livingstone who had
gone to the colonies.

Yet before the end of 1872 William MacGregor had accepted a post as an
assistant medical officer in the Seychelles. The reason for his decision can be
attributed to his ambition — always to be significant in his career — with all
its concomitant factors, varying from adventurousness or restlessness and
youthful dreams to the need for more money to support his wife and son. I
can find no evidence at this stage of any “indoctrination with Britain’s imperial
mission”.

It was chance that took him to the Seychelles. The governor there, Sir Arthur
Gordon, soon to become the inspiration of MacGregor’s career, found in 1871
an urgent need for more doctors. Gordon, with a rather typical disregard of
the formal procedure for appointments laid down by the Colonial Office,
wrote to a schoolmaster friend of his asking him to find a suitable doctor. This
schoolmaster wrote to Dr. Hooker, a Glasgow graduate, who contacted Pro-
fessor Dickie of Aberdeen University — and it was Dickie who recommended
MacGregor as

the only man known to me at present likely to fulfil expectations in the
Seychelles. He is willing to make himself useful in science [and] if considered
qualified he is prepared to go at once.

This chain of correspondence is significant in so far as it stresses that it
was chance that took MacGregor to the Seychelles. The fact is that he happened
to be the only doctor known at Aberdeen University to be available at the time,
and the circumstances certainly do not show great eagerness on his part to begin
a colonial career. It is likely that, on graduating in August 1872, MacGregor
had written to Professor Dickie asking generally about jobs, but there is no
evidence that he was seeking a position in the colonies. Certainly medicine was
his prime interest, with not incompatible desires to do some scientific research.

I have seen no evidence to support Professor Reid’s allegations that he wanted
to go to the colonies because he suffered from “chest weakness”. Against this
allegation, Professor Dickie wrote at the time that “he is able bodied and ener-
getic” and MacGregor’s active life in the Seychelles, Fiji, and particularly British
New Guinea tell against any idea of weakness. A temporary weariness at the
end of an exhaustive medical course could be expected, both from his methods

8 This and later cited correspondence about his Seychelles position is in CO 167 549.
9 Professor Reid’s posthumous article, “Sir William MacGregor”, Aberdeen University Review
of study — MacGregor was a "grinder" who worked long hours and was even said to have "practically committed to memory the entire textbook of anatomy" — and from his lack of any vacation, for throughout his course he had been continually employed in medical posts.10

I feel that the limitations of Aberdeen for an ambitious young doctor combined with his low salary (£40 a year) are sufficient to explain his desire for any other position with more opportunities and better pay. In any case his dealings with the Colonial Office before deciding to go to the Seychelles finally dispel any idea of a strong keenness to go to the colonies, let alone any feeling of accepting a colonial mission.

When the offer of the position of assistant medical officer at a salary of £250 a year was made in October 1872, he went to London and was interviewed by the Colonial Office and later he set out his queries in writing: he wanted to know the exact duties of the position; whether medicines were supplied; whether he could supplement his salary by private practice; what chances there were of future salary increases; the provision for sick pay; whether a house would be provided; when his pay would start; and finally if there would be any encouragement for scientific research. The Colonial Office's answer satisfied him on some points, although the Office was very careful not to give assurances of private practice, salary increases, or any governmental encouragement of scientific research. Economy in running the colonies generally, and the reorganization of the Seychelles in particular, kept the officers cautious.

MacGregor replied that he was

still ignorant of whether medicines are supplied by the government or not [and he feared that he] might have to expend the half of [his] salary on medicines. I cannot undertake to go out on chance... I must remain in suspense whether I shall undertake the appointment or not.

The Colonial Office replied cautiously, because their information was inadequate, saying that they thought "all such medicines as you [will] have to administer in your public capacity are found by the government". This did not completely satisfy MacGregor, for when he did accept on 18 November he made the condition that all medicines were to be supplied by the government. And to make assurance doubly sure he asked whether "medicines are to be sent along with me, or to be waiting me in the Seychelles". MacGregor's impecuniosity was illustrated later when he asked for an advance of three months' salary to pay for "a good microscope... and some other instruments requisite for scientific pursuits".

This evidence suggests that MacGregor began his life in the colonies reluctantly, that he went out solely as a doctor with an added interest in general scientific research, and that he was keenly aware in the best Scottish tradition of the importance of money.

---

10 He had been house surgeon (1870-71) and physician (1871) at Glasgow Infirmary and Glasgow Lock Hospital; Clerk to the Skin Dispensary in Glasgow (1870-71). In vacations he assisted Dr. Robb of Towie; medical assistant at the Aberdeen Asylum (1872).
Whether MacGregor was in any way typical of others joining the colonial service is a harder question to answer. Studies like those by Hall or Pugh show that some steps were taken in this period toward “professionalizing” the service. But a review of the Colonial Office Lists, which give outlines of the careers of all colonial governors, indicates that when MacGregor attained that level he was in various ways unique. I know of no other crofter’s son or the equivalent who became a governor; nor indeed of any other doctor. Furthermore, those series of Colonial Office files on patronage and honours that I have been through show a preponderance of evidence against the way he began his career. Typical examples are: a minister of religion writing blatantly in 1868 “as I understand there are several Colonial Bishoprics vacant, and having been a long time a supporter of Conservative principles, I think I am justified in presenting a petition to the Government to remember me in their disposal”; or a retired colonel in 1867, although “well aware of the many claimants for colonial appointments”, requesting that his application for a colonial governorship be considered; or cases of doctors offering their services as colonial surgeons; or in 1888 a general applying for a governorship being warned “that, as he is probably aware, the number of such applications is very much in excess of the vacancies at [the Secretary of State’s] disposal”.

In 1870 the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Kimberley, agreed with an inter-office minute that claimed “to obtain a [colonial] appointment it is necessary to be known to the Secretary of State, or to someone of position, or to furnish such testimonials as will show the applicants to be fit for the post sought”, and the minute certainly suggested that the first two were more important qualifications than the third. “Fitness for the post” did include ability, and some judgment as to physical and psychological aptitude. However it was not until 1899 that the Colonial Office, having had to adjudicate in so many personal quarrels, suggested that medical officers should determine if candidates were personally as well as professionally suitable for the appointment in question, [for the ability] to get on well in his social relations with his brother officers [is] an important point in a typical colony where the European population is mainly composed of officials.

By about 1900 there were set forms for all applicants, and forms for the referees and for testimonials which seemed to give equal weight to birth, education, and experience. But despite such developments the evidence suggests that, throughout MacGregor’s colonial career, for most colonial appointments either knowing the Secretary of State or someone else influential was more

---

12 Reverend Robert Blincoe to Colonial Office, 12 May 1868, CO 429/1.
13 Colonel H. A. Ouvry to Colonial Office, 27 April 1867, CO 429/1.
14 See e.g. 14 July 1886, CO 429/3, minutes on 12521.
16 Minute of E. H. Wingfield, 4 October 1870, CO 429/1.
17 27 October 1899, CO 429/18, minute on 29994.
18 Miscellaneous pamphlet No. 96 on “Colonial Appointment”, July 1898, CO 429/18.
important than fitness for the job. The precedent of recruiting for the Colonial Office London staff by examinations after 1870 was only slowly being applied to colonial appointments. The same sort of points applied to promotion where proven talent for colonial administration was being increasingly recognized, but always subject to intervening promotions because of patronage. MacGregor himself in July 1904, when sent to Newfoundland instead of somewhere where he felt he could be more useful, complained bitterly in a letter to his friend, Sir Samuel Griffith: “I fear that in the Colonial Office personal qualifications are not much considered. Social and political, sometimes religious, influence is an important determining factor. I do not say that such considerations should be ignored, but I mean that undue weight is at present given to them”, and he added the complaint that “here one has to pull petticoats”. This last minor point was admitted in a minute reading: “I take this opportunity of putting on record Mr. Chamberlain’s instructions with regard [to a candidate] who has appealed to him privately through feminine channels”.

A strong answer to MacGregor’s more serious charges and his allegations of disregard of talent seems to be supplied by his own career. For in fact, without privilege of birth, this impoverished doctor with no colonial mission did rise to the position of governor, did receive the usual series of colonial honours and did retire a wealthy man. Two possible alternatives can perhaps be resolved: whether MacGregor’s career is a story of the Colonial Office recognizing the value of good administration; or whether it is yet another illustration of how the conservative prejudices in favour of breeding and patronage influenced colonial careers. But in order to resolve them there needs to be appreciation of other points: such as, how far he became interested and skilled in administration as distinct from medical practice and scientific research, the part played in his appointments by his friendship with influential men like Sir Arthur Gordon and Sir Samuel Griffith, and his own frustrations and feelings that his career was largely a failure.

Although MacGregor was to become primarily an administrator his medical training was never to be completely submerged; indeed a medical approach to men and problems was always intertwined with his actions and ideas as an administrator.

His attitudes went beyond the doctor-patient relationship to a humanitarianism which needs to be assessed. Thus, in the Seychelles when doctoring liberated African labourers he took it upon himself to seek out, and to ensure the punishment of, the employers who had habitually cheated these labourers of their pay and rations. MacGregor, in other words, went beyond medical treatment and tried to eradicate the economic causes of their maladies. Then too, as a

19 Compare R. G. W. Herbert’s opinion, “It is the best and most important of all economies to secure an efficient Governor, and I think it would be a grave mistake to preclude the appointment of a man who has acquired experience in important governments”, 30 December 1885, CO 83/41, on 21828.

20 MacGregor to Griffith, 14 July 1904; and see 3 July 1904, Griffith Correspondence, Vol. VI, Mitchell Library.

21 24 March 1898, CO 429/17, on 6617.
humanitarian, he consciously tried to examine both sides; a typical example was his learning both the common spoken language of the employers, Creole French, and the language of the Africans, Swahili. Gordon pointed out that he was the "only white man here at all able" to speak Swahili.22

In Fiji his high reputation as a doctor emerges from both his friends and hostile critics; thus the editor of the anti-administration Fiji Times wrote of his "professional skill so firmly established and so generally appreciated".23 His concern with the problems of the health of whites, Fijians and Indians went beyond the scope of his official duties as Chief Medical Officer. His insistence on strict rules for quarantine, his moves against the spread of smallpox or venereal diseases, his studies of skin and other local diseases, his emphasis on the problems of sanitation were parts of a life-long concern with colonial health problems. Perhaps the clearest and most lasting example of this concern was his formulation of the plan to train Fijians as medical assistants, the beginnings of the Central Medical School at Suva. MacGregor first suggested such a scheme in 1879 because of the difficulty of providing enough doctors "to give anything like adequate attendance to sufferers in many parts of the colony", sincerely regretting "the amount of physical pain that is left unrelieved".24 He was still in Fiji when the first Fijians ended their three years' training at Suva Hospital in 1887.

On leave in 1883 he went to Berlin to study advances in medicine, and suggested to the Colonial Office a scheme for competitions to obtain doctors from Scottish and other universities which would, he hoped, 25

His concern over health problems in British New Guinea is evidenced by his continual stress on medical problems in all of his reports and addresses on New Guinea. It is true that lack of finance prevented him from taking the actions he advocated, though there is much evidence of sincere concern. This perhaps is a useful place to endorse Professor W.P. Morrell's broad verdict that "his achievements within the narrow limits set by an allowance of £15,000 a year were little short of miraculous".26 It was MacGregor who warned the audience at the Royal Colonial Institute in 1895 that

the four diseases that have been devastating the Pacific are first and before all others, dysentery, then hooping [sic] cough, measles and venereal disease. Civilization will introduce and distribute these in New Guinea; can it, or rather will it, control them? It has not done so but it has not fairly tried to do so, in the majority of the Pacific Islands.27

22 Gordon to Secretary of State for Colonies, despatch 3A of 8 November 1873, Vol. SD 121, Mauritius Archives.
23 Editorial in Fiji Times, 19 July 1882.
24 Memorandum, 10 November 1879, on 83/2555 of 15 September 1883, Colonial Secretary's Inwards Correspondence, Fiji Archives.
27 Proceedings of Royal Colonial Institute, 28 February 1895, p. 209.
Certainly in Lagos MacGregor's interest in health was always manifest and was clearly linked with his New Guinea frustrations in the treatment of malaria. MacGregor in 1895 shared the then prevailing ignorance of the causes of this disease. However, he did advocate the use of mosquito nets, although this was to filter the air, not to keep out mosquitoes. But by 1901 MacGregor, convinced of the validity of the recently suggested theory of the spread of malaria by mosquitoes, was taking active measures against these insects and openly supporting the ideas of Major Ronald Ross, Professor Celli (whose researches had been carried out on the Italian Railways) and Professor Koch (who had studied malaria in German New Guinea). MacGregor instituted medical education in the colony, for instance through a course of simple lectures on elementary hygiene for the general public, which drew large audiences. On his first leave in September 1902, he went with Ross to Egypt, to Celli in Rome, and later to Amsterdam, to study in Amsterdam's canals, so like the canals of Lagos town, the effect of salt water in reducing the prevalence of malaria — and then lectured to a medical class in Glasgow University on malaria. The justification for his emphasis in Lagos on the importance of health problems emerges in his own words: "the question whether malaria can be controlled or not, is practically one of stagnation or progress to the West African colonies generally."

This was well realized by Joseph Chamberlain who said in 1899 that he was prepared to back Sir William MacGregor thoroughly in every recommendation for improving the sanitary conditions of the Colony: "Expenses should not stand in the way of this even if it leads to a deficit — and I will allow no Treasury interference in this question."

In Newfoundland, MacGregor continued to apply his long interest in medical problems, and his humanitarian approach is most clearly shown in his visits to Labrador and his concern with the plight of the native Innuit people. He regretted their decline in population although

the fatality produced by these epidemics (measles, influenza, typhoid and whooping cough) will be by no means surprising if it is borne in mind that these diseases are new to the race, and that medical treatment, nurses, medicines and hospitals were not at hand to tend a stricken country, without resources, ignorant of medicine and sanitation ... no man that has not witnessed the effects of epidemic disease in an aboriginal race can realise its horrors, as I found by very painful experience when measles destroyed 40,000 natives out of a total population of 150,000 in Fiji in 1875.

Finally in Queensland MacGregor was interested in the health problems of the aborigines and in beginning medical training at the university of which he was the first chancellor. Even after his retirement, he was consulted by the Colonial Office on health problems of the Pacific, and amongst his last writings was a

The same sort of survey could be made of his continued interest in scientific research into colonial problems, whether into coffee leaf disease in Fiji (where his careful botanical work won praise from the Director of London’s Kew Gardens); or into the economic potentialities of British New Guinea; or the future of tertiary education in Queensland. MacGregor’s approach was that advocated for efficient modern colonial administrators, the seeking of exact knowledge and then attempting to find solutions to problems.

The point should be more than clear by now: MacGregor always had a medical and scientific interest in the people with whom he was living, and this did affect the administrative policies he adopted. Was his approach typical of British colonial policy? The balance sheet for European expansion in terms of its effect on the health of native peoples has yet to be fully drawn up. On one side there is a need to assess the frightful toll of introduced diseases, which MacGregor knew so well, on the other side there is the difficult task of assessing the effect of improvements in sanitation and of the gradual acceptance of Western medical knowledge over more primitive ideas on the causes of illness. It must be stressed that medical knowledge was advancing with tremendous speed during MacGregor’s time and that the measures he advocated did often meet with opposition. For instance, when he suggested vaccinating the entire population of Lagos and the hinterland, a British newspaper editorial appeared, crying:

> how many tens of hundreds of years will it take to eradicate the cancer or other diseases spread by the filthy practice? And then what other steps will be taken after the “work” is “complete” to root out the cause of small pox which assuredly vaccination will not do?

A fair assessment of British colonial policy needs consideration of the support given to research into tropical medicine. This support is particularly associated with Joseph Chamberlain when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies, and who did, as has been shown, support MacGregor in his medical endeavours. In 1897, in response to pressures inside and outside the British Isles, the first medical adviser, Dr. Patrick Manson, was appointed to the Colonial Office, and in the next few years schools of tropical medicine were set up in Liverpool and London, and tropical medicine was subsequently introduced as part of the medical courses at Cambridge, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Belfast. The rivalry between these schools was to stimulate results. Julian Amery in a volume of

---

31 “Sir Joseph Hooker is of opinion that Fiji is very fortunate in possessing in Dr. MacGregor an officer of sound scientific views and excellent powers of observation and resource.” Kew to Colonial Office, 11 June 1880, CO 83/24/8724.
32 E.g. “Before about 1880 the only way of classifying diseases was by their signs and symptoms.” A. H. Gale, *Epidemic Diseases* (London, 1959), p. 17.
his biography of Chamberlain has argued that "when the final account comes to be drawn it may well be judged that [Chamberlain’s support of tropical medicine was] his greatest service to humanity",\(^{34}\) and Chamberlain himself said in 1899, with apparent sincerity, that

the man who shall make the tropics liveable for white man — who shall reduce the risk of disease to something like an ordinary average — will do more for the world, more for the British Empire, than the man who adds a new province to the wide dominions of the Queen.\(^{35}\)

But this quotation itself suggests limitations on assessing a colonial administrator only as a doctor. For MacGregor was working in a period when adding "new provinces" or administering old provinces was an essential part of colonial rule. MacGregor in fact did spend more of his time as an administrator than as a doctor, and any interpretation must acknowledge this. Even in the Seychelles MacGregor performed services other than those of an Assistant Medical Officer, while in Fiji within two years he was, besides being Chief Medical Officer, the Treasurer (called Receiver General) and soon was to hold many other offices from Acting Governor downwards.

A review of Fijian governmental correspondence shows how rapidly MacGregor’s non-medical tasks took more of his time until they became his chief concern. Why this change occurred is harder to answer. The very inefficiency of many of the other colonial staff members is one important reason, for MacGregor was never one to tolerate incompetence. Another reason was his innate ability as an administrator which led him to find satisfaction in dealing with the many problems, often dull, tedious, and trivial, which poured into the governmental offices in Fiji. His conscientious application to all problems, whether minor, like the reorganization of the customs department or the promotion of a lowly clerk, or major, like the involved details of land claims before the cession of Fiji, or the possibility of a reciprocity treaty with New Zealand, is certainly an important facet of MacGregor’s character. Again and again one finds his superiors in Fiji or the Colonial Office staff praising his “careful” or “painstaking” or “thorough” work, and his chances of promotion did involve assessment of his worth as an administrator.\(^{36}\) He had defects, particularly in dealings with other officers, often because his very sincerity and thoroughness led him to take it as a personal affront if there was disagreement with the solutions he suggested; but beyond this there was his natural obstinacy and also jealousy (for instance against J. B. Thurston) when others advanced faster than he did.

His keen appreciation of financial need must be considered, although this, too, could well have taken him out of colonial service, for he could argue with

\(^{34}\) Joseph Chamberlain (1951), IV, 222.

\(^{35}\) In speech of 10 May 1899, *ibid.*, p. 227.

\(^{36}\) R. G. W. Herbert, “MacGregor, an officer of great ability and experience”; 5 January 1886, CO 83 42, on 160; and “greater ability and better service than almost any colonial officer (I put it strongly after consideration). . . . should be promoted when practicable”, 9 October 1884, CO 83 37, on 15807.
reason that he was capable of earning far more as a private doctor. The clearest expressions of his dilemma are his *cris de coeur* to his trusted friend, Gordon, the first in May 1884:

When I left Mauritius in December 1874 I left £800 a year, the appointment offered me at that [salary] was Sanitary Warden at Port Louis, now ten years afterwards I am in receipt of £850, and I cannot add £5 a year to it in any other way. I am really beginning to think seriously of leaving the service to practise in Australia. Two years from now I shall be forty, and if I do not receive substantial advancement by then I am to turn over a new leaf, because I shall then conclude that I am put on the shelf, and not to receive any higher office.

And later in February 1887, even more despondently, partly because he was recovering from dengue fever and since he had now passed his fortieth birthday:

I have lost a good deal of money in Fiji . . . if I went home at present I should certainly obtain no other appointment from the Colonial Office . . . I could not now obtain medical teaching after being so long abroad and having my attention taken away so much from professional work and study . . . I am simply like an old boat run high and dry with so many ribs stove in. My pay is £760 a year . . . my work is hard enough, too. I start regularly at 7.00 a.m. to visit the hospital, prison and lunatic asylum, and to teach the native medical students. I get to my office about ten and work there until between four and five, and not infrequently have to take work home with me.

These lengthy quotations, suggesting how much a failure MacGregor felt he was at forty, lead to consideration of the most important reason why he was more interested in administration: his ambition, combined with, in words that are easy to belittle, his concept of a duty, particularly towards primitive people. I think his ambition should have appeared sufficiently from his own words and the known facts of his career, but I do need to examine further this concept of a duty. Stemming partly from his own unprivileged beginnings, and partly from his humanitarian-medical attitude, MacGregor showed from the Seychelles onwards his concern for the protection of native peoples. Under Gordon in Fiji this concern was to be shaped into what can be generalized as a paternalist duty to protect what he regarded as the desirable features of a native society. The merits of such a concept can be debated at length, especially

---

37 Des Voeux reported Dr. McKellar, the Chief Medical Officer for New South Wales, as saying: "[MacGregor's] surgical and medical knowledge was so well recognized in the profession and would thus become so quickly known to the public that he would be sure to obtain a large income at once and would, within a year or two, be in receipt of from £4,000 to £6,000 a year." There was some cynicism expressed in CO Minutes: Fiddes referred to "the usual vague menaces of retirement" and that "a brother Scot (was) . . . giving Dr. M. a push", but Herbert and Bramston were more impressed, 27 July 1884, CO 83/37/15807.

38 MacGregor to Gordon, 7 May 1884, Stanmore Papers.

39 MacGregor to Gordon, 3 February 1887, Stanmore Papers.

40 An Englishman's "watchword is always Duty: and he never forgets that the nation which lets its duty get on the opposite side to its interest is lost", Bernard Shaw, *The Man of Destiny* (1929), p. 201.
in relation with Gordon from whom many of MacGregor's ideas stemmed. Gordon's attempt in 1874 to perpetuate the powers of the Fijian chiefs can be shown now to have been in many ways inappropriate to changing native society, certainly to have been abused later by many of the chiefs, while adherence to Gordon's ideas has played a clear part in the present difficulties of the Fijian people. But such considerations are in many ways anachronistic in understanding either Gordon's or MacGregor's approach, indeed it can well be argued that more stress should be laid on the contrast between their ideas and those prevailing attitudes which took less concern for native rights.

In Fiji in broad lines MacGregor followed Gordon's ideas and often depicted himself as the defender of the Gordon system against its detractors. Let me try to illustrate by one quotation (a detailed assessment would need careful consideration of his attitudes towards most of the problems of Fijian native administration):

I see nothing very difficult in carrying on native government here on its present lines for at least one generation. [Note that MacGregor could conceive of change — as indeed the rest of the quotation suggests.] I see a multitude of evils in the establishment of government by white commissioners, the first of which is the degradation of the race as such; the second the breaking up of towns and the scattering of the people; the third the alienation of their land; the last the disappearance of all trace of your [he is writing to Gordon] hard work here. If my conception of your policy here is correct or nearly correct, it would be a profound mistake to allow anything to interfere with the communal system, the antithesis of individual interest. Then again I am sure that if it were a mistake to adopt my view and prevent or prohibit private ownership by chiefs and to forbid them to become "planters" it would be a mistake easy of rectification at any time, whereas a start in the opposite direction admits of no return.41

After Gordon left Fiji MacGregor wanted to follow him, especially when he despaired of the direction of Fijian policy, and he tried hard from 1885 to obtain the treasuryship of Ceylon under Gordon. Then in 1886 Sir Samuel Griffith suggested his appointment in charge of British New Guinea.42 Perhaps most revealing of MacGregor's attitudes are the reasons he gave for wanting to accept the New Guinea appointment rather than to go to Ceylon:

The lessons I have learnt from you [he is again writing to Gordon, now in 1886] are I feel lessons that fit me better for administration, especially of the particular kind required in New Guinea, than for anything else. There I could put into practice many of the principles which I believe are founded on a high sense of justice, although in many quarters they are not appreciated, not fashionable. It might be that in New Guinea I might do more good, or better prevent the doing of evil, than a man that has had fewer opportunities of studying the government of native races than I have had the good luck to meet with. It seems to me therefore that my duty would be to plant your school in New Guinea if I can obtain that appointment. The remuneration is not attractive, but the work to me most inviting . . . I would therefore

41 MacGregor to Gordon, 21 July 1884, Stanmore Papers.
42 16 August 1887, CO 83/43, Herbert on 16240.
ask you to assist me in obtaining not the [Ceylon] appointment that would be by far the most agreeable and the most profitable for me, but that where it seems to me duty leads me.43

I am not here concerned to examine in any detail how MacGregor succeeded in applying these principles, or even whether such ideas were the best possible to be applied at the time. What is relevant is the sincerity of his writing, and I do feel that his actions support his words. So it can be argued that by 1886, after 12 years of serving with native races, he had developed a feeling of a paternalist duty.

These reasons — the inefficiency of much of the rest of the staff and his satisfaction in doing administrative work, his financial need and his ambition, and this concept of paternalist duty towards primitive peoples — when taken in sum meant that MacGregor had by the end of his years in Fiji become more than a doctor with an interest in scientific research: he was now primarily a Colonial Administrator. As the head of the government of British New Guinea and Lagos he was able to apply many of his ideas and to find satisfaction in his career. As well, he was to receive much support and praise from the Colonial Office. But this was a temporary phase and his last two governorships — of Newfoundland and Queensland — were far less satisfying, even if Lord Bryce felt especially from his handling of the Newfoundland fishing crisis with the U.S.A. that he was "a model of what a colonial governor should be".44 I want to suggest an answer to my question — how far was the Colonial Office prepared to go in recognizing good administration? — by analyzing the reactions to certain of MacGregor’s policies in Lagos.

In Lagos MacGregor governed Africans whom he felt were far more civilized than the Fijians or Papuans. He had to deal with completely detrivialized educated Africans particularly in the town of Lagos, and Yoruba chiefs in the surrounding largely independent states, jealous of their centuries-old traditions. MacGregor tried to apply ideas developed since Fiji of ruling through native institutions, both in Lagos and in his negotiations with the heads of these inland states. In both cases his policies led to clash: in Lagos with the educated Africans who felt that he was holding back the development of their individual independence — Lugard quotes about MacGregor, in what is a justifiable criticism, his view of "mission-educated young men who live in the villages interfering with the native councils and acting as correspondents for the mendacious native press".45 In his dealings with the inland states he was to clash with Colonial Office policies.

A Nigerian, Aderibigbe, in his London doctoral thesis on the "Expansion of the Lagos Protectorate" analyses MacGregor’s difficulties in the following way:

MacGregor was a governor whose administrative brilliance no one could deny. It was largely owing to his endeavours in Lagos that the Colonial

43 MacGregor to Gordon, 5 June 1886, Stanmore Papers.
44 As quoted in The Dictionary of National Biography. (Bryce was British Ambassador at Washington while MacGregor was in Newfoundland.)
Office formally approved, in principle, the policy of ruling as far as possible through the Chiefs. What is more remarkable is MacGregor’s patient appreciation of the political arrangements, the laws and customs of the Yoruba people. For this he was personally admired by the leading educated Africans, whose prejudices he also tried to respect. Yet, the irony of the situation was that in the end MacGregor had to fall foul of these same educated Africans on the treaty rights of Chiefs whose interest he aspired to safeguard. Not without significance has [the French writer, Baillaud] observed that MacGregor tried to get the best of both worlds during his governorship in Lagos.46

In Lagos, indeed, some of the more modern problems concerning the ends of colonial rule were to be faced by MacGregor and the Colonial Office. In Fiji and British New Guinea policies without clear end aims could be applied without much criticism: the future was not urgent when there was little desire for self-rule. The difficulties arising from attempts to preserve parts of a cultural whole were not so obvious: chiefs whose rule was already being challenged within the society could be propped up temporarily by the alien British without too many stresses appearing. But this was less so in Lagos where definition of policies for the future, and even of eventual end aims was more urgent, where stresses in native societies were obvious, where the educated Africans were already foreseeing eventual independence.

MacGregor looked at the problems of colonial rule with a concept of a duty to preserve by peaceful means something he felt was worthwhile in native society. As he justly said, “I ... know every large town and every great chief in this territory, and ... have studied native institutions on the spot in every one of these great communities”, and he felt that all traditional groups were represented on the Native Central Council, which he began in 1901: “The whitecap chiefs, the native trader’s guild, the leading Mohammadans, the head of the house of Docemo, the Bales and chiefs of some of the neighbouring towns were all selected and appointed to the Council ... so far as I know without a single dissentient voice in the community.”47 He respected the great chiefs and they in their turn respected him as shown when one chief referred to his popular sobriquet “the natives’ friend”.48 or when he took the Chief (the Alake) to Abeokuta on a visit to Great Britain hoping to show him some of the advantages of civilization which could be introduced among his own people.

MacGregor was not unaware of the problem of changing native society. Admitting in 1901 the general tendencies for communities to break away from their chiefs’ authority, he said “in the interest of good government [this] has to be, and is being, combatted. In all such cases the policy followed is to support the authority of the paramount chief.”49 On another occasion he said:

47 7 February 1902, CO 147 160/8920; and see 16 May 1902, CO 147/161/23840.
48 19 May 1902, CO 147/161, on 23832 (see also 23839 and 23845).
It is manifest that this country should be ruled by the old, well-established, chiefly families, to whom the administration, in their own way, of certain districts is hereditary. The great chiefs are, with very few exceptions, aware that things are changing fast here and that they must advance with them in spite of their conservatism.50

On the other hand, the Colonial Office policy, naturally beginning with British interests, tended to discount the rights of the chiefs whenever there was a clash and did not object to the use of force.51 Chamberlain agreed in 1901 about "ruling as far as possible through the chiefs"52 but it became manifest that this maxim had limitations. Merchants interested in developing trade with Lagos and its hinterland were critical of MacGregor who refused there, as in Fiji, to place commercial interests above native rights.53

In the Colonial Office the head of the West African Departments, Sir Reginald Antrobus, was condemnatory: "the policy of Sir William MacGregor ... in laying stress upon the independence of Abeokuta and Ibadan, instead of paving the way for their being brought under control, constituted a grave danger",54 or, on a more personal level: "I am afraid that Sir William is making a mistake, which will cause trouble to his successor, in addressing and allowing himself to be addressed by the Alake as if they were equals".55

Clearly the approach of the Colonial Office was complex, for the British government had to weigh various economic pressures and political relationships — as with neighbouring French and German states — besides humanitarian pressure from bodies such as the Aborigines Protection Society, before deciding its policies. MacGregor appreciated many of the difficulties, and agreed with British expansion to check French claims, but there remains a fundamental clash with his concept of native rule, for this form of indirect rule was unacceptable to the Colonial Office in the early twentieth century when economic gain and political prestige were so manifestly at stake in dealing with these border states.

Besides this clash of policy MacGregor fell foul of an agency of the Colonial Office, the Crown Agents, when he allowed E. Morel to publish, using his

50 11 November 1901, CO 147/157, on 45594.
51 See Antrobus, 7 February 1902 (Chamberlain agreed with this Minute), "In Sierra Leone, Ashanti and now in southern Nigeria we have had to impose our 'protection' by means of military operations. It will be a great point gained if, by means of measures such as this ordinance, the inevitable expansion of British influence over the Egbas and Yorubas can be effected without a conflict". CO 147/157, on 45594.
52 9 March 1901, CO 147/155, on 25259.
53 See e.g. John Holt (Liverpool) to Sir Alfred Jones (both of the local Chamber of Commerce), 16 July 1903, CO 147/168, on 26596.
54 Antrobus, 28 May 1903, CO 147/166/19530. For a possible justification of the Colonial Office consider Antrobus referring to a rising in Abeokuta: "the misfortune is that this rising should have occurred before Sir W.M.'s departure, for I agree ... that advantage ought to be taken of the opportunity to get rid of the 'independence' which is only good for the chiefs and the educated Egbas who use of them [sic] for their own purposes, while it is bad for the people generally and for the development of the country." 23 November 1903, CO 147/167, on 45209.
55 Antrobus, 24 September 1903, CO 147/166, on 35029.
name, in *The Affairs of West Africa* a strong criticism which MacGregor had made at a Manchester meeting of the Chamber of Commerce:

I recognise that my opinion may be entirely wrong on the point, but I do believe that there are men in their graves in this territory some of whom would, in all human probability, have been alive today had the Medical Branch of Construction (which was directed by the Crown Agents) been under the control of the Governor and Chief Medical Officer of the colonies.56

The Crown Agents were hostile to this criticism and insisted on MacGregor’s full apology. The issue was magnified to a generalized criticism of MacGregor: “He has frequently shown great want of judgment in his utterances and never more so than on this occasion”,57 and the Colonial Office went back to earlier strictures against MacGregor’s leadership, or more specifically, his typical impatience with subordinates who disagreed with him. Thus Chamberlain in May 1903 said, “I suppose Sir William MacGregor with all his good qualities is a bad manager of men but he will not remain in Lagos forever”.58

These reasons for ending MacGregor’s governorship were sufficient and preceded his serious illness of September-October 1903. Antrobus said flatly:

It is very undesirable that he should return [to Lagos] both in his own and in the public interests, but when he finds that there is no chance of his getting a first-class government, he may want to go back.59

The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Montague Ommanney, agreeing that MacGregor was quite unfitted for a first-class governorship, later minuted:

He has not been altogether a success at Lagos — and I doubt whether, if his health permits of further tropical service, it will be possible to offer him another government, certainly not a first-class job.60

MacGregor on his side realized that he had been demoted when sent to Newfoundland, but his explanations given to Sir Samuel Griffith were different:

I am not able to return to West Africa. I have given a new trend to government there, and I met with great, almost virulent, opposition to my peace policy. Lagos is the only British colony we possess there that has had no war since I went out. I alone can travel without a great military escort to the most remote corner of the territory. West Africa is the arena for ribbons and crosses, and medals. A man of peace is not wanted nor liked there. Those who at first opposed me bitterly, now ask the Colonial Office that my methods may be maintained. I have not shed a drop of blood in Africa. That is considered phenomenal but is it not a sad and woeful commentary on British rule? The policy of smash in West Africa is I fear an

56 MacGregor to Colonial Office, 8 August 1903, CO 147/166/31878.
57 Ommanney, 21 March 1903, CO 147/168, on 8585.
58 Chamberlain, 7 May 1903, CO 147/165, on 13757.
59 Antrobus, 13 November 1903, CO 147/167, on 40871. MacGregor had asked for the governorship of Mauritius or Jamaica.
60 Ommanney, 21 December 1903, CO 147/167, on 45581.
outcome of military imperialism. Why can they not adopt and practice elsewhere a peaceful imperial idea which you so successfully carried out in Australasia? It grieves me now that all the little special knowledge and experience I possess should be utterly useless . . . what vexes me is that I can do nothing whatever [in Newfoundland] that will be of any use to me or any other person.61

He could well feel that he was a failure, but it was a failure that does not deny how often he had faced, in Lagos and elsewhere, medical or more general problems relevant to modern colonial rule. Further, in so far as this failure arose from a clash with the policy of the British Colonial Office, it — like other aspects of his colonial career — well illustrates the limitations on the independence of any British governor.

Despite his successes as an administrator, particularly in British New Guinea, he was unable to be accepted as a first-class governor and his skilful administration in Newfoundland could not completely remove this impression in the Colonial Office. But this should not invalidate the judgments of Bryce, Aderbigbe or Morrell, which clearly I would endorse, that he was an outstanding colonial administrator: indeed, it has been well said that “an aura of success or failure has attached itself to the careers of [colonial governors] for reasons only slightly related to their individual talents”.62

---

61 MacGregor to Griffith, 14 July 1904, Griffith Papers. His fears, expressed thirteen years before, had been confirmed: “To me, . . . it has seemed a disgrace to the nation and the century how Christian England has trafficked in African matters. I am afraid were I to write the history of the last twenty years I should say the God of England was gold. I have not yet decided [what is] to me most hateful contemptible, the religious cupidity of the old invading Spaniards, or the selfish, hypocritical dealings of our own country on the African continent.” MacGregor to Gordon, 21 May 1891, Stanmore Papers.

The late 1880's and the early 1890's have customarily been taken as pivotal years for the understanding of Australian nationalism for it was at this time that a vocal and assertive Australianism manifested itself. Recent studies by Robin Gollan and Russel Ward have removed part of the distortion attaching to the traditional picture of this awakening of an Australian national consciousness. By showing something of the political and social growth of the values and ideals of a distinctive Australian nationalism they have helped give perspective to the happenings of a decade. Equally, however, the traditional picture has been distorted by being foreshortened at this end of the time scale. If the late 1880's and early 1890's saw the forceful expression by radical nationalists of the ideology of Australian nationalism which was to prevail, the first decade and a half of the Commonwealth saw the legislative efforts to implement these ideals. Still raw and sensitive, it is nonetheless a more responsible nationalism which is apparent in the new century, the jagged teeth of the 1880's honed by the achievement of federation, by economic growth and prosperity, by extending agreement on national values, and by the shifting balance of world power.

The expression of Australian nationalism in the new century in domestic developments, in art, and in literature, has already been considered in some detail by writers such as Greenwood. Its expression in terms of Australian attitudes to the imperial connection and in terms of Australia's developing national position within the British Empire has received little detailed consideration except in the constitutional field. This neglect has had the justification that during these years Australian energies were preoccupied with building a nation within Australia while the international interests of the Empire were left substantially in the hands of the British government. Although there is considerable truth in this view, the heavy emphasis on it has falsified the complete picture. Once it became almost universally accepted, as it was by 1900, that Australian nationalism was compatible with continued Empire membership, a form of


Empire imperialism became a component of the nationalism of possibly the majority of Australians, and to underestimate this element is to misinterpret Australian nationalism at that time. Yet, at the same time, Australia did have its regional, social, and economic interests which did not always square with those of Britain, so that while an extensive loyalty to the imperial connection continued, Australia nevertheless moved gradually towards national independence within the framework prescribed by its dual loyalties.

It is with several aspects of this gradual movement towards national independence that this paper is concerned. In the first section an effort is made to determine the prevailing understanding of Australian national aspirations and of Australian attitudes to the imperial connection in order to define the broad limits within which Australian imperial relations were to be conducted. In terms of the limits imposed by these attitudes, the second and third sections attempt to appraise the movement towards increased national independence which occurred in the two major fields of relations at this time, economics and defence.

I

It was clear by 1900 that, providing Great Britain's power remained sufficient to protect both her European interests and her Pacific Empire, Australia would move only gradually into the orbit of fully fledged powers controlling their own independent foreign policy. The Australian Constitution Bill did confer on the Commonwealth Government control of its own external affairs, but Joseph Chamberlain, discussing the bill, made it abundantly clear that the British Government was in no way abdicating its authority over "those common interests . . . which form the peculiar sphere of the central authority of the Empire". Nor did the fathers of the Constitution intend that there should be an abdication of this central authority. The bill expressly provided that Australia was "constitutionally a subordinate and not an independent sovereign community or state" and the title "Commonwealth" was seen by Quick and Garran as aspiring to convey the idea of a nation, like the American Commonwealth, only "in a restricted and potential sense".

To many observers in the 1880's, it had not been at all apparent that Australia would enter on its national existence in this sober fashion. The Honorable T. A. Brassey observed that in 1887 "it was an open question whether Australia would remain an integral part of the Empire or not". B. R. Wise stated in 1900:

I certainly did not anticipate at that time [1888] that in so short a period of twelve years the then prevalent indifference on the part of Great Britain

---

5 Ibid., p. 312.
6 Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute (1902-3), XXXIV, 6-7. (Hereafter P.R.C.I.)
and suspicion on ours would have given place to the mutual confidence which is now so significant of the relations between the two countries.\(^7\)

Though there was a residue of republicanism in 1900, the separation movements were a spent force. One ardent republican paper of the late 1880's, the *Boom­erang*, had gone out of effective existence after Lane left the editorship in 1890. The other, the *Bulletin*, had modified its platform from republicanism to "alliance not dependence".\(^8\) The Republican Union and the Republican Leagues of the late 1880's had died "of anaemia".\(^9\) The Australian Natives' Association with a membership of 20,000 in 1900 had changed its policy from one which regarded separation as tenable to a policy "devotedly loyal".\(^10\) The Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, which in 1889 had regarded separation as regrettable but inevitable, saw good reason in 1900 to strengthen imperial ties; and the Chairman of its board of directors, Carey, played a leading role in organizing a bushmen's contingent for despatch to the Boer War. Queensland, which in 1888 had returned a "national" party, partly because of its anti-British election campaign, was the first Australian government to offer troops for the Boer War in 1899; republican or separatist sentiments which had been expressed by both protectionist and free trade leaders in New South Wales in 1888 now found no voice except from a few Labor members.\(^11\) It is not the purpose of this paper to explain in detail why the extensive discontent of the 1880's was converted to support for the Empire by 1900. To make clear, however, the climate of opinion within which governments had to operate in their external relations from 1900-14, it is necessary to consider briefly both the prevailing conception of Empire loyalty that had emerged by 1900 and to consider the understanding of national aspirations which were dominant. They imposed broad limits on the freedom of government action and helped determine the lines along which Australia would move to independent national status within the Empire structure.

The first emphatic evidence that the anti-imperialist, Australian nationalism, which the *Bulletin* continued to espouse until 1905, did not have the support of the rank and file Australian became apparent in the Australian reaction to the Boer War. Though there is no certain way of recapturing the pulse of opinion at that time, the evidence does lean heavily to the view that Australian opinion overwhelmingly favoured Australian participation on the side of Great Britain. So substantial did this opinion appear to be that in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia only three members of the political Labor parties continued to oppose Australian participation by December 1899 – January 1900 when the question of despatching a second contingent was discussed. Three months earlier, forty-four of the Labor members had openly

\(^7\) *Bulletin*, 5 May 1900.
\(^8\) Ibid., 10 August 1901.
\(^10\) *P.R.C.L.*, XXXII (1900-1), 66 and XXXIV (1902-3), 6.
\(^11\) See e.g. *N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly (1887-88), XXXII, 4785. (Hereafter *N.S.W. P.D.*
opposed participation. There was no doubt that the surprisingly spirited resistance by the Boers and the moral support of the Boers by Britain’s European rivals was part of the reason why not only Labor but also some non-Labor members who had initially opposed Australian intervention now reversed their attitudes; there is no doubt either that all politicians of all parties were convinced that public opinion enthusiastically favoured Australia’s active participation in the campaign.\(^{12}\) Even the small number within and without Parliament who continued openly to express opposition, the *Bulletin*, the *Catholic Advocate*, Professor Wood and his Anti-War League, Holman, Higgins, Murray, Thomas, Christopher Brennan, and a few country papers such as Holman’s *Grenfell Vedette* accepted that their viewpoint was that of a small minority.\(^{13}\)

There was of course no single factor creating this approval but in general the attitude was determined by a desire both to help the Empire “right or wrong”, and to demonstrate Australia’s growing nationalist status. In the opinion of Professor Wood and of two other contemporary historians, Turner and Coghlan, it was the strong imperialist feeling that was basic. “It was”, wrote Turner, “the practical expression of a sentiment that the lion’s whelps were ready at the slightest call to rally around the national flag.”\(^{14}\) On the other hand, the belief that Australian participation was an expression of Australian national growth was also widely held. Richard Jebb, who had been in Australia at the time, remarked that

> Some of the most wholehearted supporters of the sending of contingents were nationalists who knew that the undertaking of responsibility would develop national self-respect, and the respect of the authorities in London for Australian nationhood.\(^{15}\)

And B. R. Wise justified his support in terms which displayed a remarkably modern conception of Australian imperial relations:

> A federated Australia able to protect herself and ready to play her proper part in the protection of the British Empire, by guarding British interests in the East, may be in a position far sooner than anyone had dared to hope to make the alliance with the other free communities of the British Empire which was the political ideal of Sir Henry Parkes, from which you accused me of having departed.\(^{16}\)

\(^{12}\) N.S.W. P.D. (August – November 1899), C, 1374 ff., and (December 1899), CII, 3504, 3528; *Vic. Parl. Debs.*, XCII, 1790 and XCIII, 2864; *Q. Parl. Debs.*, LXXII, 479 and LXXXIII, 1554; *S.A. Parl. Debs.* (1899), pp. 661 and 1075; in the W.A. and Tasmanian Parliaments there was no opposition to the despatch of the first contingent.

\(^{13}\) See H.V. Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader* (Sydney, 1942), Chaps. XIX and XXI. The Anti-War League petition, circulated late in 1901, secured only 1,206 signatures.


\(^{16}\) *Bulletin*, 5 May 1900.
Whichever of these sentiments was more significant in moulding public opinion cannot be determined, but from this time until the conscription split, at least, there could be no doubt that an Empire war was an Australian war not for constitutional reasons but because opinion favoured participation. Reduced to the least sentimental level, as it was by Hughes, the view was that an attitude of neutrality by one part of the Empire when others were engaged in international warfare was “incompatible with any form of alliance”. Expressed in its most total form as it was by Fisher on the eve of World War I, Australia was ready to stand by Britain “to our last man and our last shilling”. When the issue was joined Australia showed itself to be “substantially unanimous” in approving Australian participation. It was clear, then, that from the 1890’s, when Australia was caught up in the wave of imperialism sweeping Europe, public opinion favoured Australia’s continued active membership of the Empire and favoured it to the extent that an Empire war was an Australian war. As the Boer War had illustrated, this sentiment towards the Empire imposed one set of limits on the freedom of government action.

The limits imposed by nationalist opinion are not so readily defined. There was, however, a remarkable degree of unanimity achieved by 1907 in the broad definition of Australian nationalist values. In that year Hackett, whom Deakin described as being in the tradition of the British philosophical radicals, expounded the objectives of Australian nationalism. His definition was accepted by Deakin, the leader of the Protectionist Party and by Hughes, one of the most aggressive as well as one of the most able Labor leaders. Australia, said Hackett,

> desires that there should be defence without militarism; hence her conception of the form in which the Commonwealth should assist in the defence of the Empire; that there should be development of her country and employment for her people; hence her feeling towards protection; that there should be no infiltration of undesirable aliens and low-waged workers; hence her immigration restrictions. I may add that she requires that there should be equality of opportunity for all; hence the contributions of millions yearly by the state to the cause of education. And all these purposes it is impossible not to see she is prepared to urge forward as national objects, with such light and means as she may find at her disposal.

Hughes found himself “greatly surprised” that he was “almost entirely in accord with the lecturer” and stated that he “would say that Dr. Hackett had presented a fair and impartial statement of the opinions and ideals of Australia”. Deakin believed that in Hackett's “brief recital of the creed of Australia today”

---

17 Sydney Morning Herald, 25 July 1911. Hughes made this statement in reply to a very considerable outburst of feeling provoked by Prime Minister Fisher having been misreported in the Review of Reviews. He was reported as having said that “if we thought the war unjust, and England’s enemy in the right — we would haul down the flag and start on our own”. Fisher denied having made this statement. S.M.H., 31 July 1911.

18 E. Scott, Australia During the War, Vol. XI of Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18 (Sydney, 1936), p. 22; and see pp. 23 ff. for a survey of Australian opinion towards participation.
he had "unimpeachably and most accurately expressed" Australian aspirations.\(^{19}\) And there is no shortage of additional, corroborative evidence in the legislation of Australia, in regard to protection, new protection, defence, immigration restriction, and social welfare legislation that such values were manifestly the majority-supported values by this time.\(^ {20}\) It was with the external implications of the pursuit of these objectives that Australian-British relations were largely concerned from 1900 to 1914. But before considering their consequences for the development of Australia's national status within the Empire, it is necessary to mention, briefly, several further influences stemming from the pre-Commonwealth period, which also continued to condition some Australian attitudes towards national development within the Empire structure.

The separatist and near-separatist movements within Australia in the late 1880's, although they did overlap, fall roughly into three categories. Probably least significant by this time were the remnants of the Australian version of the Manchester School, men such as McMillan, the "representative of the importers" and "leader of the commercial class" in Sydney. He was reported by Dilke in 1890 as having stated "not long ago that he believed the present relations with the Mother Country might last twenty years, and would be succeeded, to his regret, by independence."\(^ {21}\) This Australian equivalent of "little Englandism" was already dated by European imperialism and soon ceased to be professed. By the end of the 1890's, the emphasis of the argument had changed to advocacy of continued Empire membership and support for either orthodox free trade or Empire free trade. The significance of the movement for the new century was that it left a residue of loyal Empire imperialists who possessed no national policy towards the Empire. In the federal arena, they gathered under the aegis of the free trade banner and argued for Australian freedom on fiscal questions and the uncritical acceptance of British control of Empire foreign policy and defence. But without a coherent policy of national development, and mortgaged to an increasingly unpopular fiscal policy, they ceased to be of effective political importance after about 1907. To that stage, however, they did present a viewpoint which had considerable press support.

Of greater moment was the discontent of the more militant nationalists. In essence, it was the expression of an uncertain colonial nationalism's reaction to the dilemma created for the British Empire by the surge of European imperialism. The disinterest of the Gladstone Liberals in a forceful imperialism galled Australian expansionists and those sensitive to Australian weakness in a Pacific being occupied by Germany and France and in which Russia was thought to have designs; but the revived British imperialism, if it took the form of closer Empire association, might jeopardize colonial freedoms already won.

---

\(^ {19}\) P.R.C.I., XXXVIII (1906-7), 239 ff.
\(^ {20}\) See Greenwood, op. cit.
re-establish the ascendancy of the Anglo-Australian and endanger “the social and political rights” of native born Australians.\textsuperscript{22}

The reaction to this dilemma took one of three forms. A small but by no means unenlightened group of nationalists which included Deakin, Service, and Griffith, tended to lend their weight to the idea of some kind of imperial federation in order to win for the self-governing colonies a voice in the making of Empire foreign policy. However, the advocacy of imperial federation by British Conservatives and the support which the Imperial Federation League gained from Australian conservative interests to 1900, made the movement highly suspect in the eyes of the more radical wing of the Australian Natives’ Association and of the militant nationalists. More generally, there appears to have been an extensive apathy towards the League’s essays in planning projected Empire constitutions.\textsuperscript{23} Even so, the role of the League in Australia is not to be lightly dismissed, particularly after 1905 when Deakin assumed its presidency. Not only Deakin’s 1905 presidential address, but also the continued friendly association of members of the League with the senior officers of the Dominion section of the Colonial Office, kept before the attention of these officers the interest of an influential group of Australians in obtaining a voice in Empire foreign policy.

Ironically, because the imperial federation movement accepted the existence of colonial nationalism and was seeking a method of reconciling it with Empire membership, the emergence of the imperial federation movement led to the outbreak of organized republicanism in Australia.\textsuperscript{24} As an organized movement it attracted little support, but the sentiments had a more pervasive influence than the membership of the Republican Leagues and Unions suggests because of the influence of the \textit{Bulletin} and the \textit{Boomerang} on the shearers and miners.\textsuperscript{25}

The version of republicanism which they preached envisaged the creation of a utopian, egalitarian state, safe from the evils of the Old World by severing its political ties with them.

The defeat of republicanism was implicit in the setback Labor idealism suffered during the 1890 strikes and the 1893 depression. The increasing constitutionalism of the movement as it turned to political action, canvassing the support of the small farmer, the small employer, and the lower middle class, converted it temporarily to a movement with empirical objectives.\textsuperscript{26} There was no strong revival of republicanism in the new century but the ideals which, though not new, had been co-ordinated and baptised in the first large class conflict in Australian history did become ingrained in the fabric of Labor

\textsuperscript{22} Imperial Federation League. \textit{Report of Inaugural Public Meeting} (Melbourne, 1885), p. 4.
\textsuperscript{24} B. Mansfield, “The Background to Radical Republicanism in New South Wales in the Eighteen-Eighties”, \textit{Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand}, V, No. 20 (May 1953).
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.}
thinking — isolationism, egalitarianism, anti-militarism, opposition to hereditary position, to titles, to pomp and ceremony. In the prosperous days from 1906 to 1913, they were increasingly pushed aside in the thinking of federal political Labor at least, though they remained strong in the militant centres of unionism. Conscription provoked them into full strength but by that time the Empire had evolved sufficiently for them not to be translated into republicanism, except amongst some radical Australian Irish. Nevertheless these continuing attitudes, while not denying Australia's willing participation in Empire wars, did contribute to defining the extent of this participation.

Falling between the republicans and orthodox free traders, and best symbolized by the Australian Natives' Association, was the third group who at least regarded separation as an "open question". This group believed that Australian national autonomy within the Empire demanded that Anglo-Australianism should give pride of place to Australianism and that Australia's imperial interests should be regarded as imperial interests and not as colonial aspects of British imperial interests. The failure of the Imperial Federation League in the 1880's and the achievement of Australian federation appeared to ensure the first objective.\(^{27}\) The decline of European rivalry in the Pacific after 1890 and the sympathetic and active Colonial Office administration under Joseph Chamberlain gave promise of the achievement of the second.\(^{28}\) Nevertheless the possibility of Australia's regional interests not being adequately safeguarded by Britain had been brought to the forefront, and after the defeat of Russia by Japan in 1904 the revival of regional defence fears played once again a substantial role in advancing Australian national cohesion and Australia's national status within the Empire.

It was the combination of the fears and aspirations outlined, the growth of the Australian economy, the naval challenge to Britain by Germany, and the economic challenge to Britain by Germany and the United States, which determined the broad lines of Australia's national development within the Empire.

II

Perhaps the most striking feature of Australian attitudes to Australian-British economic relations from 1900 to 1914 is the weight of interested opinion which favoured the closest economic relations. In itself this was a signal illustration, not only of the belief in the economic value of the United Kingdom to Australia, but also of the substantial satisfaction of the body of Australian nationalists with the economic and social evolution of the self-governing section of the Empire. There was no influential political opinion, either Labor or non-Labor, which saw Australia as a colony being exploited by British economic interests despite the very significant amount of British capital invested in Australia. In the early years of the Commonwealth, the *Bulletin* sporadically

\(^{27}\) See, e.g., *Imperial Federation League, Presidential Address, Mr. Justice Holroyd* (Melbourne, March 1900).

\(^{28}\) See, e.g., *P.R.C.I.,* XXXII (1900-1), 70.
made this accusation but even then it did not address its complaint against Britain. The cure, it believed, was in the Labor Party's own hands. It is significant that at the very time when the Left wing in Britain was marshalling for its attack on economic imperialism, spearheaded by Hobson's brilliant study, the majority of Australian political Labor was not opposed to an Empire policy of mutual preference which, the Australian free trader did not hesitate to point out, was designed to return the "Tory Imperialists" to power in Britain. But with growing Australian prosperity, with economic protection becoming assured, and with the growing promise of political office, political Labor in Australia was not concerned with doctrinaire political theory. It wrote Left-wing anti-imperialism back into its platform only under the tension of war and the conscription conflict.

But if majority interested opinion favoured the closest Australian-British economic relations, these ties were in fact loosened if not weakened over this period. Britain in 1914 still occupied the predominant position in relation to the Australian economy and there was little likelihood of any other country usurping her place. Nonetheless by 1914, relative to the 1880's, Australia was much less dependent on British capital; proportionately to the total, British trade with Australia had declined significantly; there was extensive Australian criticism of imports from Britain; and the hopes of the advocates of mutual preference had not been realized. These developments helped advance Australian nationalism and Australia's national status within the Empire in two main ways. The growth and prosperity of the Australian economy, particularly after 1906, and the subsequent ability of Australia to redeem some loans as well as to finance increasingly its own development from its own resources provided the economic basis for the pursuit of bi-partisan policies with national and imperial implications, in particular policies of defence and encouragement to immigration. More basically perhaps, if Herbert Burton's criteria of national economic growth are economically acceptable, they represented the gradual movement of the Australian economy from a quasi-colonial to a more national level.

In political terms, the factor which determined that Australia would develop away from Britain economically was the decision to go protectionist. This provided no constitutional problems since Britain had long conceded to the self-governing colonies the right to determine their own fiscal policies. As early as 1859 the general principle was expressed and though there were heated disputes from 1869 to 1873 between Australia and Great Britain about the continuing restrictions preventing the colonies imposing discriminatory duties on imports this question, too, was resolved with the withdrawal of the relevant imperial Act in 1898. Of the remaining restraints two became issues of some moment after 1901 — control of merchant shipping and the question of the right of the

30 E.g. S.M.H., 20 May 1903; Melbourne Argus, 1 June 1903.
dominions to withdraw from commercial treaties — but neither was in the least likely to jeopardise Australia’s Empire membership. But if there was no question of any agitation for withdrawal on economic grounds the success of protection did determine that only an economic relationship which allowed Australia to protect adequately her secondary industries would be satisfactory to the majority of the people. This virtually precluded either the possibility of imperial federation or of the more limited proposals by the Chamberlain imperialists for an imperial zollverein. A system of imperial preference was the only possible type of economic co-operation. The debate which the 1903 tariff reform proposals of Chamberlain stimulated provided an illuminating illustration of the limits set by both Australian and British economic policies on Empire economic co-operation.

Australia’s expressed attitudes to the Chamberlain proposals ranged the full scale from total rejection to ardent support. Though the Bulletin was initially suspicious of the benefits of mutual preference to Australia,32 the protectionists generally favoured the scheme. Their argument as it was advanced by Deakin was three pronged. Conceiving protection as a national policy, they saw mutual preference as its external complement. The groups not directly considered under Australian protection were the “foreign trader”, the pastoralist, the farmer and, to a lesser extent, the mine owner. The protectionists refused to accept the argument of the foreign trader that there would be any decline in overall foreign trade as a result of protection; they argued, moreover, that protection complemented by mutual preference would considerably increase Australia’s trade. In fact the foreign trader was of little real concern to the protectionist.33 Nor was the pastoralist of great concern. Deakin pointed out at the 1907 Imperial Conference that Australian wool and minerals were finding adequate markets in Germany and France despite the fact that these countries were raising protective barriers against the importing of other primary products.34 Though wool remained the largest Australian export, the protectionist had little fear in the increasingly prosperous years from 1903 that Australia would lack adequate markets for the sale of its wool and minerals. Australia’s other primary products, however, appeared to be in a less secure position. Deakin stated at the 1907 Conference that the Australian production of these goods was increasing more rapidly than the population’s capacity to consume them. Expanding markets were needed but, except for wool and ores, the great consuming markets of Europe were closed to Australian primary produce. The expansion of British demand for these goods, Deakin argued, would benefit at once all classes of producers in Australia and British manufacturers since the development of primary industry would encourage growth of population which would produce larger home markets for both Australian and British manufacturers.35

---

32 Bulletin, 13 June 1903.
34 Ibid., p. 240.
35 Ibid.
The second prong of the argument of the preferentialists was that imperial preference was a policy in keeping with the self-dignity of the dominions. Deakin asserted that a fundamental principle of mutual preference was that it should not threaten the liberty of each state to frame its own tariffs to suit its domestic interests. And the third strand of the argument was that the scheme would benefit Empire organization and growth. Deakin stated his “political gospel” on this point:

... Anything that encourages the development of imperial organisation which without limiting the self-governing powers of the several parts, or unduly trespassing on the individual liberty of the citizen shall compact them together in co-operative relations for the discharge of social duties, political obligations, and industrial efforts, every possible increase in co-operation — marks a higher stage in civilisation giving greater opportunities to the individual and greater strength to the nation.36

To the political free trader, protectionist arguments for mutual preference based on Empire sentiment were, in Reid’s phrase, “a mean, sneaking, disloyal fraud”, an excuse for establishing a higher protective tariff under the guise of trade concessions to Great Britain.37 Free traders were not, however, in agreement in their interpretation of Australian free trade nor consequently in their attitudes to the principle of mutual preference.

At one extreme were the “foreign traders”, mainly importers such as McMillan and Bruce Smith, supported in their attitudes by the weight of the free trade press, the Sydney Morning Herald, the Sydney Daily Telegraph, the Melbourne Argus, and the Brisbane Telegraph.38 This group was intensely loyal to the British connection, many of them advocating the uncritical acceptance of British control of Empire foreign policy and, at this stage, supporting the payment of subsidies to an exclusively Admiralty-controlled navy. They were opposed, however, to any restriction on Australia’s overseas trade and so were opposed to all schemes of preference. One argument which they advanced consistently was that preferential tariffs must lead to French and German retaliation and so endanger the continental market for Australian wool.39

It appears, however, that in this attitude this wing of the free trade political party and press was not reflecting the views of the primary producers whose case it purported to argue. The Australasian Pastoralists’ Review discussed the question of preference frequently between 1903 and 1907 and remained convinced of its economic and sentimental value to Australia and the Empire. It believed that its value for Australian meat, butter and wheat was unequivocal and though in one issue it conceded that the wool industry “is as likely to be hurt as helped by preferential trade arrangements”,40 it soon revised this attitude. Germany and France, it argued, were unlikely to retaliate against Australian

36 Ibid., p. 238.
37 Annual Register (London, 1903).
38 E.g. S.M.H., 20 May 1903; Melbourne Argus, 1 June 1903; Brisbane Telegraph, 19 May 1903.
39 E.g. S.M.H., 1 June 1903; Sydney Daily Telegraph, 2 October 1906.
40 Australasian Pastoralists’ Review, 16 July 1903.
wool "as their manufacturers cannot get the fine wools they want in sufficient quantities elsewhere". During these years the journal gave evidence that mutual preference was supported actively by leading New South Wales pastoralists.

Nor did the extreme free trader and anti-preferentialist have the unequivocal support of the major insurance, banking, and mercantile journal, the Australasian Insurance and Banking Record. Strongly free trade and bitterly anti-Labor, it nevertheless continued to discuss the Chamberlain proposals dispassionately long after the extreme free trade press had condemned them. Initially it saw the proposal as being potentially momentous, of vital importance to all Australian producing, financial, and mercantile interests. It appreciated, however, the major difficulties which were to kill the schemes, the fact that the colonies would not concede their protectionist tariffs and that Britain could scarcely be expected to buy food on a dear market.

The moderate attitude of these journals was possibly more representative of majority Australian free trade opinion than was the extreme view. It is impossible to be certain of this for the victory of protection in Australia meant that the free trader was never tested critically regarding his precise attitude to imperial preference. There was, however, a considerable body of expressed opinion willing to support a scheme of Empire free trade if it could have been established.

The return of the British Liberals in 1906 and the rejection of the Deakin arguments at the 1907 Imperial Conference virtually ended the debate. There was no possibility of resurrecting mutual preference while the British Liberals remained in office. In the 1907–8 tariffs the Deakin Government did make provision for unilateral preference to Britain. This tariff provided for a general duty of fifteen per cent against British goods and twenty per cent against goods imported from foreign countries. As such it was designed to protect adequately Australian secondary industry against all outside competition and then to offer Britain preference against the foreigner. The preference was, as Hancock has remarked, "a concession to sentiment that is not allowed to interfere with business". Insofar as it was possible to determine the consequences for British exports to Australia of the preferential tariffs, the Commonwealth statistician found to 1914 that they were having no "differential effect".

Perhaps, then, Australian preferences were of no immediate material benefit

41 Ibid., 17 November 1903.
42 Ibid., 16 December 1903.
43 Australasian Insurance and Banking Record, 20 June 1903, 20 January 1905.
44 E.g. South Australian Register, 19 May 1903; P.R.C.I. (1901–2), XXXIII, 214; E.A. Harney, "Imperialism from an Australian Standpoint", P.R.C.I. (1904–5) XXXVI, 112. And see statement by G. Wall, President of Sydney Chamber of Commerce — "with strong British inclinations, he favoured trade within the Empire". Coloured Labour Question, Press Cuttings, 28 July 1905, Mitchell Library.
46 Commonwealth Year Book (Canberra, No. 7, 1914), p. 559.
to the mother country. Yet the sentiment which actuated their introduction and their potential importance is not to be dismissed. They brought Australia into line with New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada, all of whom offered preferential tariff rates, and in this way helped pave the way for the introduction of mutual preference in the postwar period. More significant, perhaps, was their symbolic value, an indication of a positive willingness to seek a method of reconciling national and economic self-interest with Empire membership. And perhaps most revealing was the evidence of the debates on both mutual preference and unilateral preference that the Australian economy was discarding many of the remnants of its colonial character. The extreme free trader who thought of the cities as commercial entrepôts for a colonial hinterland was in a small minority. He did not command the support of the growing industries of butter, wheat, and meat, nor apparently of the body of pastoralists. Though the Australian Pastoralists' Review could not support tariffs of the height of the 1907–8 tariffs, it did support the growth of Australian manufacture, commending the Australian Natives' Association on its 1905–6 campaign to sell Australian manufactured goods.47

Clearly the Free Trade Party was in a state of disintegration lacking a coherent national policy. This can equally clearly be illustrated in their attitudes to defence. On the other hand, the Deakin protectionists, reinforced by the majority of political Labour, were able to argue, with differences of emphasis, a policy which reflected the majority belief in the national need for the growth of secondary industry and the growth and diversification of primary industry, while still offering some preference within the Empire. These developments were underwritten by the pattern of Australia's trade and finance.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, British exports should have had a favourable market within Australia. Not only had all Australian trade been conducted with or through Britain until 1883,48 thus establishing extensive business associations between the countries and Australian familiarity with British business practice, but to 1913 at least it appeared that the sentiment of the majority of large Australian importers favoured buying British, other things being equal. Of the 27 important business and government representatives who gave evidence before the dominions Royal Commission on Empire trade, 25 made this point directly or indirectly.49 Yet, although the total value of British imports to Australia increased between 1886 and 1914–15 the percentage of imports from the United Kingdom to the total Australian imports declined significantly. Of the principal direct imports the United Kingdom share fell from 89.31 per cent to 69.89 per cent. The value of these imports from the United Kingdom increased from £20,489,513 in 1886 to £30,826,905 in 1914–15

47 *Australasian Pastoralists' Review*, 15 March 1906.
or by 50.45 per cent, but the total value of similar imports increased from £22,937,818 to £44,104,547 or by 92.28 per cent.50

This decline in Britain's position in Australian trade was due to two major external factors and to one emanating from within Australia. The two external causes were the search for overseas markets by continental countries, particularly Germany, and in certain fields, the United States, and the unwillingness or inability of British industry to adapt itself to the demands of the New World.51

The major internal cause was the growth and diversification of Australian exports and the increasing tendency for Australia to ship directly to the importing countries instead of distributing her trade through London. Between 1894–95 and 1909–13 the percentage of exports shipped to the United Kingdom declined from 66.82 per cent to 45.14 per cent. The decline in Australia's export trade with the United Kingdom meant that Australia had to buy less from her.52

Despite the preponderance of Australian tradition and of sentiment in favour of buying British, then, the relative decline in Britain's world industrial position and the development of the Australian economy brought about some loosening of the economic bonds between the two countries. In itself this development was not in the least likely to jeopardize Australia's Empire membership, not only because the United Kingdom continued to be Australia's major market, but also because in the absence of a satisfactory system of mutual preference, a diversification of markets was an essential corollary to Australia's economic growth and as such was likely to help keep Australia content within the Empire. Nonetheless it was evidence of decreasing dependence on Britain and, if Burton's criteria are acceptable economically, of "growing maturity" and of a "decline in the colonial character of the Australian economy".53

The multiplication of Australia's direct trade relations was inevitably paralleled in the decline of Britain's monopoly of the carrying of Australian trade. Until the war, British shipping continued to occupy an outstanding position, about 75 per cent of the tonnage entering and clearing Commonwealth ports still being British in 1912. At the same time, however, the percentage of foreign trade increased between 1881 and 1914 from about 6 per cent to 25 per cent. This increase, noted the Commonwealth Year Book, was "the corollary of the extension of the trade of the Commonwealth with foreign countries".54

The growth of foreign shipping in Australian waters was not welcomed by either the Deakin Governments or the Labor Party. Partly on the grounds of sentiment, partly to encourage the development of Australian shipping, partly because of Labor's interest in protecting Australian seamen against cheap

---

50 Commonwealth Year Book, No. 9, 1916, p. 578.
51 This view was advanced by the Australian witnesses at the Royal Commission and was in agreement with the reports explaining the reasons for the decline in British trade in Australia submitted by R. S. Jaffray of the British Board of Trade in 1905 and B. H. Morgan of the Manufacturers' Association of Great Britain in 1908. Ibid., No. 6, 1913, pp. 623–24.
Asiatic and Indian labour, and partly because of the fear of potentially hostile shipping in Australian waters, the Deakin Governments and the Fisher ministry sought to obtain the agreement of the self-governing section of the Empire to a policy of encouragement of British shipping manned by British seamen. But these efforts to increase British shipping in Australian waters, as well as to write incidentally into the legislation Labor's social and racial aspirations, failed. The core of the problem was stated by Buxton, President of the Board of Trade at the time of the 1911 Imperial Conference:

Out of the 285,000,000 tons of British shipping all the world over no less than 164,000,000 tons go to foreign ports and a comparatively small proportion goes to Australian ports and therefore for the advantage and no doubt the considerable advantage of trade of the Commonwealth, we do not think it would be worthwhile to risk the possibility of disadvantage accruing to the very enormous trade which we have with other Powers.55

Australian support for mutual preference, the worried interest of both Labor and Liberal protectionist governments in maximizing British shipping in Australian waters, and the sentimental inclination of major Australian importers to “buy British” if British industry would produce reasonably competitive goods, were all ample testimony of the interest of dominant, relevant Australian opinion in reinforcing and extending Australian-British economic relations. The British rejection of mutual preference, the failure of the shipping proposals and the decline in British-Australian trade were equally ample testimony that Australia’s relations with Britain in a world context were changing measurably, modifying the colonial character of the Australian economy of the 1880’s. This was equally observable in Australian-British financial relations.

From being one of the major centres of British overseas investment in the 1880’s Australia, in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, ceased to occupy a significant place amongst the borrowers of new capital. The economic significance of this development has been examined in considerable detail in an unpublished work by Dr. A. Hall and the complementary study of Australian public and private capital formation has been and is being intensively investigated by Mr. N. Butlin.56 There are, however, several of the more superficial aspects of its implications for Australian national growth within the British Empire to which reference might be made.

While Australia had remained almost totally dependent on British investment for new development there had been amongst governments and interested groups an acute sensitivity to the prejudices of the British investor. Martin has shown the interest of commercial, land finance, and banking groups in

federation as a possible method of re-establishing British investor confidence in the Australian market after the 1893 slump. An extensive range of similar organizations petitioned the Australian Federation Convention of 1897-98 and the British Government in 1900 against the proposal in the draft federal constitution to restrict appeals to the Privy Council on the grounds that the restriction of appeals would jeopardize, further, Australian credit in Britain. Even Labor governments felt the need to tread warily and when the first Federal Labour Government was returned in 1904 the Prime Minister, Watson, immediately issued a statement assuring the British investor that the Labor Government would not indulge in any schemes of wildcat financing. The Bulletin, strongly opposed to the extent of British economic interest in Australia, was constantly critical of the inadequate stand being taken by political Labor against this form of "sweating Australia".

The sensitivity to the British investor did not extend generally to servility. Certainly in the legislative record of the early years of the Commonwealth there is no evidence that national policies of immigration restriction and social legislation were to be withheld however distasteful they might be to the British investor. But withal, there was still some substance to 1905-6 in Jebb's remark that

the course of self-respect could not escape the pressure, subtle but unmistakable with which the mortgagee knows how to check the independence of his victim. A whisper from the City, and Australian patriots sorrowfully weigh the prospects of the investment loan or the impending conversion against the behests of the national conscience.

From about 1905-6 there was a noticeable change in the relationship in which Australia stood to the British investor. There was a ring of independence in Sowden's claim that the low rates offered Australian securities were repulsing Australian loans from the London market and had led to "the prospect of

57 A. W. Martin, "Economic Influences in the 'New Federation Movement', Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand, VI, No. 21 (November 1953), 64.
58 The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, the City Bank of Sydney, the Savings Bank and the Bank of N.S.W., as well as all other banking companies trading in Victoria and N.S.W.; the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Incorporated Institute of Accountants of Victoria, the Victorian Division of the Society of Accountants and Auditors Incorporated, England, the Accountants and Clerks Association Limited, the Cambrian Society of Victoria, "fifteen or twenty" Victorian insurance companies, the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, the Society of Notaries of Victoria, the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, the Melbourne Chamber of Mines, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, the Melbourne Wool Brokers' Association, the Federal Institute of Accountants, the Victorian Licensed Victuallers' Association, Victorian Employers' Union, the Pastoralists' Association of Victoria and the Southern Riverina, the Council of Geelong and Western District Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Victoria, the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and the Ballarat Agricultural Society; the Australasian Federal League (in S.A.) and the Australasian National League, also of S.A. See Official Records of the Australian Federal Convention (Third Session, Melbourne, 1898) and Papers Relating to the Federation of the Australian Colonies (Cmd. 124 and Cmd. 158).
59 A. N. Smith, Thirty Years: the Commonwealth of Australia, 1901-31 (Melbourne, 1933), p. 86.
60 Bulletin, 19 July 1902.
61 See Jebb, op. cit.
Australia ... securing better treatment in New York". More generally, however, the note of independence was expressed in terms of Australia’s increasing ability to finance its own development. And this probably was the deeper and more permanent significance of the development which had occurred. The prosperity of the late 1870’s and early 1880’s had been financed by an almost fabulous invasion of British money. The prosperity from 1906 called for proportionately much less new capital and a substantial part of the new capital required was able to be raised locally. In the 1880’s virtually the whole of government loan money was raised in London. By 1913 when approximately 70 per cent of the London-issued capital outstanding in Australia was in government loans, the proportion of the national debt floated in Australia had risen to 30.59 per cent. Of the aggregate of loan and company capital in Australasia, Nash estimated that the percentage which was Australasian capital had increased between 1902 and 1912 from about 29 per cent to 43 per cent. Though there must be some reserve felt about Nash’s figures, Hall’s estimate appears soundly grounded. While, then, Australia was still heavily dependent on overseas capital, there is no dispute that after 1893 she did become increasingly self-sufficient, financially. Again if Burton’s criteria are acceptable economically, in the fields of finance as in the field of trade, Australia was “reaching towards maturity”. These developments economically underwrote the achievement of her national aspirations in the field of defence.

III

The subordinate position of the self-governing colonies after 1900 rested basically in the fact that the British Government retained the sole right to determine Empire foreign policy. As late as 1911, Asquith asserted that in relation to “the conduct of foreign policy . . . [and] the conclusion of treaties . . . the responsibility of the imperial parliament . . . could not be shared”. This was an opinion which the governments of Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand did not wish to dispute. It was, however, a statement which in the eyes of the Foreign Office was already qualified by the fact that the self-governing dominions controlled their own armed forces, particularly their own naval units. Although majority Australian opinion, in its support for independent
dominion forces, had not been motivated by a desire to load Australia with responsibility for high questions of Empire foreign policy, nonetheless the establishment of separate forces, particularly navies, did help bridge the final gap between colonial and complete dominion status. The Great War was the catalyst which embroiled dominion leaders in the making of Empire policy, but dominion intrusion into the residual domain of British control had been made by 1911. Australia played an important part in this movement, a role which was the consequence of the prevalent understanding of national dignity, of Deakin's interest in advancing the status of the dominions, and of the increasing cohesion of Australian attitudes regarding defence as a result of German naval development and the marked increase in Japanese power.

Until 1905 there was no urgency in the Australian demand for adequate regional defence and for Australian control of her own defence units. When Barton returned from the 1902 Colonial Conference with the naval agreement under which Australia was to pay £200,000 a year towards the upkeep of an Admiralty-controlled and British-officed unit, there was a considerable popular outcry. Of the speakers who debated the bill in the House of Representatives, 29 were either directly opposed to the agreement or hesitant about accepting while 14 favoured it. The ardent, nationalist press, the Bulletin, the Melbourne Age, the South Australian Register, supported by the Brisbane Courier, strongly criticized the agreement. But the basis of all the criticism was that the bill was an affront to national dignity. Feeling was not sufficiently strong to lead to the defeat of the Government on this issue, probably because there was little real fear for Australian security. Insofar as a threat was anticipated it was Russia which was seen as the most likely enemy of Australia rather than Japan. The fear of Japan occurred after the Russo-Japanese War and was a powerful impetus in advancing Australian national consciousness and in making more urgent the demand for Australian controlled defence forces. It contributed to advancing Australian national independence within the Empire and to increasing the pressure on the Admiralty for a policy of Empire naval strategy more consonant with the fears and aspirations of the self-governing dominions.

With the exception of the Bulletin, Australian press opinion was sympathetic to Japan throughout the Russo-Japanese War. Until the peace the picture which the Australian press painted of Japan was of an idyllic country harshly treated in the past by the great powers. "The present war", said the Brisbane Courier,
“was due to the previous wanton interference with the rights of Japan” and spoke of “the inspiration of national enthusiasm in a just cause”.74 Japan on this occasion, the Sydney Morning Herald argued, should get the fruits of her victory. “There can be little doubt”, wrote the Argus, “that Japan needs the indemnity in order to arm itself effectively against any possibility of revenge on Russia’s part.” The full range of the free trade press, including the free trade but very nationalist South Australian Register, welcomed the opportunity of expanding trade with Japan. But with the final defeat of Russia, and as its implications sank home, soul-searching commenced. Almost overnight the Sydney Morning Herald’s thinking changed as it commenced to argue that “the yellow man has taught the white man a lesson that Australians can neglect only at their peril”. The South Australian Register and the Melbourne Age began to doubt whether the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was an adequate safeguard of Australian interest. For the previously isolationist Bulletin, Australia’s geographically-provided protection against embroilment in world conflicts had evaporated with the outbreak of the war.75 The Australasian Pastoralists’ Review as well as Advance Australia, the journal of the Australian Natives’ Association, reiterated this theme:

It was fashionable to say that as Australia was far removed from Europe her duty was to remain aloof from old world strife. Now the feeling is “Australia is one of the most meanly insured countries on earth and the riches we own are tremendous”.76

Under the impact of this growing disquiet the movement for more adequate national defence took on weight. The National Defence League was established in 1904 and it drew its leaders from the front ranks of all political parties. The Bulletin swung behind the movement, discarding its anti-imperialism. Political Labor and the Labor press temporarily abandoned their opposition to compulsory military training. “Militarism is a curse of the greatest”, said the Worker, “but it is less a curse than the armed occupation of your country by invaders — possibly by invaders of an inferior race.”77 And Labor fought the 1906 election partly in terms of the “Yellow Peril” and the need for a satisfactory system of Australian military and naval defence. The 1908 Conference of the Australian Labor Party carried by 24 votes to 7 Watson’s motion “approving the principle of compulsory military training”.

By 1909 when the first bill providing for compulsory military training was introduced there was little organized opposition to the proposal. The Sydney Daily Telegraph was occasionally critical, repeating the anti-militarist arguments,

74 For press opinion at this time see Brisbane Courier, SMH, Melbourne Argus, SAR, and Melbourne Age, June-September 1905.
75 E.g. Bulletin, 18 February 1904 and 23 March 1905: “The rout of the Russians at Mukden is an event of history more important than any since the fall of Constantinople... Australia is a lonely outpost on the very borders of Asia.”
77 Worker, 15 March 1905.
and the Barrier Truth was outspoken against compulsion. More extensive criticism did develop after the scheme was introduced but much of this was directed against administrative inefficiency, alleged social discrimination and cruel discipline rather than against the principle in itself.78

The introduction of compulsory military training created no constitutional Empire problems. The right of the self-governing colonies to control their own military defence had long been conceded and Britain had withdrawn her last garrison forces from Australia in 1870. In military matters there was no problem of compatibility of Australian Empire membership and Australian national independence. Yet, undoubtedly, in the growing acceptance within Australia from 1904-5 of the need for compulsory military training there was evidence of increasing national cohesion, in no small part the result of geographically determined fears. The underlying problem for Australian-British relations inherent in this development came to the surface in the more vital problem of naval defence.

Between 1905 and 1909 the Australian naval question was settled. The Imperial Defence Conference of 1909 approved the creation of separate navies in the self-governing dominions under the control of the dominion governments, although it was recognized by the dominion governments that in time of war the naval forces would be placed under the general direction of the Admiralty. These navies were to be more than the coastal defence units envisaged by the Admiralty at the 1907 Colonial Conference.79 They were to be distinct fleet units capable of being used as such in war. To make the units effective, it was proposed to reorganize Far Eastern naval deployment by establishing a Pacific fleet to consist of three units based on the East Indies, Australia, and China.80

Although the final stages of the negotiations resulting in this agreement were conducted by the Fisher ministry and the third Deakin Government, when Deakin was in his decline, it was from 1905 to 1908 that Deakin had borne the heat of the battle. And within the Empire he bore it alone. At the 1907 Imperial Conference, Laurier, aware of the French-Canadian opposition to expenditure on naval defence, and aware that the United States had entered on a policy of naval expansion, could only refuse to make a cash contribution and be negative about the possibility of establishing a local navy. In 1909 Canada emerged as one of the dominions favouring an independent fleet unit but it had played no positive role in budging the Admiralty from its 1902 position. "New Zealand in 1907 'subscribed absolutely' to the maxim 'Trust the Admiralty', and to the postulate 'One sea, one Empire, one Navy'." In 1909, New Zealand still "preferred to adhere to her present policy of contributions".81 Cape Colony and Natal in 1907 favoured a local defence unit, while Transvaal was almost an

79 Minutes of Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1907, p. 75.
80 Correspondence and Papers Relating to a Conference with the Representatives of the Self-Governing Dominions on the Naval and Military Defence of the Empire (1909), Cmd. 4948, pp. 20-23.
81 Ibid., p. 19.
inland state. But South African energies were taken up with the possibilities of federation or union.

It would need a separate study to trace the course of Deakin’s negotiations with the Admiralty from 1905 to 1908 and to consider Deakin’s motivation in these negotiations. There are some grounds for assuming that Deakin’s intention was to achieve more than a coastal defence unit and that he was thinking in terms of a more sophisticated conception of nationalism than implied in the wish to remove the smirch on national self-respect of the 1903 agreement. There is reason to believe that his aim was to advance the dominions to full equality of status with Great Britain which meant gaining for them that right of consultation on questions of high foreign policy which, according to Grey, the establishment of independent dominion forces had brought nearer.82 Whatever Deakin’s motivation, it is a reasonable assumption, in view of Grey’s statement, that Deakin’s efforts to establish an Australian navy did advance the dominions closer to the postwar meaning of dominion status.

The Australian reaction to the 1909 agreement indicated the extent to which national agreement on the need for an Australian-controlled navy had advanced between 1902 and 1909. There was not one major newspaper which did not welcome the new arrangement. The less nationalist press, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Argus,83 saw the agreement as retaining the “essential principle” of imperial co-operation while recognizing Australian wishes. The more nationalist press, the Age, the South Australian Register, and the Bulletin, supported by the Brisbane Courier, each emphasized their parental claim to the proposals. Australia, the Bulletin pointed out, would now be defended in the Pacific and not in the North Sea.84

The amicable compromise between nationalist demands and Empire membership contained in the 1909 agreement began to show signs of strain in 1912-13 as it appeared that neither the East Indies nor the China unit was being formed. Then in March 1914 these deteriorating relations were brought to a climax by the report that Churchill had stated “that a battle cruiser was not a necessary part of a fleet unit provided by the Dominions” and that “the presence of such vessels in the Pacific is not necessary to British interests”.85 It was a speech which set off a considerable furore.

Despite the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Australia’s suspicion of Japan does not

---

82 E.g. Deakin’s statement in his 1905 Presidential Address to the Imperial Federation League: “Defence... becomes of the greatest possible importance to the development of the modern State. It is the first condition of its being. In defence the governing power plays in one sense the greatest part... The governing power of the Empire to-day is its sovereign... We are the unrepresented subordinate states... We are not excepted by tradition and precedent, but which possesses absolute authority over us... always exercised so far with the greatest consideration and caution, and always likely to be. For all that, its power is exercised with no direct warrant from us. It is surely unreasonable to suppose that this state of affairs can continue indefinitely.”
83 SMH, 21 August 1909; Melbourne Argus, 18 August 1909.
84 Brisbane Courier, 19 August 1909; Melbourne Age, 26 August 1909; Bulletin, 26 August 1909.
85 See Round Table, IV, Pt. II.
appear to have diminished after the immediate shock of the Japanese defeat of Russia. Rather was there a hardening determination to assure Australia's security. The journals most consistently vocal in drawing attention to the Japanese challenge were the *Bulletin* and its offshoot, the *Lone Hand*, but they were joined, increasingly, by the range of the Australian press. In 1913, for example, the Australian press, watching closely the Japanese reaction to the Californian immigration restriction legislation, became markedly perturbed by the degree of recognition which Japan was now demanding for its nationals. This was a view not restricted to the more radical nationalist journals but was also advanced by the *Round Table* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, both very sympathetic to the imperial idea. Then when Churchill's statement was issued in 1914 the Australian press, the *Round Table* and Senator Millen (the non-Labor Government Minister for Defence), emphasizing the difference between Australian and British relations with Japan, all expressed their acute dissatisfaction with Britain's newly enunciated naval policy and with the failure to materialize of the 1909 defence agreement proposals.

This was an attitude with which New Zealand now agreed. There had been between 1911 and 1914 an almost revolutionary change in New Zealand's policy. Not only the ordering of the *New Zealand* to the North Sea, but also the failure of the British Government to provide the other two vessels promised under the 1909 agreement, temporarily reversed New Zealand's policy. Massey believed that the Japanese Alliance "is not sufficient protection for New Zealand, and New Zealand, therefore, must do something for herself". He proposed a scheme for a great Pacific Navy arguing that the Pacific "would yet become the battleground of the nation".

It was the outbreak of the war which temporarily re-focused Australian attention on the European scene.

### IV

Australian attitudes to defence from 1901 to 1914 provide, probably, the clearest illustration of the development of Australian national consciousness and of the growth of national cohesion in the formative years of the Commonwealth. It would be just to regard both the major parties as national parties after about 1906 and, if the press was reflecting public opinion, there was also a remarkable degree of unanimity in regard to Australia's conception of its defence responsibility.

Towards the Empire, Australia's defence policy was almost bi-partisan as early as 1903, and certainly was bi-partisan from 1907. Deakin did give an

---

86 SAR, 15 April 1913; SMH, 11 and 27 April 1913; Brisbane Courier, 14 April 1913; *Round Table*, III, 735.
87 SMH, 19 March 1914; Brisbane Courier, 19 March 1914; *Brisbane Daily Mail*, 19 March 1914; *Age*, 20 March 1914; *Round Table*, IV, Pt. II, 391 ff.
88 *Round Table*, IV, 409.
emphasis to the Liberal policy which differed in degree from that of Labor. His ideal was not only to fashion a national Australia, grounded in self-respect, but also to help fashion an Empire of equals. The significance of his importance in this movement has not yet been adequately appraised. By writers such as Keith, he has been assessed too much on the failure of his detailed proposals and not sufficiently on his contribution both towards the understanding of what the new Commonwealth was to be and towards the conversion of the Empire into this Commonwealth. Labour, under Fisher, did not display this intensity of understanding and was probably more diffident in asserting Australia’s claim to a voice in high policy. Yet it was neither insular nor parochial and at the 1911 Conference Fisher stood out as an Empire realist, willing to accept the necessary degree of dominion responsibility.

The Australian debate on defence from 1900 to 1914 could leave no doubt of the essential loyalty of Australia to the Empire. Equally it could leave no doubt that a conception of Empire in terms of a strategical disposition of colonies in relation to the mother country would not be countenanced. This had been reasonably clear in the 1880’s. It was prominent by 1902. And as Japan began its triumphant march it became undeniable. From that time, in the opinion of an overwhelming number of Australians, there could be no turning the clock back on Empire evolution as the Admiralty had appeared to do in the 1903 Naval Agreement.

Yet, despite the acquisition by Australia of control of its own defence services, and despite the gradually emerging national economy, Australia in 1914 did not wish, nor was it obliged, to launch an independent foreign policy. Empire evolution had kept abreast of nationalist demands for a steady increase in national independence, and British power, if it had been challenged, was to continue of the first order of significance for another thirty years. Australia was afforded a further generation of protected apprenticeship and national evolution before it had to assume responsibility for an independent foreign policy. But as contemporary Australian foreign policy acquires a history, it is becoming increasingly apparent that, although it inevitably contains much that is new, its principles are grounded in much that is old within Australia and, not least, the understanding of Australian nationalist aspirations and regional fears as they were expressed in the formative years of the Commonwealth.
Historiography is a matter of conscience and conviction. That is to say, historical writing is the product of an individual scholar's observation moulded by his personal set of values, his Weltanschauung, his conscientiously held beliefs. If this is so, there can be no such thing as clinical objectivity in historiography despite the heroic efforts of such a scholar as Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) to achieve it. Even he was committed to a conservative, Lutheran, theocentric world view, and these beliefs were central to his historical thinking; and so we can hardly speak of perfect detachment with regard to even the most celebrated champion of historical objectivity. A modern Austrian scholar, Egon Friedell (1878-1938), in his notable work, Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit, wrote concerning the possibility of pure objectivity:

Should, however, a human being ever find the strength to write something so impartial, the confirmation of this fact would give rise to even greater difficulties; we would need a second human being to find the strength to read something so boring.

Ranke's famous intention, namely that he wanted merely to relate how it actually was (wie es eigentlich gewesen) appears at first glance to be very modest, but in reality it was an extremely daring claim which he in fact could never realize. His significance rests on something quite different. Ranke was a great historical thinker who did not only discover new important sources but rather new connections which he projected, constructed, and formed by virtue of his creative insight — in short, by his generative conceptual framework.

The historian is not accorded recognition merely for his facility in exposing new sources — that is simply evidence of his industry in archival research — but rather for exposing connections between the data, in providing a coherent, systematic explanation of "how it actually was". The recognition of "connections" between the facts, that is to say, the method employed by a historian to determine how the facts are connected, is governed by his own set of values. And this is the reason why there will be as many explanations as there are historians for a particular event. Each sees connections which are peculiar to his values and Weltanschauung. There can thus arise considerable disagreement between historians of differing outlooks on the interpretation of the same

---

The July Crisis 1914

set of facts. Historiographical controversy can usually be traced back to a conflict of ideologies and values. This is precisely what has been happening in Germany over the last eight years with regard to the image of the Wilhelmine Empire and of the causes of its collapse as a result of the Great War. The two outstanding conflicting scholarly explanations here are those of Professor Fritz Fischer (born 1908) and of the late Professor Gerhard Ritter (1888–1967). The life spans of these two men are very important because they illustrate how the training, experience, and conviction of an individual historian colour the image of the past which he is trying to project.

I

Fischer, by publishing his now famous *Griff nach der Weltpolitik*, shattered the prevailing image in Germany of the Wilhelmine era and why Germany went to war in 1914. A great deal of emotion-charged comment has appeared regarding this new German interpretation — so much so that we are experiencing the second phase of the old war-guilt debate of the twenties. In short, Fischer maintains that Wilhelmine Germany, growing ever more conscious of its economic, naval, and military power from the turn of the century, took advantage of the July crisis in 1914 to break out of the confines of its 1871 borders to establish a German dominated Mitteleuropa where the two peripheral powers, France and Russia, would be so weakened through certain annexations and treaty obligations that they would cease to count as powers at all. As a result of this dramatic change in the balance of power, Germany would have achieved the long desired *Gleichberechtigung* (equality of privilege) with the Anglo-Saxon powers. Germany would also extend her overseas empire at the expense of the vanquished European colonial powers and the intimidated England.

Naturally Germany, who had been nurturing these dreams long before the war, could not, in the established system of power politics, openly embark on an undeclared war of conquest for these aims; there would have to arise a diplomatic crisis which would allow Germany to go to war as the outraged victim of encirclement, compelled to fight to preserve the territorial integrity of herself and her ally, Austria-Hungary. The July crisis was, according to Fischer, astutely manipulated by the German government to cast Russia in the role of aggressor, believing in that case that Britain would have no pretext to enter the war against Germany and also that the large German Social Democratic Party would be behind the Fatherland in a war of national self-defence.

In arriving at this construction, Fischer places great emphasis on the formation of German political will in the decades before 1914, and particularly on

---

the schemes evolved by German industrialists, economists, generals and intellectuals for the solution of Germany's imagined long-term economic and strategic problems in the world. In short these extra-parliamentary pressure groups, the effective moulders of political will in Germany, constituted the essential core of the "nation", whose nominated executor was the Imperial Chancellor. The German nation by 1914 had become an implacably expansionist power. Such were the power relationships behind the facade of government, that even an apparently moderate, liberally-inclined Chancellor such as Bethmann-Hollweg could not restrain these forces and had no alternative but to accept them. As Fischer rather pungently states, Bethmann could no more have been an anti-annexationist than the Pope could have converted himself to Protestantism.3

This image, so sharply projected with great and convincing detail by Fischer was angrily and strenuously rejected by the older Ritter, especially as Fischer claims that the same forces in Germany which unleashed the first world war were essentially at work to produce the second. Fischer thus draws a line of continuity from Bethmann-Hollweg, executor of Wilhelmine Germany in 1914, to Adolf Hitler, dictator of the Third Reich in 1939. Such an implied characterization of Bethmann was, according to Ritter, totally erroneous and the image of Wilhelmine Germany had been fully distorted and darkened to the extent that it had become politically dangerous for the historical consciousness of modern German youth.4 For Ritter historiography played a significant role in the political education of the nation, but it should be historiography which reflected a healthy doctrine of the state. And for Ritter this was a decidedly Hegelian-Rankean view of the state — a state which is not the rational product of a social contract but which was organically evolved by historical pressures and which had an essential cultural, world-historic, indeed divine mission to fulfill as part of the "divine idea". The historian must therefore approach his task in a spirit of awe and reverence (i.e., reverence towards the state) and not in a spirit of irresponsible iconoclasm of which Fischer seemed to be guilty. For Ritter every historiographical work is a piece of nationale Selbstbesinnung, i.e., a sober reflection on the life of the state, on its right to exist, on its relationship to other states and on its future possibilities, but with a strongly conservative purpose, i.e., in the sense of preserving the historically evolved state.5 In making these reflections the true German historian was teaching the nation about itself and its future — a task implying certain heavy pedagogic responsibilities. As one of Ritter's nationalist precursors, Johannes Haller, formulated the historians' task: "History explains the present to us and provides the compass by which we can find the way to the future... Political

4 Gerhard Ritter, Der erste Weltkrieg — Studien zum deutschen Geschichtsbild (Bonn, 1964), p. 11.
The July Crisis 1914

Education is historical education; without knowledge of modern history, no political judgement!" The German historians thus claimed a leading political role as the mentors of the nation, as champions of the new Reich whose foundation "from above" by Prussia they so enthusiastically heralded. So established were the German historians in this role that not even the catastrophe of 1918 caused them to reflect on the implications of their ideology. Instead they succumbed to an anti-war-guilt hysteria and fretted nostalgically for the lost Bismarckian constitution. It took a second, greater catastrophe in 1945 (when conditions imposed new constitutions) to force the historians to begin revising their inherited task.

When Ritter castigated Fischer for an alleged lack of political responsibility in ruthlessly exposing a determined will to expansion in Wilhelmine Germany, he was really lamenting the passing of his Hegelian-Rankean, indeed, Bismarckian concept of the state and the world which he imbibed in his Wilhelmine youth. Fischer on the other hand belongs to another generation whose decisive experiences were the excesses of the Third Reich. These experiences he now clearly deplores and in trying to arrive at an explanation of how they came about found himself forced to investigate events before 1914. Any discussion of the Third Reich, says Fischer, inevitably leads back to the Treaty of Versailles and the Great War which it ended. In trying to assess the significance of the first world war from the standpoint of the parliamentary Federal Republic, Fischer has discerned a much more embarrassing continuity between 1914 and 1945 than many of his colleagues have been willing to admit.

Clearly Fischer is not interested in constructing an "acceptable" national historical image. In confronting his country's past as frankly as he does he seems to be saying: "Here are the ideologies, values, and ambitions which led our country to destruction in the space of two generations; it is now time they were re-examined and discarded from our national life." In short he has come to the view that the historian's role is not that of a national herald, but to determine the truth, however politically unpalatable it may be. He stands alone like Martin Luther and cannot do otherwise. Fischer has now in effect prepared an indictment of German imperialism which can only be understood in the light of his changed values. Central to these are a more utilitarian, liberal

---

7 Ludwig Dehio, "Deutschlands Griff nach der Weltmacht", Der Monat, CLXI (1962), 69. Here Dehio labelled Fischer's work as representative of the disillusioned angry generation which was stamped by the experience of the Hitler period when the "offensive" spirit triumphed in Germany.
8 Fritz Fischer in Foreword to Imanuel Geiss, Julikrise und Kriegsaushung (Hannover, 1964), I, 7.
9 Ludwig Dehio, Germany in World Politics in the Twentieth Century (London, 1960). In this collection of Dehio's essays he for one admits the "continuity" or connection between the two "German" wars of the twentieth century.
view of the state, and a greater sense of the dignity of the individual and of basic human rights.

This in broad terms also characterizes the attitude of other converted and liberally minded German scholars. Ritter, on the other hand, ever loyal to the state-glorifying approach to national history, saw the cause of Germany’s fate in the tragic collapse of the civilian leadership in the face of the national strategic demands of military leadership in a time of acute crisis. In other words, against the indictment by Fischer, he had prepared an apologia for German policy between 1914 and 1918 and this can be understood in the light of his conception of the German state and how it ought to be governed. A brief analysis of Ritter’s historiographical position and of his explanation of the July crisis provides useful instruction as to how dependent national historiography is upon the writer’s convictions. The resultant work is usually an attempt to project an interpretation with some political-pedagogic goal in mind.

Gerhard Ritter has been described by one of his pupils as a Deutscher aus Leidenschaft. This is a rather exaggerated way of saying he was an extremely patriotic German — not just in the sense that one is patriotic in wartime but in the sense that one is devoted and loyal to the cultural heritage of one’s country with all one’s heart. Indeed, Gerhard Ritter was one of those German scholars who gloried in Germany’s distinctly unique intellectual-cultural evolution from Luther’s time and especially from Herder and the German Enlightenment. Germany, at the heart of Europe, belonged neither in the Western nor in the Eastern European tradition but had its own unique traditions and values, in virtual contrast to those of the Anglo-Saxons with whom one would expect some basic similarities.

In historiography, the Germans from Hegel and Ranke onwards consciously rejected the revolutionary rationalism of the eighteenth century which valued established institutions only in so far as they were still considered to have relevance for the present. History in the tradition of German romanticism and the Ranke school was more concerned with understanding the past for its own sake than subjecting it to any critical analysis in the light of present day values. Any moral judgement of past events would be totally out of place. Further, the rationalist dogma of the uninterrupted progress of human culture was disputed; each epoch, each great historical entity was, as Ranke said, of equal moral and metaphysical value (unmittelbar zu Gott). Progression and regression, flourishing and decline, ebb and flow are the essence of history; it was unhistorical for the historian to sit in judgement on any epoch; his only valid task was to illuminate it in its own context. In Hegelian terms the true historian tried to grasp the peculiar rationality of a past era. The last thing he would wish was to be guilty of a hasty condemnation of past events.

11 Gerhard Ritter, "Gegenwartige Lage und Zukunftsaufgaben deutscher Geschichtswissenschaft", Historische Zeitschrift, CLXX (1950), 5-7. So long as Ritter’s heroes were
Emerging from this attitude comes the so-called individualizing method which contrasts sharply with the generalizing, rationalistic method which seeks to establish laws, patterns, and general concepts in the course of history. The German historian, on the contrary, sought to understand every historical event in its uniqueness, in the non-recurring conditions of its own epoch. Gerhard Ritter committed himself wholeheartedly to this method to the end of his days.12

The political implications of such a position are important. As mentioned earlier, the state in Ranke's teaching is not the result of a social contract, not a mere institution for the securing of life and property, but above all a concentration of forces born out of a series of historical emergencies caused by power struggles in which each community places itself under some kind of leadership and adopts a pugnacious attitude towards each surrounding community. This is always the case since each community inevitably strives to preserve its integrity and independence. Under these conditions German historiography, following Ranke's example, emphasized the primacy of foreign policy. This is a peculiarly German doctrine understandable in the light of Prussian-German history, particularly since 1648 from which time the fragmented German Kulturnation was seen striving from a condition of impotent particularism towards national unity and world power — all of which was interpreted as the nation's organic response to foreign pressures.

The role of the nineteenth century German historians in promoting the ideal of national unity and, after 1870, of world power, can scarcely be over-estimated. They were all passionately national historians — half conservative and at least moderately monarchist.13 The state for them was clearly the natural unit of historical enquiry, the state as they understood it being a concentration of moral energies striving to maintain its growth in competition with others and, in the world-state-system, insisting on the indispensability of power as the chief priority in the constant struggles with other nations.

This leads to the inevitable question concerning war. If the chief function of the state is to preserve its integrity and independence it must be ready to resort to war and, in this scheme of things, war was considered to be not culturally destructive but the struggle of moral energies in which the state with the stronger culture prevailed. In a real sense war served to promote culture in that it provided a challenge which tested out the quality of a people and their right to survive.

In this outline of the tradition in which Gerhard Ritter was trained there is one further point to consider before discussing his version of the July crisis; this is his idea of healthy, realistic government. It will be clear that he affirms the

12 [Ibid., p. 8. Cf. Ritter's final article in the same journal entitled "Wissenschaftliche Historie Einst und Jetzt", Historische Zeitschrift, CCII (1966), 575-602. This paper is a virtually hostile apologia for traditional German historiography and political thought against what Ritter sees as superficial Anglo-Saxon historiography and political naivete.]
necessity of a strong military as the central factor in the life of a nation state. What of the civilian leadership? In Ritter’s German constitutional ideology there is a central function for the bureaucracy. This it seems must be recruited from a conservative, educated elite whose vocation in the national life is to govern in the monarch’s name. It is the task of these men to reflect soberly as to what policies are in the best interests of the state. Bismarck’s Germany is clearly Ritter’s model. Government is to be carried out with no other consideration than that of Staatsraison.14 i.e. only those policies are to be pursued which further the interests of the state as a whole. All else is subordinated to this so in effect Ritter subscribes to a doctrine of refined Machiavellism as did Ranke in his day.15 That is to say there is to be no restless adventurism in foreign policy, no expansion for expansion’s sake but coolly calculated, diplomatic, and, if necessary, military action to secure the interests of the state. (The classic example of this in action was the Austro-Prussian war of 1866.)16

A state exposed on all sides such as the German Reich needed above all sober and astute civilian leaders as well as highly reliable military technicians. There are two distinct vocations — statesmen and generals — seemingly co-equal. For Ritter, Bismarck’s constitution of 1871-1918 established this duality in leadership under the monarch and this was the natural result of Prussian emergence. He did not, however, regard that constitution as being virtually invulnerable to crisis (krisenfest) as did for example so influential an historian as Hans Delbrück.17 It would necessarily be exposed to leadership being human could after all make erroneous judgements in the course of wisest diplomatic manoeuvre. That is to say, in trying to assess the true Staatsraison in a crisis there could arise a tension between the dictates of military tactics and diplomacy, i.e., between the technicians of war and the far-sighted statesmen. Ritter interprets Germany’s fate in the twentieth century as being due to a tragic miscalculation when in the crisis the demands of the military technicians left the statesmen with no room for diplomatic manoeuvre, to abdicate virtually full leadership to the soldiers.

III

Ritter had long before begun his last great work which was to be an analysis of the relationship between the aims of German statecraft and those of the military leaders from the time of Frederick the Great until the end of the second world war.18 By the time Fischer’s book appeared he had already drafted his third volume to terminate the discussion. But

14 The German term is used instead of the usual French raison d’état.
in Ritter's view Fischer had not only depicted a false image of Wilhelmine Germany and traced the roots of the Third Reich back to it, he had also, on the positive side, brought to light important new source material. Ritter then felt compelled to re-draft the entire third volume to deal only with the years 1914-17 and plan an even further volume (now published posthumously) to analyze the final stages of the Great War.\(^{19}\) One can therefore say that the old historian summoned up his final strength to refute the "catastrophic"\(^{20}\) work of Fischer. In April 1962 Ritter corresponded with a former pupil saying:

My capacity for work is still tolerable but the third volume is proving very strenuous and occasionally I almost begin to doubt the possibility of completing it. This is even more so the case as I now have the frightful task before me of confronting the unfortunate book of Fischer.\(^{21}\)

Thus the champion of German values had taken upon himself to repair the damage inflicted by a man whose work he regarded as not fulfilling the standards set by scholarly historiography in Germany.\(^{22}\) But it soon becomes fairly obvious that the differences between the two professors are ones of nuance of interpretation since both see the German leadership, civil and military, as the one group of protagonists in the drama which deliberately accelerated the crisis to its tragic climax. But with Ritter the nuance of difference between himself and Fischer is of tremendous importance. To the non-German reader, Ritter can be interpreted as admitting a limited German responsibility for the Great War, though he stops short of calling it guilt. This is because for him the actors in the drama are really the victims of a higher irrational fate — the ever present danger to which those who wield power are exposed. If we read Ritter critically with Fischer and Geiss open at one side, the account of the July crisis stripped of the pathos appears as follows:

The murder in Sarajevo of Franz Ferdinand, the successor to the Austrian throne, occurred on 28 June 1914. This was taken to be an expression of strident Serb nationalism which was threatening the continued existence of the Danube Monarchy. That multi-national power had already suffered severe loss of prestige through its helpless passivity during the two previous Balkan wars. On this occasion, in July 1914, circumstances seemed right for the Austrians, by swift military action against Serbia, to regain not only their lost prestige and bolster up the decaying monarchy, but also to incorporate Serbia into that monarchy. This was at any rate the aim of the Austrian Chief-of-Staff, General Conrad von Hützendorf. He had advised immediate mobilization against Serbia on the day after the assassination.\(^{23}\) The government was, however, hesitant because of the expected negative reaction of Russia to Austro-Hungarian action in the Balkans. Further, if Austria provoked a war with Russia, Germany would not be obliged under the Triple Alliance to assist. Therefore, in order to be able to

---

\(^{19}\) Ibid., III, 12.

\(^{20}\) Jannsen, op. cit., p. 9.

\(^{21}\) Ibid.


deal with Serbia, Vienna needed a firm promise of support from Berlin. This promise was indeed forthcoming on 6 July.

This so-called blank cheque from Berlin to Vienna dispelled all Austrian doubts about the desirability of launching a punitive action against Serbia despite the fact that the Austrian leaders must have known that Russia could scarcely stand aside to see Serbia annihilated.24 Indeed, in the view of the Austrian military, Russian military intervention was inevitable and even desirable; Russia had been in any case working for a Balkan federation against Austria, so a victorious war now against the great Slav power would clarify the situation. And it was better to start soon before prospects got any worse. Further, if one was so sure that there would be Russian interference, then the destruction of the Serbian forces could only be undertaken after the Russian forces had been dealt with. And for the purpose of a combined action against Russia, the General Staffs of both the German and Austrian allies had long since made secret arrangements.25

On learning this, the Austrian cabinet was, according to Ritter, probably very impressed. And Conrad intensified their eagerness for war by pointing out that the power relationships of the Great Powers were such that further delay would only lessen the chances of military success for the Central Powers. Ritter comments on General Conrad's encouragement of the Austro-Hungarian civilian leadership to approve war with Russia as being based on an exaggerated optimism concerning the real military-political situation. The point is that Ritter sees in Conrad's pressing his military views of the situation a tragic example of an impatient militarism triumphing over cool Staatsrason. Ritter adduces evidence to show that Conrad's personal fatalism regarding the necessity of a clash with Russia led him to undertake a venture which was nothing less than a foolhardy and desperate gamble (Va-banque-Spiel). Further, the Austrian general had sinned in that he failed to enlighten the ministers of state as to the true extent of the danger they would encounter.26 Conrad it appears was psychologically incapable of making a sober assessment either of his own or of enemy strength. And Ritter concedes rather bitterly also that the German plan of campaign, which of course was relying on the great Austrian offensive in the East, was based on an over-estimation of German capability: "Letztlich haben sich beide Generalstäbe gegenseitig überfordert". (In the final analysis both General Staffs demanded too much from each other.)27

The Austro-Hungarian decision to go to war with Serbia and provoke Russia was taken at a cabinet session on 7 July. The actual decision on the nature of the ultimatum to Belgrade was not taken until another session on 19 July — to be sent on 23 July. There were several reasons for this fateful delay: firstly there was the desire to wait for the outcome of the Sarajevio trial, then there was the need to bring in the harvest, and finally, to wait for Poincaré to terminate

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 296.
26 Ibid., p. 307.
27 Ibid.
his state visit to Petersburg. Conrad was even sent on leave to allay any suspicions observers might have had of Austrian belligerent intentions. The same steps were taken in Berlin with regard to the German generals. Only the German Chancellor and his Secretary of State appeared nervous. They waited impatiently for energetic action from Austria-Hungary to force a solution to the troublesome southern Slav question. The German statesmen, says Ritter, were very well aware of the great risk but hoped that Russia, after a little commotion, would allow the war to remain localized — provided that the world, as in 1908, could be confronted with a fait accompli. The German attitude was characterized thus: "The more determined Austria shows herself the more energetically we shall support her and so Russia will be inclined to hold still." The belief also prevailed in Berlin that Russia was not yet sufficiently armed but would become so later and that in the long term a war could not be avoided. Von Jagow's words crystallized the German state of mind: "I do not want a preventive war, but if a fight offers, we may not back down." The motive behind this was the need to prop up Germany's only reliable ally and to assist her to rehabilitate herself as a great power and halt the process of internal decay. This, says Ritter, indicates by no means a keenness for war, still less a confidence in victory but rather a sad fatalism in the face of an apparently inexorably gathering danger. Nevertheless there was also at the same time an unshakeable determination to face that danger with the utmost effort. It was indeed because of this danger that the German Chief-of-Staff von Moltke emphatically insisted from 1913 on increasing German forces. When Moltke, however, returned to Berlin on 26 July, the most important political decisions had been taken, but of course he had been fully instructed and was therefore aware all the time of the seriousness of the crisis.

Berlin had seen the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia twenty-four hours before it was handed over, midday 23 July. Ritter states that Berlin was long aware of the necessity for Austria to couch it in unacceptable terms. And he acknowledges, too, that when the Serbs appeared to accept the terms in toto there was a distinct wave of disappointment in Berlin over the fact that the great "cleaning up" action they envisaged would come to nought. However, as soon as the Austrian minister in Belgrade departed, signifying the diplomatic break, Conrad began immediately with the mobilization of eight army corps against

---

28 Ibid., p. 308.
29 Ibid., p. 309.
30 Ibid.
31 Immanuel Geiss, "Julikrise und Kriegsausschub 1914" (Hannover, 1963), I, 86 and 158. In document No. 23, Falkenhayn to Moltke, 5 July 1914, Falkenhayn tells Moltke of his intention to keep him (Moltke) informed while he is on leave so that there will be no political surprises for him on his return. Again, from document No. 84, Kageneck to Moltke, 13 July 1914, it is clear that Moltke was fully instructed as to the intentions of the Austrians. There can be no suggestion that Moltke had been innocently unaware of the turn of events.
32 Ibid., p. 312, cf. Fischer, "Griff....", pp. 71-72. Note that the Germans were at pains to deny prior knowledge of the content of the ultimatum. Zimmerman telegraphed the London, Paris and Petersburg embassies that Germany had exerted "no influence on the content of the note and had had as little opportunity as the other powers to form any opinion on it before its publication." Cf. Geiss, op. cit., pp. 122, 212, 14 and 274.
33 Ibid.
Serbia but with no intention of beginning action before 12 August. This delay was due to the time needed to mobilize fully. The significant point is that Conrad did not mobilize against Russia although he expected hostile Russian reaction; an example either of his basic ineptitude or of his dilemma. This coupled with the delay in opening hostilities caused Berlin some anxiety because people there expected Austria to crush Serbia quickly, confront the world with a fait accompli and thus prevent interference from the Entente. Finally, on 28 July, after certain pressure from Berlin, the Austrians agreed to open hostilities, i.e. before the completed mobilization, the aim being to frustrate any mediation attempts from other powers. The role now to be assumed by Germany was to do all possible to deter Russia from "escalating" the "localized war". But then neither Vienna nor Berlin expected Russian restraint. In both capitals, civil and military leaders, as Ritter is fond of saying, believed in the necessity of a clash between the Germanic and Slavic powers. Germany had no alternative but to support her tottering ally.34

In the events that follow, Ritter illustrates graphically how the dictates of military strategy destroyed any hope of a diplomatic solution. Von Moltke who kept referring to the catastrophic outcome of the emerging conflict on one hand, insisted that in no circumstances should the Russian or French military preparations be allowed to develop to the point where Germany would be at a distinct military disadvantage.35 In short, Moltke did not want war but felt obliged to prepare for it in order successfully to counter the manoeuvres of the enemy camps. Then what Moltke had allegedly feared occurred: when on 28 July Austria declared war on Serbia, the Russians mobilized twelve army corps as a partial mobilization against Austria-Hungary. Conrad's hope of a Blitzkrieg against Serbia now evaporated. Clearly this signalled the need for urgent negotiation, but this was out of the question, says Ritter, given the prevailing mood in Vienna.36

The German efforts to get Vienna to keep negotiating with Petersburg were misunderstood by Vienna where it was erroneously believed that Berlin was more concerned with manoeuvring Petersburg into the role of aggressor than with avoiding a European war.37 Ritter does not try to explain why the German government did not warn Austria in more unmistakable terms not to provoke Russia. He merely says that Bethmann was pursuing a policy of caution and restraint vis à vis Russia — as were the generals. They were to wait for a full Russian mobilization before acting although they advised Austria to get on with her full mobilization, i.e. also against Russia, and let the Russians make the declaration of war. This was to avoid outraging European opinion, especially England who, in the case of a Russian declaration, the Germans hoped would remain neutral.38

34 Ibid., p. 315.
35 Ibid., p. 316.
36 Ibid., p. 317.
37 Ibid., cf. Fischer, Griff... p. 80. Here Fischer documents irrefutably Berlin's intention to run the risk of a European war and to manoeuvre Russia into the role of aggressor.
38 Ibid., p. 319.
The Russian response to Austrian mobilization was as foreseen. At 5 P.M. on 30 July the Tsar ordered total mobilization against Austria-Hungary. At this point the German Chief-of-Staff gave the Austrians to understand that Germany would support them unconditionally, whereas the German Chancellor, to quote Ritter, was making “virtually desperate efforts to move Vienna’s policy to an understanding with Russia on the lines of the English mediation suggestions”.39 It would appear as though Moltke had wished to sabotage his Chancellor’s policies — but this, according to Ritter, was by no means his intention; Moltke was misunderstood by Vienna. The result: Vienna, relying on German military support, refused to continue negotiations with Petersburg; Bethmann-Hollweg listens to his generals and requires final clarification of the situation by midday 31 July. This comes with the official announcement of Russian general mobilization at 11.20 A.M. of that day. Further German discussion about the need for their mobilization was superfluous. And from now on all political manoeuvres by Berlin are determined by tactical necessity. Diplomacy recedes and the military technicians take control. Thus Ritter:

From midday 31 July, Bethmann-Hollweg no longer seriously believed in the possibility of rescuing peace. He had the feeling of having lost the reins of government to the generals and these felt with great intensity the pressure of responsibility which lay upon them . . . Purely military considerations destroyed the last possibilities of reaching a compromise.40

The fact that the situation had deteriorated this far was due in Ritter’s analysis to bad Austrian planning; they had played with the idea that either Russia was merely bluffing, or if not, then she would be deterred from interference by German threats. There is no suggestion by Ritter that Berlin, by timely intervention, could have held Austria back from her Va-banque-Spiel. “Seldom has a European power stumbled into a struggle for existence with so much blindness, and in this the military leadership was centrally involved.”41 Germany for Ritter was clearly forced into war by her own good nature and realism, i.e. her anxiety about her old ally and the real-political necessity of protecting her own interests. There was no way Berlin could possibly have held back the declarations of war which followed the Russian rejection of Germany’s demand to halt mobilization. The French and then the British entry into the war was the automatic response to the unfolding of Germany’s pre-arranged military plans. In a real sense Germany was the victim of her own geographical position in Europe; in order to deal with Russia she had unfortunately to deal with her ally, France, and to deal effectively with France she had to march through Belgium — “the evil legacy of the Schlieffen Plan”.42 British neutrality for which Bethmann had hoped — at least for a time — turned then to implacable hostility.

There is not space here to trace Ritter’s account of the developing crisis. He illustrates with great insight and sympathy how Germany, in order to survive

39 Ibid., p. 322.
40 Ibid., p. 329.
41 Ibid., p. 328.
42 Ritter, Staatskunst . . ., III, 49.
as a power was compelled to hand over the leadership of the state to the generals. These were dominated by the anxiety to take up positions of strength before the enemy could move on their borders. One crucial instance serves as illustration: it was appreciated by the Chancellor that in order to overwhelm France, the German armies would have to march through Belgium. What Bethmann did not know until 31 July was that if the military were to achieve this in the required time they would immediately have to secure the Belgian city of Liège. This would mean attacking a neutral state without declaration of war. But it was an inescapable necessity and it accelerated the steps of German war preparation from a day-to-day process to an hourly one. For Ritter it was an unavoidable tragedy that the freedom of German political movement was so seriously crippled during the decisive days of the July crisis by this single element of military necessity:

The fact that the responsible leader of German policy felt compelled (or at least believed himself to be) to accept such a plan of war, without obvious protest, as a military necessity illustrates the extremity of the helpless dependence of political decision-making upon the military leadership.

Indeed, Ritter describes the entire process of German policy in the crisis as a rash precipitation of events solely due to the pressure of the Chief-of-Staff who was anxious about the execution of his war plan. Moltke’s rationale of the situation is summed up by Ritter as follows: Germany declared war on Russia so hastily in order to be able to attack her ally France without delay — which was not possible as long as no war had been declared. According to military opinion, the Western offensive could not be started other than by an attack on Belgium; this again in Moltke’s opinion was not possible without previously demanding from Belgium free access to German troops, and this demand depended again on whether a state of war existed between Germany and France.

So has Ritter sought to explain Germany’s role in the great crisis. His method has been to look into the subjective motives of the chief actors in the drama, particularly Moltke and Bethmann-Hollweg. The conclusion reached is that the sensitive Moltke, aware of the terrible implications of war, nevertheless conscientiously did his soldierly duty as he saw it. Bethmann, also a sensitive figure, allowed his actions to be dominated by his anxiety over the growing power of Russia and the intensification of hostility between her and Austria-Hungary — a fact which increased the prospects of an extremely dangerous Balkan conflict. Here is emphasized Bethmann’s fatalism which saw a

43 Ritter, Staatskunst..., II, 332.
44 Ibid., p. 333.
46 Ibid., p. 338.
clash with Russia as inevitable. And without this fatalism, Bethmann’s ultimate support of Austria-Hungary could scarcely be explained. Ritter actually admits the culpable blindness for the real dangers implicit in Austrian policy but says none of that alters the fact that the policy of the German government was in principle of a defensive and not aggressive nature — in spite of repeated German urging of a rapid military action by Austria against Serbia. And even this Serbian war was understood as pure self-defence against life-threatening dangers — not as an offensive action for the conquest of Slavic territory.47

This construction of the motives of German policy is one arrived at by the strict individualizing, historicizing method — a method which concentrates on the personalities involved and which firmly rejects the generalizing, sociologically-orientated method48 which Fritz Fischer clearly takes into account. Ritter believed that individual personalities are alone decisive in shaping events; Fischer has shown that the individual cannot be detached from the world of ideas and real pressures around him and that these have to be considered in any satisfactory explanation.

It is remarkable that both professors are in almost perfect agreement as to what happened — even to the extent of admitting Germany’s decisive role in unleashing the war. Only with regard to interpretation do we perceive a vehement clash of values. For Fischer, Gerhard Ritter’s work signifies an apologia for the Prussian idea of state based on a “healthy” connection between Staatsraison and military discipline, the escutcheon of which he would wish to keep unstained by the “unhealthy” aberrations of individual militarists who had emerged in the half-century from 1890 to 1945.49

Fischer’s own work has been hailed as a turning point in modern German historiography which has revised the traditional state-glorifying method so loved by Prussian-German historians. In Gerhard Ritter, says Fischer, that tradition had reached both its peak and termination; after him it will find no future champions.50

47 Ritter, Staatskunst..., III, 17.
50 Ibid., cf. Hans Gunter Zmarzlik, “Lebendige Vergangenheit”, Historische Zeitschrift, CCVII (August 1968), pp. 55-74. This is a published version of an address given by Dr. Zmarzlik in memory of Gerhard Ritter 13 October 1967 at the Freiburg Historians’ Conference. Zmarzlik, a former pupil of Ritter, pays eloquent tribute to the life and work of his mentor. He outlines Ritter’s ideology of the state as having been derived from Stein and Bismarck, an ideology which had been preserved by Hindenburg even after the fall of the monarchy. Historiographically Ritter owed most to Ranke. He concerned himself, however, chiefly with the problem of power and just rule, an issue which became very real during the Third Reich. Zmarzlik, at all times reverent, however alludes to his master’s limitations, especially his doctrinaire conservatism which was the understandable result of Ritter’s training and loyalties. He nevertheless was, next to Friedrich Meinecke, the most important historian in Germany this century. His work, because it confronted the dilemma between the exercise of power and the wish to establish Utopia was essential reading for those who sought the right relationship between the heritage of the past and the needs of the present. Even where Ritter erred he would still help the present generation to be wiser — Wo er geirrt hat, hilft er uns klüger zu sein (p. 74).
Don Dignan

Australia and British Relations with Japan, 1914-1921

The origins of a distinctive Australian foreign policy are to be found in the growing dissent from the United Kingdom’s defence and foreign policies in the Pacific. This dissent reached a high peak during the years 1914-21, when British policies were put to their first great test as a means of protecting Australian as distinct from imperial interests. Yet apart from a few abortive attempts to create independent sources of information about Far Eastern questions, the Australian government did little to remove the long-standing conviction in Westminster that the distinctive Australian attitudes were a rationalization of racial prejudice and emotionally based insecurity rather than a balanced and informed appreciation of Pacific affairs. A typical example of Foreign Office deprecation of the Australian outlook was the reaction of the Far Eastern Department to an address given by William Morris Hughes in August 1921 to the Empire Parliamentary Association on the “Pacific Problem”. In reporting the essence of the speech, the Department’s principal expert on Japan, F. Ashton-Gwatkin, observed that

... Mr. Hughes gives the impression of a very decided, obstinate and uncompromising man. He sees the Pacific Problem in simple terms, as a chapter in the struggle for existence; and he seemed to doubt whether the problem could be solved by peaceful means. The clearness and force of his statement appealed to his audience, mostly M.P.’s, who were much impressed. But I do not think that simplification of a problem necessarily connotes adequate understanding of it.2

Miles Lampson, head of the Department and current China specialist, thought that “the summary at the beginning of the speech was shrewd and much to the point”; but the Superintending Assistant Secretary, V. Wellesley, concluded that Hughes’ “outlook is on the whole narrow. He thinks in terms of Australian and not imperial interests”.3

If the Australian government’s attitudes toward Japan were as emotive and over-simplified as Whitehall complained, surely one way to have developed


1 See Addendum.
2 F. O. 371 6704; F. 3011 2905 23.
3 Ibid.
more informed and balanced views in Melbourne’s policy-making agencies might have been to furnish them with the information on which British policy supposedly was based. That the United Kingdom government chose not to do this has always been common knowledge. What the newly-opened documents now reveal is that London not only kept Melbourne (the federal capital) uninformed but often misinformed. By deceitful and sometimes untruthful misrepresentation it concealed from the Australians the full complexion of Anglo-Japanese relations.

It is not possible here to trace the hostile undercurrents in wartime Anglo-Japanese relations which the release of British documents has now exposed. The dimensions of the conflict in China were, of course, suspected by the Australian government, since it was scarcely to be expected that Britain would be indifferent to the events which were exciting such hostility to Japan in the United States. However, the focal point of Anglo-Japanese conflict was not the much-publicized Twenty-One Demands, but a successfully concealed tussle over the acceleration of Japanese economic penetration into India and the Japanese role in the German-sponsor revolutionary conspiracies against British rule in India, a movement which the British government regarded much more seriously than has ever been made public. Indeed, it was only when the British assessed Japanese policies in China in the context of a more general threat to British imperial interests throughout Asia that they decisively rejected Sir Edward Grey’s inclinations towards a general settlement with Japan in China and fell back on the obvious strategy of conceding to Japanese advances, or resisting them, point by point.4

All of this, of course, was considered to be no business of the Melbourne government. Moreover, knowledge of the undercover assault which the Japanese were making on the British Empire in Asia might seriously distract the Australians from the more vital issues of the European war. Consequently, the British government not only withheld this information from Melbourne, but they actually obstructed several Australian efforts to make an independent assessment of the political situation to the north of them. Despite the fact that units of the Australian navy were participating in the operations of the British Far Eastern fleet, the English commander, Vice-Admiral W. L. Grant, advised the Admiralty in April 1916 that he was not communicating to the intelligence staff of the Commonwealth Navy Office the secret intelligence on which the most important aspect of his work — the frustration of Indian revolutionary conspiracies — was based. It was impossible, he argued, for anything to be kept secret in Australia for very long.5 The Admiralty concurred in his view, as did the Foreign Office.6

Nevertheless, the return of Australian destroyers from the South-East Asia

4 See Balfour to Greene, Des. No. 25, 13 February 1917; F. O. 410/66; Pr. No. 13; and War Cabinet Minutes, 22 May 1917; Cab. 23/4.
5 Grant to Admiralty, General Letter, No. 24, 27 April 1916; Adm. 125/63.
6 F. O. 371/2787; f. 211/p.p. 12426.
patrol, reports from Burns-Philp agents, and interrogation of German prisoners-of-war from Singapore and Ceylon carried a trickle of information and some "alarming rumours" through this wall of English discretion. This resulted two months later in a request from the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, for permission to attach Australian naval intelligence officers to the British consulates-general in Batavia and Manila. "It is difficult to imagine", he pleaded for his government, "how absolutely in the dark this government was at the commencement of the War to all that was going on to the north of Australia". In a correspondence protracted over six months, the Foreign Office, Admiralty, and Colonial Office combined to prevent the Australian authorities from learning more than it was good for them to know. When other arguments failed to thwart Australian persistence, the Foreign Office asked the Colonial Secretary, W. H. Long, to advise the Governor-General that

If any impression exists that there is a mass of information which reaches the Admiralty, but is withheld from your government, I am glad to be able to assure you that such is not the case.

Three years later when Major E. L. Piesse, wartime Director of Australian Military Intelligence and now Director of the recently created Pacific Branch of the Prime Minister's Department, arrived in Tokyo on a fact-finding tour of the Far East, the British Chargé d'Affaires, Beilby Alston, whose misgivings were not removed by reference to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, refused to give this senior Australian official access to the Embassy's archives. Instead he was afforded daily conversations with embassy staff and "freely shown papers bearing upon particular questions with regard to which he desired information". Although the matter was handled with sufficient skill to satisfy Piesse and prevent his employer, Hughes, from learning history which the British government preferred him not to know, the Australian government worked a note of pique into their letter of appreciation to the Colonial Secretary.

The Westminster government's lack of frankness may have prevented a further stimulation of Australia's fears and suspicions, but it did not allay them. On the contrary, it drove Piesse, Hughes, and Pearce, the Minister of Defence, to the conclusion that Whitehall was now so pre-occupied with European affairs that it was blind to the imminent danger from Japan. Australian politicians who visited Britain, particularly those who experienced a vivid contrast through travelling via the United States, returned to complain about the ignorance of Pacific affairs in London. Had these Australian critics been advised that Anglo-Japanese relations at the diplomatic level from 1913 to 1919 were far worse than Japanese-American relations, despite the contrary
appearance at the formal governmental level, at least they would have known
that United Kingdom attitudes did not stem from blindness to events in the
Pacific.

Yet would the knowledge of the information on which British policy was
supposedly based have calmed Australian anxieties about the wisdom of that
policy or merely confirmed the worst suspicions about Japan, leading to the
belief that the London government was not blind but prepared to regard Aus­
tralia as expendable, the charge which many Australians were to level at the
Churchill government in 1942? Clearly the British government was not pre­
pared to gamble on the possibility that Australian politicians might be able
to draw sober conclusions from the full facts about Anglo-Japanese relations.
Added to this danger that the immaturity of Australia's external outlook
might lead the Australian government to an emotive rather than a balanced
appreciation of the documentary picture of recent Anglo-Japanese relations,
was the danger that Australians might become aware of the growing disagree­
ment in Westminster about the conclusions which policy makers ought to
draw from the record of Japanese behaviour from the Chinese Revolution to
the Versailles Peace Conference. Far more important than Britain's conceal­
ment from Australia of the hostile undercurrents which underlay formal Anglo-
Japanese co-operation from 1911 to 1919 was the concealment of the divergence
between British cabinet attitudes to Japan and the attitudes of their professional
advisers. The culminating irony of this British refusal to communicate to the
Australian government the facts and professional opinions on which a considered
foreign policy might be based, was that Hughes was finally brought around to
a vigorous defence of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance at a time when Foreign
Office and Admiralty specialists were depreciating its worth.

In its preparations for the Imperial Conference of 1921, the Australian
government asked for an expert Foreign Office memorandum on the effect of
the Anglo-Japanese Alliance upon foreign relationships. The document which
they received was composed by C. H. Bentinck, head of the Far Eastern
Department in 1919 and recently Second and First Secretary at the Tokyo
Embassy, 1914-18; but the balance of the original draft had been shifted so
drastically by Lord Curzon's mandatory suggestions that it is fair to say that
what the Dominions received was the Foreign Secretary's and the Cabinet's
view of the Alliance rather than that of the Foreign Office. For though the
Permanent Under-Secretary, Lord Hardinge, thought the original version to
be very complete and well reasoned in its conclusions, the Foreign Secretary
complained that it was not "well balanced, for after a very formidable argument
against the Alliance (often, I think exaggerated) the writer veers round at the
end...". In deference to Lord Curzon's minutes, Bentinck

sightly toned down the case against Japan at the beginning of the memo
and tried to bring out more clearly the fact that Japanese statesmen have

endeavoured to play the game. I have rewritten page 17 further developing
the case for renewal in accordance with the suggestions of the Secretary of
State and Lord Hardinge.\textsuperscript{14}

The revised document dealt a subtle but effective blow to the hesitant nationalist
tendencies in Melbourne towards the creation of independent sources of
information on Far Eastern affairs. Sufficient of the actual Foreign Office
attitudes to Japan was retained in the revision to convince Major Piesse that
he had been wrong in fearing that European pre-occupations had blinded
the Foreign Office to realities in the Pacific. Consequently, he advised his
superiors that the memorandum might "be taken as correcting the impression
given by the speeches of Mr. Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil that the Foreign
Office was not distrustful of Japan".\textsuperscript{15} The welcome news that Foreign Office
specialists took what Australians could regard as a relatively realistic view of
Japan but concluded nevertheless that such a view justified Britain's special
relationship with Japan, made it easier for Hughes to support Westminster
policy, especially as he could see no promising alternative. Characteristically,
an independent study of Japanese affairs was discontinued as the Imperial
Conference and Washington Conference narrowed the gap between British and
Australasian attitudes. Piesse himself recommended this. The detailed study of
the Japanese press was abandoned; Captain Broadbent, who had been sent
to Japan in October 1920 "on behalf of the Prime Minister's Department,
with the objects of continuing the study of the Japanese language and gaining
such a knowledge of Japanese affairs as [might] be useful to the Government
in his subsequent employment in the Department in connection with
the foreign relations of the Commonwealth"\textsuperscript{16} was recalled. Even the services
of a full-time lecturer in Japanese at Duntroon Military College were discon-
tinued.\textsuperscript{17} Instead of developing his idea of establishing independent Australian
diplomatic missions, Piesse advised Hughes to press the Home Government,
at the Imperial Conference, for the regular transmission of copies of important
despatches from the British foreign service.\textsuperscript{18}

Not only did the Australian government not know that Curzon had drastically
modified Bentinck's memorandum, but they did not know that he had vetoed
the despatch to the Dominions of the other memoranda on British Far Eastern
Policy which the Foreign Office had prepared for the discussions on the renewal
of the treaty.\textsuperscript{19} Despite his efforts to ensure that an accurate picture of Foreign
Office and other departmental views on Anglo-Japanese relations was withheld
from the Dominions, Curzon assured the premiers at the 1921 Imperial Con-
ference that they had been fully informed on the issue. When Hughes confronted

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} "Notes on the Foreign Office Memorandum on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance", 28 June 1920
(Piesse Papers cited in Sissons, op. cit.);

\textsuperscript{16} Munro Ferguson to Coi. Sec. Des. No. 335, 22 September 1920; F. O. 371 5366; F. 2056
2056 23.

\textsuperscript{17} See Sissons, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{18} Sissons, op. cit., I, 131.

\textsuperscript{19} Cab. 21/187.
Lloyd George with the anticipated complaint about the inadequate information on British foreign policy supplied to the Dominion governments, Curzon disarmed the Australian by agreeing that not only should the Dominion governments be advised more rapidly of Westminster policy decisions, but their understanding of these policies and their ability to share in their formulation should be facilitated by the regular transmission of documents from which policy was shaped. The Dominion prime ministers would henceforth be placed in the same position as the heads of British diplomatic missions and supplied with the Foreign Office confidential prints, provided that these were not circulated to their government departments and provided that they were either returned or destroyed after they had been read. As an illustration of how well this new system would meet Dominion needs, Curzon claimed that before and since their arrival in London the premiers had been furnished with documentary material which gave them a complete picture of how the British cabinet had arrived at the recommendations on the Alliance question that they were now making to the conference.20

In one sense this was true. When the British cabinet had discussed the question on 30 May 1921, Curzon had laid before the meeting a somewhat unbalanced selection of departmental documents. Then, in the discussion which he initiated, the cabinet ministers all virtually ignored the papers by the three officials best informed on recent Anglo-Japanese relations21 and stressed the views of the current British ambassador in Tokyo, Sir Charles Eliot, who in the climate of 1920–21 had felt himself able to recommend the sort of policy which the Cabinet wished to adopt.22 Curzon’s assurance that the Dominions had been furnished with a documentary record of how the cabinet’s policy was formulated was therefore truthful to the extent that this policy had been formulated by discounting and disregarding the dominant balance of the memoranda.

Had Curzon not vetoed the despatch to the Dominions of these Foreign Office memoranda — with the exception of the one which he had so drastically edited — there can be no doubt that Hughes and his cabinet would not have received them in so highly selective a manner as did the British cabinet. The discovery that the British Ambassador in Tokyo from 1913 to 1919, the British Minister in Peking from 1906 to 1920, and the Assistant Secretary superintending the Far Eastern Department all denied the basic assumptions on which Hughes (like the British cabinet, though for different motives) based his vigorous argument for the renewal of the Alliance, could not have failed to shake the Australian government profoundly. It is difficult to see how an Australian government, which had always suspected the worst of Japan and regarded

20 Minutes of the Imperial Conference of 1921: Cab. 32/2.
22 Cabinet Minutes, 20 May 1921; Cab. 23/25.
Westminster reliance on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance with deep misgivings, could have supported the Alliance in 1921 if they had learned the full story of Anglo-Japanese relations since 1911 and the conclusions which Britain’s principal Far Eastern experts drew from this record. As it was, Hughes was placed in an utterly false position at the Imperial Conference of 1921. Here he argued a simple case for the renewal of the Alliance, from which the British cabinet themselves had been steadily retreating under pressure of the growing naval power of the United States and of American criticism, which was endorsed to a degree which they could not consistently ignore by their own professional advisers.

In fact, the British cabinet’s policy of concealing both from the Dominions and from the United States the full picture of recent Anglo-Japanese relations and an undistorted view of Whitehall attitudes to Japan, had the effect of exaggerating the gap between British and American attitudes to Japan. It also cast the debate outside Whitehall circles in over-simplified terms as a choice between two extreme alternatives: on the one hand the renewal of a genuine alliance, as alliances were understood in the pre-1914 period; on the other hand an offensive desertion of a faithful ally. Genuine alliances are directed against identifiable opponents. From 1902 to 1907, the principal objective of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance from the British point of view had been to contain Russian expansion in Asia. Then from 1907 to 1919 the British had sought to manipulate Japanese power against Germany, not so much directly as indirectly by attempting to harmonize British and Japanese interests sufficiently to permit the release of British forces from the East for a naval concentration in Europe. A secondary objective had been to guarantee that Japan would not be attracted into the German orbit. But against whom would an Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1921 be directed? Recognizing the validity of this objection, both Curzon and Lloyd George argued that it would be an insurance against the resurgence, sooner or later, of Russian and German power, and against the possibility that a diplomatically isolated Japan would drift into a hostile Russo-German-Japanese alliance. While subsequent events have shown that this was an argument of some validity, it was unlikely that a renewed Anglo-Japanese alliance could be based on what appeared in 1921 as a remote contingency.

The more immediately relevant answer which the British cabinet gave to this question, and an answer which was specifically calculated to appeal to the Dominions and to the Government of India, was that a renewed alliance would be directed against Japan herself. Not only would it avoid the possibility that a friendly Japan might be replaced by a diplomatically isolated and hostile Japan, but, argued Curzon, the experience of recent years had shown that Britain was far better able to restrain the sometimes dangerous ambitions of Japan by virtue of the special Anglo-Japanese relationship than she would be if this disappeared. For Hughes and the Australian “realists” this was the essential point, since they had always appraised the Anglo-Japanese Alliance

23 Imperial Conference of 1921, Minutes: Cab. 32 2.
as a method of securing Australia against possible Japanese aggression rather than as a means of achieving more effective imperial defence against a possible European foe.

The case for the renewal of the Alliance in 1921 thus rested mainly on the claim that it was an effective means of restraining unwelcome Japanese actions. Because it was not the usual function of an alliance to protect the high contracting parties against each other rather than against a third party, its value as such could not be demonstrated adequately from general principles but only by reference to recent specific experience. The question, then, was whether the 1911 agreement had, in fact, served the purpose (the primary purpose from the Australian point of view) of restraining unfriendly Japanese actions. A satisfactory answer to this question awaits a very careful analysis of the sources of Japanese behaviour during this period; and even this is not likely to be definitive, for, given the increasingly pluralistic character of Japanese policies, it would be difficult to attribute specific examples of Japanese restraint to the existence of the Alliance rather than to other factors. However, what was important in the 1920-21 debates was the fact that the British cabinet argued strongly that the Alliance had played this decisive role in restraining Japan, and they succeeded in convincing Hughes of its value for this purpose. Yet this interpretation of recent Anglo-Japanese relations had been reached not only by minimizing and disregarding extensive documentary evidence which showed how British diplomacy had failed to restrain the wide undercurrents of anti-British actions underlying the formal record of Japan’s loyalty to her ally, but also by ignoring the fact that the weight of Whitehall specialist opinion attributed the welcome outcome of recent Anglo-Japanese relations to factors other than the Alliance. Many of the specialists, in fact, agreed with American critics of the Alliance that it had cleared the path for Japanese expansionism.

Yet the concrete examples of Japanese expansionism — the seizure of Germany’s Pacific possessions — could be regarded as unrestrained and unfriendly acts only if they had formed no part of a vital British purpose. In the Cabinet's view they had; for the aspect of wartime relations with Japan on which Lloyd George and Curzon laid most stress — and this was strongly echoed by Hughes in 1921 — was the necessity of invoking Japanese naval assistance and the indispensable role which Japanese naval forces played in the successful prosecution of the war. According to this claim, Japanese naval operations not only ensured the safety of Australia and New Zealand from German raiders but also the safe despatch to the major war fronts of 600,000 Australian and New Zealand troops and over one million Indian troops. However, cabinet opinion on the value of Japanese naval assistance appears to have been based on their own judgment, for not only did the Admiralty not furnish the professional opinions to justify such large claims,24 but both Rear-Admiral Sir Hubert Brand, who had been naval attaché in Japan in 1914 and the key liaison officer in the combined operations, and Vice-Admiral W. L. Grant, commander

24 Cab. 24/125; G. T. 3056.
of the Far Eastern fleet from 1915 to 1917, were sceptical of the value of Japanese assistance.25

When the circumstances of Japan's entry into the war are examined, it is clear that the British request for naval assistance was not dictated by immediate naval exigencies. Although Ambassador Greene was instructed on 6 August 1914 to request that the Japanese navy "should hunt out and destroy armed German merchant cruisers who are attacking our commerce now",26 no such attacks had taken place, and the assertion was not based on intelligence from the Far East. In fact, the British Minister in Peking, Sir John Jordan, whose own information led him to believe that "we do not appear to be in urgent need of Japanese assistance",27 was greatly alarmed when the telegram of 6 August was repeated to him, and he urgently sought to have the policy reversed. Owing to cipher difficulties he lost two days in marshalling support for his views on military grounds. Meanwhile, on 9 August, he prophetically warned the Foreign Office that Japan's entry into the war would "endanger the stability of the existing regime in China to say nothing of our political influence in this country and our prestige in Asia generally" and would also lead to "the probable seizure by Japan of the islands lying between this country and Australia".28 Later that day Sir Everard Fraser, Consul-General at Shanghai, and Sir Arthur May, Governor of Hong Kong, both supported Jordan's belief that British shipping had not been molested and that the trade routes were clear from Singapore to Shanghai and from Shanghai to Japan.29 Furthermore, May asked Jordan to assure the Foreign Office that "British merchants in Hong Kong would prefer, if necessary, to suffer temporary loss to the humiliation of relief by Japan".30 Then on 18 August, Admiral Sir T. H. M. Jerram returned to Hong Kong and supported May and Jordan in their opposition to the policy of seeking Japanese naval assistance.31

Jordan's opposition, coupled with an unwelcome suggestion by Japan that the best way in which she could help would be to seize the German base at Tsingtao in Shantung, prompted an attempted withdrawal of the British request; but it was now too late to stem the consequences of the invitation issued to Japan on 6 August. Britain's precipitate action on that day thus deprived her of the opportunity to explore all the diplomatic possibilities of the situation in the Pacific and to balance the American neutralization proposal and German attitudes against the dangers of Japanese intervention in the war.

Not only was this action taken without reference to the actual situation in the Far East, but in the crisis atmosphere the Foreign Office allowed the Admiralty to usurp its function and make the decision on Japanese intervention on

25 F. O. 371 5361; F. 2585 199 23.
26 Grey to Greene, Tel. 40, 6 August 1914; F. O. 371 2016; f. 35445 p.p. 36648.
27 Jordan to Grey, Tel. 144 A and B, 9 August 1914; F. O. 371 2016; f.35445/p.p.37507.
28 ibid.
29 Jordan to Grey, Tel. 150, 9 August 1914 and May to Jordan, 9 August; F. O. 228 2306.
30 May to Jordan, 10 August, F. O. 228 2306.
31 Jerram to Jordan, 18 August 1914; F. O. 228/2306.
political rather than military grounds. Although the Foreign Office at this stage was, unlike Jordan, still quite favourably disposed towards Japan, the two successive policy reversals on 3 August and 4 August indicate quite well how the question was being balanced in the Far Eastern Department even before they learned of Jordan’s unequivocal opposition. Sir Eyre Crowe, an Assistant Secretary, thought that the debate ought to be resolved by Cabinet after hearing expert naval opinion; but the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, thought it unnecessary to consult the cabinet, and he conferred only with the First Lord, Winston Churchill. The Admiralty’s views were penned by the Chief of Staff, Admiral F. C. D. Sturdee. While laying some stress on the fact that the German Far Eastern fleet was at the least comparable to the British and on the damage which might be done by German merchantmen reported to have guns secretly stowed in their holds, his minute reveals the essentially political judgment on which he committed Britain to inviting Japanese intervention:

> It is very necessary to be most careful not to hurt Japanese feelings by not using their assistance at all. Such a course might offend them and tend to make them ally themselves with Germany later in the war, or after the war, and no doubt Germany will make strenuous efforts to get their assistance. Therefore we want to let them commit themselves by hostile acts early in the war against Germany.

Whatever might be said about this argument, the diplomatic record of August 1914 thus shows that Japanese intervention was not brought about by immediate British needs.

Similarly the record of naval operations in the Pacific resulting from Japanese intervention does not clearly substantiate the opinion of Sir Charles Eliot, an opinion echoed by the cabinet, that Japanese assistance was of decisive value. On the contrary, it lends weight to the submissions made by his predecessor, Sir C. Greene, to a Foreign Office committee on the Alliance question in 1920. Dominated by Jordan, Wellesley, and Greene, this committee, despite its efforts in successive revisions to tone down their unfavourable views of Japan and the Alliance, produced a report so unacceptable to Curzon that it was confined to reference files. On the basis of his own central role in 1914 and a specialist opinion from ex-naval attaché Brand, Greene argued that the combined Far Eastern and Australian fleets would have been adequate to deal with Von Spee’s squadron, which, with the exception of the “Emden” was withdrawing from the Pacific before the Japanese ultimatum was issued. In fact, Von Spee’s ships were engaged only by British and Australian units. Japanese supporting operations never resulted in a physical conflict between Japanese and German ships.

The Greene-Brand thesis, which of course was never allowed to come up.

---

34 F. O. 371/6671; F. 1059/63/23.
35 F. O. 371/5361; F. 2585/199/23.
to cabinet and imperial conference level to challenge Eliot's acceptable view, greatly weakens the case which the Australians were led to accept. Had the full facts about Japanese intervention and the resulting naval operations been known in Melbourne in 1914 or even later, they would have created great bitterness. In his memoirs, *Twenty-Five Years*, Grey stated rather vaguely that Australian attitudes to Japan made the question of Japanese assistance a matter of some delicacy.36 This has led some historians to attribute British vacillation on the intervention question to concern for Australian attitudes. Foreign Office records do not support this interpretation. Indeed, the head of the Far Eastern Department, Beilby Alston, echoing characteristic Foreign Office impatience with emotive Australian attitudes, thought it “more important... from the point of view of our trade in the Far East... to keep in with the Japanese than to humour our colonies who have as much to do as they can manage looking after their own affairs and who are all with us without any bribing on our part”.37

One consequence of Japanese naval assistance which was not in dispute was Japan’s seizure of Germany's island colonies in the northern Pacific. In spite of Sir John Jordan’s warning, the Admiralty and Foreign Office made a serious miscalculation about probable Japanese intentions in this matter; and the British government later disguised this error by asserting that Japanese naval operations in the Pacific were the unavoidable consequence of British naval exigencies. This interpretation of events supported their thesis of loyal allied co-operation far better than the manner in which the Japanese navy not only violated two categorical assurances by the Foreign Minister, Baron Kato, that Japan would not interfere with Australian and New Zealand plans to seize all the German colonies, but took advantage of confidential information about Australian military preparations to forestall them in this task.38 Although Alston attempted to shift the blame for this frustration of Australian policy on to the Melbourne government by arguing that the Japanese had to seize the islands “as the Australians were so dilatory”,39 the affair was much more the outcome of British diplomatic haste in early August. The seizure of the Marshall and Caroline islands, as the most striking result of Japanese naval operations in the Pacific, considerably depreciated the value of their assistance, even if the British were correct in denying the enormous importance Australia attached to these territories.

Chastened, no doubt, by the way in which this episode provided some justification for Australian fears about Japan’s trustworthiness as an ally, the Foreign Office dealt much more frankly with Melbourne on the question of the future of the islands, even though it was not politically expedient for the Australian government to admit this publicly. Yet perhaps the most striking

38 F. O. 262/269.
revelation of the British documents on this question is the cabinet decision on 5 February 1917 to block the escape route which Hughes naturally sought. Far from seeking American support, the Cabinet decided that "the possible entry into the war of the United States increased the necessity for an early decision in regard to Japan and Shantung and the occupied islands north of the Equator in order to avoid negotiations on the subject with another power". It would be difficult to imagine a decision on imperial policy in the Pacific which would have angered Hughes more than this, had he learned of it. The possibility of using American opposition to escape from the British commitment was clearly the basis of Hughes's attempt in November 1918 to induce the British government to cancel their assurance to Japan.

If then, as the British cabinet claimed, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance did play a decisive role in the allied victory, this was clearly not due to the actual value of Japanese co-operation but to the belief in Australia and New Zealand that Japan was less of a menace as a belligerent ally than as an uncommitted power. The use made of the Japanese danger in the successful anti-conscription campaigns strongly supports Hughes's argument in 1921 that it would have been politically impossible for the two South Pacific Dominions to have sent such large expeditionary forces to the Old World had it not been for apparent Japanese co-operation in the war. Hughes did not mean what Lloyd George implied, when he gratefully echoed the Australian's argument that German raiders would have kept a large part of these troops at home. Apprehension about how the Japanese would act would have done this.

What Japan might have done as a formally uncommitted power is, of course, conjectural, but the record of Anglo-Japanese relations suggests that the Alliance did little to restrain her attempt to profit from the difficulties of her chief rivals in Asia. In many ways it gave her a defensible excuse for actions which she may have hesitated to take without the diplomatic cover of the Alliance. It is difficult to see how Australia and New Zealand would have been more greatly menaced by formal Japanese neutrality than by her belligerence, for in fact her belligerence masked quasi-neutral attitudes and indeed an increasingly unfriendly neutrality. This was nicely symbolized by the necessity to establish for Japan, as for some of the neutral powers, a black list of firms trading with the enemy. It is possible that the formal existence of the Alliance may have restrained Japan from actively assisting the Central Powers; but the military risks of challenging the British Empire, engaged though it was, were incalculable. Moreover, the economic history of the war underlined Japan's dependence on raw material from the British Empire, particularly cotton from India and wool from the Dominions, not to mention the importance of established markets for Japanese manufactures in the Entente nations and in the increasingly unfriendly United States.

---

40 Cabinet Minutes, 5 February 1917; Cab. 23/4.
41 F. O. 371/3236.
42 Sissons, op. cit., gives a good account of the Japanese question in the conscription referendum campaigns.
Under the successive shocks of wartime relations with Japan, British specialists came around increasingly to the view that it was Japan's relative weakness and vulnerability rather than the Alliance which restrained her hostility towards the British Empire. In this view the security of Australia and New Zealand was largely guaranteed by the relation between Japan's strength and their geographical isolation from her. As successive Committee of Imperial Defence and Admiralty memoranda argued, an attempted invasion of Australia would lead Japan into one of the great military disasters of history unless she could be sure not only that she could gain temporary naval ascendancy in the Pacific, which British strategy and diplomacy virtually conceded to her, but be sure also that she could maintain a supremacy against hostile fleets from Europe and probably from the United States. Australian security thus depended on the preservation of the power of the United Kingdom and would be threatened indirectly by a major European power, not directly by Japan. However, this was a strategy of calculated risks not readily acceptable to Australians. To present the Australian government with the full record of Anglo-Japanese conflict and specialist scepticism about the value of the Alliance as an instrument of policy may well have weakened Australia's willingness to defend its security 10,000 miles from its shores. This is the justification for the myths which the British cabinet fostered about wartime relations with Japan — myths of which they were themselves in part victims. In the long run, however, it may have been better for Australian politicians and officials to have been exposed to all the facts and undistorted specialist opinion. Since Australia's attitudes towards Japan could not fail to exercise an increasing influence on overall British-Japanese relations, Australians had to learn to make a rational appreciation of geopolitical circumstances rather than to oscillate between a pathological fear of imminent Japanese conquest and an over-simplified view of the security afforded by formal diplomatic instruments such as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance or the Washington treaties which replaced it.

Addendum

Australia's wartime Director of Military Intelligence, Major E. L. Piesse, echoed Whitehall opinion on this question when he wrote to Defence Minister Pearce on 13 November 1918 that Australia's established defence policy against Japan had been embarked upon with insufficient knowledge of Japanese history, politics, and economic conditions. (Piesse Papers, cited in D. C. S. Sissons, "Attitudes to Japan and Defence", unpublished thesis, Melbourne, 1956.)

In the long run, perhaps the two most fruitful steps which the Australian government took to rectify this situation were the establishment of Japanese language teaching at Sydney University and Duntroon Military College in March 1917, and the creation of the Pacific Branch of the Prime Minister's Department, with Piesse as Director, in May 1919. (Sissons, op. cit., III, 56, footnote 15, and 1, 129.)

The initiative for the appointment of the lecturer in Japanese came from the Defence Department, and the effective selection was made by the British Embassy in Tokyo, who recommended two candidates, one of whom, James Murdoch, later author of the classic three volume history of Japan, took up the appointment. (Greene to Grey, 6 June 1916; F. O. 371 2699; f. 107226 p.p. 109233.) In 1920 Murdoch accompanied two of his students, Captain Broadbent of the Prime Minister's Department and Captain Capes of the Defence
Department, to Tokyo where they were attached to the British Embassy as honorary military attachés. Australia made it quite clear that it wished to avoid a Japanese demand for a reciprocal right to station Japanese military attachés in Australia. Murdoch was to remain for three months to plan the officers' language study. (F. O. 371/5366; f. 2056/p.p. 2056.)

A problem then arose as to whether these language student officers could report directly to the Australian General Staff. The Foreign Office's Japanese expert, F. Ashton-Gwatkin, thought that "the thick end of the wedge will be an Australian legation in Tokyo. But it is, I think, a healthy and necessary development". The Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, however, agreed with Assistant-Secretary V. Wellesley that "in order to maintain the necessary control it [was]... essential that all communications should pass us between the Ambassador and colonial authorities". The minutes make it clear that the implications of this issue had an important bearing on the concessions made to the Dominions at the Imperial Conference of 1921 on the question of improved information services. (F. O. 371/6684; f. 234/234/23.)

In March 1916 Australia offered to pay the translation costs if the British Embassy in Tokyo would supply copies of all important references to Australia in the Japanese press (F. O. 371/2785; f. 211/p.p. 53214).

Apart from this groundwork and the frustrated attempt, also in 1916, to attach Australian intelligence officers to the British consulates-general in Batavia and Manila, Australia's efforts were directed, with very little success, towards securing direct communication between British missions and Melbourne.
There was one sense at least in which the war that began in Europe in September 1939 was clearly going to have the dimensions of a true world conflict. It would undoubtedly determine the mastery of Europe. But this was the normal concomitant of any clash between the major European powers. What gave an added dimension to the collision between Nazi Germany and the British and French democracies was the probability that it would determine the mastery of the Americas as well. A German defeat would certainly leave the United States in a position of virtually unchallengeable predominance throughout the New World. But a German victory would not have meant just an alternative destiny for the Latins. It could also have meant the acquisition by the European fascists of bases in the New World from which they could mobilize against the United States itself resources which the authorities in Washington would have been unable to match.\(^1\)

The American and German governments were in no doubt as to the importance of the issues at stake. American diplomats had long noted with concern the extent of German penetration of the hemisphere. At the time of the Inter-American Conference at Buenos Aires in November-December 1936, Roosevelt himself spoke sensational ly of "others, who, driven by war madness or land hunger, might seek to commit acts of aggression against us..."\(^2\) The United States then attempted to persuade the Latins to agree to consult together in the event of their being threatened by a war outside the hemisphere. This was torpedoed by Argentina, however. Foreign Minister Saavedra Lamas insisted that any such consultations should take place only at the individual discretion of the governments concerned. Cordell Hull tried again two years later at Lima to create a Pan-American front against what he described as "the ominous shadow [which] falls across our own continent".\(^3\) He was successful in persuading the other American republics to "make effective their solidarity" in any case where "the peace, security, or territorial integrity" of any of their number were "thus threatened by acts of any nature that may impair them".\(^4\)

\(^3\) *New York Times*, 11 December 1938
\(^4\) *Declaration of Lima*, text.
They undertook in such a situation to co-ordinate "their respective sovereign wills by the procedure of consultation . . . using the measures which in each case the circumstances may make advisable". But Hull was defeated in his main objective of uniting the Americas under the benevolent protection of the United States. He proposed a joint statement that the American Republics would "not permit any non-American state to assist or abet in the fomenting of internal disorder in any American Republic". This was intended to serve as a direct warning to the three powers of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. But Argentina intervened again to head off a bid for American direction of the hemisphere. Saavedra Lamas' successor, Jose Maria Cantilo, insisted, reasonably, that no distinction need be made between American and non-American states engaged in such practices.

There was nonetheless no real reason to doubt the significance of German designs on the hemisphere, at least. Brazil had in fact been a major target for German migration since 1824. German publicists had been wont to refer to it since 1882 as a predestined area for German colonization. These attitudes had been inherited enthusiastically by the Nazis. In 1938 Hitler had announced:

We shall create a new Germany there. We shall find everything that we need there. We do not need to land armies . . . to win Brazil by force of arms. Our weapons are invisible ones . . . I am going to make of that continent of half-breeds a great German dominion.

Nor were their weapons wholly invisible. Extremely conspicuous indeed were the forty-nine aircraft of nine German or German-controlled air lines, which covered some 23,750 miles of air routes along the whole Atlantic coastline of Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, and traversed the continent from Rio to Lima and from Buenos Aires to Santiago. This mileage exceeded by about 10 per cent the combined routes covered by United States international airlines in South America. They were moreover selected not for their commercial significance, but to familiarize their air crews with the strategically significant areas of the continent, and to serve as means of communication between the rallying points of Nazi sympathizers in the various Latin states.

These groups constituted formidable nuclei for infiltration and subversion in almost every important Latin country. Brazil numbered 900,000 citizens out of its 41 millions who spoke German as their native tongue, and a further 600,000 of mixed German-Brazilian stock; Argentina had 236,000 German-speaking people in its total of 14 millions; Chile, 30,000 in its 4.6 millions; and Uruguay, 8,000 in its 2 millions. And the organization of these groups seemed to render...

---

5 Ibid.
6 Hull, op. cit., p. 606.
9 Melvin Hall and Walter Peck, "Wings for the Trojan Horse", Foreign Affairs, XIX, No. 2 (January 1941), 347-69.
10 Percy W. Bidwell, Economic Defense of Latin America (Boston, 1941), p. 27.
them far more significant politically than their mere numbers might suggest. German schools throughout Latin America consistently encouraged among their pupils disregard for the institutions of the countries in which they were domiciled, and devotion to those of Nazi Germany. German diplomats were universally required to further the interests of the local branches of the Nazi Party. And Conservative politicians, even when not precisely of fascist persuasions themselves, frequently found themselves obliged to one or other of the Nazi organizations.

All this need not have mattered if democratic institutions had themselves been secure in Latin America. But they had in fact been weakened almost everywhere by the economic recession of the 1930’s and its consequences. Latin America had seemed reasonably safe for democracy in 1914. It was manifestly utterly unsafe in 1939. And its prospects were probably most disquieting in two at least of the big “ABC” (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) powers, which the Germans themselves recognized as the only ones whose adherence to the Nazi cause would be of any political importance. For example, Brazil’s great traditions of compromise and orderly change had been interrupted in 1930 when Getulio Vargas was brought by military intervention from the Governor’s Palace in Porto Alegre to the Palacio dos Tiradentes in Rio. The diminutive but formidable spellbinder from the Rio Grande do Sul, in appearance more like a frog in co-respondent shoes than the legendary gaucho of his province, then began to implement progressively a thorough-going non-democratic corporative state. Formal dictatorship was established on 10 November 1937, on the spurious grounds that “the country was in imminent danger of being submerged under a tidal wave of Communism”; Vargas pronounced a state of siege, then of war, abolished the constitution he was sworn to defend, and proceeded with the implementation of what was reprovingly termed in Argentina “a comedy played after the model of European Fascist dictators”. German observers on the other hand welcomed the development of a regime which was not only Fascist in doctrine, but was supported by Brazil’s own green-shirted Fascists, the Integralistas, two of the most prominent of whom, Generals Enrico Dutra and Goes Monteiro, were installed as Minister of War and Chief of General Staff, respectively. And in December 1937 the Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs in the new regime seemed to give proof of its sympathies for Nazi methods by asking the Germans to display their Anti-Communist Exhibition in Brazil, to assist in the “fight against Communism”.

But the Germans might have realized that Brazilian readiness to use all support to bolster an indigenous Fascism did not imply any willingness to further the interests of non-Brazilian Fascists. The Estado Novo might already have been showing some claim to be regarded as “the worst dictatorship in

---

11 Documents on German Foreign Policy (hereafter D.G.F.P.) (Report of Political Division), IX, 30 November 1937.
13 La Presna, 12 November 1937.
14 D.G.F.P., Ritter to Weizsacker, 23 December 1937.
the world,” as the excitable Carleton Beals termed it, but it was most certainly not “under the thumb of Germany and Italy.” One reason for this was simply Vargas’ own fascist orthodoxy. Ethnic considerations obsessed him in the same way as they did his European counterparts. Ambassador Ritter, never exactly attuned to Brazilian ways, was unperturbed by Vargas’ decision on 3 December to dissolve all political parties in Brazil, including the Integralistas. But even he could not fail to be concerned by the vehement campaign being waged by the Estado Novo against nationalist and especially German nationalist activities. A decree of 22 December banned Nazi activities in the Rio Grande do Sul. A savage law of 18 April 1938 imposed strict censorship over all foreign news: placed foreign schools under state control; and forbade foreigners in Brazil all right of political association. German schools in Santa Catherina were practically assimilated to Brazilian schools in that province. On 11 May the disbanded and desperate Integralistas joined with elements of the Navy and some singularly misdirected local Nazis in an abortive putsch against Vargas, for which the President might have written the script himself. Vargas and the women of his household fully lived up to the best gaucho traditions by defending themselves, revolver in hand, against their aspirant assassins, until the Army arrived on the scene. To make matters worse, the Integralistas managed to wound the arch-fascist Dutra, who was visiting Vargas at the time. This was naturally enough to precipitate a torrent of anti-Nazi propaganda from the Brazilian reptile press. Ritter protested vigorously that he knew himself of no “bungling or mistakes by persons of German origin and by German elements” which could justify the abuse to which he was personally being treated. But such bungling was soon to be evidenced, on a mighty scale. On 25 June 1938 a Volksdeutsch leader named Kopp was arrested by Vargas’ police, and shortly after died in their care. They found in his possession plans for an Integralista revolt in Santa Catherina and Rio Grande do Sul. Ritter was swiftly declared persona non grata by the Brazilians while absent in Germany to attend a Nuremberg Rally, and diplomatic relations between the two countries were severed between October 1938 and June 1939.

But more than fascist ethnic obsessions impelled the Vargas regime to anti-German measures in the southern provinces of their vast country. Brazil’s wealthy south was perilously open to invasion from Argentina. The Brazilian Army was indeed twice the size of Argentina’s, albeit reputedly less efficient and certainly far more widely dispersed. But Brazil’s two ancient battleships, one cruiser and one destroyer, were hopelessly outmatched by Argentina’s two modernized battleships, three cruisers and sixteen destroyers; and Argentina’s 600 aircraft made up by far the most efficient, as well as the largest, Air Force in the Southern Hemisphere. Only the United States would be able to

16 D.G.F.P., Ritter to Weizsacker, 29 April 1938.
17 La Prensa, 12 May 1938.
18 D.G.F.P., Ritter to Weizsacker, 18 May 1938.
protect Brazil against Argentinian aggression. And the reality of this dependence was appreciated most acutely by Vargas' Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha, a fellow-gaucho from the threatened Rio Grande do Sul, and formerly Brazilian Ambassador to the United States, in which capacity he had become the most popular member of the diplomatic corps stationed in Washington. Aranha had indeed made his adherence to the new regime conditional upon Brazil's remaining firmly aligned with the United States. Aranha was accustomed to succeed at everything. Vargas honoured him by installing him in the Palacio Itamarati; the Germans, by recognizing him as "our greatest enemy in Brazil";20 and the Americans, by endorsing his bid to buy arms from Krupps, in the certainty that they would never be fired in a German cause.

Fascist, repressive, authoritarian Brazil was thus inextricably aligned with the democratic camp. Comparatively liberal, democratic Chile, on the other hand, was at least a potential fellow-traveller of Nazi Germany's. Chile's situation was one of the major tragedies of the inter-war period. In the 1890's its navy had outgunned any other fleet in the Pacific. In 1915 it had seemed strong and stable enough to underwrite the peace of South America, through the agency of the ABC treaty.21 But Chilean ambitions and self-confidence had foundered in a welter of economic distress and dictatorship after 1924. In thirteen years the Republic had endured the attentions of sixteen Chief Executives, four in 1925, one in 1927, four more in 1931 and six in 1932. And the successful incumbent in 1938, Aguirre Cerda, had assumed office only with the backing of the wealthy classes and the active support of the Chilean Nazis, after 62 of the latter had been shot by Cerda's even more reactionary opponent, President Alessandri, to whom they had surrendered. The strong pro-Nazi sympathies of the Army and the bourgeoisie in Chile were indeed mitigated only by their complete conviction that Germany could not possibly win in a war against the British Empire,22 and their firm resolve to do nothing that would alienate them from Argentina and Brazil. Since these two giants were in fact pursuing incompatible policies, this was in itself enough to guarantee that Chile would effectively do nothing.

Peru was undoubtedly Nazi Germany's favourite country in Latin America. Ambassador Schmitt reported approvingly from Lima that "Peru is a country whose form of Government does not differ from ours".23 There was little reason to disagree with this assessment. The country was in the sixth year of the dictatorship of General Oscar Benavides, who had outlawed the indigenous reform party A.P.R.A.;24 had driven most of Peru's foremost intellectuals into exile; and maintained the most elaborately repressive system in the Americas.25 Benavides had been sufficiently aware of his international reputation to place

---

21 Signed between Argentina, Chile, and Brazil on 25 May 1915, but never ratified.
22 D.G.F.P., Von Schoen to Weizsacker, 8 March 1938.
23 Ibid., Schmidt to Weizsacker, 4 June 1938.
24 Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana.
25 Artuccio, op. cit., pp. 174-76.
an order with Krupps for batteries of 88mm anti-aircraft guns, in order to be
able safely to defy the United States at the Lima conference. But defiance did
not mean opposition. Peru was helplessly dependent on the country with which
it transacted 31 per cent of its external trade. Peru might be despotic; it was
even aggressive towards the only country before which it could safely adopt
that attitude, its unfortunate neighbour Ecuador; but economics ensured that
it would be a true friend of the democracies in their duel with the Axis.

Economics might similarly have seemed to guarantee little Uruguay's adherence
to the German cause. But an even stronger motivation placed it squarely in the
democratic camp. Uruguay lay across Argentina's line of advance into Rio
Grande do Sul. The factors which determined Brazil's alignment with the United
States thus applied here as well. Only American help could save the former
Transplatine Province of Buenos Aires from being reincorporated within the
boundaries of its giant neighbour. Uruguay thus presented the positively
anomalous situation of an internally democratic Latin country actually aligned
externally with the democracies. But even Uruguay's return to democratic
institutions had taken place as recently as 19 June 1938. It had previously
endured seven years of dictatorship under Gabriel Perra, during which Nazi
influence had been strong enough to secure the arrest of the Professor of Philo-
sophy at the University of Montevideo, for publicly stating the blatantly
obvious truth, that agents of the totalitarian countries were plotting against
the safety of Uruguay.

No problem of alignment of course arose with the Latin countries of Central
and North America. In the event, economic considerations overrode even such
factors as Mexico's appropriation of British, Dutch and American oil companies,
and its subsequent severing of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom.
Overall, the Latin Republics transacted 33.7 per cent of their total trade with
the United States, 14 per cent with the United Kingdom and 18 per cent with
the Axis Powers. But individual countries varied wildly from this pattern.
Brazil, for example, transacted 23.9 per cent of its total trade in 1938 with the
United States, 14 per cent with the United Kingdom, and 27 per cent with the
Axis. Comparable figures for Chile were 21.7 per cent, 16 per cent, and 22.8
per cent; for Peru, 31 per cent, 15 per cent, and 19 per cent; for Uruguay,
7.9 per cent, 23.3 per cent, and 26.6 per cent; and Argentina 13 per cent, 26.5
per cent, and 17.7 per cent. Dependence on the American economy increased
markedly as one moved north. Thus Colombia transacted 54.4 per cent of its
total trade with the United States; Panama, 73.4 per cent; Honduras, 74.3
per cent; Mexico, 62.6 per cent; and Cuba, 73.4 per cent.

Economics thus denied any real freedom of action to Peru and the Latins
north of the Amazon. Security considerations similarly committed Brazil and

26 D.G.F.P., Schmidt to Weizsacker, 5 April 1938.
27 Artuccio, op. cit., pp. 7-9.
28 International Financial Statistics; and U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and
Domestic Commerce.
Uruguay. Instability and "war neurosis" left Chile virtually incapable of any kind of action. Only one Latin country in 1939 was free at once from external danger, or from incurable dependence on either the American or German markets. Only one could claim meaningfully to possess a positive discretionary capacity in its foreign relations. And this was the country which had most consistently fostered the idea of Latin unity and which also presented unquestionably the most mature and liberal social institutions south of the Río Grande.

Virtually alone in Argentina did the massive liberal institutions of a superbly articulate and informed independent press, bourgeois constitutionalism, and moderate socialist aspirations stand solidly against military authoritarianism, oligarchy, or the corporate state. For just one year, in 1931, the Army under General José Uriburu had suspended constitutional processes in a situation of economic crisis. Affairs since 1932 had been managed by a concordancia of radicals, conservatives, and socialists, undoubtedly alien to British and American practice but utterly familiar to western Europeans.

This great liberal state had indeed already performed signal services for the democratic cause. By its mere existence across the Río de la Plata, it compelled Brazil and Uruguay to align themselves with the United States, and led Chile on a string. Moreover, Argentine diplomats repeatedly distinguished themselves in confrontations with the European dictatorships. They had uncompromisingly rebuked Russia for its criticisms of Brazil in 1935; they had frequently protested vigorously to Berlin about nationalistic activities by Germans in Argentina itself, and were cooperating with Brazil in its campaign against the Nazis in the Río Grande do Sul; and they were preparing to take the lead from Chile in forming a united Latin American front against Franco, to defend the right of asylum of Spanish Nationalists, sheltering in the Chilean Embassy in Madrid. Argentina was indeed the only Latin country that could speak for democracy on the world stage, without risking being accused of hypocrisy and with some real prospect of being listened to.

But it was in fact the tragedy of the hemisphere that its only mature democracy outside the United States should for that very reason have been committed to a struggle for prestige against the United States itself. Argentina's leaders had anticipated by twenty years or more the principles and posture of Charles de Gaulle. They too had been forced to the conviction that the only way in which a nation lying within the natural sphere of authority of a superpower can demonstrate its independence to the world outside is by opposing the objectives of that superpower wherever practicable. The parallel with Gaullist France is indeed almost exact. Argentina lacked the resources to pretend to equal partnership with the United States, so it could preserve its national dignity only

29 D.G.F.P., Von Schoen, op. cit.
31 Moreno, op. cit.
33 La Presna, 17 August 1939.
by rejecting any offer of an American alliance. It could not itself dominate the hemisphere, so it could claim an historical role within it only by offering the other Latin Republics the example of its independence. This example had indeed been demonstrated consistently by Pueyrredon at Havana in 1928, by Lamas at Montevideo in 1933 and at Buenos Aires in 1937, and by Cantilo at Lima in 1938. In the context of fascist expansionism in Europe, it meant that Argentina could be counted on to pursue a policy of neutrality which could only be injurious to its fellow-democrats in the New World, and helpful to their common enemies in the Old.

Such a policy might well have seemed singularly unprofitable but for the nature of the stakes involved. What was at stake was nothing less than Argentina’s status as a significant power in the international community. Such a role had indeed seemed assured to the great Republic of the Pampas after the first world war. Argentina had entered the twentieth century as the twelfth trading nation of the world. By 1929, it ranked fifth, supplying 2.6 per cent of total world trade and 39 per cent of all Latin American trade. But the economic vicissitudes of the thirties had struck at Argentina more damagingly than at any other major trading nation. The system of Imperial Preferences negotiated at Ottawa in 1933 completed what the depression had begun. By 1938, Argentina, with its economy slowly recovering, was still only tenth among the trading nations, supplying only 1.8 per cent of world trade and 33 per cent of Latin trade. However, it still towered among its Latin partners by every calculation of economic and social strength. Its standard of living was still significantly the highest south of the Rio Grande; its national income of about $2,657 million was over 25 per cent greater than that of the other Latin giant, Brazil; and its combined reserves of $481 million represented almost 80 per cent of the foreign exchange holdings of all Latin countries put together. It possessed also the unique advantage of having as its main trading partner a nation which no longer had any pretensions to dominate the southern hemisphere. And Argentina’s substantial dependence upon the British market had the further advantage in that, in any international crisis, the British would find it far harder to obtain alternative suppliers for the foodstuffs and industrial raw materials they obtained from Argentina, than the Argentines would to find other sources for the manufactures they bought from the United Kingdom.

Argentina thus possessed to an extraordinary degree the resources and flexibility to exploit to its own fullest commercial advantage the consequences for world trade of a new international crisis. It certainly had every incentive to do so. The first world war had helped to bring Argentina to the threshold of world power and influence. A second might bring these supreme prizes of national ambition within the reach of Buenos Aires again. Certainly, nothing less was likely to do so. The Argentine choice could hardly be

---

37 I.M.F., *op. cit.*
doubted. The Republic of the Pampas would hold rigorously to its principles of neutrality and independence. In doing so, it would make the paradox of Latin American alignment complete. As the threat of war deepened in Europe, and the assorted dictatorships of Latin America with the defenceless Uruguayan democracy clustered about the United States, the liberal and powerful Argentine Republic held to the course that was to lead to alienation from the rest of the Americas, to fifteen years of siege and military rule, and to the triumph of an indigenous fascism in Buenos Aires, scarcely a year after its defeat in Europe.
There has been a growing volume of discussion on "the export of electoral systems" to non-Western polities. Professor Mackenzie recently advised the collection of case-studies, and the accumulation of such factual material has already shown great improvement in the past three or four years, through academic studies and the reports of those designing and administering electoral systems in non-Western states, independent or emergent. This article turns to a somewhat larger question, the theories of representation which, whether explicit or implied, have influenced the selection of imported, or the design of homegrown, electoral systems. Of course it would be difficult to speak meaningfully of the theories, or ideologies, or attitudes, underlying electoral systems without describing the machinery. One harassed federal legislator said at the start of the debate on franchise reform in the Central African Assembly:

In this matter there is enormous scope for the study of basic principles before one can work out details of any franchise scheme. That, I think, is one of the peculiarities of this particular subject, that very often when you try to discuss it with anyone, they will concentrate on the mechanics of the particular system which you are trying to explain instead of getting back to the principles on which any mechanics must be based.

It may well be that this study will suffer by moving between the two levels, but the novelty of the institutions involved may help to excuse the division of attention.

This paper is a slightly modified version of one read to Section E of the 1958 ANZAAS Congress at Adelaide. First published in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, IV, No. 2 (November 1958), 165-78.


We may begin by noting two systems of representation which failed to develop or take permanent root, corporate representation and states' rights representation. The introduction of unicameral forms of Crown Colony government led to corporate representation by nomination. Elective corporate representation was introduced in a few isolated instances, e.g. the Gold Coast, but usually the corporate selection was a suggestion to the Governor who by convention almost invariably appointed the person selected by the appropriate interest group. This form of representation has declined for two reasons: in those territories where the major economic interests are externally owned and controlled, their direct representation runs counter to local nationalism, and where they are locally owned and controlled, the rise of party systems makes unwelcome the retention of a separate bloc which could overturn the results of a popular election. The idea of a states' rights theory of representation has developed only in the West Indies where geography and history have combined to give the constituent units of the federation a pronounced individuality. In Nigeria, Central Africa, and Malaya, the characteristic differences are tribal, racial, or communal rather than territorial. The classic devices of weightage in the lower chamber, parity in an upper chamber, and federalization of Cabinet have all been tried, but it appears likely that, as in Australia, effective recognition of states' rights will come from the party system rather than the constitution.

Unfortunately, one of the most important developments in the emergent states — the spread of adult suffrage — must be dismissed with equal brevity. In Asia, West Africa, and the West Indies adult suffrage has come either with independence or the achievement of semi-responsible government, and the consensus of most would be that it has worked satisfactorily in educating the population and producing stable governments. In some territories, such as Ceylon and Pakistan, the organization of the electorate into common or separate rolls is still debated, but nowhere is there a demand for restriction of the franchise. Only in the territories of Central and East Africa, together with the adjacent island of Mauritius and the more distant colony of Fiji which, for reasons of space, must be overlooked here, is the introduction of adult suffrage still one of the burning issues of politics, and the attendant choice between separate and common rolls a matter of the first importance. It is to this hard core of the problem of representation that the greater part of this paper will be devoted.

In the half-dozen territories of Central and East Africa small British settler communities, ranging from six or seven per cent of the total population down...
to less than one-half of one per cent, must find some accommodation with the interests of the indigenous Africans. To consider the arguments of the European community first, there are three postulates which are generally agreed amongst the settlers: first, that adult or a very wide franchise should not be introduced; second, that the franchise should not be limited on grounds of race; third, that the settler community will have to retain political control for the foreseeable future. Beyond these, there is disagreement as between common and communal rolls, and on the degree of enfranchisement to be permitted, but these basic propositions are sufficient to attempt a construction of the theory of representation from which they derive.

The criticism of adult suffrage proceeds on two lines: that it is all very well elsewhere, but cannot yet be applied in Africa, or that part of Africa of which the critic is speaking, and that it is not at all certain that it will work anywhere. In the first category we find the Tredgold Commission of Southern Rhodesia whose members believed that adult suffrage requires a homogeneous electorate “at a fairly high standard of civilization and divided by political divisions, based on the policies and record of government and opposition, and not confused by differences, such as race or colour, that tend to create artificial divisions cutting across the real issues”. In the second, we find W.F. Coutts, the Electoral Commissioner for Kenya, who pointed out that adult suffrage has existed in Great Britain for only six elections and caution should be shown in trying the broad franchise in Africa until the British (and other) experiments have worked a bit longer. There is a general suspicion of adult suffrage: the Tredgold Commission pointed out that in some countries extension of the franchise “to people who were incapable of exercising it with judgment, or who lacked the necessary political tradition” led to the breakdown of popular government, with the likelihood that fascism is merely the reaction when popular government is extended to those unworthy of the privilege of voting. To many European settlers, if not to the electoral commissioners just quoted, the election of the Labour Government in 1945 and the repudiation of the Prime Minister who had just won the war for the Empire, showed that even in more mature communities a wide franchise can mean colossal blunders. Two points are implicit in both lines: the franchise is a privilege to be given to those who are likely, if not absolutely certain, to exercise it properly; the type of government

---

8 There are, of course, substantial Asian communities, which in four of the territories are more numerous than the European, but they stand somewhat apart from the main struggle. One suspects that they will be able to reach a settlement within whatever compromise the other two races may achieve.


10 Ibid., p. 3.

11 Report of the Commissioner appointed to Enquire into Methods for the Selection of African Representatives to the Legislative Council (Nairobi, 1955), hereafter cited as Coutts Report; the Commissioner was W. F. Coutts.

12 Ibid., p. 7.

13 Tredgold Report, p. 4.
produced is more important than the electoral system which produces it. Thus
the constitution-maker decides from first principles what type of government
is wanted and then tailors the electoral system accordingly. This position was
stated by the Government of Northern Rhodesia in its White Paper on Con­
stitutional Change:

The constitutional arrangements should ensure that the government of
the country will continue to rest in the hands of responsible men, men with
understanding and sufficient education and experience of affairs to be able
to reason and to exercise judgment between alternative courses of action.
The electoral system must encourage the return of men or women who are
prepared and indeed disposed to consider and balance the interests of
all racial groups, and who are prompted primarily by a spirit of public
service to the whole community; it must discourage the return of extremists
who would look to sectional interests alone.

To come to this priority of result over method is to differ from the main stream
of modern democratic thought which argues that the characteristic of democracy
is the right of all to choose their government, and the best form of government
is that which preserves a system of free election. However, the distinction be­
tween right and privilege is not firmly drawn; thus within a few lines of the
passage in which they call the franchise a privilege, the Tredgold Commissioners
speak of the principle that every man “should have a say in his own government”
and then state that this right must be exercised without detriment to the right
of others.

Refusal to restrict the franchise on grounds of race may be traced back to
Rhodes’ injunction of equal rights for all civilized men. However, there may be
other criteria for restriction as prescribed by Lord Malvern:

We must unhesitatingly reject a doctrine that our supremacy at present
rests on colour of skin; because, in fact, it rests on our superiority of
technical skill, education, cultural values, civilisation and heredity. We
must be sufficiently realistic to appreciate that there is no proof that we have
a paramount monopoly of these qualities; it is in the ultimate interests of
the Europeans to encourage the more backward people to acquire these
qualities.

What civilization means in this context is not satisfactorily defined. Perhaps, as
Mrs. Huxley says, it is only a question for the philosophers, for the Africans
concerned have so clearly accepted whatever standards European settlers care
to display: “Equal rights, therefore, for all who have reached a certain standard
of education (let us hope a fairly high one); for all who accept certain common
standards of social behaviour, ethics, respect for the law, service to the com­

\[14\] Proposals for Constitutional Change in Northern Rhodesia (Lusaka, 1958).
\[15\] Ibid., p. 6.
\[16\] Tredgold Report, p. 3.
\[17\] Southern Rhodesia, Legislative Assembly Debates, XXXIII, Part II (23 June 1952), 2629-30.
\[18\] E. Huxley and M. Perham, Race and Politics in Kenya (London, 1944), p. 194; but note
Rhodes’s dictum: “My motto is equal rights for every civilized man south of the Zambesi.
What is a civilized man? A man, whether white or black, who has sufficient intelligence to
The point is made that there cannot be permanent domination by an aristocratic minority, but exactly what the alternative could be is not made clear. One suggestion is that there must be an élite of some sort: Lord Malvern quotes Marriott on the failure of Athenian democracy and the Nigerian nationalist leader, Dr. Awolowo, on the need for an élite in every society, and in the speech just quoted he also says: “We must reject permanently the idea that our concept of democracy can consist of a mere counting of heads”, and

We must ensure that the franchise is a privilege to be exercised by those who have attained a certain standard; but at the same time we must not deny opportunities to all people to attain that standard and must by all means in our power encourage them to do so.

This potential conflict between a limited franchise and what could eventually produce adult suffrage is perhaps explained by the expectation of what will happen as more and more Africans qualify for the franchise: they will support the European policy of a qualified franchise, thereby making it a popular policy; they will join existing, i.e. European, political parties; and “there is quite a sporting chance that they will play with the Europeans in their political habits and not represent any kind of colour at all”. If this expectation proves wrong, then the Africans already on the roll will have to be disfranchised.

Prior to the substantial absorption of Africans into the political system, what theory of representation justifies the maintenance of what is admittedly a minority government? There are at least two possible explanations, virtual representation and trusteeship. The distinction I would draw between the two would be that, in the case of trusteeship, there is a duty on the trustee to consider the interests of his “constituents” as final, whilst the virtual representative may give priority to some other larger interest, such as the welfare of the whole nation. The option for virtual representation is clear in the terms of reference of the Tredgold Commission: “To consider and report on a system for the just representation of the people of the Colony in its Legislative Assembly, under which the Government is placed, and remains in the hands of civilized and responsible persons...” Most settler members accept this principle; thus one member, a Captain Robertson, for the Federal Assembly:

Sir, the hon. member poses me a question, do I represent Africans? [MR. CHIRWA: Does the Federal Government represent Africans?] I am part of the Federal Government, Sir. I do not know whether the hon. member means the Cabinet, or whether he means this House, which I look upon as the Government of the people. Sir, even as I look upon my position as an elected member for the Luangwa constituency as having its obligations and duties towards the people within that constituency, regardless of

write his name, has some property or work, is in fact not a loafer”, as quoted by W. K. Hancock, Survey of Commonwealth Affairs (London, 1937) I, 188, n. 1.

20 Ibid., 2630.
21 Ibid., 2639-40.
whether they are white or black, I am equally confident that the gentlemen who represent our Government today are equally imbued with a similar sense of duty. If the hon. member likes to think otherwise, he is just as much entitled to his beliefs as I am.23

The theory of trusteeship which was supported by official members of Legislative Councils has declined as the elected settler members have assumed greater responsibility and authority in colonial government.

The anti-settler camp contains two groups, the Africanophiles in the United Kingdom and the African nationalists themselves. A pamphlet by Mr. Tom Mboya of Kenya may be taken as typical of the nationalist position.24 In a brief introduction Mboya advances certain “convictions” which support his political proposals. They are that men are fundamentally equal regardless of race, colour, or creed, and that all should participate in their own government on terms of equality with all others; society exists to “enable all individuals to live in amity together and to co-operate for their common good”, and government exists to serve individuals, so the state should be organized to produce the maximum freedom for each consistent with equal freedom for others. The form of multi-racialism now existing in Kenya is predicated upon the existence of communal groups and impedes the introduction of democracy. The qualified franchise does not achieve any end but the support of European supremacy:

The argument that full democracy is impracticable because not all men have developed a sense of responsibility, ignores the important question as to who shall be the judge and on what criteria judgment is to be based. Does the possession of wealth, academic education or other social status conclusively prove that a person is politically more responsible than those who lack these things? And what is meant by a sense of responsibility? Surely it could be said that the South African White voter exercises his vote responsibly because he returns a government which is committed to European supremacy? But from the point of view of the African people, virtually unrepresented in the South African Parliament, the Europeans are not using their vote responsibly as they are not considering non-European needs and desires.25

Mboya does not consider differences of “culture” or “civilization”, apparently equating them with racial differences. As for the multiple voting system introduced by Coutts, Mboya demolishes it by pointing out that if the possession of one qualification is necessary to show that a person is politically conscious it might be difficult to recognize degrees of political consciousness. A qualified franchise set on European levels of income or education may be unrealistic considering the natural wealth of the country, and the creation of a graded system of African voting is likely to mean that should the decision to establish a Common Roll be taken, only the handful of Africans at the top of their roll would be eligible. Mboya is prepared to admit that universal franchise in Kenya quite possibly could lead to the return of self-seeking or incompetent individuals.

23 Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Parliamentary Debates, VII (5 March 1957), 2823.
25 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
but observes that this can happen with more mature electorates and is the only way by which Africans will gain voting experience and mature judgment.

The Africanophile is more ready to recognize the need for some protection for settler groups. A typical statement of the Africanophile view is *Advance to Democracy*, a pamphlet of the Fabian Colonial Bureau. The word "partnership" has come into extensive use in Central and East Africa, but there has been little clarification of its meaning, either in social policy or political development, except to say that at the official level it represents a retreat from the paramountcy of African interests. (The Capricorn African Society is to establish "Colleges of Citizenship" in Kenya and Rhodesia to offer courses in philosophy, politics, and government, and instill the ideas of partnership and common nationalism; no doubt such teaching will stimulate the development of the theory of partnership.) The Fabian report suggested that it should include recognition by Africans of the right of settler communities to remain and "take their share in building a democratic society based on the equality of individuals", which meant an acceptance of "the compromises which democracy demands and without which it cannot exist". The report expected a transitional period leading to full democracy; during this period differences must be maintained to protect weaker communities, but with flexibility for easy alteration of constitutional machinery. With respect to the franchise this would involve the introduction of direct elections where they do not exist, and the expansion of elected blocs to give greater experience of representation to both representatives and electorate. Communal representation is rejected for the usual reasons, and a common roll sought:

What is required is the recognition that individual members of all communities are citizens of one country and that each is a member of the local population in the district in which he lives. The only kind of electoral district which meets this requirement is a geographical constituency, served by a member who represents all its people and not those of one racial community alone. The link between a member and his constituency is the foundation of parliamentary government.

As the common roll would be unacceptable to minority communities at present, two devices are suggested to offer protection for minorities: a bicameral legislature with an upper chamber based on parity between communities and a lower chamber largely elected from a common roll, and reserve seats where the common roll is applied.

Having discussed broad principles, it might be useful to consider their application. The Coutts Report, slightly modified by the Kenya Government, brought in for the first time direct elections for Africans on a communal roll. Despite a vigorous campaign by the Government for registration only one-third of those thought to have been eligible registered; apathy and suspicion of the

---

declarations of property or income necessary to qualify have been blamed. The election itself was carried out without incident, and, considering the novelty and the elaborate system of three different colours of ballot, it is surprising that barely one-half of one per cent of the ballots were rejected. The poll was high, some eighty per cent. However, one commentator reports that during the campaign there was a steady movement from a moderate to a more radical position on the part of all candidates, and that the results which were to reflect the weightage given to age and experience showed little distinction in selection of candidates between those voters with one, two, or three votes to cast. The defeat of "moderate" Africans and the solid support which the newly elected members have given the demands of Mboya for increased representation to achieve parity with Europeans in the Legislative Council, suggests that the limited franchise, with qualification and weightage, still failed to produce a pro-European African bloc.

In Southern Rhodesia the Tredgold Commission proposed a common roll on which there would be two classes of voters, ordinary and special. The qualifications for ordinary voters should be based on property, or a smaller amount of property with a rising educational qualification; the range should be from an income of £720 or property of £1,500 to an income of £300 or property of £500 plus in either case the completion of four years of secondary schooling. For the special voters' qualifications, the Commissioners proposed an income of £180 and ability to fill in the registration form unaided. Ordinary and special votes should be counted equally, except that the total of special votes should not equal more than one-half the total of the ordinary votes, i.e. special votes could not total more than one-third of those counted. When they were more numerous, their individual value would have to be depreciated accordingly. However, the Delimitation Commission should be instructed to seek to include no more than one-third voters with special qualifications in any one constituency. These recommendations were substantially modified by the Southern Rhodesian government in preparing electoral legislation under which all voters cast the same type of vote. Instead of classes of votes and voters, there are ordinary voters roughly equivalent to the ordinary voters proposed in the Tredgold Report, and two groups of special voters, the first with an income qualification of £240 for the preceding two years' average, the second merely "gainfully occupied and employed" for the two years preceding enrolment, and having completed primary school. However, when special voters reach twenty per cent of total enrolment in the Colony, the category will be closed, and thereafter those special voters already on the roll will remain as ordinary voters. In addition the income and property qualifications will be revalued from time to time to recognize fluctuations in the value of money, what one might call a gold clause in the Franchise Act.

The Southern Rhodesian proposals substantially influenced the first federal

Franchise Act. The same two classes of special and general voters are created, but the Tredgold Report is followed by retaining separate seats for different classes of voters. The general voters will return 44 members (out of a total Assembly membership of 59), and will also vote with the special voters to elect a further eight members. It was this legislation which was referred by the African Affairs Board and approved by the British Government over the strong opposition of the Labour Party and many groups in Britain.

In Northern Rhodesia the Government, after extensive consultation, published its proposals for franchise reform, also modelled in part on the Tredgold Report. It proposed a common roll with two types of voters, ordinary voters who had complied with the requirements for the federal franchise and special voters who had complied with the special voters' requirements of the Federal Act. There would be twelve ordinary electorates in which the special votes might not count for more than one-third of the total, six special electorates in which the ordinary votes might not count for more than one-third. The ordinary electorates would have been concentrated in the Copper Belt area and would be expected to return European members, the special electorates would have been rural and expected to return Africans. To avoid an urban-rural conflict on racial lines, there would be four “amalgamated” constituencies, two made up of the six special electorates but reserved for European members, two composed of the twelve ordinary electorates but reserved for Africans. In the amalgamated electorates a reverse system of weightage to that used in the constituent electorates would have been applied. However, the qualifications for special voters would be steadily increased so that after a period of ten years when the special category would be closed, the income qualification would have risen 300 per cent for those with no educational qualification or just over 100 per cent for those who had completed two years at secondary school, and the property qualification by 150 per cent for those with no educational qualification, with a new alternative of the original property holding together with two years' secondary education. Once on the roll a voter might not be removed because he subsequently fell below the income or property qualification. The Government of Northern Rhodesia estimated that such a franchise would produce about 20,000 ordinary voters and about 24,000 special voters, roughly equal in numbers in the Copper Belt, with the special voters six times more numerous than the ordinary voters in rural areas, but the estimate was implicitly denied by the Member (i.e. quasi-Minister) for Education and Social Services, who pointed out that only one-seventh of African children today could complete primary school, and only one-fortieth two years of secondary school.

Having dealt in some detail with the electoral systems, it would be as well to analyse a trifle more carefully two further points arising from the underlying theory of representation of the settler community. First the explanations

---

30 These proposals were part of a scheme for constitutional reform which was defeated in the Legislative Council and then modified by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

31 Times, 12 May 1958.
advanced for a qualified franchise. To the Tredgold Commission there were three arguments and qualifications: education — “all things being equal a man with a mind trained and disciplined is unquestionably at an advantage with an untutored fellow”; means — “under our present economy, a man does not earn more than a subsistence unless he has certain qualities of mind and character”; character — the difficulties which the Commission had in coming to grips with this concept may be indicated by a somewhat extended quotation:

The most formidable difficulty in evolving tests of fitness to exercise the franchise lies in the fact that it is well nigh impossible to evolve a satisfactory test of character, and character must enter into the picture. Intelligence in itself is not enough for it does not necessarily equate with a right attitude of mind. A disinterested and altruistic approach to problems affecting the common weal is obviously desirable in those exercising an influence in the affairs of state, but this is not measured by examination results or even by success in acquiring an income. But as against this it may be pointed out that even the most estimable character is not in a position usefully to exercise the franchise unless he has judgment as well as virtue. Moreover, self-interest in the political approach is not wholly to be condemned, provided it is informed and enlightened.32

It might be asked what the Commissioners imagine to be involved in the act of casting a vote. Is it an act of faith in a representative based on an appreciation of his ability and character, or is it a deliberate selection between alternative policies offered by different candidates, who will be more delegates than representatives? For the Tredgold Commission at least the former is not enough:

An uneducated peasant, from a remote area, might possibly be able to form some sort of judgment on the personal qualities of a candidate. But, under our system of parliamentary government, that is not enough. A voter must be able to form an opinion as to the true merits of the policy for which the candidate stands. This he certainly could not do.33

In fact prior to the appearance of a party system in which Africans play a significant part, it is likely that there will be little to choose between the policies of different candidates of the same race, but even if this is overlooked their view is unsatisfactory. By that judgment which should be shown by voters it may be supposed the Commissioners mean an ability to see the likely consequences of a policy and to assess the integrity of a candidate therefrom. We may consider an example other than the South African one provided by Mboya. An African candidate in Kenya who urges that Africans should be given the right to acquire land in the White Highlands apparently offers a simple policy which can be grasped by any illiterate tribesman. But the settler would argue that the implementation of such a policy would lead to a flight of capital from the country and consequent economic stagnation, and a candidate who proposes such a policy must be a demagogue, either ignorant of the realities of government or prepared to injure the country to secure short-term political advantage. Should

32 Tredgold Report, p. 4.
33 Ibid., p. 6.
the candidate or the voter who supports him say that they are quite prepared to see these consequences of economic disruption to secure social or political goals, what then? The intention of the whole system of qualifications is to confine the franchise to those who have been sufficiently integrated into European social patterns through education and the labour market to begin to follow European values in the selection of goals. Education means not an education in techniques but in a scale of values; property and income signify achievement of a status which will be sought only when those values are accepted; character is that moral strength which comes with a particular set of values. The vote is not a right or a privilege, despite the uncertainty of the Commissioners on this point — they have been misled by prevailing, and perhaps vulgar, terminology. The vote is a trust to be exercised in pursuit of a set of values. Mill might be quoted:

The suffrage is indeed due to him, among other reasons, as a means to his own protection, but only against treatment from which he is equally bound, so far as depends on his vote, to protect every one of his fellow-citizens. His vote is not a thing in which he has an option; it has no more to do with his personal wishes than the verdict of a juryman. It is strictly a matter of duty; he is bound to give it according to his best and most conscientious opinion of the public good.

Fortunately for the voter here there is no need to formulate his own opinion of the public good, for he may adopt one ready-made, that of the settler community. Should it be the case that the attempts of Westernized Africans to pursue these values are not accepted as genuine, then the whole argument stands revealed as an attempt to maintain minority rule by manipulating and distorting established theories of representation.

The second point that I would like to re-examine in greater detail is the decision to move towards a common roll. All schools of thought join in condemning communal representation and rolls as maintaining or deepening racial divisions. To Mr. Mboya they are a means of preventing the African majority from coming into its own:

The objection to multi-racialism must . . . be based on the grounds that its existence is dependent on the maintenance of racial groups, and as such it is an impediment to the establishment of democratic rights. Secondly, the present multi-racial form of government is forcing a conflict of politics based on self-preservation. Each group is fighting to accumulate gains as a group, and consequently the maximum limit to which the minorities are prepared to go is parity between each of the three races. To them proportional representation would mean African domination just as much as to Africans the present set up means European domination. Democracy is unacceptable to the Europeans because they think in terms of equating their group participation and the participation of the Africans as a group. They are still not concerned with individuals, only with races.

34 Representative Government, Ch. X.
35 Mboya, op. cit., p. 32.
To the Africanophiles, separate electorates force communal politics and inhibit the development of inter-racial organizations, and all political interest centres on "a frustrating, embittering and fruitless contest centred on numerical calculations".37 To the settler too they mean the worsening of communal relations. Thus the Tredgold Commission:

When the voters in a constituency are all drawn from one section of the community and when conflict, real or apparent, arises between the interests of that section and other sections, it is asking too much of human nature to expect that the member for the constituency should fearlessly support the view that he knows will be unpopular with his constituents. In a country with racial groups, at widely different stages of development, the appearance of conflict of interest between such groups must constantly arise. Only those with exceptional political insight can be expected to realize that, in each case, a solution that sets the interest of their own group first must, in the long run, be detrimental to all. Only a man of exceptional moral fibre can be relied on to press for the long view, involving compromise and concession of immediate benefits by his group, especially as this course must lay him open to a charge of disloyalty to his group. Conversely, a member avowedly representing a racial group, consciously or subconsciously, feels himself, in a measure at least, absolved from his broader duty to the community as a whole . . . . We believe that this is not merely a matter of theory. Instances spring to the mind in which systems of racial representation have led to the deliberate exploitation for political purposes of racial differences.37

To challenge the contention that communal representation worsened communal relations would be to examine Indian and Ceylonese politics for the past half century.38 I would merely say that I believe the case not proven. Communal relationships are too complex to permit a single causal explanation; and institutions rarely have the influence on politics that is at first suspected. Whilst in India it could be argued that forty years of communal representation saw steadily worsening communal relations, the experience of Ceylon is ambiguous, and in Fiji the refusal to establish a common roll has meant a period of relative communal peace, albeit at the cost of political retardation. If one could assume that the introduction of communal representation did not necessarily prove a source of inter-group irritation, what utility might it have for representation?

The tide of pluralist theory in this century had passed before the phenomenon now known as the "plural society" received its classic definition from J. S. Furnivall:

... A plural society: a society, that is, comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political...
unit. In a plural society there is no common will except, possibly, in matters of supreme importance, such as resistance to aggression from outside. In its political aspect a plural society resembles a confederation of allied provinces, united by treaty or within the limits of a formal constitution, merely for certain ends common to the constituent units and, in matters outside the terms of union, each living its own life. But it differs from a confederation in that the constituent units are not segregated each within its own territorial limits. In a confederation secession is at least possible without the total disruption of all social bonds, whereas in a plural society the elements are so intermingled that secession is identical with anarchy.

For this last reason two of the classic Indian (and now Ceylonese) solutions to communal difficulties, partition or communally-oriented federation, are impossible in most of the territories of Central and East Africa. But if the deep divisions of the plural society were recognized as permanent and not necessarily dangerous, might it not be possible to devise political institutions predicated on the permanence of differences, and not attempting to conceal or eliminate them? Two items of Asian experience are significant for Africa here. Clear proof was given during the period of Congress ministries, 1937–39, that any communal settlement must embrace not only the constitutional system, but the party system as well. More recently the use of guaranteed rights for the protection of minorities has indicated an attempt to ensure that Leviathan is shackled, rather than incorporate the minorities into the state. To acknowledge the permanence of communities would mean an acceptance of the pluralistic multinational state envisaged by the Austrian Social Democrats, rather than the homogeneous Westernized society which most seek, built on the powdered shards of tribal society, in which tribal and even racial differences would be preserved in form only, not in content. For the machinery of government it would mean a substantial departure from the transfer of the central institutions of British parliamentary government, with monolithic parties, solid majorities and unlimited parliamentary supremacy. No matter how carefully the electoral system may be structured to ensure protection of diverse interests, it is certain that for such a glittering prize of a strong central government, every effort will be applied to circumvent restrictions.

The Coutts system has apparently failed to achieve its purpose, and the Tredgold proposals and their offspring will fail; for the view of political behaviour on which they are based is wrong because it is quite unrealistic. There is no indication of familiarity with electoral experience or with contemporary psephological writing: the Tredgold Commissioners give no indication of familiarity with the Prussian three-class system and its anomalies, and Coutts insists that multiple voting based on superior qualifications was devised by Nevil Shute. But apart from such limitations, there is unfamiliarity with what must be the great conclusion of the detailed electoral studies.

39 Netherlands India (Cambridge, 1939), pp. 446–47.
42 Coutts Report, p. 38.
the extent of irrationality in voting behaviour, no matter what the educational, or economic, or social status of the voters concerned. From their knowledge of Western societies and acquaintance with indigenous societies still in the tribal state, they suppose that age, wealth, education, experience of responsibility, will lead to conservatism and acceptance of a particular set of values. Most students would say that detribalization and economic development through the spread of Western techniques and an approximation to Western conditions of living breed hostility to Western political domination, but this view is not yet admitted in East or Central Africa except by the supporters of apartheid. Experience is certain to show that there is no easy descent of Niagara by steps. It may be possible by skilful navigation to veer or tack briefly, but it is impossible to prescribe a timetable with easy resting stages. It may be possible for a time to moor to a rock above the falls as the South African Government is doing; it may be possible to shoot the falls and find a broad and placidly flowing stream at the bottom. But it is not possible to halt, or, as Lord Malvern suggested, turn back, once the descent has started, without overturning the boat.
Both in Europe and in Asia heavy demands have been made on history for its well demonstrated quality to spread ideas, to further certain ends. In times of crisis or change such pressures, especially from authority, have been much greater. In resurgent Asia today, it is apprehended that Asians will rewrite their history with the sole purpose of asserting an "Asian viewpoint" against a "Western viewpoint". Although both these terms are much employed and seldom defined and the frontiers between the two, to say the least, are utterly confused and unrecognizable, it must be said at once that historical objectivity stands in no more danger in Asia than anywhere else. The need for rewriting history arises from a variety of reasons — some accounts are, no doubt, motivated or eccentric — and fresh interpretations must not be adjudged necessarily tendentious. If an Asian historian criticizes a European historian or vice versa why should it be regarded as a difference between an Asian and a European, and not a pure historical dispute between two members of the same academic fraternity? Each writing must be scrutinized on its own merit and, if need be, emphatically denounced. Investigation should be fair, though the verdict can be firm. Excessive anxiety must not cause historians to misread historical statements nor must it be allowed to produce imaginary fears.

Having said this, it must be admitted that there is evidence of group prejudice in some quarters on both sides and at times it is only with detailed knowledge of the period, full personal background of the historian, and thorough investigation of the materials, that personal bias can be isolated or individual eccentricity distinguished from national sentiment or preconceptions. There are scientific historians, however, on both sides, whose disputes, originating from the very nature of history, are sometimes as deep as any. Historians hardly ever agree on interpretation but they generally admit the need for each generation to rewrite history. Many of them concede, in fact expect, that their work will be subjected to ruthless scrutiny and superseded in due course; historical investigation, consequently, is an unending process. Yet every historian claims to be telling the truth as no one else has done before, and points out in forceful

First published in *Hemisphere* (July 1963), 9-14.
terms the errors, inconsistencies, omissions and assumptions in the writings of his predecessors. Such a paradoxical attitude, leading as it does to a variety of confusions, cannot be appreciated unless it is recalled that history is not the re-enactment of the past but a recollection of it. It is not an account of what actually happened but a narrative of what has been recorded. No one can record everything that happened in the past, even in the narrowest field of his choice. The selection of events and determination of historical facts depend upon the judgment of the recorder, who is guided in his assessment by his beliefs, interests, and values. The impossibility of summoning the past for direct inspection makes reliance on the records complete. Hence an eminent historian has designated history as “a series of accepted judgments”. Because of the element of human perception involved in recording events and interpreting them, historical narratives, even when based on the same data, are varied. Discovery of new material, a change in outlook, values, or society, brought about by a revolution or advance in knowledge, invariably leads to the rewriting of history. The changing concepts of history alone require periodic revisions.

A historian of great repute, Professor E. H. Carr, once observed: “I hope I am sufficiently up to date to recognise that anything written in the 1890’s must be nonsense.” History certainly has travelled a long way from ascertaining facts to drawing conclusions.

History, it would thus appear, is what historians make of it. All claims to historical objectivity must remain qualified, and Acton’s hope a dream that histories of such impartiality can be written that can be accepted as satisfactory by every possible reader, whatever his race or creed. It is subjective, however, only to the extent that it carries the stamp of its writer’s personality. As long as the story is allowed to unfold itself naturally, without any deliberate distortion or suppression of facts and without aiming to serve an end, it is a historical account based on objectivity no matter what conclusions are drawn by the author. A great Liberal journalist, C. P. Scott, once said: “Facts are sacred, opinion is free.” Once the narrative is geared to an objective, or personal bias is replaced by group prejudice, it is at once reduced to propaganda. Personal bias is generally based on feelings and is easy to detect and correct, whereas group prejudice often held as a matter of conviction — rational and irrational — is far more complex and difficult to eradicate.

Only a few histories are, however, free from such prejudice. Of the assumptions based upon group consciousness — for example, those belonging to a religious order, social or economic class, race or nation — the most devastating ones emanate from what Nehru has called “the curious illusion of all peoples and all nations that in some way they are a chosen race.” This image of self-superiority or righteousness is often reflected in historical writings, even of Europe where the “age of reason” dawned more than a century ago. Take the case of the English and the French in the Hundred Years’ War. In both countries their history books aim to create the impression that their own country won the war. Beginning from the Athenians against the Spartans, the Romans against the Carthaginians, the Greeks against the Persians, the readers of European
history are impelled to take sides in practically every major dispute. These prejudices become more apparent when modern happenings are considered, such as the Napoleonic wars and the last two world wars. Even the persistent efforts of Unesco to break down national frontiers from the realm of European history have not fully succeeded. At least twice since the conclusion of the second world war some of the British and German historians, after considerable and prolonged mutual consultations, have published common drafts of the causes of the first world war, yet, both in Britain and Germany, they “aroused a good deal of opposition from critics unable to abandon views which had already hardened into orthodoxy”.

Prejudicial attitudes appear somewhat more pronounced when European writings on Asia are examined. American scholars too, while they adopted a more independent attitude on European history — their account of their revolution differed radically from that of the English — continued to look at Asia through European eye-glasses. As their own involvement in Asia was limited and recent, they remained generally unaware of the major historical developments in Asia. Whatever they knew was partial to Europe. For instance, they refused to admit anything derogatory to the British administration and accepted uncritically that whatever was done under the British auspices in India and Malaya was for the good of Indians or Malayans. Emerson’s work on Malaya illustrates the point well. Reading European accounts one has it impressed on his mind that conflict between East and West has been going on for thousands of years and that the cause of Europe has always been righteous. European writers always describe the West as the champion of liberty and apply the word “despotism” to the East. Fisher, in discussing the Persian wars, says “for the next two hundred years the Persian menace was a governing factor in Greek politics. It was a rivalry between East and West, between despotism and liberty, between Iranian fire-worship and the free and various play of Hellenic polytheism.” In modern times the tide of European dominance over Asia was viewed as part of the perennial struggle between West and East, and characterized as the “march of civilisation” in which authoritarianism and political power were employed to dethrone “oriental despotism” and to ensure the growth of civilized communities. Seeley declared that nothing as great was ever done by Englishmen as the conquest of India, which he classed along “with the Greek conquest of the East and the Roman conquest of Gaul and Spain”, pointing out that the British who had “a higher and more vigorous civilisation than the native races” founded the Indian Empire “... partly out of a philanthropic desire to put an end to enormous evils” of the “robber-states of India”. Even before a firm moral basis was given to the British rule in India or the doctrines of guardianship or trusteeship were given currency, popular historians such as Macaulay and Malleson had explained the British ascendancy in terms of the superiority of British individual or national character. James Mill in his History of British India (1818) declared that the people of Europe, even during the feudal ages, were greatly superior to the Hindus. Later, at the beginning of this century, Vincent Smith, Dodwell, and others, wrote more or less in the same
strain, making it abundantly clear that India would relapse into its old state of degeneration if the firm hand of the "benevolent paramount power" was withdrawn. Those who took a sympathetic attitude towards India were run down as wicked "Radicals" or "sentimentalists" who hampered the "good work of ruling India". Well considered views of the most widely read historians were naturally to filter down to the history text books and to popular writings. Kipling's brilliant, though utterly unkind "caricatures of Indians" amused British households, and incidents such as the Black Hole of Calcutta and the Cawnpore massacre became the proverbial expressions of Indian history, generally regarded as typical examples of Oriental or Asian cruelty and cunning. Seldom was an attempt made to scrutinize the historicity of Holwell's testimony, around which the fabric of the Black Hole was woven, although he was generally regarded by eminent historians, including the British, as "untruthful and unscrupulous". In contrast, few people knew of the "Black Wagon", the airless railway vans which conveyed two hundred Moplah prisoners in hot weather without water, whereby seventy were asphyxiated. Practically all the books on Indian history included a detailed account of the murderous fire opened upon the Europeans at Cawnpore, when only four men survived to tell the tale. It is not pointed out in these books that a fortnight later, when the forces of Havelock retaliated, the massacre was so complete that no Indian lived to tell the tale.

A distorted picture was presented not only by suppressing certain facts, but also by contrasting the best aspects of Western culture and contribution with the worst features of Eastern societies. For example, the burning of widows (sati) and the caste discrimination in India were emphasized repeatedly, and no attempt was made, even for the sake of comparison, to refer to the burning of heretics or to slavery and serfdom in Europe. While every opportunity was taken to point out that these evil practices were abolished by the British, for they offended their sense of decency and justice, little was said of the persistent efforts which the Indians themselves made to root them out. On the contrary the history books declare that the Indian Revolt of 1857 was a reaction of the orthodoxy in a corrupt society against the enlightened British policy of social reform. In spite of the publications of the great orientalists who had unearthed India's glorious past, many European writers continued to minimize the worth of Indian culture and civilization. James Mill ridiculed the "hypothesis of a High State of Civilization"; even the antiquity of Indian works like Vedas and Epics was denied. If there was any good found in Indian society it was proclaimed to have been borrowed from the Greeks. The trigonometric sine was not known to the Greeks and it was used in India from the third century onwards. No mention was made of the fact that the Indus and Vedic civilizations flourished long before the Greek.

Western misconceptions about the East included religion and science alike. Mystical East was contrasted with practical West, and no mention was made that until the Industrial Revolution the East was not behind, if not ahead of, the West even in science and technology. The Indian contribution to phonetics,
grammar, metallurgy, medicine, algebra, chemistry, physics, civil engineering, music, etc. was ignored much more than were the Arab and Chinese sciences. A Western historian once observed that “the man in the Western street knows little about the East except what he thinks queer”. Such lopsided accounts of historical events were not limited to the history of India alone. They were more or less true of all Asian countries. Of Philippines historiography, which was mostly written by Spanish and American authors, Professor Zaide said:

Such a foreign-penned history is, invariably, un-Filipino because it was written from a Western viewpoint. It is either pro-Hispanic, glorifying the achievements of Spain in the Philippines, or pro-Yankee, extolling the accomplishments of the United States in the islands. It ignores or belittles the role played by Filipinos in the economic, political, and social progress of the Philippines.

Spanish historical writings, linked as they were with the Spanish religious activities in the East, bear a strong religious bias. Similar attitudes are reflected in the Dutch writings on the East Indies. Strengthened by dynamic Calvinism, the Dutch writers gave their country’s political and commercial success in the East a moral justification. “Might was equated with right. Spiritual blessing to colonial venture was not slow in coming.” Further, the Dutch historians treated the Hindu-Buddhist period of Indonesian history as if it were a sort of prelude or introduction to the history of Dutch activities. Professor Hall, a well-known British historian whose writings are demonstrably “Anglo-centric”, while praising the contribution of European scholars to the history of South-East Asia, remarks that “their previous approach to their subject . . . has been too much influenced by certain preoccupations inherent in their own training and outlook” and pleads for the abandonment of this approach which De Casparis calls “Europe-centric”.

Reaction against such tendentious history was inevitable in Asian society which has been going through a period of rapid revolution both in the realm of thought and matter. Spurred on by national pride, Asian writers, with exceptions as on the European side, took the other extreme view. Some Asian writers upheld the supremacy of their own culture and civilization and tried to belittle the Western contribution. In India, Hinduism in all its entirety was defended; the Vedas were upheld as the source of all human knowledge and a certain school of ardent advocates of Hinduism even asserted its supremacy over other religions. Social abuses, such as the caste system, were either denied or diluted or rationalized. The British regime was denounced as rooted in tyranny and exploitation. Even the military successes of the British were attributed either to treachery, forgery, or bribery. To match Macaulay’s essay on Clive, books such as Clive, the Forger appeared. British claims to parliamentary democracy were met by claiming that the parliamentary system with all its present-day features had existed in ancient India.

Not content with different interpretation alone, some extreme writers play up historical events where the British imperialist rule can be shown at its worst. For instance there is the tragedy of Amritsar in 1919, when an unlawful but
Damodar P. Singhal

unarmed assembly of about 5,000 Indians was mercilessly fired upon by the troops of General Dyer. The only exit was blocked by the volleys of bullets; hundreds died and more than 1,500 were wounded.

The earlier phase of Asian national consciousness coincided with this period of reaction. The need for restoration of national morale required at once the denunciation of foreign rule and the exposition of its inherent weaknesses. Dadabhai Naoroji, R. C. Dutt, and others expanded the theme of economic exploitation of India and Major Basu made a long catalogue of evil deeds. Savarkar published a book early in this century on the Indian Revolt of 1857, designating it as the Indian War of Independence. Influenced, no doubt, by national sentiment and at times exaggerated patriotism, these works are often very solid pieces of research containing a lot of laboriously acquired historical information. Because of these writings which were vast and varied, there soon developed an “Asian viewpoint” against a “European viewpoint” on almost every major issue of history. Political antagonism completely dominated historical judgment. On both sides there appeared a flood of material asserting their respective claims.

While this political battle was being fought on the historical plane, an academic revolution was going on imperceptibly in the minds of historians who were concerned with the historicity of the accounts and not with the alleged group prejudice behind them. They were not concerned with either upholding the British deeds or denouncing them. Their task was to narrate the story, without fear or bias, as it unfolded itself. If, in the process of doing so, some sentiments were hurt and protests were aroused, this was disregarded. Until the spread of English education, the Indians — in fact most Asians — did not fully realize the value of history and so did not write many historical accounts. The ancient period of India, with all the wealth of extremely rich literary sources, is conspicuous for its lack of historical texts, with the exception of Kalhana’s Rajata-rangini written in Kashmir in the twelfth century. There is, however, considerable evidence to suggest that every important Hindu court maintained archives and genealogies of its rulers. The Muslim rulers during the mediaeval period certainly had a keener sense of history but it did not stretch much beyond giving an account of royal courts, households, military campaigns and religious activities. It certainly establishes a clear chronology of the major political events, but little is known of the patterns of the evolving society. History, in the sense of interpreting the past and of explaining events, is of nineteenth century origin in India, although the only known historian of ancient India, Kalhana, had a true conception of history and the correct method of writing it. He held that a true historian while recounting the events of the past must discard love (raga) and hatred (dvesha). Actually his well-developed concept of history and technique of historical investigation have given rise to some speculation that there must have existed at the time a powerful tradition of historiography in which Kalhana must have received his training. It was not, however, until the expansion of Western knowledge and ideas of history that there developed in India a body of historians trained in scientific techniques of historical investigation.
who began to explore for themselves their own past, which had so far been done by the Europeans, and felt the need, as any historian would have, to scrutinize the existing writings on the subject. These Indian historians include such famous names as R. G. Bhandarkar, Raychaudhuri, Sardesai, J. N. Sarkar, S. N. Sen, Majumdar, Panikkar, and Nilkanta Sastri, whose works match European scholarship. Taking the Black Hole incident again as an example, Sarkar analyzed the whole episode historically and gave a reconsidered verdict, which is now generally accepted, that the incident did occur but it has been much too much overemphasized. In the British camp too there are historians such as Digby, Havell, Thompson, Garratt, Basham, Cantwell-Smith, and Boxer, who do not subscribe to national sentiment and have written history as they saw it. In fact, upon closer examination it is revealed that much of the so-called “Asian viewpoint” owes its origin to their writings.

As might have been expected, Asian independence from Western domination accentuated the growth of historical literature on both sides. In India, for instance, a comprehensive history of India under the general editorship of K. M. Munshi is already on its way; six of the ten projected volumes are already published. Another is being planned by the Indian History Congress of which one volume has come out. The Government of India has officially sponsored a History of the Freedom Movement — one volume was published last year — and a history of the 1857 Revolution, the latter having been published already. In Pakistan similar efforts have resulted in the publication of four volumes dealing with the Freedom Movement. In Burma the Government set up a statutory Commission in January 1955 to compile a standard history of Burma. The present writer is not aware of its results.

The reasons which led these Asian governments to sponsor historical works are varied, some no doubt are political. A predominant one, however, appears to be their realization that the tradition of historiography, being recent and underdeveloped in their countries, required encouragement and assistance. For instance, in Burma, earlier historical writings were closely associated with historiographical literature, which were classified as traditional, comprising annals of pagodas and kingdoms, memoirs and chronicles of kings, historical ballads, etc. Even the great chronicles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries — both official and unofficial — having been compiled by men of letters, are more literary than historical. Since the tradition of chronicles continued even in the twentieth century, few histories — as we understand the term today — of Burma written by Burmese are available to us. But the spread of English education, an increasing contact with the West, and the growing political consciousness effected a gradual change in the outlook and technique of Burmese historians. Recently Dr. Maung Maung has produced two books on Burmese history, but one deals mainly with the contemporary scene and the other with political institutions. Burmese scholars are, however, busy at work and soon further publications may be forthcoming.

In Indonesia too, modern historiography was practically unknown until the second quarter of this century. Modern education gave rise to nationalistic
movements, which in their turn stimulated the reorientation of historical writings on patriotic lines. The writings and addresses of the popular leaders aroused mass national consciousness by painting a glorious picture of their past and holding imperialism responsible for their state of oppression. It was in relation to this image of the past that ideas on Indonesian history developed and contributed to the growth of national movements.

In this period of post-independence similar trends are seen on the European side too. Taking Britain as an example, the British scholars — the British Government has commissioned no histories — have shown an unusual interest in recent Indian history as is suggested by a spate of publications by Griffiths, Moon, Mosley, Spear, and many others. In contrast to the Indian opinion, the British scholars have generally maintained that the expansion of British rule in India was not a calculated design or a preconceived plan; it was thrown into the lap of the British by the anarchy and disorder which followed the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Having been compelled to acquire an unwanted empire, the British were left with no choice but to retain it in trust until such time as the Indians were ready to govern themselves. Meanwhile, the British gave "good government", and the benefits of modern civilization for the sake of India's own betterment.

It is of some significance that the British series of Indian History, the Cambridge History of India (which is being revised) will have all British contributors, and the Indian series, the History and Culture of the Indian Peoples, will be entirely a work of Indian scholarship. Yet among both sets of editors and historians are men who sincerely advocate the need for objective writing without any nationalist considerations. Are we then to believe that joint enterprise has been precluded on both sides for reasons other than nationalistic?

Under the stimulus of this national conflict, however, interest in history grew steadily, led to re-examination of it and to the discovery of some very valid reasons for revision. The Europeans' interest in Asia was mainly confined to their own activities which led them to produce, even at their best, history with a Europe-centric character. An Asian historian has described the history of Asia as having been "written as if it were a footnote or an appendix to the history of Europe". Certainly it is mainly written by retired European administrators and is largely political and administrative. It is mainly either an account of the dynasties and kings of particular reigns or a description of British factories and trading posts; at its best, of their activities. Consequently it is local, narrow, perhaps in some respects, e.g., British trading activities, too specialist, and often dull and uninteresting. Asian history if viewed as the growth of various peoples in various phases of human development would, no doubt, make a fascinating study, but if we continue to understand it in political terms, it is bound to be dull and lopsided. The history of Asia, which has been the cradle of the principal religions of the world and of most major and ancient civilizations (as well as the scene of vast empires), must be an account of social and cultural development, and not primarily a political history.

Moreover, it is at present divided into various regions — India, China,
Writing Asian History

South-East Asia — and will have to be co-ordinated into a common account. Even the history of South-East Asia has not been studied as one unit. Unless the historical developments in South-East Asia are inter-related with those in other Asian countries, their full significance cannot be realized. The scope of Asian history has to be widened, and the evolution of social and cultural forces in one region has to be related to movements in other parts of Asia and, finally, to the development of human civilization. It may appear at present a somewhat remote possibility, for even the history of Europe has barely been lifted from a collection of narratives of component units.

Europeans, necessarily, looked upon Asia from outside and their view was that of a bystander — in some ways a valuable viewpoint indeed — but it is desirable to look at Asia from within. As action is inseparably linked with thought, an Asian is better placed to get into the thought processes of his ancestors or contemporaries and analyze the events or policies with greater accuracy. Imaginative understanding of the peoples under discussion is the most essential prerequisite of history-writing. Western writings were written mainly for Western readers, but now Asians must rewrite these accounts to make them intelligible to Asian readers. Some periods and areas of Asian history have been better studied than others for a variety of reasons. These gaps must be filled and the overall view taken.

For these and other reasons the re-writing of Asian history is being encouraged both in Europe and in Asia. It is a tribute to European scholars that they have, in fact, initiated the process and are rendering all assistance to Asian scholars. In recent years many American scholars have also entered the scene but their main interest, because of their involvement in world politics, is confined to contemporary history and their tradition of historical writing in this field is still in its formative stages.

The problems involved in the rewriting of Asian history are, however, enormous. Some Western historians have suggested that since the prevalent concepts of history and methodology are Western, it is not possible for Asians to produce an Asian version of history. This is a very clumsy argument, if not altogether nonsensical. Concepts and ideas have no nationality; in the final analysis all knowledge is the result of joint human effort.

The most formidable difficulty is the scarcity of material on the Asian side. Historians, as has been stated, are absolutely limited by their sources. Asians with exceptions, such as the Chinese, did not realize until recently the value of preserving historical records and hence did not care to preserve them. Much of whatever little was kept has been lost. However this gap is being filled by constant search for new materials, as in the case of India, in private archives of the Indian princes, merchant houses, temple records, and by more thorough scrutiny of the literary writings in the local languages. Meanwhile judicious use of the existing materials tackled from a different angle, and a comparative study of the archives of the different European powers — the interests of the Dutch, the British, the French, the Portuguese, and others overlapped in certain areas and all these powers have kept records — should produce fresh interpretations.
But unless Asians can unearth historical material on their side even the new tools of investigation such as anthropology and archaeology will not yield drastically altered historical versions.
24 Pressure Group Theory: Its Methodological Range

How barren a thing is Arithmetique! (and yet Arithmetique will tell you, how many single graines of sand, will fill this hollow Vault to the Firmament.) How empty a thing is Rhetorique! (and yet Rhetorique will make absent and remote things present to your understanding). DONNE

An outstanding advance in one field of human endeavor will often inspire workers in others to try to transfer its conceptions or techniques into their own less successful fields, for obvious reasons. And so political theorists who have long been discontented with the state of politics when compared with that of certain other sciences have, in consequence, sought to advance their field by adopting the ideas or techniques of their scientific contemporaries. The impressive application of physics will probably increase both political tension and the political scientists' interest in methodology.

The last hundred years of political science have seen attempts at the introduction of various exotica, Darwinism, Economism, Freudianism, even Statisticism; but what I shall here discuss is the centuries-old attempt to appropriate the success of dynamics or mechanics to politics, an attempt which found its first great exponent in Hobbes but which has been carried on in this century by men like Bentley and Catlin. The success of dynamics, such men seem to have thought, is evidently the result of its method, which they took to be the reduction of phenomena to the primary qualities of matter and motion. We who are interested in politics, accordingly, will do well to copy the method of the successful scientists and reduce all political phenomena to similar primary entities. Just as Newtonian physicists speak of material bodies or particles, and the forces they exert upon each other, so we must confine ourselves to the description of the motions of atomic political bodies and the forces they exert upon each other. Thus we need only speak with Hobbes of men and their desires, or with Catlin of political men and their wills, or with Bentley of groups and their pressures, in order to succeed. We know that, in the early chapters

---


1 There is a sense of "dynamic" or "mechanistic" in which all sciences are, or aspire to be, mechanistic. But in this paper I have tried to confine my use of these two terms to the narrower (if vague) equivalent of "like Newtonian mechanics".
of *Leviathan*. Hobbes announced this as his programme; but it is doubtful whether, as he moved from methodology to political theory, he did as he said he would do and whether he had not worked out his political theory before he “deduced” it from his primary entities of matter and motion. In what follows I shall try to show a similar history in the work of A. F. Bentley and D. B. Truman. I shall try to show that Bentley announced a methodological programme and that Truman’s “development” of it has been quite external and could, in fact, have been undertaken without any reference to Bentley at all. I shall try to show, that is, that Bentley’s contribution to political science has been of a psychological rather than a logical kind, and that the references made to him by contemporary pressure group theorists are similar to those which a Russian physicist might make to dialectical materialism.

**I. Arithmetique**

1. Politics as physics: general statement. Unlike Catlin, Bentley does not say, in *The Process of Government*, that the study of politics should begin with a study of classical or Newtonian physicists, but I think that that is what he really had in mind, and that we can find very close parallels in Bentley to the physicists’ conceptions of “body”, “force”, “equilibrium”, “laws of motion”, “system”, and “epiphenomena” or “secondary qualities”.

Taking dynamics to be the science of forces exerted by bodies on bodies, we may recall Bentley’s view that the political process is adequately conceived as groups of men interacting or pressing against each other. “The whole social life in all its phases can be stated in such groups of active men, indeed must be stated in that way if a useful analysis is to be had.” But, just as it was impossible, in classical mechanics, to imagine either of the underlying conceptions of “force” or “matter” without the other, because matter demonstrates its existence as a source of force by its action on other matter, so Bentley makes it quite clear that groups and their pressures are as closely associated in his theory. His Newtonianism is further noticeable in his remark that “once given an organization of the interests, held in position by effective groups, and with no clashes with changing group interests, then that organization may persist indefinitely. There is no reason why it should not be continued — which is just another way of saying that there is no interest group in action powerful enough to alter it” (p. 266) — a statement pretty well equivalent, in its way, to Newton’s first two laws of motion.²

² *The Process of Government*, reissue (Bloomington, Ind., 1949), p. 204. Unless otherwise indicated, further references to Bentley are to this book and to this edition of it.


⁴ With Newton’s Third Law compare Bentley’s two remarks: “No interest group can be estimated at its right force except in terms of the amount of resistance that others will offer to it” (p. 410), and “If the machine hurts enough, the reaction on it will come just in proportion to relative strengths” (p. 418).
Another similarity between Bentley's political methodology and classical mechanics lies in his treatment of society as a whole. The classical physicists regarded the energy of a given system in two ways, either from without the system, or from within. When they spoke of the total energy of a system, they regarded it from the outside. The total energy of a thermal system, for example, is the work which would be done by the heat in passing from the system to its environment. Such a system, in mechanics, was seen as a group of bodies moving about one another in space under some particular dynamical law, such as the law of gravitation; and this is virtually Bentley's conception of society as a whole:

Now, as the points I have just reiterated imply, the activities are all knit together in a system, and indeed only get their appearance of individuality by being abstracted from the system; they brace each other up, hold each other together, move forward by their interactions, and in general are in a state of continuous pressure upon one another (p. 218).

But, since "activity", "interest", and "pressure" are synonymous in this sort of context for Bentley (pp. 271, 443-44), and since nothing but a group can have an interest, it follows that there cannot be such a thing as a "social interest", unless the society is regarded as itself a group in a larger "society". Just as we could only speak of the "total energy" of a thermal system or the "total force" of a system of physical bodies, if we assumed that those systems were themselves members of a wider system, if they had an environment with which they interacted, so we can only speak in politics of "the interest of society" if we assume that that society is interacting with (say) another society to form a single system which itself is a (super-) society. And this is precisely what Bentley says (pp. 220, 221, 422). He is very confused in his presentation of this, and some of his interpreters, both proponent and opponent, have thought that he was only saying that, as a matter of empirical fact, we never observe any interest common to any society as a whole. He does indeed say that; but intertwined with this empirical doctrine there is a logical or methodological doctrine, namely, that if we define "interest" as something possessed only by a group, and define a group as an element in a social system, then to speak of a society as having an interest is to imply that that society is an element in a (wider) social system. This is true, and it may be useful, but it is quite independent of "experience" and should not be confused with what we observe as political scientists.

The last similarity I shall notice between Bentley's theory and that of classical physics is his rejection as "secondary" or "epiphenomenal" of that for which he has no place in his system but which he cannot (and perhaps does not want to) deny. He himself uses neither of these words since he chooses not to draw attention to his appropriation of the ideas of dynamics and emphatically wants to dissociate himself from philosophy; but the idea is there as firmly as ever it was in Newton's "rational mechanics". The "secondary" qualities of the old "natural philosophers" were seemingly physical qualities which were simply left out of account, either as being of no account or as being reducible to
quantitative terms in some way yet to be discovered, and they find their counterpart in Bentley's theory in what he calls "spooks", namely, ideas, ideals, feelings, instincts, reasoning, discussion, and so forth. He does not deny that these may have a place in other disciplines such as psychology, or even in a more refined political science; but he insists that for political science in its present state these entities may either be ignored as of no account or taken to be reducible to groups and their pressures in some way yet to be discovered (p. 445).

If I have rightly understood Bentley's approach, then, we may summarize it as the belief that political science can and should be studied by referring solely to political or social groups (the distinction is not important at this point) and the pressures they exert upon each other. Nothing else but these groups and their pressures should be referred to, and anything else which has a strong claim to recognition by the political scientist can in fact or in principle be reduced to these terms. In the rest of this general statement I shall show how he attempted this reduction with reference to (a) technique, (b) environment, (c) state, society, and government, (d) individual, and (e) reason.

(a) Technique. About the middle of the last century certain physicists believed that all the problems of physics could be stated in terms of physical "particles" with their mass and the distance between them, and that the kind of forces connecting these particles, be they "electrical" or "magnetic" or "gravitational", would be of no interest in a pure or ideal physics. In a similar way Bentley very often says that what is significant to the political scientist is merely the pressure that one group exerts on another, and that the kind of pressure is of no such significance. Such differences of kind he indicates by the word "technique", a word he uses dozens of times. He blows hot and cold on the question of how much recognition the political scientist should accord to technique. Often (e.g. pp. 216-17 and 316-17) he suggests that differences of technique will be recognized by the political scientist, while at others he seems to treat them as epiphenomenal. I am inclined to think that the best reading of him is to take him as saying that differences of technique will not be noticed in a pure political science or that, if they are, they are "directly to be interpreted in terms of changed interest groups" (p. 320), that is, reduced to terms of groups and their pressures, a reading which is consistent with his Newtonian approach. Not how they press, but that they press, would be the significant consideration. Before leaving this question, however, I must emphasize that sometimes he suggests that the political scientist will recognize technique as such, and that I have adopted the present reading only because it seems consistent with my over-all view of Bentley, which I take to be independently established.

(b) Environment. There is no doubt about Bentley's reductionist intention in

---

5 G. E. C. Catlin, in his Principles of Politics (London, 1930), pp. 78 ff., uses exactly the same conception in the same way, but refers to it as "method".

6 Cf. Catlin's "Not what they will, but that they will is the significant consideration", ibid., p. 139.
this case, for on p. 193 he asserts that the physical and geographical environment can be “taken up into the statement in terms of activity” (which is to say, the activity of interest groups). He does not want to eliminate the environment from science, but he wants to eliminate it from political science except in so far as it can be reduced to groups and their pressures. We shall see later that he treats the individual in the same way, and on p. 461 he brings the two together in the sentence: “In the group we take up the [physical] environment as well as the [biologically individual] men, the group itself being formed in a way that includes both.” For a dynamic political science, that is to say, the environment as such does not exist; we have only groups and their pressures.7

(c) State, society, and government. Bentley does not talk much about the state, being more interested in the use of the terms “society”; and “government”, but one thing that he says confirms my account. “The ‘state’ itself is,” he says, “...no factor in our investigation. It is like the ‘social whole’: we are not interested in it as such, but exclusively in the processes within it” (p. 263, my emphasis). He will, that is, consider the political process on the model of a physical system, but he will not (for the most part) consider it in relation to other systems: he will interest himself in the interacting pressures of the groups which constitute the system rather than the pressure of the system as a whole. I have remarked elsewhere on Bentley’s confusion when he speaks of society as a whole:8 what I here suggest is that an important source of that confusion is his failure to distinguish the methodological from the scientific, the formal or logical from the material or factual issues. On page 220, for example, he says that “no such group as the ‘social whole’ enters into the interpretation” of political scientists, a statement which, if we recall that a group is defined as a constituent of a system called “society”, seems purely formal; so that when he immediately supports the statement by appealing to observation, by saying that “there are always some parts of the nation to be found arrayed against other parts” (which I take to be a statement of fact and not of form) we may feel lost and confused. In the next and evaluative section of this paper I shall elaborate the criticisms suggested by these remarks; for the moment I shall pass to Bentley’s account of government. His remarks here are very confusing but, mutually contradictory as they may be, they are all consistent with a mechanistic view of politics based on

7 A very similar view is proposed by J. W. N. Watkins, in *Philosophy of Science* (1955), p. 58. The sort of reductionism I am discussing is not peculiar to the mechanistic approach to social science; as May Brodbeck has shown, it is common to those students of what she would call the “incomplete sciences” who attempt a short cut to completeness, or the formulation of a “stochastic equation” with a disturbance component of zero. Such attempts must fail since, as she says, “no individual social science can by itself expect to achieve completeness in its terms.” “Methodological Individualisms”, *Philosophy of Science* (1958), p. 11. I suspect that what she means by a “complete science” is the same as what I have referred to as the first sense of mechanistic science, above, note 1.

8 *A.P.S.A. News*, Department of Government (University of Sydney, 1959), IV, No. 4, pp. 13-14. In this note I drew attention to Bentley’s confusions on pp. 217-22, where he argues both for and against the conception of a “social whole”. 
groups. He distinguishes between three senses of the word “government” which he calls the broad, the narrow, and the intermediate senses; but I shall only be concerned with the narrow sense, the sense, that is, where we can speak of the government, where we can (as we might say) pretty accurately indicate “the governing body”. Government in this sense is, for him, a group, and what it is doing is holding “the balance between conflicting interests, that . . . is enforcing restraints on their activities in the political field . . .” (p. 235, my emphasis). Accepting this, however, we still get three different views of what sort of group the government is, and it is not easy to see which Bentley would finally settle for. First, there is the view that the government is the political tool of the strongest of a set of contending groups, or (what I take to be equivalent) is itself the strongest group in the political field (pp. 237, 281-82, 319). Secondly, there is the rather different view that the government is a group, or the tool of a group, which is distinct from and stronger than any of a set of contending groups, into which set it brings “balance” or “adjustment” without itself being a member of that set (pp. 235, 454). Thirdly there is the view that the government is not a group in either of the above senses at all, but is the system of political interactions of contending groups, the government here not producing so much as itself being the “balance” or “adjustment”, being a “network of activities” (p. 261). This last would allow us to speak of government as a group only in the way in which we could speak of society as a group, that is, as a group or system of other groups, and on page 260 Bentley does take the broad sense of government in this way. For the most part, however, he wavers between the first two. It does not seem worthwhile trying to establish which of the two is dominant (assuming that either could be made coherent), for either will be consistent with the view of Bentley I am recommending.

On any view, however, what the government does is to produce balance or equilibrium or order between interacting groups, and this conception is, again, the sort of thing you would expect in a mechanistic view of political science (not bothering here to distinguish between dynamics and statics). Since the words “balance” and “equilibrium” seem always to have been used (at least in English) as freely without as within the discourse of physics, the mere fact of a political scientist’s use of them hardly indicates that he takes a mechanistic view of his subject. But when we find the words used as Bentley uses them, in immediate connection with “pressure”, “push”, “resistance”, and so forth, we may perhaps venture a little further. He says that “pressure, as we shall use it, is always a group phenomenon. It indicates the push and resistance between groups. The balance of the group pressures is the existing state of society” (pp. 258-59, his emphasis). Since he uses “balance” synonymously with “equilibrium” (and “order”), and defines society as the system of interacting groups, we may imagine that his presentation here has been at least partly modelled on the physicists’ conception of equilibrium, of a closed physical system in which the forces within the system are so arranged that their resultant at every

9 See, for example, the quotations in note 21, below.
point is zero. (See, for example, the quotation on page 384 above, which I likened to Newton’s first two laws.)

(d) Individual. If what I have said is true, that he was proposing the adoption of a mechanistic method by political scientists in which the units are groups, then we should expect him to treat individuals in the way that the classical physicist would treat any dubious entities clamoring for attention; that is, he will try either to explain them away, or to fit them into his already established conceptual framework, or simply say that they do not form a part of his study. Bentley does not try to explain the individual away, he does not “ignore the individual”; but he does try to describe the political activities of individuals in his own mechanistic group terms, and he does say that much that people want to say about individuals is unobjectionable but is no part of political science. His belief is that as things stood when he wrote it was a question of which of “the two methods of statement”, the individualistic or the group method, “is the most useful”. And he thinks, with the economists, that it is the latter (p. 246). For political science, that is, the individual is a fiction (p. 170), just as color does not exist in the solution of a problem in kinetics, or melody for the physicist working in sound. But this does not mean, he says, that “the physicist would deny color when he studied wave lengths” (p. 166). The question is just whether, in the present condition of our knowledge and techniques, the political scientist will achieve more of his aims by looking at group pressures rather than at individual pressures, and it is a question of fact, to be settled by investigation and comparison. On pages 247–52 Bentley makes such a comparison and concludes that it is more useful to consider groups.

(e) Reason. Reasoning in politics is, for Bentley, a method or technique used in the exercise of pressure, so that we may expect him to advise political scientists to ignore it in just the way that a physicist may, in certain problems, choose to ignore color or density. And so he does: “pressure is broad enough to include all forms of the group influence upon group, from battle and riot to abstract reasoning and sensitive morality” (p. 259). This is not to ignore the pressure maintained by means of reasoning, although it is to ignore the means of reasoning used to maintain pressure. I shall go into this in detail in the next section; all that I want to do here is to indicate how Bentley’s treatment of reason can be taken as a substantiation of the view that his was a Newtonian mechanistic political science.

I have now drawn together a number of strands in Bentley’s thought to show that what he was desiderating was a dynamic or mechanistic political science of the Newtonian kind; but it is obvious that I have ignored much of what we might call Bentley’s material, as opposed to his methodological, thinking. What I have said about his attitude to “the individual” or to “reason”, it will be objected, only catches part of his thought; and while what I have said may be true, it is not the whole truth since Bentley was evidently, and in some way not stemming from methodological considerations, “against” the
individual and "opposed" to rationality. Such an objection would be entirely justified, but I have tried to emphasize the methodological side of Bentley because I think that it has been rather overlooked by certain objectors, and because, even when his attempt is recognized as being the establishment of a mechanistic politics (as it clearly is by Odegard) it is not seen that this is consistent with his "recognition of" these terms in other fields than politics, that Bentley explicitly said so, and that he gave his reasons for taking a group, as opposed to an individualistic view of the study. But these critics may now be given more attention.

2. Politics as physics: an evaluation. I am not prepared to say that an autonomous political science is in principle impossible, but I think that we can set down certain sine qua non's for such a science, and also indicate that Bentley has not supplied them. Assuming that we are to take classical physics as our model, we must first of all get some counterpart to the concept of "body" or "particle". Bentley was aware of this, but I think that he did ill to take the group as that counterpart, precisely because there are, in political fact, pressure groups, the features of the actual groups being imported into the conceptual "group", with an inevitable procrusteanism in consequence. For example, having said that the group is his fundamental unit, and wanting to fit individuals into his system, he is forced to reduce the individual to a group. This almost inevitably produces something approaching a crude conspiracy view of politics, an assumption that there must be a "they", or a "social force" behind everything that any individual does in the political arena. Thus we get the intrusion of factual considerations into what began as a conceptual or methodological device. He first assumes (rightly) that he must stick to one unit, he then assumes (wrongly) that that unit must be something existing in what we may call political Nature; he then says that since you must take one of the available natural units and one only, then you'll get the best results by taking the group; finally, having committed himself to the "group" as a unit, but finding that he must accommodate political entities such as individuals, states, and so forth, in his theory, he gets enmeshed in quite extraordinary tangles by trying to show how in actual fact the individual is in some way not merely an individual, and that we must "look upon the [group] process as proceeding through him". This not only

11 See Odegard's article in *Western Political Quarterly* (1958), pp. 699-70.
12 I should perhaps here speak of a relatively autonomous political science, because of the presence of such exogenous variables as the psychological, economic, geographical, meteorological, etc., all of which influence the interactions of political bodies. But the problem is beyond the scope of this paper. See section 1 (b), above, and note.
13 In addition to the two deficiencies I shall remark, we may also notice those of "closure" and "completeness" mentioned by Brodbeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 ff. As she puts it, "nothing that happens at any other time or place than those being considered affects the properties with which the theory is concerned". Bentley's reductionism may be seen as an attempt to legislate all exogenous variables out of existence or into endogenous variables.
leads to regrettable statements such as "President Roosevelt" means "a certain number of millions of Americans" (p. 322), but almost inevitably pulls Bentley towards a Marxist type of doctrine of objective forces and the like, so that, no matter what anybody does, the group process marches on, "group interests" playing the role of Engels' "economic factors" (see, for example, pp. 389-90). I do not think, however, that this is the outcome of the mechanistic view alone, but rather that it stems from taking a real political factor and making it do the work of a conceptual factor; that it stems from beginning with a conceptual entity called a "group" and then, when saying that in politics only "groups" are admissible, thinking that one is referring to actual groups. But, since it is quite obvious that in fact individuals participate in politics, there results an attempt to "interpret" the empirical facts of political life, an "interpretation" which is in fact a distortion.

Yet another failure of Bentley's "group" to meet the demands of mechanism lies in the difficulty of identifying a group, as that term is used by him. When, in the dynamics of a two particle system, we speak of one body's attraction by another, we do not concern ourselves about bodies within the attracted body which reinforce or oppose the attraction. But Bentley (and, even more, Truman) has constantly to deal with the problem of "cohesion", so that it is hard to know whether, "for political science", the Republican Party is a group or a system of groups. And then, of course, within any group we find recalcitrant individuals.

Much of this trouble, I have suggested, stems from importing certain features of a real entity into a conceptual entity, and could be avoided if the mechanist were to begin with something avowedly conceptual, say a "polbod", which he might define as "any political entity (whether group or class or individual) which exerts a sway on another political body" (defining "sway" as "the action which one polbod exerts on another"). Starting thus with conceptual entities, he would be the less likely to muddle fact with logic in the Bentleyan way, and should pretty quickly test the worth of the mechanistic approach.

But if his use of the term "group" is unsound, it is not as glaringly so as his conception of "pressure". As Catlin has remarked, the supreme difficulty in mechanistic politics lies in measuring. All talk of polbods, groups, political men, sway, pressure, will, and so forth, will be very imprecise indeed (and therefore far removed from physics), unless the entities can be enumerated and their relations measured. But Bentley does not indicate how we should measure pressure: he only says that we should. (Although, in the Appendix to The Process of Government, he seems to think that the vote will be an ingredient of such a measure, the position is not elaborated.) Catlin proposed the vote as a good measuring unit (op. cit., pp. 259-62), a view which he repeated in his Principles of Politics without ever adding one to one; and his hedging provisos show how useless as such a measure the vote is.

What is objectionable about Bentley's Process of Government, then, is his
persistent confusion of the formal with the material, and I think it is this that is (at least in part) the source of most of the objections that have in fact been raised against the theory. This may be illustrated by Maclver’s remark that “they denied or rejected the integrating function of the state”; and Odegard’s remark that they “have all but banished reason, knowledge, and intelligence from the governmental process”.15

With Maclver’s remark compare Bentley’s statement that

the term state indicates a great complex of closely coinciding activities, which hold together, and get enough representative process for stability. The state is fundamental not as a mystic being but only in the sense of this stability, this durational extent, this relative permanence.16

What could possibly have led Maclver to make the statement that he did? Bentley certainly said that the groups existed in a social whole; he said that the social whole provided a background of habit, or rules of the game, in accordance with which the groups in fact operated; he said that there was a permanent tendency to order or equilibrium between the groups and (therefore) of the whole; what did he say to provoke Maclver’s censure?

The answer17 lies not in Bentley’s methodology, but in his obvious belief that, as a matter of fact, not all the constituent groups in a society have the same ends. It is his penchant for such remarks as “murders answer to existing interests”, with the inference “hence no interest of society as a whole”, that caught Maclver’s eye. Bentley seems to have believed that he observed that some groups in a society were in nothing but opposition to each other, a belief which he expressed pugnaciously and often; and he confused this with the methodological advice that political scientists should not regard society or the “state” as something “over and above” the one thing he thought they could handle (groups) but as the whole system of groups in interaction. Excluding international relations, then, “the state” or “society” cannot be an object of study, any more than the whole material universe (assuming it to be limited) could be an object of study for a physicist. Maclver’s accusation carries no weight at all against the purely methodological recommendations, and it is simply not true that Bentley’s pressure group theory, conceived as such a methodology, denies the integrating function of the state, whatever Bentley himself may sometimes have thought.

Odegard’s criticisms are the more remarkable for his clear recognition of the mechanistic aspirations of Bentley. Yet, he objects,

the group theorists, in their quite reasonable rejection of rationality as the sole or major factor in political decision-making have all but banished rationality from the governmental process ... Anyone familiar with the decision-making process knows that pressure, force, intimidation, self-

15 Odegard, op. cit.
16 Although the quotation is from his Relativity in Man and Society (New York, 1926), pp. 119-20, it is quite consistent with The Process of Government. Bentley’s eccentric attachment to physics is, of course, self-evident in his later book.
17 See the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, VIII, 145.
interest, and, heaven knows, group interests, account for no small fraction of the decisions that are made. But they do not account for them all. Reason and logic are by no means strangers to the decision-making process. Not infrequently decisions both on policy and administration are made not under pressure of rival group interests but in the light of reason and on the weight of the best available evidence... (op. cit., my emphasis).

Since the last clause of Odegard's own remarks here illustrates the ease with which very ancient and common usage adjusts itself to Bentley's explicit characterization of reason as a technique or method of pressure, it would hardly be enough to show him "forceful arguments" or "pressing reasons"; surely, we are driven to believe, there is some explanation of his oversight of Bentley's repeated remarks.

Bentley's philosophical nominalism or conventionalism is at once too complicated and naive to discuss here, but we may notice two features of his attitude to reason in politics. The first is that he does erupt, and frequently, into a cynicism expressed in such terms as "mere reason", a cynicism which suggests that he believed that "thought" and "reasoning" come into the political process very little or not at all. We do not, that is, find him speaking of "mere corruption" or "mere violence" quite as often as he speaks of "mere reason". But he does speak disparagingly of techniques other than reason; on page 442, for example, he puts corruption, sophistry, and violence on a methodological level with reason. And this reductionist attitude to reason (a direct outcome of his methodology), I think, somewhat justifies Odegard's complaint. But I should want to go further, and make it the basis of a general criticism of any mechanistic political science, and not merely of Bentley's.

Let us suppose that some genius were successfully to construct a purely mechanistic political science, a science in which we spoke of nothing but (say) polbods and the (measured) relations between them. What would be objectionable about such an Arithmetique would be, I think, that it would be too abstract, that it would eliminate a tremendous amount of what interests us in politics. We are interested in grey mechanistic theory, but we are also interested in the green tree of political life. We are interested, that is, not merely in the fact that A affects B, but also in how A affects B; not merely in saying that the party came to power, but also in how it came to power. We are very interested in technique. Should the mechanistic dream be realized we should find in it deficiencies very similar, I think, to those now shown by formalistic or legalistic "theories of the state" or of society. Merely to classify governments as monarchies, aristocracies, and democracies is, as we all know, to omit a tremendous amount of what is politically interesting. We want to know whether group A has affected group B by argument or trickery or physical force, whether it acted as a group or through the medium of an individual, or a small committee, and so forth. All this interests us, but it is all (I suggest) precluded by a good mechanistic approach, an approach which cannot accommodate the colors, harmonies, and discords of political life. I do not say that a dynamics of politics, were it achieved, would not be of tremendous value and interest; but I do say
that it would leave a lot of our aims in the study of politics completely unrealized. And my main objection to Bentley is his repeated assertion and implication that political science and political dynamics are equivalent, and that we ought to abstract from our political experience nothing but groups and their relating pressures and state our entire political science in these terms alone, and that when we have done that we have done all.\textsuperscript{18}

3. Conclusions. If, embedded in Bentley's \textit{Process of Government}, there is a demand that political scientists use no other methods than those which will yield them a dynamics of politics, and if what I have suggested about the limitations of a successful political dynamics is true, then we should not be surprised to find Bentley himself deviating from his own recommendations, nor should we be surprised to find the strength of subsequent "pressure group theory" to be quite independent of Bentley's methodology. Bentley's own reduction of such factors as environment, state, society, government, individual, and technique (including reason) were not too consistent: indeed, in the case of technique it was very half-hearted. But it is in the Appendix to his book, where he offers a sample of mechanistic political science, that we see how very far from his model he has drifted. When we consider that the features of a good mechanical system — its closure and completeness, the definitude of its elements and the commensurability of the relations between them — allow us to predict the behavior of one element from our knowledge of all the other elements, we see that Bentley's achievements in his Appendix are, by the standard he himself has suggested, quite laughable. In the following section I shall try to show that D. B. Truman's \textit{Governmental Process} shows even wider deviations from Bentley's methodological ideal. I shall try to show, that is, the change from a pressure group methodology into the vague common sense of a pressure group theory, the abandonment of \textit{Arithmetique} for \textit{Rhetorique}.

\textbf{II. Rhetorique}

Although Bentley spoke much of "political science" and not at all (as I remember) of "methodology" or its equivalent, he undoubtedly regarded himself as a methodologist and not as a political scientist — as attempting to "fashion a tool" rather than to use one (pp. 209, 263, 330, 434). When, therefore, we are told on the blurb of Truman's \textit{Governmental Process}\textsuperscript{19} that he is "elaborating on and extending Arthur F. Bentley's pioneer work" we might expect him to be doing one of two things: either, we might think, he will accept Bentley's methodology and proceed to a scientific investigation of politics, using

\textsuperscript{18} "If psychological concepts are never used, we should have only the physics of human nature, not its psychology. Without psychological categories we could no more assert anything about what people are thinking or doing than we could assert anything about the temperature of a gas if we used only mechanical concepts." M. Brodbeck in \textit{Philosophy of Science} (1954), p. 149.

\textsuperscript{19} (New York, 1953); unless otherwise indicated, all references to Truman are to this book.
the mechanistic method, or else he will offer us a more elaborate and worked out account of the mechanistic method itself. It is immediately obvious that Truman does not attempt the second of these programmes, that he is not (except incidentally) a methodologist; but neither does it seem that he is attempting the alternative programme, for he is not (by a long chalk) rigorously applying a mechanistic method. What, then, is his avowed debt to Bentley? It is, I suggest, little more than a realization that interest groups are "very important" in the political process and that a lot of attention should be given them. His debt is more to the gobbets of political science to be found here and there in Bentley than to anything else; it is what I have called psychological rather than logical. But, although he does not seriously try either to use or to sharpen Bentley's tool, I do not think that he himself is clearly aware of that fact. On the contrary, he seems to think of himself as carrying on the central instead of the merely peripheral ideas in Bentley. I shall now try to show that that is not so.

Assuming that he regards himself as a political scientist rather than as a methodologist, as using (rather than improving) Bentley's method, can we also assume that Truman would recognize the account of Bentley's methodology that I have given? I think we might, in view of his denunciation of the "Robinson Crusoe hypothesis that men are best conceived of as isolated units" (p. 14); or his belief that groups, with their "dynamics, their interconnections, and their relative strength" are, or will soon be, the "primary data" of the social scientist; or his statement that he is attempting an "interpretation" of politics "in terms of group patterns" (p. 47), and so on. Yet there are interesting divergences from Bentley; for Bentley asked us to talk about groups in a way that enables us to understand politics, while Truman wants to talk about politics in a way that enables us to understand groups (pp. 13, 47, 49). Bentley, we might say, was interested in a group theory of politics where Truman is interested in a political theory of groups. Here it begins to look as though all Truman wants is to give us a picture of (American) political life in which the role of interest groups and their pressures is emphasized; here he does not begin by saying that we can experience nothing but such groups when engaged in political science. But this has nothing at all to do with what I have taken to be Bentley's methodology and is, in fact, entirely consistent with the individualism of Catlin, or of Brodbeck, or of Watkins. I have said that, in his Appendix on political science, Bentley does not really apply his method. I now wish to show the same for Truman. I shall, that is, ignore what Truman says he will do in favor of seeing what he actually does. I shall take a piece of political science from his book and ask whether it does in fact exemplify the Bentleyan method I have sketched above.

His chapter on "Interest Groups and the Judiciary" will serve to illustrate his general approach to political science.20 Briefly, his statement comes down to this: that, since the judiciary has discretion in its interpretation of statutes and

---

20 The only reason for selecting this chapter is that it is shorter than those on the legislature or administration; but what I say of it applies equally to them.
in ruling on the constitutionality of legislative or executive acts, it participates in the process of politics, for the decisions taken on such matters are not simply the “automatic result of technical legal procedures and constitutional knowledge”. But this, although it may take us beyond the allegedly simple layman and the scholastic jurisprudentialist, hardly takes us very far: it needs no great theoretical apparatus to tell us so little. What groups, then, are influencing the judiciary? This is a matter of historical fact, and Truman names several: labor groups, party factions, the Hygrade Food Products Corporation, elements of the judiciary itself, and so forth. How, he also asks, do these groups exercise their influence? Through the ballot (where judges are elected); through “bar associations and other organized and potential interest groups” threatening denunciation, ostracism, reputation, impeachment, etc.; through selection and appointment of judges; and through open or concealed appearance as litigants. It is all very interesting and (so far as I know) true, but it in no way depends on Arithmetique, on the mechanistic method recommended by Bentley, despite its occasional references to “dynamics”. It would all be quite familiar to, say, Hallam (who equally spoke of “faction”, “party”, “landed aristocracy”, “merchants”, and so forth); but it no more presumes a mechanistic method than does Hallam’s reference to the Whigs and Tories as bearing “some analogy to the two forces which retain the planetary bodies in their orbits”.21 Truman’s references to “dynamics”, “interactions”, “influence” (his equivalent to Bentley’s “pressure”), and so on, are of no methodological significance at all: they are either the stock and ancient terms of political and social talk, or else they are Rhetorique, mannered and fashionable bits of jargon designed (albeit unconsciously) to give his work the appearance of a type of force and precision that it does not in fact have.

This is not to say that Truman’s work is not in every way excellent, that he does not make many hitherto “absent and remote things” present to our understanding. He gives what I understand to be a very good general introduction to the too neglected role of organized groups in American political life; but this is to speak of the matter of his investigation, not its method. And, indeed, his method is just what you can find in almost any historian of the last hundred years. His work, if it is a development of Bentley at all, is a development not of the body of The Process of Government, but of its appendix. In one respect, in fact, Truman deviates widely from Bentley’s methodology: and that is in his interest in technique. To ask how the influential groups exert their influence on the judiciary is not, I think, in accordance with the methodology we have been discussing; and the fact that Truman does ask this question and answers it in an illuminating and interesting way shows that he is far too interested in politics to be content with a grey mechanics.

21 Constitutional History of England (1827), ch. XVI; and compare R. G. Menzies’ remark that “I know next door to nothing about science. True, I recall that the first law of physics is that ‘action and reaction are equal and opposite,’ but this is so true of politics that its scientific origin has become dulled in my mind.” University of Sydney, Gazette (November 1959).
Bentley’s service to Truman, if I am not mistaken, is much like that of Marx to the average historian. The economic is the only factor, announced Marx; and the sensible historian realized that the economic factor needed more attention than it had hitherto received. Politics is explicable only in terms of groups, announced Bentley; and Truman and others sensibly realize that groups are important in politics and have been neglected. One wonders what all the excitement has been about, and why some people persist in keeping it up.

The answer to this last question lies only partly, I suspect, in the desire to give an incomplete science an appearance of the force and precision of a complete science. It also lies in the failure of Truman and his likes to assess their own work at its true (and great) value. They really do believe, I think, that Bentley has given them a clue which, if followed, will lead them to put “the Newton of this subject in his seat”. They would, I suspect, repudiate my denial of any connection between their work and Bentley’s methodology, even if not as indignantly as a politically orthodox and naive Russian physicist might react to the statement that what he does owes nothing at all to dialectical materialism. We can see in Truman, that is, over and above his observations about the place of groups and their pressures in the matter that comes to the political scientist, a faith in something called “the group interpretation of politics”. This faith has had an influence on his political science which has been, if I am not mistaken, almost wholly evil.

This is most clearly seen on pages 47-48, where he seeks to defend “the interpretation of politics in terms of group patterns” against the charge that it “inevitably leaves something out” or “destroys something essential” about the processes of “our” government. What is in question, as of old, is the individual and society or the state, and Truman here does launch into a bit of very naive methodology. While he does not see that the merit of a “group interpretation” of politics (meaning by that a Bentleyan methodology) would, if it were worked out be precisely that it does “leave something out”, it is to his credit that he does not pursue his reflections about “the individual”. It is the more regrettable, therefore, that he has allowed himself to get fearfully entangled with the other entity, “society”.

### III. Group Interests and Common Interest

Bentley’s remarks about the “social whole” turn on the existence of a “common interest” in society as a whole. If we eliminate his confusion of the logical with the empirical, we are left with a view which by definition entails the rejection of a common interest, if “interest” is equated with “pressure of a group which is a component of society” and if “society” is itself never a group. Whether such a view entails also the rejection of the “classical” conceptions of the common interest I shall not here inquire, but simply sketch one conception of the common interest which is consistent with Bentley’s methodology (which does entail a common interest, as he defines “interest” and “society”, in the theory of international relations). Assuming that groups do have interests, or
aims, and that the pressure of a group will tend to realize its aim, nevertheless
despite the appearance of a mutual incompatibility between these aims — they
are very often (perhaps always) parts of wider and more generalized goals,
other parts of which are not merely compatible, but actually identical.

If, for example, we consider two parties contesting an election in a democratic
community as constituting a system of two groups, then we see that they cam­
paign in accordance with what Bentley and Truman call the “habit background”
or “rules of the game” and that, though they each press to realize their interest
at the expense of the other, they do not press to do so at any cost. If, that is,
the declared interest were establishable by means ruled out, those means
will not really establish the interest at all. Our definition of the “interest”,
in other words, was inadequate, and needs to be widened to include the rules
of the game or the preservation of “equilibrium”; the parties’ interests were
not merely to secure a majority, but to secure it by democratic methods, methods
accepted by both. Since, however, this common interest does not distinguish
the groups from each other, does not further an analysis of the internal situation
once it has been generally outlined, we neglect it in our account of the motivating
interests of the groups. For what makes them different is their different interests,
and their acceptance of a common interest or common good is not worth
remarking until it is denied. Such a common interest in the preservation of
equilibrium, however, is not the interest of some “absent” or “potential”
group; rather it is common to the interacting groups themselves, even though
the interest may sometimes be felt as a positive restriction and shortsightedly
thought not to be in the group’s interest at all. But this mistaken belief fails
to consider the group’s interests as a whole and in the long run. It abstracts the
interest peculiar to the group from that which it shares with others and sets
up the abstracted interest as the whole and sole interest in this situation.

These last remarks seem to express a position very like Truman’s own recent
statement that

I would be willing to go one step beyond the somewhat confining model
of utility in contemporary welfare economics to the extent of arguing that
the public interest can have an inclusive and reasonably objective meaning
if it is defined in terms of the functional prerequisites of a social system...
As I think the closing chapter of my book makes clear, and as Bentley
himself indicated implicitly, the stake in a system can be equated with the
public interest even if that stake is not consciously acknowledged or unani­
mously agreed to.

All this is consistent with Bentley, for if he will speak of “society as a whole”,
then we can speak of the interest of that society, while if he refuses to speak of
anything but groups, then we can speak of interests common to each of a set
of groups. But is it consistent with a Trumanian pressure group theory? If

22 “The war in fact is not to the finish, the socialism that extends itself to large portions of
the population... ends in political compromise.” Bentley, p. 208; and cf. Truman, p. 504.
23 W. A. Leys and C. M. Perry, Philosophy and the Public Interest (Chicago, 1959), p. 37.
my emphasis.
this “theory” is merely the assertion that in studying politics we must or may consider the activities of groups without always reducing them to component individual activities, then my doctrine of a common interest is quite consistent with it.

But Truman, like Bentley, writes as though there were only one game with only one set of rules; he concentrates on “society” or “the state” and neglects the rules of the game of lesser associations based on tangential relations between groups. It would be better, I suggest, to consider the habit background not of Bentley’s “social life” but of what I may call “associational life”, and to see that there are as many sets of rules as there are associations (where “association” means a set of interacting groups).

The interest common to “society as a whole” would then be of less interest to the working political scientist than would the interest of Congress, or the trade unions, or the Administration, or whatever association of groups he chose for his study. Nevertheless, there may well be an interest common to society as a whole, despite the practical impossibility of describing it in a modern nation-state, and the equilibria of the particular associations in which we are interested may in turn be contingent on a wider equilibrium so that our idea of the common good of an association may be modified when we extend our enquiries beyond it.

But, although Truman’s empirical political science does not presuppose Bentley’s methodology, the evil effects of Bentleyism are evident in the steady modification of his statement that “we do need to account for a totally inclusive interest, because one does not exist” (p. 51), a modification which proceeds to a conclusion, on pages 516-17, very similar to Rousseau’s.24 Truman’s political science, then, is quite consistent with my conception of the common good.

Indeed, he uses the phrase “the rules of the game” to explain activity which I might call activity in accordance with the common good, saying that it maintains itself because it is in accordance with the rules of the game, or that it was undertaken because the actors thought that it was in accordance with the rules of the game. In short, he uses the phrase when driven to it by the explanatory inadequacy of sectional group interests, of the notion that we see nothing but incompatible and particular interests. The tensions in his thinking here are indicated when he says that the rules of the game are the interests of some particular group, the interests and the group being characterized by the odd conjunction of “potential”, “pervasive”, “weak”, “strong”, “quiescent”, and “dominant”; tensions not the result of his common sense recognition of groups, but of a confused attachment to a confused messiah. And he could eliminate them all, by snipping a few verbal definitions before his world “has gone crackly and dry”.

24 See Social Contract, IV, i, and notice again the quotation from Leys and Perry, above, note 23. The process of modification may be followed by consulting the references given in Truman’s Index, s.v. “Interest groups: potential”, and “Rules of the game”.
Seymour M. Lipset's article, "Value Differences, Absolute or Relative: The English-Speaking Democracies" is an influential article and it deserves to be so, for Lipset has produced an interesting comparison of what he calls the "four English-speaking democracies", namely, Britain and her former colonies, U.S.A., Canada, and Australia. His comparison is based on a set of dimensions or polarities which he calls "pattern variables", a modified version of Talcott Parsons' "value-patterns". They enable him to explore societal values beyond the basic "parochial — subject — participant" categories of Almond and Verba's groundbreaking five nation study. The polarities are: Equalitarianism-Elitism, Achievement-Ascription, Universalism-Particularism, and Specificity-Diffuseness.

This paper sets out Lipset's classificatory scheme and its application to Britain, U.S.A., Canada, and Australia, then takes a very critical look at some of the data that Lipset produces to substantiate his judgments. I shall (a) discuss some misconceptions that caused Lipset to arrive at mistaken judgments regarding Australia; (b) offer an explanation of the differences which emerge between the U.S.A. on the one hand and Australia, Canada, and Britain on the other; and (c) make some consequent suggestions for altering the scheme of polarities.

In Almond and Verba's classificatory scheme the four countries of the English culture area would hardly be distinguished from one another — they are all part of "the civic culture" — however different they are from countries outside the English culture area. It is a merit of Lipset's pattern-variables that significant differences between them are brought out. In table form his comparative evaluation looks like this:

---

1 Published in two prominent books: Bernard R. Blishen et al. (eds.), Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives (Toronto, 1961) and Seymour Martin Lipset, The First New Nations, the United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective (London, 1964). This latter is the edition referred to in footnotes in this article.

Lipset explains his pattern variables in these words:

According to the achievement-ascription distinction, a society's value system may emphasize individual ability or performance or it may emphasize ascribed or inherited qualities (such as race or high birth) in judging individuals and placing them in various roles. According to the universalism-particularism distinction, it may emphasize that all people shall be treated according to the same standard (e.g. equality before the law), or that individuals shall be treated differently according to their personal qualities or their particular membership in a class or group. Specificity-diffuseness refers to the difference between treating individuals in terms of the specific positions which they happen to occupy, rather than diffusely as individual members of the collectivity.

The above dimensions are taken direct from Talcott Parsons. Lipset goes on to say:

I shall add the equalitarian-elitist distinction to the pattern-variables just outlined. According to this, a society's values may stress that all persons must be given respect simply because they are human beings, or it may stress the general superiority of those who hold positions of power and privilege. In an equalitarian society, the differences between low and high status people are not stressed in social relationships and do not convey to the high status person a general claim to social deference. In contrast, in an elitist society, those who hold high positions in any structure, whether it be in business, in intellectual activities, or in government, are thought to deserve, and are actually given, general respect and deference.3

Lipset adds the warning:

In actual fact, no society is ever fully explicable by these analytic concepts, nor does the theory even contemplate the possible existence of such a society. Every society incorporates some aspect of each polarity. We may however, differentiate among social structures by the extent to which they emphasize one or another of these polarities.4

The polarities seem to have been developed by contrasting American and British societies. Lipset says that Tocqueville in Democracy in America and Bagehot in The English Constitution "accurately specified" the values and class relations around which these societies are integrated. "According to Tocqueville, American society was democratic and competitive (achievement-oriented); according to Bagehot, Britain was deferential (elitist) and ascriptive."5 Australia and Canada are seen by Lipset as somewhere in-between — Australia being more like the U.S.A. and Canada more like Britain.

---

The numbers represent only Lipset’s “tentative estimates of relative rankings” and these estimates are based on Lipset’s reading of the classics like those cited above and a host of other evaluations by historians, political scientists, sociologists, journalists, literary people, and other writers. (This is not said to disparage such sources — far from it — but Lipset’s rankings are his estimate of their estimate.) He also cites certain statistics and other “quantitative indicators” in support of his rankings. It is to this evidence that I now turn my attention.

II

Lipset argues that the equalitarian values of American and Australian societies compared with the elitist values of Britain and Canada are demonstrated by the higher proportion of the youth of the former two countries in institutions of higher learning compared with the latter two, because equalitarian values require “giving the means to take part ‘in the race for success’ to all who are qualified.” He cites the following figures to prove his case:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>12.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to match Lipset’s figures and conclusions with those of Robert Alford who compares the same countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students in Higher Education per 1000 Population about 1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences in the figures quoted may be accounted for in that they refer to slightly different categories and to a different time period. However note the conclusion drawn by Alford, who says, “The greater opportunities for education in the United States and Canada than Britain and Australia suggest that the character of social mobility must be quite different in the former countries, in spite of the gross similarity of movement found in the studies mentioned in Chapter 1.” (His point is that education is the chief means to social mobility.)

---

6 Ibid., p. 259.
9 Ibid.
It is clear that Alford draws conclusions respecting equality of educational opportunities in Australia and Canada that are opposite to those of Lipset. More recent figures seem to support Alford's conclusion rather than Lipset's but perhaps it is not unfair to say that both show a propensity to generalize too easily from insufficient and imperfectly understood data.

Canada has 58 universities for a population of 20 million. Australia has 16 universities for a population of 12 million. That makes 2.9 universities per million population in Canada and 1.33 per million population in Australia. Ontario with a population of six million has as many universities as the whole of Australia. J. R. Lawry, quoting from a study by P. H. Karmel, states that the enrolment ratios of the age groups 15 – 19 and 20 – 24 years in Australia compare very unfavourably with those of many countries. Australia ranks twelfth for the age group 15 – 19 years and last but one for the age groups 20 – 24 years. Nevertheless I am not at all sure that Canada is so much ahead of Australia in per cent of the age group 18 – 24 in universities — it is difficult to find comparable statistics — but one can say with some assurance that Australia is not ahead of Canada in this regard. Finally, if percentage of national income spent on education (both public and private) is an indication of the value the society attaches to providing equal opportunities for upward mobility (and I would have grave reservations about asserting that proposition) then Canada is again ahead of Australia; indeed, it leads even the U.S.A.

The question that comes immediately to mind is: On what types of education was the money spent in each country? One can spend a lot of money educating those with high socio-economic status in elite schools and perhaps quite a lot of money training those in lower socio-economic groups in technical and non-leadership skills. The point of reproducing these statistics is to show that Lipset's use of educational statistics is rather careless. The matter is much more complex than he represents it and it demands a good deal closer study than he has given it before one is able to come to any firm conclusions.

---

11 J. R. Lawry article on Education in D. F. Davies and S. Encel (eds.), Australian Society (Melbourne, 1965), p. 82.
12 Per Cent of National Income Spent on Education (Public and Private)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lipset’s contention that equalitarianism in the U.S.A. and Australia makes them very similar societies in respect of proneness to witch-hunting and ‘populist’ movements through which popular passions wreak their aggression against the structure of the polity” should be examined carefully. The evidence he gives for this statement is that “both sustained large-scale popularly based efforts to drive suspected Communists out of key positions in unions and politics”. Australia has had no figure comparable to Senator Joseph McCarthy in its public life nor indeed was there any popular movement similar to his bent on purging the government of suspected Communists. It is true that, when Vladimir Petrov, the Soviet spy, defected and brought his files with him, the Liberal-Country Party Government led by Menzies set up the Royal Commission on Espionage in 1954, but no witch-hunt followed. It must be remembered that in 1946 the Canadian Government (Mackenzie King Liberal Government) held a Royal Commission on Espionage after the defection of the Soviet embassy clerk, Igor Gouzenko. According to Lipset civil liberties should be safer in more elitist Canada than in more equalitarian Australia; but actually there were features of the Gouzenko affair (like arbitrary arrest and examination in camera, with the finding that specific individuals betrayed Canadian state secrets to Russia), which raised in an acute form fundamental questions of individual liberty versus the security of the State to an extent that did not result from the Petrov case. It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that, rather than being excited, the Australian public was bored with and apathetic about the newspaper reports of the Royal Commission on Espionage.

The campaign to eliminate Communist influence from the trade unions in Australia should be seen in terms of (a) the magnitude of the influence of the Communist Party and (b) the different elements which conducted the campaign. During the second world war and in the immediate postwar years the Communists were successful in taking over the most influential posts in the major industrial unions — coal-miners, iron and steel workers, munition workers, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the railway workers, the seamen, and the waterside workers at the national level, and a number of others at the state level. Amidst the general indifference to these developments during the war when the Soviet Union was a valued ally against the menace of Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo there were two groups which were thoroughly alarmed. They were the Labor Party’s trade union and party officials whose jobs were threatened (power in the unions produces political power in a party which is so much a trade-union party that the influence of the unions is built into the constitution and every aspect of its power structure); and the leaders of Catholic Action and the Bishops of the Catholic Church who are always particularly sensitive to increases in Communist strength. In this case the latter group magnified the threat of Communist dominance in the labor movement into a bid for supreme political power in Australia. The result was an alliance of these two groups to protect their mutual interest in the Labor Party. Catholic Action moved into
the unions and mobilized Catholic unionists. The Labor Party officials set up
the A.L.P. Industrial Groups to encourage non-Catholic anti-Communists to
coop-erate with the Catholic movement and to make use in union ballots of the
strong identification of unionists with the Labor Party. However, this was
not a populist or even a popular movement. Although the A.L.P. anti-Com-
munist groups had some general public approval it was not enthusiastic, and
the people who worked in the groups were small in number and very poorly
financed. But they had nevertheless, by about 1953, largely routed the Commu-
nists in most of the important unions.

A quite different attempt to deal with Communist power in the trade unions
was made by the Liberal-Country Party government led by R. G. Menzies.
The coalition had defeated Labor at the 1949 election and one of the issues was
Labor’s alleged kid glove handling of the Communists in the great coal strike
of 1949 which, by general agreement, was regarded as part of the Cominform’s
cold war strategy directed at the enemies of the Soviet Union. In 1950 the Men-
zies Government enacted legislation to ban the Communist Party and to
prevent Communists from holding office in trade unions. Certain clauses
affecting civil liberties were opposed by the Labor Party as Labor manoeuvred
to find a way of frustrating the government, without upsetting its own members
and voters who supported Catholic Action’s anti-Communist campaign. Most
trade union leaders regarded the Bill as a menace to the Labor movement.
But the public opinion polls showed a majority of the general public in favor
of the legislation. However, the Act was challenged and declared unconstitu-
tional by the High Court. Thereupon the Government decided to ask the people
in a referendum to agree to its proposal for an amendment of the Constitution
so that the Act would become constitutional.

Dr. H. V. Evatt, the Labor parliamentary leader, and his colleagues in the
Labor Party, waged a campaign for a No vote on the issue of the danger to
civil liberties in the Government measure and on the argument that a witch-
hunt against the Communists would turn into a general witch-hunt against the
Left, threatening the freedom of minorities and damaging the very substance
of a free society. In the event the proposed amendment was defeated. For the
Commonwealth as a whole the No vote was 50.48 per cent. (The A.L.P. vote
in the election in the same year was 49.07 per cent and in all states, except
Western Australia, the No vote exceeded the A.L.P. vote.) Three states had
small majorities in favour of No and three had by small margins voted
Yes. To have passed the amendment needed Yes majorities in Australia as a
whole as well as in four states; so it failed quite decisively.

This was at a time when the Communists had made themselves particularly
obnoxious to the public by causing frequent power black-outs and interruption
of public transport services, and when several of their spokesmen had made it

13 See Tom Truman, Catholic Action and Politics (Melbourne, 1960); Henry Mayer (ed.),
Catholics and the Free Society (Melbourne, 1961), especially “The Movement — an Outline”,
by B.A. Santamaria.
clear that they put their loyalty to the cause of the Soviet Union and the International Communist Movement before any other consideration — to the point of assistance to a foreign Communist invasion of Australia. The referendum voting thus seems to raise doubts that there was amongst Australians anything like the willingness of Americans to deprive Communists and suspected Communists of their civil rights, which Samuel A. Stouffer found in the survey of opinion conducted in the summer of 1954. Only 27 per cent of the American national sample were prepared to allow Communists the right to make a speech in their community. Sixty-six per cent were in favor of removing books by Communists from the local library; 91 per cent were in favor of dismissing Communist high school teachers; 89 per cent said they would fire a Communist college teacher; 68 per cent would terminate the employment of Communist shop-assistants (store-clerks); 63 per cent would sack a Communist radio singer; 77 per cent would favor taking away American citizenship from Communists; 51 per cent would jail admitted Communists.

However, we must notice that the American survey measured only "latent tendencies". The Australian referendum statistics measure actual voting behavior. We cannot be sure that had the Americans been given the opportunity to vote on the banning of the Communist Party they would have voted in favor of it. However, if to Stouffer's figures we add the evidence of the real witchhunt and persecution of Communists, and suspected Communists, by Senator Joseph McCarthy and his numerous supporters from 1950 to 1955; and if we add the fear of McCarthy's power and influence over public opinion displayed by the President, Senate, and House of Representatives (with some few honorable exceptions), then it is a reasonable conclusion that the attitudes of Americans more clearly supported a "populist movement wreaking aggression" against due process and individual liberties than did the attitudes of Australians. At the very least we can enter a judgment of "not proven" in Lipset's claim that the two peoples were very much alike in their reaction to Communism in the fifties.

Lipset quotes J. B. Priestley, the British novelist, in support of his case. Priestley, he said, argued that, "Australia's attitude to men of independent thought was the same as that of America when McCarthy was at his peak". The incident that caused Priestley to come to this conclusion consisted of two

---

warnings issued by federal cabinet ministers to the public about what they alleged was the Communist-controlled Australian and New Zealand Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament. The Government seemed most concerned that a number of prominent citizens who it seemed to think were politically naive had been induced to act as sponsors and section-leaders for the peace conference. In August 1959 the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. R. G. Casey said: "... The close connection of this projected congress with the so-called World Peace Movement is a highly dangerous one for the Australian people". In a statement in the House of Representatives on 6 October the Attorney-General, Sir Garfield Barwick, reinforced this warning:

The Congress is truly Communist and not intended to be a vehicle for any impartial discussion on a topic we are all most concerned about. The purpose of the Congress is to get highly respected citizens to associate themselves with it in the hope that their association with it will benefit Communist propaganda.

Subsequently, two well-known university professors, Sir Mark Oliphant, Director of the Research School of Physical Sciences in the Australian National University, and Professor A. K. Stout, Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy in the University of Sydney, withdrew their sponsorship of the Congress. A very unusual aspect of Professor Stout's withdrawal was that he said that he had had a visit from the head of the Australian Security Organization, Brigadier Spry, who came with the professor's permission to give him the evidence for believing that the Congress was controlled by the Communist Party.

This rather unorthodox use of the Security Service was vigorously attacked by the Labor Party in Parliament and by some newspapers. The Prime Minister in defending his Attorney-General seemed also to administer a rebuke: "It is not", he said, "the function of the security organization to go around persuading people, and it is given instructions not to do so. With one certain exception it has not done so." Professor L. C. Webb, Professor of Political Science in the National University, in a comment on this incident, agreed with the Melbourne Age which said that the controversy caused by the actions of the government "had given an undue prominence to this congress which is unlikely to have any impact of importance on our affairs".

J. B. Priestley was a British delegate to the Congress.

Turning from this evidence of "populist" Australia's witch-hunting, I want to contrast the way the British Labour Government handled a similar peace conference in 1950. Lipset's comment on Priestley's charge was: "Conversely in Canada, as in Britain, such problems have been handled in a much more

---

18 Ibid., p. 92.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
discreet fashion, reflecting in some part the ability of a more unified and powerful political elite to control the system."21

*Keesing's Contemporary Archives* carried this report:

Preparations by the Communist dominated “Partisans of Peace” organization to hold a “World Peace Congress” in Sheffield November 13 – 19 were mentioned by the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, in a speech in London on November 1st to the Foreign Press Association during which he strongly denounced the sponsors of the “Peace Congress” as Communists and “fellow-travellers” and described the projected Sheffield meeting as bogus.22

In the course of his speech the British Prime Minister said that the government would permit the Congress to be held, as Britain was a free society and believed in free speech and freedom of assembly even for Communists, but the Government would exercise its own judgment in deciding which of the foreign delegates it would admit into Britain.

Mr. Morgan Phillips, the Secretary of the Labour Party, on 29 October warned all Labour Party organizations, affiliated trade unions, and Labour M.P.’s that participation in the Sheffield “Peace Congress” would be incompatible with membership of the Labour Party.23

The Archbishop of Canterbury issued a statement in July advising the clergy not to support the “peace petition” organized by the British Peace Committee. The British Council of Churches, meeting in London on 18 October, rejected an invitation to be represented at the Sheffield World Peace Congress. In declining the invitation the Council said: “While claiming to be champions of peace, the promoters of this Congress have no word of condemnation for the Communist aggression launched against South Korea”.24

In a later report *Keesing’s Contemporary Archives* stated:

The “World Peace Congress” originally designed to have been held in Sheffield in November 1950 was transferred to Warsaw after several hundred foreign delegates had been refused visas for Britain or had been prevented by immigration officers at British ports and airfields from completing their journey to Sheffield.

Some very prominent men were barred.25

---

23 By contrast at the Australian peace congress the left-wing of the Labor Party and trade union movement was well represented and included both federal and state members of Parliament. No warnings about the congress were issued by any of party’s office holders. However, it should be stated that the members and supporters of the Catholic Action movement which had organized the anti-Communist A.L.P. Industrial Groups had split off from the Labor Party after their defeat in a showdown with the left-wing at the Federal Conference in 1955. After leaving the Australian Labor Party they formed a rival party called the Democratic Labor Party. The D.L.P. was loud in its condemnation of the peace congress as a Communist-run propaganda stunt. Had the D.L.P. men remained in the position of power in the A.L.P. they held prior to 1955 then it is very probable there would have been no Labor Party support, official or unofficial, for the peace congress.
25 *Keesing’s, op. cit.*, 11220 (January 20–27). Among those refused entry were: Professor...
Mr. Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary, in answering criticism of the Government's action in the House of Commons, said that in making his decision to grant or refuse admission he considered the past of every applicant and especially relations, if any, with the Cominform. He said 561 applications for visas were received, 300 were granted and 215 were refused. Included in these latter were all, except one, of the members of the Committee of the Congress.

Viscount Hinchingbrooke (Conservative) said: "We have done more damage to our case by blocking the conference than would have been done by allowing it to proceed." To which Mr. Chuter Ede replied: "It is no part of my duty to enable people engaged in a cold war against this country to have opportunities for spreading their doctrines." The World Peace Committee, he declared, was an instrument of Soviet policy.

IV

Lipset argues that equalitarian U.S.A. and Australia, with their anti-authoritarian traditions, have relatively negative attitudes towards authority and the law. Elitist Britain and Canada have much more respect for law and order. Acceptance of authority and informal social controls in Britain, he thinks, are based on deference for social superiors and traditional obligations to some extent mutual. Lipset asserts that new equalitarian societies like the U.S.A. and Australia have rebelled against social hierarchy and elitism and they have substituted the universalistic cash nexus as a source of social relations. Canada, he states, in reaction to revolutionary and equalitarian U.S.A. clung to the elitist traditions of Britain and fostered respect for central political authority to prevent any weakening of the bonds between her people and the government that might encourage the U.S.A. to attempt an invasion and annexation.

On the other hand, he says, lack of respect for the police and law enforcement, even "contempt for law" is typical of Australia and is traceable, not only to equalitarianism, but also to the country's penal origins.

In regard to this view I should like to quote from some comparisons between the crime rates of the U.S.A., Canada, and Australia for 1965 which were given in a paper delivered by Sir Reginald Sholl, Australian Consul-General, to the

Joliot-Curie, former head of the French Government atomic energy operation, and President of the World Peace Committee; M. Saillant, Secretary General of the World Federation of Trade Unions; Louis Aragon, French poet and prominent Communist; Petro Nenni, leader of the Italian left-wing Socialists; Ilya Ehrenburg, Soviet writer and propagandist; Dimitri Shostakovich the Soviet composer; and Nikolai the Metropolitan of Moscow.

26 Keesing's, op. cit., January 20–27.
28 I am indebted to Mr. F.C. Murray, Acting Australian Consul-General in New York, for a copy of Sir Reginald Sholl's paper. Sir Reginald's qualifications as a lawyer and scholar include M.A. degree Melbourne and B.C.L. Oxford. He was a Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria 1950–66; Chairman, Victorian Supreme Court Rules Committee 1960–66; member of the Chief Justices Law Reform Committee 1955–66; sometime Official Law Fellow, Brasenose College, Oxford, and lecturer in the law relating to journalism in the University of Melbourne.
Sir Reginald Sholl’s explanation of the reasons for the much higher crime rates in the U.S.A. was principally that “Your nation (the U.S.A.) has for years been allowing it to get further and further out of the power to achieve two great essentials of an efficient law system — speedy detection and speedy and final conviction”. He said he realized that there were other factors:

the very great mixture of peoples, especially in the last three-quarters of a century, you have had to operate the British common law which your founders brought with them; the lawlessness of earlier frontiers being pushed forward against the hostility of enemies; the barriers of nature, and the depredations of banditry; the different history and habits of your police forces; the tradition of gun-toting which is still part of your mores; the fact that in a wealthy country some crime pays handsomely; and the enthusiastic portrayal of violence in your news and entertainment media.

But there is still an important source of distinction in our constitutional approach to crime and in our practical legal methods of dealing with it.

He mentioned the tendency of some American communities, e.g. Buffalo, New York, and parts of New Jersey, to set up lay law enforcement officers, vigilantes,

29 The figures were drawn from Crime in the U.S. — Uniform Crime Reports (F.B.I., 1965); Crime Statistics (Canada, 1965); Australian Commonwealth Year Book (1967), pp. 522 ff. I have tried to get comparable statistics for England and Wales from the Home Secretary’s Report for 1965 (Cmnd. 3037 H.M. Stationery Office) but I have no confidence that I managed to do so because I do not understand the way the offences are defined. Criminal homicide appears to be 1.24 per 100,000, robbery 2.95, auto theft 2.95, violence against the person 31.0, and rape 1.2 per 100,000.
and the like; the current fashion of the authorities of appeasing rioters and lootors and of Government abdicating its task of maintaining law and order; the suspicion of constituted authority on the part of many Americans, including lawyers, and low regard for the police forces; over-legalism and over-elaboration of defendants' rights; the long drawn-out appeals system with its inherent delays; post-conviction remedies and the doctrine of retrospectivity; the elaborate system of challenges to jurors; the election of judges either on party or non-party tickets; the exclusion of relevant evidence if illegally obtained instead of admitting it and punishing the breach of the law in obtaining it; and unduly hampering the police in convicting offenders by unreasonable restrictions on modern technological aids to police work, such as electronic devices like "bugging" and "wire-tapping". What this criticism by an Australian lawyer of the American system of law enforcement reduces to is essentially that Americans have upset the balance between order and liberty by leaning too far towards the rights of the accused and too much against constituted authority, especially against the police. He put his case in these words:

The parliamentary and executive governments you and we elect are democratic, they can be changed through the ballot box. The police and other authorities whom they appoint are our fellow citizens, and their powers are given them by our elected representatives. Will you then kindly allow a stranger humbly to ask why in this country so many people — lawyers included — appear to suspect constituted authority rather than respect it, and even in many cases to revile it? Constituted authority — whether we feel we can improve it or not — is the best that we have been able to put between ourselves and anarchy, and we should never forget that ... It is essential to remember that any freedom worth having is freedom under the law; that no individual freedom is secure or lasting except in an ordered society; and that you cannot have order without law, justly and firmly administered.

Sholl's crime statistics show Australia to be like Canada rather than the U.S.A. in the matter of law enforcement and law-keeping. Historical evidence tends to support this conclusion. The pattern of the history of law enforcement in colonial Australia and Canada is similar because the British Government followed the general policy of not allowing settlement to outrun government control and adequate policing. When these countries achieved self-government they still remained within the British Empire. They naturally followed the traditions already established and tried to model themselves as closely as they could on the British administration which they so admired. If one looks at the government of the mining camps in the gold rushes one is struck by the contrast between the U.S.A. on the one hand and Australia and Canada on the other.

In the U.S.A. the miners and settlers in California, the Rocky Mountains, and Alaska formed communities which were self-governing and made their own laws subject only to broad statutory limitations. They sometimes made the laws and dispensed a rough justice by public meeting. They elected their own officials, sheriffs and justices who, of course, had no special education or training
for their positions and could rely only on their own native wisdom in dispensing and enforcing justice. Sometimes these democratic arrangements worked well enough even if the law did vary from place to place and they had, at least, the merit of local knowledge and interest. Sometimes freedom descended into licence and anarchy. Sometimes there was mob-rule and lynch law as at San Francisco and other Californian towns. Sometimes these American frontier and mining towns were dominated by some crooked boss like Jefferson "Soapy" Smith who intimidated the citizens with a band of hired thugs and gun-slingers at Skagway in Alaska, the port for the Klondike in the years 1897–99. Smith had been king of the underworld in Denver, and at the silver camp of Creede in 1892 had rigged the election, selected the executive council, and named the police chief and every civic official from justice of the peace to coroner.

In Canada the famous Northwest Mounted Police organized and led by ex-officers of the British army, and responsible to the distant government at Ottawa, controlled the whole vast area of Canada west of Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains. Though but three hundred strong their sway was undisputed by the thousands of Indians (including the Blackfeet and the fierce Sioux, upon whom they imposed the peace that thousands of U.S. troops could not bring about south of the border), as well as by many white desperadoes, whisky traders, and ranchers who came in from the U.S.A. The secret of their success was the respect in which they were held by red man and white man alike for their discipline, their honesty, their protection of the weak, the even-handedness of the justice they dispensed, their record of successful arrest of wrongdoers and not least, as British policemen because of the reputation of that nation in the administration of justice. When the Klondike Rush began they moved into a community where every man was armed, quarrels might be expected to be numerous, and only ten per cent of the population was Canadian — most were Americans. Tappan Adney, an American reporter and Klondike correspondent for Harper's Magazine, though very critical of the lack of local government and the absurdity of the laws being made in Ottawa, two thousand miles away, stated:

The police control of the country was as nearly perfect as one could expect. Thefts and misdemeanours were numerous and effectively dealt with, and one or two murder cases were tried. The saloons were closed on Sunday, nor was any labor permitted on that day ... No city on the continent presented a more orderly appearance ... The mounted police, both officers and men, in their capacity as preservers of order and as individuals, commanded the respect of every miner. Captain Constantine upon his departure from Dawson, received a testimonial in the form of two thousand dollars' worth of nuggets ... 34

32 Ibid., p. 335.
34 Tappan Adney, The Klondike Stampede (New York, 1900), pp. 433 and 440.
The goldfields of Australia did not have such an excellent police force as the "Mounties" but they were nevertheless effectively policed and administered by officials sent out by the central government from the state capital. There never was any "Judge Lynch", committees of vigilantes, or mob-rule. Lord Robert Cecil who visited the Victorian goldfields in 1852 noted in his diary:

From this camp the commissioner rules a body of 100,000 men; exacts their licence fees, punishes their offences, and guards their gold. For this latter purpose his only coffer is a tin paper box secured by a sixpenny padlock; and his coercive force consists of three policemen, two carbines and a sword. And yet his tent has never been robbed, nor his authority resisted.35

The first move in the American mining camps was to establish local democracy, and then to provide for law and order. The British method, followed by the Canadians and Australians, was to make sure of law and order first and, by means of police sent out from the central government, to administer the law made by that government. Where the danger of the American system was mob-rule or "bossism", the hazard of the British system was that the benevolent despotism of officiandom might degenerate into police tyranny and provoke rebellion. This happened at Ballarat in 1854. It was only a small affair and easily put down, but the Eureka Stockade and the Royal Commission of inquiry that followed greatly helped in the fight for a democratic constitution for Victoria which went into effect in 1856.36

It is true that Australian police forces do not have the glamour or the prestige of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police but the administration and conduct of the police has usually been free of the grosser forms of corruption either political or financial. The police in Australia have always been administered by colonial or state governments. There never have been any locally-controlled police such as in America where they have been subject to local political influences and to boss rule.

The over-concern of the courts in America with the rights of the accused and their suspiciousness towards police evidence, as well as the general lack of respect for the police shown by the public, and even by lawyers, seems to be the result of a vicious circle of effects and causes. The police of America generally have a history of poor performance whatever the present conduct of particular police forces may be. There have been many instances in the past of ill-disciplined police exhibiting rude and aggressive behavior, of police cruelty and oppression, and of the perversion of justice and police work by political machines. It is not then too surprising that police generally in the U.S.A. are poorly regarded by the public. This, in turn, results in low morale and low pay, which affects standards of recruitment, training, and discipline.

These effects become the causes of maintaining the low opinion of the police.

Some confirmation of the argument advanced above comes from a report by Chief Inspector Leonard Powell of Scotland Yard who made a study of U.S. police work in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and six other American cities. He reported that the American police were “unduly aggressive and sometimes plain rude”. They lacked “restraint and self-control”. They relied too much on “fire-alarm policing — sending heavily armed officers into a community to quell disorder”. They badly neglected community relations — they were at their worst in Chicago, no one will be surprised to learn. He said he found U.S. police lacking the respect and social status given their British counterparts. Where the record of performance of the law enforcement agency is regarded as good, as in the case of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the lawmen can elicit the respect of Americans. The old F.B.I. Chief, Edgar Hoover, in fact enjoys so much public regard that he is almost immune from control either by the President or the Congress.

Making the distinction between “elitist” Canada and “equalitarian” Australia, Lipset tells us “Canadian unification in 1867 is associated with the Conservative Party, while the federating of Australia round the turn of the century was pressed by the Labor Party, which existed in most states”. He gives this as an instance of his general proposition that for Australia “the ‘left’ played the major role in defining political and social institutions in the periods in which national identity was established”. The “left” in the context seems to mean the Australian Labor Party.

Of course, Lipset is just plain wrong about Labor being the main force promoting federation. In the three most populous colonies and where Labor had its principal strength, that is New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, the party opposed federation as inopportune: in New South Wales particularly they felt that federation jeopardized the gains in social legislation they had painfully won in the colonial legislature. Federation, the Labor party believed, by bringing in the more “backward” colonies would dilute the influence that Labor could bring to bear. According to Evatt (who was himself to become Labor leader), in his biography of William Holman, one of the founders of the A.L.P., Labor men came to believe that “many Federationists were aiming at shutting the gate against social and economic reform”. Labor had only one delegate elected in the Federal Convention elections of 1897 — Trenwith of Victoria — and he was repudiated by his own party. The people elected as delegates the most obviously eminent politicians of the

---

37 Globe and Mail (Toronto), 17 February 1969, p. 5.
38 Lipset, op. cit., p. 255, footnote 17.
39 Ibid., p. 255.
40 H.V. Evatt, Australian Labor Leader (Sydney, 1945), p. 97.
These were mainly “liberals”; although there were some “conservatives” in the appellation of the times, in the ideological sense there were only radical liberals and conservative liberals, no ideological conservatives at all. The radical liberals on balance prevailed. These were the strong federationists, the nationalists amongst the federalists rather than the state-righters (only federalism was politically possible), the democrats rather than those who feared the popular vote, and those who thought the State had a duty to help the unfortunate and the under-privileged — Section 51 which sets out the powers allotted to the Federal Parliament included the then very progressive clause (xxii) “Invalid and Old Age Pensions”. The delegates were mainly middle class people. The 1897 Convention had an average of 12 years’ service in colonial parliaments. The “politicians” had served so long as to be said to have had life-long careers in politics. Russel Ward has expressed the judgment of modern historical research on the federation movement in these words:

Generally speaking, Labor’s political leaders actively opposed, or were at best lukewarm towards, federation; Conservatives, whether Free trade or Protectionist in complexion, were divided. Overwhelmingly the lead came from liberal middle-class politicians like Alfred Deakin of Victoria, Sir Henry Parkes of New South Wales, and Charles Cameron Kingston of South Australia.

Lipset may have been misled by Hartley Grattan, an American freelance journalist who made a specialty of interpreting Australia to Americans. Modern historical scholarship, which is summarized in Russel Ward’s excellent short history, holds that Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century was a middle class society like the United States, and it rivalled the U. S. A. in its booming prosperity. But it was much more urbanized than the U. S. A. (or Canada). As the bulk of the population was drawn from the British lower

---

42 The following table compares the occupational background of delegates to the 1891 and 1897 Conventions (the delegates to the 1891 Convention were appointed by the colonial legislatures whilst those who attended the 1897 Convention were elected by popular vote):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1891 Convention</th>
<th>1897-98 Convention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoralists</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other land interests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce, Industry &amp; Finance</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Union Officials</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

classes, mainly working class, it was bound to be an equalitarian society as these immigrants were strongly opposed to the British aristocratic class system and were determined to build a new society free from the class barriers of the Old Country. Observers and visitors from Britain were astonished by the upward mobility of the working classes in Australia and a big proportion of the middle classes were erstwhile workingmen. Craft unionism on the British model flourished and wages were generally much higher than in England. Russel Ward states:

In the third quarter of the nineteenth century Australian political sentiment was overwhelmingly liberal, even radical (liberal), but at the same time strongly individualist and not markedly either collectivist or nationalist. John Stuart Mill was the philosophical mentor of most politicians literate enough to be aware of theoretical writings.44

The leadership of the nationalist movement, of the incipient welfare state as forecast in old age and invalid pensions, and the federation movement which coincided in the nineties with the rise of a frankly nationalist literature was taken up, naturally, by liberal and radical liberal politicians. The Labor Party in the nineties, though it had made an auspicious beginning in 1891, was too weak a force to lead public opinion. In the first nine years of the new century and the first eight of the Federal Government the Labor Party generally gave support to the Protectionist Party which enacted the legislation that may be considered to have laid the basis of Australian political development for the next half-century. All the while the Labor Party grew with the extension of unionism; by 1909 it had taken most of the working class vote away from the radical liberals who, finding themselves dwindling away, fused with the conservative liberals to form the Liberal Party, the precursor of the modern Liberal Party. Labor won its first decisive victories in the Commonwealth and in the most populous state of New South Wales in 1910. By this time Labor had taken the lead in the equalitarian and nationalist traditions and was winning enough middle class and rural votes to form governments. The period 1910-1950 was the era when Labor, though more often out of power than in, was the predominant influence on Australian society;45 but the liberal traditions of equalitarianism and nationalism did not die out. They lived on in the left-wing of the Liberal Party, diluted by the more elitist and imperialist right-wing.

In the United States the great depression of the eighties and nineties was succeeded by an agrarian revolt, the Populist movement. In Britain and Australia, which were urbanized societies, it was succeeded, or accompanied, by a

---

44 Ward, op. cit., p. 65.
labor protest movement that began with the extension of union organization to the semi-skilled and unskilled, developed into big strikes, and culminated in the rise of the Labor Parties (which developed with unionization and rising class-consciousness).

The People’s Party faded because the farmers lost their class-consciousness with the return of prosperity so that equalitarianism in the U.S.A. remains a middle class capitalistic equalitarianism. In Australia equalitarianism became a two-tiered affair with the new fiercer class-conscious equalitarianism of the Labor Movement overlapping the older middle-class tradition. Lipset, it appears to me from the evidence I have examined, has erred in believing that, because Australia is similar to the U.S.A. in being a society with equalitarian values, the effects which he attributes to equalitarianism in the U.S.A. — i.e. high proportion of youth in universities and higher education, populistic explosions, witch-hunting crusades and disregard of minority rights, toleration of lawlessness and high crime rates — are also a feature of Australian society. I have attempted to show that these supposed effects of equalitarianism do not occur or, at least, not to the same extent in Australia. Assuming that there is some sort of causal relationship between equalitarianism and the effects mentioned (and it seems to be a reasonable hypothesis) I am going to suggest that there are intervening variables; and this is why the effects of equalitarianism in Australia are different from the effects of equalitarianism in the U.S.A. The intervening variable which I think is most influential, and which I want to emphasize, is the political system, especially the different effects produced by the American political institutions and the Australian or British-type political institutions and the conventions, expectations, and attitudes associated with those institutions.

VI

Lipset’s Elitist-Equalitarian dimension tends to emphasize the similarities between the U.S.A. and Australia on the one hand, and Canada and Britain on the other, but other dimensions can produce the emphasizing of similarities that would rearrange the groupings. For instance, I would argue that the common experience of Australia and Canada as British colonies and later dominions, their generally good relations with Britain, and their modelling their institutions and their public life on Britain have tended to make Australian and Canadian societies in some ways more like British society than they are like American society, which by reason of its formal political separation and deliberate fostering of an independent national tradition from the late eighteenth century has diverged from the other three countries more markedly than they from one another in certain respects. (The administration of justice and the implementation of law and order have been mentioned already and others are mentioned later in this paper.)

In some other respects, notably in the relatively early development of a high degree of urbanization, a high degree of union organization, the existence of a strong Labor Party, and a relatively high degree of class-voting, Australian
society more resembles British society than it does American and Canadian
society. Similarly in attachment to liberal capitalist values the two North
American countries are similar to one another and Britain and Australia are
alike in being relatively more collectivist, though all four countries are liberal,
capitalist, democratic, middle class societies and very similar to one another
when compared with countries outside the British culture area.

These arguments are made not to disagree with Lipset’s rankings along the
equalitarian-elitist dimension and his grouping of Australia and the U.S.A.
together, as being in this respect more like one another, than either is like Britain
(though I am not sure that he is correct in perceiving Canada nowadays as
closer to Britain than it is to the other two countries). The arguments are made
to suggest that Lipset’s dimensions need to be supplemented by others to bring
out features of the countries compared which are, at least, of equal significance
as those his dimensions indicate.

Lipset describes the value-patterns of American society almost entirely in
terms of equalitarianism and achievement.\textsuperscript{46} Obviously he does not find the
dimensions of particularism-universalism and diffuseness-specificity very useful.
In the following table they are replaced by what I consider are more significant
dimensions. The tentative rankings in the new table are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Britain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equalitarianism-elitism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement-ascription</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class-consciousness: high — low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment to capitalist values: high — low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of government: strong — weak</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralization-regionalism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawlessness: high — low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Populism: strong — weak</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to class-consciousness the table follows Alford, more or less.\textsuperscript{47}

All the dimensions are fairly self-explanatory except “articulation of govern­
ment: strong — weak”. This is a measure of the integration of governmental
institutions, the concentration of responsibility as in the British system of
fusion of executive and legislative power versus the diffusion of responsibility
as in the American system at all levels — national, state, and local. This measure,
the political system, is one intervening variable influential in determining
whether equalitarianism results in populistic explosions, witch-hunting crusades,
onslaught on minority rights, toleration of lawlessness, and high crime rates.

Concerning “‘populist’ movement through which popular passions wreak
their aggression against the structure of the polity” the United States has a

\textsuperscript{46} Lipset, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 110-35.
record that cannot be matched by Australia, Canada, or the United Kingdom. To begin the list of these American movements of intolerance no further back than the early twentieth century there was, following the Russian Revolution and the creation of the Communist International, the great "Red Scare" — the anti-radical and anti-Labor hysteria of the early twenties culminating in the Palmer Raids.48 There were similar conservative reactions to the Russian Revolution in Britain and Australia but nowhere near the magnitude of the American movement — and this despite the fear of socialism having rather more foundation because the Labor Parties in both countries adopted clauses in their platforms to signify their intention of nationalizing industries and introducing socialism if and when elected. Curiously enough, it was "elitist" Canada rather than "equalitarian" Australia which came closest to the American witch-hunting in the Borden Government’s panicky reaction to the Winnipeg Strike.49

There was the Ku Klux Klan in the prosperous twenties which attacked Negroes, Jews, Catholics, and "cosmopolitan" Protestants. The Klan was so powerful in the twenties, according to Lipset50 that it dominated political life in Maine, Indiana, Colorado, Oregon, California, Arkansas, and Oklahoma and had millions of followers.

There was Father Coughlin in the thirties whose Christian Front preached the Nazi racial doctrines.51 “Elitist” Britain came closest to the U. S. A. with Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists but this organization was dangerous chiefly because of the hostile crowds it gathered.52

There was Senator Joseph McCarthy in the fifties who rode a powerful anti-Communist bandwagon and smeared, harassed, and persecuted leftists and liberal opponents using his Senate sub-committee and his flair for getting the attention of the mass media of communication.53 In Canada and Australia there were the Royal Commissions on espionage after the defection of Russian embassy officials but no great public reaction. In Australia there was the Catholic Action movement and the creation of the A.L.P. Industrial Groups to fight Communism in the trade unions, but this was small scale and private activity not like McCarthy’s influence on public opinion or his mass following. (There was of course no Commonwealth counterpart of Goldwaterism or George Wallace’s American Independent Party.)

There have usually been some popular reactions in Britain, Canada, and Australia resembling in kind if not in magnitude the American radical right movements.

51 Ibid., pp. 374-446.
Herbert Hyman, who reports on a study he made in Britain at the time McCarthyism was at its height in the U.S.A., found that the British public too held intolerant sentiments regarding leftists and dissidents but they remained latent because of political restraints. He asks, "What insulates the elites and political structures from popular pressures (in Britain)?" His answer is that the English public accords more privacy and deference to the political elites. This, while true of Britain, is less true of Canada, and even less true of Australia. It seems to me that what insulates the elites in the Commonwealth countries is the political system. The Cabinet-Parliamentary system with its disciplined legislative parties, which fuses executive and legislative powers in the Cabinet, makes for a governmental system strong enough to withstand very great public pressure providing the Cabinet remains united. Because of the disciplined legislative parties, whose discipline comes not so much from the sanctions the party leaders can exert but rather from a strong party loyalty arising from the dependence of the Government on the support of a majority in the Lower House and a desire not to let their opponents profit from disunity, there is little opening for pressure in the legislature.

There are two striking examples from recent Australian political history. The Australian Labor Government stood firm on its policy of bank nationalization in 1947 despite the very strong public reaction and the big drop in its popularity as recorded by the Gallup Poll. The Australian Liberal-Country Government in 1960 applied a "credit squeeze" of such severity that it turned a boom into a slump. The Government remained resolute despite the enormous public outcry and the bitter opposition of friend and foe alike. Compared with the British Parliamentary system the American government appears to be divided against itself and very vulnerable to pressure because of the many openings in such a loose-jointed system. This is because the American system consists of separated political institutions sharing powers and checking and balancing each other; with the President, House, and Senate separately elected; with the Congress again divided into almost autonomous committees; and executive departments and agencies, according to Neustadt, often behaving as though they were independent of the President and responsible only to the interest groups who form their clientele. American political institutions and politicians are, therefore, much more sensitive to public opinion in the constituencies and in the nation than are the British institutions and politicians. The effect of the British Parliamentary system is to dampen down public agitation, whereas the tendency of the American institutions is to resonate public opinion and to encourage and increase the swings. It takes a very courageous politician to stand against the tide, to change the metaphor, when American public opinion is running strong. Nothing illustrates this better than the McCarthy years. There were precious few public figures (Adlai Stevenson and Senator William

54 Herbert H. Hyman, "Climates of Tolerance and Intolerance", in Daniel Bell, op. cit., p. 281.
Fulbright were two) who dared to oppose McCarthy at the height of his power. Of course, when it became clear he had alienated public opinion by his bullying and insulting behavior towards the respected General Zwicker in the televised Army hearings, the Senate of the United States plucked up courage to censure him and President Eisenhower bravely crossed him off the White House visiting list.57 The point is not that American politicians are more pusillanimous than British, Canadian, or Australian politicians, but simply that they are, under their system, more exposed and defenceless against those who, like McCarthy, can mobilize public opinion. Operating within a system that makes them more vulnerable than politicians in the parliamentary system, they are socialized into a cautious prudence and an attitude of not opposing anything or anyone that an important proportion of their constituents cares about intensely.

57 Rovere, op. cit.
I want to propose a paradox in this essay, and it is this: that there has rarely been a time in the history of this subject when it has been in such a depressingly uncertain, and yet promising, condition as it is now. And this is so, not because we know less about the facts of federal life: on the contrary, there has never been a time when so much has been known about the subject. Only the more we have come to know about it, the less satisfying and the less reputable has become the whole corpus of our inherited ideas.

Virtually all the perspectives and techniques of political science have contributed in some fashion or other, to the downfall of what I want to call the "federal Humpty-Dumpty". And for myself, I am quite uncertain whether we can put him together again, and indeed, whether we ought to put him together again. It is a grotesque and sobering thought that in this instance, at least, it could well be the king's horses and the king's men who will put an end to this dilemma.

If one were asked to name the culprits (or heroes, as one chooses to see the matter) who were responsible, wittingly or unwittingly, for corroding the received federal ideas I would mention at least these four: the juristically-orientated political theorists, who hold faith with the classic question of "how and what theory of the State will accommodate what theory of federalism"; the linguistic analysts, who aspire to mediate our differences by tending to the logic of our conversation; the pluralists, who seek to rescue the federal idea from its constricting state apparatus; and the behaviourists who, more than anyone else, have become the chief prosecutors and executioners of the received doctrines.

I would hesitate to arrange these "schools" in their precise order of guilt. What I am fairly clear about is that the greatest burden must be equally borne, though in very different ways, by the state theorists on the one hand and by all those who have examined any living aspect of the federal tissue, in a word — the behaviourists.

To begin with the first. The pursuit of staatslehre is somewhat rare in our own time. And not without reason. For it is difficult to do even Sobei Mogi's guided tour of federal literature ("The Problem of Federalism") without recoiling from the profound scholasticism and the excesses of grand federal theory. The
style and tradition of inquiry is easily recognizable. Its primary concern with the formal power-relations in the federal state, and the type of questions it asked were, no doubt, inescapable; for where there is a state, there is law, and where there is law, there must be theory. But in answering these questions it developed a set of categories and fictions which were ill-suited to prepare statesmen and electors either for the facts of federal life, or to explain their experiences of federal life as they lived it. At best the devotees of state theory opened up ingenious and deeply satisfying insights into the new form of political organization. At worst, they revealed a narcissistic scholasticism which drew greater pleasure from the formal beauty of a theory than from its correspondence to the facts.

Who, for example, has not suffered as a student from the elaborate analytical and classificatory exercises where the selection of facts, more often than not, whether they concerned the nature of the German Empire or the United States of America, betrayed a greater concern for political recommendation than political science? And who, indeed, has not turned away from the magisterial confidence with which Dicey, Bryce, or Laski diagnosed the ills and predicted the condition and the fate of those who mistakenly chose to live the federal life?

Remember, for instance, the passage in Dicey:

The distribution of all the powers of the state among coordinate authorities necessarily leads to the result that no one authority can wield the same amount of power as under a unitarian constitution is possessed by the sovereign. A scheme again of checks and balances in which the strength of the common government is so to speak pitted against that of the state governments leads, on the face of it, to a certain waste of energy. A federation therefore will always be at a disadvantage in a contest with unitarian states of equal resources.  

How quaint it all seems now. Yet how understandable; because for Dicey the federal deviant was simply the bastard child of a political passion for union without unity, an untidy and illegitimate departure from a coherent Westminster sovereign order, and many of his premises are a barely concealed admixture of common law jurisprudence and political sentiment. But if this is Dicey, is Harold Laski, whose heart and persuasions were so different, any better? Who does not remember his epitaph to the "obsolescence" of American federalism in the thirties? Or how strenuously he asserted the incompetence of American federalism to engage in any meaningful national welfare programmes? Acutely conscious though he was of American society and its history, he was quite unable to free the "federal principle" from the very particular way American society chose to live its "federal" life.

It may seem unfitting to rake over the graveyards of past theories, and indeed, outside a purely antiquarian curiosity, it would be so if the tradition which gave birth to these ideas were spent. But what is one to say of a recent

---

influential attempt to erect a pure model of federality, renovate the old classificatory techniques, and issue a slightly restyled set of the old federal theorems? Is there any difference in the focus and manner of Wheare's taxonomy which distributes the categories of "federal"/"quasi-federal" and the nineteenth century style of arranging unions or leagues of states in a federal scheme of "perfect"/"imperfect", or "pure"/"impure", or "total"/"partial"? Is there any difference in the way Wheare searches for the federal deviants — the disallowance power of the Canadian Governor-General, the unusual power of amendment in the Swiss Constitution, the unlimited federal power of income taxation in the Commonwealth Government of Australia, and the way in which German scholars wrangled over the majoritarian principle, the role of the Emperor, the possibility of dividing political functions fairly, or the necessity for independent administrative organs?

Knowing as much as we do know about the facts of federal life what progress have we really made with its theory? The greatest triumph of the behaviourists has been the gradual erosion and atomization of the theories born of staatslehre. If they have not freed us from the influence of the formalists and scholastics entirely, they have left very few of their major propositions unscathed or still standing. Certainly the constitutional or jural shell remains, but what else? What, in fact, have we learned that has proved so damaging to the inherited ideas? Let me recite a few of the facts which are most commonly obscured in the rush of nationalistic emotions which attend the making of a federal state.

First, we have learned that the motives and circumstances which lead to federation are as diverse as the motives and circumstances which lead to marriage, and that we can no more predict the life which will ensue from this form of political union than we can predict the style and quality of life which will flow from the form in which a marital union is joined.

Second, that in the business of dividing political functions between the parties to this form of union there is neither science, mathematical exactitude, nor theory — only the draftsman's skill in translating the compromises of the key bargainers in language to satisfy them.

Third, that we can never be certain that the words in which the key bargainers have clothed their intentions can ever be more than a crude guide to their political activity, or indeed, that the range of permissible activity, at anytime thereafter, will bear any necessary relationship to their intention or expectations.

Fourth, that at the moment of any federal transaction it is quite impossible to know the ambit of any function given or any function retained by any of the parties, nor indeed the manner in which governments will legislate nor the interests and purposes they will seek to satisfy.

Fifth, that while each unit of a federal community is, within its ambit, free to initiate what policies it chooses and in what manner it chooses, the cash-value of their "autonomy" or "independence" is less determined by constitutional
inviolability, than by the complex of judicial decision, political or economic pressure, fiscal resources, and the permissive or negating measures of all the other units in the community.

Sixth, that if finance is the vital principle of each body politic, we have learned that it is impossible to frame a permanent and equitable fiscal settlement between the central and regional governments: and, for at least these two reasons, we cannot predict the cost of government for any long term period unless we can predict the level of political demand and the movement of prices; nor can we predict for any long term period the revenue yields of any tax fields.

In a word, what we have learned both from the sheer force of experience and the accumulated studies of the past two or three decades is that the informational and explanatory value of the federal symbol is very much less than we once thought. At base, it may still tell us that there are parties which desire to engage in a particular form of union which is constitutionally wholly distinct and structurally nearly distinct from all other forms of union. But outside this, it can tell us little, if anything at all, about a vast number of critical political determinants — for example, the apportionment of political functions between the central and regional governments, the range and influence of their functions, the distribution of wealth, the precise set of fiscal relations, the party system and the power structure within it, the degree of cohesion and diversity within the community, the quality and disposition of political skills, the habits and the traditions of politics, and the attitudes to the new political garment and the new identity it entails. And plainly, because it cannot tell us these crucial things, we cannot predicate of any “federal” system either constitutional weakness or strength, radicalism or conservatism, flexibility or rigidity, legalism or lawlessness; nor can we — pace Harold Laski — predicate either its impotence or power to cope with the demands of welfare economics, planned society, or the “new” politics!

In the light of this, can we profitably continue to employ a term when it is incapable of expressing the great differences in the legal and extra-legal power relations inside communities which have dressed themselves in the federal garb? How can we compress the multiplicity of political life which distinguishes India, Nigeria, Malaysia, the United States, to name only these, within the common federal symbol without losing in descriptive reality or, worse, disfiguring reality? Can we continue to describe the federal principle as that “which makes the United States the society that it is” (Wheare) when plainly no other federal system is even approximately the political society that the United States is?

For Dicey — and he is neither alone nor the last — there was nothing at all absurd or more than superficially amusing in joining the United States Congress, the Great Eastern Railway Company, the Belgian Parliament, and an English School Board in the common category of “subordinate law-making bodies”:

There is, it is said, a certain absurdity in bringing into one class things so different in importance and dignity as, for example, the Belgian Parliament and an English School board ... No doubt when features of
likeness between things which differ from one another both in appearance and in dignity are pointed out, the immediate result is to produce a sense of amusement, but an apparent absurdity is no proof that the likeness is unreal or undeserving of notice. A man differs from a rat. But this does not make it the less true or the less worth noting that they are both vertebrate animals.

And still more than half a century later, MacMahon of Columbia argued in the preface of an impressive symposium of essays on mature and emergent federalism that:

There is virtue in making such a word [as federal] do service in varied applications provided it carries an essence or logic that is remembered and respected. The test on the borders of usage is likely to be one of degree. Thus a federal system distributes power between a common and constituent governments under an arrangement that cannot be changed by the ordinary process of central legislation. This requirement leaves open the question of how additionally difficult must be the method of amendment and how it is to be conducted. A further characteristic of federal systems is that the matters entrusted to the constituent units must be substantial and not merely trivial; this, too, is a problem of degree, etc., etc.

How then should we instruct our students? Should we, like MacMahon, content ourselves that there is such a common logic running through the political systems of the United States, India, Nigeria, and Malaysia that it transcends the profoundly different power relations between the central and regional governments in these countries; or indeed, that the federality is the same thing in each political system, or that the differences where they exist are not in kind, but simply of degree? Or should we turn our backs on Wheare and MacMahon? And if so, in what direction shall we face?

However jubilant the behaviourists may be, their triumph to date has been a wholly negative triumph. That is, while they have taught us a great many of the facts of federal life, they have so far failed to agree about the meaning of federal life as a whole. Not that their failure in this area is so unusual. Why, after all, should we expect to erect a universally acceptable and stable theory of federalism when we have had so little success, if any at all, with general theory in the whole field of politics? But usual or unusual, the fact is that we are caught, as it were, between the sky of tattered grand theories and the deep blue sea of a vast body of empirical work lacking in a single agreed and clear focus. No longer is federal theory the showpiece of political science. And exciting as this spectacle of erosion may be for some, it is also a little disconcerting for others. What then do we do now? Should we accustom ourselves to look upon each state in each epoch as a political individuality, so unique, so special that we cannot capture it within any single theory without being accused of the obvious or the trivial? Or do we look for another focus, a firm primary theory with new concepts which will encompass the political arrangements of all these states in terms which yield more reliable explanatory material than satisfied Dicey and his generation? Or do we try to salvage something from the wreckage?
To begin with, I myself seriously doubt whether we can make any further progress with the terms, federal, unitary, confederal, or any of their cruder variants. We have, I think, worked them to the bone, and imposed burdens on them that they were not built to endure. Few, if any, now believe that states designated federal, or unitary, or confederal, whether they are constitutional systems or not, have one political style or one set of political tendencies. And it makes no more sense to try to salvage the term federal by appending such prefixes as “quasi” than it would, and with equal logic, make sense to refine the terms “unitary”, or “confederal” by the same prefix: though I confess that “quasi-confederal” sounds far more ghastly than “quasi-federal”.

For my part there are times when I wish we could pension off these terms, give them a grace and favour residence, and commission a historian of the eminence of the late Richard Koebner to write their biography and epitaph. I do not think that their retirement would impede political conversation or political analysis, any more than the disuse of many other terms in the shifting political lexicon. After all, we are at a familiar cross-roads in political communication, and we have been there before many times with such terms as “imperialism”, “sovereignty”, and indeed “democracy”. What cardinal do we really want to know, for example, about the Soviet, Yugoslav, Pakistan, Australian, or American political system? Whether we should call them federal or quasi-federal or pseudo-federal? Or do we want to know, and in the greatest possible quantitative and qualitative detail, at every level of decision-making, the answer to the question that matters so much in politics — “who governs?”

I realize, of course, at other moments, that it is wishful thinking on my part to believe that one can write an end to a term such as “federal”. None of us is a King Canute. We cannot stem the tide or contain the momentum of usage. And since we must live with it does it really matter? The question however is — matter to whom, where, and when? For some the term, worn as it is, can at least serve as a purely jural or constitutional designation, if nothing more. For others, and especially those for whom the term is filled with deep emotional associations there is still a solid core of identifiable doctrine and practice in the idea, however vague or fragile it may be at the frontiers. And all would probably agree that no harm can really come to anyone who reads the word “federal” in the title of a constitution, so long as they also remember to read the whole of the constitution, and examine — if they are allowed — the whole system of government. Could we then — the “fundamentalists”, who like the authors of the recent “Studies in Federalism” prefer to fish for legitimate federal experience only in the crystal pure waters of the original five — the United States of America, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, and Germany; the “revisionists” who seek the admission of India, Malaysia, Nigeria, and indeed Italy and France, into the inner court of the federal club; and the “nihilists” who wish to retire the term altogether — be content with this uneasy settlement?

Obviously not: and for this reason considerable attention has recently centred in the offer of what at first sight appears to be an interesting solution to the impasse by Carl Friedrich of Harvard in a thesis he argued at the special IPSA

As I understand it the core of — what I would like to call — his "reconstructionist" case rests in one major recommendation. And to avoid the risk of bowdlerizing his intent I should like to quote at some length several passages from both his Oxford and Geneva papers.²

From the Oxford Round Table Meeting: (19 September 1963):

None of the major theories of federalism have given, though occasionally they have hinted at, an adequate interpretation of this complex political phenomenon, primarily because of their static approach. Federalism should not be considered a term for a static pattern, designating a particular and precisely fixed division of powers between governmental levels. Instead, federalism seems the most suitable term by which to designate the process of federalising (my italics) a political community, that is to say the process by which a number of separate political organisations, be they states or any other kind of association, enter into arrangements for working out solutions, adopting joint policies and making joint decisions on joint problems, or reversely the process through which an hitherto unitary political community as it becomes differentiated into a number of separate and distinct political communities achieves a new organisation in which the differentiated communities, now separately organised, become capable of working out separately and on their own those problems they no longer have in common. But it is not only a matter of decision making, but of the entire range of power and its exercise. The federalising process accompanies, so to speak, the communal development as its organisational counterpart...

The federalising process may indeed commence in the forming of a league, such as the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Community, or the Confederation which preceded the forming of the United States of America. Or it may lead to such loose association, as that of the British Commonwealth of Nations. But always there is the problem of how to combine local autonomy with comprehensive unity.

From the I.P.S.A. Conference, Geneva: (21 September 1964):

Federalism as a topic of political science has greatly increased in scope in recent years. As new nations have emerged, as international organisations have multiplied, and the study of the politics of various groups and organisations beyond the governmental level, not only parties, but interest groups, churches, trade unions, have been encompassed, federalism has been dynamically interpreted as the effective organising of diversity (my italics) and comprehensively related to the pluralism of modern industrial societies... Federalism is thus seen to be a process rather than a design, as had been the prevailing outlook in the past. Any particular design or pattern of competencies or jurisdictions is merely a phase, a short-run view of a continually evolving political reality. This does not mean, of course, that the former view is devoid of meaning; at any particular

² "Federalism, National and International in Theory and Practice" (Oxford), and "New Tendencies in Federal Theory and Practice" (Geneva).
moment, the task of describing a federal order is still definitely a matter of ascertaining its design. But the once crucial distinction between a federal state and a confederation of states has become blurred, though it may still have significance in law and political practice...

I would state it as the core of such a general theory of federalism that a federation is a union of groups, united by one or more common objectives, but retaining their distinctive group character for other purposes. Seen thus, federation appears to be on the group level what association is on the interpersonal level. It unites without destroying the selves that are uniting, and is intended to strengthen them in their mutual relations and in the pursuit of common objectives or ends. It is organised cooperation of groups as groups. Hence the nature of the particular groups which federate will have a decisive impact upon the particular federal system which they enter.

If thus understood as the process of federalising [Friedrich's italics] it will become apparent that federalism may be operating in both the direction of integration and differentiation. For both the transformation of the British Empire into the Commonwealth of Nations, and that of European states into a United States of Europe (as envisaged and initiated) are federalising processes. In the case of many emergent political orders, such as India, Nigeria or Malaysia, integration and differentiation may be going on at the same time; they are quite distinct aspects of the federalising process.

What have we here? By making the “federalising process” synonymous with the process of “organising diversity” or, to use another of his statements, the process by which groups as groups organize their co-operation, Friedrich has, it seems, made one of the most suggestive contributions to the field of federal theory that has been made for some time. For not only does it hold out the promise of finally rescuing the federal idea from the jurisprudents and saving it from extinction, but, and from my viewpoint even more valuably, it brings it directly into the body of extremely interesting empirical and theoretical work which Karl Deutsch and others elsewhere are conducting into the process of nation and community building.

Indeed, despite my own aversion to attempting new adventures with old terms, I would exhort everyone to join the expedition if only I could be assured that we have a good compass and a clear map to save us from being swept out to sea by the “federalising process”. Because there are, as Friedrich himself recognizes, a number of serious difficulties which must be attended to first. I will cite just one that I believe crucial to any further progress with his thesis.

Briefly, I am not at all sure whether Friedrich’s desire to explore the new frontiers of federal theory is not, in some way, compromised by his equal desire to hold faith with past theory. This ambivalence, as I see it, seems to be especially noticeable if one asks the question, precisely what link should we retain between federalism as a process and federalism as a design? Let me explain this quickly. While scholars like Bryce and others have noted the dynamic effects of the centrifugal and centripetal forces, nevertheless when they came to describe “federalism” as a system of government they gave, as Friedrich rightly points out, primary emphasis to design rather than the continual ebb and flow of power to and from the centre. Friedrich, on the other hand, has proposed that we reverse this emphasis, that we should see federalism as a
"process" rather than (or "not merely as") a static design. However he has also been careful to point out that we should not ignore design either. In his own words (already quoted above), "at any particular moment the task of describing a federal order is still definitely a matter of ascertaining its design".

If this is the case then some of the questions which must follow are fairly obvious: for example, is the "federal" design to be some sort of magnetic pole or centre of gravity from which we measure the ebb and flow of the federalizing process? And more important, of course, what design shall we talk about? I have already spoken of the "fundamentalists" and the "revisionists" in the field. And if I may do further violence to the workers in this vineyard, I would say that with one or two variations, there are two fairly distinguishable schools of design here: (a) those who assert that the federal style of organization is distinctive, and that there are reasonably objective tests for determining its presence or absence; and (b) those who assert the opposite, namely that it is not a distinctive kind of organization; that the tests for detecting its presence or absence are either crude, vague, or subjective; that the power relations (in their fullest sense) between the central and regional governments differ from those in the unitary decentralized system in degree only, and not in kind; and that it takes more than the clairvoyance of an Oxford man to recognize a federation when he sees it walking down the street.

In brief there seems to me a danger that if Friedrich were to insist that federalism is a particular kind of constitution rather than any pattern of organized co-operation between groups, then the expedition for which he holds out so much hope may be aborted before it even leaves camp; and worse that we may be thrown once more into the sterile and fratricidal exercises of pinning different labels on the same countries. True, Friedrich does say that the "once crucial distinction between a federal state and a confederation of states has become blurred". May it not be equally true, however, that the lines between the federal state and the highly decentralized unitary system have also become blurred? And if this is the case can emphasis be put on any other design but that which gives the loosest possible version of a federal organization — as loose indeed as the Commonwealth of Nations on the one hand, and as tight as the Soviet Union on the other?

These are only a few of the difficulties in his position. There are others. But Friedrich has undertaken to clarify his argument further, and pending his restatement, this is where the debate stands at the moment. As a shot in the dark however, I would think that he can combine the idea of the federalizing process with one of at least three positions: (1) to withdraw — as the fundamentalists do — to the inner keep of the castle, and refuse admission to anyone who does not satisfy their own tests of federality; (2) to relax the conditions of membership to some point of his own choosing and to admit, for example, the structure of the Commonwealth of Nations; (3) to dissociate the federalizing process from any particular end design, and to think of it solely in terms of a reversible process — continuous or discontinuous — by which new political communities are formed. The implications of his choices are plain enough. If
he chooses the first, the debate will revert to its former position. If he chooses the second, it will lose him some of the fundamentalists but bring the matter closer to the present loose usage of the federal idea. If he chooses the third, the most dangerous of all, the term is ready for burial, and Friedrich might as well refer to the federalizing process as the process of aggregating or disaggregating, concentrating or deconcentrating, unifying or dispersing. It will matter little.
Gordon Greenwood
Selected Publications

Books
Early American-Australian Relations (Melbourne, 1944).
The Future of Australian Federalism (Melbourne, 1946).
Australia: A Social and Political History (Sydney, 1955); editor and contributor.
Brisbane, 1859–1959 (Sydney, 1959); editor and co-author with John Laverty.

Contributions to other works
"Australia’s interest in the South Pacific Islands" in C. Hartley Grattan (ed.), Australia (California, 1947).
"The case for extended Commonwealth powers" in Federalism in Australia (Melbourne, 1949).
"History in the Australian Universities" in The Teaching of the Social Sciences in Australian Universities (Social Science Research Council of Australia, 1952).
"Some problems of Australian foreign policy", Introduction to Australia: Data Papers for Commonwealth Relations Conference, Lahore (Melbourne, 1954); editor and contributor.
"Australia, the Commonwealth and Pacific security” in Australian Policies towards Asia: Data Papers for Institute of Pacific Relations Conference, Lahore (Melbourne, 1954); editor and contributor.

Articles and monographs
"The Australian political scene", Pacific Affairs, XX, 3 (September 1947).
"Australia’s foreign policy", Australian Outlook, 1, 1 (March 1947).
“Britain in a changing world”, *Australian Outlook*, 1, 4 (December 1947).

“Australian attitudes towards Pacific problems”, *Pacific Affairs*, XXIII, 2 (June 1950).


“Oliver Cromwell”, *The Protector* (1957).


